

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY
Women's and Gender Studies Program
Strategic Plan 2016-2020

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Introduction

The Women's and Gender Studies program is an essential part of the university's on-going mission to provide a quality education to the citizens of Illinois. As such, Women's and Gender Studies is dedicated to providing an educational experience of the highest quality, combined with a commitment to innovative interdisciplinary scholarship, quality programming, and extra-curricular opportunities for civic engagement. Relatively speaking we are a small program with a very large footprint in the College of Arts and Sciences: We continue to be the model for interdisciplinary scholarship, curriculum and programming on campus. Our curriculum has historically been very diverse and continues to make substantial contributions to the University's diversity mission.

This is the third strategic plan our faculty has drafted since I became the director of the program over ten years ago. Our hard work over the past decade is paying off and we are indeed poised for another period of growth. The *Women's and Gender Studies Strategic Plan 2016-2020* aligns its mission, vision, and values with those articulated in *Educating Illinois 2013-2018* and the College of Arts and Sciences own strategic planning documents. It is my greatest hope that with continued careful fiscal planning, community building, curriculum updates, and strategic priority initiatives that we will collectively, joyfully, and expeditiously reach the goals outlined in this plan.

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement: A strong and viable Women's and Gender Studies program is essential to the university's on-going mission of providing a quality undergraduate and graduate education. The Women's and Gender Studies minor and graduate certificate programs prepare students to think, act, and write critically about contemporary issues from a variety of interdisciplinary and multicultural lenses. WGS students are encouraged to take leadership roles in their communities using these new insights and skills.

Vision Statement: The Women's and Gender Studies Program is an interdisciplinary community of scholars committed to a transformative analysis of gender as it intersects with class/caste, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, age, coloniality, and transnationality. We are engaged in innovative and collaborative scholarship, teaching, and service that promote alternative expressions of knowledge and socially responsible activism.

Core Values: The WGS Program shares the core values outlined in the university strategic plan with a unique interdisciplinary emphasis on diversity and civic engagement.

**The Women's and Gender Studies
Strategic Planning Process**

Review of the WGS Strategic Plan for 2010-2015: The WGS Program faculty and staff have successfully achieved almost all of the goals outlined in the *Women's and Gender Studies 2010-2015 Strategic Plan*. We completed more than 90% of the action items. For the purposes of this document, we will highlight the major accomplishments that now position us for the next phase of growth:

- I.2 (a): Created and grew the enrollment in the WGS-Social Work Certificate. [7 students (2016)]
- I.2 (a) Increased enrollment in the minor from 39 students (2012) to 59 students (2016).
- 1.2. (a) Increased enrollment in the graduate certificate from 10 students (2012) to 30 students (2016).
- I.3 (a): Staff Hires: Dr. Stacia Kock was hired as our new assistant director, advisor, and core faculty member. Mandy Dartt was hired as our new Administrative Clerk, and she has successfully taken on additional programming and development responsibilities with other units across the university.
- I.3 (c): Faculty Hire: Successfully partnered with SOA to jointly hire Dr. Erin Durban-Albrecht who began her position in 2015. This is our first tenure-line hire.
- I.4 (a): Distance Learning: Established regular online delivery of WGS 120: Women, Gender and Society for summer sessions. We will be offering two online sections this summer.
- II.1 (a-d) Promotion: Regularly promoted the WGS Program at registration, advising events, open houses, and via social media.
- II.2 (a-c): Advising: Revised all advising materials, forms, plans of study, advising Wiki, stepped up our outreach activities at advising and tabling events. Added career-related and internship outreach events. Produced a more professional looking brochure as part of our advising outreach.
- III.1 (a): Symposium and Programming: Maintained high-visibility WGS student research symposium and expanded student presentation opportunities. Regularly partnered with The School of Social Work, Visual Culture, Student Affairs, and other CAS departments on lectures and campus programming.
- III.3 (a-c): Maintained connections with local community groups and increased internship site possibilities.
- III.4 (a-e): Continued our support for and partnerships with the LALS Program, Visual Culture Program [new], the School of Social Work, University Galleries, and Milner Library.

- IV.1 (a-b) Continue to support all WGS core and affiliated faculty through their department tenure and review processes.
- V.1 (a) Alumni Outreach: Increased mailings of our *WGS Alumni Matter* publication. Invited alumni to attend or Skype into WGS career and internship workshops.
- V.2 (a-c) The Anne Semlak Memorial Scholarship, Luellen Laurenti Scholarship, and Dorothy E. Lee Scholarship and Grant Fund are now all fully endowed. Dr. Laurenti has made further provisions for the WGS Program in his will.
- VI.1-2: Continue to enhance WGS staff development through regular trainings and monthly staff meetings.

