

Proposal for the Establishment of an Institute for Women's Studies at the  
University of Georgia (March 7, 2003)

The Women's Studies Program (WSP) resides administratively in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, but includes faculty and students from seven colleges and 35 departments at UGA. Thus the WSP, with its 10 core faculty and 62 affiliate faculty, exemplifies interdisciplinary work at UGA. The program was established in 1977 and has continued to grow in numbers and functions over the years.

WSP is requesting a change in designation from Program to Institute for several reasons:

(1) "Institute" is a more appropriate designation than "program" because the former more accurately describes what WSP has grown to become at UGA. The evolution of this interdisciplinary unit is similar to that of the interdisciplinary African Studies, which changed from a program to an Institute several years ago. The current structure and activities of WSP resembles institutes at UGA. Interdisciplinary units like Women's Studies tend to be institutes rather than departments. The Institute would replace the Program.

(2) The other large Women's Studies units at universities with a significant research component in the area are Institutes, namely, the Institute for Women's Studies at Georgia State University and at Emory University. Because many people perceive institutes as having more status than programs, it is important that UGA continue to be able to compete with other universities in the area for outstanding students and faculty with interests in Women's Studies. Becoming an Institute may increase Women's Studies visibility both in the local area and nationally.

(3) With the arrival of a new director two years ago, WSP has an increased focus on interdisciplinary research, including research collaborations across campus. This balances the program's focus on building its teaching component in its earlier years. Designation as an Institute may enhance WSP's competitiveness in attracting research funding from external agencies.

*Goals.* The mission of the WSP is to provide outstanding research, teaching, and service in the interdisciplinary area of women's studies. WSP core faculty have active research programs focused on the experiences of women and girls, the organization of society and culture along gender lines, and the intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality. Thus, the WSP is at the center of many of the goals of the university. Women's Studies provides opportunities for interdisciplinary activities for its core and affiliate faculty, who are from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Law, Family and Consumer Sciences, Journalism and Mass Communication, Business, and Social Work. Examples of departments of core and affiliate faculty are Geography, History, Romance Languages, Psychology, Speech Communication, Music,

English, Drama, Reading Education, Computer Science, Ecology, Political Science, Health Promotion, and Legal Studies. As part of its mission as an interdisciplinary unit, the WSP encourages research collaborations or grant applications regarding women or gender with other units on campus. A recent Research Forum, for example, was intended to stimulate research collaborations across campus. Such activities support and enhance various programs at the university. Institute status would provide more visibility and a more formal structure to further enhance the research of both faculty and students. An Institute for Women's Studies with strong connections among faculty across departments would create new opportunities for interdisciplinary research for students.

The WSP offers interdisciplinary coursework and degree programs. The newest academic program is an undergraduate A. B. degree (begun in 2000). Ten students have graduated (3 were Summa or Magna Cum Laude) and 27 currently are in the major. The WSP has an undergraduate minor (26 students) and certificate (31 students), and a graduate certificate (53 students both inside and outside of the College of Arts and Sciences). The program has 27 courses plus 74 departmental courses approved for credit towards WSP majors, minors and certificates. In 2001-2002, 991 students took WMST courses and 751 took departmental approved courses. Several WMST courses can count towards the College of Arts and Sciences's multicultural requirement or the university's social science core curriculum requirement. WSP courses emphasize an interdisciplinary perspective and typically a multicultural and/or international perspective. Examples include Latinas in the U. S, Women and the Construction of Knowledge, Understanding Research in Women's Studies, and Gender and Computing. WSP sponsors both an undergraduate and graduate student organization. Obtaining Institute status would further enhance both formal and informal interdisciplinary teaching.

The WSP regularly sponsors a number of research, teaching, and other academic activities for the campus-wide community. For example, we are in our fourteenth year of Friday noon lectures on research or teaching (by faculty, graduate students, or scholars from elsewhere), our twelfth year of Women's History Month programming for the University and Athens community, our tenth year of a UGA student research symposium, and our ninth year of the Andrea Carson Coley endowed lecture series. Moreover, the WSP co-sponsors numerous lectures, conferences, and other events initiated by other units, and organizes an annual reception for new women faculty.

In 2000 an external review team called the WSP "healthy" and "vibrant" and "ready to move to the next phase." As part of that next phase, external searches resulted in a new director in fall, 2001 and three new core faculty members.

### *1. Operating Procedures and Policies*

These would be the same as those currently used by the Women's Studies Program, as described in a 6-page set of bylaws. The key faculty in the Institute would be the current 10 core faculty, including the Director. Tenure is earned through the disciplinary departments. New core faculty are hired by a search committee consisting of faculty from both the WSP and the disciplinary department; both units vote on a

candidate for an appointment. Both the WSP and the disciplinary department contribute to the third-year reviews and reappointment of Assistant Professors. The Director is appointed by and reports to the dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. In addition, an academic professional with a Ph.D. serves as Assistant Director and also teaches WSP courses. Staff include a Senior Administrative Secretary, a Publications Specialist III, and hourly student workers.

