

## Four Year Report (2022)

### Women's and Gender Studies Undergraduate Programs (reviewed 2017/18)

#### A. Summary of Review

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.

1. The academic programs offered by the Department of Women's and Gender Studies which were examined as part of the review were:
  - BA (Honours) Women's and Gender Studies
  - BA with Major in Women's and Gender Studies
  - BA (Pass) in Women's and Gender Studies
  - Minor in Women's and Gender Studies
  - Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies
  - Combined Honours and Pass in Women's and Gender Studies with Sociology
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Ann Braithwaite (University of Prince Edward Island) and Annalee Lepp (University of Victoria) and an internal reviewer, Athena Colman (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on March 7-9, 2018.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on Nov 14, 2018.

5. The reviewers assigned the programs the following outcome categories:

Program (s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
BA (Honours) Women's and Gender Studies			X	
BA with Major Women's and Gender Studies		X		
BA (Pass) Women's and Gender Studies		X		
Minor in Women's and Gender Studies		X		
Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies				N/A: this is being phased out
Combined Honours and Pass in Women's and Gender Studies with Sociology		X		

6. The next review of the undergraduate programs in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies will be in 2025/26.

## B. Recommendations

### Recommendation #1

The review team recommends that the WGST program further maximize its curricular resources by identifying some efficiencies in its course offerings and curricular structure. In particular, we recommend some revisions to the architecture of the program as a way to increase student recruitment especially at the 200-level, enhance flexibility in core and elective courses, maximize the teaching capacity of (currently very limited) core faculty members, and enable formalizing the existing involvement in graduate education.

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre  
 Responsible for resources: Centre  
 Responsible for implementation: Centre  
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2018/19

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Change the curricular structure and architecture of all undergraduate programs.	YEAR 1	YEAR 1

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

This was achieved by removing restrictions on 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses and broadening the lists of courses that may be chosen for degree requirement to be met at all levels. Efficiencies in course offerings were identified. WGST created two 400 level courses that are used as 500 level electives for graduate students in order to formalize the existing involvement in graduate education for students in MA and PhD programs in AHSC and the MA program in SJES. With new faculty joining the Centre, we have continued to review curriculum on an ongoing basis. WGST created its first micro-credential in 2021 in “Gender Justice and the Art of Activism.”

**Recommendation #2**

The review team agrees with the WGST Self-Study Report’s argument that the program needs new faculty lines to ensure its continued viability as a standalone unit. We thus support the request for a new tenure track hire for the program, as soon as possible.

We also recommend that the program and the administration explore the option of another cross-appointment between WGST and another unit—depending on the direction in which the program decides to move.

In the short term, we suggest that WGST explore how to formalize connections with faculty from other institutional locations, in order to lend stability to the program and its curriculum.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to explore ways to formalize connections with faculty from other institutional locations to be accepted. ARC considers the recommendation for additional faculty positions to lie outside the Committee’s jurisdiction and expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

**Implementation Plan (2<sup>nd</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Centre  
 Responsible for resources: Centre  
 Responsible for implementation: Centre  
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Seek approval to advertise a tenure-track position and hire a new faculty member.	YEAR 1	YEAR 1 and 3
Action #2 Seek out ways to connect with faculty from other institutions and evaluating the needs of WGST in relation to the cross-appointment of faculty.	YEAR 1	YEAR 1 and 3

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

#1. A tenure-track faculty member was hired in April 2019 and began in July 2019. A second position was granted to the Centre in 2021 - being housed in WGST and cross-appointed to Sociology. The initial start date was July 2021 but due to a delayed hiring process, the faculty member will start July 1, 2022.

#2. This has been carried out through consultations at the annual Women’s and Gender Studies meetings at Congress and other conferences. In addition to the cross-appointed position for 2022, WGST helped to negotiate the cross-appointment of a colleague and former/current Director in 2019 from another unit at Brock (originally appointed in AHSC, now housed in Sociology and cross-appointed to WGST).

**Recommendation #3**

We are concerned about space for the WGST program- since space is always also about visibility. We thus recommend that the chair, whoever they are, always have space within the program, along with other faculty.

We also encourage the administration to work with th WGST program to ensure adequate office for WGST Tas - the people doing some of the integral work to curriculum delivery and successful student learning.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction. It is expected that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for space resources.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation not accepted.

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

WGST is advocating for enhanced space through the regular governance channels and is currently in discussion with Dean Makus and Associate Dean Zinga about office space for our incoming faculty member in July 2022.

**Recommendation #4**

We recommend that the WGST program continue its work in promoting WGST and enhancing its visibility on campus, including updating its website and information cards, etc. when appropriate. It might also consider working with current students to establish a WGST student union to assist, in a more formal way, with some of the student recruitment and promotional work, in that students, like alumni, can often act as the most important ambassadors of an undergraduate WGST program.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation that the Centre continue its work in promoting WGST and enhancing its visibility on campus to be accepted. It is expected that the Centre will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for staff resources

**Implementation Plan (2<sup>nd</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Centre  
 Responsible for resources: Centre  
 Responsible for implementation: Centre  
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Update the WGST website.	YEAR 1	YEAR 1-4
Action #2 Update WGST social medial platforms.	YEAR 1	YEAR 1-4

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

WGST continues to update print and web-based materials on an on-going basis. WGST will develop resources for students to support online learning that can be accessed through webpages and course Sakai sites. This has increased significantly with the pivot to Remote Emergency Teaching since March 2020 and has continued unabated. A WGST student ambassador was hired using the FOSS Dean’s Discretionary Fund in 2021. The student ambassador has forged connections with students from all years, promoted WGST on social media platforms as well as created new presences on new platforms.

## **C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation**

### **1. To what extent has the Unit achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?**

WGST has implemented the suggested improvements as possible. Revisions to the structure of the program at the 200-level has increased flexibility for students and has improved student recruitment and retention. The two 400-level courses are popular elective options for graduate students from across Brock. We have two more positions housed in the Centre to support our course offerings and another cross-appointment to support the program. We have completed all suggested improvements by the reviewers.

### **2. What overall impact has it had on the Unit's programs?**

The external review helped WGST to critically examine its programs and structure, the requirements for courses and programs and have significantly streamlined our programs. It has fostered closer connections between our undergraduate program and graduate programs at Brock, notably the MA in Social Justice and Equity Studies.

### **3. Is the Unit adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?**

Yes, we have engaged in an ongoing review of curriculum to ensure that it reflects the needs of our students and faculty. In 2022 for example, we have started a review of course titles and descriptions to consider updating these to better reflect the course content and outcomes. We introduced a micro certificate in 2021.

### **4. How well do the programs now align with Brock University strategic priorities?**

The Centre for Women's and Gender Studies has always been a leader of transdisciplinarity and social justice at Brock and continues with this important work. The practicum course offers exceptional experiential education opportunities for students. The Centre is a leader in fostering a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization and the academic programming demonstrate this commitment.

### **5. How does this review and its results position the programs as the Unit moves into the next review cycle?**

The external review process was a constructive process that allowed the Centre to examine the content, flow and requirements of its programs. It also focussed on the student experience and the importance of recruitment and retention. The Centre continues to refine and improve its programs, course offerings and linkages to other programs at Brock.

## D. ARC Final Summary

In final summary of the 2017/18 cyclical academic review of the programs offered by the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, ARC will determine the following:

1. Have the Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily?  
Yes
2. Has the Unit established a direction for next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle?  
Yes
3. Has the Unit achieved a broad-based, reflective and forward-looking self-assessment?  
Yes