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## MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION: Senate

TEL

FROM: Peter Keller, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP

RE: External Review of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies (SCUP 17-39)

DATE: November 10, 2017

TIME

At its November 8, 2017 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

**Motion:**

That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies that resulted from its External Review.

c: L. Campbell  
 J. Pulkingham



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**MEMORANDUM**

<b>ATTENTION</b>	Peter Keller, Chair, SCUP	<b>DATE</b>	October 18, 2017
<b>FROM</b>	Wade Parkhouse, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic	<b>PAGES</b>	1/1
<b>RE:</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies		

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:

*"Overall, we find ourselves impressed by the high level of research amongst the faculty – especially by their leadership role in community-engaged and community-based research, the faculty's commitment to excellence and innovation in teaching, the students' enthusiasm for their programs, and the dedication of the staff."*

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Team\* for the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies was submitted in June 2017. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Department and the Dean.

**Motion:**

**That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies that resulted from its external review.**

\*External Review Team:

- Susanne Luhmann, University of Alberta (Chair of Review Team)
- Liz Millward, University of Manitoba
- Scott Morgensen, Queen's University
- Michael Everton (internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:

1. External Review Report (June 2017)
2. Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Action Plan
3. Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc Jane Pulkingham, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Lara Campbell, Chair, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

**Program Review**

**Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
Simon Fraser University**

**2017**

**Prepared by**

**Susanne Luhmann  
Liz Millward  
Scott Morgensen**

We would like to thank Simon Fraser University for the opportunity to review the undergraduate and graduate programs in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS). This report is prepared on the basis of the self-study provided by GSWS as well as two days of meetings with the various constituents involved with the development and delivery of the programs (see Appendix A).

Overall, we find ourselves impressed by the **high level of research** amongst the faculty - especially by their **leadership role in community-engaged and community based-research**, the faculty's commitment to excellence and innovation in teaching, the students' enthusiasm for their programs, and the dedication of the staff. GSWS at SFU is a thriving and vibrant unit that since the last review has grown significantly and in ways that aligns the Department strategically with the University's and the Faculty of Arts and Social Science's (FASS) institutional goals and future plans.

Despite increasingly stretched resources faculty and staff excel across all areas of responsibility (research, teaching, administration). GSWS is highly respected across the FASS. Indeed we heard that "GSWS is the place to be." The unit is an example of functional and collegial relations among faculty and staff. Faculty members work closely with both undergraduate and graduate students and have deep roots in the community. Teaching and Administration in the unit is supported by a large number of Associate Faculty from other Departments.

Since the last review in 2009, the unit has implemented important and productive changes that position it well and in line with the strategic direction of the University, both in teaching and research. Major among the changes are: the consolidation of undergraduate programs (the former Gender Studies Minor Program with the Women's Studies Minor and Major) and the recent name change to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) to reflect this program integration. Corresponding changes were made to accomplish a more streamlined curriculum; graduate admissions were reinstated; community engagement was expanded and made more visible. The unit also developed a cohort of supportive Associate Faculty, who contribute to committees, teaching, and supervision. Furthermore, changes to the endowed Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair increased the holder's contributions to the Department. And a new junior tenure track hire adds interdisciplinary research interests that align with broader research priorities of the University.

We note faculty research strengths and national/international scholarly leadership across a range of both traditional disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields as well as an impressive number of research collaborations internationally, nationally, and with local communities. Members of the unit work across a multitude of methodological orientations while sharing a commitment to transnational perspectives.

We note significant enrolment increases in the undergraduate program. For undergraduate students the unit's orientation towards social justice scholarship clearly holds appeal. Based upon the evidence provided we conclude that the ability to offer more courses in this unit very likely will lead to further increased enrolments, thus we are

confident that the Department has significant further growth potential, especially at the undergraduate level. However, without additional faculty and staff, burnout of faculty members is a significant risk. After having lost a number of faculty members due to retirement in recent years, the unit operates with a much-diminished faculty and staff complement, and thus is stretched to the max, especially when it comes to carrying the significant administrative load.

We recommend the Department create a more visible narrative of its impressive commitments and accomplishments to provide the Dean of FASS with arguments for further smart and strategic growth. This growth does require additional positions for GSWS, ideally with GSWS as the home Department. However, acknowledging the budget realities of the FASS, cross-appointments would also be an option, as long as the tenure and promotion home and administrative load are clearly defined. Given its long history of interdisciplinary scholarship and cross-disciplinary collaboration, its proven agility in adapting to change and working with others, GSWS is an excellent candidate for new and innovative growth in the FASS and beyond.

We would like to compel the Dean of the FASS to recognize and draw upon the existing strength of this unit and support further growth. We also suggest that the VPR's office recognize and work with members of this unit, by drawing upon their extensive expertise and experience in community engaged research, which already models SFU's strategic vision of being "the engaged university." Furthermore, GSWS Faculty members should be recognized as the leaders they are in interdisciplinary research and in areas identified in the VPR's strategic plan, especially in their contributions to "Strengthening civil society by advancing justice, equity and social responsibility" and "Supporting health across the human lifespan" ([http://www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/srp/SRP\\_2020.html](http://www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/srp/SRP_2020.html))

The graduate programs in GSWS are much sought after: however, they seem rather disadvantaged when it comes to their ability to guarantee funding packages, especially in comparison what Ontario Universities offer. We did not receive comparative data for graduate funding from other units in the FASS and thus are unable to comment upon this aspect. That said we do urge the Dean of Graduate Studies to create equitable funding to Graduate Programs in the FASS. We also suggest that GSWS might engage in a fundraising effort for graduate bursaries and/or try recruiting international students who come with funding from their home countries.

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## **1. Quality of Faculty Research**

Current core faculty members hold PhDs from a variety of disciplines other than Women's and Gender Studies (WGS), including Comparative Literature, Politics, History, Theatre and Performance Studies. Like most interdisciplinary WGS scholars, GSWS faculty members pursue feminist research across a wide range of fields and areas of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Current core GSWS faculty members publish

feminist and gender studies work in the more traditional disciplines as well as being leaders and contributors to key areas of WGS, including women's and gender history; film and cultural studies; LGBTQ Studies; youth studies; labour and policy studies; migration, immigration, and racialization; refugees and development studies; gendered violence; gender and conflict; as well as political communication, political economy and public policy. The more recently hired junior faculty member adds expertise in emerging and cutting-edge fields such as feminist techno science studies, disability studies, critical race and gender theory, and performance studies to the mix.

Taken together the core faculty complement covers a **good breadth of areas and research fields relevant to WGS**, with a shared commitment to transnational approaches in their respective research areas. As a unit, GSWS faculty represent the range of multidisciplinary methodologies relevant to the field, including textual and archival work, policy analysis, and oral history, as well as qualitative, mixed methods and ethnographic research.

The quality of faculty research is high, compared to similar programs in Canada, and faculty produce traditional academic scholarship, community-engaged research and collaboration, as well as utilizing more popular and alternative modes of knowledge creation and dissemination, such as a graphic novel, a video game, and a film archive to name a few. Departmental members hold an **impressive number of Tri-Council funds**: SSHRC Insight Grants; SSHRC Connection grants; and SSHRC Partnership grants. They also hold research grants from other granting agencies: BC Council to Reduce Elder Abuse; Hari Sharma Foundation; Metropolis grants; and MITACS. Faculty research excellence has been recognized through awards by external bodies (National Capital Commission; Canadian Women's Studies Association; Canadian Historical Association; Hohai University) as well as internally (Dean's Medals for Academic Excellence).