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We are well positioned to articulate our vision for the next five years. At the beginning of the semester we sent out a survey to core and affiliated faculty and stakeholders asking them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our program. On 28 August, 2015 we held a general WGS Strategic Planning Session. We reviewed and discussed the results of our survey, re-examined our current practices, identified potential new planning directions, and considered ways to spend our resources judiciously on well-defined strategic priorities.

On 30 September Mandy Dartt and I met with Dr. Tammy Birk (WGSS Director at Otterbein University) as part of her campus visit (for another event). She informally reviewed our program curriculum and shared how she was able to grow her program at Otterbein. She offered strategies for internships and public leadership, campus recruitment, and program review. This fall we formed three committees: (1) The WGS Curriculum Revision Committee (to review the Minor and to identify a curriculum for the Queer Studies Concentration); (2) WGS Graduate Certificate Review (to review both the general certificate and the Social Work Certificate in WGS); and, (3) A WGS Strategic Planning Committee (to identify long-term goals). Committee suggestions are currently being implemented and reviewed as part of our strategic planning process.

With the aim of strengthening the interdisciplinary nature of our program, we've spent this year meeting with most of our affiliated departments. We've met with each unit in order to: (1) communicate new initiatives and changes to the WGS Program; (2) update them on how many WGS students were in their departments and discuss outreach opportunities; (3) remind them of WGS faculty members' contributions to their units; and (4) strategized ways of both increasing the WGS Program footprint in their departments and identifying future common goals in our respective strategic plans.

WGS Strategic Plan for 2016-2020

Strategic Goals and Actions

Strategic Focus One: Facilitate Academic Excellence by Expanding a Strong WGS Curriculum. Continue to review, reform, and grow our existing

curriculum in ways that are consistent with the WGS Program's mission and vision and that reflect current trends in the discipline.

Goal One: Grow the Women's and Gender Studies Program from a minor to a major.

- Perform an external review of the Program in fall 2016 in order to identify directions for growth.
- Explore the feasibility of offering a 27 credit-hour WGS major (9 classes).
- Identify additional electives for the WGS major and continue to develop a more flexible plan of study.
- Explore and promote a "friendly double-major/minor programs" to encourage undergraduate students in departments with a heavy WGS faculty presence to pick up the WGS minor/major along with their home major.
- Promote the minor/major through university advising networks, brochures, social media, and partnerships with other departments.
- Continue to identify, request, and develop electives that count for the WGS minor/major.
- Design and implement a one-credit Collective Community Action Project capstone experience for our majors.
- Secure funding for an additional section of WGS 391 to be offered as a Black or Latina Feminist Thought course.
- Increase the number of WGS 120 courses offered as general education electives.
- Maintain and grow the online internship catalog on our website.
- Explore the possibility of a Triota Honor Society for our potential majors.

Goal Two: Launch and grow the new Queer Studies Concentration.

- Hard launch the Queer Studies concentration in fall 2016 and promote it through campus advising networks, social media, and partnerships with other departments, student organizations (e.g. PRIDE and FLAME), and the LGBTQ Studies and Services Institute. (Note: We soft launched the program this spring and have identified at 11 potential students who can easily complete the concentration).
- Identify additional electives for the four-course Queer Studies concentration.
- Work with Philosophy to develop a queer philosophy course and ask them to offer it as a regular departmental elective.
- Secure funding for the popular and edgy QueerTalks lecture series to promote queer scholarship on campus and to generate continued interest in the concentration.
- Continue to support and grow the Lavender Graduation event.
- Secure funding for a part-time undergraduate assistant for queer studies courses. This may be a run as supervised college teaching opportunity.

Goal Three: Manage the growth and direction of our increasingly popular WGS graduate certificate.

- Revise and reframe WGS 490 theories and methodologies class to better engage both growing interdisciplinary student audience in the seminar and the wide range of WGS literacy among students in the class.
- Continue to identify and cultivate new electives and opportunities for the graduate certificate.
- Explore promoting “WGS-certificate-friendly graduate programs” to encourage more graduate students to pick up the certificate.
- Continue to grow the new WGS-SWK certificate.
- Investigate the possibility of offering a WGS graduate concentration in education.
- Create opportunities for networking and collaboration among WGS Graduate students such as monthly research brownbag talks.
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Goal Four: Coordinate WGS 120 syllabi across all sections to better prepare students for upper-level course offerings.

