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**\* External Review Team:**

Marilyn Porter (Chair) - Memorial University  
Paisley Currah – City University of New York  
Ann Braithwaite –University of Prince Edward Island.

CC L Cormack - Dean, Arts & Social Sciences  
C Murray - Chair, Department of Women's Studies.

**EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN**

**October 13, 2009**

Unit under review Women's Studies	Date of Review Site visit Report April 6, 2009	Responsible Unit person, Catherine Murray, Chair	Faculty Dean Lesley Cormack, Dean FASS
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**Note:** It is not expected that every Recommendation made by the Review Team needs to be included here. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified. Some consolidation of the Recommendations may be possible while other Recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.

External Review Recommendation	Unit's response notes/Comments (if any)	Action to be taken	Resource implications (if any)	Expected completion date
1 Consolidate Gender and Women's Studies(S.1.1.1) and streamline curriculum ( S. 1.2.3& 4 &6).	Yes	Application to Change Name to Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. Memo to Dean, September 25, 2009. Undergraduate curriculum review underway.	None.	Spring Semester
2 Allocate two new full time faculty lines. (S.1.21)	Requests tabled under current budget year.	Demonstrate total enrollment increase ( target +20%)and return to make the case in the next fiscal year for the first position as retirements increase.	Tabled	2010-2011 to be revisited

	Yes	Underway	Sustainable. No net new impacts since leaves returning.	Fall 2010
3 Reinstate Graduate admissions (S.1.2.2)				
4 Improve Visibility of Community Outreach (S.1.2.5 & 6/ S.1.3.1)	Yes	Underway. FASS is also collaborating on communication strategy.	None.	Ongoing.
5 Develop Associates (S.2.1.2&3)	Yes, but cap at 18	Underway. Especially to build breadth on gender and sexuality.	Some. Incentive/Service Framework will be accommodated under current endowment	Fall 2010
6. Integrate Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair. Increase Flexibility.(S. 2.2.3). Earmark Chair's Research Mandate.	Constrained by Terms of Reference for Endowment. Reject Women's Studies Identity Idea.	Continuing AP4 position matched by SFU is suspended for next academic year.	Interim 8 month or Post Doc Position, but will work with Dean to reestablish continuing position by 2011-2012.	Fall 2011.

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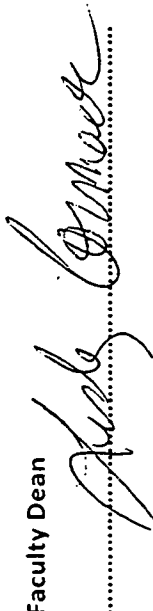
The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and ratified May 27, 2009. It has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

<b>Unit Leader (signed)</b>		<b>Date</b>
<b>Name</b> .....Catherine Murray .....	<b>Title</b> .....Professor and Chair Women's Studies .....	October 13, 2009 Based on Executive Summary of Full Response, dated June 2009 and reply September 25,2009

**Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan :**

''( Abstracts From Memo of September 17, 2009)  
I am in complete agreement with the Department in their move to reform their undergraduate curricula and to work to consolidate the Women's Studies and Gender Studies streams. I think the Department has taken the recommendations seriously and is working to improve their undergraduate and graduate programs as well as their relationship within and outside the university. I especially agree with the recommendation that they look for further associate members and I will work with them to improve the ways in which such cross-departmental teaching is 'counted' in the SFU System.

At the heart of the report...sits funding. ... While I have arranged a three year secondment to the program to fill the Chair position(2009-2012) it is not possible in the current budget situation to consider any new hires at the moment.... I urge the Department to increase its teaching per faculty member, as well as to ensure these statistics represent the true picture. In order to argue for future hires, the Department will need to be seen to be a place of strong student demand, as well as the excellent scholarship already undertaken. I also undertake to work together with Women's Studies on the funding of the Ruth Win Woodward Chair to ensure its continued viability....

<b>Faculty Dean</b>	<b>Date</b>
	26 Oct 09

**Full Response of the Women's Studies Department to the  
External Review Report of the Department,  
June 2009 (amended September 2009)**

The Department welcomes the External Review Report (henceforth ERR), its recognition of the national and international reputation of the Department, and its acknowledgement of the critical juncture the Department is experiencing due to the reduction in our faculty complement and financial pressures. We agree in principle and in most particulars with the ambitious program of changes the ERR proposes. At a special meeting to formulate our response, followed by an electronic referendum, the Department determined that we can implement most of the recommendations within the suggested timelines, *if, as the ERR also recommends*, we are provided with the necessary resources. We reject a few recommendations that do not reflect institutional realities at Simon Fraser University or our experience as a Department.

**In Part One, the Executive Summary & Action Plan** (pages 2 to 8), we organize our responses by whether the responses are positive, qualified, or negative, and within each of these categories, we subdivide by the time frame the ERR indicated: short, medium, or long term. Next, we list specific suggestions that were not associated with a particular timeframe and our responses to them.

**Part Two, Detailed Responses and Rationales** (pages 8 to 16), is with one exception organized recommendation by recommendation as listed in the ERR. Each recommendation or set of recommendations is followed by our response(s) and the reasons for the response(s).

## Part One: Executive Summary & Action Plan

### 1. Recommendations fully supported:

#### 1.1 Short term:

- 1.1.1 -that the distinction between Women's Studies and Gender Studies be eliminated and that these two course programs be consolidated into one and the creation of a new set of number designations that would reflect all Women's Studies and Gender Studies courses under a new system.

**Action:** The Department has already voted to consolidate the two programs and will integrate the number designations of the two programs this summer/fall.

#### 1.2 Medium term:

- 1.2.1 -that the Department be allocated two new full time appointments, one at the Associate Professor level, in order to both rebalance the department in terms of faculty levels and provide faculty to enable the Department to adequately offer its undergraduate and graduate programs as soon as possible.

Initial response: Our next requests for faculty lines will be for an Associate and Assistant position.

**Action:** *After discussion with Dean Cormack and receipt of the Memorandum of September 17, 2009, it is agreed to table requests for the new positions this year. See the Chair's acknowledgement dated September 25, 2009 in tab 5.*

- 1.2.2 -that the administration give priority to ensuring that the Women's Studies Department is able to reinstate entrance to its graduate program by September 2010 at the latest. (medium term)

**Action:** WS is accepting applications for the graduate program in 2009-3.

- 1.2.3 -advise the Department to look carefully at the three master's options in view of their restricted resources.



**Action:** We will replace the field exams with a publishable essay to cap the course-intensive option.

- 1.2.4 -We would encourage the growth of the Ph.D. program in particular. It is both a strength and a hallmark of the Department (long term).

**Action:** We agree with this recommendation and assessment.

- 1.2.5 -that the Department discuss how to make their community outreach more visible and how to recognize and articulate individual activities as part of a coherent departmental effort. (medium term)

**Action:** The Department will insert a page on Community Outreach to the Departmental website. It would help if FASS had a mechanism to make the outreach activities of all faculty members more visible and valued.

- 1.2.6 -that the Department explore streamlining its Joint Major degree options, perhaps by standardizing the Women's Studies requirement so that they are the same for each program (medium term)

**Action:** The Department will make appropriate changes in the two Women's Studies joint majors whose requirements are different than the rest, when the four faculty members of leave next year return (i.e. 2010-2011).

### 1.3 Long Term:

- 1.3.1 -that the administration pay particular regard to the existing work of Women's Studies in community outreach, and recognize how this work extends and contributes to the university's growing reputation locally, nationally, and internationally and that it recognize and make use of its expertise and provide support for further initiatives. (long term)

**Action:** We will provide more regular information about our extensive community outreach to the Dean.

### 1.4 No specified time frame:

- 1.4.1 -that Women's Studies does not lose any more physical resources.

Amen!

2. Recommendations partially supported:

2.1 Short term:

- 2.1.1 -that funds be made available from the administration immediately to facilitate this process (revising curriculum and courses).

**Action:** WS supports funding such extensive revisions to our curriculum but given the current financial situation, asks only two course releases for the Undergraduate Chair and sessional funding to cover these course releases.

2.2 Short and medium term:

- 2.1.2 -that the department extend invitations to more faculty members—especially but not limited to recent appointments—who do feminist research on women, gender, and sexualities in other units of the university to become Associate Faculty members, and that it create alternate ways to welcome and integrate these Associates into the intellectual life of the Department.

**Action:** WS will add Associates but cap the number at eighteen at any one time to ensure that we have enough faculty members to serve as internal/external examiners for our graduate students. We will continue to put Associate Faculty on our mailing lists and to offer a yearly luncheon for recent Associate Faculty members. Assuming that we will have enough faculty members in 2010-2011, we will appoint a faculty member to take responsibility for faculty liaison.

- 2.1.3 -that the Department actively explore the possibility of more cross-listed courses that reflect the breadth of work on gender and sexuality being done in other institutional locations.

**Action:** The Department will ask our Associates and potential Associates teaching in the areas of gender/women/sexuality about cross listing their courses. We will also ask Associates about designating WS courses for credit in their departments.