The **publication record** for a small Department is excellent. In fact, given how much teaching and service each member of GSWS has to do, their publication records are even more impressive than the numbers alone of high quality monographs and peer-reviewed journal articles would suggest. Since the last review, the six current and one recently retired GSWS faculty have between them published: 5 books (sole and co-authored); 8 co-edited books and journal special issues; 25 peer-reviewed articles; and 32 peer-reviewed book chapters. They have given 37 invited addresses and keynote lectures; 78 conference presentations; and 18 commissioned reports. These publications and presentations are in the Humanities and Social Sciences, where times-to-publication are lengthy (3-5 years from submission of manuscript to publication of a monograph, approximately 2 years from submission to publication of a peer-reviewed journal article). The publication rate is therefore very high.

GSWS faculty members excel at **community-engaged research**, with a special emphasis on research that is initiated by communities and serves their needs rather than being another case of academics using communities. That said, community engaged research takes time. It requires extensive time commitments to build trust with communities before and after projects have ended as well as ongoing engagements to maintain established relationships. We heard examples of community partners approaching

researchers for advocacy purposes long after projects have ended. GSWS faculty members are at the forefront of community-initiated research, which increasingly is of strategic priority for national funding bodies too. Yet universities continue to struggle with how to properly assess and evaluate community-engaged research, given that more traditional evaluative tools, such as journal index or number of citations, don't readily apply. That said we do encourage community engaged-researchers to publish in traditional venues too, so as to make accessible their work to others. And we also encourage the Department, the FASS, and the VPR's office to develop evaluation standards for community-engaged research, so as to make this work visible to the wider university community.

Faculty in GSWS engage in impressive levels of collaboration with each other and with other scholars both internal and external to SFU, nationally and internationally. Indeed, the review team was impressed by the number of national and international research collaborations faculty members are involved in.

The combination of high quality research, research collaborations, and community engagement sustains a stimulating academic environment. This is demonstrated for example by the graduate students applying to GSWS, with GSWS getting a high number of applications each year for graduate study.

The unit supports a Visiting Scholar position, which is unpaid. The Visiting Scholar contributes to the scholarly life of the unit by giving public lectures or undertaking other types of Department-based scholarship in return for shared office space. The position attracts applicants from all around the globe. Since the creation of this position, Visiting Scholars have come from Wales, Scotland, the Netherlands, and China, indicating that GSWS has a global reputation and offers a stimulating environment.

Faculty research is integrated into teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

## **Recommendations**

- **The reviewers recommend that the unit together with the FASS and the VP Research engage in further initiatives to increase research visibility.**

The Department's research visibility *outside of SFU* is already high. Since the last Program Review: GSWS faculty and students have organized 256 talks, conferences and workshops for the general public. Faculty have written 33 newspaper or op-eds and given roughly 36 print and radio interviews. Indeed, GSWS faculty are exemplary in engaging the public and in research dissemination beyond the scholarly publication.

Yet this outside recognition of faculty research excellence does not seem to be matched with knowledge and understanding of GSWS research by the VP Research. The unit might consider explaining more effectively the interdisciplinary nature of its scholarly production. Women's and Gender Studies is its own field; it is not English or Film or History research, though members of this unit also contribute to traditional disciplinary knowledge production and dissemination.

Given the long history of GSWS's interdisciplinarity, we suggest its research be promoted by FASS and the VP Research as a **model for interdisciplinary research** for the whole university.

Department faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars are highly engaged in a variety of GSWS research and this means that it should be looked to as a leader in the field.

We recommend that FASS and/or Office of Research Services task a Communications Officer to improve the system by which the external research visibility of GSWS (and, presumably, other Departments) is captured and circulated internally.

- **The reviewers recommend that the VP Research recognize and facilitate further the inclusion of GSWS faculty members in university-wide strategic research initiatives.**

During our visit we heard of difficulties GSWS researchers have to be recognized and included in the larger strategic research clusters of the University. GSWS have excellent expertise to bring to these university-wide excellence clusters (such as health across the life-span and social justice/equity). Given the Faculty's extensive experience with interdisciplinary research and collaboration, we see much untapped potential here.

## **2. Quality of Programs**

### **2a. Undergraduate Program**

#### Overview

The undergraduate program delivers a Major, Extended Minor, Minor, and Joint Major. Degree requirements appear appropriate to each level and can be satisfied with existing courses. The Department is considering the addition of a Minor by Distance Education, which would be supported by existing online courses.

Since the last external review, the Department significantly restructured the undergraduate program: by reimagining the course complement and design to reflect its named responsibility to gender, sexuality, and women's studies; and by markedly expanding enrollment in lower level and some upper level courses, which produced a 75% increase in majors and minors after an earlier period of very low enrolment and declared majors / minors. Undergraduate courses now reflect the breadth and integration of gender, sexuality, and women's studies at all levels. Even while expanding enrollments, the Department has preserved smaller enrolment in 400-level courses. This structure appears to mirror and support the rates of student intake identified in the student survey, which reports that students choose to major primarily in their first or second years, while those who choose to minor do so primarily in their second or third years. Notably, during this pursuing reorganization, the Department developed an especially robust scope of community-engaged courses ("Sex and the City," "Oral History



Practicum,” “Young Women Civic Leaders,” “Feminist Action Research,” RWWC seminars in the city) that model the distinctive skills and leadership of GSWS faculty in engaging gender, sexuality, and women’s studies with social life.

The educational goals appear to be clearly aligned with the curriculum; they also appear to be assessable as they “describe the competencies, skills, and attributes that students should possess upon completion of a course or program.”

Overall, the undergraduate program appears to be very healthy, even as the capacity of core faculty to support it appears to have reached its maximum. Thus, the program’s only apparent limitations are its inability to grow and its potential difficulty in sustaining current capacity during periods of faculty sabbatical or secondment, unless the core faculty complement was to increase.

The Department highlighted one aspect of the undergraduate program for our consideration. After recognizing that undergraduates faced “two main barriers to declaring a Major or Minor in GSWS: (1) students don’t think GSWS will lead to a career; (2) they are finding out about GSWS too late” (Self Study p 31), the Department addressed the second item successfully by expanding the curriculum and enrollment and began addressing the first by “creating faculty videos and doing web-based outreach to inform students about applications of GSWS in future careers” (SS p 26). But the Department then acknowledges, “it is clear that we could do more to inform students about careers specializing in this field, and we welcome suggestions on improving undergraduate professional development.”

The review team was also asked to address the following items related to the program:

- a. Given the changes in faculty component and the development of new curriculum, consider recommendations on the best way to articulate and update Department curricular themes (undergraduate courses);
- b. Consider recommendations regarding the future undergraduate curriculum, particularly the feasibility of implementing an Honours Program.

### **Recommendations**

- **As our major recommendation for the undergraduate program we invite the Department to set time aside for reviewing the curricular themes and any rationale for having them and to enter into a more integrative conversation that will narrate the overall distinction of the Department’s research and teaching profile.**
- **We recommend that the Department investigate the establishment of an Undergraduate Honours program.**

- **And that the Department work towards increasing diversity in faculty complement and topics.**

The list of **curricular themes** appears to us to be somewhat archaic with respect to the reformulated undergraduate program. While the variety of themes may have reflected the teaching or research concentrations of a former faculty complement, today that variety appears more arbitrary and disarticulated from the emergent coherence of the program. We also observe that the list serves no administrative function in the fulfillment of undergraduate degree requirements.

Narrating a **cohesive research and teaching profile** will produce a template that the Department may bring back to the undergraduate program to illuminate those precise elements that signal and advance its common purpose. Those newly illuminated qualities may differ in kind and quantity from the ones that appear within the current curricular themes. Many current themes may no longer need to be named, just as other qualities of the program that so far have gone unnamed may become particularly important to the Department's new narrative. We see no inherent value in listing undergraduate curricular themes, but we do see great value in identifying precisely how the undergraduate program contributes to the Department's larger narrative of its scope and purpose. The Department then may find appropriate ways to draw the attention not only of undergraduates but also of the Department's broadest audiences to those parts of the undergraduate curriculum that advance its overall goals.

