MISSION STATEMENT:
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.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS:

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

Student Learning Outcomes
- Students will gain a critical and analytical understanding of women and gender across history and cultures.
- Students will be able to promote social justice in both an intellectual and activist context.
- Students will gain an awareness of women’s issues.
- Students will 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.
- Students will gain an understanding of how gender intersects with race, class, sexuality and nationality.
- Students will have knowledge of basic feminist ideas and methods of analysis.
- The knowledge acquired in women’s studies courses will influence ways in which student acquire knowledge in other courses.

ASSESSMENT (What assessment tools are you using and how do they address the objective/goals cited above?):
**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, for many professors and students 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 every five years.

**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.

**Student Assessments:** An annual exit interview with graduating minors
- A capstone course or senior seminar taught every Spring
- An annual Women’s Studies essay contest and an annual Women’s Issues Leadership Award
- Course evaluations for all women’s studies courses
- Measurement and assessment tools in all courses
- A women’s studies teaching roundtable held at the beginning of every semester
The advisor to women’s studies minors conducts an annual exit interview with our graduating minors. This interview encompasses both a written and an oral part. Students are asked to evaluate the minor in terms of its intellectual rigor and how it has added to their education at Loyola, as well as to their preparation for a career and advanced education. Students also make suggestions on how the minor can be improved (i.e. addition of new courses, suggestions for readings and other supplemental materials, etc.). In addition of giving us a clear picture of where the women’s studies minor is and how it can grow, the exit interview also enables us to assess the social justice commitment and feminist activism of our students. Similarly, participation in Service Learning and internships in which students have participated, indicates ways in which students are putting to use their commitment to feminist activism and social justice.

Every women’s studies minor takes the Senior Seminar in Women’s Studies either during their junior or senior year. This capstone course is designed to familiarize “students with the relevant and current theoretical developments in the field and provide them with the opportunity to apply this knowledge to their own research” (from the bulletin). More specifically, the seminar has mapped a history of feminism in the western world, with a particular focus on some of the “classic” texts in 20th century feminist thought and theory. Students are required to examine how women from various cultural, class, and racial backgrounds have thought about and responded to the conditions of their lives and to the various systems of oppression and domination that contain them as women or as members of other oppressed groups. Alternatives to gender oppression women have envisioned over the centuries are also part of the course. Particular emphasis is placed on how feminist scholars have theorized this experience.

- All written and oral coursework measure students’ ability to think within, across, and beyond disciplines and encourages an interdisciplinary approach. Assignments include the journal or book review, numerous short papers that encourage students to view the course material comparatively, and a self-generated research paper.
- The Capstone course requires students to use the interdisciplinary knowledge they have gained in their other courses and to incorporate them into their written assignments.

The annual essay contest encourages students from all women’s studies courses to submit papers they have written during the academic year. Judged by two or three faculty members, the writing contest enables us assess the quality of student papers written in different disciplines as well as to judge how well they reflect the learning outcomes.

- All women’s studies courses are evaluated each time they are taught. Women’s studies has its own evaluation form which students fill out in addition to the College evaluation form. Questions are designed with women’s studies minors and non-minors in mind. Questions for minors specifically assess how the course meets the requirements for a women’s studies course. These evaluations are read by the Director of the Women’s Resource Center and returned with comments and recommendations to the faculty member.

WHERE ARE THE ASSESSMENTS LOCATED?

- We are unable to load the assessments and syllabi on our intranet due to the limit on storage. The file is kept with the director of WS.
Each women’s studies course has its own measurement and assessment tools to appropriately determine a student’s success in this course. Assessment varies: some faculty use strategies from feminist pedagogy such as journaling and creative and/or research papers to measure student success; others use measurement tools standard in their disciplines.

- Course evaluations, specifically tailored to WS, are provided for students.

- The women’s studies teaching roundtable enables current and past teachers in the program to talk about their syllabi, feminist pedagogy, and how their course reflects the learning outcomes for the program. Comparing syllabi also helps to avoid duplication in course materials and topics covered in class.

**RESULTS/OUTCOMES:**

- The results of evaluations of students reside with the professors of the WS courses.

- The WS director examines whether syllabi meet the standards of the goals and objectives women’s studies courses. Two courses were dropped, because they did not meet the standards.

- Each syllabus will be uploaded to the WS intranet, and the syllabi will be critiqued by WS steering committee (provided we get more storage space to do so).

- The Fall forum on the discussion of name change (i.e., women’s studies or gender studies) is now set for November 3 (results pending).

**USE OF RESULTS (What modifications, adjustments were made based upon the evaluation of the assessment materials?):**

- A committee was formed to determine and adjust the required courses for the WS minor.

- The WS brochure will be updated in terms of course offerings for WS minors.

**RESOURCES/TIMELINE/APPROVALS (Based upon the modifications/adjustments included in the USE OF RESULTS section, identify the timeline, resources and approvals required to implement the change.):**

- The WS minor needs courses to be offered on a regular basis. We struggle with getting some departments to offer WS courses.

- Budget restrictions prevent us from hiring someone to teach a foundational course in WS, and usually other courses are substituted to meet requirement needs.

**SIGNATURE: DEPT. CHAIR/DIRECTOR**

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**SIGNATURE: DEAN/VICE-PRESIDENT**

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