

Women's Studies Program

Articles of Organization

Mission Statement

Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary academic field that explores the historical and contemporary achievements of women from around the world. The mission of the SMU Women's Studies Program is to enhance the lives of all students by analyzing theories about gender as a structuring principle in society. This program of inquiry examines the extent to which traditional disciplinary approaches have failed to take women and gender into account and sets in motion a program of study to address those questions. Through participation in Women's Studies courses, SMU students, both male and female, will learn new ways of thinking about life choices and professional opportunities, in preparation for challenges that may confront them in the contemporary world. Women's Studies acknowledges the diversity of women's experiences while working to provide a center of unity for university women.

I. Programmatic Objectives

- A. to expand and encourage scholarship and teaching about women and gender issues;
- B. to enhance the lives of all students by communicating a framework for integrating theories about gender, and knowledge about the roles and achievements of women, both past and present, in this and other societies;
- C. to expose SMU students, both male and female, to new ways of thinking about life choices and professional opportunities, in preparation for challenges that may confront them in the contemporary world;
- D. to explore feminist histories and theories;
- E. to educate students regarding women's rights as human rights;
- F. to acknowledge the diversity of women's experiences while working to provide a center of unity for university women.

II. Structure

- A. The Women's Studies Program shall report to the Dean of Dedman College. The program will also report to the Provost's office, keeping the Dean informed, in the event that a liaison is required to coordinate the Women's Studies Program with schools other than Dedman.

- B. The WS Program will consist of two core components: the Director and the WS Council.
- a. Director: The WS Program will be under the general direction of a Director elected for a renewable three-year term by the outgoing Council. As administrative head, the Director will lead the meetings of the Council, and have the power to establish and appoint members to subcommittees whenever necessary. The Council will report election results to the Dean who will issue an official letter of appointment to the women's studies director.
 - b. Council: The general aims of the council are
 - i. To encourage development of courses addressing women's and gender issues within all SMU departments, programs, and schools;
 - ii. To approve new course proposals for the women's studies minor and to initiate approval procedures from the undergraduate council or other appropriate units;
 - iii. To expand course offerings in order to ensure a broad and diverse set of courses across disciplines for the WS minor;
 - iv. To collaborate with the Women's Center and other campus organizations to encourage extracurricular activities related to the aims of the WS program;
 - v. To co-sponsor scholarly lectures, performances, and other gender-related events on campus;
 - vi. To provide oversight for the Louise B. Raggio Endowed Lecture Series in Women's Studies;
 - vii. To select award and scholarship recipients as appropriate given existing funds and endowments;
 - viii. To circulate a newsletter to campus and community subscribers
 - ix. To respond to campus concerns regarding women, as they arise

C. Council Membership

- a. Composition: The Council shall be composed of at least six undergraduates; two graduate students, one of whom shall represent Perkins School of Theology and one Dedman College; and at least twelve faculty and staff. Council members may be nominated by current council members or self-nominated. Insofar as possible, representation from the various schools will be encouraged.
- b. Selection: By the beginning of April each year, the Council will solicit nominations from the existing Council and from other faculty and students. The Council will then approve nominations for the subsequent year.
- c. Tenure: Council members may serve for an unlimited period, at the discretion of the director of the women's studies program.

D. Meetings

- a. The Council shall meet once a month and at any other time deemed necessary by the director.

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