Our recommendation also speaks to the Department's interest to devise **undergraduate professional development**. While the curricular themes appear to have been intended to aid students in crafting a coherent course of study, the directions it provides do not lead to any clear career pathways. But a narrative of the Department's research and teaching profile would explain how the profile is served by its degree program design, and thus would indicate the careers students would be best prepared to enter on taking their degrees here rather than in other WGS programs in BC or elsewhere. With that in mind, we encourage the Department to articulate a collective profile that also clarifies how its degree prepares undergraduates for a certain array of careers. Once these are known, they can be associated with particular aspects of the training provided in the undergraduate program, without requiring the presence of curricular themes. (Alternatively, if the Department wants to keep the curricular themes, seeing them as reflective of faculty research, these could be used to develop pathways through the degree towards the different careers GSWS graduates might be pursuing.)

In kind with the interest and recommendations of Department constituents, we recommend that the Department investigate the establishment of an **Undergraduate Honours program**. Undergraduate students enthusiastically suggest that an Honours program will help GSWS majors advance their future graduate studies or careers; will attract high-achieving SFU students to major in GSWS; and will increase interest in graduate study in GSWS. We agree, and we specifically ask the Department to think creatively about the potential of an Undergraduate Honours programs not only to support undergraduate students but also to enhance integration and bridging between the

undergraduate and graduate programs. Given that core faculty are committed already to existing tasks, we are concerned that the program offer a rewarding Honours experience without overly burdening faculty with additional advising. Thus we invite the Department to investigate models for such a program without necessarily privileging the production of an undergraduate thesis. For instance, if a student were to produce one paper of publishable quality and length, one paper written for refereed conference presentation, or one original data set with preliminary data analysis, then they would leave with a product that is applicable immediately to their professional development or graduate studies. There also may be possibilities for undergraduates to receive the Honours designation in part or whole for having participated in an Honours seminar: either an existing or new 400-level course that would be designed to fulfill this goal. Finally, as we discuss in the Graduate Program section, should the Department adopt an **Accelerated Masters program**, the Undergraduate Honours requirements could be designed to assist accelerated entry to the MA program.

We understand that the Department's interest in "establishing a reserved **Feminist Theory course** for the Department's PhD students to teach" may be a worthy goal, if it serves to bridge the overall intellectual and curricular goals of the undergraduate and graduate programs. The Department's decision to require GSWS 822 Feminist Theory of all graduate students establishes feminist theory as the major common area of graduate training. PhD candidates, who would have taken GSWS 822 and passed a Comprehensive Exam on feminist theory, would be equipped to teach an undergraduate course on the same theme. Their teaching experience also would serve the Department by empowering PhD candidates to bridge the intellectual foci of the undergraduate and graduate programs: thereby reinforcing one aspect of the Department's distinctive intellectual profile, and potentially helping GSWS undergraduates envision their advancement into the graduate program. Prior to hiring PhD sessionals for this course, we recommend that the Department decide the nature and relative levels of course content in the undergraduate and graduate courses, to ensure that students who take both courses over the course of their academic career achieve appropriately stepped learning.

We feel it is incumbent on us to mention, however, that we are not of one mind that "**feminist theory**" is necessarily the primary focal point of intellectual training in the field of women's, gender and sexuality studies. Organizing curricula around the concept of "feminist theory" is not guaranteed to offer core instruction in "gender, sexuality, and women's studies"; that would depend on how "feminist theory" is collectively understood and taught. For instance, the degree to which this category may or may not fulfill the purpose of WGS today remains a topic of sustained question in critical race, Indigenous, and transnational feminist scholarship. These questions ultimately hinge on how the Department defines the category and what it is then bound, or not bound, to teach. We invite the Department to consider such questions carefully, to question any definition of "feminist theory" that narrows rather than broadens into contemporary conversations in WGS (such as "canonical" approaches to the category), and to privilege the critical perspectives on this category emergent within critical race, Indigenous, and transnational feminist studies.

Finally, we agree with undergraduate students and with other Department members that the undergraduate program would benefit from **greater diversity in its topical areas and instructional faculty**, and that the areas of greatest need are critical race studies, Indigenous studies, and disability studies. This requires new faculty positions, but could be accomplished through new cross-appointments, for example with First Nations Studies.

## **2b. Graduate Program**

### Overview

Since the time of the last external review, when graduate admissions paused due to a lack of graduate supervisors, the Department undertook significant program restructuring before reopening graduate admissions. The Department now hosts a robust graduate program. Since 2009 the size has remained relatively stable year-over-year, and the Department has graduated a total of 9 PhD students and 31 MA students. During this period five PhD students and one MA student received SSHRC funding. The course intensive MA in particular has experienced marked growth in applications and admissions. The graduate program as a whole expanded its capacity to supervise by creating encouragements for affiliated faculty, most notably by allowing affiliates to sole supervise. The Department also declines to accept PhD or MA Thesis applicants unless it can identify a panel of three to supervise at the time of admission. The Department reports a rate of completion for the course intensive MA with shorter than average times among similar programs in FASS (4.6 versus 7 terms on average); a completion rate for the PhD that is roughly identical times to the FASS average (19 versus 18.6 terms); and longer completion times for the MA Thesis (12.5 versus 9.4 terms).

The program structure benefits from new standardizations and enhancements that have been applied since the last external review. The tripartite structure -- course intensive MA, MA Thesis, and PhD -- clearly distinguishes three non-overlapping modes of graduate study: a clarity made possible by the Department's decision to eliminate the extended essay MA. The Department has chosen to require GSWS 822 Feminist Theory for all graduate students. (While we were unclear if this change is planned or already approved, we acknowledge its strength below). All graduate students also are required to take a two-term **professional development seminar** (GSWS 812, 822) that teaches skills for academic and nonacademic career success. The Department indicates that its development of this seminar series reflects "the realities of the job market," in that "most of our graduate students will pursue careers outside academia." We would add that addressing academic and nonacademic degree applications enhances professional training for *all* students, regardless of their intended initial career path. Together these three required courses give students seeking all graduate degrees a stronger cohort experience.

The Department sponsors required graduate courses and occasional graduate electives,

and allows graduate enrollment in advanced undergraduate courses (“grad add-ons”), which we affirm provides a crucial source of course options for the course intensive MA when the faculty complement is not large enough to sponsor a wide range of annual standalone graduate seminars. Grad add-ons also provide benefits to undergraduate learning, to graduate application and retention rates, and to the integration of the undergraduate and graduate programs, as we address further below. We also agree with the Department’s decision that grad add-ons be limited to 400-level undergraduate courses. As such, if grad add-ons are important to the completion of the course intensive MA completion, the Department must continue to prioritize its sponsorship of 400-level courses on a regular and ongoing basis throughout the academic year.

In its structure and course complement, the graduate program appears to be providing students with a general education in gender, sexuality, and women’s studies that is grounded in feminist theory and in preparing for academic and nonacademic careers. Within this structure, students appear to receive specialized training in gender, sexuality, and women’s studies primarily through the direction of their supervisor and committee, by instructors of any electives they may take, and by their specific research. This program design thus appears to be open to a very broad interpretation of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies. This openness is an advantage to attracting a broad applicant base and to facilitating supervision by faculty members who may range widely across varied disciplines. At once, there appears to be room for the focus of the graduate program to be made part of broader discussions about the Department’s teaching and research profile. The graduate program -- or, distinct degrees within the program -- may be able to be imagined as providing training that is more precise and distinctive (rather than broad and open) thereby allowing the program and its degrees to stand out more dynamically from among those offered by other WGS programs in BC or nationally.

The educational goals appear to be clearly aligned with the curriculum. They also appear to be assessable and “describe the competencies, skills, and attributes that students should possess upon completion of a course or program” (SS 35/36).