## 2.2 Medium Term:

- 2.2.2 -that the current CODE allotment of distance education courses be increased to at least two courses a year.

**Action:** Although we support this recommendation, we cannot comply unless CODE changes its stated policy of supporting only one new or adapted WS course a year. We are already committed to adding three new courses, including GDST 200, in the next three years.

- 2.2.3 -that the Department reflects on how to better integrate the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair into the thinking and resources of the Department, by building more flexibility into the Chair's responsibilities and possibilities, including enhancing the contribution of the chair to the Department, perhaps by extending the term of the chair and allowing her/him to take on additional or other duties, as the need and/or interest arises. (medium term)

Initial response: We will write more flexibility about the length of the term (i.e. one year with the possibility of renewal for one year) into advertisements for the Chair, so that a particularly appropriate incumbent might legally be asked to stay a second year. We will seek an agreement with the Administration that a Chair might be considered for a permanent position after their term expires.

Our expectations of the Endowed Chair are constrained by its terms of reference, which requires the Endowed Chair to put at least as much emphasis on public outreach as on their contribution to the Department. The reviewers seem unaware of this constraint.

**Action:** *In subsequent discussion with the Dean after the cuts to the T/TA budget eliminated the matched AP-4 equivalent in place for many years in the RWWP chair, it was agreed to explore the financial accounting history of the chair and look for ways to support the program. The Department agreed to seek either a shorter appointment or post-doctoral model for 2010-2011, but also asked to work with the Dean to seek ways to stabilize the Endowed Chair under its previous levels in time for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations with the four other such chairs established by the Status of Women Canada*

## 2.3 Specific Recommendations, without a timeline:

- 2.3.2 -advise the Department to look carefully at the master's degree requirements, in view of their restricted resources.

Action: We are going to eliminate the most labour-intensive of the three options for a master's degree.

- 2.3.3 -that the department think about establishing alternative points of entry into the undergraduate programs by rethinking the WS 101 and WS 102 prerequisites – either eliminating it completely in some cases, or designating alternative prerequisites such as a certain number of credit hours.

Action: We have sent a proposal to replace these prerequisites in 11 courses either with no prerequisites or six to fifteen credits in WS or GDST. Our major and minor requirements will be reviewed next year, to ensure a reasonable progression of courses leading to these degrees.

- 2.3.4 -making all 200 level courses broad introductions to the range of topics, theories, and approaches in the field. Each such course would articulate how they are part of the discipline as one focus in the course,

Action: Most of our 200 level courses are broad introductions and we are only accepting one change in 200 level courses that does not conform to this tradition. We are submitting to FASCC a new, open-access lecture course, WS 204, "Sex in the City," which several of our faculty can teach and which should attract students who might otherwise not choose WS.

- 2.3.5 -moving the current 200 level 'methods' and 'theories' courses to the upper level for degree-pursuing students.

Action: We prefer to keep the feminist theory and methods course at the 200 level, but have a proposal to amalgamate them as WS 203, "Feminisms, Ideas and Approaches." This seems to fall under the rubric of breadth at the 200 level.

- 2.3.6 -that the Women's Studies department introduce more 'topics' oriented courses at the 400 level (seminar style) – either by constructing new courses or, more easily, by renumbering some current 300 level courses and altering their content slightly to meet the specific requirements of graduating Women's Studies students and Master's students.

Action: We will consider this recommendation at an August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting on curricular reform, guided by two objectives: ensuring that these courses meet the needs of our minors and majors for a coherent program of studies and that the courses to which we attach graduate

add-ons, have pre-requisites and course content that justify a graduate add-on.

Update: *August the 19<sup>th</sup> saw overwhelming ratification of an agreement to change our name to better reflect the amalgamation of the program (see Memo Attached under tab 6), and with it, extensive curriculum changes, which are now set out in the Three Year Plan and will be working their way to Senate.*

- 2.3.7 A few additional suggestions: i) remove the word 'introduction' from the first year courses and find alternate names (without necessarily changing content) to capture broader range of students; ii) use the words 'social justice' in at least one course – existing or a new 100 level course – to both capture the grade 12 social justice course interest and as a possible alternative 100 level requirement for the degree programs.

**Action:** We will rename our two 100 level courses "Thinking About Women" and "Thinking about Feminism." Given appropriate faculty resources, we will add a "Thinking About Gender" course at the 100 level and a Social Justice course, likely at the 200 level.

### 3 Recommendations rejected:

#### 3.1 Medium term:

- 3.1.1 -that a future Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair could be recruited to contribute specifically to the development and growth of departmental identity and vision as a premier Women's Studies Department in Canada and that in the next two years the Women's Studies Department consider appointing a Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor with specific skills in the area of developing a Women's Studies identity to help focus their thinking and planning. (medium term)

**Rationale:** We believe that developing departmental vision and identity is best accomplished by engaging everyone in the department in the process and will request funding for another visioning exercise when we have a better picture of future faculty resources. Twenty-two years of experience advertising for RWW Chairs informs our adherence to the practice of advertising for applicants with a range of academic and activist expertise to ensure an adequate candidate pool.

- 3.1.2 - that the administration consider the pedagogical and course content implications of the increasing diversity of the student

body, and if necessary, funds should be made available to enable them to update and revise their courses.

**Rationale:** We believe that WS has reflected the increasing diversity of the student body.  
New faculty would allow us to expand our catchment, by teaching more courses on public policy and on masculinity and by introducing a course on Social Justice.

## Part Two, Detailed Responses and Rationales

### 4. Recommendations in response to the Five Questions posed to the reviewers.

**4.1 -strongly recommend that the Department be allocated two new full time appointments, one at the Associate Professor level, in order to both rebalance the department in terms of faculty levels and provide faculty to enable the Department to adequately offer its undergraduate and graduate programs as soon as possible. (medium term)**

WS agrees with this recommendation, which reflects our requests for CFL faculty lines since 2004 and responds to the retirement of four faculty members over the past six years. We have submitted a request for two Assistant Professor positions this coming year in consideration of the financial situation.

In the medium term, we will ask for an Associate and Assistant, and as the three faculty members approaching the age of normal retirement retire, we will seek replacements, although not necessarily in precisely the same fields.

**4.2 -that the department extend invitations to more faculty members—especially but not limited to recent appointments—who do feminist research on women, gender, and sexualities in other units of the university to become Associate Faculty members, and that it should create alternate ways to welcome and integrate these Associates into the intellectual life of the Department. (short and medium term)**

WS agrees with the intent of this recommendation, which we have to some degree pursued, but do not want its implementation to reduce the number of faculty that our Graduate Program can call upon for internal/external examiners for thesis and dissertation defenses.

We currently have twelve Associate Faculty members from five departments; four of them were added in the past year, when one Associate retired and another will retire. We will add more Associate to our roster but cap their number at eighteen at any one time. The recent introduction of a limited term as Associate Faculty, with the option of renewing, or not renewing, every three years, should allow us to draw upon more than eighteen faculty members over time.

As for welcoming Faculty Associates, we have always put them on our mailing lists to be informed about any public events and special seminars and invited them to participate in our recent campus-wide colloquium on the body. This year we held a luncheon for recently-appointed Associates, at which we provided them with information about our programs, answered any questions they had about the programs, and requested input on what they were doing that might interest our students. The response was positive and we will continue to do this yearly.

For the medium term, we are considering appointing a faculty member to take responsibility for faculty liaison. We will not be able to do this next year, when our faculty complement is nearly depleted due to four study leaves and four retirements without replacements.

## 5. Undergraduate Program

**5.1 -that the distinction between Women's Studies and Gender Studies be eliminated and that these two course programs be consolidated into one and the creation of a new set of number designations that would reflect all Women's Studies and Gender Studies courses under a new system. (short and medium term)**

At the special meeting to consider the External Review on 8 May 2009 (confirmed by an electronic poll of all voting members), the Department voted to consolidate the two programs. A decision about consolidation, which we discussed previously, had been postponed until after the External Review.

We have scheduled a special curriculum meeting of the department on 19 August 2009, when we will decide on a new name for the department and create an integrated system of course numbers. These changes will be brought to the FASS Curriculum Committee in the fall of 2009.

**5.2 -that the Department explore streamlining its Joint Major degree options, perhaps by standardizing the Women's Studies requirement so that they are the same for each program (medium term)**

The Department will make appropriate changes to the two Women's Studies joint majors whose requirements differ from the other joint majors, but not until 2010-2011, when there will be more faculty members available to work on the medium-

term recommendations. We will need to consult with the other departments involved, which might further delay approval of the changes.

**5.3 -that the Department actively explore the possibility of more cross-listed courses that reflect the breadth of work on gender and sexuality being done in other institutional locations.**

The Department has qualms about significantly increasing the number of cross-listed courses with other departments, because enrollments more often accrue to the other departments. As long as the University is committed to increasing enrollments and its current system of rewarding departments on the basis of enrollments, we only commit to consulting with our associates and potential associates who teach in the areas of gender/women/sexuality about cross listing their courses.

