Introduction:

Illinois State University, the first public university in Illinois, has built on its historical legacy as one of the leading teacher’s colleges to establish a strong reputation for academic excellence across each of the academic disciplines. A strong and viable Women’s and Gender Studies program is essential to the university’s mission of providing a quality undergraduate and graduate 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 cutting-edge scholarship, top-notch programming, and thought-provoking extramural opportunities for our students. The knowledge base offered by our program actively prepares our graduates to make lasting contributions to an increasingly diverse society and globalized workforce.

The University has had a remarkable period of growth since the release of Education Illinois 2000-2007 and the College’s 2005-2010 Strategic Plan. The Women’s and Gender Studies Strategic Plan 2005-2010 aligned its new mission, vision, and values with those articulated in these documents. With careful fiscal planning, community building, curriculum reform, and strategic priority initiatives our faculty worked diligently moved forward to realize our new vision as responsibly, joyfully, and expeditiously as possible.

Mission, Vision and Values

**Mission:** A strong and viable Women’s and Gender Studies Program is essential to the University’s mission to provide a high-quality liberal arts education. Our undergraduate minor and graduate certificate programs enhance any major and prepare students to think critically about gender, as they become global citizens who value life-long learning and social justice.

**Vision:** The Women’s and Gender Studies Program is a multidisciplinary community of scholars committed to a transformative analysis of gender as it intersects with class, sexuality, race, ethnicity, ability, age, nationality, and transnationality. We are engaged in innovative and collaborative scholarship, teaching, and service that promote new knowledge and socially responsible activism.
**Values:** Consistent with the Educating Illinois and the CAS Strategic Plan, the WGS Program values the active pursuit of learning and scholarship, individualized attention, diversity, and civic engagement and service learning.

**The pursuit of learning and scholarship** includes:

- **A strong liberal arts and social sciences tradition** that encourages students to be life-long active learners;
- **innovative approaches to knowledge-making,** and the development and maintenance of curricular programming in line with disciplinary standards;
- **a commitment to on-campus partnerships** that enrich interdisciplinary learning opportunities;
- **creative integration of theory and social practices;** and
- **academic freedom and responsibility** in creative expression and the freedom to pursue diverse expressions of truth and knowledge.

**Individualized attention** fosters student’s intellectual and social development as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and engaged global citizens who are knowledgeable in their field. This includes:

- **Faculty-student collaboration** in teaching, learning, research and service;
- **Proactive and responsive student advisement;**
- **co-curricular programs** that enhance classroom learning and intellectual engagement.

**Diversity** of ideas, backgrounds, and approaches to the pursuit of knowledge enriches and promotes student growth. This includes:

- **A commitment to diversity in programming, curriculum, and civic engagement;**
- **embracing the strengths and challenges of diversity** in gender, race, ethnicity, class/caste, age, religious traditions, sexual orientation, and nation;
- **global and international dimensions** of learning, scholarship, and creative activity;
- **openness to and civil discussion of diverse viewpoints.**

**Civic Engagement and Service Learning:** This includes:

- **providing service learning opportunities for students** with local and state organizations; and,
- **maintaining partnerships with local community organizations serving women.**
The Women’s and Gender Studies Strategic Planning Process: Strategic Planning for the WGS Program has historically been done through a series of informal faculty retreats and discussion groups.

Review of WGS Strategic Plan for 2006-2010: The faculty and staff of the Women’s and Gender Studies Program have collectively spent the past five years reinventing the Program. During a series of four retreats we examined questions such as: Who are our stakeholders? What do we want the program to look like in five years? What are the strengths of the Program? What are the obstacles to our success? How would we use additional funds? How can the program feed, support and energize faculty and students? Answering these questions helped us to craft a new mission and vision, and with it, a plan to reform and update curriculum; to maintain diverse extracurricular programming; to cultivate alumni and donors; to broaden campus and community visibility; to recruit and retain core and affiliated faculty; and to facilitate program staff development and support.

As a result, the WGS Program has become the model for interdisciplinary minors on campus. We’ve exceeded the goals we’ve set for ourselves in the 2006-2010 strategic plan: We have a stronger and more dedicated faculty, greater campus visibility, an updated curriculum, and steady enrollments in the minor and certificate program. These were low-cost and time-intensive builds. We accomplished a great deal on a very limited budget. We had hoped to get additional tenure-track lines as a result of our efforts; however, an uncertain state budget climate means that the funds needed for additional lines are unlikely to materialize. As a result the WGS Program faculty must turn our attentions toward reinforcing our successes, supporting our faculty, and continuing to grow the minor and graduate certificate.