The Department provides a wide range of institutional and social support to graduate students. The Department used its first “Strengthening the Core” (SCORE) grant to produce a database of job placements for alumni and to create alumni networks, and it will continue this work in 2017 with its second SCORE grant. Graduate students praise the support they receive from faculty and from the collective energy and purpose of the Department. They also recognize the attentiveness and responsiveness of the Department to their past recommendations, as in the Department’s response to graduate student requests for more professional training (now delivered in the Professional Development Seminar).

With respect to areas for improvement, the Department raised a number of items for consideration:

- Naming student-funding support as their “biggest recruitment challenge,” the Department states that they “welcome suggestions for finding creative solutions and/or alternative sources of graduate funding.”

- With respect to supervisory support for students, the Department acknowledges that “we are limited in the number of PhD and MA Thesis students we can take due to Faculty members not having the space in their schedules to supervise” beyond the numbers that are currently being served.
- The Department seeks to increase breadth by “offering four or five standalone graduate courses every year,” whereas “we are currently only able to offer 2-3.”
- The Department is committed to advancing completion time for the MA Thesis, by potentially reducing length to “30-40 pages with the goal of producing an article-length paper ready for publication” or by electing to “eliminate the formal oral defense for the thesis and instead require a formal proposal which is approved by the senior supervisor.”
- The Department also is seeking to improve completion time for the PhD with “further streamlining of the curriculum,” such as by “requiring the feminist theory PhD comprehensive exam to be completed within one year of taking GSWS 822 Feminist Theory” and “instituting a tighter timeline for completion of the other two PhD comprehensive exams.”

Graduate students also raised items for consideration with respect to program structure:

- Graduate students wish to see a larger complement of graduate courses. While students acknowledge that the Professional Development Seminars provide important training -- which graduate students requested -- these two required courses do not add to the intellectual training that students seek. Some students also expressed concern that the need felt by course intensive MAs to fill their schedules leads to pressure to secure faculty to advise directed readings (pressure potentially felt by both students and faculty). The graduate students as a whole specifically highlighted that the quantity and frequency of courses is insufficient for course intensive MA and international students, in that “if few or no courses are offered” then these students “are unable to apply for loans and scholarships or complete their degrees in a timely fashion.” Some course intensive MA students also indicated that they enrolled because the program is advertised as being able to be completed in as few as 12 months, but they are finding that option to be difficult or impossible to achieve.
- Graduate students also identified a lack of a sense of cohort as an ongoing concern. They recognize that the cohort experience improved with the establishment of the Professional Development Seminar, but they expressed a desire for more opportunities to develop a sense of intellectual cohort by being able to take more graduate courses in common.

Finally, the review team was asked to “Consider recommendations regarding the graduate program, particularly the ideal number of standalone graduate courses for MA students, streamlining PhD comprehensives, ensuring timely completion in the MA thesis program, and establishing a reserved Feminist Theory course for the Department’s PhD students to teach.”

## **Recommendations**

We recognize the graduate program as being sufficiently robust to both sustain and increase its growth. We recommend a series of methods to support both goals.

- **Signal more clearly the distinction of GSWS at SFU as compared to other WGS graduate programs in the region and nationally by way of the Department's collective vision of its distinctive research and teaching profile.**
- **Revisit the decision for two Professional Development Seminars and develop an intellectual rationale for making Feminist Theory the central course in the Graduate Program.**
- **Streamline aspects of all graduate degrees (such as course options; qualification milestones; progress to completion), so that each one can be completed more quickly.**
- **Create the option of an Accelerated Masters Degree.**
- **Consider making Methodology (together with Feminist Theory) the core of the graduate programs.**
- **Identify faculty members and courses that are available or particularly suited to summer instruction.**
- **Affirm grad add-ons as a significant means for MA completion together with incentives and support systems for faculty.**
- **Reduce Prominence of MA Thesis option in favor of the course-intensive MA and PhD programs.**
- **Increase its instruction in critical race theory and Indigenous studies.**

As stated in our broader comments on Department growth, a strong basis for sustaining and growing the graduate program will emerge from integrating its focus and scope with **the Department's collective vision of its distinctive research and teaching profile**. We reviewers see distinct strength in this Department in community-based and engaged research as well as substantive interest among faculty in diverse research methodologies. The graduate program as a whole and specific degree plans may signal particular distinctions that GSWS presents to the field of WGS or to graduate training across BC or Canada. Once these qualities are identified, they can be narrated to help promote the program and to ensure that its course complement, degree requirements, and paths to completion are designed efficiently to realize those qualities.

For instance, while revisiting and narrating the focus and scope of the program, the Department may wish to revisit the required graduate course load. In addition to

constraints on the overall number of courses, the current course complement would benefit from greater coherence. The Department should consider, on balance, the relative strengths of having two required terms of **Professional Development Seminar** vis-à-vis the potential drawbacks of professional training constituting 2/3 of the current required coursework for a PhD or MA. Is the intellectual core of the graduate program sufficiently central to its degree plans, and how can manifesting and narrating that intellectual core direct the Department's decisions with respect to which courses it will require? In turn, the Department should be able to explain why Feminist Theory has been determined to be the central and, currently, only shared basis for graduate intellectual training in gender, sexuality, and women's studies. If the Department agrees that Feminist Theory is necessary to such training, is it the only topic that is or that should be made central and necessary? And if another, equally central topic was developed in a new or existing graduate seminar, how would it and Feminist Theory both emerge from and reflect the Department narrative of its overall research and teaching profile?

The graduate program's growth can help lead GSWS into its next stage of collective growth. To achieve this we recommend that the Department continue to **streamline each aspect of all graduate degrees** -- course options; qualification milestones; progress to completion -- so that each one can be completed more quickly, with less difficulty, with fewer required administrative inputs from faculty, and with a decreased financial and temporal burden upon enrolled students.

In a time of minimal funding for graduate education, redesigning programs so that students are empowered to reduce their times to completion can be understood as a creative funding solution: by enabling students to complete the same work without the financial burdens of extended enrolment and delayed entry into career employment.

The **ideal number of standalone graduate courses** would be dictated, ideally, by the progress requirements established in each degree plan. At present, it appears that the course intensive MA is most impacted by the number of available graduate courses. However, that degree also is the best suitable for participation in grad add-on instruction. The undergraduate curriculum has considerable breadth that can support grad add-ons. As well, graduate participation in advanced undergraduate courses can enhance undergraduate learning and increase ties between the two programs. Of course, grad add-ons must be considered to be auxiliary to primary graduate instruction that should be taking place in standalone graduate courses. The Department sponsors 2-3 graduate courses annually and requires three (GSWS 811, 812, 822) for graduation. For the sake of course intensive MA learning, then, the Department ideally would teach all three required courses annually, and make available one more graduate course (an elective, or possibly an additional requirement) for an annual complement of four, which would allow course intensive MAs to complete the majority of their training in graduate seminars. Of course, if the faculty complement were to increase, the capacity of the Department to guarantee four (or more than four) annual standalone graduate courses will be enhanced.

We note as well that adoption of the **Accelerated Masters** (see below) would serve to reduce the number of graduate courses taken by course intensive MA students who enter



from the program; thereby likely reducing the proportion of grad add-ons that would be sought by each cohort that includes Accelerated Masters students.

As an overall note on streamlining, the program's inheritance of an older Department's course complement combined with new curricular directions has created some anachronisms in the graduate course list. The first course on the books (GSWS 800) is not required of graduate students and appears none of the three degree plans center the course. The professional development seminars (GSWS 811 and 812) appear appropriately at the next level, but the only substantive course currently required of all graduate students (GSWS 822) is numbered closer to the level of electives. While revisiting what core instruction in the field should constitute, we encourage the Department to consider rearranging the first level of 800 series course numbering -- perhaps also considering if **Methodology** should join Feminist Theory in being core to the graduate program -- and then renumbering the 800 series to tell a clearer story about the intellectual focus of the graduate program.

