1. Executive Summary

The Women’s Studies program here at Loyola University has a number of explicit goals.

a) It provides an academic interdisciplinary minor program for students interested from all the undergraduate colleges here at Loyola, although it should be noted that in the past year, two students also chose Women’s Studies as contract majors.

b) It seeks to foster interest in women’s issues, both academic and non-academic, across campus. In this respect, it plays an integral role liaising with the Women’s Resource Center and offering joint programming.

c) It provides a forum for discussion and community to all faculty, staff and students enthusiastic about women’s issues.

2. Unit Identification / Profile Summary

2.1 Name: Women’s Studies

Mission: The Women’s Studies minor is an interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary program that seeks to provide students and the university community with educational frameworks and strategies for intellectual and personal growth, positive social change, and political awareness that informs active participation in public affairs. It prepares students to gain an awareness of women’s issues, to understand how social constructions of gender and sexuality affect and have shaped daily experience, broader social structures, institutions, social relations, and cultural and aesthetic production. By its very definition, attention to gender necessitates an approach that examines gender across race, class, sexuality, age, and nationality.

2.2 General Statement and Descriptive Information

The Women’s Studies steering committee includes representatives from faculty and staff across the university. For the 2010-11 Academic year, the steering committee was composed of: Sara Butler (chair; History), Laura Hope (Theatre), Cathy Rogers (Communications), Karen Reichard (Women’s Resource Center), Valerie Goertzen (Music), and Marcus Kondkar (Sociology). With the exception of Dr. Reichard (whose position is permanent as the director of the Women’s Resource Center), all members hold their term for two years. The larger Women’s Studies committee is comprised of fifteen full members: Sara Butler (History), Laura Hope (Theatre), Cathy Rogers (Communications), Karen Reichard (Women’s Resource Center), Jaita Talukadar (Sociology), Rae Taylor (Criminal Justice), Ginger Hoffman (Philosophy), Janet Matthews (Psychology), Terri Bednarz (Religious Studies), Connie Mui (Philosophy), Barbara Ewell (English), Valerie Goertzen (Music), Sue Mennino (Sociology), Trish Nugent (Library), Angie Hoffer (Business). There are also a great number of associate members. Full members are expected to attend all meetings and have voting privileges. Associate members may only vote when they attend meetings.

The minor consists of seven Women’s Studies courses. To provide students a good introduction to Women’s Studies, they have the option of taking one of the following three
courses: WSA 100 Women, Society and Culture; SOCI A250 Sociology of Gender; or PHIL V241 Philosophical Perspectives on Women. Students may then take six of the following courses:

- CMMN A453 American Women Journalists
- CMMN A455 Media and Gender
- ENGL A410: Writing Gender
- ENGL A461 Contemporary Women’s Literature
- ENGL A466 Southern Women Writers
- ENGL A490 Julian Norwich and Margery Kempe
- ENGL U287 Martyrs, Minstrels, Mystics
- ENGL V274 Women Writers
- ENGL V275 Black Women Novelists
- HIST A260 Modern European Women’s History
- HIST A352 Women in African History
- HIST W240 Between Eve & Mary: Women in Medieval Europe
- HIST W255 Medieval Sex and Gender
- HIST X290 Women in American History
- LAS V235 Women Writers of Spanish America
- MUGN U271 Medieval Music and Mysticism
- PHIL U254 Postmodernism and Feminism
- PHIL V241 Philosophical Perspectives on Women
- PSYC A327 Studies in the Psychology of Women
- PSYC H434 Gender Differences in Cognition
- RELS A417 Women, Religion, Culture
- RELS U343 Women in the Christian Tradition
- RELS U281 Women in World Religions
- SOCI A240 Sociology of the Family
- SOCI A250 Sociology of Gender
- SOCI A255 Human Sexuality
- SOCI A260 Women in Latin America
- SOCI A305 Social and Political Inequality
- SOCI A416 Gender, Law and Social Control
- VISA U236 Images of Women in Arts
- VISA H295 Images of Masculinity: Questions of Desire

Women’s Studies also hosts a number of programming activities over the course of the year separately or alongside the Women’s Resource Center, and the student organization Women’s Issues Organization.

