

# Institutional Effectiveness Report

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## Assessment Summary

**Department or Division:** Women's and Gender Studies Program

**Degree Program:** Women's and Gender Studies Minor

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**Assessment Cycle** (academic or calendar year): 2008-2009

**Mission** (related to VSU mission):

The Women's and Gender Studies at Valdosta State University is an interdisciplinary program committed to providing feminist scholarship across the disciplines. The mission of the Women's and Gender Studies Program is:

- To promote gender equity and an academic climate that hears and respects women's voices.
- To provide resources and an intellectual context for students, the University, and the community which facilitates individual and collaborative research about women, gender, and sexualities.
- To promote the integration of women, gender, and sexuality issues into courses across the disciplines and so encourage critical and sensitive thinking about women, gender, and sexualities.
- To initiate and co-sponsor events related to women, gender, and sexualities with campus departments and student organizations.
- To offer networking, advocacy, and support for all faculty, staff, and students.

**Assessment History** (discuss here how and when the program developed its current assessment program, what it used prior to starting that program to assess its effectiveness, etc.):

Under the leadership of Dr. Viki Soady, the Women's and Gender Studies program (then known as the Women's Studies Program) instituted its initial assessment plan in 1998. At that time, the program created educational outcomes and outcome assessments. The outcome assessments consisted of the following:

1. The creation of writing portfolios that demonstrate the evolution of thought and learning across the courses taken in the minor
2. Student participation in local, state, and national conferences
3. Exit interviews with students
4. Discussion and feedback from other Women's Studies Programs

In July 2005, Dr. Tracy Woodard-Meyers became the Interim Director of the Women's Studies program. It was during this time that the program underwent major changes. The name of the program was changed from Women's Studies to Women's and Gender Studies program. The curriculum underwent major revisions and the educational outcomes were updated. The outcome assessments have remained the same. Unfortunately, outcome assessment data are only available for 2005-2008 academic school years.

## **Expected Student Learning Outcomes:**

Course work in Women's and Gender Studies will enable students:

1. To gain familiarity with the development of Women's and Gender Studies as an interdisciplinary academic area and the research that is conducted in the field
2. To examine academic disciplines and public policies from a feminist perspective, using research and analytic methods that encourage the translation of research into committed and responsible social involvement
3. To examine women's and men's lives as they are affected by gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, age, race, class, ethnicity, religious, and national differences
4. To understand that what are commonly referred to as "women's issues" are societal in scope and effect and are therefore of concern to everyone, regardless of gender

**Assessments** (include when and to whom these are administered, and align goals with specific assessments):

1. The creation of writing portfolios that will demonstrate the evolution of thought and learning across the courses taken in the minor
  - a. All minors are required to take the Senior Capstone course (WGST 4400). This course was revised in Spring 2007 by the new Director which required students to write a senior research paper on the intersectionality of women, gender, feminist knowledge and a topic relevant in their major field of study. These papers are often submitted to the Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR) and presented at the University's spring CUR symposium. Meets goals: 1, 2, 3, and 4.
2. Student participation in local, state, and national conferences
  - a. The WGST program hosted the Southeastern Women's Studies Conference in Spring 2006. This conference was attended by VSU students and a number of folks throughout the country. While this conference was a bi-annual event on the VSU campus making it an easy way for students to participate in a major women's studies event it is now hosted by various colleges throughout the southeast region. A number of students still participate in these conferences by attending and presenting papers but with fewer travel monies this is likely to decrease. Meets goals: 1, 2, 3, and 4.
3. Exit interviews with students
  - a. The University asks graduating students to complete a survey concerning their field of study and experiences at VSU upon graduation. Unfortunately, data is not collected concerning one's minor therefore the WGST program does not receive data from the graduation exit interviews.

4. Discussion and feedback from other programs in Women's Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, and Gender Studies
  - a. The Director of the program attends regional and national conferences each year in which discussions and feedback are exchanged with other directors and professor in Women's and Gender Studies programs throughout the country.
5. Student Evaluations
  - a. The WGST program receives good feedback concerning student assessment throughout the year through the evaluation of student's knowledge in each course. Professors use a variety of evaluation measures some of which include tests, papers, written assignments, and group assignments. Meets Goals: 1, 2, 3, and 4.

#### **2005-2006**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):
  - Students were encouraged to participate in and attend the SEWSA Women's and Gender Studies Program on VSU campus in March 2006. Students were allowed to attend the conference free of charge. Because students did not have to pay, they did not register for the conference therefore we do not know how many students actually attended the conference. We did have five VSU students present papers at the conference.
- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:
  - All five of the students papers pertained to some aspect of the students' knowledge concerning women's and gender issues.
- Modifications Made:
  - None at this time

#### **2006-2007**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):
  - Students in the Senior Capstone course wrote a senior research paper concerning women, gender, feminist knowledge and a topic relevant in their major field of study. Two students presented their papers at the Council of Undergraduate Research symposium.
- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:
  - Through their research, students were able to demonstrate their knowledge of women's and gender issues, theory, and policy.
- Modifications Made: None at this time.

#### **2007-2008**

- Assessment Results (submit an electronic file of the data collected):
  - Students in the Senior Capstone course wrote a senior research paper concerning women, gender, feminist knowledge and a topic relevant in their major field of study.
- Discussion/Dissemination of Results:

- Through their research, students were able to demonstrate their knowledge of women’s and gender issues, theory, and policy.
- Modifications Made:
  - None at this time

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<b>Dept. Head/ Director</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Dean</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>VPAA</b>	<b>Date</b>
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Adapted from: University of Alabama SACS site (<http://sacs.ua.edu/degreeInfo2.cfm?college=2&dept=50>);

University of Western Kentucky SACS Accreditation Review Process (<http://www.wku.edu/sacs/assessmentmanual.htm>) ; and

Mrs. Marila D. Palmer, VP-Executive Affairs & Planning, LeTourneau University, Presentation to 2008 SACS-COC Institute