

Women's Studies B.A./B.S.

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Women's Studies B.A. and B.S. Programs offer undergraduate students high quality degree programs in Women's Studies that meet national standards of excellence. Additionally, the programs' introductory course, WMST 201S, supports the University's General Education program as one of the courses fulfilling the Social Sciences Goal, while WMST 401U forms part of the World Cultures: Values and Visions Cluster in Option B of the University's Upper Division General Education program, and WMST 390T forms part of the Impacts of Technology Cluster. Program faculty are committed to quality teaching and to the discovery of new knowledge. The faculty support the institutional mission to serve a diverse student body, to understand the perspectives of women, minority, and nonwestern peoples, and to place knowledge in a global context (Strategic Initiative 6.1).

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The Women's Studies B.A./B.S. Programs support the University goals of (a) quality undergraduate academic programs, (b) quality teaching, and (c) discovery of new knowledge.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

Students will demonstrate knowledge of (a) the factors affecting women's diverse lives, perspectives, and accomplishments in a U.S. context, (b) the factors affecting the diverse lives, perspectives, and accomplishments of women globally, and (c) the major explanatory theories in the field of women's studies.

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: All students will attain at least an Acceptable (in a 3-part evaluation scheme ranging from Excellent to Acceptable to Poor), and 35% of students will attain an Excellent in a review (by three Women's Studies core and/or associated faculty) of students' individual Portfolios which consist of all written work prepared for Women's Studies courses, with special attention given to the culminating paper written for WMST 490, the Capstone course.

N.B. Owing to factors extraneous to the academic program (e.g. military deployment, workplace demands, illness, caregiving responsibilities), the academic progress of many of our Majors has been slowed, reducing the completion of the WMST degree to one student in the past year. To flesh out the assessment data for this and all other outcomes, data are included for those eight students among the women's studies Minors who have graduated in the past year, having taken at least three courses with a WMST prefix (as opposed to the minimum of two WMST courses required for the Minor in addition to courses cross-listed from other departments). Also data, serving as a progress report, are included for four Majors who have completed almost all their Women's Studies requirements and will be graduating in the next two semesters. Since neither the Minors nor the not-yet-graduated Majors have taken WMST 490, the method of assessment for them for Outcome 1 has been their final exam papers for their WMST courses.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1: The student completing her WMST degree showed excellent knowledge of a, b, and c. Of the eight graduated Minors, three showed excellent knowledge of a) and b), four showed acceptable knowledge, and one showed poor knowledge. In regard to c), two students showed excellent knowledge, three showed acceptable knowledge, one showed poor knowledge, and there was insufficient data to gauge the remaining two. As to the Majors-in-progress, three showed excellent knowledge of a) and one showed acceptable knowledge; in regard to b) three students showed acceptable knowledge and there was insufficient data to assess the fourth student.. In regard to c) two students showed acceptable knowledge, and there was insufficient data to assess the remaining two.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: One component of the Exit Interview conducted by two Women's Studies core and/or associated faculty with each graduating seniors will be three questions designed to probe the specific components of the knowledge base described above. All students will be expected to attain at least an Acceptable on this oral exam, and 35% of students will attain an Excellent.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 1: This method of data collection was not used this year.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: Each Women's Studies student in her/his final semester will give a public Senior Reflection in which they articulate their understandings of the conditions and perspectives of women. Two women's studies core and/or associated faculty will evaluate this presentation. The goal is for all students to convey at least an Acceptable degree of knowledge and for 35% of the students to convey an Excellent grasp of the knowledge base through this means.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 1: This method of data collection was not used this year.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 1 to Improve Academic Program: Alternative means of assessment (i.e. a final exam) will be used in the Feminist Theory course to promote greater accountability among the students so as to improved performance on criteria c). In addition various exercises in class will be introduced to clarify information for students.

Intended Outcome 2

Students will communicate complex ideas effectively in writing.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: 100% of students will earn scores of Acceptable or higher on the review of their Portfolios, as undertaken by three Women's Studies core and/or associated faculty members, with special attention paid to the culminating paper written for the Capstone course, while 75% of students will earn scores of Excellent.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2: The graduating major was found to be excellent at writing, although we found her better at summarizing ideas than at analysis.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: 90% of students will pass the Exit Exam of Writing Proficiency on their first attempt, while 100% of students will pass the exam.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 2: By this criteria, all the WMST Majors are excellent, since all the Majors have passed the Exit Exam on their first attempt.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: Method of assessing the Minors and the Majors-in-progress was analysis of their final (essay) exam papers.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 2: Of the Minors, three were deemed to have excellent writing skills, three had acceptable skills, and two had poor skills--one of these because English was not her first language. Among the Majors-in-progress, all four now show excellent ability to convey complex ideas in writing.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 2 to Improve Academic Program: We are doing an excellent job already with our Majors in this regard. We believe the key is the amount of writing required for our courses which we will continue, despite its labor intensive impact on us as instructors.

Intended Outcome 3

Students will express ideas clearly in spoken form.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: Each Women's Studies student in her/his final semester will give a public Senior Reflection in which he/she articulates understandings of the conditions and perspectives of women and an analysis of their own development as learners. Two Women's Studies core and/or associated faculty will evaluate this presentation. The goal is for 100% of students to convey their ideas clearly and forcefully in spoken form to an Acceptable degree and for 50% of students to be assessed as Excellent in their oral presentations.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3: The graduated Major was judged as excellent in expressing ideas clearly in oral form in this presentation.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: The Exit Interview conducted by two Women's Studies core and/or associated faculty with each graduating senior will be used to assess student ability to convey ideas clearly. All students will be expected to attain at least an Acceptable on their oral performance during the Exit Exam and 50% of students will attain an Excellent.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 3: The graduated Major was judged as acceptable in expressing ideas clearly in oral form in the Exit Interview

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: The Minors and Majors-in-progress were assessed on the basis of oral contributions to class discussion and oral reports given in class.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 3: Of the Minors, three were assessed as excellent in expressing themselves orally, four had acceptable skills and one had poor oral skills. Among the Majors-in-progress, two had excellent skills and two had acceptable skills.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 3 to Improve Academic Program: More oral reports will be assigned at the 300 level of courses.

Intended Outcome 4

Long-term impact of Women's Studies courses: One-time outcome. In honor of the 25th anniversary of Women's Studies at Old Dominion University, we sent a questionnaire in 2002, to all our alumnae/alumni that we could contact, probing what they considered to be the impact of their women's studies courses on their lives. A copy of the report based on those questionnaires is attached.