2.2.1 Headcounts of staff: n/a

2.2.2. Headcounts of faculty: n/a

2.2.3. Headcounts of undergraduate students: 16

2.2.4. Headcounts of graduate students: n/a

2.2.5: Retention rates: n/a

2.2.6. Graduation rates: n/a

3. Assessment

3.1. General Statement on Assessment
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Assessment this year took place on a number of levels.

a) Program Assessment:  The Women’s Studies program here at Loyola has been at an impasse for the past two years over a situation that may sound inconsequential to some, but to those in the program is very meaningful: we don’t know what to call ourselves. Within the discipline itself, there have been tremendous changes in the last two decades with many claiming that the original goals of Women’s Studies (that is, to claim a past of our own, to highlight the accomplishments of women) have been completed and that we now need to move on to Gender Studies (a much more theoretical discipline that focuses more closely on power relations). However, to many within the program here at Loyola, a move from Women’s Studies to Gender Studies means a displacement of women and an abandonment of a political agenda, thus undermining the very foundation of the discipline. Loyola is not the only school debating this issue; this is a vital issue at Women’s Studies programs across the country, and it is causing severe rifts at some universities. This year we took a number of steps in an attempt to begin the resolution of our difficulties. First, in November we held a Women’s Studies Retreat Evening in which a group of twelve Women’s Studies Faculty met for several hours to discuss the predicament, and try to determine reasons both for and against the change. This evening was part of a larger initiative to develop a five-year strategic plan for Women’s Studies – the potential name change was just part of the conversation. Second, in December an anonymous survey went out to all Women’s Studies faculty and staff concerning the name, and also our goals over the next five years. After an analysis of the results of that survey, it was determined that in fall of 2011, we would host a forum concerning this decision in order to get feedback from the wider community.

The other aspect of program assessment that occurred this year was the beginning of a reevaluation of the courses that make up the interdisciplinary minor. Sara Butler amassed the syllabi for all relevant courses and put these on the Women’s Studies intranet. In fall 2011, the Women’s Studies steering committee will submit all of these courses to scrutiny to make sure that their content meets the requirements of the Women’s Studies program. It was decided that this process should occur roughly ever five years.

b) Course Assessments:  For the first time, in fall of 2010 we attempted electronic submission of course evaluations through survey monkey. While we received much more complete evaluations from our students than usual, it was determined that there was not enough incentive for students to go on-line outside of class to fill these in. For spring 2011, we reverted to written evaluations, but determined to send them out at a time that did not conflict with the normal course evaluations, in the hopes that students might offer more complete comments.

Finally, we also revamped our tool for course assessment. With the input of the entire committee, we reworked the evaluation was reworked in the hopes of obtaining better feedback from students both within and outside the minor.

3.2 Program Goals for 2010-2011

We did not have a current strategic goal before this year. After a number of meaningful discussions over the course of the year, we have a much better sense of the direction of Women’s Studies.

3.3. Student Learning Outcomes
The Women’s Studies minor has not developed a specific set of “Student Learning Outcomes” for all minors. One of our goals for 2011/12 is to develop these.

3.4. Assessment of Internal and External Factors Affecting the Unit

We have spent copious amounts of time discussing the external factors affecting the program this year. Our conversations dwelt on two aspects primarily:

a) Women’s Studies as a discipline has a negative connotation among students on campus and thus is preventing students from participating in many of our events. In an effort to change this perception, Sara Butler met with the Pan-Hellenic council of sororities in December to discuss Women’s Studies and its shared characteristics with the sororities (that is, both suffer from social stigmas; both serve to empower women; both are dedicated to women’s issues). We have plans to continue this next year with a meeting of all sororities for an “Empowering Women” evening.

b) Women’s Studies is incapacitated, in large part, due to the small size of its budget. While we were grateful that our budget was finally reinstated at the end of October (2010), it is insufficient to achieve much.

3.5. Assessment of Community-Related Activities

N/A

3.6. Assessment Results

Please see the individualized sections above.

4. Summary of Achievements

4.1. Unit as a Whole

Women’s Studies tends to gage its achievements in terms of programming efforts. This was an extremely successful year. Below, please see a list of the events that Women’s Studies sponsored / cosponsored / participated in:

Sept. 23: 7 pm, Nunemaker: Half the Sky event with author Sheryl Wudunn
Oct. 27th: 6 pm, horseshoe: Take Back the Night
Nov. 4: 7 pm, Audubon Room: An Evening of Belly Dancing – Love your Body the Way it is!
Nov. 19: 7 pm, Audubon Room: Nona Aronowitz, “Girldrive: Criss-crossing America, Redefining Feminism”
Dec. 1: Healthy Sexuality Discussion Night
Feb. 12: 9-4, Sexual Assault Response Advocacy Workshop