**The course intensive MA average time to completion** of 4.6 terms is well below the FASS average of 7. At this rate, students on average still take more time to complete than the program guidelines advertise (12-16 months). Nevertheless, the overage is small enough that there may be ready means for reducing it. We recommend that steps be taken to **streamline the course intensive MA**, so that the program may be completed in an average of 3.5 terms (the midpoint of the program's advertised length). As we understand it, students will complete the course intensive MA in 3.5 terms if they complete all required coursework during their first three terms and then submit their field exams for marking at the end of the third term or in the first half of the fourth term.

We understand that a limitation on the ability of the Department and students to achieve this rate of completion may be a difficulty faced by many, or all SFU Departments: the frequent inability to sponsor **sufficient courses during summer term** for students to spread their annual course load across three terms. Under these conditions, a student could complete an annual course load on time only by carrying a larger course load in fall and winter terms. The Department faculty and students offered many perspectives to us about this problem and about how it might be addressed. An obvious solution would be for the Department to identify faculty members and courses that are available or particularly suited to summer instruction and to do everything possible to guarantee their annual sponsorship. We understand that the Department is already pursuing this course of action and that it is still unclear if it can be guaranteed year over year.

With these constraints in mind, we recommend that the Department work creatively to also ensure that course intensive MA students have access to a minimum of three distinct course options in each of fall and winter terms. Given that it is impossible for the Department to provide that number of course options through standalone graduate seminars, we recommend that the Department **affirm grad add-ons as a significant means for MA completion**, and create incentives and support systems that enable Department faculty to accept grad add-ons into suitable upper-level GSWS undergraduate courses. While grad add-ons would be assigned most appropriately to 400-level GSWS

courses, if a particular 300-level course were understood to be suitably advanced in its instruction it also could serve as a host. If the Department can create enough options through these means, MA students would be able to complete in 3.5 terms so long as the Department could guarantee availability of at least one graduate course every summer.

**Reducing course intensive MA time to completion** will serve students who are concerned about the financial burden of enrollment for 4 or more terms, and the amount of time the degree takes them from their career or career development. Yet this reduction also will reduce the administrative burden faculty currently carry during fall and winter terms when they are advising both prior-year and current-year course intensive MA students. The supervisory time freed up by this change then would make faculty more available to assist PhD or MA Thesis students pursue or complete their degrees.

The Department also may wish to consider streamlining the course intensive MA as a way to facilitate entry of excellent course intensive MA students into the PhD program. If degree requirements are condensed as much as possible into three terms, and if appropriate methods of incentive or acceleration are implemented, an MA student who wishes to conduct doctoral research could complete the MA in three terms and begin the PhD at the start of their second year as a graduate student at SFU.

We agree with the Department that time to **completion for the MA Thesis** must be substantially reduced. We recommend significant streamlining in its degree requirements and speeding of its required milestones.

We agree with the Department that this degree may be completed in formats other than the current 60-120 page thesis. In addition to the Department's suggestion of a single, publishable 30-40 page journal article, we welcome the option of preparing a policy paper (inclusive of original data and data analysis) or the option of writing the thesis in either the current monograph format or in manuscript format, as a collection of distinct documents (two publishable articles; one article and one policy paper; etc.).

Especially if these options are entertained, but even under its current design, we strongly recommend that the number of **milestones for completion of the MA Thesis degree be reduced**. The thesis proposal oral defence can be replaced without lessening the quality of training and evaluation in this degree. The thesis proposal may be submitted to and evaluated by the supervisory committee without requiring a defence. The proposal even may be circulated in first draft to a committee for comment, and then submitted in final form and evaluated solely by the supervisor (with confirmation of evaluation by the Graduate Chair).

We also recommend that program policy state that MA Thesis students must complete all coursework in the first year (if this is not already required); that the thesis proposal be written and evaluated in the third term, or no later than the fourth; and that research normally begin in the fourth term. If the Department does not already do so, we also recommend that MA Thesis research progress be tracked by the supervisor and Graduate Chair at the end of each of the fourth, fifth, and sixth terms, with the intention being to

direct the student to complete research by the end of the sixth term. Then the complete thesis and oral defence could be due at some date of the Department's choosing between the sixth and ninth terms.

The Department also may wish to consider the possibility that once current cohorts of MA Thesis students finish, the **MA Thesis option may be reduced in prominence** so that faculty advising can concentrate in the course-intensive MA and PhD programs. Under this scenario, MA applicants who are interested in conducting original and extended research could be directed into the course intensive MA, which if bridged appropriately with the PhD (see above) will allow these students to continue into the PhD at the start of their second year of graduate study. Given that current rates indicate that MA Thesis students regularly take four or more years to finish, some students who currently choose the thesis to pursue a course of original research might be better served by directing those years of study towards quickly completing a one year MA that bridges into the PhD.

**PhD times to completion** also may be lessened by reducing the number and kind of milestones that students must meet, when they transition from coursework to research and from research to completion.

We recommend that program policy state that PhD complete all coursework in the first three terms (if this is not already required). If the Department requires all graduate students to take GSWS 822 Feminist Theory, then PhD students also may be required to complete the Feminist Theory Comprehensive Exam in some relation to their enrollment. In the Self Study the Department entertains the idea of requiring students to complete the exam within one year of taking the course. Once GSWS 822 is redesigned to serve the needs of graduate students completing multiple degrees, could its service to PhD students include preparation of the Feminist Theory exam paper as required coursework? If so, timely preparation of the exam would be advanced, and the paper would associate more closely with required instruction, while doubling of students' workload would be reduced by combining two tasks (course and exam preparation) in one term. With this change, the Department could reasonably require that the Feminist Theory exam paper be written within as little as one term's time past the completion of the course. This also would speed the time in which the two remaining exam papers would be completed: potentially, requiring that all papers be written as quickly as the close of the fourth or fifth terms.

Currently the Department requires oral defences for both the comprehensive exams and the thesis proposal. While this arrangement is common, both traditional and newer approaches to PhD advancement sometimes permit streamlining, in the form of (1) delivering the comprehensive exam to committee evaluation without an oral defence, preserving the defense only for the proposal, or (2) linking the comprehensive exam and research proposal components so that they can be reasonably completed as a single project and evaluated in a single oral defence.

Whatever pathway to completion the Department creates, we recommend that it facilitate a time to completion that is below the FASS average of 18.6 terms, possibly by a

significant margin. Given that the SSHRC Doctoral Award funds no more than four years of study, and as an incentive to reduce the financial burden carried by non-SSHRC students, we recommend that the program designing PhD requirements to be completed within 15 terms. This schedule would be feasible only if students are required to complete all coursework within year one and all milestones for candidacy (exams and proposal defence) by the end of year two.

The **Accelerated Masters** option sponsored by the Graduate School allows Departments to invite high-achieving upper year students to seek admission and acceleration in the Department's MA program. We believe that adopting the Accelerated Masters could be of particular benefit to the GSWS graduate program at this time: by serving the larger goal of enhancing connectivity between the undergraduate and graduate programs; by sustaining growth in the MA; and by potentially supporting, and being supported by an Undergraduate Honours program. The program would ensure a reliable stream of high-achieving MA applicants who are already interested in and acculturated to the Department, SFU and Vancouver. Adoption of the program potentially:

- increases the total quantity of high-achieving MA applicants
- increases the overall proportion of high-achieving applicants who are based in BC and Vancouver
- increases the proportion of high-achieving applicants who will choose SFU regardless of out-of-province offers, given the investment that Accelerated Masters students already will have made in envisioning their studies at SFU
- assists the cohesion of first-year graduate cohorts due to an increased proportion of members who are familiar with one another and with the Department, SFU, and the Vancouver region.

We envision the Accelerated Masters primarily as a means to enhance entry into the course intensive MA, and we would recommend that it be advertised in this fashion. As indicated, we understand this program to be a way of addressing concerns about funding: for so long as national disparities in funding leave graduate programs hard-pressed to bring high-achieving students, enhancing retention of high-achieving students who are already committed to your program seems like a win-win situation.

