

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1. Review Summary

Programs Reviewed:	Women and Gender Studies, B.A. Hons: Specialist, Major, Minor Women and Gender Studies, M.A., Ph.D.
Division/Unit Reviewed:	Women and Gender Studies Institute
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prof. Sunera Thobani, Institute of Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, University of British Columbia2. Professor Samantha King, Department Head, Department of Gender Studies, Queen's University3. Professor Anita Mannur, Director, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Miami University
Date of Review Visit:	May 10 – 11, 2018

Previous Review

Date: January 10 – 11, 2008, University Review of undergraduate and MA program

The PhD program was approved to commence in 2011-12 under the UTQAP and has not undergone a cyclical review to date.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Programs

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Transnational curriculum brings together global issues, diaspora and migration, race, gender and intersectional analysis
- Curriculum fits well with other programs at University College
- Major program is popular among students

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Lack of core faculty to teach required courses
- Large class sizes

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Institute should review teaching assignments, and consider rotating junior and senior faculty among the required and introductory courses

2. Graduate Programs

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- MA program is off to a good start with some excellent students enrolled

Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Outstanding faculty
- Strong track record of teaching and research
- Excellent research funding received

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Faculty members have many demands placed on them due to the nature of being cross-listed to multiple units; some feel overworked, and students and community members are seeking more time to connect with them

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Hire three more full-time faculty
- Arts & Science should review the contracts of the cross-appointed faculty to see how teaching and service loads are distributed

Administration

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Institute is a powerful presence on campus, and exemplary model of innovation and excellence
- Top ranked department in North America and internationally
- Institute organized conferences provide intellectual growth for faculty and staff
- Strong leadership from current and former Directors

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Some faculty expressed concern over the governance structure; process seemed too time consuming
- Lack of space prohibits program expansion
- Difficult for students from cognate units to register
- Some other units do not support feminist scholarship

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Consider what resources would be required to offer a PhD program
- Consult among senior faculty regarding next Director appointment
- Revisit priorities to reduce the number of projects taken on
- Increase the staff complement, and consider a higher classified staff hire to work on grant writing, catalog copying, website, etc.
- Review governance structure and consensus model
- Work with New College to develop space plans
- Review relations with cognate units (planned lecture series could assist in building relations) and consider reserving space for students from other programs to register in courses
- University should strengthen their diversity and equity programs

Last OCGS review date: 2005-06 MA program approved to commence

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of Reference; Self-Study and Appendices; Faculty CVs.

Consultation Process

The reviewers met with the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science; Associate Dean, Undergraduate Issues and Academic Planning; Director, Women and Gender Studies Institute; Undergraduate

and Graduate Coordinators; Junior and Senior Faculty members; Representatives of Cognate Units: Sexual Diversity Studies, Anthropology, Sociology; Principal, New College; CAO, New College; Undergraduate and Graduate administrative staff; undergraduate and graduate students.

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - Undergraduate programs are clearly a strength of the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGS)
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Meets degree level expectations and program learning outcomes
 - Directly relates to student experiences, interests, and concerns
 - Curricular focus on transnational gender studies has made the programs a leader in Canada in this sub-field
 - Recent Critical Race Studies hires are helping build the undergraduate program's reputation as an up and coming leader in the field
 - Robust range of topics in offerings
 - Strong commitment to expand Indigenous Studies offerings
- Assessment of learning
 - Assessment of student learning is in line with other women and gender studies programs
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - Institute activities create a sense of belonging for students
 - Students are inspired to advanced their studies
 - Healthy program enrolments especially given the declining trend in humanities and social sciences
 - Teaching evaluations report higher than average (compared to overall Faculty) satisfaction with teaching, quality of interaction, and course content

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Objectives
 - Ongoing and renewed support from the University administration is needed to continue the intellectual and political work of the Institute
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Absence of curriculum in South Asian/Diaspora Studies
 - Some rethinking needed in order to balance all sub-field in offerings
- Quality indicators – undergraduate students
 - While enrolments are healthy, members of the unit would still like to see an increase in undergraduate enrolment

