



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

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October 10, 2009

TO: Committee on Education Affairs
Faculty Senate of the College of Arts and Sciences

FROM: George Watson, Interim Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Watson".

RE: Proposed creation of the Department of Women's Studies

I am pleased to support the proposal to create a Department of Women's Studies at the University of Delaware. Since its creation in 1974, the Women's Studies Program has grown to become a department in every way but name. It now has substantial numbers of majors and minors, higher totals than at comparable institutions which have fully-fledged departments. The Program includes three tenure-track and three continuing non-tenure-track members of faculty as well as an additional 64 core and associated faculty members. Collectively, they project a notably multi-disciplinary scholarly presence on our campus. Already a thriving undergraduate program with approximately 3,000 students enrolled in its courses annually, its faculty members also aspire to develop a graduate program in the future.

The elevation of the Women's Studies Program to department status will not require additional resources. In recent years, the Program has functioned as a quasi-department led by a director whose terms of appointment are the same as those for department chairs. The Program has by-laws and the director conducts annual appraisals of faculty members whose primary appointments reside in the program. As with every department in our College, the Program has a separate budget and is subject to all the administrative policies that apply to departments. On two occasions, the Program has undergone Academic Program Reviews, and the most recent one strongly recommended its advancement to department status.

It is time to advance the Women's Studies Program to the Department of Women's Studies. It is the rational next step, will confirm current practice, and lay the foundation for further development of this important interdisciplinary area at the University of Delaware.

September 18, 2009

PROPOSAL TO GRANT DEPARTMENTAL STATUS TO THE WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

I. GOAL AND RATIONALE

The Women's Studies Program (WOMS) seeks departmental status. This long-term goal has been unanimously endorsed by the WOMS faculty and has been encouraged by the current and former deans of the College of Arts and Sciences. The following proposal provides an overview of WOMS, its history, faculty, and curriculum, and it outlines the rationale for granting WOMS departmental status. As will be detailed in the proposal, no new resources, be it in terms of faculty, additional financial support or new space allocations are needed for this transition.

Enrollment figures, numbers of majors and minors, study abroad programs and service learning as well as its many contributions to the academic life of the University (weekly lecture series, distinguished speakers etc.) show that WOMS has long outgrown program status and is de facto operating like a department. Its program status indicates WOMS's origin as a faculty-driven initiative but it does not adequately reflect its current work and contributions. Granting the Program departmental status is primarily an administrative change that would correct the imbalance between administrative status and educational operation.

II. HISTORY

Overview

The University of Delaware Women's Studies Program **was founded in 1974** at a time when academic Women's Studies programs were created nationwide in order to investigate the experiences and representations of women and address the multiple inequities women faced at all levels in society and culture. From their inception, women's studies programs were conceived within an interdisciplinary framework, and the humanities and social sciences were at the forefront of this new field that exploded with intellectual energy and enthusiasm. Over the past thirty years, Women's Studies has evolved from a primarily women-centered focus to a much broader field of inquiry often referred to as "gender studies" which includes the study of masculinity and acknowledges that gender is a decisive factor in all forms of knowledge and social organization. A second and equally important development has concerned the internationalization of women's studies which has led to the study of women and gender across nations, cultures, and ethnicities, often focusing on diversity and race. Women's Studies, including its methodologies, theories, and objects of inquiry has thus advanced into a highly complex and diverse research field to which disciplines such as biology, life

sciences, legal studies, disability studies and environmental studies increasingly contribute. WOMS has participated in this evolution and in the process developed into the largest and most successful interdisciplinary program at the University of Delaware.

The following are **major milestones** in this development:

- 1978/79 Creation of the Women's Studies Minor
- 1993/94 Approval of the Women's Studies Major; Six majors graduate in the first class
- 1998 Program enrolls 40 majors and 60 minors and enrolls over 2500 students in courses each academic year;
First Academic Program Review is conducted
- 2005 Second Academic Program Review is conducted strongly recommending granting WOMS a tenure-track line and departmental status
- 2006 The new minor in SGST (Sexualities and Gender Studies) is added to the program
- 2007 WOMS receives a 3-year research grant from the Provost's Office designed to foster university-wide WOMS research (faculty, graduate, and undergraduate levels). The grants result in the addition of numerous new cross-listed WOMS courses, including courses from departments traditionally not associated with WOMS such as the Department of Health and Exercise Sciences.
- 2008/09 WOMS is granted its very first tenure-track search. Search results in hiring the #1 ranked candidate, Dr. Pascha Bueno-Hansen, a specialist in transnational feminism and women's human rights.

Current Status

In each academic year, more than 3000 students enroll in WOMS classes, either free-standing or cross-listed, and based on their experience, many students decide to major or minor in WOMS. At the end of the spring semester 2009, the program had 98 majors and 105 minors. The numbers for our aspirational peer institutions, the University of North Carolina (60 majors, 40 minors) and the University of Virginia (25 majors, 9 minors) are significantly lower. In 2007, the program relocated from Ewing Hall to the blue Victorian House at 34 West Delaware Avenue, a move enthusiastically supported by the faculty.

