

## FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

### Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

#### Gender Studies and Feminist Research (M.A. and Ph.D. Graduate Diploma)

**Date of Review: April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

*In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the graduate programs delivered by Gender Studies and Feminist Research. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.*

*The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.*

#### **Executive Summary of the Review**

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Gender Studies and Feminist Research program submitted a self-study in February 2019 to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its graduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, and selected by the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on April 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research, Director of the program and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Acting Director and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (July and August 2019). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

- **Strengths**
- **Faculty Excellence:** "Passionate scholars who are experts in their research fields and in pedagogical innovation, as evidenced by, for example, peer-reviewed publications (books, edited collections, journal articles, etc.), teaching awards, internal and external grants, journal editorial work, leadership positions with research centres, and national and international research dissemination through conference presentations and keynote and invited lectures" (p. 2).

- **Transdisciplinarity:** “The program’s clear commitment to transdisciplinarity, creativity, and continual self-reflective engagement. Despite limited resources and institutional obstacles, the program’s teaching and research attempts to span the Humanities and Social Sciences (and with the occasional course in Health Sciences too), with classes and scholarship that challenge assumed barriers between these fields. Classes and the IRP encourage both conventional and creative engagement with the ideas, and the courses emphasize introspection and self-critique.”
- **Community Engagement:** “The integration of community engaged work and experiential learning within the program. For example, the “Knowledge in Action” course connects abstract theories and debates to hands-on learning through the assigned community work. At the same time, the course problematizes the history and the notion of community engagement, thus continually challenging students to both “be the change you want to see” while always self-reflecting on the limitations and ideologies that can affect social justice and equity-oriented work” (p. 2).
- **Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** “The program’s connections to the broader university mandate to promote access, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and the faculty’s service work around this. As stated in section 3.0 of the Strategic Mandate Agreement, there is a clear institutional commitment to supporting efforts to increase equity and access at McMaster. The program’s faculty, courses, research, internal policies, and community-building--both within the university and between the university and the wider Hamilton region--clearly supports this goal. Indeed, the program is a vital source of knowledge and inspiration for understanding and strengthening access and equity commitments on a theoretical and substantive level” (p. 2).
- **Areas for Enhancement or Improvement**
- **Faculty Complement:** “As was evidenced by the self-study and the interviews with faculty, students and upper administration, there is an urgent problem with insufficient faculty to address the needs of the program that must be addressed quickly” (p. 2).
- **Equity and Diversity:** “As noted in the self-study, and elaborated upon during interviews with faculty and students, there is a lack of diversity among the core faculty in relation both to equity factors (for example, there are no appointed faculty who are Indigenous, Black or people of colour), and in relation to expertise of the appointed faculty, which is concentrated within the Humanities (in particular English and Cultural Studies, and Communication Studies and Multi-Media Arts). Though the possible electives are diverse, they are limited in quantity, are still disproportionately concentrated in the Humanities, and are sometimes offered inconsistently” (p. 2-3).
- **University Structures, Budget and Siloing:** “The university structure and budget model have created barriers to sharing resources and cross-appointments across faculties. This forces the director to continually expend time and energy every year negotiating with deans and faculty to piece together sufficient teaching staff and resources to run the program” (p. 3).
- **Visibility/Promotion:** “The commendable success of the program could be further promoted within the broader university, in particular the Research Symposium and the community engagement component” (p. 3).

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>GSFR Proposed Follow-Up</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up</b>	<b>Timeline for Addressing</b>
<p><b>1. Urgent need for faculty replacement and expansion, given retirements in the current year and near-future.</b></p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b></p> <p>GSFR will work with Dean Humanities to discuss possibilities of securing a GSFR hire and temporary cross-appointments;</p>	<p><b>Acting Director/Director</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate/Medium-Term</b></p>

