Women’s and Gender Studies Analysis and Recommendation

I. Visit Summary:
I met with Anne Kugler and Margaret Farrar at the beginning and end of my April 1 visit, which lasted from 10:10am to about 4:30pm. I met with the original creators of the program, the adjunct instructors who have been teaching the program’s core courses, and three WG students. I also visited the office of the former administrative assistant. Before arriving I had been able to familiarize myself with the program requirements and the academic program review, but had not yet seen the financials. I also met with Katherine Gatto for two hours the evening of April 20th. One of the items we discussed was the pool of potential faculty who could take on a rotation as Women’s and Gender Studies director.

I had two colleagues in my Math department review the history of minors/majors and course enrollments. The fluctuations in enrollment of majors and minors that you’re seeing could easily be random; there simply aren’t enough observations to determine a pattern. With respect to course enrollments, what you are seeing is a bulge in enrollment in 2014/2015, and consistency in the other years. Whether that bulge is reproducible I do not know; but I recommend addressing the issues with program visibility and cross-listing discussed below before making a determination on whether enrollment is increasing, declining, or holding steady. Do ask, however, what changed in 2014/2015—overall college enrollment? Better cross-listing? A couple of highly popular lectures?

The program has a strong nine-credit core and students who are excited about the program. It has done a great deal to create a strong presence in the minds of local women’s organizations and promote the program to students by hosting numerous lectures. Students suggest WG might enroll more students by expanding its curriculum beyond its current arts and sciences offerings. You might also consider offering WG 101 and WG 301 as a linked EHE sequence. A potential transition to a new program director provides an opportunity to open the program’s 9 credit-hour core curriculum to faculty across campus as well as build and connect a core of stakeholders on and off campus, especially if you create a new advisory board that includes the current director.

The loss of administrative assistance creates significant problems, not just because of the work the administrative assistant provides but because students strongly prefer having an office to go to for support.

II. Strengths and Weaknesses (Opportunities, Threats)
A. Strengths—
   1. Excellent direction; extraordinary outside networking
   2. Qualified and committed adjunct faculty
   3. Enthusiastic students
   4. Large cadre of senior faculty interested in teaching WG cross-listed courses
   5. Good office space and other tangible support for adjunct faculty
   6. Violence Prevention and Action Center whose head has a Women’s Studies
7. A web presence the program can influence/control
8. The three WG core classes are well designed to achieve and assess program outcomes/goals
9. An eye for personnel—Dr. Gatto clearly has an eye for talent, which the program should make use of even if she decides to step aside as director.

B. Weaknesses (internal)
1. My difficulties finding Margaret Farrar, (the entry guard claimed ignorance of the the phrase “Arts and Sciences” as well as the location of the A&S Dean’s office) turn out to have been symbolic. The greatest weakness I found is a **systemic lack of institutional communication**. With respect to WG, here are the most important examples I found:
   a. poor signage
   b. active ongoing formal communication among interested faculty and staff
   c. physical presence—no office or meeting space signals triviality to current minors/majors and their peers in other programs
   d. listserv or other rapid method of communicating among all faculty, staff, and students who express an interest
   e. **institutional awareness**. No one I spoke with knew the answers to basic questions. For example: What is the process and who is responsible for deciding when and whether the program directorship rotates? For deciding how much administrative assistance the program needs and how much the college can afford? For identifying and communicating with potential future directors?
   f. **compensation**—no one had a clear answer as to how much release time and/or pay the program director is receiving. I was told the original proposal was for one course release (it was unclear to me whether it was one course release for a year or per semester) and a stipend, but that this isn’t and has never been the case. I am not making a specific recommendation as to what compensation should be, but the program director should know exactly what they will receive.
   g. cross-listing courses is inconsistent from semester to semester
2. director may need to leave because of increasing responsibilities in home department.
3. absence of administrative assistance—A good women’s studies program director has to spend a lot of time continuously building and nurturing ties in the community and arranging partnerships for short- and long-term projects. The program director has done an excellent job with this, but without administrative assistance I don’t think she or anyone else would be able to continue.
4. One of the WG learning outcomes could be more explicit
5. “silo” mentality across campus limits communication