II. Description of the Program

1. Faculty and Staff

The WOMS faculty is composed of **in-house faculty**, i.e. faculty whose lines are located in WOMS, as well as a large cadre of **core faculty** (39 faculty members) and **associate faculty** (25 faculty members) whose appointments are in different colleges and departments such as Anthropology, Communication, English, Foreign Languages and Literatures, History, Music, Philosophy, Political Science and International Relations, Sociology and Criminal Justice, Human Development and Family Studies, Health and Exercise Sciences. Core faculty include in-house faculty and faculty members who meet the criteria for a secondary appointment, i.e. teach three WOMS (cross-listed) courses over a five-year period. Associate faculty contribute to the instructional and service activities of WOMS and teach occasionally (cross-listed) WOMS courses.

The in-house, full-time faculty consists of three tenured or tenure-track faculty (one named professor, one associate professor, one assistant professor) and three CNTT faculty (all at the level of assistant professor). In addition, 25% of Dr. Jeannie Pfaelzer's appointment is in WOMS, which translates into one course per year taught by Dr. Pfaelzer, Professor of English. Within the past five years, three WOMS faculty have won major teaching and advising awards, and faculty members are regularly nominated for Excellence in Teaching Awards. The current full-time in-house faculty-student ratio based on students enrolled in WOMS classes is 634:1; the major to full-time in-house faculty ratio is 20:1.

The research profile of WOMS faculty, both in-house and affiliated, is very strong offering a prominent example of interdisciplinary research. With the new tenure-track position, WOMS will be able to further augment its research profile.

WOMS has one Assistant Director and one Office Coordinator. Jessica Schiffman has served WOMS almost from its inception, first as Program Coordinator and since 1997 as Assistant Director, and her dedicated service has been absolutely crucial for the growth and the success of the program. Emily Hayworth, the Office Coordinator has served the program also in an exemplary fashion. A Director, appointed to a five-year term, leads the program and is responsible for all its operations.

2. Curriculum

Courses offered in WOMS fall into two categories. The first category are courses owned by the program which carry the designation WOMS and are taught by in-house faculty. The second category are courses cross-listed with other departments, for example ENG/WOMS or HIST/WOMS and are taught by core or affiliated faculty. Courses range from the 200- to 400-level. Currently, WOMS owns twenty-six courses and on average

offers an additional twenty-nine cross-listed courses per semester. Cognizant of the evolving intellectual developments in the field of WOMS, particularly the focus on transnational feminisms, and the overall impact of globalization on education, WOMS recently underwent a significant curriculum change. This reform resulted in making a second introductory course focusing on international feminism mandatory for majors and creating new 300-level topics courses related to race, ethnicity and gender. With the arrival of the new faculty hire, Dr. Pascha Bueno-Hansen, we will expect further updates and additions to the curriculum, particularly in the areas of women and human rights and feminist methodology.

3. Study Abroad and Service Learning

Aware of the urgent need to provide students with international experience, WOMS was the first to offer a study abroad program in India which focused on women in rural parts of India. Students in the 2008 winter session program led by Dr. Carolyn Bitzer also learned to make their own podcasts allowing them to develop technology and documentary film making skills. Since then, WOMS has expanded its study abroad programs and is now offering programs in Paris, France and Buenos Aires, Argentina which were both led in coordination with colleagues from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures. The internship course, which fulfills a DLE requirement (Discovery Learning Experience), has provided students with service learning opportunities.

4. Students and Enrollment

Students enrolling in WOMS courses, whether owned by WOMS or cross-listed, fall in essentially two, though not strictly separated groups. The first and larger group comprises students who seek to fulfill requirements (such as multicultural, second writing course etc.) by enrolling in WOMS courses. The second, and significantly smaller, group is comprised of those students who, based on their positive classroom experience, decide to major or minor in WOMS. Since there are no WOMS courses offered at high schools, for virtually all UD students, WOMS is a new field which many of them embrace enthusiastically. Students majoring or minoring in WOMS find a host of different employment and educational opportunities that range from pursuing graduate degrees (including medical school and law school) to working for different local or state government offices, non-profit organizations or social service and health care providers. About 50% of WOMS students pursue a double major, and WOMS/Biology and WOMS/Psychology are particularly popular majors.

Demand for WOMS courses is very strong and has been growing steadily. Sections of the "Introduction to WOMS" regularly fill to capacity (60). The program recently added a SGST (Sexualities and Gender Studies) Minor which has met with a great deal of student interest.

5. Programming

Throughout the years, WOMS has contributed most actively to the intellectual climate on campus. The list of regular activities, examples of which include weekly lecture series, a film series, the annual Geis Student Research on Women Conference as well as numerous lectures is particularly impressive given WOMS limited resources. On average, WOMS organizes 2-3 lectures per semester providing a forum both for research conducted by UD faculty and by well-known scholars and artists from other institutions. With the support of other units on campus, WOMS was able to bring such luminaries as Susan Sontag or, more recently, Faith Ringgold to campus. WOMS prides itself in the ongoing intellectual support it has been able to provide to the UD community and the community at large.

