

# Final Assessment Report

## Women's Studies (BA)

March 2015

---

### Introduction

Offering its first set of courses in 1972-73, Women's Studies (WS) has developed both regular and honours degree programs as well a minor, and a diploma for students interested in learning about gender and its interconnectivity with such categories as race/ethnicity, class and sexualities among others.

The following academic plans are offered by Women's Studies.

- Women's Studies Diploma (approved in 1986; for students enrolled in any non- or post-degree academic plan)
- Women's Studies 3-Year Major (approved in 1994)
- Women's Studies 4-Year Major (approved in 1997)
- Honours Women's Studies (approved in 2009\*)
- Joint Honours Women's Studies (approved in 2009\*)
- Honours Women's Studies & Arts and Business – Co-op or Regular (approved in 2009\*)
- Women's Studies Minor (approved in 1998)

The above programs demand varying combinations of required and elective Women's Studies courses, and additional courses from an approved course list.

The following plans were approved in 2004 and then inactivated in 2009 due to lack of enrollment:

- Four-Year General Women's Studies, Science and Technology Specialization
- Women's Studies, Science and Technology Minor
- Women's Studies, Science and Technology Option
- Four-Year General Women's Studies, Issues in Entrepreneurship Specialization
- Women's Studies, Issues in Entrepreneurship Minor
- Women's Studies, Issues in Entrepreneurship Option

---

\* These programs were established since the last program review in 2007.

## **Review process**

The self-study was submitted January 27, 2014 and the site visit occurred March 3-4, 2014. The external reviewers were Prof. Annalee Lepp (Department of Women's Studies, University of Victoria) and Prof. Kathryn McPherson (Department of History, York University). The internal member of the review committee was Prof. Carolyn MacGregor (Systems Design Engineering). During the visit, the team met with university, faculty and program administrators, Women's Studies Advisory Board members, sessional instructors, and program majors. The review team's report was received on May 8, 2014, and the program's response and implementation plan were received on January 30, 2015. (Note: The program's response was delayed by the resignation of its previous Director and the appointment in November, 2014 of a new Director. The Dean of Arts indicated his endorsement of the plan on February 1, 2015.

As part of the self-study process, the Women's Studies Advisory Board undertook regular meetings to discuss strategic planning and the program review. The Board engaged a facilitator from the Centre for Teaching Excellence to help it develop a set of priorities, deliverables and timelines for moving forward. In addition, the previous Director met with many other UW stakeholders in order to incorporate those perspectives into the planning process. These included department chairs from other Arts departments that are closely connected to Women's Studies (Germanic and Slavic Studies, Sociology and Legal Studies, History, English Language and Literature, Philosophy), the campus Women's Centre, the Status of Women and Equity Committee, the President, and the Provost. The previous Director also consulted with a number of community stakeholders, including the Kitchener-Waterloo chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women.

Following the previous Director's sabbatical and subsequent resignation, the current Director was appointed. She was given a specific mandate to spearhead a transformation both curricular and administrative of Women's Studies in response to the reviewers' report and with an eye to making Women's Studies more administratively sustainable while judiciously updating and improving its undergraduate programs within the context of wider curricular and programmatic changes currently underway in Arts. Taking her lead from the reviewers' recommendations, the Director engaged in a renewed process of consultation and a scan of complementary programs and resources on campus. She will produce a set of recommendations for changes to Women's Studies by the end of the Winter 2015 academic term.

This Final Assessment Report summarizes the main findings of the self-study and the reviewers' report and outlines a program response and some suggestions for an implementation plan, based on the Director's emerging renewal plan for the program.

## **Previous review**

The previous review of the Women's Studies (WS) program occurred in 2007. Important accomplishments emerging from and since that review include the following:

- As of Fall 2010, WS began offering Honours, Joint Honours, and Arts and Business Honours (Co-op and Regular) B.A.s in Women's Studies, in addition to the general B.A.s and minor already on offer.
- WS has increased the number of courses from 10 to 31 (September 2010). Twenty of these courses are cross-listed with other departments.
- Increased course release for the Director in July 2012 allowing her to spend more energy focused on running and creating awareness of the program. [\*Note: This was not a permanent increase. Currently, the Director's course release has returned to the pre-2012 level.]

