

**Internal Academic Review Committee
Report on the Review of the Department of Women's Studies**

Department of Women's Studies

The Department of Women's Studies plays a unique and anchoring role at Queen's. The External Consultants and Review Team are uniform in their praise for the Department's strong teaching and thriving research. Women's Studies' distinctive and innovative pedagogy is at the forefront in the delivery of multi-disciplinary programs and in the development of new pedagogical methods. The faculty are to be commended for their commitment and service to Queen's and the broader community. Students and reviewers spoke highly of the dedicated faculty and staff, whose encouragement of diversity has resulted in a welcoming atmosphere conducive to feminist scholarship.

Though enrolment is stable in Women's Studies, its small size appears to have contributed to a sense of vulnerability within the Department. It is clear to the IARC that the success of Women's Studies is often reflected outside its own boundaries as curriculum in the field of women's studies is increasingly integrated into other programs such as Sociology, Political Science, English and History. The IARC wishes to affirm the strong anchoring role that the Department of Women's Studies plays for this discipline at Queen's and with this in mind, it makes the following recommendations:

Major Recommendations

1. **UNIVERSITY ROLE:** The Women's Studies program fulfills a key role at Queen's by offering students the historical and institutional background of many gender issues in society. The Review Team noted the wide variety and inter-disciplinary nature of the Department's teaching activities as demonstrated by its range of course offerings and its innovative blending of theory and practice. Women's Studies continues to stimulate new approaches and analysis in the area of gender and feminist scholarship, therefore acting as a "teaching laboratory". The IARC acknowledges this important role and commends the Department's efforts to apply these novel strategies to other, well-established programs.

The IARC supports the vital role that Women's Studies plays at Queen's and encourages the

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May 10, 2004

Executive Summary

The Department of Women's Studies has established a strong and productive presence in the Faculty of Arts and Science. The department provides an intellectually rewarding and emotionally supportive environment for its students and faculty. The department enjoys strong teaching evaluations from its students and has a very productive research output. With additional resources, perhaps leading to the introduction of a graduate program, the department's contribution to the university could continue to grow.

General

The Review Team for the Department of Women's Studies has read the Self-Evaluation report and found it to be thoughtful and comprehensive. We have also reviewed the External Consultant's Assessment dated November 21, 2003. As a group, the Review Team met on 3 occasions (October 9, November 11, and February 6). Our first meeting was for planning, our second meeting was with the External Consultants and our third meeting was with members of the Department of Women's Studies. At the outset, we can say that we generally support the recommendations of the report by the External Consultants, with a few qualifications.

Undergraduate Academic Program

From the Department Self-Study and the Consultant's report, it is evident that the Department of Women's Studies has made, and is making, concerted efforts at developing and maintaining a stimulating academic program. The Department continues to utilize a broadly cross-disciplinary approach towards its objectives of rectifying the omission of women from traditional areas of study, examining changing gender roles, and valuing inclusive and participatory learning environments. In the 2003-2004 academic year, and concurrent with this review, the Department launched a significantly revised undergraduate program intended to facilitate the entry of students into the Women's Studies concentration as well as capitalize on the teaching and research interests of current faculty. Additionally, the range of upper year courses in Women's Studies has been broadened and the course contents clarified. While it is not possible to accurately measure the effect of these changes at this time, because these changes are fairly recent, the Review Committee has noted that these kinds of curriculum revisions are consistent with those recommended in the Consultants' Assessment. Specifically, the Consultants have suggested that courses proven to have "wide-appeal" at other universities, such as "Women's Identities" and "Health, Sexuality and Female Bodies", be offered at the first and second year

level through the Department as a means of attracting greater numbers of students. The Consultants have noted that the Department's new course, "Sex, Gender and Popular Culture", has provided a step in this direction. Both the Consultants and the Department have recognized that future faculty recruitment may provide further avenues for diversifying the complement of courses available.

While, again it is not yet possible to draw any firm conclusions about the way in which the new Women's Studies undergraduate curr

distinctive strengths. Although the external reviewers recommended that Women's Studies should become more humanities based, we see no reason for this. Subject concentration is up to the members of the unit and their hiring committees to decide upon and, arguably, there are significant advantages to not being like every other Women's Studies program. Subject specialities of this unit include: gender, development and environmental values; gender identity, space and the arts; gender, ethics and planning; gender, race, colonialism and native identity; and gender, poverty and structured social disadvantage. The unit also has a strong humanities dimension with one member cross appointed to Art and an adjunct teacher with a PhD in English. In addition, if we look to the first and second degrees of full time faculty, there is a considerable representation of interdisciplinary training from English to Politics, Biology, Geology and Journalism. This is a diverse and interesting (Geov7/ that W)dimediy.fae cs,. Mo isTJ(e)-1(more h

Service

There is an excellent commitment to service in the department including service within the department, within the Queen's community, as well as a commitment to service within the larger community of feminists and social justice organizations outside the university. Within the university, the service contributions include service on many department and university committees. All but one of the core faculty members have joint appointments in other programs, leading to service loads in two or more areas. Nonetheless, the service contributions of the cross appointed faculty remain exceptional. Department members are also very engaged in service to the larger community, ranging in scope from the local to the international. This includes appointments as editors on national and international journals, service on the boards of various agencies ranging from children's centres to women's shelters.

Resources and Plans for the Future

The External Consultants' Assessment recommends that the department hire the equivalent of one full time tenure-stream faculty member (or two joint appointments). They also recommend an additional full-time member, perhaps as a non-renewable three-year adjunct. They also recommend a staff review of the receptionist/secretary position with a view to putting more resources towards support staff.

As demonstrated above, the department has had solid outcomes even with its fairly small complement of faculty and staff. However, if the department is to grow, more resources and staff are necessary. If the department is to pursue a graduate program, more faculty members would be essential. Given the department's strong record in research and teaching, it is also reasonable to expect that the department will continue to attract high quality faculty and staff.