We will also explore having courses in WS designated for credit in other departments—as we have done with WS 201, 202 and 306 for nearly two decades—because enrollment in these courses count toward our enrollment. The presence of faculty members jointly appointed with WS in the other department that designated our courses facilitated their designation. In so far as the three remaining joint appointments have not pursued this option, we will investigate whether Associate Faculty would vouch for the scholarly and pedagogical quality of any courses we wanted to be designated. We can only hope that the University algorithm for enrollment accounting will not undermine this kind of initiative.

**5.4 -that the current CODE allotment of distance education courses be increased to at least two courses a year. (medium term)**

We support this recommendation, but having been informed, when we approached CODE last spring with an ambitious plan to increase the number of WS courses on line, that CODE could only support one new or adapted WS course a year for the next three years, we decided to add three new courses, including GDST 200, in the next three years. We revised two long-time Distance Education courses, specifically to be on-line courses, in 2007-8 and 2008-9.

We think it might be useful to assess the success of the first two new courses after they were offered once or twice, before committing to two new courses a year. Once again, new faculty members would make this program of course creation more feasible for a small department.

**5.5 -The re-organization and streamlining of the program will entail the revision of some courses and the re-writing of others. We recommend that funds be made available from the administration immediately to facilitate this process. We further recommend that the administration consider the pedagogical and course content implications of the increasing diversity of the student body, and if**



**necessary, funds should be made available to enable them to update and revise their courses.**

WS certainly supports funding such extensive revisions to our curriculum. In so far as there has been no University or FASS funding for this kind of essential pedagogical work in our collective memory (or are we misinformed?), we have proceeded with revisions and streamlining. With the integration of Women's Studies and Gender Studies and the resulting curricular overhaul, we would like a commitment from administration for the following resources:

- two course releases for the Undergraduate Chair
- funds for sessionals to cover these course releases.

Last summer, when we explored the possibility of inviting a curricular specialist in post-secondary instruction in WS to a day-long workshop, we found the cost of the closest one (a professor of Education at UBC) prohibitive for a department with a budget under \$17,500.00. Travel and accommodation costs would make distant specialists more expensive. Perhaps the Administration should employ curricular consultants to help the many departments trying to implement new directives about more lecture, on-line, and alternative courses.

As for the implication that WS has not reflected the increasing diversity of the student body, we totally reject the implication. A short list of our initiatives to increase diversity includes:

- offering Distance Education (now CODE) courses since the early 1990s and creating more CODE courses to serve students that cannot come to campus
- offering courses on race and gender since the mid-1990s,
- appointing six Ruth Wynn Woodward Chairs who specialized in the history, sociology and literature of women of colour as well as one who specialized in transgender (and all left a mark on our courses)
- introduced the GDST minor in 2004 to cater to more men, gay, bisexual and transgender students;
- made liberal use of Humanities and Social Science Breadth designations to draw students from other faculties, notably Science and Business;
- are changing WS 102 from Western Feminisms to Western and Global Feminisms, prior to renaming it Thinking about Feminism;
- and conducted a study of ways of appealing to high school students that recommended, among other things, contacting teachers of the new high school course on social justice with offers to either visit their classes or host their classes in one of our introductory courses. This initiative was premature, in so far as the teachers participating in the trial run for this new high school course were not interested. We will try to contact teachers once they are more accustomed to teaching the course.

New faculty would allow us to expand our catchment by teaching more courses on public policy and on masculinity and introducing a course on Social Justice to attract high school recruits who have no instruction about WS or GDST in high school, but who may have taken the new high school course on Social Justice.

Regretfully, among the five courses that we propose to drop in response to the FASCC directive to eliminate courses without a dedicated faculty member to teach them is Women and Religion, which has focused on women or feminism in Islamic cultures in recent years.

## 6. Graduate Programs

**6.1 -that the administration give priority to ensuring that the Women's Studies Department is able to reinstate entrance to its graduate program by September 2010 at the latest. (medium term)**

WS has already announced that we will be accepting applications for the graduate program in 2009-3. More faculty members would make this a more viable option.

*The following is slightly out of order but relates to the graduate program.*

**6.2 -advise the Department to look carefully at the three master's options in view of their restricted resources.**

We will replace the field exams, which are the most labour-intensive, with a publishable essay to cap the course-intensive option. We voted to do this in 2008-3 but have been preoccupied with preparing for and responding to the external review.

**6.3 -encourage the growth of the Ph.D. program in particular. It is both a strength and a hallmark of the Department (long term)**

This recommendation, which we wholeheartedly support, would be easier to implement if the department had a full complement of faculty in WS/GDST. We need to replace faculty who are likely to retire in the next two or three years and who have ceased taking new PhD students, because they may not be available to supervise PhDs to completion.

## 7. Community Outreach

**7.1 -that the administration pay particular regard to the existing work of Women's Studies in community outreach, and recognize how this work extends and contributes to the university's growing reputation locally, nationally, and internationally and that it recognize and make use of its expertise and provide support for further initiatives. (long term)**

We support this recommendation and will contribute to its realization by providing more regular information to the Administration (see below).

**7.2 -that the Department discuss how to make their community outreach more visible and how to recognize and articulate individual activities as part of a coherent departmental effort. (medium term)**

Inferring from this recommendation that our annual (hard copy and on-line) Newsletter is inadequate to the task, we will put a new page on our website with updated information about our activities. The Chair, who will expand her efforts to inform the Administration about our outreach activities, would appreciate Administrative guidance about how to do this effectively. We have a suggestion: a mechanism within FASS to make the extensive outreach efforts of all faculty members, not just those in WS, more visible, better regarded and even rewarded.

## **8. Ruth Wynn Woodward Professorship**

**8.1 -that the Department reflects on how to better integrate the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair into the thinking and resources of the Department, by building more flexibility into the Chair's responsibilities and possibilities, including enhancing the contribution of the chair to the Department, perhaps by extending the term of the chair and allowing her/him to take on additional or other duties, as the need and/or interest arises. (medium term)**

Until the past five years, the Department was flexible about the length of the term for the Ruth Wynn Woodward's Chair (from one semester to four years). However, we noticed that longer terms encouraged some incumbents to withdraw from involvement in the last year of their term and others to develop expectations about permanent appointments that the Department was unable to fulfill. Accordingly, we have for the past five years advertised for one-year appointments. When we inquired about extending a one-year term, Gayle Myers informed us that an advertisement that specified a one-year term could not be extended.

Two responses to the ERR suggestions are:

- specifying in advertisements for applicants for the Chair that we would consider one or two year terms, so that a promising incumbent might legally be asked to stay a second year.
- an agreement with the Administration that a Chair would be considered for a permanent position after their term, which would have the added advantage of addressing the particularly difficult hiring situation in FASS at this time.

As for the suggestion that the Endowed Chair should contribute more to the Department, the terms of reference for the Endowed Chair put at least as much emphasis on the public outreach component of the Chair's responsibilities as on their contribution to the Department. We are reluctant to do anything that can be construed as improper stewardship of the Chair.

**8.2 -that a future Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair could be recruited to contribute specifically to the development and growth of departmental identity and vision as a premier Women's Studies Department in Canada.**

The Department is working on its vision, beginning with a visioning workshop last spring and continuing in our external review retreat and Self Study. We intend to remain a leader among Women's Studies Departments in Canada but are not persuaded that hiring a Chair with skills in developing a WS identity would be the best way to accomplish this. We think that the whole Department needs to be fully engaged in this process. Funding for another visioning exercise, especially when we have a better picture of our faculty resources in the future, would be useful in this regard.

**8.3 -that in the next two years the Women's Studies Department consider appointing a Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor with specific skills in the area of developing a Women's Studies identity to help focus their thinking and planning. (medium term)**

At a very practical level, we are concerned that advertising for such a specialist might significantly limit the number and perhaps quality of the applicants for the Chair. It might be possible to indicate in an advertisement, that we encourage applicants with this kind of expertise, and other kinds of expertise, to ensure more applications. Broad advertising has served us well in the past, and there is no reason to believe that this practice will not work in the future.

## **9. Material and Human Resources**

**9.1 -that Women's Studies does not lose any more physical resources.**

Amen! The recent loss of three more offices (bringing our total losses to five offices) has meant that our department cannot offer TAs, sessionals and PhD candidates the accommodations other departments, including the one that has taken over our former offices, provide their teachers and graduate students.

**10. Some additional suggestions about curriculum and programming for the department:**

**10.1 -that the department think about establishing alternative points of entry into the field by rethinking this prerequisite (WS 101 and/or WS 102) – either eliminating it completely in some cases, or designating alternative prerequisites such as a certain number of credit hours.**

We have voted to eliminate these prerequisites from 11 courses, replacing them with no prerequisites or six to fifteen credits in WS or GDST. Our major and minor requirements will be reconsidered next year, to ensure a reasonable progression of courses leading to these degrees.

