

The Women's Studies minor was reviewed by Dr. Brad Carroll, Physics Chair at Weber State University, Dr. Kerry Kennedy, Associate Professor in Social Work at Weber State University, Dr. Giancarlo Panagia, Assistant Professor in Justice Studies/Gender Studies Adjunct at Westminster College, and Dr. Armando Solorzano, Associate Professor in Family and Consumer Studies/Adjunct in Women's Studies at the University of Utah. The following report summarizes information gathered from the Program Review document as well as interviews with program faculty, support persons, students, and program directors.

I. Mission Statement

The Women's Studies Program has a clear mission statement with clearly stated goals. These goals are:

1. to build on the existing body of scholarship as the program develops an interdisciplinary curriculum about women and gender issues.
2. to encourage variety in pedagogical methods for teaching.
3. to transform traditional disciplines through continuing consideration of new data, methods, theories, and analytical frameworks generated by Women's Studies scholarship, helping to correct long-standing oversight of the study of women's contributions to societies throughout the world.

These goals reveal a dual focus on women and on other gender issues (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender, hereinafter LGBT). The Women's Studies Program should continue to pursue broadening its program to become a more inclusive Gender Studies Program. To inform its decisions, the program should survey what other institutions are doing in this regard. Comparing its program with WSU's ten peer institutions (<http://www.weber.edu/IR/peer.html>) may provide an argument for widening its traditional role. The Review Committee believes the Women's Studies Program should take the lead in promoting a greater understanding of LGBT issues through its curriculum and scholarship. The program should expect to encounter some resistance to the expansion of its traditional role, but the committee nonetheless encourages the Women's Studies Program to continue to evolve in this direction.

The committee approves of the plans of Women's Studies to grow its program. In spring 2011, the Women's Studies Executive Council approved a new vision statement for the year 2030 that outlines its vision for the growth of the program. This vision statement is appropriate for the program's goals and supports the vision statement of the university. In the committee's interview with the Dean, he stated that increasing his support for the program will depend on the growth of the program. If the Women's Studies Program wishes to offer both a major and a minor, it must produce hard data that will allow it to document such growth. These data will allow the program to strategize effectively about how to increase participation in its program. To this end, the program should assemble statistics on the number of minors by year and compare these numbers with the enrollment growth on campus and in the College. The majors of those students who minor in Women's Studies should be determined to learn who is taking advantage of the Women's Studies minor and who should be targeted for the program's recruitment efforts. The Women's Studies program must reach out beyond the social sciences if it is to expand.

II. Curriculum

The Curriculum of Women's Studies is clearly stated and is consistent with the program's mission. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to support the program's goals, as demonstrated by its curriculum outcome grid. The curriculum consists of six core courses (including a research project, internship, and seminar) and four elective courses offered within the program, and a number of cross-listed programs taught by a healthy variety of academic departments on campus. (It is unfortunate that the College of Science and the College of Applied Science and Technology do not offer a course that could be cross-listed). Twenty credit hours are required for the minor, 12 hours from the core courses and 8 hours from the cross-listed courses. Student comments show a general satisfaction with the curriculum, although some students have made suggestions for additional courses that could be offered (as described in a following section).

The Dean appears to be committed to maintaining the current level of financial support for the Women's Studies Program. However, if the Women's Studies program is to expand to offer a major and a minor, its curriculum will have to evolve to accommodate its larger role. It will require a full-time Program Director and faculty to support the program's expansion. This will in turn require increased funding, and Women's Studies will have to compete with other departments for limited financial resources. Hard data on SCHs, enrollment, and number of students served will be required if the Dean and the higher administration are to provide support for the program's growth.

The committee is concerned about the program's ability to offer its courses on a regular basis. The program's necessary reliance on cross-listed courses places some aspects of scheduling beyond the program's control. The program should carry out a time-to-degree study of its minors to determine if scheduling uncertainties are an impediment to students receiving the Women's Studies minor.

III. Faculty

Women's Studies teaching faculty is completely comprised of support faculty. Presently, most of the Women's Studies teaching faculty consists of professors from supportive departments. In fact, some of them teach part of the cross-listed courses. In addition, some teaching faculty is comprised of Weber State University staff. Faculty members are diverse in gender, ethnicity, discipline, and teaching style.

The Women's Studies Five-Year Program Self-Study addresses faculty demographic information and qualifications. In addition, teaching standards are clearly outlined. Moreover, direct evidence of effectiveness of instructions is provided for both faculty and adjunct instructors. Finally, professional development activities are adequately summarized. However, a process for mentoring new faculty and adjunct instructors is not clearly presented.

