

**College:** Fairmount College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

**Department/Program (s):** Women's Studies

**Degree (s) Offered:** B.A. in Women's Studies

**Triggers:** Low majors and degrees

**Brief Description of degree programs:** B.A. in Women's Studies – The critical examination of the intersection of gender with race, class, sexuality, nationality and global region, and religion is central to the program. Students gain critical understanding of women's lives through three core areas of internationalism, representation and social issues. Graduates of the program are prepared to work in areas such as social work, education, international relations, media, politics, law, psychology, criminal justice and others that concentrate on media literacy, diplomatic or foreign service, international trade, visual design or social services. Recently the department has created two new courses of interest to students throughout the University: Women and Sports; LGBT studies.

**Assessment of Learning Outcomes:** Appendix C includes an assessment plan in which two goals are related to learning. The first of these goals includes six program objectives and two objectives are associated with the second goal. The plan also includes assessment tools to be used to measure the level of achievement for each program objective. It is not possible to determine if the individual program objectives are met because the data from the two assessment tools used, Exit Survey and Writing Sample, is presented by goal not by program objective.

The statement on page 6, "Data indicate that the department objectives to teach women and gender in interdisciplinary contexts as well as analytical and critical thinking on gender and its intersection with race, class, religion, sexuality, culture and globalization are met," demonstrates an emphasis in the teaching process instead of student learning.

**Placement of Graduates:** The information on placement of graduates comes from two sources: Career Services and an Alumni Survey conducted in the spring of 2011. The average graduation year for the Alumni Survey respondents was 1994 with a sample size of 25. Graduates from the WS program are employed in a variety of fields with the majority of these working in the non-profit sector. The average salary reported in the survey was \$69,583 for respondents with 17 years of experience on average.

**Sources of External Support/Faculty Comments:** The sources of external support include the WSU Plaza of Heroines and YWCA of Wichita which provides on average a total of \$5,500 per year for scholarships. The faculty are productive in terms of their teaching and research and have national and international reputations.

## Conclusions:

### Statements/Commendations:

- The curriculum emphasizes topics that are relevant in today's world.
- An assessment plan is in place and efforts have been made to gather feedback from program graduates through an Alumni Survey.

### By April 1, 2012 (send to the Office of the Provost):

- Efforts should be made to document that the program review process is a part of a continuous improvement approach involving all departmental faculty.
- The learning outcomes for the program, which could be based on the current program objectives, should be developed and a revised assessment process needs to be implemented to include the following:
  - Learning Outcomes: Statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. These relate to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students acquire through their program (e.g., graduates will demonstrate advanced writing ability).
  - Assessment Methods: Direct measures used to identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes (e.g., writing project evaluated by a rubric). Consideration should be given at requiring the CLA, for example, as a requirement for all seniors.
  - Targets: Expectations of students to achieve the desired outcome to demonstrate program effectiveness (e.g., 90% of students will demonstrate at least the benchmark performance on a writing project).
  - Results: Actual achievement on each measurement (e.g., 94% of the students achieved at least the benchmark performance on the writing project).
  - Analysis: An evaluation that determines the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved and leads to decisions and actions to improve the program. The analysis and evaluation should align with specific learning outcomes and consider whether the measurement and target remain valid indicators of the learner.
- General education expectations should be further developed (and assessed) for both program majors and non-majors.
  - To measure student learning, assess a representative sample of student assignments (e.g., for writing or critical thinking abilities) using a rubric from selected courses (pre, at the beginning of semester and post, at the end).
  - Utilize processes listed above to evaluate the outcomes.

Prior to the next review in 2014:

- A specific timeline should be established for increasing the number of students in the program as well as the number of degrees awarded.
- Discussions should occur with College/University administrators on how the Women's Studies major can be sustained at WSU in the current environment. Reaching out to other colleges is one suggestion (see bullet below).
- Additional multidisciplinary collaborations outside of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences should be explored. For example, course work offered in the Department is very relevant to the colleges of Business, Engineering, and Health Professions. Dual degrees may be possible in Women's Studies and Public Health, for example. Developing an undergraduate liberal studies degree with concentrations in women's studies, ethnic studies, religion, and LGBT issues may be another option to increase the profile of the discipline.
- Data should be collected and evaluated in terms of student perceptions about the program. The University implemented an electronic undergraduate student exit survey in 2011 (by program) for this purpose.
- Data should be collected and evaluated from all program graduates to include salary, employment location, and employment in the field. The University is implementing an alumni survey (by program) for this purpose in 2012.