Other recommendations from the 2007 review were not implemented due to insufficient funding or lack of student interest (e.g., WS program did not achieve departmental status, did not establish a Research Institute on Gender, Science and Technology; did not initiate a graduate program in Women, Technology, and Health).

## **Characteristics of the program**

The objectives of the WS program are to explore, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the ways in which society is shaped by gender. Students and faculty examine how social, historical, and political forces shape our world.

The primary learning outcomes for students in the WS program are to:

- Identify and analyze gender and its intersections with other relations of power and privilege such as sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, geography, etc. while distinguishing between universalist understandings of gender, women and sexuality, paying close attention to the interconnectivity and mutual constitution of categories of analysis;
- Recognize the ways that gender issues are connected to wider social, political, economic, national, historical and cultural contexts and articulate the ways that disparities in power and privilege are inextricably linked to these wider issues;
- Describe and distinguish between various feminist theories and methodologies and articulate how these are culturally and historically contingent;
- Identify appropriate contributions to the scholarship and engage with these for their own research projects;
- Articulate the various sociopolitical contexts that inform opinions, theories, identities, subcultures and politics related to gender and sexuality;
- Write and speak effectively from feminist perspectives in different communication contexts while analyzing academic and social issues;
- Transfer theory to practice in everyday experiences of different feminist issues and find effective ways to advocate for change in the world, both locally and globally.

The program was mapped against the Undergraduate Degree Learning Expectations (UDLEs). This exercise revealed that the current curriculum requires some revision to ensure clear pathways exist for students to achieve program-level learning outcomes. This curricular revision process started in 2012.

The first step was redesigning the Women's Studies 101 course (both online and face-to-face versions); the redesigned course was offered for the first time online in Winter 2014. The Director plans to introduce additional core courses – both online and face-to-face, to support the program goal of preparing students for post-university activity (either community work or post-graduate education).

The external reviewers viewed the Women's Studies program as having potential for further growth and development resulting from “three cornerstone activities that make for a solid and engaging inter/disciplinary academic unit[:]...high quality scholarly research and publication; strong commitment to undergraduate teaching (servicing honours students, majors, minors, and especially students across the university); and impressive university and professional service.”

## **Students**

Enrollments of majors in the WS program are low. Combining the Regular and Honours program, from 2006/07 to 2012/13, the program averaged 9.6 majors per year. During that interval, the lowest enrollment was 4 majors in 2007/08. Enrollments climbed in the last three years, once the Honours Regular and Co-op programs were available, to 16 students in 2012/2013. The majority of students are enrolled in the Honours Regular program. In 2012/13, four students were in the regular program, 11 in the Honours Regular program, and one in the Co-op program.

As with most programs in the Faculty of Arts, students apply for a major, in this case Women's Studies, at the end of their first year. Students are predominantly Canadian citizens and entirely female, although male students in other programs do take WS courses. Students in WS are not generally scholarship winners – only one student won an entrance scholarship in 2008/09. The program has an essay award valued at \$500 presented annually since 2012 to a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year major in Women's Studies.

Enrollment of students in WS courses is highest in first and second year courses. In the last five years of the review period, WS 101 (An Introduction to Women's Studies) routinely attracted over 500 students each year (two offerings each year). Other WS courses with high enrollments over the last five years of the study period include WS 102 (Contemporary Women's Issues in Canada, 130-195 students), WS 201 (Images of Women in Popular Culture, 164-253 students), WS 202 (Women Across Cultures: Canadian and Global Perspectives; 71-136 students) and WS 205 (Gender, Culture and Technology, 69-103 students). In all cases, enrollment increased in latter years.

During the period included in the review, the program offered two online courses – WS 101 and WS 222, both of these revamped since 2012. In WS 101 enrollments ranged between 39 and 67 students. In WS 222 enrollments ranged between 8 and 18 students. (WS 222 is cross-listed with Philosophy, with enrollment caps set by Philosophy. The foregoing figures only represent the WS enrollments in the larger combined classes.) The program Director has received a number of enthusiastic comments from students about the new CEL version of WS 222. The initial roll-out of the CEL version of WS 101 revealed some infelicities in the design of the course; it is currently being tweaked to smooth out these difficulties. Notwithstanding this, the infrastructure designed for the CEL WS 101 course now usefully supplements the on-campus WS 101 course, permitting students a rich, “blended learning” experience.

