

WOMEN'S STUDIES
ACADEMIC PLAN (2004-2009)
September 15, 2003

Executive Summary

Women's Studies at UW is a dynamic field of inquiry that constantly challenges its participants, both students and faculty. Though our official program is small with only three FTE faculty lines and a curriculum comprised almost exclusively of cross-listed classes, our reach into the University at large is much more significant than these numbers indicate.

In line with the University's commitment to high quality teaching, Women's Studies classes promote critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills. In the spirit of feminism, the UW Women's Studies Program is notable for its leadership in social/activist endeavors. While Women's Studies is first and foremost an academic unit, we celebrate that activist outreach forms a large part of our identity and that our academic pursuits and activism go hand in hand.

At all levels of activity, the Women's Studies Program insists on social engagement among its participants. Women's Studies faculty conduct research with both wide ranging and clear social implications. In addition, the Women's Studies curriculum strongly emphasizes social awareness. Our courses tie academic study to the challenges and issues of women (and men) in contemporary societies both here and abroad. Women's Studies undergraduate and undergraduate students develop strong leadership skills as they pursue both their academic and social interests through their courses of study.

Throughout the 2004-09 Academic Plan, the Women's Studies Program seeks to retain and cultivate our activist identity while also pursuing the academic diversity and excellence for which we are known. To that end, we seek to expand and enhance our curriculum for our majors and minors as well as the general UW student body. We will focus on classes related to gender and culture, globalization, and diversity. We will actively participate in the USP program for lower level undergraduate students. We will explore formalizing our graduate program through the graduate school. We will strengthen our ties across all units of the University with an eye towards interdisciplinary hires and joint scholarship. As it is very likely that at least one line faculty member in Women's Studies will retire within this planning period, and because of the recent reassignment of our APL instructor, we will need to pay particular attention to our ability to offer our curriculum. Finally, we will look to highlight and coordinate the research of our faculty and students at UW who are exploring issues related to women and gender.

1. Progress on 1999 Action Items

Due to the commitment of the Women's Studies advisory committee and adjunct faculty as well as the support of other departments across campus, we teach over 800 students per year usually in small, seminar type classes. We are rewarded with some of the best and brightest students who regularly win academic awards related to their Women's Studies scholarship (e.g. A&S Top 20 (Evelyn Haskell, 2002) and Outstanding Master's Thesis Award (Janel Kasper, 2003)). Similarly, our faculty are regularly recognized for their teaching, research, and service

with awards such as the Ellbogen Teaching Award, A&S Extraordinary Merit for Teaching, Research and Advising, and grants such as Fulbrights.

Though the Women's Studies Program was not specifically targeted in the 1999 Academic Plan for Action Items, we have supported numerous University commitments articulated in that Plan as well as Moving Forward III (MFIII). Women's Studies has been at the center of university initiatives such as:

- *The recognition of stronger interdisciplinary education and research as the wave of the future.* To this end, WMST has an established interdisciplinary advisory committee of 18 members and numerous cross-listed classes. We actively support other existing interdisciplinary initiatives such as ENR and International Studies, and are currently participating in discussions regarding new interdisciplinary initiatives such as Victorian Studies
- *The need to bolster graduate education.* We have begun to emphasize graduate education through offering a summer class for graduate students interested in feminist theory and methods, and through the mentorship of graduate students in established degree programs.
- *Internationalization of the curriculum and faculty.* We have participated in the internationalization of the curriculum and faculty through hosting three scholars from Russia over the past academic plan, and we have developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Gender Studies Program at Ivanova State University, Russia. Our curriculum includes several classes that meet the G and NW USP/A&S designations, and many of our faculty are engaged in international research and the International Studies Program.
- *A commitment to outreach.* We are strongly committed to increasing our involvement in statewide Outreach. We will begin having articulation conferences with community college instructors, and we will increase our class offerings through the Outreach school to meet the needs of home-bound students throughout the state.
- *The significance of diversity in the curriculum and in the recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff.* Our commitment to diversity is core to our program. To that end, we have hired Dr. Peaches Henry and have helped with the recruitment of female faculty in several A&S departments (Zamudio, Wells, Patton) and cross-college (Castaneda and Leedy). Our curriculum includes classes cross-listed with American Indian Studies, Chicano/a Studies, and African-American Studies. WMST and our faculty regularly participate in diversity related issues on campus including the Shepard Symposium for Social Justice, SAFE Zone trainings, and UW Days of Dialogue. We co-sponsor speakers such as Bertice Berry and Matt Kailey. In addition, we have begun discussions with the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities to establish a class on women with disabilities.