Goals and Strategic Directions for 2010-2015: Women’s and Gender Studies Program’s Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 is consistent with and supports the internal goals set by our core and affiliated faculty during the first strategic plan, the University’s goals outlined in Educating Illinois 2008-2014: Priorities for Illinois’ First Public University, and the College of Arts and Science’s Strategic Plan 2010-2015. Our second strategic plan was shaped by faculty discussion during the Spring 2010 WGS faculty retreat. Over the summer the director drafted the second plan. The draft was circulated and discussed at the fall faculty meeting. The director revised the draft in response to faculty input, and the draft was circulated for a second round of comments.

In spring 2010 the WGS Program sent out a survey to fifty-five core and affiliated faculty. We received twenty-two replies [See Appendix One: Survey Results]. On April 9, 2010 twenty-five of the core and affiliated faculty met to discuss the survey results and to chart future goals for the program [See Appendix Two: PowerPoint, and Appendix Three: Minutes]. During the fall 2010 semester the WGS Program hosted two opportunities for faculty input on the strategic plan drafted by the Director over the summer. Our discussions focused on answering the following questions and concerns:
Questions:

- What are the strengths of the WGS Program as of 2010? Are there any new obstacles that have emerged of which we need to be aware?
- How can we increase faculty participation in promoting the program and growing the minor and graduate certificate program?
- How can we better support and maintain a cohesive WGS faculty community?
- Are there any new initiatives we need to embrace over the next five years

Faculty Raised the Following Concerns:

- We need to further define the roles, duties and expectations of core and affiliated faculty.
- We need to continue updating curriculum and to identify new people to teach WGS 120.
- WGS faculty needs to construct a means supporting one another.

WGS will continue to focus our resources and attention on strategic goals that address the pressing challenges that Illinois State University and the discipline will face over the next five years. These challenges relate to changing student demographics in the state (and nation), resource availability, advances in technology, and new trends in Women’s and Gender Studies. As a faculty we need to work smarter not harder. We need to be smarter about growing student enrollment in the minor, certificate, and the new WGS emphasis in Social Work. We need more voices to weigh in on the problem of faculty responsibility and accountability. We need to reconsider ways of motivating WGS faculty to regularly make time to promote the program in their home departments, classes, and communities. We need more faculty to “do one thing” for Women’s and Gender Studies. The goals and strategies below are designed to specifically address these challenges.

Strategic Focus One: Facilitate Academic Excellence by Maintaining a Strong WGS Curriculum.

Continue to review and reform our existing curriculum in ways that are consistent with the WGS mission and vision, and that reflect current trends in the discipline.

Goal One: Develop and Maintain Rigorous Academic Curriculum

- Revise curriculum outcome forms to reflect University Curriculum Committee’s suggestions while maintaining our status as the model interdisciplinary program on campus.
- Conduct a Curriculum/Program Review that compares our program with WGS programs of similar size and rank.
- Rotate core faculty service on WGS curriculum committee.
• Maintain our support of the Latin American and Latina/o Studies Program by offering sections of WGS 391 on Latina feminist topics, co-sponsorship of speakers, and co-hosting events.

Goal Two: Enhance Partnerships with Academic Departments

• Grow the new WGS-Social Work Concentration.
• Investigate and pursue the possibility of a WGS Concentration in Education.

Goal Three: Faculty Curricular Development

• Continue to recruit new core and affiliated faculty.
• Continue to identify new electives and expand WGS course offerings. We are particularly short on courses with transnational, postcolonial, and trans/queer content.
• Continue to request at least one tenure line in WGS.
• Find new faculty and/or NTTs to teach WGS 120.

Goal Four: Investigate Distance Learning Possibilities

• Experiment with offering on-line sections of WGS 120 during the summer and perhaps during the academic year.

Strategic Focus Two: Continue to Grow the WGS Minor and Certificate

Goal One: Increase Faculty Involvement in Promoting WGS Program, Minor and Certificate:

• Aggressively encourage faculty to promote WGS in their courses and in their departments. Explore simple non-time consuming ways to have WGS faculty promote the minor in their classrooms. [E.g. “canned” PowerPoint and materials]
• Encourage WGS faculty to serve on university committees (e.g. DFSCs, Senate, etc.)
• Define more clearly the role of core and affiliated faculty in WGS and draft a statement of responsibilities to reflect faculty discussion on this topic.
• Devise a plan of classroom visits before registration.
• Develop WGS Program PowerPoint for classroom promotions.
• Promote the minor through dorm programming, videos, and lectures.
• Promote the minor through campus student groups such as FLAME, Habitat for Humanity, PRIDE, etc.
• Encourage faculty to table at events. Establish a rotation for this.