There are 62 officially affiliated faculty (see attachment) from many colleges at UGA. Faculty applications for affiliate status are approved by vote of the WSP Steering Committee (see below) based on their relevant teaching, research, and/or service. Affiliated faculty conduct research on women or gender and attend WSP events. Some serve on WSP committees, teach courses on women or gender in their department, or occasionally are "bought out" to teach WSP courses.

The administrative structure of the WSP is as follows. In addition to the daily administration of the program by the Director and Assistant Director, a Steering Committee meets regularly to discuss and vote on WSP matters. This committee consists of the core faculty, the Director, the Assistant Director, two Affiliated Faculty representatives selected by vote by the Affiliated Faculty, the chair of the Curriculum Committee, and undergraduate and graduate student representatives chosen by vote by their peers. An Executive Committee, elected by the core faculty, consists of a core faculty member from each of the three professorial ranks. The Executive Committee advises the Director, particularly on matters such as faculty raises, grievances, and the budget. Other standing committees include the following: curriculum, awards, student symposium, Coley lecture, affiliate initiatives, and service and outreach. The WSP has its own budget within the College of Arts and Sciences.

*2. Anticipated Financial Arrangements.* If approved for Institute status, the unit requests no additional funds. The WSP already has its own budget from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences and that budget will be the same as what would have been allocated under Program status.

### *3. Formal Arrangements Through Which Faculty Will Participate*

The Director, Assistant Director, and core and affiliated faculty would constitute the participating faculty at the Institute. As now, the Director and Assistant Director would be budgeted 100% in the Institute and seven of the core faculty would be budgeted halftime in the Institute and halftime in their disciplinary departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. As now, two of the core faculty would teach part time for the Institute but be budgeted 100% in another college and the affiliated faculty would be budgeted 100% in their own departments.

### *4. Participating faculty and roles.*

The core faculty include:

Dr. Patricia Bell-Scott, Professor, Child and Family Studies  
 Dr. Caroline Desbriens, Assistant Professor, Geography  
 Dr. Roberta Fernández, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages  
 Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Associate Professor, Adult Education  
 Dr. Doris Kadish, Professor, Romance Languages  
 Dr. Chana Lee, Associate Professor, History  
 Dr. Patricia Miller, Professor, Psychology  
 Dr. Miranda Pollard, Associate Professor, History  
 Dr. Patricia Richards, Assistant Professor, Sociology  
 Dr. Susan Thomas, Assistant Professor, Music  
 [Dr. Mary Carruth, Assistant Director, Academic Professional]

These core faculty teach courses in Women's Studies, conduct research in the area of women's studies, and contribute to governance and administration in Women's Studies through committee work and participation in faculty meetings.

The core faculty are active researchers. In the last three years they have won several national book awards and UGA's Faculty Creative Research Medal. Last year they published 3 books, 13 book chapters, and 12 refereed articles and articles in peer-reviewed journals, and produced several creative works. Core faculty currently have grant proposals under review at NSF and NIH.

5. *Letters of support.* See attached letters from heads of disciplinary departments in Arts and Sciences and deans of colleges from which WSP core faculty come.

6. *Plan for acquiring unavailable resources.* See #2 above. For any later expansion of activities, the Institute would engage in fund raising and writing grant proposals.

7. *Anticipated additional staff or faculty.* A one-half core faculty line is empty. If the College of Arts and Sciences or another College can add a one-half line, there will be a search for another core faculty member.

8. *Responsibilities of participating units.* The Director works closely with the heads of the disciplinary departments of the core faculty regarding teaching and committee assignments. Both contribute annual evaluations, travel money and other resources, mentoring of junior faculty, etc.

9. *New courses or degrees.*

The Institute would continue to offer the courses, degrees, and other academic programs already in place. New courses will continue to be developed to meet student academic needs.

In conclusion, changing Women's Studies from a program to an Institute would make it consistent with other institutes at UGA (e.g., African Studies Institute) and with Women's Studies at Georgia State University and Emory University. This change would

acknowledge the program's growth, success, and current structure and activities, would emphasize the unit's ties with other academic units across campus, and would increase its visibility at the local, state, national, and international level. Becoming an institute is a desirable next step that would help the WSP more fully develop and implement its mission and contribute to the increasing excellence at the University of Georgia. The last quarter century has seen dramatic changes in women's lives, research on women, the UGA campus, and our world. As an Institute, we would explore, discuss, celebrate, and debate these past and future changes.

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