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Objectives
 - Seek material and symbolic University/Faculty support and recognition for the intellectual and political work performed at the Institute
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Consider filling curricular gaps in Indigenous Studies and/or South Asian/Diaspora Studies, with a senior-level tenure track hire
 - Review the undergraduate curriculum to develop new course offerings in Indigenous Studies, and South Asian/Diaspora Studies; enhance the offerings in political economy, cultural studies, community engagement and research methods

2. Graduate Program

The reviewers observed the following strengths:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Meets degree level expectations and program learning outcomes
 - Directly relates to student experiences, interests, and concerns
- Assessment of learning
 - Assessment of student learning is in line with other women and gender studies programs in the field
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - Healthy graduate program enrolment

The reviewers identified the following areas of concern:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - WGSU is undergoing a comprehensive review of the graduate programs, so unable to make specific recommendations about either the curriculum or program delivery at this point
 - Program requirements and procedures appear to be in different stages of development
 - Limited number of tenured faculty who can serve as supervisors (non-tenured can only serve as co-supervisors) has hampered graduate program progress

The reviewers made the following recommendations:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - Establish clear lines of communication regarding program requirements, procedures and timelines amongst leadership, faculty supervisors and committee members, students and staff

- Expand PhD comprehensive exam options to enable students to acquire expertise in research methods, curriculum development, and/or community engagement

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - Faculty members speak highly of one another, and students echo the sentiment
 - Research and scholarship of faculty are well received in the field, and publications rank 3rd behind Harvard and Michigan
- Research
 - High quality and wide breadth of research, consistent with similar interdisciplinary units
 - Publishing in top ranking publications nationally and internationally
 - Impressive productivity
 - Highly successful in receiving research funding

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Faculty
 - Some undergraduate students concerned that learning and mentorship are inhibited due to the temporary status of sessional faculty who are relied on to delivery the undergraduate program
 - Administrative burdens falling on junior faculty
 - Unusual that many mid-career faculty have not pursued promotion to full professor; reviewers sensed some resistance to this from chairs of cognate units with jointly appointed faculty

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Faculty
 - Reduce the reliance on sessional faculty, and relieve some administrative burden, by appointing a permanent lecturer and senior-level tenure-track faculty member
 - Work with the Faculty and cognate units to ensure strong associate faculty members are encouraged to pursue promotion, and provide overall mentoring and other supports for untenured faculty to ensure long-term success

4. Administration

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships

- Great deal of appreciation and enthusiasm for the accomplishments and activities of the WGSJ, and clear commitment to meeting the needs of the University, underserved communities and marginalized populations
- Rich learning environment
- Institute plays a key role in fostering and participating in scholar-activist-community relationships
- Many members of the Institute are invited to deliver keynotes, serve as media commentators, and policy consultants
- When faced with challenges, the members of the Institute pull together and support each other
- Increase in internal communication among faculty at all three-campus in regards to administrative and Institute community matters
- Organizational and financial structure
 - Overall satisfaction with Institute finances, especially for projects and special events
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - Institute programs and activities exceed the University mission
 - Publically-engaged research is key to the Institute's wide range of activities
- International comparators
 - WGSJ has played a leading role in the Canadian history of the development of the disciplinary field
 - Successfully grown from offering one of the first programs of its kind in Canada to now offering programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and graduate Collaborative Specialization levels
 - Institute ranks favourably against national and international peers, and has unmatched strength and depth in the area of transnational feminism

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Organizational and financial structure
 - Staffing:
 - growth in graduate enrolment has led to unevenness in staff workloads
 - some staff expressed concern over remuneration in relation to workloads, seniority and experience
 - anxiety around proposed review of Institute staffing
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - Institute has no academic plan
 - WGSJ cannot directly approach potential donors, hampering unit-specific fundraising
 - Projected decreases in enrolment will make it imperative that funding be secured

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - Ensure careful attention to and support for efficient internal communication

- Organizational and financial structure
 - Consider staff remuneration as part of the upcoming staff audit
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - Incoming Director should initiate the development of an academic plan, in consultation with all stakeholders
 - Continue to enhance activities and community building efforts by adding new annual events
 - Integrate the Institute's long-term financial needs within the University's larger strategic fund-raising plans



2. Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

March 15, 2019

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of Women and Gender Studies Institute

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of the Women and Gender Studies Institute, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of the Institute and its programs: Women and Gender Studies, B.A., Hons., Specialist, Major, Minor; and Women and Gender Studies, M.A., Ph.D. The reviewers complimented the Institute on the way that *"the activities of the Institute provide a rich learning environment to its students."*

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated January 28, 2019, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate (6 months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) terms, where appropriate, along with who (Program Director, Department, Dean) will take the lead in each area. The Dean's office has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with the Director of WGSJ and to develop the following implementation plan incorporating the reviewers' recommendations.

The reviewers noted that they could not make recommendations about the graduate programs because a curriculum review was pending; please comment on the timelines for completing the graduate curriculum review process.

Implementation Plan

Immediate to medium term response: The Director has struck a Curriculum Review Committee, chaired by the Graduate Coordinator, with faculty and student representation. The Graduate Coordinator will oversee a curriculum mapping process as part of this review. The Committee will present its recommendations in Fall 2019, with plans to implement changes the following year.

Medium term response: The Vice-Dean, Graduate, will work with the Director to discuss proposed changes and their implementation. Changes will go through the Arts and Science governance process, as appropriate.

The reviewers recommended engaging in curriculum review to enhance course offerings and add new offerings in Indigenous Studies and/or South Asian/Diaspora Studies.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: The Institute will consider new offerings as part of the curriculum review process.

Medium to longer term response: The unit plans to make future requests for faculty in these areas to the Arts and Science Faculty Appointments Committee.

In the Faculty of Arts and Science, units submit requests for new faculty positions through a formal process to the Faculty Appointments Committee (FAC). Units submit requests in February/March of each year for consideration by the FAC, which includes faculty representatives from across the three Arts and Science sectors (the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences) as well as the Colleges. After considering the full range of requests, the FAC makes recommendations to the Dean. Any request for additional faculty has an impact across the division, and as such, faculty appointments are considered not in isolation, but with respect to needs that exist across the Faculty. Requests for faculty lines from WGSJ will be considered each year as part of this process.

The reviewers suggested expanding options for PhD comprehensive examinations to enable students to acquire expertise in their area of specialization.

Implementation Plan

Immediate to medium term response: The unit will consider changes to PhD comprehensive examinations as part of the Graduate Curriculum Review.

They noted the importance of clear communication especially with graduate students regarding program requirements, procedures and timelines.

The unit recognizes the importance of communication with graduate students. The Graduate Administrator and Graduate Coordinator are in regular email communication with graduate students. The Graduate Administrator has a rotating workflow list that is used to remind students of upcoming deadlines and program requirements. Every student is provided with a hard copy of the Graduate Handbook for students at their Orientation. The WGSJ website is an additional source of information for graduate students, including documentation related to annual progress reports, conference funding, and other forms of funding (<https://wgsi.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-forms>). The Graduate Coordinator holds regular office hours each week for individual student advising.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: The Director will review communications strategies with the Graduate Coordinator and Graduate Administrator to identify possible improvements in these strategies.

The reviewers noted the need to establish clear lines of communication across groups.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: The Director will work to improve communication within the unit. The Director will meet monthly with administrative staff. Faculty meetings are held once per month. Department meetings, including student representation, are held once per month. Staff are also represented at the department meeting, thus all the constituencies of the department are represented.

The reviewers noted the need to work with cognate unit Chairs to support tenure and promotion to ensure faculty members' long-term success at the University.

Implementation Plan

Immediate term response: In the case of faculty with joint appointments, the Director will establish regular meetings with cognate unit Chairs to ensure consistency and transparency in tenure and promotion procedures. The Director notes that Arts and Science has policies and procedures in place for tenure and promotion in the case of joint appointments.

The reviewers commented on the need to engage in academic planning, community-building, and internal communication efforts; they also noted the important role the Institute plays in the academic and social landscape of the Faculty and recommended that the Faculty's planning processes reflect this.