Goal Two: Academic Advising
• Develop an advising Wiki for the minor and certificate.
• Make WGS more visible at academic advising events.
• Work with Sally Parry to establish a network for disseminating WGS course offerings and information on the WGS minor and certificate to advisors.

**Strategic Focus Three: Maintain High-Quality Diverse Extracurricular Programming.**

**Goal One: Maintain Support for Student Research:**

• Maintain a high quality WGS Student Research Symposium by inviting internationally and nationally recognized keynote speakers, recruiting high quality student research projects, and mentoring student projects.
• Maintain WGS resource center and library for WGS, WMN and students in WGS classes.

**Goal Two: Foster and Continue WGS Partnership with Student RSOs**

• Continue WGS programming partnerships with FLAME to educate our campus and community on issues of gender, race, class, ability, sexuality, coloniality, etc.
• Develop a stronger partnership with PRIDE.

**Goal Three: Maintain Partnerships with Community Groups:**

• Maintain partnership with YWCA on community events such as It’s Time to Talk, Take Back the Night, Women’s Self Defense Workshops, and Stepping Stones.
• Foster partnerships with Neville House, Planned Parenthood, McLean County Historical Society, and Safe Schools Project.
• Investigate new partnership opportunities for programming and internships.

**Goal Four: Continue to Foster Partnerships with Campus Programs:**

• Continue WGS-International Studies Seminar Series partnership [4 speakers per year].
• Maintain our support of the Visual Cultures M.A. through collaboration on campus symposia, student art shows, and speakers’ series.
• Continue support for the Women’s Mentoring Network (WMN) by hosting regular programming and social functions.
• Maintain support for Latin American and Latino Studies Program by co-sponsoring programming.
• Maintain excellence in campus programming co-sponsorships with Milner Library, University Galleries, and other academic departments.
**Strategic Focus Four: Enhance Support for WGS Faculty:** Ensure the professional development, growth, and retention of WGS faculty through effective mentoring, networking, research, and teaching opportunities.

**Goal One: Continue Formal Support for WGS Faculty during DFSC Process**

- Continue writing letters of support for all WGS faculty requesting annual letters for their DFSC portfolios or for tenure and promotion.
- Encourage academic departments to count WGS service toward their service quota in home departments.

**Goal Two: Establish Informal Faculty Support Measures:**

- Support core and affiliated faculty wishing to host conferences on WGS themes on the ISU campus.
- Create additional networking and informal mentoring opportunities [coffees, potlucks, social gatherings, etc.]
- Establish an orientation for new WGS faculty.
- Explore ways of supporting WGS faculty in teaching and research. Investigate reviving the WGS Research Consortium, and WGS Teaching Roundtable.

**Strategic Focus Five: Alumni and Donor Development:** Ensure the growth of the WGS Program through statewide friend and fund-raising, and alumni development.

**Goal One: Maintain and Grow Alumni Contacts**

- Continue to cultivate alumni contacts through annual *Alumni Matter* newsletter and quarterly emails with *Gender Matters* attached.
- Establish ISU-WGS Alumni Facebook Group.
- Print extra copies of *Alumni Matter* for the Alumni Center.
- Discuss having a regular alumni event during homecoming.

**Goal Two: Maintain Strong Relationships with Donors:**

- Maintain stewardship of Luellen Laurenti, Anne M. Semlak, Dorothy E. Lee Scholarship and Grant accounts and their donors.
- Regularly promote the WGS program at the annual CAS Telefund.
- Continue to work University to cultivate donors.

**Strategic Goal Five: WGS Staff Development:** Continue to enhance the efficiency of WGS Staff through regular meetings and supplementary training.

**Goal One: Keep Staff Training Current**
• Provide annual web and software training to WGS staff.
• Continue annual updates to staff internal calendars and handbooks.

Goal Two: Increase Regular Communication among WGS Staff:

• Director will meet regularly with Assistant Director.
• Regular meetings for Gender Matters newsletter production.
• Holds meetings with UGA and GA at the start of every semester, and as needed.

III. Appendices

Appendix One: In April 2010 a survey was sent to our fifty-five core and affiliated faculty asking them to comment on the changes we’ve made to the Program during our first strategic plan. Twenty-two faculty members completed the survey. The results are attached as Appendix One.

Appendix Two: The WGS Program held a five-year planning retreat on April 9, 2010 to discuss the results and to think about future directions for the program. The PowerPoint presentation is attached as Appendix Two.

Appendix Three: Minutes from the April 9, 2010 retreat.