2. Curriculum

The Women's Studies degree does not require more than 128 hours of course work for completion.

In 2003, Women's Studies closely scrutinized our curriculum to plan for the future and to reconfigure the program in accordance with the new USP curriculum. Naturally, we want our curriculum to accomplish many goals simultaneously. Perhaps the two most significant parts of

our educational mission are 1) to fully educate majors and minors about the fundamental questions and information in the field of Women's Studies; and 2) to raise all students' awareness of important issues relating to feminism, American diversity, and global issues. WMST offers our students rigorous classes in small settings that emphasize connected learning. We expose our students to ideas that they have not heard before and require them to think (as well as act) critically. To create a framework that will enable students to select a set of classes that will encourage connected learning, we have recently developed three concentrations (or streams) within the Women's Studies curriculum: Art, Literature and Culture; International and Global Perspectives; and Gender and Diversity. During 2004-09 we will be evaluating our curricular offerings to ensure that students can get breadth as well as depth within and across the streams. This will take coordinated efforts among numerous departments and programs across campus.

In support of the revised USP curriculum, we or other UW departments, have approval for the following new USP (or NW) designations:

- WMST 1080 – Introduction to WMST, CH and D
- WMST 1090 – Intellectual Community in Women's Studies, 1 cr I class, taught in conjunction with WMST 1080.
- WMST 2001 – Gender, Ethnicity and Science. C, awaiting D
- WMST 2465 – Comparative Autobiography; CH
- WMST 3500 – Gender and Society, WB
- WMST 3610 – Non Western Women Writers; NW
- WMST 3710 – Gender and Humanities; CH
- WMST 4335 – Women and Islam, G
- WMST 4580 – Women and Development, G and NW
- WMST 4590 - South Asian Women's Lives, new class. Has been accepted for NW, will be submitted for G

Other classes soon to be in the "pipeline" include Global Feminisms, 2000 level for G; Women, War and Health and Gender, Women and Health for G. In addition, we intend to boost our 2000-level offerings in order to expose students to Women's Studies at the beginning of their college careers. In particular, we are considering new or revised classes including: Women and Spirituality, Women and Disabilities, Women and Music, US Women of Color, and Gender and Film. **Action Item WMST-1:** Reevaluate and change our curriculum to both meet the needs of our majors and minors and to expose UW students, in general, to issues related to gender, feminism, American diversity, and women around the globe

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3. Assessment

The National Women's Studies Association has not developed specific goals, student-based outcomes, or assessment techniques for Women's Studies curricula. At UW, we have established goals that can be seen at: <http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/Wmst/index.htm>.

We have used both formal and informal means of student assessment. Our primary student learning assessment tool has been our capstone class for majors and minors, WMST

4700: Feminist Theories and Methodologies. Our second assessment instrument is an internship or senior paper. Each major must choose one of these to complete degree requirements. If feasible, students are encouraged to do both. The senior paper requires the student to work closely with a WMST faculty member and to complete a written or creative project that demonstrates the student's ability to define a problem or issue of interest and effectively research, write and/or create. The internship requires work over the course of the semester at a field placement where WMST course work may be applied. Internship students work with both the intern coordinator and a faculty member on campus, and produce a reflective essay at the end of the placement. The Program is now maintaining copies of these works. Graduating seniors are requested to participate in an exit interview with the director. Students are asked to reflect upon their experiences in the program, our curriculum, and faculty, as well as inform us of their post-graduation plans.