Attrition appears to be low based on comparing enrollments between Year 2 and Year 3 in the program for any given cohort. From 2007 to 2012, a total of 10 students graduated from the Women's Studies program, with one student on the Dean's Honours List.

## **Graduates**

A survey was sent to graduates from the program in Spring 2013, attracting 21 respondents with varying completion rates. Overall, graduates reported that they had a positive experience in the program and, in particular, found the development of their critical thinking abilities, communication skills, and knowledge of feminism to be key outcomes of their studies. Of the respondents who answered (18/21), 83% found the quality of their education to be excellent or very good and the same number of students would recommend the program to others.

The graduates of the WS program who responded to the survey question regarding their current employment are found in a wide variety of employment types, including professional jobs. These include assistant professor, teacher, academic librarian, frontline counselor, registered nurse, respiratory therapist, investigator, editorial intern, program evaluation and project coordinator, retail entrepreneur, and miscellaneous other professions.

## **Faculty**

The WS program at Waterloo is the only program out of 13 Women's Studies programs across the country with no faculty appointed to the program. However, many faculty members from other departments and faculties across campus participate in this program as Board members, instructors of cross-listed and/or approved courses, and as scholars interested in gender and feminist studies. The 2010 Two-Year Report lists 27 Waterloo faculty members teaching courses in WS. At the time of the self-study, the WS Advisory Board consisted of four faculty members from, respectively, History, Religious Studies, Philosophy, and Recreation and Leisure Studies.

The scholarship of faculty who contribute to the WS program represents an impressive breadth of expertise that explores gender and sexuality from a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives. All of the faculty associated with WS are members of various professional and disciplinary associations. Many faculty associated with WS are journal editors, sit on editorial boards or serve as reviewers for journals and granting agencies. Faculty involved in the program attract grant funding from a variety of sources and disseminate their research results through a wide range of publications and conference presentations.

Most WS-owned courses are taught by sessional instructors. Student course evaluations in WS-owned courses are close to or slightly below the Faculty of Arts averages for classes of varying sizes. For instance, in 2012-2013, the average mean score for WS course evaluations was 4.19, compared to 4.24 Faculty-wide. However, this data reflects on a very small number of evaluations (average of ~10 for each of last three years, spread among four class-size categories).

## Program strengths and challenges

### Strengths

The external reviewers identified the following strengths of the Women's Studies program:

- Highly efficient use of very limited financial and teaching resources;
- Strong and consultative leadership and clearly articulated governance structures;
- A collegially-elected Women's Studies Advisory Board composed of, *inter alia*, dedicated faculty members who are also in leadership positions and otherwise contribute to advancing equity and diversity at the University of Waterloo and beyond;
- A solid and engaging interdisciplinary academic plan that has the potential to attract high quality students as majors and honours students
- Affiliation of qualified tenured faculty members and sessional instructors, with strong records of teaching, scholarly publication, and/or success in obtaining research grants appropriate to their career stage. The program's recent research outputs have ranged from a compelling documentary about issues faced by women of colour when they immigrate to Canada to an innovative study of women's consumption of digital erotica ;
- Development of appropriate and clear learning outcomes at the program level, which are consistent with the University of Waterloo's Strategic Plan and the Faculty of Arts draft Strategic Plan. Emphasis on disciplinary knowledge acquisition and application, communication skills, professional capacity, as well as applied and experiential learning;
- 'Value-added' service teaching of students across the university, consistent with the university's commitment to equity and diversity; this teaching provides critical and intersectional perspectives on key Waterloo priority areas such as technology and entrepreneurship;
- High levels of student satisfaction among current students and alumni;
- Development of strong and effective promotional, outreach, and networking initiatives under the Director and Advisory Board.

### Weaknesses/challenges

The self-study articulated a number of challenges to be met and recommended ways to address them in the areas of enrollments, curriculum, re-branding of the program, administration and physical resources. A further, prominent weakness identified in the self-study is student recruitment into the program. The self-study indicates clearly the low enrollments of program majors, low enrollments in some WS courses, low representation of international students and gender imbalance (no male students as majors in program). The program also struggles to effectively communicate the value of the WS program to students across the campus. Since the foregoing challenges were also identified by the external reviewers, the program's plans to address these challenges are embedded in the replies to the reviewers, below.