<p><b>1.a. One dedicated hire</b> that addresses program concerns about faculty diversity</p> <p><b>1.b. Location:</b> This new position, should be housed in GSFR, and if it is a cross-appointment, should be housed in GSFR as the “home” unit, with service and tenure and promotion decisions being well delineated as lying within the GSFR program</p>	<p>and <b>with</b> VP EDI, and BIPOC Group.</p> <p><b>1.a.</b> GSFR will request a hire from the Dean Humanities.</p> <p><b>1.b.</b> A new hire could be undertaken in GSFR in collaboration with various other university initiatives, such as EIO, BIPOC/ EDI developments. Acting Director will discuss possibilities with Dean Humanities.</p> <p>GSFR should take the lead in developing a job ad and hiring process for a new hire, in collaboration with other department(s); teaching and service duties should lie primarily within GSFR.</p>		<p><b>1.a., 1.b. Medium Term:</b> Acting Director to meet with Humanities Dean in Summer and Fall 2019. Further discussions to ensue.</p> <p>Conversations/decisions are contingent upon other more immediate securing of resources— e.g., the “temporary cross-appointments”, along with longer-term planning for the program and its possible transformation.</p>
<p><b>1.c. Temporary cross-appointments:</b> Implementing a structure to create temporary cross-appointments of faculty members from other departments and</p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b></p> <p>This would help solve immediate needs, as well as ensuring future stability.</p> <p>GSFR will work with Dean Humanities in</p>	<p><b>GSFR Acting Director, Dean Humanities</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate</b></p> <p>Course management begins in November 2019; plans to offer 2020-21 courses should be in place by December 2019.</p>

<p>Faculties for a duration of 3-5 years, during which a faculty member's teaching and service would be spread across two (or more) units....These new positions would stabilize the faculty complement and curriculum/course offerings, expand on electives, and strengthen ties and connections to other units on campus; this is an especially exciting possibility for growing resources if the program decides to reorganize into a broader institute structure (p. 9)</p>	<p>collaboration with various Chairs/Directors with whom temporary cross-appointments could be made. Ideas include Philosophy, ECS, CSMM, IGHC and various Social Sciences programs, etc., and further developing EDI/BIPOC initiatives.</p> <p>GSFR and Dean Humanities should identify the appropriate number of cross-appointments, duration, and location, which would solidify the next three years of GSFR.</p>		<p>GSFR Acting Director will meet and consult with Dean Humanities and other Chairs in Summer into Fall of 2019, and beyond as necessary.</p>
<p><b>3. Clarify Faculty Relationships:</b> There is an urgent need to clarify the relationship between the Humanities and Social Sciences Faculties in order to strengthen connections in terms of both faculty and curricular resources; ensure the easiness of crossing existing Faculty and disciplinary</p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b></p> <p>This recommendation will facilitate deep interdisciplinarity, working towards structurally de-siloing faculties and departments that need the freedom and flexibility to deliver a truly interdisciplinary program such as GSFR.</p>	<p><b>Dean Humanities, Dean Social Sciences, Provost, in collaboration with GSFR Acting/Director and other Chairs/Directors</b></p>	<p><b>Medium-term to Long-term</b></p> <p>Conversations about sharing resources can follow with Dean Humanities' assistance in working with Social Sciences and other faculties to secure "temporary cross-appointments" noted in 1.c.</p> <p>Timeline for this must coincide with timelines</p>

<p>boundaries (p 10);</p>	<p>Some of the formalities of an arrangement depend on long-term planning for GSFR.</p>		<p>exploring Recommendations 5 &amp; 6.</p>
<p><b>4. Develop 400/600 Courses:</b> We recommend that the program explore the creation of 400/600 cross-level courses, which will have the benefit of increasing elective options for Masters students while also building the profile of the undergraduate minor, and thus priming it for future growth (p 13)</p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b> GSFR acknowledges that this recommendation would speak to providing more electives, and building the profile of the minor, and is open to the possibility if there are no administrative impediments.  GSFR is excited to re-introduce a WMST fourth-year course to strengthen the minor as well as contribute to the grad program and any development of new program(s)</p>	<p><b>GSFR Director, in consultation with GSFR Executive Committee.</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate</b>  As undergraduate curriculum submissions are required in September 2019, GSFR Executive will discuss this possibility alongside other minor curriculum changes. Summer 2019/September 2019 GSFR Exec will meet, will consult with Advisory and potential instructors</p>
<p><b>5.a. Visioning: Undergraduate Program in Social Justice:</b> Consider the idea of (re)establishing an undergraduate major focused on identity and social justice (p</p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b> Exploring a broadened undergraduate program in EDI/social justice is very appealing.</p>	<p><b>GSFR Director in consultation with Executive and Advisory Committee; Dean Humanities; Assistant Dean Humanities; Director Peace Studies; VP</b></p>	<p><b>Medium-term</b>  AY 2019-20 should find opportunities to engage in visioning exercises to profile WGS/GSFR at both levels as a way of potential transformation into</p>