**10.2 -making all 200 level courses broad introductions to the range of topics, theories, and approaches in the field. Each such course would articulate how they are part of the discipline as one focus in the course.**

We are examining our 200 level courses, most of which already are broad introductions, with this recommendation in mind and, in the interval, are only accepting changes that are broad. We are also submitting for approval a new, open-access, no-prerequisite course, WS 204, called Sex in the City, to be taught as a lecture course, which we believe will attract students who might otherwise not choose WS.

**10.3 -moving the current 200 level ‘methods’ and ‘theories’ courses to the upper level for degree-pursuing students.**

We prefer to keep the feminist theory and methods course at the 200 level, for pedagogical reasons, but are submitting a proposal to merge the two courses into one, WS 203, entitled Feminisms, Ideas and Approaches, in our June 2009 submission to FASCC. This merger respects the recommendation to make 200 level course broad introductions and allows more of our faculty members to teach the course.

**10.4 -that the Women’s Studies department introduce more ‘topics’ oriented courses at the 400 level (seminar style) – either by constructing new courses or, more easily, by renumbering some current 300 level courses and altering their content slightly to meet the specific requirements of graduating Women’s Studies students and Master’s students.**

We will consider this recommendation at the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting on curricular reform, mentioned above. We will be guided by two intersecting agendas: ensuring that these courses meet the requirements of our minors and majors and

that the courses to which graduate add-ons are attached, have the pre-requisites and course content appropriate to have an add-on.

**10.5 -A few additional suggestions: i) remove the word 'introduction' from the first year courses and find alternate names (without necessarily changing content) to capture broader range of students; ii) use the words 'social justice' in at least one course – existing or a new 100 level course – to both capture the grade 12 social justice course interest and as a possible alternative 100 level requirement for the degree programs.**

We have had a preliminary and positive discussion about removing the word "introduction" and replacing the current titles of the 100 level courses with titles such as "Thinking About Women" and "Thinking about Feminism." If we could count on new faculty lines, we would add a "Thinking About Gender" course at the 100 level. See above about a course on Social Justice.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Lynn Stewart for the entire Department of Women's Studies

**External Review Report  
Women's Studies Department  
Simon Fraser University**

**External Reviewers:**

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Submitted April 6, 2009

**Executive Summary**

The external review team is unanimous in our respect for the accomplishments and quality of the Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University. It remains one of the best Women's Studies departments in the country, and also has a significant international reputation. However, the Department is at a critical juncture. A series of losses of faculty coupled with increasing fiscal restraint have pushed it to the point of unsustainability. On a more positive note, we think that the crisis does offer the opportunity to re-think and revise their current programmes. In moving forward in this revisioning process, the Department can build on its strengths, taking advantage of new thinking and creating innovative opportunities. This will require support of various kinds (not just faculty renewal) from the administration, but the result will be a programme that both optimizes its resources and is a robust and invigorated Department, able and ready to take a leadership position in the university.

While we understand the difficulties facing the university as a whole and all the units in it, we have been struck by what seems to us to be a number of unnecessarily complex bureaucratic hurdles and procedures. When departments are being asked to change and reform, it would be helpful if the streamlining process extended across the university as a whole. We feel that this is also true of the way in which statistics and other records are collected and used. We found a number of examples where the administration appears to calculate departmental effort in ways that do not take account of the complex limitations of a small department with a number of joint

appointments or faculty having major responsibilities outside the Department. In addition, Women's Studies is, by any counting scheme, a small department. Experience elsewhere indicates that schemes designed for the whole university tend to discriminate against such smaller units--for example, by underestimating the effect of the loss of one faculty member, or by 'rounding down' calculations of faculty/student ratios.

In a short report, we cannot provide the rich detail about either the Department's successes and strengths or about the challenges that it faces that we would like, but the ample documentation provided by both the administration and the Department has enabled us to make a coherent series of major and minor recommendations. Our major recommendations are summarized below, and the more minor ones -- mostly at the departmental level -- are included in an appendix.

### **The Five Questions**

The Terms of Reference provided to us outlined some general areas that we should document and comment on, but also laid out five issues that the administration and the Department wanted us to pay particular attention to. We provide our major suggestions and recommendations on these five issues below. We also indicate whether we see the implementation of these recommendations as being short term (within 3 months), medium term (within 3 years), or longer term (3-5 years). Further rationale for these recommendations is provided in the body of this report.

a) Evaluate the impact of recent and expected future faculty retirements on the Department.

◆ We strongly recommend that the Department be allocated two new full time appointments, one at the Associate Professor level, as soon as possible. (medium term)

◆ We recommend that the department extend invitations to more faculty members—especially but not limited to recent appointments—who do feminist research on women, gender, and sexualities in other units of the university to become Associate Faculty members, and that it should create alternate ways to welcome and integrate these Associates into the intellectual life of the Department. (short and medium term)

b) Consider future directions for the Gender Studies minor and the potential for expanding the Graduate Studies program, including collaborations with other departments and programs.

#### Undergraduate program:

◆ We recommend that the distinction between Women's Studies and Gender Studies be eliminated and that these two course programs be consolidated into one. We further recommend the creation of a new set of number designations that would reflect all Women's Studies and Gender Studies courses under a new system. (short and medium term)

◆ We recommend that the Department explore streamlining its Joint Major



degree options, perhaps by standardizing the Women's Studies requirements so that they are the same for each program. (medium term)

◆ We recommend that the Department actively explore the possibility of more cross-listed courses that reflect the breadth of work on gender and sexuality being done in other institutional locations. (medium term)

◆ We recommend that the current CODE allotment of distance education courses be increased to at least two courses a year. (medium term)

◆ The re-organization and streamlining of the programme will entail the revision of some courses and the re-writing of others. We recommend that funds be made available from the administration immediately to facilitate this process. We further recommend that the administration consider the pedagogical and course content implications of the increasing diversity of the student body, and if necessary, funds should be made available to faculty to enable them to update and revise their courses. (short term)

#### Graduate Programs

◆ We recommend that the administration give priority to ensuring that the Women's Studies Department is able to reinstate entrance to its graduate programme by September 2010 at the latest. (medium term)

◆ We would encourage the growth of the Ph.D. programme in particular. (long term)

c) Identify the research strengths of the Department and suggest possible new strategies or initiatives for the future.

◆ We are impressed by both the quality and the depth of the research activity in the department. While there are clear strengths, for example in public policy and in gender and health, we would argue against insisting that there be specific, but limited, research foci in the department. New faculty may well bring completely different but equally valuable research interests. The Department is already exploring a wide range of sources for funding, and while in a time of fiscal restraint they should continue and extend these efforts, neither should they nor the administration discriminate against those faculty whose research activities do not mesh with obtaining large external grants. We have no specific recommendations in this area.

d) Review the effectiveness of the Department's community outreach initiatives.

◆ We recommend that the administration pay particular regard to the existing work of Women's Studies in community outreach, and recognize how this work extends and contributes to the university's growing reputation locally, nationally, and

internationally. (long term)

◆ We recommend that the Department discuss how to make their community outreach more visible and how to recognize and articulate individual activities as part of a coherent departmental effort. (medium term)

e) Assess the Department's stewardship of the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair in Women's Studies.

◆ We would suggest that the Department reflects on how to better integrate the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair into the thinking and resources of the Department, including enhancing the contribution of the chair to the Department, perhaps by extending the term of the chair and allowing her/him to take on additional or other duties, as the need and/or interest arises. (medium term)

◆ We would further suggest that a future Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair could be recruited to contribute specifically to the development and growth of departmental identity and vision as a premier Women's Studies Department in Canada. (medium term)

## Background and Context

Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University began 30 years ago in 1976, one of the earliest programmes to develop Women's Studies as an intellectual discipline in Canada, or, indeed, in the world. The intervening years have seen (sometimes slow but) steady growth in all areas, with significant highlights along the way, including the inception of the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair in 1985 and the introduction of the Ph.D. programme in 2004, one of only five such programmes in Canada. The Department currently serves 775 undergraduate and 23 graduate students, with a core staff of five full time faculty, and with some help from the three joint appointments and from the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair.

From its inception, Women's Studies at Simon Fraser became a significant actor in the development of the discipline across Canada. Its scholars were, and are, nationally and internationally recognized; its graduates moved on to become significant players inside and outside the university. It remains a powerhouse, with a national and international 'clout' beyond what its size might suggest. It is one of the leading Women's Studies departments in Canada with a continuing high reputation for teaching, publications, multi-disciplinary major research projects, contributions to theoretical discussions about the future of the discipline, and leadership in feminist scholarly associations and publications.

As a nexus of interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, Women's Studies links to a multiplicity of other areas and disciplines. Its role as a key focal point is exemplified by the range of cross-listed course, joint majors and minors, and joint and associate faculty. It continues to provide real strengths to the university in this way. Since the 1970s, however, Women's Studies has also

developed as a discipline, evolving as all other disciplines have--by developing a sense of cohesion, a shared set of texts and references, a distinct (although fluid and evolving) body of theory and methodology, a set of shared values and priorities (always contested), and a distinctive pedagogy and 'atmosphere'. In all these ways Women's Studies at SFU has contributed significantly to the development of the discipline of Women's Studies.