C. Opportunities
1. Weak enrollment in college overall provides an opportunity to tempt faculty to take on a commitment to regularly offer one of the 3 WG core classes to be sure to make load.
2. An advisory board can be a cheap and effective tool for promoting and energizing a program. Student meetings before or after the board meetings can be a good way to build community on and off campus.
3. The college is re-evaluating its use of space. Get some for WG! If you can’t get a conference room and an administrative office space for WG, can you maybe put together an office space for an administrative assistant and a conference room for all the Interdisciplinary Majors?
4. Qualified faculty who have not run the program but might be willing to. Dr. Gatto thinks the two most likely to be able to take over in the coming year are Medora Barnes and Susan Orpett-Long, who already has experience running an interdisciplinary program.
5. Continuity of institutional memory. If a new faculty member takes over as director, Dr. Gatto says she would be happy to sit on the new Advisory Board and be one of the faculty who regularly teaches the WG core classes.
6. The ability to transfer what is learned in one course to another is one of the most important and hardest liberal arts skills to develop. Interdisciplinary programs do this as a matter of course and so can model the skill for a wide audience of students.
7. The new core—WG 101 and WG 301 seem well-designed to serve as an ECE pairing.

D. Threats (external)
1. Decreasing population of college age people in NE Ohio
2. Weak overall enrollment in Northeast Ohio
3. Women’s Studies is not as well known as many other fields

III. Questions
A. Posed by Program

1. How can the WG Program maintain itself or even thrive without any support from the administration?
Adjunct office space and course release/compensation for the program director provide important support. Nevertheless, the program does need a plan for short-, medium-, and longer-term stability. It probably cannot function long without significant administrative assistance or a program director, and it really needs both. An Advisory board made up of on-campus faculty, representatives of community non-profits, business leaders, and a student representative that meets twice a year can, however, be a great help. Faculty who are able to commit to sometimes teaching one of the three Women and Gender Studies core courses (not just WG 299 special topics) might rotate on and off the board or
through the directorship on a two or three-year cycle. This would also help preserve institutional memory and improve cross-disciplinary communication.

2. How can one market the program to the JCU community (faculty and students) and beyond without sufficient administrative help? Work study students can do some of these, as well as anew one, the maintenance of a LISTSERV or other communication tool for faculty, students, staff, and advisory board members. However, students must be supervised, and they cannot provide the institutional memory of a continuous administrative assistant. An advisory board could help hold/arrange roundtables or presentations to increase campus and regional visibility. See the appended list of tasks that the former administrative assistant took on.

3. How can one find paid internships for WG majors and minors? Most Women’s Studies programs consider collaboration with other departments and offices on and off campus to be one of their key functions. This is much easier for an advisory board than for a lone director, and will raise visibility in the community and potential internship sites. Currently the program benefits from Dr. Ondrus’ many women’s studies contacts. Dr. Ondrus thinks she can help with finding paid internships.

4. How can the WG Program increase its number of majors and minors? Of course, if I really knew the answer to that question I would be the most sought after woman in academia. I do have some suggestions based on what I heard from your program stakeholders. Most of these suggestions come from your students and adjunct faculty.

a. Adjuncts and students said that correct cross-listing of courses with WG is erratic and that this hurts enrollment. I actually saw this demonstrated when one student mentioned in conversation that they hadn’t been able to take a class and another gave a detailed explanation of where to find the cross-listed courses.

b. The students said Women’s Studies lacks visibility—even a Women’s Studies Program sign would help, although a physical space would be better. An advisory board that helped advertise and hold WG events and talks around campus might help with that.

c. Part of the importance of visibility, according to the students, is that few JCU students know what Women’s Studies is. Again, an advisory board that helped organize and advertise WG events and talks around campus and among their own contacts might help with that.

d. I notice the program generates many of its credits through minors, and you might consider that as a potential strength.

e. Are there colleges from which JCU recruits many students? Does WG have an easily accessible and clear transfer policy with them?

