

Memo

To: Dean Francis Harrold

From: María D. Parrilla de Kokal

Date: 4/17/2012

Re: Response to Women's Studies Review

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## **Introduction**

Women's Studies experienced our five year review in March 2012. The Review Team consisted of 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 Solórzano, Associate Professor in Family and Consumer Studies/Adjunct in Women's Studies at the University of Utah.

## **Mission Statement**

General committee comments were overwhelmingly positive and ones we would agree with. In accordance with their suggestions, we plan to continue our mission by consistently scheduling classes and by creating classes that will help the growth of the program as Women & Gender Studies. To this end we will be studying other institutions' Women & Gender Studies' relevant course offerings. Additionally, we will be investigating what is needed to acquire a post-doctoral student to help with the Women's Studies program.

The Review Team noted that the College of Science and the College of Applied Science and Technology do not offer any cross-listed courses with Women's Studies. Questions also arose regarding the program's reliance on these courses and the uncertainty this creates for student scheduling. To this end, the WS Curriculum Committee will contact all departments with cross-listed courses to update our information. Additionally, we will study other Women & Gender Studies programs for ideas about courses that might be cross-listed in the College of Science and the College of Applied Science and Technology.

In their meeting with the Dean, reviewers were told that additional support for the program is contingent on its growth. To this end, the WS Coordinator will access hard data to document the program's growth.

## **Curriculum**

The Review Committee acknowledged the program faculty's demographic and qualifications as well as faculty student evaluations. However, they wondered about the process for mentoring new faculty/adjunct instructors. Although Women's Studies has a faculty manual with detailed information that is given to all our faculty, we do not have formalized mentoring. In order to address this concern, WSEC members will be assigned to new instructors. A template with information delineating required course content will be created and distributed to all new instructors. Additionally, a formal teaching contract will be designed for all faculty.

In their meeting with the Dean, the Review Team reported him saying that *the logistics of the University are ones in which departments may "spare a course for Women's Studies."* The Review Team added, *"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."*

The above statement is confusing to us as Psychology provides two courses for Women's Studies, Psychology of Women; taught every Fall, and Psychology of Diversity; taught every Spring and Summer. Additionally, of the six WS Coordinators, Psychology has provided a coordinator twice. When we pressed further, we were told that one reviewer understood the Dean to say that *"the so-called professional programs such as psychology and criminal justice could not spare one course because their faculty were overworked."* We think some sort of misunderstanding occurred that we have been unable to clarify.

The Review Team expressed concern about the limited offerings of cross-listed courses. They recognize this can and does create problems for advisement and for student program completion. The WS coordinator will contact individual departments to get more detail about course offerings in order to better advise students through the Student Manual and through individual advisement.

As part of supporting WS faculty, the coordinator will utilize WSEC members who have taught in the WS Minor Program. These members will observe courses utilizing an appropriate Curriculum Committee designed rubric and offer constructive feedback to teachers. Reviews will take place every 2 - 3 years for individual faculty members.

Once again, as suggested by the Review Team, the WSEC will explore the process for Post-Doc students to assist with the program. Funding opportunities from entities like NWSA, AAUW, and the Ford Company will be explored.

The Review Team expressed concern that WS is an "orphan program" that should be housed under the Office of the Assistant to the President for Diversity. WS will continue its dialogue with the Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Vice President Ryan Thomas regarding our placement and our future.

## **Learning Outcomes**

We support the Review Team suggestions that the program funding could be strengthened with "direct, measureable outcomes." This is something we have been exploring for the past

year. Assessment changes have already begun to be standardized. The Assessment Committee has plans for creating assessments that are more meaningful and foster a better understanding of the program.

### **Program Support**

Suggestions that the WS Coordinator be a ½ person are being explored by us. Dialogue with the Dean will continue along with stronger assessment of the program. We continue to support the hire of a ½ time secretary, who adds consistency and strong support to the program.

Additional Review Team suggestions include: “a) the increment to a budget that guarantee the high morale prevailing in the faculty, b) putting money towards the implementation of hybrid courses, c) 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.” To these we note that: a) we are continuing dialogue with both the Dean and Vice President as well as working on gathering more meaningful program data, b) we already have secured the funding needed for a hybrid class and two online courses i.e., Introduction to Women’s Studies has been taught as a hybrid and as an online course and this summer, Feminist Theories will be an online course, c) we requested 3 new computers from the Capital Campaign funds, d) we currently have \$500.00 for travel, but will look for additional funding to augment this line item to help with additional faculty and student travel to national meetings/conferences, e) we are looking toward utilizing creativity and grant-writing for matching funds to facilitate the creation of a WS Major.

In order to improve advisement, appropriate changes regarding cross-listed courses will be added to the Student Advisement Manual this summer. Additionally, Minors will be emailed each semester to schedule advisement meetings.

Research will be added as a component to the WS Internship, so students will have an opportunity to do a research project outside of the Research course. Additionally, we will work with the Undergraduate Research Office by meeting with the Director to discuss ideas about energizing students. We will also create a forum for the presentation of student research.

Concern was raised about library resources for WS. We are not concerned as the WSU library has allocated \$1,500 to \$2,000 a year for the purchase of WS material. Additionally, WS has access to subject librarians who have and will order material relevant to Women’s Studies in the Social Sciences, Health, Education, and the Humanities. Finally, we have access to Gender Watch, which connects us with databases containing links to full text articles.

The Review Team suggested we “create an evaluative mechanism to measure the efficiency of the service projects” as some students “show a concern and uneasiness with the community projects in which they are engage.” This is a little confusing to us

as we utilize the rubrics set by the WSU Community Involvement Center. Perhaps further dialogue with the students can create a better understanding about project responsibilities, evaluation, and student confusion.

Another suggestion made by the Review Team was to strengthen and solidify relationships with the Center for Diversity and Unity and the Women's Center. As the Women's Center already has a partnership for Social Work interns, we will develop an internship program with the Center for Diversity and Unity. Additionally, we will recreate stable internship programs with the outside community i.e., the Ogden YCC Shelter and the St. Anne's Program for women. We will also reconnect with the University of Utah Gender Program and other similar Women and Gender programs for program planning and support.

### **Recognized Commendations**

Again, we recognize the strengths of this program. Our faculty and community supporters are quite committed to the program. We do prepare our students to work in diversified environments and to help in the advancement of women.

Our students really feel challenged in the program and are supportive of us. We recognize they enjoy their faculty and recognize they have learned a great deal.

We realize we are a small program with highly qualified and dedicated faculty, staff and community supporters.