



Memo To: Dean Julie Rich

From: Melina Alexander

Date: 5/12/2020

Re: Response to Women and Gender Studies Review

## **WGS Weber State University Response to Program Review Suggestions**

The program review team, Melina Alexander, Kathryn McKay, Emily January Petersen, and Stephanie Speicher have written this response to the program review by Dr. Valerie Hegstrom and Dr. Jason Barrett-Fox. We appreciate their insights and their willingness to contribute to the success of our program. While the reviewers discussed many positive aspects of our program, in this response we wish to focus on the recommendations section of the review. We address the suggested changes and advice below. We hope such changes will help the WGS program better meet the standards outlined in the program review information.

### **Mission Statement (Standard A)**

The WGS program review team agrees with the review findings under Standard A Mission Statement.

The WGS advisory board will write a new mission statement. The advisory board will write it by reviewing the mission statements of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences and WSU and looking closely at the three current WGS program mission statements and program outcomes to ensure that our new mission statement aligns with and supports those of the college and university. Specifically, the WGS program will consider the college's aim to enhance "the quality of life in northern Utah and beyond" and the university's stated goal to serve as an "educational [and] cultural ... leader for the region."

### **Curriculum (Standard B)**

The review team does agree with the recommendations for Standard B Curriculum, however, we realize that some of these suggestions will be impossible to facilitate with current budgetary constraints.

- a. The WGS program director will request an additional course reduction in the strategic report due at the end of May 2020 to make it possible for her



to sustain the load of administering the program. We expect this request to be denied.

- b. Currently, the WGS program director does teach at least one course a semester. This course is not taught in load. We need to explore a mechanism for teaching courses in load not just for the director but for all current WGS faculty that are also faculty in other departments. We will survey instructors to determine who would be interested in teaching courses in load as opposed to overload. We will then review information with Betty Kusinierz the Director of Academic Finance and discuss mechanisms for our core courses to be taught in load and how to facilitate this process. See our response for C on how to further address this issue.
- c. In collaboration with the dean and/or the associate dean of the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences, the program director will work with the department chairs of core WGS affiliated faculty members to obtain Memos of Understanding, which agree to allow these faculty members to regularly (once a semester, once a year, or even every other year) offer a core WGS course in load (as part of their normal teaching load). We will ask the dean of Social & Behavioral Sciences to support this initiative by reaching out to the deans of other colleges to lay the groundwork for obtaining these MOUs. Further, we need to investigate this with some faculty who aren't regular instructors.
- d. In Fall 2020, the program director will reach out to faculty who have taught in WGS previously to see if they would still be interested in teaching for the program. She will also reach out to department chairs to see who they have that would be qualified and able to teach for the program.
- e. With the support of the dean and associate dean of Social & Behavioral Sciences, the WGS program director will work with the department chairs in other departments to develop courses that could be cross-listed in a given department and WGS. We will first reach out to department chairs to see if they have courses that can be cross-listed, and, if needed, we will reenact our curriculum committee.



### Learning Outcomes and Assessment (Standard C)

The review team does agree with the review recommendations that WGS program outcomes should relate directly to the new mission statement, that each learning outcome should be specific and measurable, and that each learning outcome should be assessed by at least one direct measure. However, we do not agree with obtaining a pre-post examination. The nature of our program does not facilitate this process.

WGS will make sure that learning outcomes align with the new mission statement. We will also identify core courses that address each. In addition, we will identify which learning outcomes go with our elective courses. We will make sure our program outcomes are clearly measured and that those teaching our courses identify one assignment that directly relates to each of the learning outcomes identified as being addressed in these courses. WGS will not dictate these assignments but will require that faculty report on the data gathered. We will do some research with national organizations (like the NWSA) to review their suggested learning outcomes and assessments and provide this information to our faculty as reference. We cannot enact a diagnostic exam, but we will implement an exit interview for our minors. Finally, we propose that WGS use a portfolio system with our minors, where students select assignments/works/activities they have completed in our program that illustrate mastery of our program outcomes. We will ask students to provide a reflective analysis to this end. Finally, we will post our new program learning outcomes online on the program's website.

### Academic Advising (Standard D)

The review team agrees with the recommendation to create a stronger explicitly defined strategy for advising students.

The program director is working on strengthening connections with program alums. She will use those connections to support efforts to advise current students in the program. We will also work on making advising available through the program's administrative assistant.

We will incorporate the following strategies:



- We will make our website rich with information, including faculty profiles, a list of scheduled courses, and a brochure/flyer to help students understand all advising resources available to them and how to connect with them,
- The program's administrative assistant will take the training tracker mentoring courses and prepare to perform specific low-level advisory assignments to help guide students through the completion of the minor.
- The program director will set up stronger connections with Stephanie Quinn or another liaison in the advisement center who can provide information about the minor, internships, preparing for graduate school, and job opportunities,
- There is no funding for a dedicated faculty advisor; however, we will ask our board if there is anyone who would be willing to give information about graduate school and career planning for students who have majors within their field.
- We will institute short exit interviews for each graduating minor to indirectly measure program outcomes and offer advice about graduate school and career planning.

