**Women’s Studies Program Assessment Report Update:**

**FALL REPORT 2015-2016 PER PROVOST REQUEST**

**Prepared by Professor Kensinger, Assessment Coordinator**

**Fall 2016**

Women’s Studies engaged in a number of time-intensive activities in 2015-2-16 related to assessment. These included:

* We have begun implementing our 2015-2021 SOAP. Our efforts this are in line with that SOAP document timeline, which states in 2015-2016 we will:
	+ Complete work on the SOAP Alumni Survey from our last SOAP document and Finalize the new SOAP.
	+ Method 3: Administer Post Exam in a GE course.
* In fall 2015 we engaged in closing the loop discussions on our alumni survey from summer 2015. These were reported as part of our 2014-15 assessment activities.
* In the fall Women’s Studies also wrote, deliberated and approved its 2014-2015 department and GE assessment reports.
	+ For the record: In memo dated 4/16/2016, Dr. Jordine reports that the *The Learning Assessment Team* review of our 2015-2016 reports scored us at the 4 “Highly Developed” level in all four rubric areas:
		- Alignment of SOAP - 4
		- Evidence and Discovery - 4
		- Consideration of and use of results - 4
		- Overall Engagement in assessment - 4
* In the late fall and throughout the spring, the program assessment coordinator worked with the department to develop a new post-test instrument for WS 12—Critical Thinking, Gender issues, in spring 2016. This would meet both departmental and GE assessment goals. This involved all current faculty teaching WS 12 in the spring, and was also reviewed by the entire faculty at faculty meetings. It was truly a collaborative effort.
* In May, 2016, the test was administered three sections of WS 12, one section of each faculty teaching the course, but as one instructor has since left the university, and GE only requires two sections of multiple section courses, we report two sections here.
* In Summer 2016, data was entered into an Excel spread sheet (which required some training for the assessment coordinator).
* August 17,2016 the program held closing the loop discussions at the annual retreat.
* In fall 2016 the program deliberated and approved its 2015-2016 general and GE reports.

Below please find the Women’s Studies Program Assessment results to date.

**1) What learning outcomes did you assess?**

*WS 12—Critical Thinking: Gender Issues*

1. In spring 2016 Women’s Studies used a posttest to assess learning in WS 110: Representations of Women. The test was a newly developed instrument.
	1. ***For Women’s Studies SOAP purposes the test targeted***

SLO 1-- Students will demonstrate their comprehension of both the status of women in society and gender, as well as the unique impact of gender ideology on women.

SLO 4-- Students will demonstrate “information literacy”.

**2) What instruments/measures did you use to assess the learning outcomes?**

*WS 12—Critical Thinking: Gender Issues*

The program engaged in an intensive effort to develop a new post-test multiple choice instrument for WS 12 that required several months. The program wishes to recognize our non-tenure track faculty who were instrumental in our assessment efforts this year, as all sections of this course were taught by non-tenure track faculty. Enid Perez and Natasha Hagaman-Cummins are particularly recognized for their efforts in developing this instrument. They met at least twice with the program assessment coordinator to provide feedback on exam questions, provided copies of their own exams, and reviewed and assessed early drafts and of the instrument. All of this work was well beyond their assigned duties helping create a more comprehensive instrument suitable to the different topical and pedagogical approaches across classrooms.

Below we isolate the questions pertinent to this review. It should be noted that questions 7 through questions 13 are not present in this report as they were looking at student understanding of fallacies as part of our General Education Assessment, and will be reported in that document. They were included in the overall test scores reported below, but kept out of specific SLO discussions.

*WS 12—Critical Thinking: Gender Issues*

1. In spring 2016 Women’s Studies used a posttest to assess learning in WS 110: Representations of Women. The test was a newly developed instrument.
	1. ***For Women’s Studies SOAP purposes the test targeted***:

**SLO 1--** **Students will demonstrate their comprehension of both the status of women in society and gender, as well as the unique impact of gender ideology on women.[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Question 14: Gender is:

Question 15: Which of Jean Kilbourne’s elements of the view of gender sold to us in advertisement is most present in this Absolute Vodka Ad?

Question 16: Which of Jean Kilbourne’s elements of the view of gender sold to us in advertisement is most present in this Bushmaster Ad?