<p>13)</p> <p><b>5.b. (implied in 6.b.)</b></p>	<p>GSFR Acting Director will meet with Dean Humanities to discuss possibilities. GSFR Exec and Advisory Committee will meet in Fall to begin “visioning exercises”</p> <p><b>5.b.</b> Developing a new undergraduate program should be met with faculty release time and additional administrative support.</p>	<p><b>EDI; BIPOC group</b></p>	<p>new program.</p> <p>Conversations should start immediately and unfold organically and appropriately.</p> <p><b>5.b.</b> Course release and administrative support should be provided as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>6a. Visioning: Research Centre, Institute, and/or Broader MA Program</b></p> <p>With the existing intersectional commitment of the program, the evolution of WGS departments, and the increasing societal interest in social justice and equity issues, we suggest time and resources be dedicated to a revisioning exercise, for the purpose of seriously considering a reorganization and potentially renaming of the program: for</p>	<p><b>GSFR Agrees.</b></p> <p>Visioning around both the grad (6.a.) and undergrad (5.a.) programs, and whether to create a centre or institute, will be an exciting opportunity to reflect on and consider broader coalitions, structures, and partnerships.</p>	<p><b>GSFR Director, in collaboration with Executive and Advisory Committee; Dean Humanities, and numerous stakeholders (including, at least, VP EDI, Provost, Dean Social Sciences, Associate Dean Grad Studies &amp; Research, Humanities)</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate to Medium-Term</b></p> <p>GSFR Acting Director to discuss with Dean Humanities in Summer 2019. AY 2019-2020 should include a series of visioning exercises within GSFR, and external meetings with other stakeholders. Depending on outcomes, proposals for program changes to be solidified in AY 2020-2021.</p> <p><b>6.b.</b> Course release and administrative support should be provided as soon as possible.</p>

<p>instance, as the self-study proposed, leveraging the new Equity and Inclusion office to rethink how to articulate GSFR's work. This process would include research and consultation to consider and potentially realize the idea of an institute and/or program that encompassed a broad range of issues and lenses, which may include social justice, equity, feminism, intersectionality, and diversity in its title and/or mandate.</p> <p><b>5b/6b: Support for Visioning:</b> We recommend that a faculty member is given release time and resources to accomplish this [visioning] work (p 7).</p>	<p>6.b. GSFR agrees with the reviewers that this visioning process will involve much work: visioning and consultation within GSFR, consultation with stakeholders, seeking collaborators, discussions with senior administrators, seeking and assessing feedback, program/curriculum development – will necessitate</p>		
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	additional course release for the Director or Leader, as well as additional administrative staff support.		
<p><b>7. Recognition &amp; Promotion:</b> Given the program’s contribution to research and teaching excellence and community building, we recommend stronger institutional recognition and promotion. GSFR models many of the Principles and values laid out in the Strategic Mandate Agreement and the “Forward with Integrity” letter and has innovative graduate programming, e.g., “Knowledge in Action” course; Research Symposium, that deserves to be more widely recognized (p 16)</p>	<p><b>GSFR Agrees.</b></p> <p>Reviewers noted that GSFR was the first program to offer an experiential-based graduate course, and also noted the absence of celebration of that fact in the wider community.</p> <p>GSFR Director, Instructors, and Administrative Staff; office of Associate Dean Grad Studies and Research, to raise the visibility of GSFR’s unique contribution to experiential education.</p> <p>GSFR Director, Instructors, to work with Community Engagement Office to help showcase our work and/or to share successes in CE workshop</p> <p>GSFR Director, Instructors—work with McPherson –</p>	<p><b>GSFR Director, Instructors, and Administrative Staff; in collaboration with office of Associate Dean Grad Studies and Research; Community Engagement Office; McPherson Institute</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate</b></p> <p>AY 2019-20 should end with more widely publicized recognition; showcasing GSFR work and expertise</p>

	opportunities for students and faculty to participate in workshops or other events around CE pedagogy		
<p><b>8. Secure Space</b></p> <p>Secure two more offices for GSFR faculty; space for student/faculty gathering. This will be especially important if the program develops into a broader based social justice institute, and growth in undergraduate program (p. 10-11)</p>	<p><b>GSFR agrees.</b></p> <p>GSFR would like to have a space that can function as a sessional office (currently sessionals meet in the Director's office). The program would also like a small gathering place for program meetings</p> <p>If a future Institute or Centre develops, it would need to be housed appropriately.</p>	<p><b>GSFR Acting Director/Director; Administrative Staff; Dean Humanities</b></p>	<p><b>Immediate/Long Term</b></p>

Dean's Response

The Dean thanked the Review team members and the GSFR faculty, staff, and students for their thorough and constructive approach to the review of the program and was pleased to see that the Reviewers recognized the high quality of the students and curriculum, and the strong efforts by affiliated faculty to build and maintain the program. They reiterated that GSFR has been a model for the institution when it comes to community engaged research and learning at the graduate level. It is also the only Humanities program to offer a PhD diploma to graduate students across HUM and FSS, and in doing so serves as a model of transdisciplinarity and creative credentialing at the graduate level.

