WOMEN’S STUDIES PROGRAM
PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

The Women’s Studies Program prepared a self study following program review guidelines. A two-person external review team visited the campus; reviewed the self study; interviewed unit personnel, university administrators, undergraduate, and graduate students; and submitted an external report. The Program Review Committee studied all written materials. The Program Review Committee liaison for the Program discussed the self study with the director and teaching faculty. The Program Review Committee discussed its preliminary findings with the Dean of Arts & Sciences. This document reflects the Program Review Committee’s findings and recommendations.

SUMMARY OF THE SELF STUDY

Introduction

Mission. Through the practice of feminist scholarship and teaching (p. 9), students and faculty within the Women’s Studies Program challenge “prevailing assumptions” (p. 10) and “traditional social norms” (p. 9) within cultures and institutions. Students and faculty cultivate “innovative pedagogy based on collaborative learning approaches” (p. 10), conduct “scholarship based on the centrality of gender as a category of analysis” (p. 10), and promote “social responsibility” locally and globally (p. 10).

History. The Women’s Studies Program was established in 1978 with a budget of $1500, a part-time administrator, no full-time faculty, and no secretarial support. By 1990, the Program moved to Shatzel Hall, had a budget of $7491, a half-time director, several joint appointment faculty, and full-time secretarial support. In 2004, the Program moved to East Hall, had a full-time director, a full-time undergraduate coordinator, two joint appointment faculty, and half-time secretarial support.

Description of the Unit

Program identification. Women’s Studies offers three programs: an undergraduate major, an undergraduate minor, and a graduate certificate (p. 10 and Appendix B).

Programmatic and curricular offerings. The curriculum for the undergraduate major in Women’s Studies consists of five core courses, WS 200, WS 302, ETHN 302, WS 400, and WS 401; 24 credit hours of gender-focused courses, and a 12-hour concentration in one department/discipline (p. 12). The curriculum for the undergraduate minor in Women’s Studies consists of four core courses, WS 200, WS 302, ETHN 302, and either WS 400 or WS 401; and 9 credit hours of gender-focused courses. The graduate certificate in Women’s Studies consists of WS 620, four gender-focused courses, and WS 786, Independent Study in Women’s Studies/Capstone project.
Faculty resources. The core faculty in Women’s Studies consists of a full-time director (currently held by a tenured faculty member from the Division of Sport Management, Recreation, and Tourism within the School of Human Movement, Sport, and Leisure Studies in the College of Education and Human Development), an undergraduate coordinator (currently a non-tenured lecturer with a Ph.D. in American Culture Studies), and two joint-appointment faculty (currently tenured faculty members from Romance Languages in the College of Arts & Sciences, and Educational Foundations in the College of Education and Human Development). The Director teaches one course per semester; the undergraduate coordinator teaches four courses per semester; one joint appointment faculty member (50%) teaches three courses per year; and the second joint appointment faculty member (25%) has not taught since 2000 (p. 14, 17). “Thirty-eight faculty members from 22 departments comprise the affiliated faculty” (p. 16 and Appendix D). Part-time faculty teach a total of 2-3 courses per semester (p. 16).

Graduate assistant resources. Women’s Studies has five graduate allocations, four at the doctoral level (three American Culture Studies allocations and one Women’s Studies allocation) and one at the master’s level (from both Psychology and American Culture Studies), all of which are funded for the maximum award (see chart on p. 18). “Graduate assistants teach 4 courses a semester” (p. 16). According to the chart on p. 19, four of five graduate assistants teach one course per semester and one graduate assistant serves in a “non-teaching” capacity.

Staff resources. “From 1998 until 2001, Women’s Studies had a full-time secretary” (p. 19). Since 2001, the Program has had a half-time secretary who also serves half time for Creative Writing.

Student credit hour production. Undergraduate student credit hours have increased from a total of 1977 in 1998-1999 to a total of 2736 in 2003-2004. During the same 7-year period, Graduate Student credit hours have increased from 54 to 79. WS 200 satisfies a General Education/BG Perspective requirement and enrolls 12-16 sections per semester. A policy change in 2003 that requires all cross-listed courses to have the same course number will necessitate blue-sheet approval for course number changes in Women’s Studies (see Goals, p. 63).

Recruitment and retention efforts. Women’s Studies undergraduate majors ($N = 15$ in May 2005, p. 21) are recruited from “humanities and civic-minded students” (p. 25), some of whom have taken WS 200 to satisfy a general education requirement. Students in the certificate program ($N = 8$ in Spring 2005, p. 23) are drawn primarily from the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Education and Human Development. “Most Women’s Studies students complete their degree” (p. 26, no data presented).