**SLO 4--. Students will demonstrate “information literacy”.**

 The overall exam results are pertinent to assessing SLO4, as critical thinking, reading comprehension and application are all parts of information literacy. Our SOAP states “Students can also demonstrate information literacy through their ability to accurately respond to reading based questions, showing their ability to distinguish key facts and comprehend premises, key concepts, and main points of materials they have read.” For this sample, the program found questions especially useful to assessing information literacy were those related to the ability to retain course definitions on arguments, and questions pertinent to recognizing when an argument was occurring. These included the following:

Question 1: In Critical Thinking courses, “argument” has a specific meaning. Which comes closest to the definition of argument used in this class?

Question 2: When judging the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, types of questions we should ask include all of the following except?

Question 3: Read the following example…What of the following is true regarding the above example. a) This paragraph contains an argument.

b) This paragraph does not contain an argument

Question 4: Which of the following presents an argument?

Question 5: Read the following example…What of the following is true regarding the example? Options: a) This paragraph contains an argument.

b) This paragraph does not contain an argument

Question 6: Which of the following presents an argument:

We found Questions 14 15 and 16 (see above) are also pertinent to information literacy as they involve defining concepts, recalling information provided through a film and lecture to new example ads.

Per the 2015-2021 WS SOAP, Women’s Studies benchmark for quantitative surveys for both GE and non-GE courses: At least 70% of respondents overall score should be 75% or above.

**3) What did you learn from the data?**

*WS 12*

This was the benchmark used for assessing WS 12 results this year. The test was administered the last week of class. One way of interpreting our benchmark is to combine courses. The 55 tests were counted, making our benchmark total 38.5=70%. As noted in our last report there are two ways to read our benchmark. The first is to look at the total scores. Read this way our results showed 32 students achieved the benchmark, with both classes failing to hit the 38.5 benchmark. However, we note with satisfaction that when taking all 16 questions into account, in Sample 1 students scored over 90% on 6 questions (questions 3, 5, 8,11,13,and 15), in Sample 2 students scored over 90% on 2 questions (questions 5 and 13); and in Sample 1 students scored over 80% on 3 questions (questions 15, 7, and 2); and in Sample 2 students scored over 80% on 6 questions (questions 1,3,7,8,10, and 11).

However, as we discovered in our last report this benchmark reading does not isolate questions asked for particular SLO purposes. If we look at the questions relevant to SLO 1 on Gender (assessed through questions 14, 15, and 16) we the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Sample 1 % Correct | Sample 2 % Correct | Average |
| 14  | 82 | 76 | 79 |
| 15 | 91 | 73 | 82 |
| 16 | 77 | 67 | 72 |

If we translate our benchmark to isolate questions aimed at SLO1 (Gender knowledge), we might read the benchmark in terms of questions asked. In this case, 70% of 3 questions should have us seeing 2.1 of scores at the 75% or better rate. We see that in Sample on 3 questions students scored over 75%; in Sample 2 the class scored over 75% on 1 question. Thus we meet our benchmark of 2.1 in one class, but fail to meet it in the second class. One additional element to consider is the average score of all classes, as we can see we fall just shy of our benchmark here, with 2 questions scoring at or above 75%. Finally, the overall average score across all exams (459.999 and divide by 6) was 76.6.

I turn now to translate our benchmark to isolate questions aimed at SLO4 (Information literacy). Here are the results for questions related to this SLO.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Questions | Sample 1 % Correct | Sample 2 % Correct | Average |
| Q1 | 68 | 85 | 76.5 |
| Q2 | 82 | 61 | 71 |
| Q3 | 95 | 85 | 90 |
| Q4 | 45 | 67 | 56 |
| Q5 | 95 | 91 | 93 |
| Q6 | 55 | 67 | 61 |
| Q14 | 82 | 76 | 79 |
| Q15 | 91 | 73 | 82 |
| Q16 | 77 | 67 | 72 |

If we translate our benchmark to isolate questions aimed at SLO1 (Gender knowledge), again reading the benchmark in terms of questions asked, 70% of 9 questions should have us seeing 6.3 scores at the 75% or better rate. We see that in Sample 1 the class scored over 75% on 6 questions; in Sample 2 we see the course scored over 75% on 4 questions. In neither class did we meet this benchmark. However, there was a problem with question 4 on the exam (see closing the loop discussion below). If we take that out of the equation and only count 8 questions as part of the equation, our benchmark would be 5.6 at 5.3 or better, in which case sample 1 would meet our benchmark. Finally, a third way to look at the numbers, the average score. Here we see that on 5 questions students hit the 75% or better benchmark, leaving us short of the 6.3 students needed. The overall average scores for this set of questions were 75.6, 78.12 if we take question 4 out of the equation.