In their identification of the program's weaknesses, the external reviewers both expanded upon challenges identified in the self-study, and noted additional issues to be addressed. The reviewers

separated their 16 recommendations into three categories: (A) governance, (B) program name, mission and curriculum, and (C) resources. The recommendations, with the Women's Studies' responses, follow.

### **A) Governance**

**Recommendation 1:** Initiate a strategic discussion about the representation of additional Faculties on the Women's Studies Advisory Board

**Response:** WS agrees that it would be beneficial to the program to forge both formal and informal relationships with faculty members from outside Arts. However, the administrative recommendations the Director is developing may oblige WS to use mechanisms other than the Advisory Board to forge these relationships. In brief, the WS board and the Department of Philosophy, with the support of the Dean, are currently exploring the possibility of housing WS in the Department of Philosophy. This proposal has received a positive response from both the Women's Studies Advisory Board and the Department of Philosophy, with discussions with both bodies ongoing. The amalgamation of WS with Philosophy, if approved, would provide WS with support, expertise and resources not presently available to it, and would permit the rationalization of space, staff and faculty resources between the two units. However, it is unlikely that WS would continue to have an Advisory Board if it were housed in Philosophy. However, should WS and Philosophy decide to proceed with this plan, it will be important to have scholars from other cognate disciplines, not just philosophers, involved in WS in order for it to remain differentiated from Philosophy. To this end, the Director is exploring the possibility of seeking cross-appointments between WS and other programs. In keeping with the reviewers' recommendations, she will be especially attuned to such cross-appointment opportunities with faculty members from outside of Arts, including those in STEM disciplines.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Formal recommendations for amalgamation of WS with Philosophy to be referred to, respectively, Women's Studies Advisory Board, Department of Philosophy and Dean of Arts by April 2015 for decision by June 2015 and. If the proposal is approved, implementation begins September 2015, with the first combined WS-Philosophy budget occurring in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

**CHAMPION:** Director, with support from Philosophy Chair and Dean of Arts.

### **B) Program Name, Mission, and Curriculum**

#### **Program name**

**Recommendation 2:** Initiate a process to discuss the re-naming the program with an eye to distinguishing it from related programs at Wilfrid Laurier University and St. Jerome's University and to building a more gender and otherwise diverse student cohort. One possibility would be Equity, Diversity, and Social Justice Studies, which would align the program to the University of Waterloo's strategic priorities.

**Response:** included in response to Recommendation 3

### **Mission**

**Recommendation 3:** If renamed, engage in a re-branding exercise, which would include creating a fresh mission statement, the development of a communications plan and promotional materials for the purposes of student recruitment and retention, and the marketing of the benefits of a three- and four-year major, honours and joint honours.

**Response:** WS supports these recommendations. As the self-study indicates, WS has already begun the re-branding process. Additionally, in her scan and consultations, the Director has identified both the resources and the appetite at Waterloo to expand Women's Studies' focus beyond women to gender (broadly construed), race, ethnicity, class, ability and other identity categories, and to structures and institutions in which (and whereby) members of the foregoing identity groups are disadvantaged. Concomitantly, she proposes to extend WS's theoretical approach beyond traditional feminist approaches to expose students to the kind of theorizing that occurs in such complementary disciplines as Critical Race Studies, Disability Studies, Queer Studies, and Post-Colonial Studies. Women's Studies faculty, staff, and board members agree with the external reviewers that the current name does not clearly communicate the core values and intended learning outcomes of the program. This misalignment will likely be exacerbated by the anticipated program changes. Some alternative names have been suggested, and will be the subject for further discussion with stakeholders. It is expected that the board will have approved the new objectives and program name by the end of the Winter 2015 term, and will be able to move on to implementation. This implementation will include the creation of a fresh mission statement, the development of a communications plan and promotional materials for the purposes of student recruitment and retention, and the marketing of the benefits of a three- and four-year major, honours and joint honours plans. If WS moves into Philosophy, the Director will work with the Philosophy Chair, Undergraduate Chair, and Undergraduate Committee, in consultation with the Arts Undergraduate Office to develop and implement a communications plan and promotional materials that address the reviewers' recommendations and align with Philosophy's communications and promotions plans.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Women's Studies Board will approve the new mission statement and program name April, 2015.