We gather data for each major/minor regarding classes taken, GPA, honors, and career plans or aspirations. We are collecting copies of senior papers, internship essays and projects. We have a narrative assessment of the program in either a collective videotape or exit interview. Included in the narrative assessment is information about when students chose to become WMST students, reviews of core classes, and concerns. WMST has already utilized this information for programmatic improvement. Information from these discussions has resulted in several changes to the program including: establishment of identified Women's Studies space so that students feel that they have a "home" at UW, and exploration of a WMST graduate program. We will be looking to curricular modification in the future based on this data.

Using the template for assessment developed by Academic Affairs, assessment in Women's Studies will proceed according to the following timetable. Implementation of this timetable is **Action Item WMST -2.**

- Currently and Year-1: Re-evaluate the goals and establish objectives and evaluation methods for the Women's Studies Program. Examine and modify the curriculum to meet those goals and objectives. Collect and analyze syllabi and course evaluations from all classes cross-listed with Women's Studies for relevancy to our goals and objectives.
- Year - 2: Examine existing and other assessment tools appropriate for Women's Studies including (but not limited to): review of class assignments in required classes by teaching faculty cohorts; exit interviews; review of senior papers and internships by committee; review of Feminist Theory as the capstone in WMST.
- Years-3 and on: Begin formal collection and data evaluation from assessment tools; Modify program accordingly and repeat steps.

4. Areas of Distinction (AD)

The manner in which Women's Studies faculty conducts our work is unique to WMST and provides an essential and beneficial component to the T/R/S done by other more traditional departments. WMST's methodology is clearly cutting edge, innovative, and interdisciplinary, challenging entrenched assumptions about theory and society, thus liberating new perspectives and actually changing the world. Significantly, WMST's value resides not only in our innovative approaches to teaching and research but also in our mandate for activism, the concept

that praxis must coincide with theory, thus making service go far beyond committee work and into the realm of political activism. WMST faculty accepts that being part of WMST commits us to leading by example regarding social activism. WMST majors tend to be very dedicated, hardworking, and more successful than their peers as illustrated by their community leadership and award winning scholarship. They have the “fire in the belly” mindset about their decision to be WMST majors in the first place and that fire spills over into their academic performance and their activism.

WMST clearly supports the Areas of Distinction (AD) presented in MF III, as illustrated below:

Environmental and Natural Resources.

MF III states that “the social sciences are fundamental to teaching and research” in ENR. Frieda Knobloch (American Studies and Women’s Studies) has been instrumental in assuring that ENR include a humanities, social science, and feminist perspective as part of its curriculum. Recently, Susanna Goodin (Philosophy and Women’s Studies) has joined the ENR advisory board. Both Frieda and Susanna are (or will be) teaching classes cross-listed among ENR, WMST and their home departments. The class, Women and Third World Development (WMST 5580) typically taught by Kathy Jensen (Women’s Studies, Sociology, International Studies) is part of the ENR, Masters level minor. As ENR expands and broadens its conception of itself in accordance with the discussion in MF III, new opportunities for existing and new WMST faculty to link their scholarship and expertise to the aims of ENR and UW will open. [For example, a new archivist at the American Heritage Center has expressed an interest in teaching a lower level class on gender and the environment.]

Of particular import in the centrality of an increased humanities and social science focus within ENR will be the inclusion of the class, Gender, Ethnicity and Science in the curriculum. Though WMST has no faculty currently available to teach this class, we consider it of such importance that WMST put the class forward for large C, USP certification during 2002-03. [The certification was granted.] **Action Item 3** will require us to work with other units on campus to assure that this class becomes a permanent offering in our curriculums.

Professions and issues critical to the region.