**4) What changes did you make as a result of the findings?**

On August 19thth at our annual retreat Women’s Studies faculty held our closing the loop discussions. During this time faculty reviewed instruments and results, were reminded of benchmarks, and focused discussion on strengths and areas to improve as revealed by the data.

While faculty found our average scores, scores on SLO 1 and Sample 1 scores on both SLO’s heartening, we found that the results were extremely mixed and inconsistent between the two classes and across questions asked. While overall the program was a bit disappointed in our findings, we are a bit skeptical of putting too much weight on this first uses of this instrument.

This is the first time this instrument was used and the first time in a number of years these courses were assessed, so we are interested in repeating this test in the future while improving some of its flaws found in our closing the loop discussion.

One of the first elements that was noted as a potential area of concern in our discussion was that question 4’s correct answer option had a typo in it that may have thrown students off. While the answer was corrected on the board this is never ideal in a testing situation and it is likely it explains the low score on this question across classes. Indeed, as noted above in our findings, if we throw this questions out, then one class meets our benchmark for SLO4 on average scores. We decided to be sure this question is included in the next test with the typo corrected to see if the question continues to be a problem.

A second potential issue with the instrument itself was that a series of colored images were copied in black and white and may have hampered some students’ ability to read these images. The next exam will be printed in color or will have images projected through the course Blackboard so students can better see them to assess their content.

In the discussion, faculty also thought Question 16 presented a problem. The first option, faculty felt, might confuse some students. On the next exam we will leave the question but reword this option to avert the potential problem and see if student ability to assess the main content improves.

Finally, we noted that there seemed to be some anecdotal correlation that when the sample argument or fallacy had directly gender relevant content (as opposed to simply being an argument itself) students seem to do better. For example, question 3 asks if an argument is present in a paragraph regarding domestic violence. Students in both questions did very well with this question. It could be that students are less nervous in a class devoted to gender assessing gender based materials than assessing other materials whose topic is not directly tied to the course. It was suggested in our next round we expand the argument section by at least two more questions that will focus on gender related topics to see if this impacts outcomes.

Thus the instrument needs some attention before we draw too many solid conclusions from these results. However, the program faculty did see and commit to a number of potential sites for improvement even with these somewhat preliminary findings.

Related to both SLO 4 and our GE outcomes, faculty found students were able to show when an argument was occurring in a paragraph (q3 and q5) but were less able to deal with the more complex task of finding an argument from a list of statements (q. 4 and 6). Faculty agreed that it is important across all WS 12 sections that instructors be sure to emphasize and instruct students on the key phrases that indicate arguments are occurring. This should help with this area, since all correct examples contained clear markers.

Regarding the questions related to SLO 1, faculty teaching WS 12 agreed to be sure to be clear on a common definition of gender and sex across sections of the course, and to be sure this is reinforced throughout the class so that it is retained by the end of the semester. Also faculty agreed to be sure that in teaching sections on advertisement, students are given opportunities to apply key concepts covered in films and lecture. It was suggested that faculty in particular encourage students to look at the Gender Ad Project web site as an easily accessible source for such application materials.

**5. What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2016-2017 year?**

Per the Women’s Studies newly approved SOAP, our timeline states:

Year 2016-2017

Method 2: Analysis of Student Essay (non-GE/non-Core)

Method 3: Post Exam (GE)

Student final exam/project essays in WS 107/PLSCI 107 or in WS 136T will be collected in fall 2016 for Method 2. For Method 3, the program will seek to improve WS 12 survey and re-administer it in spring of 2017. However, since GE assessment is not required this year, we may put this assessment off until we see what will be required in relation to new GE assessment protocols. This will allow us more time to concentrate on our non-core, non-GE assessment activity.

**6. What progress have you made on items from your last Program Review Action Plan?**

Women’s Studies is still in the midst of having its last program review approved and finalized, so our new action plan is not yet in place.

1. For this report the program provides questions without providing answer options or examples. This will allow the test instrument to continue to be useful in the future, as assessment reports are often made available on university websites, while providing those charged with oversight information on the types of questions found in the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)