

**Comprehensive Program Review
Institute for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS)
Georgia State University
November 2021**

The following programs are critical to the institutional mission and thus MEET the institutional criteria for retention:

Bachelor of Arts with a major in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (05029900)

The Institute offers an undergraduate minor and major (BA) in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We have seen a steady upward trajectory since Academic Year 2011-2012, when we had 20 students enrolled in the major. In the past three years, we had 27 students enrolled in 2016-2017, 29 students enrolled in 2017-2018, and 32 enrolled in 2018-2019. Average degrees conferred for the past three fiscal years is 7, but in 2020-2021 BA degrees totaled 10, the target number for our unit. From fiscal year 2018-2020, our annual credit hour generation grew from 4082 to 4331 total. Between Fiscal Years 2008-2010, we generated 1239-1728 in Core hours for the entire year. In other words, our current numbers per semester are beyond earlier totals for the entire year. Steps 1, 2, and 4 of our Action Plan impact undergraduates, with a continued focus on College to Career (CTC) engagement and a focus on the university's core learning outcomes, specifically, analyzing the complexity of human behavior and how historical, economic, political, social, and/or spatial relationships develop, persist, and/or change and how these skills are applied in various work environments.

Master's of Arts with a major in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (05029900)

The Institute for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies offers a graduate certificate and a master's degree (MA). In order to staff more undergraduate sections of Core and general courses, such as WGSS 2010, we undertake significant supervision of GTAs to reach higher enrollments (see BA information above). This GTA experience gives qualified master's students experience in teaching in the Core Curriculum. Such experience gives our master's students an advantage in the doctoral program application process and permits the full-time faculty to devote more of their effort to the bachelor's and graduate degree programs. Steps 1, 3, and 4 of our Action Plan impact our graduate students as we seek to improve recruitment and preparation of MA students.

Step 3 of our Action Plan impact graduate students

Provost/VPAA Signature and Date _____

---OR---

Provost/VPAA's Designee Signature and Date Michael Galchinsky 11/10/2021 _____

Appendix: 2021 APR Action Plan
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS),
Georgia State University

Major Findings of the Current Review

WGSS consists of six full-time faculty representing research and teaching expertise across the humanities, the social and behavioral sciences, and education. Research and pedagogy are interdisciplinary. The WGSS mission is to promote transformative critical thinking by making explicit how gender and sexuality, in conjunction with other categories, shape understandings of the world. The review revealed:

- Impactful and Growing BA Program: WGSS trains undergraduates to think in intersectional ways in order to interpret complex arguments, formulate original claims, and engage in dialogue. The unit has significantly increased its credit-hour generation. For lower-division courses, the course fill rate has nearly doubled since the last review (from 2011 to 2018) and the course fill rate remained above 95%. WGSS majors are typically trained for careers in research, policy and non-profit, creative media, community advocacy, and health careers. Our reviewers emphasized the significance of our connection to the community, dedication to writing instruction, and choice of topics and perspectives. Similarly, our majors and alumni highlighted the program's excellence in realizing learning outcomes, particularly those focused on intersectional perspectives and writing/critical thinking skills. Supporting the GSU Quality Enhancement Plan, WGSS invests in the College-to-Career initiative to prepare its majors for post-graduation pursuits.
- Unique MA Program in the State and Nationwide: The review committee note the significance of our program: "WGSS has a competitive advantage as the only WGSS master's program in the University of Georgia System [sic], which prepares students for doctoral work." Our high placement rates at top PhD programs in the state and nation support this claim and show the advantage of teacher training and professional development. About half the graduate students receive pedagogical opportunities and training as GTAs, enabling them to be competitive for positions after graduation. The MA program offers three distinct kinds of theses: research, creative, and action research. Typical master's programs offer thesis options that focus on scholarly research and preparation for doctoral work; WGSS's articulation of creative and action research theses acknowledges the range of students' goals and interests. Graduating MA students have also found employment in NGO work and as licensed counselors. Professional development is a hallmark of the GSU WGSS program: it is important to note that in just one academic year (2019-2020), our cohort of 15 MA students delivered 26 academic papers. Eight students presented more than one paper, while 12 out of 15 presented at least one.
- Faculty, Affiliate Faculty, Community, and Research Reputation: Faculty are devoted to developing critical and theoretical perspectives in undergraduate and graduate curricula. The review committee lauded the fact that, "The faculty have national and international scholarly reputations. Faculty devote considerable time to writing instruction in their pedagogy. The

structure for supporting thesis writing (through proseminars) is good.” We are also making strides in building community on and off campus. WGSS has 39 affiliate faculty across departments, disciplines, and colleges. The Institute offers a diverse curriculum to serve a diverse student population. One-half to one-third of the majors have been Black or people of color; fittingly, the unit as a whole has demonstrable strength in Black Feminist Studies. Reviewers noted, “Students appear pleased that because of their experience in WGSS, ‘a lot of doors opened.’” WGSS enables first-generation students to develop academic skills. WGSS connects students to the community in innovative ways, and the MA program provides non-profit training. WGSS contributes to the GSU Strategic Goals of globalization through research and study abroad. Nevertheless, there is room for growth in connecting local, state, national, and international communities.