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1 Julie Haught had her contract modified to have a joint appointment in English and Women's Studies (.5 in each unit), effective in 2005-2006. She is a lecturer.
Facilities and equipment. Women’s Studies list computers as their primary equipment (see Appendix J for specific computers and equipment in the office).

Information resources and services. Books and periodicals are available in the Jerome Library. For those journals not available, Women’s Studies students and faculty rely on electronic resources.

Financial resources. The operating budget for Women’s Studies has increased 35% since 1999 (see Table 12, p. 29). According to Table 14 (p. 30), personnel expenditures have increased 76%, “primarily due to the rank and salary of the director” (p. 28). In addition, the College of Arts & Sciences has approved requests for faculty travel. The Director has been successful in grant applications ($2,862 from Association for the Advancement of Applied Sport Psychology and $4,615 from the Research Consortium, p. 31) and the Director, as editor for Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, receives $3000 annually to support the editorial office of the journal. Women’s Studies maintains two foundation accounts that total $7,425.

Self Evaluation

Faculty quality and productivity. Appendix L reports core faculty productivity in the aggregate. Table 15, p. 32, shows that core faculty members are active in publication of journal articles and book chapters and in presentation of papers.

Women’s Studies has 38 affiliated faculty from 22 campus programs or offices. Whereas affiliated faculty are drawn from all ranks and several disciplines, most faculty, like the students who are recruited into Women’s Studies, are from the Colleges of Arts & Sciences and Education and Human Development (p. 33). Fifty-eight percent of the affiliated faculty are tenured professors at the rank of associate (42%) or full (16%).

Student entry attributes. Tables 18 and 19 (p. 36) show that Women’s Studies undergraduate majors enter the university with high school GPAs at or above 3.00 and ACT scores at or below the national mean. Table 24 (p. 38) shows entry attributes of graduate students in the certificate program (2000-2004). The mean GRE-verbal score for graduate students is 543; the mean GRE-quantitative score is 510.

Assessment of student learning outcomes. Learning outcomes for the undergraduate major and graduate certificate program are described in Appendix N, as follows:

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2 See [http://www.act.org/aap/scores/norms.html](http://www.act.org/aap/scores/norms.html) for norms that help in interpretation of ACT scores relative to national normative percentages.

3 See [http://www.gre.org/edupubs.html#scoreuse](http://www.gre.org/edupubs.html#scoreuse) for norms that assist in interpretation of GRE scores relative to national normative percentages. A GRE-verbal of 543 is at the 69th percentile nationally; a GRE-quantitative of 510 is just above the 25% percentile nationally.
At the completion of study for the baccalaureate degree, students in Women’s Studies are expected (to be able) to discuss the multiple types of feminisms that currently exist in the U.S. and internationally, as well as their histories and development; critically analyze and make profitable connections between feminist theories and feminist practices; explicate the basic debates or areas of contention within contemporary feminist thought; describe the multiple ways in which gender is intersected by other social relations such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and nation; identify the basic components that distinguish feminist methodologies from other approaches to inquiry, and the ways in which women’s studies approaches have transformed traditional disciplines; and communicate clearly and effectively in written and oral expression.

Students in the Graduate Certificate Program are expected (to be able) to gain working knowledge of, articulate, and apply contemporary feminist theories; gain working knowledge of and articulate the historical contexts of feminist theories; integrate feminist theory into research and analysis in her/his area of study; critically analyze intersections among gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity, and social class; understand how to employ feminist research methods appropriate in her/his area of study; demonstrate competence in feminist and interdisciplinary writing; and demonstrate competence in oral presentation of feminist ideas and research.

Annual assessment reports (Appendix O) reveal an assessment program in its formative stages. Since 2001, Women’s Studies undergraduate majors compile a senior portfolio that is evaluated by faculty. As reported in the self study, “the content of portfolios seems to vary . . . and the learning objectives are not observed in as systematic a fashion as would be ideal” (p. 39). As stated on p. 42 of the self study, the Program intends to “develop a formal mechanism for assessing the capstone projects relative to the program learning outcomes” (p. 42). At the graduate level, The self study lists the development of a formal mechanism for assessing capstone projects as a goal (p. 42).