However, in 2009, Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University finds itself at a critical juncture. In our view, its diminishing resources (mostly as a result of recent and continuing loss of faculty) has reached the point of unsustainability. In recent years, the administration has made many, sometimes contradictory, demands on the Department, such as giving priority to both higher enrollments and an enhanced research programme. Like other small departments, Women's Studies has suffered disproportionately from both larger proportional losses of resources and from discrimination in the various statistical evaluations that use methods that inevitably under-represent the Department's efforts and achievements. In our view, the Department has systematically endeavored to achieve the targets set by the administration in all areas—enrollments, grants, publications, and so on. The Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser has the potential to continue to grow and remain one of the leading Women's Studies departments in the country. Further, it has the potential to respond to the current crisis with innovative and sustainable initiatives. But, in order to do this, it must receive immediate and continuing support from the administration, including, but not limited to faculty renewal.

In this report we make a number of suggestions and recommendations. Some of these can be accomplished with no or few extra resources; some require considerable commitment on the part of the administration. But we would point out that this small unit is already working at full capacity. Even comparatively small changes, such as re-organizing courses, take considerable discussion and work from both faculty and support staff. Support provided at this point will pay much greater dividends in terms of the future robustness and vitality of the Department.

An additional note about numbers: we have considered carefully the documentation on enrollments in both the undergraduate and graduate programmes. They are difficult to interpret and seem to offer a shifting target. The current chair of Women's Studies contests some of the most recent figures (Self Study p.8-9), arising out of misinterpretation of FTTEs. Discussions with administrators lead us to believe that while some figures on low enrollments in Women's Studies are correct, they are misleading and discriminatory towards small departments because of the way in which faculty are counted, even when their other duties or releases make it impossible for them to teach courses. While we do not think that the enrollment figures for Women's Studies are as much below average as some reporting would suggest, we are aware that Women's Studies is making every effort to increase its enrollments at the undergraduate level. We understand that new methods, which include counting graduate enrollments, will improve the standing of Women's Studies. In our recommendations, especially those directed at streamlining the undergraduate programmes, we have looked at ways in which reduced faculty resources can be best used. We also think that the new focus on open entry 'flagship' courses and additional distance education courses will both significantly increase enrollments in

Women's Studies. We mention this here in order to make the point that our recommendations about re-organizing faculty and curricular resources are about how best to utilize and optimize the resources available, rather than simply to bow to the pressure to increase overall enrollments—although we suspect that will also happen.

## **Process of External Evaluation and Site Visit**

The three external reviewers were contacted well in advance and asked to carry out an external review of the Women's Studies Department. Bal Basi, Program Assistant in the Office of the Vice President, made all the arrangements most efficiently. We were sent a large package of documentation approximately three weeks ahead of time, providing time for us (individually) to familiarize ourselves with the requirements of the review, the university context, and the detailed self-study and associated materials prepared by the Women's Studies Department. The documents we received are listed in the Appendix. One other document which we did not receive, but which would have been very useful, was the report of the previous external review carried out in 2003. It would also have been extremely useful if at least some of these documents had been sent to us in electronic form.

We also received a very substantial binder containing the Women's Studies Department's Self Study, with all the associated documentation. We would like to recognize the extraordinary professionalism and care with which the Women's Studies faculty and especially the Chair, Dr. Mary Lynn Stewart, prepared this Self Study. Her efforts contributed greatly to our ability to understand both the achievements and challenges of the Department.

Our site visit took place Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The university administration had requested that we remain in Vancouver over Saturday so as to work together on our Report. While four days is a long time by the standards of External Reviews, we valued both the extra day of interviews and the time provided so that we could work together on the Report.

Our schedule included individual and group meetings over three days as well as a reception. The visit was well arranged and every attempt was made to meet our requests. The schedule was intense and all the reviewers felt that we had met a good cross section of people involved at various levels and in various ways with the Women's Studies Department, including all of the key players. The depth of this process—from document review to extensive interviews—gave us the footing we required to assess the accomplishments and the current challenges facing the Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University.

## Faculty Resources

### Teaching Complement

Since the last external review in 2002, the Department has gained two junior level faculty members but lost three senior faculty members. The Department now has five full time faculty and three joint appointments. In addition to the permanent faculty complement, the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair teaches two courses a year, and we were given to understand that the incoming Department chair will contribute two courses a year.

There are two problems with the faculty teaching complement as it stands now that pose a serious challenge to the department's ability to maintain its programme. The first problem is that none of the faculty with joint appointments teach as much as half time in the Department. This is because of release from teaching for external grants, administrative responsibilities, research chair conditions, health issues, etc. The result is a much lower teaching contribution than might otherwise be expected of joint appointment positions.

Second, the Department is skewed toward senior faculty and faces a wave of retirements in the next few years. One full time appointment, with a high teaching load, is retiring in August of 2009, and her teaching contribution to the Department will be especially difficult to replace. Three other faculty members are approaching the age when people often choose to retire. There has not been a new hire since 2004 when Lara Campbell joined the faculty.

In sum, the low level of teaching contributions from the jointly appointed faculty, potential retirements in the next few years, the end of courses taught by sessional instructors in 2010, and planned study leaves (two planned for next year and one for the following year) create serious challenges for the Department. Without a minimum of two full faculty appointments, the Department will not be able to sustain its undergraduate and graduate programs, including Ph.D. supervision, in the next few years. It is for this reason that the Department decided to suspend admissions to both its M.A. and Ph.D. programmes for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Additionally, this uneven development of faculty in such a small department has long term implications for the two most junior people in the Department. As the more senior members retire, the newer hires will bear the brunt of administrative work in the Department in future years, in effect becoming a cohort of two senior people, possibly followed by more junior faculty.

**We recommend that the Department be allocated two new full time appointments, one at the associate level, as soon as possible, in order to both rebalance the department in terms of faculty levels and provide faculty to enable the Department to adequately offer its undergraduate and graduate programmes.**

## Associate Faculty

Currently, according to the academic calendar, the Department has thirteen Associate members. While respectable, that number does not represent the number of faculty members across the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences who engage in innovative feminist research on women, gender, and sexualities. During our visit, we did not have the opportunity to meet with any faculty members who do women's, gender, and sexuality studies who are not already Associate faculty in the Women's Studies Department. But conversations with faculty and graduate students in the Department, in addition to a review of conference reports (the 2008 Regulating Bodies" colloquium, the 2007 "TransSomatechnics" conference, and the 2006 conference "Transformations: The Politics of Women's Studies"), clearly revealed that Simon Fraser is rich in feminist scholars who center women, gender and/or sexuality in their research. Expanding the tier of Associate faculty would encourage collaborative networking and knowledge production. Certainly, some of that collaboration is already happening organically, outside the Department's formal structures, through informal reading groups and research networks, and is evidenced from conference programming. But we think the Department should support the development of this larger intellectual community by increasing the number of Associate faculty members. The Department and the wider Women's Studies community would both gain if the Department were to reposition itself as a focal point, drawing feminist scholars from across the university together. Creating a real home for feminist scholarship at the university would ensure the ongoing vitality of the Department in the future. Additionally, increasing the number of Associate faculty would do much to create or rebuild connections between the Department and other departments. One of the medium term consequences would be to make cross-listing arrangements easier to arrange.

**We recommend the Department extend invitations to more faculty members—especially but not limited to recent appointments—who do feminist research on women, gender, and sexualities to become Associate faculty members. We also recommend that the Department create alternate ways to welcome and integrate Associate faculty into the intellectual life of the Department.**

## **Faculty Research**

The Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University is recognized nationally and internationally. The scholarship produced by faculty members ranges from the promising to stellar. In terms of the faculty's scholarly reputation, the Department is fortunate to have several scholars of international stature. And it appears to be a truth universally acknowledged by the people we met during our review that the two faculty members hired since the last review—Helen Leung and Lara Campbell—were inspired appointments. From prestigious grants to countless interviews in national media to the publication of cutting edge critical and cultural analysis and the hosting of conferences drawing international audiences, the scholarly reputation of the Women's Studies Department adds much to the lustre of Simon Fraser University as a

leading intellectual center.

Individual research interests are accurately described in the self study, so we will not repeat that information here. By both qualitative and quantitative measures—which we operationalize as “how many” and “where published”—the Department’s aggregate output is very impressive. As detailed in the self-study, since the last external review in 2002, the eight core members of the faculty have authored or created an inspiring combined total of 187 books, peer reviewed articles, book chapters, edited collections, book reviews and short contributions, reports, monographs, and films. In the last year alone, two of the eight core faculty have had books published—Helen Leung’s *Undercurrents: Queer Culture and Postcolonial Hong Kong* (University of British Columbia Press, 2008) and Mary Lynn Stewart’s *Dressing Modern Frenchwomen; Marketing Haute Couture, 1919-1939* (John’s Hopkins University Press, 2008). A third faculty member, Lara Campbell, will see the publication of her first book, *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family and Unemployment in the Great Depression, Ontario, 1929-1939* (University of Toronto Press), later this year.