- Work with all WGS 120 instructors to develop a 3-4 week common curriculum that emphasizes core concepts, vocabularies, and issues.
- Work with Milner Library to devise a common weblink resource page for all WGS 120 classes.

Goal Five : Maintain strong student advising activities and practices for our minor and graduate certificate student.

- Institute an annual WGS advisor outreaches to department advisors for the purposes of identifying and coordinating our interdisciplinary curriculum between the Program and departments for the academic year.
- Draft and maintain WGS sample plans of study for each academic department or program.
- Continue to explore additional advising and development opportunities (e.g. attending higher education advising events in the state and NWSA advisors and directors conferences).
- Strengthen our relationships with local organizations (e.g. YWCA, Neville House, Labyrinth etc.) in order to both provide a broader and more rich co-curricular and service learning opportunity for our students and to give something back to our community.
- Formalize relationships with internship programs in the Chicago area.

Strategic Focus Two: Maintain high-quality, diverse interdisciplinary extracurricular programing and opportunities. Continue to seek out exciting and innovative ways to diversify and grow our existing programing in ways that draw on interdisciplinary campus collaborations.

Goal One: Maintain support for campus programs offering diversity initiatives

- Maintain our support of the Latin American and Latin@ Studies Program by offering sections of WGS 391 with Latina feminist content, co-sponsoring of speakers, and co-hosting events.
- Nurture our relationships with the Umoja Black Graduation and Latin@ graduation ceremonies.

Goal Two: Grow the audience for our annual interdisciplinary WGS Student Research Symposium.

- Expand the symposium call for papers and make additional efforts to recruit students from area universities and colleges.
- Work toward increasing the attendance and the WGS symposium event by incorporating a social media dimension to the event (e.g. simulcast, live tweets, email questions for panelists) and doing stronger outreach to students at area colleges and universities.
- Integrate the WGS graduating seniors pinning ceremony into the awards announcements.

Goal Three: Explore new partnerships among existing departments and programs.

- Strengthen our relationship with the School of Art in order to:
 - Grow ties between the Visual Culture certificate and WGS Graduate Certificate.
 - Develop and formalized student curatorial program for WGS's Rachel Cooper Gallery student art space.
 - Explore ways of getting WGS student involved in the arts and vice versa. (e.g. offer a multi-media class around WGS issues and topics).
- Explore study abroad opportunities related to WGS courses with LAN.
- Solidify our programming and curricular ties with CJS especially around programing related to sexual assault on campus.

Strategic Focus Three: Maintain support for our faculty and staff. Our program has historically supported and mentored WGS affiliated faculty. We will continue our efforts and explore additional measures in response to faculty needs and requests.

Goal One: Foster growth, support and communication among WGS faculty, students, and community stakeholders.

- Continue to mentor, support and write external letters for WGS core and affiliated faculty during the tenure and promotion processes.

- Revisit the distinction between core and affiliated faculty in order to condense our list of faculty and bring in more in line with the goals of our new strategic plan.
- Reconstitute an annual WGS update and strategic planning feedback meeting.
- Form a WGS Advisory Committee to solicit informal feedback on Program.
- Reconsider faculty rotation model for curriculum work.
- Offer more informal meet and greet opportunities during the year.

Strategic Focus Four: Grow alumni and donor development. Identify and cultivate new stakeholders and potential donors.

Goal One: Forge stronger connections with our alumni and donor bases.

- Maintain and strengthen ties between WGS faculty and WGS alums through alumni programming, communication, and events.
- Work with alumni to increase professional and networking opportunities for students.
- Update and expand our “What are they doing now?” page for WGS graduates.

Goal Two: Investigate and pursue potential fundraising events and opportunities.

- Research strategies for a capital campaign.
- Identify and develop additional fundraising opportunities.

Appendices: Available upon Request

- **Appendix One:** WGS Strategic Planning Retreat Online Survey and Survey Results.
- **Appendix Two:** PowerPoint presentation from 28 August, 2015 faculty planning retreat.
- **Appendix Three:** Queer Studies brochures and supporting curriculum committee documents.
- **Appendix Four:** Strategic planning checklist for 2015-16.
- **Appendix Five:** WGS checkpoint chart. These charts are used for majors. In preparation for our move to a major, Dr. Stacia Kock drafted a WGS checkpoint chart to help with our vision for the major.