Curriculum, instruction, and support services. The self study reports: “The current workload of the Women’s Studies core faculty has limited our ability to submit the curriculum paperwork to create new courses in Women’s Studies and therefore offer cross-listed courses through Women’s Studies” (p. 24). Curricular changes are listed as goals (see Table 31, p. 63-64)

Service. “Women’s Studies faculty often spend a large proportion of their time on program, college, and University committees, as well as on engagement with the BGSU, Bowling Green, and professional communities” (p. 44). Undergraduate majors and minors are active in community service. In partial fulfillment of WS 401, a practicum course required of majors, Women’s Studies students complete 75-90 hours of supervised field work with on- and off-campus organizations (p. 47).

Comparative advantage and program distinctiveness. The self study asserts that the BGSU’s Women’s Studies Program is distinctive because of its focus on feminism in
America and the Western Hemisphere (compared to the International focus of University of Toledo, for instance).

Demand. Women’s Studies offers 21-30 class sections per semester. Table 27, p. 50, shows that classes at the undergraduate level enroll an average of 35 students per section in WS 200 and 9 per section in upper division courses. Graduate course enrollments shown in Table 27 reflect the nature of cross-listings. However, class-size data (Table 27) show that the average class size is below the minimum in most years for upper division and graduate level classes (e.g., 10 for 300-400 classes and 5 for graduate classes).

Connection to the mission. Grounded in feminist philosophy and pedagogy, Women’s Studies emphasizes inquiry, engagement, and community outreach. In the area of inquiry, Women’s Studies students “reflect upon current and historical issues of gender, race, and class” (p. 52). In the area of engagement, Women’s Studies classes often include some form of service learning; for example, students assist at “domestic violence shelters, rape crisis units, and abortion clinics” (p. 52-53). Women’s Studies is most closely aligned with English, American Culture Studies, and Ethnic Studies. The majority of 44 affiliated faculty listed in Appendix I, p. 109-112, are from arts and humanities departments within the College of Arts & Sciences. Affiliated faculty also represent departments within the Colleges of Health and Human Services, Technology, and Education and Human Development. Women’s Studies and the Women’s Center enjoy a “symbiotic relationship” (p. 56).

Financial considerations and adequacy of resources. The self study reports that core faculty cannot respond to the demand to offer more sections of WS 200. At present, four of five graduate assistants, funded at the maximum level for 20 hours, teach one section of WS 200 per semester.

Unit planning (next seven years)

The planning process. The faculty members met as a group during a retreat to develop a long-range plan (see Table 31, p. 63ff). The faculty want to increase research opportunities for students at the undergraduate and graduate level, increase the visibility of the Women’s Studies program, and improve communication with graduates of the program.

Goals and strategies. Means for meeting curricular goals include increasing the number of course offerings at the undergraduate and graduate level, incorporating a research capstone or senior thesis requirement at the undergraduate level, and revising the graduate certificate program requirements. Means for increasing the program’s visibility and improving communication with graduates of the program include sponsoring a student research symposium, developing an electronic newsletter, and creating a recruitment DVD that can be mailed to area high schools.
**Timetable and implementation plan.** Means by which goals will be accomplished are defined for each year from 2005 until 2011. These seem reasonable and appropriate.

**SUMMARY OF THE EXTERNAL REPORT**

The External Review Team, consisting of Dr. Jill M. Bystydzienski and Dr. Karen Gould, issued a report on December 29, 2005, based on information provided in the self study and interviews conducted during their campus visit on November 14-15, 2005.

The External Report emphasized the significant role that the Women’s Studies Program currently plays in fulfillment of the mission of the University; it offered several suggestions for bolstering the Program.

In the area of curriculum, the external evaluators suggested that instructors of WS 200 collaborate in sharing their individual approaches to this introductory course (p. 3), which satisfies a general education requirement and serves as a venue for the recruitment of majors. They recommended that WS 302 be expanded; that feminist methodologies and methods be taught at the 300 level (p. 3-4); and that majors be required or strongly encouraged to take at least one international/global course on women from non-western regions. The evaluators stressed the need for greater balance of course offerings across semesters and fewer scheduling conflicts between units and colleges offering relevant courses.

In the area of infrastructure, instructional resources, and institutional support, the external evaluators noted that the Program would benefit from greater numbers of joint appointments within the College of Arts & Sciences (p. 5-6), with special consideration given to the areas of science, technology, and mathematics (p. 3). The evaluators suggested the establishment of a buy-out budget (see p. 6) as an incentive for recruitment of tenure-track and tenured faculty to teach within the Program, and a national search for a jointly appointed faculty member to teach lower and upper division courses within the Program.