Love your body week:
- Monday, Feb. 14: Love Your Body Week: "Walk in the Park"
- Tuesday, Feb. 15: Love Your Body Week: "Feed Your Soul through Meditation" - 12:30p - 1:30p; Love Your Body Week: "Girls' Night In" - 7p - 9p
o Wednesday, Feb. 16: Love Your Body Week: "Walk in the Park"- 12:30p - 1:30p; Love Your Body Week: "Indian Women and the Ultra-Thin Ideal" - 3p - 4p + Stacy Nadeau from Dove Soap

o Thursday, Feb. 17: Love Your Body Week: "A Conversation with the Carmelite NGO on Global Issues- Food Security"- 12:30p - 1:30p

o Friday, Feb. 18: Love Your Body Week: "Walk in the Park"- 12:30p - 1:30p; Love Your Body Week: "Salsa Lessons"- 3:30p - 6:30p

Mar. 22: 5-6:30, Diboll Gallery, Appreciation Reception for Women Faculty in STEM fields

Apr 4-8: Sexual Assault Awareness Week

Apr 9, 9 to noon in Miller 112: Start Smart negotiating skills workshop

In both semesters, we also ran a once a month Women’s Studies discussion group tied to the Women’s Studies class offered in each semester. Faculty teaching Women’s Studies classes agree to choose a reading for discussion and they meet with students from classes together to discuss a joint theme. This has been one of our most successful ventures to date. In fall 2010, the theme was “Women Empowering Women.” Drs. Butler, Ewell and Reichard, as well as their students, participated in this discussion series. In spring 2011, the theme was “Gender as Performance.” Drs. Sebastian and Eklund, as well as their students, participated in this discussion series.

4.2. Faculty Achievements / Service: n/a

4.3. Staff Achievements / Service: n/a

4.4. Student Achievements:

Sister Fara Impastato Award for Outstanding Women’s Studies Minor: Jennifer Hunt. It should be noted that Jennifer was a contract Women’s Studies major, and she wrote a thesis on the reaction of Iranian women writers to the loss of rights in post-revolutionary Iran (supervisor: Behrooz Moazami). This thesis also won the History Department’s Outstanding Thesis award.


4.5 Community Engagement Achievements

N/A

5. Budget

5.1.1 Budget discussion

Our 2010-11 Operating Budget was $1,350

The budget is insufficient for our needs. Not only were we incapable of doing much of the programming we had hoped to accomplish, but we also had to dip into our gift account and
rely on the assistance of the Women’s Resource Center in order to supplement our operating budget.

5.2. 2011-2012 Operating Budget: $1350

5.2.1 Budget discussion. This budget is insufficient. We are looking forward to the project $3000 budget for the following year promised to us by Dr. Lydia Voigt and Adrienne Blanco.

6. Planning and Goals for 2011-2012

6.1 Strategic Planning

Although this year we began the process of determining our five-year strategic plan, we did not actually put our thoughts into a written report. To be honest, this is going to be the outcome of our Women’s Studies Forum in September.

6.2 Support of the University Mission

Women’s Studies is clearly in line with the University’s Identity Statement. As a program that thrives on the discussion and valuation of difference in human beliefs and experience, and attempts to foster campus-wide discussions relevant to these differences, it meets several aspects of the statement in particular:

- Commitment to moral values and ethical behavior.
- Mutual respect – by the individual for the Catholic identity of the university and by the university for individual’s freedom of conscience and religious liberty.
- That God’s love is more powerful than human weakness and evil.
- That true freedom includes freedom from sin, ignorance, prejudice, limited horizons, and distorted values and desires.
- That a personal concern for and respect for each person in the university community is evident in all its programs, practices, and services
- That there is a special dedication to the growth of the whole person
- The formation of a learning community among students, faculty and staff marked by personal interaction, mutual concern and mutual respect
- The development of an attitude to be of service to others and a habit of reflection on the experience of this service
- An awareness of their social environment, the world around them, and the needs of that world

The University’s Strategic Plan for 2012 also stresses the importance to support Interdisciplinary programs. The Women’s Studies minor exemplifies interdisciplinary cooperation at its best.

6.3. Program Goals and 6.4. Student Learning Outcomes

Women’s Studies will draft a set of program goals and student learning outcomes in the academic year 2011-12.

6.5. Community Engagement
Through our programming, Women’s Studies has become very involved in the community and hopes to continue to do so, budget permitting.

6.6. Resources
Women’s Studies currently is limited in terms of resources in two different capacities:

a) Budget: our budget is insufficient.

b) Faculty: because we are an interdisciplinary program, essentially we make do with whatever faculty the departments hire. There are some noticeable gaps in our program, however, and we need to find some way to fill these. First, we have no one to teach “Women in American History.” Second, we do not have a permanent faculty member to teach “Women in Islam.” These are two basics of a Women’s Studies program. We are trying our best to encourage the departments to hire in these areas.

6.7. Assessment Plan
We plan to continue as usual.