On the qualitative side, the research output of the Department appears in leading university presses—such as the University of Toronto Press, University of British Columbia Press, the University of Alberta Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, University of Minnesota Press. Faculty have also found homes for their research in highly regarded publishing houses, such as Ashgate and Routledge, that engage in the peer review process. Articles by faculty members are published in recognized Women’s Studies journals, including *Atlantis* and *Canadian Woman Studies*, and prestigious journals from other disciplines, such as *Asian Cinema*, *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *French Historical Studies*, *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, *International Review of Qualitative Research*, and the *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*.

In terms of research ‘input’ some members of the department work in fields (e.g. history, cultural studies) that do not require large external grants to produce knowledge. We emphasize this point because the diversity of scholarly activity across the university, and in Women’s Studies, needs to be assessed by a broad range of criteria. Clearly, the largest and most prestigious grants have been those awarded to Griffin Cohen, with her \$1,000,000 CURA grant, and Canada Research Chair Patton, with her many health related grants. In this area, at least, size does matter, but we were also extremely impressed with the effort and care that these two faculty members took to leverage their grants so adroitly to support graduate students. They did this not only by giving graduate students employment, and hence funding, but also by making sure that the employment involved substantive training and the possibility of publication. Indeed, the number and quality of graduate student publications and conference presentations (listed in Appendix 13) is a clear sign of the success of the Department in creating a research environment for the incubation of ideas.

## Undergraduate Programming and Curriculum

As both an intellectual discipline and an institutional and academic site, Women's Studies is both tightly focused and wide-ranging in its interests—a statement that might seem initially contradictory but which is in fact one of the major strengths of this field. In its current practices, Women's Studies incorporates at least two major focuses: i) a focus on women and women's experiences in a variety of locations, and ii) investigations into the historical and contemporary social/political/cultural/personal construction of social identities that make up this category, a focus that necessarily includes work on gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, disability, class, and age, among others. Both pedagogically and intellectually, the discipline of Women's Studies (or its increasingly common designation as Women's and Gender Studies) thus includes work that covers a wide range of fields, topics, approaches, and theories. But while many other disciplines are also increasingly concerned with issues of gender and sexuality (and other social identity groups)—work which must connect with and be included in the institutional site of Women's Studies, Women's Studies is also much more than the sum of all of this wide-ranging work. At its 'core,' the discipline of Women's Studies self-reflexively articulates a set of overlapping questions, debates, concerns, and issues, asking questions about the knowledge produced in these other intellectual and institutional sites and investigating what is at stake in this knowledge production.

We offer the above short introduction to the discipline of Women's Studies here in order to frame our following comments and recommendations for how the Department can build on and expand its current strengths in curriculum and programming. Our comments here have largely been shared with the Department over the three days of our visit with its members, and both reflect and build on discussion currently occurring in the Department. We were impressed with the amount of careful and ongoing thinking the Department is putting into its undergraduate curriculum, especially in response to what are often two competing emphases—increasing overall enrollment numbers across the board and maintaining and strengthening the necessity for a cumulative educational experience for undergraduate majors and minors. During our visit, we also met with a group of undergraduate students who enthusiastically endorsed what the Department is doing. Most importantly, they clearly articulated a range of both knowledges and other skills that they have learned in this degree program. Students are the best ambassadors for the success of any department, and this group certainly illustrated the overall success of the Department's programming and curriculum.

The following recommendations are thus our attempts to aid the Department in addressing, both generally and specifically, the two requirements of maintaining a thriving undergraduate curriculum for Women's Studies degree students, and building enrollments overall in the Department. We have divided these into two groups: i) larger recommendations that have impact at the level of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences are included in this general report, and ii) suggestions that are more departmentally specific are included as an appendix to this report.



1) Currently, the Women's Studies Department runs a well-subscribed major, a minor in Women's Studies, and an increasingly popular minor in Gender Studies. Gender Studies courses are differently numbered and appear in a different location in the university's academic calendar. The result is that students and colleagues across campus see these two course streams as quite separate, both intellectually and in relation to undergraduate education. These two streams also have different prerequisites, and the Gender Studies courses often do not count as prerequisites for the Women's Studies courses. Additionally, courses for the Gender Studies minor are drawn from across other departments and units and keep those departmental numbers, while courses for the Women's Studies major and minor are housed almost exclusively within the Women's Studies Department. As reviewers we find this arrangement somewhat unwieldy administratively, pedagogically, and intellectually.

**We recommend that the distinction between Women's Studies and Gender Studies be eliminated and that the two course programs be consolidated into one.**

As a solution, it seems that simply renumbering all Gender Studies courses as Women's Studies courses would counter the original thinking behind creating these courses and this distinct minor. Thus consolidating Gender Studies and Women's Studies would also require changing the current name of the Department to something that recognizes this consolidation. We note that in conversations with members of the Department, there seemed to be solid backing (and even enthusiasm) for this idea. Additionally, given changes to the focuses and breadth of scholarship and teaching in this discipline over the past 30 years, this move would be in keeping with a general move in the discipline across Canada and the US. It would also enable more connections with other departments and units across campus, and help increase both the numbers and roles of departmental Associates. In combination with other suggested curricular changes listed in the appendix, this change could also result in more broad-based 'B' type courses for the department, demonstrating an attention to the ongoing concern with overall numbers of enrollments.

2) As part of the expanded focus of intellectual areas made visible in the above recommended changes, and in keeping with the current Gender Studies minor's practice of being constituted from courses in other departments, we suggest more courses jointly offered.

**We recommend that the Department actively explore the possibility of more cross-listed courses that reflect the breadth of work on gender and sexuality being done in other institutional locations.**

This cross-listing should also ensure that those courses also carry Women's Studies (or the new) number designations so that that the Department gets credit for enrollments in those courses. We understand that this is more possible with some departments than others, but urge the Department to explore ways to open those courses for its own students (e.g. through alternative prerequisites if the other department has them, through the setting aside of a limited

number of seats for Women's Studies students, etc.). This work could be made easier with the aid of the expanded role of committed Associate faculty. Finally, we encourage the Department to think about this new breadth of courses as a number of different clusters or streams in the discipline (women, genders, sexualities, etc.), and to perhaps even informally highlight those for students as possible ways through the discipline in their major and minor degrees. We will comment more below on how to consolidate these streams into an overall coherent experience for degree students.

3) We also note that the Department currently hosts a number of undergraduate programs, all of which take some amount of administration and student advising. In such a small department, we are concerned about the amount of time this takes up. Seven joint majors and an extended minor in Women's Studies, in addition to the already mentioned current major and minor in Women's Studies and minor in Gender Studies seems like a lot for a small unit with already stretched faculty resources.

**We recommend that the Department consider streamlining and simplifying their major and minor programmes, and M.A. programmes (see below).**

4) In our discussions with the Department, we understand that currently it is only allowed by CODE to develop one distance education course a year.

**We recommend that this allotment be increased to at least two courses a year.**

Such an increase would fulfill a number of needs: i) it would add to the curricular options for students – especially important given reduced faculty resources over the next few years; ii) it would help provide funding for graduate and especially Ph.D students; and iii) it would reach students not currently served by the Department, such as women living in remote and rural areas, and help disseminate both the Simon Fraser University name and the Women's Studies reputation in the broader community.

## **Graduate Program**

The Women's Studies Department decided, reluctantly, to suspend admissions to both their Master's programmes and to their Ph.D. programme for the academic year 2009/2010 because they did not have sufficient faculty resources to service these programmes in the short term. We fully understand this decision. It is the inevitable but painful consequence of their current perilous situation with regard to faculty. In order to reinstate the programmes they must be assured of adequate faculty staffing, which, as we have noted above, will not be available for two more academic years. We found that both the Master's (Course and Thesis routes) and especially

the Ph.D. programmes to be fundamentally excellent. They have attracted first class students, the materials and methods of teaching are excellent, faculty have shown dedication to ensuring that students graduate in a timely fashion (see Self Study, Appendix 11) We received supporting materials including the reading lists prepared for the Ph.D. students' comprehensive exams, which were broad ranging and thoughtful. We met students from all three programmes, and they all had nothing but praise for the programmes and the faculty. They were, of course, concerned by the suspension of new entrants and the insecurity of the future of the programme. The suspension also affects the quality of the student experience of the existing cohort. We hope that the Department can restore entry to the graduate programmes in the near future, but we recognise that this will depend on replacing faculty resources.

The Ph.D. programme is one of only five such programmes in Canada. It is backed by an experienced and dedicated body of faculty. There are currently nine Ph.D. students, most of whom are at or almost at ABD. One indication of the success of the programme is that their first graduate from the Ph.D. programme immediately secured a tenure track position in Women's Studies at Memorial University. The graduate students are aware that one of the restrictions of being in a small programme is the narrow range of topics in which they can either take courses or receive supervision. They have particular concerns about the 'add-on' courses, which do not serve them in terms of depth. We think this can be (partly) addressed by the re-distribution and consolidation of the undergraduate programme that we are suggesting.