Additionally, if the Department adopts an Undergraduate Honours program, then it may be possible to design it alongside the Accelerated Masters for mutual benefit. Students drawn to complete Undergraduate Honours may discover that it may be applied towards accelerated master's admission, thereby enhancing graduate program; and students drawn to participate in the Accelerated Masters may learn that they may complete Undergraduate Honours as one method of participation.

As mentioned previously, if the Department establishes an undergraduate **Feminist Theory** course, then the logic for concentrating the intellectual core of advanced undergraduate and graduate learning on this topic should be clearly articulated within the Department's narrative of its distinctive research and teaching mission.

In this context, if the undergraduate Feminist Theory course were established, reserving its instruction to the Department's PhD students would enhance the intellectual coherence of the undergraduate and graduate programs (individually and together) and would provide important professional training and curricular leadership to PhD candidates.

Particularly if the Department adopts the Accelerated Masters, but even in its absence, the Department would need to clearly distinguish the level and content of the undergraduate Feminist Theory course -- which some future MA students will take, while PhDs will teach -- from that of the GSWS 822 Feminist Theory seminar required of all graduate students. If these courses are clearly stepped, then students who take the first as an undergraduate and the second as a graduate student (while potentially teaching the first) will receive two levels of instruction. As well, we would strongly recommend a curriculum design that requires Accelerated Masters students who receive graduate credit for taking the undergraduate course to enroll in GSWS 822, which then would provide them with distinct and more advanced instruction.

The undergraduate and graduate students, collectively, and many individual students highlighted their strong recommendation that the Department **increase** its instruction in **critical race theory and Indigenous studies**, by:

- prioritizing the advertising and hiring of tenure-line faculty and sessional instructors in critical race theory and Indigenous studies; and
- sponsoring a larger quantity and greater frequency of both undergraduate and graduate courses in critical race theory and Indigenous studies.

We support these goals wholeheartedly. We would add that courses throughout a WGS curriculum benefit from the presence and instruction of critical race, Indigenous, and transnational content. For that reason we also strongly encourage Department faculty to revisit existing courses and identify ways in which critical race, Indigenous, and transnational feminist knowledge can be present, and made central, not peripheral to the course of study.

### 3. Administration

GSWS currently consists of:

- 5 tenured fulltime faculty members in the unit (one of whom is fully seconded to the Dean's office)
- 1 tenure track full-time faculty member in the unit
- 1 two-year limited term senior lecturer
- 1 Adjunct faculty member
- 1 Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Chair (either senior, junior or postdoctoral fellow)
- 20 Associate Faculty Members

The Department is governed by the following administrative positions:

- Chair (3 year term plus possible two year extension) – historically internally recruited from among GSWS faculty (with two exceptions)
- Undergraduate Chair
- Graduate Chair

**Plus two full-time continuing staff:**

- Manager, Academic and Administrative Services who with the Chair is responsible for day to day running of the Department and thus performs the jobs of three different positions: Departmental Manager (budgets, faculty and event expense claims, sessional appointments, hiring, software management and processes), Undergraduate Advisor (course scheduling, undergraduate advising, transfer credits) as well as Communications Officer (Departmental promotion at events such as Open House etc. and through social media);
- Department Secretary who holds the three positions of receptionist (in charge of information requests, email, book orders, course outlines, course evaluations for all courses, information about GSWS community events, speakers, job advertisements) as well as being the assistant to both the Department Chair and the Grad Chair (clerical work for Chair and graduate programs, including such tasks as applications, advising, progress reports, defences, scholarship and awards etc.)

While the Department is run extremely effectively, faculty and staff involved in administration are maxed to the limits, with burnout being a real risk in the future. On the faculty side, of the five faculty members currently on the ground, at any time, three will be involved in running the Department, thus constantly circulating among them the positions of Chair, Grad and Undergrad Chair. While these positions come with course releases, the strain and negative effect upon research productivity and career prospects must be taken into consideration, especially when tenure comes with taking on significant administrative appointments. And any further position losses, permanently or even temporarily through secondments away from the Department, or routine sabbatical and other leaves put additional strain upon those faculty remaining in the unit.

It is the view of the reviewers, that it is vital for the unit to receive **additional faculty and staff resources**, preferably in form of new continuing academic positions (as laid out in the renewal plan proposed in the self study). Though new joint tenure track appointments or the conversion of existing affiliated faculty members into new partial appointments with GSWS, and making permanent the limited term senior lecturer position would also alleviate some of the pressures currently experienced by the unit.

Comparable Departments across the country with both MA and PhD Programs in WGS tend to have a larger faculty complement, such as Western (5 fulltime plus 7 cross-appointments), Queen's (5 fulltime plus 2 cross-appointments), and the University of Toronto (9 fulltime plus 6 joint appointments). Given the overall research and teaching

excellence of the unit, as well as the student interest in pursuing graduate degrees in GSWS at SFU, we encourage the University to add resources to this unit.

The unit presents in its self-study a thoughtful and doable faculty renewal plan, which we as reviewers fully endorse. All hiring area proposed in the renewable plan are in cutting edge area and in direct alignment with the University's strategic priorities and areas of research excellence.

While we understand the budget limits at SFU, we do recommend that GSWS we granted comparable staff complements as other units in the FASS.

Understanding budget limitations, we make the following

**Recommendations:**

- **We do recommend additional permanent faculty positions for GSWS in line with the renewal plan developed by the Department (in form of new tenure track positions in GSWS or joint appointments with other units; by creating new joint appointments for existing affiliated faculty members; by making permanent the senior lecturer position).**
- **Staff complements for GSWS should be comparable to that of other units of comparable size.**

#### 4. Workplace Environment

The unit's workplace environment is conducive to the attainment of their objectives, including working relationships within the unit, with other University units, the community and the unit's alumni.

In our conversations with faculty, staff, and students, we found this unit to be an example for highly functional and collegial relations among faculty and staff. Faculty members work closely with both undergraduate and graduate students and have deeply engaged within the community. Staff and faculty members reported the unit to be supportive and in our observation, all members of the unit showed deep respect for each other. Like all units, GSWS faculty might not always agree about the future direction of the programs, but our impression is that even the amalgamation of programs, often a highly contentious process, has not negatively impacted the workplace environment. Indeed, we were impressed with how effectively those leading the unit have been able to effectively transcend any old divisions and facilitate the current vision for the Department's future.

Another contentious factor for departments can be intergenerational, though this was not our impression during our on-site visit. That said we do encourage that the voices and perspectives of those members of the unit most likely to carry forward the programs for the next decade or two be given special weight in the planning of the future of GSWS.

That said within the unit, the primary challenge facing GSWS is the **lack of space**. Faculty, instructors and TAs all need office space to undertake administrative and teaching-related duties. Dr. Marchbank is officially located at the Surrey campus but has to be present at the Burnaby campus at least two times a week, yet has no space allocated to her there. Three or more people use the existing offices each week, in rotation. This is not a satisfactory situation.

GSWS need a dedicated meeting space for various types of departmental meetings, workshops, and thesis and dissertation defenses. They did use AQ5119, shared with Humanities, but are losing access to this space, which means they will be the only Department in FASS without their own meeting space.

The Department has an active student association (GSWSSU). Because of the challenge of creating a cohort effect given the location of the campus, and the need for students to fund their studies through paid work (off campus), GSWS has created a study bar in the departmental lounge, where the GSWSSU holds its weekly meetings. While this is a popular space, it is shared between faculty, staff and students (graduate and undergraduate).

On the positive side, GSWS has developed a large number of **Associated Faculty**, twenty (20) in total at this time, who are actively affiliated with GSWS. This indicates positive working relationships with other units and is a sign of the strong reputation of GSWS.