WMST provides classes for students in the professions and contributes greatly in the development of how the various professions view themselves. While WMST already has strong links to health sciences, links to other areas, such as business, engineering, education, and law, need to be more actively and systematically recruited. Past links to these areas dissolved when specific individuals moved away. Future links must become more institutionalized. This is **Action Item WMST-4.**

WMST actively supports UW’s interest in promoting “strong, prosperous, educationally rich communities not only for the economic and social well being of the region but also for the opportunities that they create for our graduates” (MFIII, p. 9). WMST works to ensure that outmoded concepts of economic and social well being are not perpetuated. In particular, feminist

theory and methodology has greatly improved the more traditional outlooks of the professions such as education and business in meeting the needs of all the citizens of the state. For example, our student internships with programs like SAFE bring to the forefront the reality of domestic violence against women; work on the wage gap between Wyoming's men and women illustrates the continuing inequities in the salaries earned by Wyoming women; the establishment of the Snowy Range Non-Profit Institute helps to promote the non-profit sector that often provides services to women and children; and research on attitudes towards sexual assault on campus has helped to establish a campus awareness of the issues and to establish a new response and advocacy organization. This work has dovetailed into post-graduation opportunities for our students, such as acceptance into prestigious graduate programs and work with government non-governmental agencies. **Action Item WMST-5:** Continue and enhance WMST emphases on service-based learning, research and activism that have learning objectives that promote economic and social well being.

Statewide leadership in cultural endeavors, the arts, and the humanities.

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One of the main goals in connection with this AD is to sustain an institutional-wide commitment to writing, critical thinking, and oral communication across the disciplines. This AD is addressed by WMST. Our students are already held to very high standards of academic excellence, and generally they excel in meeting these standards. More specifically, WMST faculty have been active with the Wyoming Council for the Arts and the Wyoming Council for the Humanities.

History and Culture of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region.

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WMST scholarship, research, and courses provide a sensitivity and awareness of the role that women and/or gender studies play in coming to a more comprehensive and more deeply textured understanding of what it means to be a history or a culture in the first place. Currently faculty have worked within the state on issues related to land management, and Heart Mountain. Our advisory board now includes a faculty member from the American Heritage Center.

5. Issues in Moving Forward III & the College of Arts and Sciences Planning Themes Germane to the Women's Studies Program

Interdisciplinarity.

The Women's Studies Program's commitment to interdisciplinarity is probably second to none on the UW campus. It is evidenced by our curriculum, faculty, programming for the university community, and sustained interaction with other units across campus. We often take the lead in developing or participating in interdisciplinary initiatives, and we are regularly asked to help recruit new faculty members interested in interdisciplinary connections. We are also committed to **exploring** the coordination of gender related research on campus and in the community. Informally, we have begun this process. Over the past decade Women's Studies has sponsored research related reading and writing groups, as well as public forums for the presentation of works-in-progress. As members of the Southwest Research Institute on Women (SIROW) we understand how coordinated research efforts on women's and gender related issues

can funnel millions of grant dollars through a university and its Women's Studies Program. We will continue to explore the possibilities for a similar structure at UW that will both formalize and enhance our current efforts. **Action Item WMST-6** aims to revitalize our discussions on the establishment of coordinated research efforts and external funding regarding gender and women's issues

Curriculum Enhancement and Interdisciplinarity.

Action Item WMST-7 will target specific departments and programs across campus to introduce Women's Studies as a complementary minor or double major to their existing programs. This item includes but is not limited to, meeting with department heads who have expressed an interest in institutionalizing WMST within their programs and developing promotional materials (e.g. brochures) that target specific audiences. Preliminary discussions will begin with Social Work (Health), Secondary Education (Education) and Food and Consumer Sciences (Agriculture).

Graduate Education.