f. Students had the impression that there are not a wide variety of courses and that more courses could be directed to multiple audiences. They recommended 1) more science courses 2) a course on some aspect of gender or women in sports 3) in general, to percolate women’s studies classes throughout the curriculum. I suspect erratic cross-listing diminishes the apparent diversity of WG offerings already available. Course cross-listings should be visible in the departments housing the course as well as in WG. It might help if cross-listed courses had a WG designated number, if they don’t already have one. For
instance, in my own program, History 454 Research Methods in History and Historic Preservation is the same course as Historic Preservation 501 Methods.
g. A gathering space or some kind of regular meetings would help WG students get to know each other and make them a campus presence. You might consider having some regular kind of group service or fundraising activity on campus.
h. Can the various interdisciplinary majors create a few courses that “double dip” for each of them? “Women in Chinese Art”, “Gender and Warfare”?
i. Minors can turn into majors; I myself planned only to minor in German until I reached senior year and realized I could finish the major in 12 credits.
j. I notice Gatto’s IC 299/WG 299 Women’s World Cinema had the highest number of enrollments in the program. Is there any chance that course can run again? 😊

5. Should we change the title of the program to include “sexuality studies” as well, since that seems to be the trend, i.e., Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies? I didn’t get any strong responses one way or the other. For me, sexuality is part of both Gender Studies and Women’s Studies, just as queer theory and men’s studies are aspects of Gender Studies. It might be instructive to ask some programs with sexuality studies in their names why they made the change.

B. Posed by Dean
1. How well is the department meeting the mission and expectations of the university? The program’s mission, learning outcomes, and internships meet the mission of the university. To the extent that their stated course objectives and departmental goals are filled, they will be in line with the mission and learning outcomes of the college.

2. How well is it meeting its own departmental goals and mission?
Here is the program’s mission statement:
“The Women’s and Gender Studies Program seeks to instill in students a desire to excel in learning and a commitment to global engagement to bring about gender equity in the pursuit of humane values and social justice. “
Here are the student learning goals, with comments relating to assessment inserted using the “review” function for MS-Word. If you look at the document and select the dropdown menu for “Review” and select “Final: Show Markup” you can see them to the right. The bottom line is that it seems to me the program introduces, reinforces, and probably assesses all its outcomes/goals, and so probably only needs a plan to capture and report on data already collected.

The Women’s and Gender Studies Program helps students to:
• Recognize how the social and cultural constructions of gender have shaped the experiences of men and women historically and geographically.
• Understand connections between gender and power in a global context.
• Examine gender roles from multiple perspectives and disciplines.
• Evaluate feminist critical scholarship and methodologies.
• Analyze the connections between gender inequalities and other forms of discrimination (race, class, ethnicity, etc.)
• Develop abilities and skills to deal positively and effectively with gender issues.
• Appreciate the ethical and social justice dimensions and implications of the study of gender.

In doing program outcome assessment, you might try a plan somewhat like this. An “I” means the outcome is introduced in the course; an “R” means it is reinforced in the course; and an “A” means it is assessed in that course. Because WG has 3 courses all majors and minors must take, it’s probably easiest to do it in those three, and to create assignments/activities that assess them. So, for example, if an outcome is “develop abilities and skills to deal positively and effectively with gender issues”, what assignments/activities lead students to demonstrate those abilities and skills? Note that assessment does not necessarily require a grade; a discussion of what a faculty member has observed, a student self-assessment, or even a class discussion might be enough for a given year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Outcome 3</th>
<th>Outcome 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WG 101 Intro.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 301 Global</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 299</td>
<td>Do you want to include the 299’s in assessment?</td>
<td>Do you want 299’s to all address the same outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 450 Capstone</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. What is your assessment of the department in terms of curriculum, faculty strengths, teaching and learning, use of resources, assessment practices and results, student recruitment and performance, and future departmental plans?
The program seems to have done a great deal with the resources it has (or had, until the administrative assistant left). Student recruitment is hard to judge; but the methods the program is trying are sound. I might add developing specific 2+2 or other transfer policies with Lakeland and CCC. At the moment the program’s plans for the future are stalled until a decision is made about a director and administrative assistant. I do think that without an administrative assistant the program will stagnate.