On the student side, the GSWSSU has worked on establishing a Sexual Assault Prevention and Education Resource Centre on the campus as well as on an initiative to permit students to identify a preferred name on registering. These initiatives indicate both the engagement and commitment of GSWS students to improving the campus community, as well as being a sign of the productive and positive relationship between this unit and other university units.

In regards to the wider **off-campus community**, GSWS excels at having built excellent and long-established relationships with community groups. This is in addition to the community-engaged research. Faculty and students sit on boards, engage in outreach, co-organize events with community groups, and have been honoured for their service to local organizations. Both GSWS faculty and students model responsible relationships between the university and the broader surrounding communities, thereby embodying already SFU's aspiration of being the "engaged university."

Regarding **alumni relations**, we support the ongoing and future plans GSWS has already indicated in the self- study, including the Graduate Mentorship program that connects current graduate students with alumni willing to share their career path and become



mentors to current (graduate) students. We suggest making the profiles of alumni more visible on the webpage so as to also serve as a recruitment tool. We also would like the unit to consider doing something similar for the undergraduate majors (and future honours students). We applaud the career events and networking with alumni and again suggest that the unit might consider including undergraduate majors. Demonstrating career paths, through alumni, might also help in the recruitment of future majors. Also developing a clearer identity and narrative for the graduate and the undergraduate programs, and showcasing the successes of program alumni, likely will be excellent recruitment tools as well as potentially connecting with alumni as donors, so as to grow the already substantial GSWS endowment.

### **Recommendations**

- **Understanding that space is at a premium, we do recommend finding additional space for this growing unit: office space, meeting space, and student space.**
- **Make visible alumni success stories on the webpage.**
- **Continue connecting alumni willing to mentor with current graduate students.**
- **Expand the mentorship program and career events with alumni to undergraduate majors (and future honours students).**

## **Appendix A**

On campus schedule of meetings:

### **Wednesday April 5, 2017**

8:00 - 9:00 am	VPA
9:15 - 10:00 am	Chair Lara Campbell
10:15 - 11:30 am	Meeting with the Chairs -- Department Chair, Graduate Chair, Undergraduate Chair Lara Campbell, Jen Marchbank, Helen Leung
11:30 - 12:00 noon	Undergraduate Students GSWS Student Union
12:30 - 2:00 pm	Lunch and Reception with Faculty, Graduate and Undergraduate Students, Visiting Scholars
2:15-3:15 pm	All GSWS Faculty & Lecturer
3:30 - 4:30 pm	FASS Dean

### **Thursday, April 6**

9:00 - 9:30 am	Dean, Graduate Studies Wade Parkhouse
9:30 - 10:00 am	Associate VP, Research
10:15 - 10:45 am	Faculty Meeting Coleman Nye
10:45 - 11:15 am	Faculty Meeting Tiffany Muller Myrdahl
11:15 - 12:00 noon	Associate Faculty Meeting
1:45 - 2:15 pm	Staff Kat Hunter & Roberta Neilson
2:15 - 2:45 pm	Graduate Students
2:45 - 3:15 pm	Coffee Meeting with Chair Lara Campbell
4:00 - 5:00 pm	Closing Meeting with Dean FASS, VPR, Dean Grad Studies

## EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

<b>Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director</b>			
Unit under review	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person	Faculty Dean
Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies	April 2017	Dr. Lara Campbell	Dr. Jane Pulkingham
<p><b>Notes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is <u>not</u> expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.</li> <li>2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the Educational Goals as a separate document (Senate 2013).</li> <li>3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.</li> </ol>			
<b>1. PROGRAMMING</b>			
<p><b>1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):</b></p> <p><b>1.1.1 Undergraduate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review curricular themes</li> <li>• Articulate and advertise GSWS program distinctiveness</li> <li>• Investigate establishment of undergraduate Honours program</li> <li>• Increase diversity of faculty and course topics</li> </ul> <p><b>1.1.2 Graduate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revisit the role of the graduate courses in Professional Development</li> <li>• Establish Rationale for Feminist Theory course and consider mandatory Methodology course</li> <li>• Consider additional graduate courses (including summer courses)</li> <li>• Streamline Graduate Degree milestones and articulate vision for MA and PhD programs</li> </ul> <p><b>1.2 Resource implications (if any):</b> At least three additional full time faculty members (which could include cross-appointed faculty) to achieve programming recommendations</p> <p><b>1.3 Expected completion date/s:</b></p>			

**Fall 2017: revise and update curricular themes**

**Fall 2017/Spring 2018: finalize statement of program distinctiveness for website and/or other advertising**

**Fall 2017: Graduate Program Committee to Investigate options to streamline graduate program requirements**

**Spring 2018: Graduate Program Committee to draft and submit for departmental approval the defining characteristics of MA and PhD programs and streamlined programming (reduce MA field exam requirements and clarify PhD timelines for coursework and comprehensive exams). Graduate Chair to submit all required paperwork required for program changes**

**Ongoing: The Undergraduate Program Committee will continue to investigate course-based honors programs at SFU. If additional faculty lines are granted, the UPC will write a draft proposal for department approval and will undertake approval process.**

**Ongoing: Additional graduate courses will be considered if new faculty lines are granted**

**Ongoing: Establish protocols for ensuring all Sessional Courses are taught from an intersectional perspective; seek associate members to teach gaps in curriculum**

**Ongoing: consider faculty renewal planning with diversity of faculty and course content as a priority**

**Ongoing: continue to work with FASS advancement to seek private philanthropic funding to fund new faculty positions**

## **2. RESEARCH**

### **2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):**

- **Work with Associate Dean, Research (FASS) and Vice-President, Research to increase research visibility**
- **Highlight Intersection of GSWS research and VPR research initiatives**
- **Build on and highlight collaborative and international faculty-led research initiatives (China, Hong Kong graduate exchanges); dedicate section of website to promote special initiatives in community-engaged research and international collaborations**
- **Consult with Graduate Studies regarding joint degrees and student/faculty exchanges; continue to work with SFU International on internationalization projects**
- **Publish annual research report highlighting faculty and graduate student research successes: post on website and distribute to SFU administration**

### **2.2 Resource implications (if any):**

**Possible resources to support internationalization projects if exchange/joint degrees are developed**

### **2.3 Expected completion date/s:**

**Ongoing: internationalization initiatives and research promotion**  
**Spring 2018 or Fall 2019: first annual research report completed**

## **3. ADMINISTRATION**

### **3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):**

- **Request 1 day/week of a shared communications position to aid the Department Manager in: promoting and communication research, events, and community engagement (i.e help organize and promote approximately 100 events per year, including outreach, annual symposiums (Rosemary Brown Symposium, Margaret Lowe Benston lecture series, Ruth Wynn Woodward lecture series), and Woodward Travelling Speaker Series; maintain and expand social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram**
- **Confirm dedicated department meeting space**
- **Update and reorganize website to highlight faculty and student research initiatives and success**

**3.2 Resource implications (if any):**

Funding for communication position

Potential dedicated meeting space from FASS to ensure departmental needs are met since current shared space has been re-organized

Funding for expert in website re-design

**3.3 Expected completion date/s:**

Ongoing

**4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

**4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):**

- Continue to work with Associate faculty members in Hellenic Studies, First Nations Studies, History, and other units to develop additional cross-listed or designated courses at undergraduate and graduate level

**4.2 Resource implications (if any):**

n/a

**4.3 Expected completion date/s:**

Ongoing each semester

**5. Alumni and Mentorship**

**5.1 Action/s:**

- Expand alumni presence on website
- Connect alumni with current graduate students in mentorship relationships
- Develop career days and mentorship programs for undergraduate students

**5.2 Resource implications (if any):**

**5.3 Expected completion date/s:**

Ongoing: additions to alumni page on website

Fall 2017: Complete mentorship database funded by Graduate Studies (SCORE grant )

Spring 2018: run pilot mentorship session with alumni and graduate students

Spring 2018 and/or Fall 2018: Host career day for undergraduate and MA students; collaborate with other departments to extend reach of event

2018-2020: Apply for additional SCORE funding to maintain and expand graduate mentorship project

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

Unit Leader (signed)	Date
Name <i>Lara Campbell</i> Title: Professor/Department Chair	26 September, 2017

**Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan:**

I met with Dr. Lara Campbell, Chair of the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (GSWS) September 24 2017 with Glynn Nicholls (Office of the VPA) to discuss the external review prepared by Associate Professor S. Luhmann (University of Alberta), Associate Professor L. Millward (University of Manitoba), and Associate Professor S. L. Morgensen (Queen's University).