### Faculty (Standard E)

The review team appreciates the feedback and suggestions given to improve our procedures to support faculty.

We agree that faculty should hold advanced degrees, and to that end, we have agreed to contact department chairs to identify additional faculty. In addition, we will update our adjunct faculty posting to reflect this requirement.

For our current faculty, the WGS advisory board will implement regular faculty meetings for development. These meetings will be held once or twice a semester, depending on faculty preference. As suggested in the review, faculty meetings will include director announcements and faculty sharing.

The WGS advisory board brainstormed ways to implement faculty development given the resources already available at WSU. We will look into creating a community of practice with the Teaching & Learning Forum (TLF).

In the future, we hope to be able to secure funding to invite a regional or national WGS scholar (perhaps a current or past leader of the NWSA) to campus to meet with faculty to



discuss current pedagogical practices in the field, as well as the state of the discipline. WSU WGS faculty would prepare for such a workshop by reading an article or book chapter by the invited guest.

### Program Support (Standard F)

The review team agrees with the recommendations proposed in the program review.

With the dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the WGS program director will reach out to the Director of Academic Finance and Administration (Betty Kusnierz) and the Controller and Director of Accounting Services (Ron Smith) to access more information about budget training and available instructional wage money, with the goal of being able to compensate adjunct faculty and part-time support staff who work within the WGS program, as well as support the program budget in other ways.

### Program Summary (Standard H)

In addition to the steps, the WGS program will take above, we consider and respond to the following suggestions:

- We will carry out a time-to-degree study. (This should determine why higher numbers of minors are not graduating each year. The program director has recognized and is studying this issue. Her efforts to understand and solve this problem will be supported by the WGS advisory board.)
- We are already working on creating a line in the budget that allows the program coordinator and faculty to attend national and regional WGSS meetings and conferences (such as SIROW and NWSA).
- We would like to plan for a future major in WGS, but it is, at this time, unfeasible from an institutional perspective. We would like to revisit it at our next program review.
- We would like to increase the release from teaching time for the program coordinator to fifty percent, but this too is not feasible at this time. We will continue to consider it as we weigh institutional buy-in.

### Additional Recommendations

We further plan to work on the following:



1. We are dedicated to building a stronger network and connections between WGS students.
  - a) In the past, we have held once a semester open-house with faculty and students. We did experience problems with attendance. We again attempted this in 2019 and had poor attendance here as well. We again will attempt a once-a-semester program open house or mixer for WGS faculty and students, at which we invite prospective students and current students could share what they know and future plans. We will work on advertising and try and hold these at times when students will be available.
  - b) We plan to strengthen the program's Social Advocacy Club by inviting a student leader to take over as president.
  - c) We like the idea of creating a chapter of Triota (the national WS student honor society) at WSU, but we don't always have strong student leadership. We plan to talk about this with students at the once-a-semester open house.
  - d) We will talk with students about participation in a coalition of WGS undergraduate students at all Utah universities.
2. We will establish a protocol that clarifies the relationships between the WGS program and Vice Provost Kowalewski (curriculum), Dean Rich (budget), and Assistant Vice President for Diversity Andrews (support, activities). A more clearly defined sense of these relationships will be useful for alleviating some of the strain on the program's director.
3. We will hold an advisory board discussion and exploration of feminist pedagogies, including team teaching possibilities and community-based experiential learning opportunities.



2020 WGS Program Review Findings Actions Items								
		Dates		Responsible Person/Group				
		Target	Completed	Melina	Roe	Board	Other	Comments
<b>1</b>	<b>Mission Statement (Standard A)</b>							
<b>a</b>	The WGS advisory board will write a new mission statement.	12/2/20		X	X	X		
<b>2</b>	<b>Curriculum (Standard B)</b>							
<b>a</b>	The WGS program director will request an additional course reduction in the strategic report due at the end of May 2020.	6/1/20		X				
<b>b</b>	Do a website analysis of what is taught in load... and we will review information from Betty and talk about mechanisms in place for our core courses to be taught in load and how many we can do. A funding structure.	12/1/20		X	X			
<b>c</b>	The program director will work with the department chairs of core WGS affiliated faculty members to obtain Memos of Understanding	3/1/21		X				
<b>d</b>	Reach out to faculty who have taught in WGS previously to see if they would still be interested in teaching for the program. She will also reach out to department chairs to see who they have that would be qualified and able to teach for the program.	9/1/20		X				