6. Future Plans

Once granted departmental status, WOMS will begin discussions to establish a graduate certificate followed by a graduate program, possibly focused in transnational feminism and in collaboration with universities in Canada and Central and/or South America. Following the guidelines of the first strategic initiative, the 21st Century Research and Graduate Studies Initiative, WOMS would welcome the opportunity to create a new, interdisciplinary, and international graduate program.

7. Impact of Departmental Status on the Curriculum

No changes will occur in the curriculum, the training of students or in the requirements for WOMS majors and minors. Granting the program departmental status will have no effect on the educational operations.

III. Resources and Administrative Structure

Granting the WOMS program departmental status would not require any new resources at this point since it is essentially an administrative change that does not impact the research, teaching, and service delivered by WOMS faculty. No personnel changes, requests for additional budgetary needs, learning or space issues are applied for with this proposal.

If the proposal is successful, the program would need to be dissolved and replaced by the Department and it would require that the current WOMS by-laws be rewritten in order to adequately reflect the change. Departmental status would also entail that the title of Director be changed to that of Chair. The new by-laws should be cognizant of maintaining the strength of the core and affiliated faculty and of updating selection processes for the Chair.

IV. Conclusion

Most major WOMS programs at US universities have long achieved departmental status about ten to fifteen years ago and the University of Delaware is, in fact, significantly lagging behind these important developments. The University of Maryland and Rutgers University are two flagship universities in the Mid-Atlantic region which have highly regarded Women's Studies units. Both have departmental status with numerous tenure-track lines (UM 8-9, Rutgers 10) as well as graduate programs. Yet in both cases, the numbers of majors or minors are significantly smaller than at the UD.¹

University of Maryland	Rutgers University	University of Delaware
10 tenure track lines	10 tenure track lines	3 tenure-track lines
39 majors	27 majors	98 majors
10 minors, 63 certificate students	63 minors	105 minors

In supporting the WOMS move to Department, the University would correct an outdated administrative status, recognize WOMS as an equal player based on the growth and success demonstrated, and clear the way for further growth and prominence.

Approvals:

This proposal was unanimously approved (4:0) at the WOMS Executive Committee meeting held on Monday, September 14, 2009.

This proposal was unanimously approved (8:0) at the WOMS in-house faculty meeting held on Wednesday, September 16, 2009.

This proposal was unanimously approved (29:0) at the WOMS core faculty meeting held on Friday, September 18, 2009.

¹ Please note that these numbers are constantly in flux and are thus approximate values based on the information available in spring 2009.

Howie, Cheryl

From: Shenkle, Cynthia W. [cshenkle@art-sci.udel.edu]
Sent: Monday, October 12, 2009 6:53 AM
To: chowie@udel.edu
Subject: FW: Letters of support for advancement of WOMS to departmental status
Attachments: Dean-WOMS-support-ghw.pdf; Dean-WOMS-support-ghw.doc

Hi, Cheryl. This will go with the WOMS proposal when it is added to the 10/19 Ed. Affairs proposal.
Thank you.
Cindi

Cynthia Shenkle
Assistant Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Delaware
219 Mitchell Hall
Newark, DE 19716
(ph) 302-831-3020
(fax) 302-831-4358

From: Watson, George H.
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2009 11:51 AM
To: Pika, Joseph
Cc: Cleveland, Mary E.; Shenkle, Cynthia W.
Subject: Letters of support for advancement of WOMS to departmental status

Joe, thanks for drafting the letter; I fine-tuned a bit. Attached is scanned pdf of signed copy for Cindi to attach to proposal. Original is in Mary's desk in-box. In addition, the *.doc file is attached in case further edit is required.

George Watson
Interim Dean
College of Arts & Sciences
University of Delaware



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Howie, Cheryl

From: Shenkle, Cynthia W. [cshenkle@art-sci.udel.edu]
Sent: Friday, October 09, 2009 7:06 AM
To: Monika Shafi
Cc: chowie@udel.edu
Subject: RE: WOMS proposal

Dear Monika,
Thank you very much for your message. I'm including here Ms. Cheryl Howie who organizes the committee materials, so that she can watch for it in my mailbox so that it can be placed on the 10/19 Ed. Affairs agenda.
All best wishes,
Cindi

Cynthia Shenkle
Assistant Dean
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Delaware
219 Mitchell Hall
Newark, DE 19716
(ph) 302-831-3020
(fax) 302-831-4358

From: Monika Shafi [mshafi@UDel.Edu]
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2009 8:50 AM
To: Shenkle, Cynthia W.
Subject: WOMS proposal

Dear Cindi,

The routing form with the WOMS proposal attached has been sent to you and you should receive it latest by the end of this week. I will be leaving for a conference in DC later this afternoon and will, at best, have only infrequent e-mail access. If there should be any questions, you can direct them to Jessica Schiffman (jesss@udel.edu).
With best regards,
Monika

Monika Shafi
Elias Ahuja Professor of German
Director of Women's Studies
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
Phone: 302 831 2942
or 302 831 8474