Women's Studies offers numerous classes dual-listed at the 4/5000 levels. Currently, graduate students interested in Women's Studies participate in the Interdisciplinary Master's program or remain in a 'traditional' department but concentrate their studies and choose their committees from WMST classes and faculty. Neither of these options accurately reflect the education they receive in Women's Studies, and this process hinders our graduate recruitment efforts. As Women's Studies is interdisciplinary, per se, the current rules of the Interdisciplinary Master's program do not accurately reflect what we can and do offer our students. Acknowledging our unique position and program is something that we have already begun to discuss with the Graduate School. **Action Item WMST-8.**

Individuals and departments across campus have begun to discuss offering cross-listed graduate seminars, and graduate level concentrations in Victorian/Trans-Atlantic studies and Public Policy. **Action Item WMST-9** is to continue to pursue graduate content areas such as public policy and Victorian Studies.

WMST will explore offering a graduate certificate in Women's Studies for graduate students who want to include feminist theory and methods into their existing programs. Impetus for this exploration came from students themselves and resulted in our 2002 award of a Summer Innovative Class on feminist theories and methods for graduate students in other disciplines. **Action Item WMST-10** is to explore graduate certificate programs at other universities, and to decide if such a credential should be pursued for UW students. In support of this action item, **Action Item WMST-12** is to continue to offer the graduate level feminist theory and methods class at least once every two years in order to gauge continued interest by graduate students in graduate level feminist studies.

Outreach and Extension.

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WMST commitment to Outreach education has been limited due to our stretched commitments. However, it has been increasingly clear to us that there is a need and desire by site-bound students to have Women's Studies courses available to them. Thus, we have had conversations with the School of Outreach about expanding our offerings throughout the state. Deb Beck regularly offers our introductory class via correspondence, and there are two PhD level faculty members in the state who regularly teach WMST 3500, 3610 and 3710. The addition of WMST 4700 and one-two more electives offered regularly via Outreach would make the WMST minor available to students throughout the state. **Action Item WMST-12** is to continue these discussions with an eye towards offering the minor and/or bachelor's degree through the Outreach school.

Diversity, Internationalization, and Access.

Women's Studies is strongly committed to cultural and social diversity of both our faculty and curriculum. Our role in enhancing the University's and the College's diversity has been substantial during the last two and half years and is ongoing. Our curriculum will be evaluated, in part, to assure that we offer our students both breadth and depth regarding US diversity.

WMST is strongly committed to internationalization of our curriculum, faculty, and programming. WMST has been the host to three visiting Russian scholars associated with the Junior Faculty Development Program. Currently, numerous WMST faculty have research and teaching interests that span the globe: Susie McKay's work on the reintegration of girls associated with fighting forces into home communities in Africa, Kathy Jensen's Fulbright fellowship in Nepal, Bonnie Zare's work with South Asian women writers, Marianne Kamp's work with Uzbekistani women and women and Islam. Jeanne Holland received a Hewlett grant in 2000 to develop a class in global feminisms that is currently being evaluated by the course committee for full inclusion into our curriculum. We need to maintain and further develop this part of our curriculum and faculty. **Action Item WMST-13** is to continue strengthening this focus area in support of internationalizing the UW curriculum and consider hiring a scholar with a PhD in Women's Studies with an international/global focus. Of particular import would be a scholar with the Ph.D in WMST, a credential none of the current faculty have. Such a scholar would bring to UW some of the most current, interdisciplinary training in the field. In addition to assessing our curriculum to assure both breadth and depth in the study of women and gender issues globally, **Action Item WMST-14** is to explore international travel and exchange opportunities specifically for our students.

6. Other issues that are germane to the department

▼ The A&S Interdisciplinary Programs have already begun of many of the priorities outlined in MFIII. ▼ The Programs offer to the University community intellectual means to address the critical issues identified in MFIII.