**We would encourage the growth of the Ph.D. programme in particular. It is both a strength and a hallmark of the Department**

The Master's programme is also small but also has a satisfactory completion rate (Appendix 11). Forty-three Masters students have completed their degrees since 2001, 4 more than in the previous review period. The enthusiastic and well informed MA students had nothing but praise for the faculty and for their programmes, but like the Ph.D. students, they were worried by the suspension of the entrance and had some concerns about the range of topics and specialisms offered by the Department and by the proportion of 'add-on' courses. We think the re-structuring of the undergraduate curriculum, especially with the addition of upper level 'capstone' courses will help with this problem. We also think that recruiting more Associate members of the Department (referred to above) will also help to broaden the range of faculty available for supervision. As currently structured, the MA programme is a little too complex, with two streams (course based and thesis based) and an extended essay option.

**We have no specific recommendations but do advise the Department to look carefully at this section of their overall programme, in view of their restricted resources.**

Funding for graduate students is an increasing problem throughout the university. The Self Study (p. 29-30 and Appendix 12) describes the range of possible funding opportunities for graduate students, and Women's Studies students have been successful in obtaining scholarships and fellowships. However, the average financial support for a Master's student is \$11,000. Ph.D. students, in particular, will be badly hit by the cancellation of sessional appointments. Apart from success with external scholarships and fellowships (which are listed in the latest Women's Studies Newsletter), graduate students have to rely on insufficient TMs and TAs for support. We hope that restructuring the curriculum with more emphasis on large lower level courses will increase funding from these sources. We are also hopeful that the development of additional Distance Education courses will open more TM and TA sources of revenue for the Department. We also recognize and encourage the efforts of faculty in securing large external grants (e.g. Cohen's CURA grant, which supported 13 graduate students on Research Assistantships to work in the community, and Patton's ongoing success in securing grants for research students in the area of gender and health)

**We recommend that the administration gives priority to ensuring that Women's Studies Department is able to reinstate entrance to its graduate programme by 2010**

### **Ruth Wynn Woodward Professorship**

In 1985 Status of Women Canada instituted five research chairs in Women's Studies across Canada. Simon Fraser University was successful in obtaining endowment for the chair and the Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair has become the envy of Women's Studies scholars across Canada. It has continued to attract stellar candidates (see the list and description pp. 37-41 in the Self Study, and the report of the last Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair) and is certainly one of the distinctive advantages and achievements of Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University.

We talked with the current Chair, Dr. Afua Cooper, who, like her predecessors, has brought her unique skills, interests and networks to the position. She has organised a photo exhibit on Black Communities in BC at the Teck Gallery, and is preparing for a conference on 'Knowledge Production and the Black Experience' in May. The support for the Chair appears adequate in terms of both a part time support staff person and office space. The Department is supportive of the Chair and provides good levels of support and coordination.

We were interested to read in the report of the previous Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair (Susan Stryker) about her ideas for enhancing the contribution of the Chair to the Department including extending the term of the Chair and allowing her/him to take on additional duties. Stryker suggests that 'In a fiscal environment where staffing is stretched to the limit, having a highly flexible endowed position such as the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor is a tremendous asset. The Department should not feel constrained by precedent, but, rather, should feel free to grasp

the possibility of using this Chair in a creative new fashion'.

**We recommend that the Department reflects on how to better integrate the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor into the thinking and resources of the Department by building more flexibility into the Chair's responsibilities and possibilities.**

We also realise that streamlining and re-thinking the undergraduate curriculum will entail some intensive departmental thinking about exactly what the objectives of the various Women's Studies programmes are, and about their theoretical and pedagogical aims.

**We suggest that in the next two years the Women's Studies Department consider appointing a Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor with specific skills in the area of the developing a Women's Studies identity to help focus their thinking and planning.**

## **Community Outreach**

Outreach into both the university and the local community has always been a key element of Women's Studies as a discipline. It is not only seen as a political and social commitment, but is an integral part of the theory of the discipline. As a result, community outreach is not just an 'add-on' to Women's Studies, and this department, like others, has put resources and energy into building strong connections in the community and addressing local concerns. Successful community outreach provides real 'outputs' to the community, such as collaborative research, the provision of skills workshops, and help to community groups in presenting their case to government. It also improves the visibility of the university, and, done well, the respect accorded to the university in the wider community. We noted that community outreach (or service to the community) is becoming more salient in the university's plans and priorities. (See p. 18 Three year plan for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2007-2010 and p.10 Local Communities SFU Strategic Research Plan 2005-2010.) The administration needs to recognize and support the valuable work done by units and departments representing the university in this way. The Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University is particularly strong in this regard. We felt that the Department had undersold its own achievements in the Self Study, and as the strength and depth of their successes and involvement became clear during our visit, we asked the Department to document their community outreach in a more systematic way.

**We recommend that the Department discuss how to make their community outreach more visible and how to recognize and articulate individual activities as part of a coherent departmental effort.**

The following is by no means an exhaustive account of the work Women's Studies does in and for the community.

Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair. This much-respected Chair is the flagship for community outreach (but by no means the only vehicle). The Department has been astute in recruiting a wide range of dynamic scholars to this position who deliver a number of talks and presentations throughout BC. The Traveling Speaker series also enables scholars at the University to travel throughout the area, extending the geographical range of the Department's and University's name, and reaching thousands of new people each year. The Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair also organizes at least one major conference during her term, attracting 300-500 people from inside and beyond the province. Ruth Wynn Woodward Chairs have also organized photographic exhibitions and other innovative ways of reaching broader publics.

Research for many members of the Department involves a close integration of their scholarly work to broader outreach work in other communities. The work of Marjorie Cohen Griffin and Cindy Patton, to name only two examples, is a good example of this kind of research activity that spreads beyond the university. For instance, Griffin Cohen has both secured several large grants (e.g. CURA "Re-defining Public Services in British Columbia: Challenges to Economic Security and Alternative Possibilities") and she is constantly in the public eye, giving television and radio interviews, speaking publicly about issues of immediate concern, presenting talks and workshops nationally and locally and is often recruited as a nationally recognized figure to analyze public issues (e.g. as a Breakfast on the Hill speaker). Cindy Patton's Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Community Culture and Health and associated work is likewise focused on the broader community, and her projects have contributed significantly to addressing health issues, especially of poorer populations in Vancouver. Her impressive lab at the downtown Harbour Centre building has developed innovative approaches to help disadvantaged populations document, analyze and respond to their own health issues, including the development of the Public Access Homelessness Research Library. In addition, Patton works closely with the new Institute in Critical Studies for Gender and Health and is a strong advocate of a new style of intensive networking between researchers that is both flexible and strong, although often not recognized in formal structures. All of this kind of scholarly activity contributes to the visibility of both Women's Studies and Simon Fraser University in the wider community.

Women's Studies faculty also contribute significantly in presenting a range of community workshops, speaking publicly, contributing short written pieces on specific issues, and helping community groups present their cases. One example of this last is Habiba Zaman's study on "Workplace Rights for Immigrants", carried out in conjunction with the respected Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, was put on the web and has been downloaded more than 18,000 times. Zaman also has an outstanding record in delivering talks and

workshops, especially to women immigrants, focussing on South Asian and Filipina populations, and in helping community groups to research and present their own experience. Lara Campbell organizes an imaginative 'Herstory Café' – a monthly series of public history outreach events in downtown Vancouver, which are well attended. Campbell is one of the majority of the Women's Studies faculty who take care to include substantial amounts of community outreach focus and experience in their undergraduate courses. Other members of the Department contribute to community outreach inside and outside the university, sometimes in ways that have not become visible to the Department or the administration.

The ongoing Margaret Lowe Benston Lecture Series in Social Justice honours the tradition of feminist activism and continues to contribute richly to the Department's outreach through a diverse series of public lectures.

There are many other examples of diverse ways of integrating Women's Studies scholarship into, and contributing to, the wider community – inside and outside the university. We should make two points here. The first is that the majority of this kind of work is done on 'overload' and is rarely recognized as valuable by the administration. The second is that there is a huge repository of skills, connections and experience in the area of community outreach in Women's Studies that the administration needs to make better use of. We understand that in the next cycle of strategic planning, the university will be placing more emphasis on its community outreach work.

**We recommend that the administration of Simon Fraser University pays particular regard to the existing work of Women's Studies in community outreach, and that it recognize and make use of its expertise and provide support for further initiatives.**

## **Material and Human Resources**

The Self Study provides a good description of the physical and human resources available to support the Department. Most resources appear to be adequate to the needs of the Department, including space. We note, however, that Women's Studies has recently lost two offices and

**We recommend that Women's Studies does not lose any more physical resources.**

We were able to meet with the three support staff in the Department (Roberta Neilsen-Departmental Assistant, Kathryn Hunter-Department secretary, and Esther Harrison- part time Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair secretary). All three support staff appeared highly competent and committed to their work. None of them raised concerns about their work environment, and there

was a generally pleasant atmosphere in the Department. We did not examine the departmental budget allocation in detail but it appears that this is not a major problem for the Department. Renewal of computer facilities and technical support appears to be satisfactory. We noted that there had been a sharp decrease in workshops and other training offered by the university in both technical and pedagogical programmes.