If move into Philosophy proceeds, in September 2015, the Director will begin working with key Philosophy administrators, in conjunction with the Arts Undergraduate Office, to develop WS communications plan and promotional materials that align with Philosophy's communications strategy.

Proposed plan changes, including name change, brought to Undergraduate Arts Group (UGAG) for approval in early 2016, and from there make their way through the university approval process in the usual way. Anticipated effective date for new plans and program name: Spring 2017.

**CHAMPION:** Director and, if appropriate, Philosophy Chair, Philosophy Associate Chair Undergraduate, Philosophy Undergraduate Committee, Arts Undergraduate Office.



## **Curriculum**

**Recommendation 4.** Given that many of the current students in the program are joint honours students, the strategic promotion of the joint honours is critical; consideration should also be made to the strategic promotion of WS double major and minor for students in other University of Waterloo programs.

**Response:** WS supports this recommendation. The reviewers refer to both double majors and joint honours programs. The double major is rare at Waterloo, but WS agrees with the importance of actively promoting its joint honours and minor plans. Currently, the Faculty of Arts is engaged in an undergraduate plan-standardization project that, even though this is not the primary goal of the project, will make it easier for students to pursue joint honours and minor plans. As these new streamlined plans are rolled out, WS will seize the opportunity to promote its joint honours and minor. Within WS, the Director is developing a revamp of the program's focus, undergraduate plans, and course offerings that will, it is anticipated, make the value of a WS joint honours or minor much more salient to students in other programs. Among the likely revisions to WS plans is the addition of a number of courses from related programs as approved WS electives. Having additional electives available to WS students will make it easier for students in other programs to add a WS joint honours or minor and double-count their existing courses towards that plan.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Stage 1: Streamlined version of existing plans, standardized in accordance with new Arts plan standardization templates, sent to Arts Undergraduate Office approved at UGAG March 2015. Stage 2: See above response to Recommendation 3.

**CHAMPION:** Director

**Recommendation 5.** Extend and clarify learning outcomes (intellectual and skills-based competencies) at each program level and identify clearer pathways through the program.

**Response:** The Arts Plan Standardization process discussed in response to Recommendation 4 will result in many Arts programs reducing the number of plans they offer. WS passed its first round of plan changes (in order to align with the Arts Plan Standardization project) at the March 2015 UGAG meeting. Those plan changes included combining the honours, joint honours, Arts and Business (regular and co-op) plans into a single plan. This is the first of a two-phase plan revision process for WS. WS did not have time before the March 2015 UGAG meeting to thoroughly investigate the prospect of further reducing its number of plans. However, as the program prepares for its second round of revisions (these revisions intended, inter alia, to reflect the program's new focus, new name, and new degree level learning outcomes), it will consider cutting the 4 year general plan and the diploma. Thus, at the end of this process, WS expects to have three plans (3 year general, honours, minor) rather than its current seven. This reduction and streamlining of WS plans will make it easier for student to navigate WS pathways.

Additionally, the Director's April recommendations for the WS revamp will include recommended degree level learning outcomes for WS plans. These outcomes emerge from both the multiple curricular development sessions the CTE coordinated for WS (CTE facilitated; then WS board members participated in these sessions) held in Winter 2013, and from the Director's recent scan and consultations.

See also the response to Recommendation 6.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Stage 1: Standardized plans approved at UGAG March 2015. Stage 2: Further plan modifications, oriented around revamped WS learning outcomes, brought to UGAG early 2016.

**CHAMPIONS:** Director, WS Board

**Recommendation 6.** Undertake a modest redesign of the WS “hosted” curriculum, with a focus on student recruitment and retention at the 100- and 200-levels and establishing a capstone and preparatory course for three- and four-year general majors and honours students respectively. This redesign would involve adjustments to the 100-level courses, the creation of an alternative 200-level recruitment/retention course, the development of a “Research in Action” course at the 300-level, and the strategic retitling of courses as necessary.

