

**To: Academic Priorities Committee, Brown University**  
**From: Sue Alcock, John Bodel and Steve Houston, Program Co-Directors**  
**(AY 2009-2012)**  
**Re: Proposed Renaming of the 'Program in Ancient Studies' to the**  
**'Program in Early Cultures'**  
**Date: July 6, 2009**

The Program in Ancient Studies, under the leadership of Kurt Raaflaub, has been for many years an impressively organized and widely recognized enterprise at Brown University. Its strong thematic and comparative focus — an essential part of the Program's core identity — has successfully connected scholars in various disciplines and departments both at Brown and beyond. Given Professor Raaflaub's recent retirement, however, and given the changing landscape of 'ancient studies' at Brown, the new triumvirate of co-directors (Alcock, Bodel, and Houston) would like to reconfigure certain aspects of the Program's operation and scope. This includes a recommended change in titlature.

It is suggested that the Program in Ancient Studies be retitled the '**Program in Early Cultures**'. This name is felt better to reflect the wide geographical coverage and long temporal reach of the program. The term 'ancient' can prove problematic in this context, suggesting as it does, by comparison with programs elsewhere, a focus on the Old World alone. As a title, 'Ancient Studies' also raises definitional questions about just when the 'ancient world' ends. For these reasons, it seems logical to re-position the Brown program as both *global* and *pre-modern* in scope (a trend already strongly initiated by Kurt Raaflaub). Such repositioning not only draws in new faculty strengths (in Archaeology, Classics, Anthropology, History of Art and Architecture, Religious Studies, Sanskrit, Western Asian Studies, the Islamic World, and more), but reiterates and confirms the Program's distinct profile in North American academia. We also intend that the proposed name change apply to the undergraduate concentration in Ancient Studies, the requirements for which the new co-directors are in the process of slightly modifying. We undertake to follow whatever steps are required to carry out such naming and curricular revisions.

This proposed renaming has been extensively discussed among members of a subcommittee appointed to consider the future of Ancient Studies (composed of the three present co-directors and Nancy Khalek [Religious Studies]). Comments were solicited from all eight members of the Program's Steering Committee and were received from Committee members James Allen, Saul Olyan, and Michael Satlow, as well as former director Kurt Raaflaub. None raised objections to the proposed name change and several were strongly in favor of it.