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In order to make the interdisciplinary programs more visible, and in order to better coordinate our joint activities, we suggest housing us together, or at the bare minimum establishing space for each individual program that is centrally located. The move of Health Sciences provides such an opportunity for the Interdisciplinary Programs to be housed together in Ross Hall or Student Health Services. **This is Action Item WMST-15.**

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7. Action Items (linked to sections above)

WMST-1: The two most significant parts of the educational mission of Women’s Studies are to fully educate our majors and minors about the fundamental questions and information in the field of Women’s Studies, and to raise all students’ awareness of important issues relating to feminism, American diversity, and global issues. During this planning period we will reevaluate and change our curriculum to both meet the needs of our majors and minors and to expose UW students, in general, to issues related to gender, feminism, American diversity, and women around the globe. [See Section 2 - Curriculum]

WMST-2. Implement assessment timetable. [See Section 3 – Assessment]

WMST-3 – In furtherance of Moving Forward III’s statement that “the social sciences are fundamental to teaching and research” in Environmental and Natural Resources, we will further our commitment to ENR by institutionalization of WMST 2001 Gender, Ethnicity and Science within the curricula. [See Section 4 – Areas of Distinction, ENR]

WMST-4. Actively recruit faculty and pursue links within Arts and Sciences and to the Colleges of Agriculture, Health Sciences, Business, Engineering, Education, and law through membership on the WMST advisory committee, cross-listed classes, faculty research, and programming. [See Section 4 – Areas of Distinction, Professions Critical to the Region.]

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WMST-5. Women’s Studies has centered the relevance of service-based learning in our curriculum through an internship program and opportunities for our students to participate with faculty and members of the community on research. WMST will develop learning objectives for our students that promote economic and social well being of the region. [See Section 4, Areas of Distinction, Professions and Issues Critical to the Region]

WMST-6. The Women’s Studies Program at UW emphasizes both interdisciplinary teaching as well as research. We are committed to encouraging UW faculty to pursue research related to gender and women’s issues, and have initiated numerous efforts in this direction. WMST will revitalize our discussions on the establishment of coordinated research efforts and external funding regarding gender and women’s issues. [See Section 5 – Issues, Interdisciplinarity]

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WMST-7. As interdisciplinary, cross-college connections are being encouraged throughout the University, WMST will promote the WMST minor as complementary to existing programs across the University. [See Section 5 – Issues, Interdisciplinarity]

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WMST-8. Currently, students interested in pursuing graduate Women's Studies do so by participating in the Graduate School's Interdisciplinary Master's program or through carefully choosing courses and faculty in existing traditional departments. Neither of these is satisfactory, and inhibits our recruitment efforts. ~~WMST will explore formalizing a graduate program.~~ [See Section 4 - Areas of Distinction, Graduate Education]

~~WMST -9.~~ Explore graduate content areas including public policy and Victorian or Trans-Atlantic 19th Century Studies. [See Section 4 - Areas of Distinction, Graduate Education]

~~WMST -10~~ In response to student interest, Women's Studies should explore the establishment of a WMST graduate certificate. [See Section 4 - Areas of Distinction, Graduate Education]

~~WMST -11.~~ In support of student interest across campus in graduate feminist studies, WMST should redirect resources to begin to offer the graduate level feminist theory and methods class at least once every two years. [See Section 4 - Areas of Distinction, Graduate Education]

~~WMST-12~~ The Women's Studies Program will increase our commitment to teaching via Outreach and explore the possibility of establishing a minor or bachelor's degree program through the Outreach School. [See Section 5 – Issues, Outreach]

~~WMST 13-~~ One of Women's Studies' strengths is faculty with international expertise. We need to maintain this emphasis and strengthen our commitment to global feminisms and internationalization of our curriculum. [See Section 5 – Issues, Interdisciplinarity]

~~WMST 14 –~~ Explore international travel and exchange opportunities specifically for Women's Studies students. [See Section 5 – Issues, Interdisciplinarity]

~~WMST-15.~~ Women's Studies, and the A&S Interdisciplinary Programs are currently spread out and could be far more efficient if they were centrally located. As Health Sciences department move to their new homes, these programs could be moved into their existing space. [See Section 6 – Other]

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