**Response:** Women’s Studies supports these recommendations. This year’s Arts plan standardization initiative ensures that all Arts undergraduate plans, including WS, will have much clearer pathways through the program in place by the end of the year. In-house, the Director is planning two additional plan revisions that will make pathways clearer to students while ensuring that graduates achieve degree level learning outcomes: (1) Currently WS honours majors must select courses from five different lists. The Director plans to streamline the plan such that students have just two lists of courses: one list of mandatory courses and a second list of approved electives. (2) In order to ensure that students achieve appropriate learning outcomes as they progress through WS plans, and degree level outcomes at the completion of the plans, the Director plans to develop new theory, methods, and practicum courses – on-campus, online, and .25 credit labs – to be included in the list of mandatory WS courses. Correspondingly, some currently mandatory courses will become approved electives. Unfortunately, the small number of WS majors means that a senior capstone course is not viable; the class size would be too small to be a sustainable use of teaching resources. Instead, a .25 credit lab at the senior level would allow upper year students to integrate their work in other courses in a way that supports their intellectual autonomy and serves as a capstone experience in their final year of study.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Proposed new courses and course changes, along with plan changes (See response to Recommendation 3), brought to Undergraduate Arts Group (UGAG) for approval in early 2016, and from there make their way through the university approval process in the usual way. Anticipated effective date for new plans and program name: Spring 2017.

**CHAMPION:** Director and, if appropriate, Philosophy Associate Chair Undergraduate.

**Recommendation 7.** Strengthen and integrate intersectional course content and courses that focus on colonialism, contemporary neo-colonial realities, and Indigenous feminisms; racialization, transnationalism, and the experiences of people of colour; queer and trans studies; and disability issues.

**Response:** Women’s Studies agrees that such a revision is long overdue, and has begun the work that such a revision requires. This work has three main prongs: (1) Strengthening intersectional content in existing Women’s Studies courses, (2) adding existing courses from other programs that emphasize such

content as approved electives to WS plans, (3) strategically creating – or supporting other academic units’ creation of – such courses as are necessary to fill in gaps in existing Waterloo offerings. For instance, there are currently no Waterloo courses devoted to disability issues. The Director is currently investigating the possibility of having a colleague in another department who specializes in disability author a new WS online course on disability; this course could then cost-effectively be taught by a sessional or graduate student in the future, would fill an important gap, and would serve as an important service course (and possible gateway course) for students in the social sciences, AHS, Optometry, and some Engineering areas.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** For timeline of implementation of prongs (1) and (2), see plan and course change timelines sketched in replies to Recommendations 3 and 6, above. Prong (3): ongoing.

**CHAMPION:** Director and, if appropriate, Philosophy Associate Chair Undergraduate.

**Recommendation 8.** Consider incorporating an honours defense as a component of the capstone experience of WS honours students.

**Response:** WS unfortunately finds this recommendation unfeasible at this time. Both the existing honours thesis and the reviewers’ proposed honours defense are time-consuming for faculty. The honours thesis has traditionally been supervised by the Director of Women’s Studies. This practice is problematic since the Director is not always an expert in the area the student wishes to do thesis research on. Moreover, this supervisory load entails that the Director spends considerable time on supervision that could better be spent on program development and (since our Directors have often been dynamic and popular teachers) on teaching lower division gateway courses. Moreover, while WS sessional instructors have sometimes supervised honours theses in the past, it is the view of the current WS Board that it is unjust to burden sessional instructors with supervisory duties for which they are not compensated. Similarly, especially in times of fiscal constraint, it is unsustainable to expect other academic units to provide uncompensated teaching support to WS by permitting their tenure-stream faculty to supervise WS honours theses. Finally, it bears mention that Philosophy some years ago dropped its undergraduate thesis requirement in order to focus supervisory activity on graduate supervision; the Philosophy undergraduate thesis was replaced with senior honours seminars for Philosophy students. If WS moves into Philosophy, Philosophy will want to treat WS and Philosophy students consistently in this respect; hence, will favour senior seminars over honours theses for WS majors. For all of the foregoing reasons, at the March 2015 UGAG meeting, WS removed the honours thesis component from its honours plans. It is hoped that the .25 lab discussed above will serve as a useful capstone for senior students, helping them to integrate what they have learned throughout their degree, and to engage in further, independent exploration of material from one of their other senior courses.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Proposal to remove thesis requirement from honours plans approved by UGAG March 2015. For timeline on creation of .25 courses and integration of same into WS plans, see plan and course change timelines sketched in replies to Recommendations 3 and 6, above.