- The reviewers commended the WGSS faculty for completing the Academic Program Review despite challenging circumstances, including onboarding a new Director who chaired the APR process while faced with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. They noted: “We commend the unit for pulling together a thorough self-study under trying circumstances.”

Action Plan for the Coming Cycle

1. Develop WGSS Strategic Plan-Strengthening the Institute: We chronicled departmental strengths to build on several factors: WGSS has grown in faculty numbers, undergraduate enrollment, graduate student resources and professional development, physical space and technology. We also offer support for the university QEP, contribute to the CAS Strategic Plan, have successfully transitioned unit administration in a way that demonstrates team building, and developed unit identity and leadership in the field at local, state, and national levels. This plan will address recommendations of the committee, including:

1. Prepare a Strategic Plan
 - a. The Director will assemble a team, led by an Executive Committee member to build on strengths and address concerns based on the APR report. Given the small number of faculty in the unit, this Committee will lead the Action Plan process. The plan should be complete by May 2022.
2. Develop a Black Feminist Studies concentration.
 - a. The Director will work with the Undergraduate and Graduate committees to consider viability for adding a concentration, to be completed by May 2023.
3. Supply the Career Center, Admissions, and Advisement with recruiting materials. WGSS staff will publicize the process for double majoring and transfer student options.
 - a. Investigate support for faculty who demonstrate measurable productivity in building relationships between theory and practice via community partnerships.
4. The Director will facilitate a transition between the existing administrator and the new unit administrative professionals in summer 2021.

2. Increase Undergraduate Enrollment

Though our undergraduate credit hour generation has nearly doubled since the last review, we believe that increasing enrollment is necessary to continue WGSS’s success in growing

the major, and in improving rates of retention, progression, and graduation. To increase credit hour generation, we will need continued investment in instructional staff. The Undergraduate Director and faculty will work to maintain 10 majors who graduate each year, in line with programs of our size. Our target is to increase enrollment by 10% a year.

- a. We will examine the viability of developing a popular, large gateway course to invite more students into the major. The Undergraduate Director will explore to what extent the pandemic-era teaching has prepared faculty for teaching a large gateway online course and search out university resources from CETLOE and other initiatives that might be offered to faculty to help develop such a course. We will explore with faculty if this will be a current or new course and make decisions after completion of the strategic plan is completed in May 2022.
- b. The Director, Undergraduate Advisor, faculty, and staff will seek to develop more consistent programming activities (career workshops, especially with community partners), to clarify potential career paths for this major.

3. Recruit More Highly Qualified Graduate Students

Increasing the number of outstanding MA students is essential, to be accomplished by offering competitive funding packages to students. On par with undergraduate goals, our desired growth will be 10% per year. Partnerships with community organizations might be a source of funding.

- a. Work with college and university graduate services offices to enhance graduate recruitment efforts through marketing, faculty engagement, and community outreach.
- b. WGSS faculty, particularly the graduate advisor and faculty specializing in community-based partnerships will build meaningful opportunities to enhance the options for action research and creative work. Faculty will explore developing a practicum component. We will develop community partnerships that grow alternative thesis options based on the infrastructure for growth in the direction reviewers have suggested.
- c. The Director will continue to support and encourage students to take advantage of professional development partnerships like the Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA) and partnerships with state-wide campuses and WGSS peers.

4 Strengthening the Faculty, Public, and Professional Networks

1. Develop a mentoring program for institute faculty. The Director will tap into college and university resources to ensure faculty are aware of formal and informal mentoring structures.
 - a. The Director will work with the college to recruit faculty. This will be connected to enhanced professional partnerships (ex: SEWSA/NWSA).
 - b. The Director will work with the college to retaining faculty in conjunction with the college. This effort will be connected to enhancing professional development.

Signatures

Stephanie Evans

9.1.2021

Stephanie Y. Evans, Director

Date

S. Rosen

1 September, 2021

Sara Rosen, Dean

Date

Wendy Hensel

9/7/21

Wendy Hensel, Provost

Date