

Program Assessment Report 2016-2017

Program: Womens Studies

Program Learning Description

1). Demonstrate an understanding of the experience of gender, especially women's experiences in history, society and culture and be able to critically analyze those experiences;

Identify the artifact(s) (i.e. student work or outputs) that you used to assess the PLO. [Projects, papers, presentations, portfolios, exam questions, specific assignments, capstone work]

Surveys

Other artifact(s)

Identify the instruments (e.g. rubrics, surveys, spreadsheets, statistical software) used to assess the artifact(s) (i.e. the way in which student output are analyzed).

Qualitative review and analysis

Other instruments Used

Exam Questions

Describe program collaboration to plan, implement and use the results of assessment.

Explain the results of the assessment activities.

Where applicable, outline the steps you will take to make improvements to the program based on the results of assessment activities identified in #3.

Results of Direct Assessment Activities by Dr. Jean Harris:

Data for both majors and concentrators was collected. In both classes, Women's Studies students performed at a consistently higher level than non-concentrators/ non-majors. This may demonstrate the effectiveness of the curriculum as a whole, as well as the aptitude and accomplishments of individual students in the specific classes. A statistical analysis of the data and copies of the assessed items are attached.

PS 227: Women Authority and Power

Six Women's Studies students were in the class. Data was collected on eleven test items designed to assess students' ability to demonstrate an understanding of women's experiences in history, society, and culture. Data showed that 82% of students were successfully able to complete these items. Five of six students did so fairly, solidly, or excellently. Only one student did so poorly. An additional set of fourteen items assessed student ability to critically analyze these experiences. 91% of student responses were fair, solid, or excellent in this set of test items. 70% achieved excellent.

PS 216: Women's Rights and Status

Seven Women's Studies students were in the class. Data was collected on twentyfive test items designed to assess students' ability to demonstrate an understanding of women's experiences in history, society, and culture. Data showed that 94% of students were successfully able to complete these items. Three students out of seven had also taken PS 227 in the previous semester; high success may also indicate that students benefited from the sequence of courses. Seven items assessed student ability to critically analyze these experiences. 26% of student answers achieved "fair" and 68% "excellent."

We will use Harris's results to help contribute to establishing baselines for future program assessment. In the meantime, we are very satisfied with her results and have no recommendations for curricular changes in support of PLO 1. At the course level, she nonetheless plans to make changes to PS 216 that further focus course material and spend more time discussing students' "Status Report" assignments, graded, reflective narratives designed to encourage students to apply course material to specific current events and social and cultural issues. These reports will also be useful in assessing WS PLO 3, allowing her to show how students analyze contemporary policy debates. In PS 227, she will devote more course time to focusing on larger, contextualizing issues. This will likely entail a shift in the class organization and assignment sequencing to introduce historical information to better situate analytical activities.

Results of Indirect Assessment Activities: Student Exit Survey

The Senior Exit Survey had a 67% response rate. Students reported overwhelmingly positive experiences in the program. Our students all rate WS faculty and their courses as better than average.

Our students report a high level of participation and leadership in student organizations, including United Colors, ISP trips, The Leahy Food Pantry, the Philosophy Society, the JKWC, and Scranton Inclusion, and point to the value of feminist theories of intersectionality to their co-curricular activities and discussions. We are pleased that our current curriculum, with its emphasis on the relationship between theory and practice, enables our students to transfer classroom knowledges to other contexts. Indeed, all students reported that they believed 50-100% of WS courses actively promoted leadership skills. Students also ranked opportunities for volunteer and outreach activities within our program very highly. Two-thirds of responding students also ranked the contribution of Women's Studies courses to their understanding of international issues as "very helpful," underscoring our programs contributions to global learning goals at a university-wide level.

Nearly all students reported that WS courses were very helpful in developing knowledge and understanding of our PLOs (see question 22 a.-d. on attached surveys). (The sole "not too helpful" was one awarded in 22.d.)

Are there any new resources needed to create program improvements? If so, please include the resources that you will request in the Budget section of the Annual Report.

a. While students rated their improvement of GE skills in WS classes very highly. In Year two of our assessment cycle, responses to a question regarding information literacy were lower. Faculty worked to highlight how specific assignments in fact contribute to information literacy and a short statement about how WS courses support GE aims was also added to the WS statement included on each syllabus and circulated to faculty at the beginning of each semester. Further, the question itself was amended to clarify that information literacy is not limited to technological facility. It now reads: "What percentage

of classes in Women's Studies promoted or emphasized information literacy (including the ability to identify, assemble, and critically evaluate information, as well as to use technology to complete your work or assess written material)?" This year, all students identified specific courses that advanced their information literacy and all indicated that between 50 and 100% of all WS courses improved their information literacy.

b. We will use assessment data on PLO 1 as a baseline for our next assessment cycle, recognizing that this sets a high standard.

c. As a result of previous years' assessment activities, we have also refined the language of our PLOs and will continue our next three-year cycle using the newer PLO and SLO language, adopted with no audible dissent at our Spring 2017 faculty meeting.