**CHAMPION:** Director and, if appropriate, Philosophy Associate Chair Undergraduate.

**Recommendation 9.** Undertake a review of existing cross-listed and approved courses, taking into account demonstrated student demand, consistency with the unit's program goals, mission statement, coherence, and level-specific learning outcomes, as well as the elimination of repetition of content.

**Response:** The Director is currently completing such a review, and developing a slate of such revisions ready to proceed through Waterloo's plan change approval process.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** For timelines on changes to WS cross-lists, see plan and course change timelines sketched in replies to Recommendations 3 and 6, above.

**CHAMPION:** Director and, if appropriate, Philosophy Associate Chair Undergraduate.

**Recommendation 10.** Re-negotiate, if possible, the WS seat allocation in high demand cross-listed and approved courses.

**Response:** Women's Studies agrees with this recommendation. As WS works through the plan changes discussed in response to Recommendation 9, it will undertake such re-negotiations, where possible and appropriate.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Consultation on WS seat allocation is underway and will be completed by the time WS program and plan changes go to UGAG for approval. (See response to Recommendations 3 and 6 for details.) Thereafter, such coordination with departments hosting WS cross-lists will be ongoing.

**CHAMPION:** Initially, Director. Thereafter, if appropriate, Department of Philosophy administrators.

**Recommendation 11.** Foster broader connections with academic units and potential affiliated faculty whose areas of research and teaching expertise may focus more on, for example, gender, equity, diversity, and social justice issues than specifically on women.

**Response:** Women's Studies agrees with this recommendation. The responses, above, to Recommendations 1-3 and 7 detail how WS will implement this recommendation.

**Recommendation 12.** Negotiate the establishment of a new required course, Gender, Human Rights, and Equity in the Workplace, which would add further and significant breadth to the existing WatPD course offerings, would be consistent with the university's strategic priorities, and, given its relevance, would potentially increase the number of WS honours students enrolled in the Arts and Business Co-op Program.

**Response:** One of the benefits of moving WS into Philosophy, if both units decide to proceed with that direction, is that such a move would allow WS to take advantage of existing capacity in Philosophy to create much-needed courses like the one described in Recommendation 12. Philosophy is perhaps unique among Arts departments in that it has two faculty members assigned with developing and overseeing, respectively, extended learning courses and applied ethics courses and modules, including those for other units. If moved into Philosophy, WS could take advantage of this capacity and expertise to create a course on equity in the workplace, and smaller equity modules for use in other programs.

Additionally, the WS Advisory Board is considering creating a minor on equity in the workplace. Such a minor would provide valuable, and highly marketable, training that would be an obvious complement to many Waterloo degrees. The minor in Human Resources Management (HRM) is an excellent model of how successful such a “professional” minor can be. As of Fall 2014, 316 students are enrolled in the HRM minor, up from 108 in Fall 2009. Even as Arts enrollments flag, the appetite for minors with clear workplace relevance is rising sharply.

**Recommendation 13.** Implement, if feasible, the fuller or strategic use of the course timetable, with an eye to creating more student options, increasing enrollments, and eliminating timetable conflicts among WS “hosted” and cross-listed courses.

**Response:** Women’s Studies agrees in principle with this recommendation. In practice, Waterloo is still in the early stages of implementing new scheduling software campus-wide. It is too early in that implementation to know how the new software affects WS enrollments. As well, in the past, WS has often had difficulty finding sessionals who live in Kitchener-Waterloo who are well qualified to teach core WS courses. This has often meant a heavy reliance on instructors who commute to campus from Toronto; this, in turn, has sometimes forced us to schedule classes in 2.5-3 hour blocks to reduce the number of commutes our instructors must make each week. While WS has little control over the implementation of the new scheduling system, WS is working to identify well-qualified instructors who live in Kitchener-Waterloo. In particular, the Director has been consulting with administrators from other units about the possibility of seconding staff or faculty to teach individual WS courses, possibly with the provision of funding for a sessional to the unit from which the instructor is seconded. Additionally, as Women’s Studies broadens its course offerings and plan requirements, it is foreseeable that it will see a corresponding increase in the pool of local instructors well-qualified to teach its courses.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Stage 1: Identify well-qualified local instructors to teach WS courses. Done.  
Stage 2: Pilot seconding instructor from other UW unit to teach WS course – September 2015.