After conducting interviews with the Faculty, the students, the staff, and the Dean, the review team reached the following conclusions: Faculty size, composition, qualifications, and professional development activities should result from a planning process which is consistent with the Women's Studies Program; however, due to lack of budgeting resources, the planning process is presently a weakness of the program.

Presently, the Program does maintain a core of contract/adjunct faculty (sufficient to provide stability for the Minor) who are academically and professionally qualified. In fact, this support faculty is impressive in their own right, as demonstrated by their accomplishments in terms of awards of excellence. This represents strength of the program. In addition, the program demonstrates efforts to achieve demographic diversity in its faculty. This, too, represents strength of the program.

The Women's Studies Executive Council, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and community people, is critical to programming and curricular needs for the program. In addition, some processes are in place to determine appropriate teaching assignments and service workloads, to guide and mentor contract or adjunct faculty, and to provide adequate support for activities which implement the Program's mission. However, there is a concern that the process in place, due to lack of budgeting resources, is not fully operational in determining a set schedule and in providing guidance and mentoring to faculty who receive teaching assignments. As the students complain, the schedule of Women's Studies courses is not available in advance. Plus, a better rotation of courses is needed. This leads to the recurring problem that not enough courses are offered each semester (e.g. anthropology of gender has not been offered in four years). In addition, the Dean pointed out that for the first time ever during the meeting with the review team he had heard of the possibility for pre-professional programs to offer courses for Women's Studies. According to the Dean, the logistics of the University are ones in which departments may "spare a course for Women's Studies." Evidently, according to a complaint received by the review team, the psychology program is not supportive of the minor. Thus it cannot spare a course for Women's Studies.

Teaching is systematically monitored to assess its effectiveness, and revised periodically within two academic years to reflect new objectives and to incorporate improvements based on appropriate assessment methods. For both contract and adjunct faculty, there is evidence of effective creation and delivery of instruction. Ongoing evaluation and improvement of instruction is present. Finally, innovation in instructional processes is fully demonstrated. This category fully represents strength of the program.

A formal, periodic review process for all faculty of the program is not present. Thus the results of the reviews are not available. This represents a weakness of the program. In conclusion, program strength is the enthusiasm and the high morale of the faculty. In addition, diverse faculty who is academically and professionally qualified is strength. Faculty revises periodically their courses and incorporate improvements based on appropriate assessment methodologies. Weaknesses are illustrated by the lack of budgeting resources detrimental to the planning process. A formal periodic review is not properly available.

As a recommendation for change, the review team supports the request for a Post-Doc position. This position would help the Program Coordinator in determining appropriate teaching assignments, guide the adjunct faculty, create the appropriate procedures for the orientation of new faculty, and provide the formal periodic review of the faculty. The Post-Doc position would help with the planning process to make it consistent with the Program's mission. In addition, the Post-Doc could help create and offer a core of courses sufficient to provide stability and ongoing quality for the Program offered. In addition, since the Women's Studies is an "Orphan Minor" it

should be moved under the Office of the Assistant to the President for Diversity and be independent from other schools in order to offer its own courses. This would provide an identifiable funded structure rather than the “stepchild treatment.” This move would give Women’s Studies a home and its own budget.

IV. Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes of the program support the mission of the program. The program has become more consistent in requirements in the classes that are taught by multiple and/or different professors. The learning outcomes are appropriate for graduating seniors and are focused on student learning. While the program provides outcomes and ways where each outcome is assessed, more focus on direct, measureable outcomes would strengthen an argument for funding necessary to expand this program. The program had anecdotal evidence related to learning outcomes but lacks direct measures. The committee feels that the lack of direct, measureable outcomes is partially a result of the lack of dedicated resources to the program and recommends creating an evaluation plan that includes direct measures.

V. Program Support

As a Program, Women Studies functions under the leadership of a Coordinator who is a faculty in the Psychology Department and is granted a ¼ release time to administer the program. Beside the Coordinator, there is a secretary who is the backbone of the Program and work on a ½ time basis. In spite of the growing nature of the Program, the operating budget has been the same for the last 20 years. In the last five years, the efforts have been concentrated in maintaining the budget and avoiding further cuts. Nonetheless, the program remains active and visible due to one-time donation by the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, individual contributions of faculty and auxiliary personnel, and anonymous donors.

The external reviewers perceived that budget priorities should be given to: a) the increment to a budget that guarantee the high morale prevailing in the faculty, b) putting money towards the implementation of hybrid courses, d) updating technology and computer in the main office, d) expanding the curriculum by providing online classes, e) to create a line in the budget that allows the Coordinator and faculty to attend National meetings and conferences, and f) to secure additional funding for the creation of a Major in Women Studies.