The Review team quite clearly identified the main challenges facing the program. The first is that GSFR has a very small affiliated faculty complement, and it is in the process of losing three key members to retirement. The second is that it is an interdisciplinary program, which like other similar programs on campus, struggles to share resources across Faculty borders. In light of these challenges, the Review

team made several recommendations and the Acting Director has offered her response. What follows is the Dean's assessment of the most significant recommendations.

## **Recommendations**

*Faculty Complement:* The Reviewers rightly identified the losses, due to retirement, of faculty teaching resources as the most pressing problem facing GSFR. The Dean's office has already begun to look for ways to ease this crisis.

- The Dean's hope is that we can engage new faculty members in the work of GSFR and do so by arranging 2-3 year secondments of 3 or 6 units of teaching. This is a strategy that the Arts and Science Program has employed with success, and it would mean the Director of GSFR would not have to scramble every year to find instructors.
- In 2019 the Department of Philosophy will be running a tenure track search in Feminist Philosophy. The Dean has spoken with the chair and their understanding is that one aim of the search is to find someone who can contribute to GSFR in an on-going capacity.
- Communications and Multi Media hired three new faculty members in 2018-2019, on the understanding that there would be a contribution of teaching units to the Faculty. The Dean will work out the specifics of this arrangement with the Chair of CSMM and the Acting Director of GSFR.
- GSFR also reports that they are interested in creating 600 level seminars to provide new electives to their students. This is a commendable plan. The Dean has already spoken to Dr. Quail about this suggestion and we should have time to make headway before the curriculum submissions this fall.

*Equity and Diversity:* The insufficient diversity within our faculty complement has been recognized as a serious problem that needs to be addressed. We have already begun this process.

- Hiring committees in 2018-2019 began following the University's new EDI guidelines for faculty searches and we will continue to do so.
- If central university funds become available for targeted hiring in this regard the Dean will make every effort to see that Humanities participates.

*University Structures/Space:*

- The Dean has begun discussions with Dean Hurley and the Director of the Globalization MA about possible arrangements in which teaching resources are shared across Faculties. The Reviewers' Report notes that such sharing has been difficult in recent years, but the Dean is hopeful that they might make headway as both programs (Globalization and GSFR) have shown interest in doing so.

- The Dean has asked their space manager to review the space needs of GSFR with Dr. Quail. If there are immediate needs that are not currently being met, they will seek to provide them within the Faculty's current space allocation.

*Visibility:* The Dean supported the Program's desire to raise awareness about the MA and diploma programs. I would be happy to help support initiatives with this end in mind.

- This spring I extended support to GSFR (alongside all our Faculty's grad programs) to provide a stipend to current a student who will serve as social media ambassador for the program this year.
- 600 courses may also help draw students from the Faculty's undergraduate majors to GSFR. The Dean was less certain that creating a level IV seminar in Women's Studies makes sense, given that as a minor WS does not currently have level IV courses, but the Dean would expect that some existing 400 level seminars in Humanities might be found to serve this purpose. I have asked Associate Dean Corner to investigate these options.

*Visioning:* The Faculty of Humanities is undergoing a significant shift in leadership. The Dean, two Associate Deans, and four chairs and directors of programs are all new in 2019-2020.

- It is a sensible time to take stock and also do some visioning and planning for the future. The Dean intended to lead such a process and will work with GSFR faculty and students and others to explore whether GSFR should continue to stand alone or be integrated into an existing department or new centre on campus.

The Dean looked forward to working with the acting director of GSFR to find ways to ensure that this small program remains financially viable and can continue to offer a quality program to its students.

#### **Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation**

**In their report, the external reviewers noted that the program itself was of good quality; however, several issues were raised with regard to resourcing of the program. The QAC noted that there could be challenges implementing the recommendations with the existing resources. The QAC agreed that the program could benefit from engaging in an earlier review to assess the status of the program and its sustainability with the resources that are available. As a result, the Quality Assurance Committee is recommending that the Gender Studies and Feminist Research program should follow a modified course of action with an 18-month follow up report and a full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than 5 years after the start of the last review to assess the follow-up actions' impact on the program.**