**CHAMPION:** Director

**Recommendation 14.** Initiate a discussion with sessional instructors and students about appropriate reading loads in WS “hosted” courses by year level.

**Response:** Women’s Studies agrees with this suggestion, and will integrate it into new teaching mentorship and peer review mechanisms currently being implemented by the Director.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Launch peer review of teaching program in Women’s Studies in Winter term 2015.

**CHAMPION:** Director

### **C) Resources**

**Recommendation 15.** Negotiate the allocation of a Women’s Studies meeting space in close proximity to the Women’s Studies offices for student and affiliated faculty use.

**Response:** WS welcomes this recommendation. However, it is sensitive to the very difficult space constraints that exist throughout the Faculty of Arts. In the short-term, the Director, who has a Philosophy Department office upstairs from Women's Studies, has turned her Women's Studies office into a common meeting space for sessionals and students. However, this is a short-term solution. If Women's Studies is moved into the administrative home of Philosophy, its members would be able to take advantage of existing Department of Philosophy common space. If the proposed move into Philosophy does not occur, Women's Studies will have to develop creative solutions to its space problem.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** If WS's move into Philosophy is approved, reallocate existing Philosophy common space as Philosophy and Women's Studies common space, effective September 2015.

**CHAMPION:** If appropriate, Philosophy Chair.

**Recommendation 16.** To create greater continuity, as well as enhance the strength and the further growth and development of the WS program which students, affiliated faculty, and members of the Advisory Board indicated was a pressing necessity, the allocation of one full-time faculty position to the program. This faculty member could either assume the Director position or a full-time faculty position with a regular teaching load; in either case, the faculty member would be tasked with teaching some of the WS "hosted" courses and would contribute to the labour-intensive administrative, academic planning, and promotional and outreach work of the program.

**Response:** While Women's Studies would considerably benefit from the creation of a new faculty line, it is cognizant that current fiscal realities in the Faculty and the University make such an appointment unlikely. This is a pressing problem for the program. Women's Studies must grapple with a lack of consistency in the teaching of WS courses (the majority of WS courses being taught through contract faculty positions), a heavy reliance on affiliated faculty through cross-listed courses, a highly functioning, yet consistently changing Advisory Board, and the loss of institutional memory that comes with the revolving nature of the Director position (she is seconded from various departments and returns to them when her term is complete), all without a single permanent faculty member. The primary reason that Women's Studies' courses and plans are as outdated as they are is that the program has simply never had the faculty resources to engage in appropriate course and plan stewardship and development. If Women's Studies is moved into Philosophy, a number of these challenges will be addressed since WS will be able to take advantage of both Philosophy's existing administrative capacity and the teaching and scholarship of faculty members in Philosophy who work on gender and/or equity. However, in order to implement the plan the Director is currently developing to make WS strong and sustainable, WS will need additional faculty support. Moreover, it is unlikely that Philosophy will agree to house Women's Studies if the move results in a net loss in resources for Philosophy. Thus, Women's Studies and Philosophy are working together to seek support for a new shared faculty line that would both build on Philosophy's initiatives in applied ethics pedagogy and graduate professionalization and support Women's Studies' most urgent pedagogical and curricular needs. Such a position would make it worthwhile for Philosophy to provide a home for Women's Studies, and would permit Women's Studies

to build on its current strengths in order to provide Waterloo students with a high quality and practical education in gender, identity and equity.

**ACTION AND TIMELINES:** Proposal to seek joint WS-Philosophy incremental hire approved by Department of Philosophy February 6, 2015. Will next proceed to the Dean of Arts, and if appropriate, to the Vice-President Academic.

**CHAMPIONS:** Director and Philosophy Chair.