In the area of faculty contributions, the evaluators commended the core faculty, namely, Vikki Krane, Jeannie Ludlow, and Opportune Zongo, for the quality of their teaching, service, and publications (p. 7).

In the area of student quality, the evaluators noted that the students were “articulate, interested, and engaged” (p. 8). Graduate students appreciated the self-directed nature of the program, opportunities to work as teams, and the chance of having a voice in decisions (p. 8). Noting that “self-assessment is taking place in numerous ways” (p. 9) – in the form of journals, summary reports of internship experiences, public presentations about internships, conferences attended, and research conducted – the evaluators recommended that “specific descriptions of student self-assessments” of learning be included in future assessment reports (p. 9).
In the area of “scholarship of engagement,” the evaluators state: “... it appears to us that there are many ways in which a vibrant Women’s Studies program can be a vital partner in community outreach and what is referred to as the ‘scholarship of engagement’” (p. 10). Given the “conflicting views of what the institutional goal means to different constituencies and conflicting views as well about what the institution is seeking to promote in the realm of external and community partnership building” (p. 10), the Women’s Studies Program needs to “make a compelling case and design program communications to highlight specific initiatives and ways in which it contributes to ‘scholarship of engagement’” (p. 11).

In summary, the evaluators propose that the Program focus on the need to increase the number of formal course offerings, to improve its outreach to graduates of the program, to increase the number of its majors and minors, and to enhance its visibility (p. 11). The reviewers noted that to be successful in such efforts, the Program should be supported with greater numbers of actively participating faculty.

**PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The PRC congratulates the Women’s Studies Program on its comprehensive self study. We commend the Program for its fulfillment of the missions of both the University and the College of Arts & Sciences through an interdependent approach to teaching, learning, scholarship, and service across disciplines.

Both the self study and the report of the external reviewers indicate that a fundamental problem is the relatively small size of the jointly appointed faculty. Whereas the PRC cannot mandate an increase in faculty lines, the external evaluators’ recommendations to increase the number of formal course offerings, improve outreach to alumnae and the community, increase the number of majors and minors, and enhance the visibility of the Women’s Studies Programs cannot be adopted without an increase in the numbers of participating faculty.

Reasonable deadlines for carrying out each recommendation should be worked out between the Director, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and the Graduate Dean, as appropriate.

1. Recruitment

   *Finding.* Women’s Studies is a small program with 15 declared majors (p. 20).

   *Recommendation.* We endorse the recommendation of the external evaluators that Women’s Studies expand and accelerate recruitment efforts to attract more majors, minors, and program certificate students. We recommend that Women’s Studies seek to double the number of majors, minors, and program certificate students by the next program review cycle.
2. Assessment

*Finding.* As noted in the self study, “the content of portfolios seems to vary, often students have not retained their ... Women’s Studies coursework, and the learning objectives are not observed in as systematic a fashion as would be ideal” (p. 39).

*Recommendation.* As part of the assessment plan, we endorse the external evaluators’ recommendation that faculty in Women’s Studies specify methods of student self-assessment. Further, we recommend that the Director in coordination with her affiliated faculty develop a systematic approach for the creation, collection, and display of materials from classes and internships through which students demonstrate program learning outcomes. In particular, we recommend that an assessment plan be developed for WS 200 given its importance to the recruitment of majors.

3. Curriculum

*Finding.* Learning outcomes for the undergraduate major and graduate certificate program include the ability to discuss multiple types of feminisms that currently exist in the U.S. and internationally and the critical analysis and connection of feminist theory to practice (Appendix N, p. 134).

*Recommendations.* Based on recommendations by the external evaluators and learning outcomes articulated in Appendix N, we recommend the inclusion of an international/global course on women from non-western nations or regions for Women’s Studies majors and the expansion of WS 302 into a 2-course sequence over two semesters, with the first semester focusing on the History of Feminist Thought and the second semester focusing on Contemporary Feminist Theory and Practice.

*Finding.* “Beginning in 2003, courses can only be cross-listed if they have the same course number in both academic programs” (p. 24).

*Recommendations.* We recommend that paperwork be completed so that WS 300 and 400 topics courses can be assigned regular course numbers and appropriately cross-listed as needed. We further recommend that communication across units and colleges regarding anticipated plans for course offerings on women and gender topics be improved so that courses appropriate for Women’s Studies students are offered across semesters and at times not in conflict.