The curriculum is solid. You have good adjunct faculty and a number of good full-time faculty capable of teaching in and running the program if their other departmental commitments permit. (See the list I put under part I “Opportunities”). The academic outcomes/goals of the program are sound—I made one suggestion for refinement, but I think they would be fine with HLC as written—and that the program goals are sufficiently reinforced and assessed within classes.
Formal Assessment should be relatively easy. See for instance a slightly longer version of the table in 2 above, with possible assessment results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Outcome 3</th>
<th>Outcome 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WG 101 Intro.</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 301 Global</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 299 Global</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 299 Global</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG 450 Capstone</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Program Assessment Results</td>
<td>In-class discussion in Capstone indicated competency across the board</td>
<td>Written work showed students less competent than we would like; next year we will target this area</td>
<td>Student presentations demonstrated competency</td>
<td>Written work demonstrated competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Program Assessment by Advisory Board (obviously, if you have 40 people graduating that year won’t want to use this assessment)</td>
<td>Focused on last year’s problem area. Revised formative assignments; Advisory Board reviewed finished assignments by majors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What recommendations do you have for the department on the issues above, mindful of its size and circumstances in a teaching-oriented, mid-size university? Create a town/gown advisory board; get buy-in from college faculty on creating a rotating directorship. Continue sponsoring the lecture series and other high profile activities such as study abroad. Assessment should be easy, because the program goals are embedded in the core courses.

5. What recommendations do you have for the Dean and Academic Vice President as they work to support the department? Systemic lack of communication is very bad for interdisciplinary
programs. Publishing and keeping track of cross-listing is crucial. Apparently Peter Kvidera used to do this when he was Associate Dean? The program needs administrative assistance.

1. How might the program adjust in light of declining enrollment in the major but rising enrollment in relation to the New Core?

See my opening remarks; there is no significant evidence of enrollment decline or increase in the major. I do recommend making 101 and 301 a linked EHE pair.

I want to point out that the program generates a lot of income compared to the costs of running it.

I am not sure how you do a cost/benefit analysis at JIU, so here is a method I am familiar with. Note that I don’t have numbers for 2016. However, based on total class enrollment, the figures are probably similar to those for 2014.

Cost/Benefit Analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Direct Costs in USD</th>
<th>Tuition per credit (assumes 36 credits per student per year)</th>
<th>Total Credits</th>
<th>Total Credits x Average Tuition</th>
<th>Tuition-Direct Costs/Direct Costs. A typical ratio for an institution as a whole is 1.5-1.8, which then becomes a target for programs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$6751</td>
<td>? I couldn’t find this number, so the rest of the row is blank</td>
<td>74x3=222</td>
<td>?</td>
<td><img src="https://latex.codecogs.com/png.latex?%5Cfrac%7B133,164-19348%7D%7B19,348%7D=5.88" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$19,348</td>
<td>961; average paid 822, or 85 percent of published cost.</td>
<td>54x3=162</td>
<td>$133,164</td>
<td>133,164-19348/19,348=5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$28,176</td>
<td>1030 listed; if we assume 85 percent of published cost: 1030x.85=876</td>
<td>116x3=348</td>
<td>$304,848</td>
<td>304,848-28,176/28176=9.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Do you have suggestions for increasing the visibility of the program and its attractiveness to potential majors?

3. How might we rethink the role and responsibilities of a new director?
Before rethinking that role, we need to know what the program director and administrative assistant are currently doing. Based on communication with Dr. Gatto, students, and adjuncts, this is what I think the Administrative Assistant and Program Director are doing.

In addition, the Director should be someone who is able to teach at least one of the WG core courses as part of their regular course load. If the program does develop an Advisory Board, then the Director and Administrative Assistant will have to add maintaining communication and holding events for the Advisory Board to their regular tasks. In an ideal world, the Advisory Board would meet twice a year, including at least one meeting where they interact with students. Based on what I have seen, there are plenty of faculty and some staff interested, and current director and adjunct faculty should be able to find good board members off campus.