e	With the support of the dean and associate dean of Social & Behavioral Sciences, the WGS program director will work with the department chairs in other departments to develop courses that could be cross-listed in a given department and in WGS. We will first reach out to department chairs to see if they have courses that can be cross listed, and, if needed, we will reenact our curriculum committee.	8/1/21		X				Deans Office
<b>3</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes and Assessment (Standard C)</b>							
a	Update Learning outcomes, making sure that we align learning outcomes to the mission statement and core courses.	10/1/20		X	X	X		
b	Identify which learning outcomes go with our elective courses.	11/1/20		X		X		
c	Implement an exit interview for our minors.	12/1/20		X	X	X		
d	Program outcomes are clearly measured and that those teaching our courses will identify one assignment that directly relates to one learning outcome, without dictating what the assignment is.	1/4/20		X	X	X		
e	Research national organizations (like the NWSA) to review their suggested learning outcomes and assessments.	9/15/20		X	X			
f	Post program learning outcomes online on the program's website.	1/4/21		X	X			



4 Academic Advising (Standard D)								
a	Update our website to include faculty profiles, a list of scheduled courses, and a brochure/flyer to help students understand all advising resources available to them and how to connect with them,	12/1/20			X	X		
b	The program’s administrative assistant will take the training tracker mentoring courses and prepare to perform specific low-level advisory assignments to help guide students through the completion of the minor.	9/1/20				X		
c	The program director will set up stronger connections with Stephanie Quinn or another liaison in the advisement center who can provide information about the minor, internships, preparing for graduate school, and job opportunities,	11/1/20			X	X		
d	Ask our board if there is anyone who would be willing to give information about grad school and career planning for students who have majors within their field.	9/20/20			X		X	
e	Institute short exit interviews for each graduating minor to indirectly measure program outcomes and offer advice about graduate school and career planning.	12/1/20			X	X		
f	The program director is working on strengthening connections with program alums. She will use those connections to support efforts to advise current students in the program.	4/30/20			X	X		



<b>5</b>	<b>Faculty (Standard E)</b>							
<b>a</b>	The WGS advisory board will implement regular faculty meetings for development.	9/1/20		X	X	X		
<b>b</b>	Secure funding to invite a regional or national WGS scholar (perhaps a current or past leader of the NWSA) to campus to meet with faculty to discuss current pedagogical practices in the field, as well as the state of the discipline.	Ongoing		X	X		<b>Development Office</b>	
<b>d</b>	We will look into creating a community of practice with the Teaching & Learning Forum (TLF).	9/1/20		X		X		
<b>6</b>	<b>Program Support (Standard F)</b>							
<b>a</b>	With the dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the WGS program director will reach out to the Director of Academic Finance and Administration (Betty Kusnierz) and the Controller and Director of Accounting Services (Ron Smith) to access more information about budget training and available instructional wage money, with the goal of being able to compensate adjunct faculty and part-time support staff who work within the WGS program, as well as support the program budget in other ways.	2/1/21		X	X		<b>Deans Office</b>	



<b>7</b>	<b>Program Summary (Standard H)</b>							
<b>a</b>	Carry out a time-to-degree study. (This should determine why higher numbers of minors are not graduating each year. The program director has recognized and is studying this issue. Her efforts to understand and solve this problem will be supported by the WGS advisory board.)	10/1/21		X	X	X		
<b>b</b>	Create a line in the budget that allows the program coordinator and faculty to attend national and regional WGSS meetings and conferences (such as SIROW and NWSA).	10/1/21		X	X			
<b>c</b>	Plan for a future major in WGS	on going		X	X			
<b>*</b>	<b>Additional Recommendations</b>							
<b>1</b>	Build a stronger network and connections between WGS students.	on going		X	X			
<b>a</b>	Hold a once-a-semester program open house or mixer for WGS faculty and students, at which we invite prospective students and current students could share what they know and future plans.	12/1/20		X	X			
<b>b</b>	Strengthen the program's Social Advocacy Club by inviting a student leader to take over as president.	10/1/20		X	X		X	
<b>c</b>	Create a chapter of Triota (the national WS student honor society) at WSU, but we don't always have strong student leadership. We plan to talk about this with	12/1//20		X	X			



	students at the once-a-semester open house.							
<b>d</b>	Talk with students about participation in a coalition of WGS undergraduate students at all Utah universities.	12/1/20		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>2</b>	Establish a protocol that clarifies the relationships between the WGS program and Vice Provost Kowalewski (curriculum), Dean Rich (budget), and Assistant Vice President for Diversity Andrews (support, activities). A more clearly defined sense of these relationships will be useful for alleviating some of the strain on the program's director.	4/30/21		<b>X</b>				
<b>3</b>	Hold an advisory board discussion and exploration of feminist pedagogies, including team teaching possibilities and community-based experiential learning opportunities.	10/30/20		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		