4. Faculty Support

*Finding.* The self study states that the program aspires to support all faculty engaged in feminist scholarship and teaching and women’s scholarship in all disciplines (self study, p. 9-10). Of 38 faculty members listed in the affiliated faculty in Appendix D, none is from science, math, visual art, music, psychology, or visual communications in technology (Appendix D, p. 76-77).
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**Recommendation.** We recommend that Women’s Studies recruit particular faculty members in areas that can broaden and deepen the impact of Women’s Studies at the University and that a mechanism be developed that enables the Director to recruit these faculty. These faculty could hold joint appointments in Women’s Studies and their home departments, or they could be recruited for particular courses. In addition, we endorse the external evaluators’ recommendation that, when resources permit and coordination of hiring can be arranged, the University hire at least one additional tenure-track faculty member in a national search to teach lower- and upper-level WS courses and that this external hire be a joint appointment with another unit, preferably one under-represented in the current mix of faculty.

**Finding.** The “Director is expected to teach one course a semester while (the) undergraduate coordinator has had a 4/4 teaching load. One of the jointly appointed faculty members teaches 3 Women’s Studies courses per year while the other jointly appointed faculty member currently has no teaching responsibilities” (self study, p. 17).

**Recommendation.** We recommend that a teaching load policy be developed for core faculty so that loads are equitable and appropriate, and that the Director, like chairs of departments, be granted the authority to set teaching loads for core faculty and graduate assistants in Women’s Studies.

5. External Funding

**Finding.** At present, the Women’s Studies Program is dependent on the institution for staff, graduate assistantships, jointly appointed faculty, affiliated faculty, operational budget, and space. One solution to the need for more resources might be to generate more external funds. However, we note that, “Women’s Studies core faculty have not been active in seeking external research funds as they do not have assigned time for research, so the potential to seek external funds is quite limited” (p. 31). We note also that the research in Women’s Studies is “mostly textual, qualitative, and conceptual analyses” (p. 26), and therefore not the type of research likely to be funded.

**Recommendation.** We recommend that Women’s Studies explore ways to increase its self-sufficiency within the University through creation of scholarship of engagement opportunities that might yield affiliation agreements or partnerships with potential donors, and expansion of alumni networks to find program graduates who may be willing to fund particular projects. We recommend that the Director actively recruit core and affiliated faculty on the basis of their research agendas and grant activity, especially from colleges or units under-represented in the current list of affiliated faculty.

6. Relationships to Alumnae and Alumni

**Finding.** Among the primary foci over the next seven years is that goal of “creating a stronger bond with … alumnæ/i” (p. 61).
Recommendation. We endorse the recommendation of the external evaluators that a communication plan be developed with graduates of the Women’s Studies major, minor, and certificate programs and that the plan be implemented to ensure that program graduates and friends of Women’s Studies are well informed about program achievements and initiatives in order to expand the interest of Women’s Studies’ supporters and donors. We recommend the Director work with the Dean of Arts & Sciences and the Office of Development in identifying graduates of the program, including those who have excelled in careers that might be considered counter-intuitive such as law and corporate business, who might serve as role models for potential majors.

7. Scholarship of Engagement

Finding. “Women’s Studies faculty are heavily involved in community engagement activities. Much of our research, creative, and intellectual endeavors contain strong activist and community engagement components” (p. 45). Community engagement and service learning are central to the mission of Women’s Studies, but the relationship of community engagement or scholarship of engagement to specific program learning outcomes, including research outcomes, has yet to be articulated.

Recommendation. We endorse the external reviewers’ recommendation that the Women’s Studies Program design program communications to highlight specific initiatives and ways in which these initiatives contribute to the scholarship of engagement. We recommend that Women’s Studies faculty document the full range of their students’ and their own scholarship of engagement activities and that they reference the characteristics established by the Standards Committee for evaluation of Scholarship of Engagement as endorsed by the President (see http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/president/page13269.html).

8. Planning

Finding. Although faculty members met as a group during a retreat to develop a long-range plan, there is little evidence of strategic planning, particularly with regard to recruitment of majors, recruitment of faculty willing to teach in the program, and forging relationships with alumnae and alumni who share an interest in Women’s Studies issues.

Recommendation. We recommend that the Director and faculty members in Women’s Studies develop a strategic plan for recruitment of more majors, recruitment of faculty willing to teach in Women’s Studies, for assessment of WS 200 given its importance in recruitment of majors, and for expanding the network of graduates and friends of Women’s Studies.

The Women’s Studies Program should report annually to the Dean of Arts & Sciences, with a copy to the Provost, on the implementation of these recommendations.