Implementation Plan

Medium term response: The Institute will be undertaking unit-level academic planning, as discussed in more detail below.

Equity and diversity are priorities in the Arts and Science Faculty planning process. In 2017-2018, Arts and Science identified a set of six Faculty Priorities (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/faculty-staff/academic-planning>) including enhancing equity and Diversity. As part of the Faculty's current Academic Planning exercise, the Dean has formed a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, with representation from faculty, staff, and students. This group has a mandate to explore ways to increase representation from underrepresented groups and enhance opportunities to build diversity and create a more inclusive Faculty environment. The Working Group will develop a series of recommendations in a report to be submitted to the Dean in May 2019. The Faculty will engage with WGSJ as it moves to implement recommendations of this Working Group and develop the next Arts and Science academic plan.

The reviewers reflected undergraduate students' concerns regarding the need for mentorship and commented on the limited number of faculty available to serve as graduate supervisors; they made a number of recommendations to stabilize the Institute's complement and address gaps in South Asian/Diaspora and/or Indigenous Studies. (Note:

in responding you may wish to clarify that the question of which tenure-stream faculty can serve as supervisors is determined at the unit level.)

WGSJ made a decision that only tenured faculty would supervise doctoral students. Untenured faculty can co-supervise doctoral students. The decision was made with the intention of supporting untenured faculty as they progress towards tenure. Assistant professors in WGSJ can and do supervise masters students.

Implementation Plan

Medium term response:

As part of a new unit-level planning process, all units within Arts and Science will be asked to submit an academic plan, including a section on complement planning, within a year following the completion of their UTQAP review. This document will also allow the Dean to evaluate progress on the implementation plans identified in the UTQAP administrative response. As part of this planning process, WGSJ will develop plans for undergraduate mentorship, review assignment of graduate supervision, and consider longer-term complement planning to ensure the stability of the Institute's faculty complement.

The Institute plans to make requests through the Arts and Science Faculty Appointments Committee for positions in South Asian/Diaspora and Indigenous Studies. As noted above, any requests will be made through the Arts and Science FAC.

The Dean's office will monitor the implementation of recommendations, with, at minimum, a brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the year of the site visit and the year of the next site visit. The year of the next review will be the 2024-2025 academic year.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified the Institute's strengths and noted a few areas for development. The Women and Gender Studies Institute has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

David Cameron

David Cameron
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc.

Rinaldo Walcott, Director, Women and Gender Studies Institute
Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Arts & Science

Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

3. Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

4. Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers were impressed with the welcoming and inspiring environment at the Institute, and complimented faculty and staff for building a positive and respectful community. The reviewers praised the curricular content in that it matched students' interests and was directly relevant to their life experiences and concerns. The reviewers added that these factors contribute to maintaining a healthy enrollment in programs despite trends in the field. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: engaging in curriculum review to enhance course offerings and adding new offerings in Indigenous Studies and/or South Asian/Diaspora Studies; expanding options for PhD comprehensive examinations to enable students to acquire expertise in their area of specialization; establishing clear lines of communication, in particular with graduate students regarding program requirements, procedures and timelines; establishing clear lines of communication across groups; working with cognate unit Chairs to support tenure and promotion to ensure faculty members' long-term success; engaging in academic planning, community-building, and internal communication efforts; reflecting the important role the Institute plays in the academic and social landscape of the Faculty in the Faculty's planning processes; addressing undergraduate students' concerns regarding the need for mentorship; addressing the limited number of faculty available to serve as graduate supervisors; stabilizing the Institute's faculty complement and addressing gaps in South Asian/Diaspora and/or Indigenous Studies; and answering the question of which tenure-stream faculty can serve as supervisors. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5. Monitoring and Date of Next Review

The Dean's office will monitor the implementation of recommendations, with, at minimum, a brief report to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, midway between the year of the site visit and the year of the next site visit. The year of the next review will be the 2024-2025 academic year.

6. Distribution

On May 17, 2019, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Science, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to the Director of the Program.