### Library Resources

To evaluate library research resources, we met with Moninder K. Bubber, the librarian charged with the Women's Studies collection, and Associate University Librarian, Natalie Glick. We were very impressed not only with the breadth and depth of the collection—from journal access to archival materials—but also with the strong connection between the library specialist and the Department. Bubber has developed extensive study guides for required courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level and compiled very useful lists of resources for research in Women's Studies.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University is an excellent department. The range and depth of our recommendations and suggestions should not be taken as being critical, but rather, as ideas for further supporting the Department. We are aware of the difficult situation currently facing the Department and have tried to use this external review as an opportunity to build on the Department's strengths, to open up new opportunities, and to achieve better results from Departmental efforts. We hope that the administration will share our view that this is a valuable part of the university community, with a distinctive and excellent contribution to make. Moral and practical support from the administration to support the Department's own efforts will result in an even stronger and more productive department, a Women's Studies Department that Simon Fraser University can be truly proud of.

### **Appendices**

#### **Appendix 1**

Some additional suggestions about curriculum and programming for the department:

- 1) At the moment, many courses in the Department require Women's Studies 101 or 102 as prerequisites for entry to subsequent courses – a requirement that artificially limits students'



point of entry into the Department and discipline.

*We recommend that the department think about establishing alternative points of entry into the field by rethinking this prerequisite – either eliminating it completely in some cases, or designating alternative prerequisites such as a certain number of credit hours.*

This re-structuring would enable some 200 and 300 level courses to also act as larger 'flagship' or 'boutique' courses (with 'flashy' names) to both draw students into the Department and enable them to take several (or many) courses, without requiring them to declare themselves Women's Studies students and follow that path through the discipline. We recognize that this shift means that the Department must think about its curriculum in two major ways: as offering both general interest courses on women/gender/sexuality in some way (with a 'B' designation), and as a set of courses that offer a cumulative intellectual experience for students pursuing a Women's studies degree.

2) This shift to making 200 level courses alternative broad introductions to the field may also help counter what we understand is an institutionally specific historical resistance to 200 level courses. And all faculty could teach both large flagship 'B' courses and smaller 400 level courses, ensuring an equitable workload in the Department.

*We also recommend making all 200 level courses broad introductions to the range of topics, theories, and approaches in the field. Each such course would articulate how they are part of the discipline as one focus in the course). We also recommend moving the current 200 level 'methods' and 'theories' courses to the upper level for degree-pursuing students.*

3) In order to meet this above suggestion, and since these more broadly based 200 and 300 level courses would include both sets of students, we note that Women's Studies students would also need more specialized 400 level 'seminar' type courses. These new or newly numbered courses would both i) enable students majoring in the discipline to take classes that include only their cohort, and ii) consolidate or cap their degree experiences – perhaps by drawing together their experiences in the various new streams or clusters and exploring the overlaps among those as they constitute the discipline. Although more is said about the Masters' students elsewhere in this report, these 400 level courses would also act as 'add-on' courses for their degrees, removing what is sometimes an unsatisfactory experience right now with 300 level courses.

*We recommend that the Women's Studies department introduce more 'topics' oriented courses at the 400 level – either by constructing new courses or, more easily, by renumbering some current 300 level courses and altering their content slightly to meet the specific requirements of graduating Women's Studies students and Master's students.*

4) A few additional suggestions: i) remove the word 'introduction' from the first year courses and find alternate names (without necessarily changing content) to capture broader range of students; ii) use the words 'social justice' in at least one course – existing or a new 100 level course – to both capture the grade 12 social justice course interest and as a possible alternative 100 level requirement for the degree programs.

5) A specifically feminist pedagogy is a vital part of Women's Studies teaching and of the positive atmosphere created in the classroom. We note the changing composition of the student body at SFU, and in particular, the much greater proportion of students with a non-western cultural background, who may know little or nothing about the context of many of the existing Women's Studies courses (e.g. a western christian background). In addition, many of these students (up to 60%) may have English as a second language, or be less than fully fluent in English. All these factors are especially significant in preparing and teaching in an Arts department such as Women's Studies. It requires the faculty to constantly revise their courses in order to reach such students.

*We further recommend that the Department considers the pedagogical and course content implications of an increasingly diverse student body, and if necessary, funds should be made available to faculty to enable them to update and revise their courses.*

### *Summary of recommendations*

- ◆ *We recommend that the Department actively explore the possibility of more cross-listed courses that reflect the breadth of work on gender and sexuality being done in other institutional locations.*
- ◆ *We recommend that the Department think also about establishing alternative points of entry into the field by rethinking their prerequisites.*
- ◆ *We note that Women's Studies students also need more specialized 400 level 'seminar' type classes.*
- ◆ *We recommend making 200 level courses broad-based introductions to the range of topics, theories, and approaches in the field.*
- ◆ *We recommend moving the current 'methods' and 'theories' courses to the upper level for degree pursuing students.*
- ◆ *We have no specific recommendations about the numbers of programs the Department is managing, but do advise the Department to look carefully at this section of their overall programme, in view of their restricted resources.*
- ◆ *We would suggest that the Department reflects on how to better integrate the RWWP into the thinking and resources of the Department.*

## Appendix 2

### Meetings during the Site Visit

<i>Date</i>	<i>Individuals/Groups</i>	<i>Topics discussed</i>
March 18	Bill Krane (Associate VP Academic) George Agnes (Associate Dean Graduate Studies) Glynn Nicholls (Director Academic Planning) Mario Pinto (VP Research) Lesley Cormack (Dean FASS)	Introductions, outline of purpose of review, topics to be covered, significant issues
	Mary Lynn Stewart (Chair, Department of Women's Studies)	Review Self Study. Priorise issues to be addressed. Issues facing Women's Studies in teaching, research and administration
	Roberta Neilson, Kathryn Hunter, Esther Harrison (Women's Studies Dept staff)	Staff perspective on faculty, students, administrative issues, relationship of unit with SFU
	Marilyn MacDonald (Grad Chair, Women's Studies)	Issues relating to teaching and funding of graduate students
	Women's Studies Department faculty, staff and students	Identify additional issues
	Graduate Students	Identify issues relating to graduate students
	Lesley Cormack (Dean FASS)	Review 1 <sup>st</sup> day, ask additional questions about faculty and role of Women's Studies

March 19	Mario Pinto (VP Research)	Situation of research in Women's Studies; general issues re research funding and organisation
	Marjorie Griffin Cohen (Joint Appointment, Women's Studies)	Details of administration of Women's Studies and issues arising
	Sue Stanley (Acting program manager, Arts co-op program)	Role and effectiveness of Coop in Women's Studies
	Women's Studies Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (Lara Campbell and Helen Leung)	Curriculum issues, especially those relating to Women's Studies and Gender Studies
	Afua Cooper (RWWP)	Role of RWWP in Women's Studies, problems and possibilities
	Brian Burtch (Associate Faculty) Elise Chenier (Associate Faculty)	Relationship of Associate Faculty to Women's Studies
	Habiba Zaman (Women's Studies)	Issues relating to department
	George Agnes (Associate Dean, Grad Studies)	Issues affecting Women's Studies graduate programme
	Undergraduate students	Issues specifically affecting Women's Studies students
March 20	Catherine Murray (incoming Chair of Women's Studies)	Issues relating to administration, staffing and leadership in Women's Studies
	Cindy Patton (CRC, Joint Appointment in Women's Studies)	Issues relating to joint appointees, staffing issues in Women's Studies

	Jackie Levitin (Joint Appointment in Women's Studies)	Issues relating to joint appointees, staffing issues in Women's Studies
	Moninder Bubber (Library Liaison) Natalie Glick (Acting Associate University L	Library issues relating to Women's Studies
	Mary Lynn Stewart and other available departmental members	Wrap up and final questions and discussion
	Senior Administrators	Wrap up and final issues

### Appendix 3

List of documents from the VP Academic's office received ahead of the site visit:

- Program Self Study Report
- Itinerary for Site Visit
- Various documents pertaining to travel expenses
- Terms of Reference for the External Review
- SFU Senate Guidelines for external reviews
- President's Agenda
- SFU Statement of Purpose
- 3 Year Plan of VP. Academic 2007-2010
- 3 Year Plan for Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2007- 2010
- SFU Strategic Research Plan 2005-2010
- Institutional Accountability Plan and Report 2008-2011
- Data on SFU research grants and contracts, with specific data on Women's Studies faculty grants (2008-2009)
- Administrative Structure Chart
- SFU Calendar 2008-2009