### Administrative Assistant’s Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>On-Campus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>1. enter student records 2. Write up budget requests 3. Make room reservations 4. library acquisitions 5. arranging publicity, videotaping and set-up for lectures and other special events, including field trips and meet your major events 6. answering e-mails and telephone calls 7. entering major and minor declarations, graduation audits, and doing general record keeping, 8. gathering syllabi for all WG and WG-approved courses 8. Keeping eligible course and faculty lists up to date 9. oversight of student worker 10. keeping track of service and volunteer opportunities for the capstone course 11. helping maintain the WG website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Director (for Women’s Studies, items 2 and 4 are probably the most labor intensive activites)</td>
<td>1. Tracking course cycling 2. Identifying and arranging speakers for lectures, which requires making community contacts (14 in the first three years) 3. Identifying organizations for internships 4. Making and keeping up contacts/communication with local women’s organizations 5. Arranging travel study, including travel abroad 6. Identifying adjunct instructors 7. Arranging “Meet your Major/Minor” events. 8. Maintaining website, including generating materials for it 9. Program review and assessment 10. Advising 11. Requesting cross-listing (like proof-reading, this is something that needs more than one set of eyes) 12. Selecting choices for days and times of teaching for adjunct staff 13. Reviewing syllabi for WG-approved courses 14. Teaching in the program 15. Manage program budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Which peer institutions might the program look to for ways to foster fruitful connections with departments and for ways to maintain currency in its offerings? I believe this is the kind of question best answered by an advisory board. I would start creating that advisory board by contacting the institutions where students have already done internships and some of John Carroll’s local board of trustee members for likely candidates. I suggest a slate of non-profit program leaders and faculty members who understand that helping you connect the program and students with other organizations is a primary concern. That is, you want them for their contacts, not their wallets. I think you will find that potential board members appreciate the professional contacts they make through the board and having a connection to the college. Board memberships look good on a resume.

5. Like many interdisciplinary programs, Women’s and Gender Studies often finds itself relying on the enthusiasm and goodwill of other departments for maintaining course offerings and faculty. Discuss best practices in terms of hiring, course schedule planning, and advising for universities interested in supporting their interdisciplinary programs.

I am not an expert in this area, but based on what I’ve heard from your stakeholders and my own experience and observations, here are some suggestions.

1. An active advisory board is a great asset.
2. Interdisciplinary programs can cross-list some courses with each other.
3. Are there other programs at the college that can benefit from students with a major, minor, or just some expertise in your area? Program directors should coordinate their own offerings with related departments. Incidentally, some of these departments should provide your advisory board members, which will make it a lot easier to remember to cross-list.
4. Every program needs a salaried champion who teaches in the program.
5. Advising needs to be consistent, accurate, and coordinated with course cycling.
6. Service and teaching in interdisciplinary programs must count and be publicized as counting towards tenure and promotion.
7. Interdisciplinary programs should benefit from rotating directorships, as the faculty related to the program will have diverse strengths, disciplines, and contacts to draw from over time. Women’s Studies are a field that particularly requires community and cross-campus contacts to thrive.

IV. Recommendations

A. For Program—seek allies across campus to act on an advisory board as well as a pool of people who will each teach one of the three WG core courses every year or two. This group of instructors should meet regularly—one or twice a year—to touch base on what they are doing, what academic goals/outcome(s) are being assessed, and upcoming course cycling—including cross-listing.

B. For Administration—1) Without a salaried faculty member to act as director and some administrative assistance it will be very difficult to keep the program healthy. Potential directors must know in writing that running WG will contribute towards promotion/tenure/service
expectations 2) faculty in multiple disciplines must be able to sometimes teach the “core” courses of WG or other interdisciplinary programs as part of their regular teaching load 3) A strong Women’s Studies program has many community ties, internships, and on-campus activities. Any director will therefore need administrative support. The program so far has done extremely well in developing outside relationships, creating on-campus events, and identifying partner faculty across faculty and it would be a shame to have that momentum disappears for lack of assistance. 4) Interdisciplinary programs may do better with tangible physical space. 5) Any degree to which the administration can help build bridges across campus by making and creating infrastructure for continuing contacts would be helpful. 6) My analysis shows that the program more than pays for itself