The main responsibility for advising students falls in the hands of the Coordinator of the program. Issues of class scheduling, sequence of the classes, and availability of courses are mainly addressed by the secretary. Through advisement meetings, the coordinator informs the students about the academic requirements and the relevant careers the students can pursue.

While the students show a strong satisfaction with the academic content of the classes, they expressed a concern about the appropriate advising. They find quite cumbersome to navigate among the different departments that participate in the Women Studies Program, with class schedules, and with the different expectations of professors from different departments. Most of the students tend to agree that appropriate advising is out of the control of the Coordinator. The unpredictability of scheduling, the heavy teaching loads, and the reduced number of classes the Program offers make very difficult for students to plan ahead. Students also believe that with more financial resources the Program can provide bulletins, pamphlets, and

more efficient ways to advertise the classes in short-long basis. Students also find comfort in knowing that their peers are good advisers in terms of the time, content, and progression of the classes.

Both the faculty and staff seem comfortable with having a main office, an office for the Coordinator of the Program, and a room for Adjunct Faculty. They also cherished the last efforts of the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences to provide and furnish their Conference Room.

The main library is the primary source of information for Women Studies. The Program maintains a strong connection with the personnel at the library. Although there is not a budget for the acquisition of specialized journal and literature on women issues, the library has established connections with other programs that support the acquisition of such materials. A common perception between faculty and the personnel at the library is that there are more videos than journals addressing gender issues. Both videos and books only support the classes but don't allow further research on gender issues. At the adjunct faculty office and the coordinator office there is a good collection of women literature that has been provided by individual collections and faculty participating in the Program.

Given the mission of Women Studies to prepare students to work in professional and community organizations, it is essential that the Program maintains formal, stable, and systemic connection with social service agencies, women organizations, and communities throughout Ogden. All the linkages that the Program establishes are informal and based on particular service projects. The list of external institutions in which the students participate is quite impressive but it lacks of consistency and permanency. These connections should be made more permanent to secure the institutional collaborations of agencies and Women Studies.

It is also necessary for the Program to create an evaluative mechanism to measure the efficiency of the service projects. While the students show a great satisfaction with the content of the classes, they also show a concern and uneasiness with the community projects in which they are engage.

Internally, the Women Studies Program maintains close relationships with the Office of Diversity and the Women Center. These relations should be strengthen and solidified since both play a definitive role in the conformation of Major in Women Studies. Both, the Office of Diversity and the Women Center, should funnel a diversity of students, inspire the curriculum, and serve as a placement center for those students who graduate from the program.

Commendations:

1. The faculty and auxiliary personnel share a sense of purpose and commitment to the Women Studies Program. The morale is very high, and so it is their vision to create a Major in Women Studies.
2. The Program is aware of the economic limitations but continues advancing the interest of women, and above all the mission of the University.

3. There is consent that the Program prepares the students to work in diversified environments and advances the position of women in society.
4. The willingness of faculty to teach together and under different disciplines is exceptional. The faculty is very supportive of each other and congenial, while collaborating well with each other, and working as a team.
5. Students are very complimentary of the program in terms of what they are learning and the support they get from the faculty.
6. The Program has made strong efforts to recruit students and faculty from diverse backgrounds.
7. The interdisciplinary nature of the Program provides the students in developing their program of study with a variety of coursework from which to choose.

Recommendations:

1. The Executive Committee, the Faculty, and the Coordinator of Women Studies should meet with the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences to discuss the growth of the program and its budgetary concerns. The main arguments should be the shift toward the study of gender issues in the nation, the university, and the labor force.
2. The teaching-release-time for the Coordinator of the Program should be increased to fifty percent.
3. Provide incentives to other department and faculty to develop cross-listed classes with Women Studies.
4. Develop better mechanisms to institutionalize the relationship of Women Studies with external organizations.
5. There is a need for a committee that can plan the future of the program on a short-long basis.
6. The computer at the main office should be replaced and upgraded.
7. Fund and create a Gender Studies Post-Doc position to
 - a) help Program Coordinator in determining teaching assignments
 - b) guide adjunct faculty
 - c) create appropriate procedures for orientation of new faculty
 - d) provide formal periodic review of faculty review
 - e) help create and offer a core of courses
8. Develop and record measureable learning outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program.

In conclusion, the committee was very impressed with the dedication of the faculty to the Women's Studies program. We found many strengths within the program and feel that the program can continue to grow with proper resources. Thank you for the opportunity to review this program.