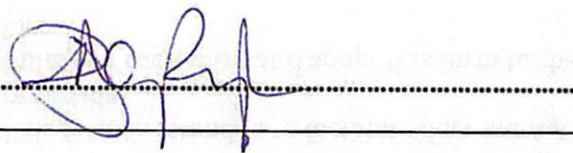
Our office has given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of GSWS. The external reviewers have produced a very thoughtful assessment, capturing the strengths found in the Department, identifying opportunities for new initiatives building on the department's strengths, as well as some challenges.

As the attached Action Plan outlines, the Department plans to pursue several important recommendations. At the undergraduate level, these include reviewing/revising curricular themes and (increasing) the diversity of course topics, as well as exploring the possibility of developing an honour's program. At the graduate level, the initiatives include articulating a vision for and streamlining graduate degree milestones for the MA and PhD programs, including examining the role and nature of specific graduate courses (e.g., Professional Development, Feminist Theory, Methodology and year-round offering of course offerings), and to articulate and communicate/advertise GSWS program distinctiveness.

The external reviewers commend the unit's impressive record of research, in particular its leadership role in community-engaged and community-based research that is both international and collaborative, and encourage the unit to work with the AD Research (FASS) and the office of the VPR to increase the visibility this research. The unit requests additional staff resources by way of a communications position to enable it to do more by way of promotion/communication/advertising program and research activities (outreach via web/social media presence and community engagement through community engagement). Our office will support the unit to build its capacity in this regard, as part of an overall communications and marketing strategic plan being developed for the Faculty. The unit also requests dedicated meeting space, and the office of the Dean will ensure that appropriate space is secured.

The unit also requests three continuing faculty appointments, which could include cross appointments, in order to ensure that it can mount its programs and undertake the recommended programmatic revisions particularly as it pertains to diversifying the range of courses available and diversity of faculty complement. The office of the Dean will endeavour to support future faculty hiring in the unit as identified above, while balancing renewal needs in FASS as a whole over the next three to five-year period. Progress on the latter front is already underway with a new cross-appointed continuing teaching faculty appointment, with GSWS as the academic home unit, approved to start in fall 2018.

**Faculty Dean**



**Date**

October 11 2017



## Assessment Plan/Report Card

This form is intended to facilitate documentation of program-level Education Goals assessment for unit self-study, internal, and external reporting.

Units can customize and adapt this form to their unique needs. This means adding columns, removing columns or creating an entirely new form.

Unit/Program: GSWS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit EG Coordinator: **Jennifer Marchbank**

Unit Chair/Director: **Lara Campbell**

PROGRAM EGs At the end of this program students will be able to:	COMPONENTS/ DEFINITIONS OF EGs	DATA SOURCE	DIRECT ASSESSMENT	INDIRECT ASSESSMENT	YEARS/ SEMSTER S OF DATA COLLECT ION (what is the data?)	MAJOR FINDINGS	ACTIONS RESULTED FROM FINDINGS
<b>I Display disciplinary knowledge of core concepts of gender and sexuality</b>							
	1. students can understand and evaluate some of the major intellectual theories and scholarship relevant to the field of gender and sexuality	GSWS 100 GSWS 101 GSWS 102	-Tests -Exams -Tutorial participation				
	2. students can engage in critical debates from a	GSWS 101 GSWS 311	-tutorial debates				

	range of theoretical perspectives	GSWS 312 GSWS 335	-tutorial participation -class participation - annotated bibliography				
	3. Students can think critically about how core concepts of gender and sexuality shape research inquiry	GSWS 316	-research paper -research paper presentations				
	<b>4. Students can identify and evaluate culturally and historically specific constructions of genders and sexualities</b>	GSWS 101 GSWS 311 GSWS 335	-midterm test -final exam -film essay				
<b>II Develop Transferable Skills and Information Literacy</b>							

	1. Students will be able to find and filter print, digital, and visual data relevant to the study of gender, sexuality, and identity	GSWS 330 GSWS 316	-media analysis and paper -artifact project				
	2. Students will be able to contextualise, assess, and critique relevant data	GSWS 311	mid term exam				
	3. Students will be able to effectively communicate in written and oral formats	GSWS 101 GSWS 312	Tutorial debates Presentations (in-class)				
	4. Students will engage in independent and collaborative tasks	GSWS 312 GSWS 316	-class participation -class final project				
	5. Engage in and develop research skills at an appropriate level.	GSWS 311 GSWS 312	-research paper				

<b>III Analyze and assess the concept of gender with an intersectional focus</b>							
	1.Students will evaluate how gender intersects with categories of race, ethnicity, class, gender identity, sexuality, and/or dis/ability	GSWS 101 GSWS 316 GSWS 330	-lab journal -attendance at tutorials -final exam				
	2.understand and explain the concepts of privilege and oppression in relation to the above categories	GSWS 312	-final exam				
<b>IV Analyze assess, and apply interdisciplinary approaches to gender and sexuality.</b>							
	1.students can gather evidence to support a research question	GSWS 311 GSWS 312	-research paper				

	2. students can formulate a supported position based on assessment of scholarly research	GSWS 317 GSWS 330 GSWS 335	-research paper -research paper -film essay				
	3. Students can understand, interpret and critique complex sources of research	GSWS 311	-research paper				
<b>V Display Engaged and Empathetic citizenship</b>							
	1. Students can demonstrate critical awareness of local and global issues of social justice.	GSWS 330	-creative group project				
	2. Students engage with issues of inequality, oppression and justice in relation to gender and other identities.	GSWS 317 GSWS 316	-group document presentation -group 'implosion' project				

	3. Students engage with local, national and/or global communities.	GSWS 317 GSWS 225	-group document presentation -summary exercise				
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**Overall Results & Actions:**

### Assessment Chart Legend

**Program Level Educational Goal:** Identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, etc., that students should be able to demonstrate upon completion of the program. The goals need to be specific and measurable.

**Breakdown of EGs:** Sometimes it might be helpful to break down a program level EG to smaller operationalizable units. This will help you to find the data you need in your curriculum in order to assess your program level EGs.

**Data Source:** Programs should identify where in their curriculum (course number) data is being gathered to assess the specific EG. Remember: not all courses need to be assessed.

**Direct Assessment:** Direct Assessment requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, etc., for faculty to then assess whether/how well students are achieving/have achieved a program level EG. Examples of direct assessment include artistic work, case studies, exams, juried performances, oral presentations, papers, and portfolios.

**Indirect Assessment:** Indirect Assessment gathers perceptions of whether/how well students are achieving/have achieved a program level EG. Examples of indirect assessment include alumni, employer, and student surveys, exit and focus group interviews, enrolment and retention data, and job placement data. Indirect assessment complement the data collected from direct measures and cannot stand alone as sole measures of student performance.

**Years/Semester of Data Collection:** Programs should identify when (in which year or semester) the data is being gathered

**Major Findings:** Programs should identify the major findings after analyzing the data collected.

**Actions Resulted from Findings:** Programs should provide evidence that the findings have been used to further develop and improve student achievement of program level EGs (i.e., actions that were taken as a result of data collection and analysis). It is also important to state when findings provide evidence that students are successfully achieving a program level EG.