

University of Dayton Women's and Gender Studies Assessment Plan (August 2011)

Overview:

Women's and Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary program in the College of Arts and Sciences, offering both major and minor programs of study. The program typically has between 10 and 15 majors, and between 25 and 40 minors. WGS is staffed by a quarter-time director and a half-time administrative assistant. Planning and decision-making for the program is done by the program director with the aid and guidance of a 15-member advisory committee, made up of selected faculty members with research and teaching interests in women's and gender studies.

Among our program's primary goals are to raise the visibility of gender issues and concerns at UD, to improve UD students' ability and willingness to think critically and reflectively about gender and other social justice concerns, and to increase our impact on campus and in the wider community by increasing the number of majors that we graduate. We hope that all of these aims will be furthered by our finding one or more curricular footholds for WGS core courses in the emerging Common Academic Program, and positive assessment results may be used to help support arguments for our courses in CAP.

The assessment plan was developed by the program director, with input and advice from the Women's and Gender Studies advisory committee. Assessment materials are collected and evaluated annually during the spring term and early summer by the program director, who then shares the results with the advisory committee at the beginning of the fall term. The committee discusses the results, compares them to results from prior years, and makes recommendations for further revision of the plan, outcomes, and/or measures, as well as for improving our performance on particular outcomes and measures. Decisions about any alterations to our curriculum or other practices, in response to assessment results, are made by the program director in close consultation with the WGS committee.

Assessment results are turned in to Associate Dean Don Polzella. Dean Polzella then shares them with the University Assessment Committee, which also posts them on a website for any internal or external audiences who may be interested. Assessment results may also be shared, upon request, with current or prospective students and/or potential donors.

We plan to assess at least one outcome per year, more when possible, ensuring that each outcome is assessed at least every third year. Results are communicated in chart format, indicating whether the goal indicated by each measure has been met and adding any further comments as warranted. This year, we have revised the measures for Outcome 2—Feminist Scholarship Across the Disciplines—and assessed that outcome. (See below.) As the accompanying chart indicates, the goals of all measures associated with Outcome 2 were met. These results will be shared with the Women's and Gender Studies advisory committee at our first meeting this fall; given the satisfactory assessment results, I do not anticipate that changes will be recommended at this time.

During the coming year, we anticipate revising the measures for Outcome 3; this outcome will be assessed at the end of academic year 2012-13.

Learning Outcome 1: Understanding Diversity

[University Assessment Outcomes: Diversity, Practical Wisdom, Community]

WGS majors will develop and demonstrate intellectually informed, appreciative, and critical understanding of how the cultures, histories, and places of multiple others, as marked by class, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, and other manifestations of difference, intersect with and shape gender identities, roles, and status. Students' understanding will reflect scholarly inquiry, experiential immersion, and disciplined reflection.

Measures:

- a. portfolio review and exit interviews will show that 80% of graduating WGS majors have engaged in service for organizations that serve diverse women and/or conducted research and analysis that incorporates attention to women's issues across lines of diversity as part of their required Service Learning in Women's Studies (WGS 390) experience.
- b. portfolio review will show that 80% of graduating WGS majors have conducted research on women or gender that attends to other aspects of diversity—either in the project's focus or in a predicated reflection on the relevance of their own social locations for this scholarly work
- c. exit survey will show 80% of graduating majors either agreeing or strongly agreeing that "I am aware of both historical and contemporary examples of how the construction of gender affects the lives of women and men in several cultures"
- d. exit survey will show 80% of graduating majors either agreeing or strongly agreeing that "I am aware of how my own social position and socialization have conditioned the way I view issues related to difference (gender, race, sexuality, etc.)"
- e. exit survey will show 80% of graduating majors either agreeing or strongly agreeing that "I understand how the social construction of difference (gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.) contributes to forms of social inequality"

Learning Outcome 2: Feminist Scholarship Across the Disciplines

[University Assessment Outcomes: Scholarship, Critical Evaluation of Our Times]

WGS majors will develop a scholarly understanding of women's lives and gender issues that integrates insights from multiple disciplines. WGS majors will demonstrate the ability to respond thoughtfully and critically to feminist research and theory from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Informed by such research and theory, they will produce academically rigorous scholarship of their own that illuminates women's lives and/or gender issues.

Measures:

- a. portfolio review will show that 80% of graduating majors have included at least one writing sample demonstrating interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary research or analysis relevant to gender, race, and/or class.
- b. exit interviews will demonstrate that 80% of graduating majors regard their WGS courses as having drawn together more than one discipline to make sense of gender issues and/or women's lives
- c. exit survey will show 80% of graduating majors either agreeing or strongly agreeing that "My major courses have shown me how issues related to gender, race, and class are better understood by crossing disciplinary boundaries."
- d. WGS 490 instructor will report—by answering 4 or 5 on the relevant rubric items—that 80% of graduating majors, in their major paper(s) for the seminar, skillfully integrated information/insights from more than one academic discipline to defend a coherent and plausible thesis

Learning Outcome 3: WGS Skills in Community and Vocation

[University Assessment Outcomes: Community, Vocation, Practical Wisdom]

WGS majors will demonstrate mastery of the interpersonal skills appropriate to communities of support and challenge, and an awareness of how these skills—particularly those learned within WGS—will aid them in their chosen vocations.

Measures: [TO BE REVISED]

- a. consultation with WGS 310, 350, and 490 instructors will show that 80% of graduating majors were responsible, respectful, active contributors to the WGS learning community
- b. WGS 390 evaluations by site supervisors will show that 80% of graduating majors demonstrated maturity, responsibility, and respect for others during their service placements
- c. exit interviews will show that 80% of graduating majors are able to articulate how they will bring the values, knowledge, and interpersonal skills they developed as WGS majors to their future vocation
- d. exit survey will show 80% of graduating majors either agreeing or strongly agreeing that “the WGS program has given me direction, skills, and/or encouragement to work for social justice in my own life”