Women’s Studies Advisory Council (WSAC)
MINUTES for November 12, 2008
History Conference Room – 104 Copeland Hall, 4-5pm

Present: Julie Campbell, Patricia Cruzeiro, Carrie KracI, Nyla Khan, Darleen Mitchell, Tami Moore, Larry Hughes, Janice Fronezak, Sheryl Heidenreich, Amy German, Laurel McKellips, Demaris Grant, Amber Lewis (Student Rep.), Linda Van Ingen (Chair).

Absent: Diane Wysocki, Sarah Elger (Student Rep.), Deb Bridges (ex-officio).

Linda Van Ingen called the meeting to order at 4pm.

1. Minutes from the last meeting on October 8, 2008 were approved by email on 10-23-08

2. Assessment Report update: German and Hughes volunteered to conduct the Focus Group survey for the WS420 (Fall 2008) Senior Seminar students; the exact date will be arranged. The WS220 assessment process needs some improvement; Mitchell and Van Ingen will begin by putting together a set of terms/concepts for assessment.

3. Curriculum update:
   a. Distribution of Bookmarks with Spring 2009 schedule & other course flyers. Most courses appear to be meeting enrollment requirements. Mitchell’s new Spring course MUS 499-80 (“Women’s Music in the Global Village” 2cr;) is an on-line course and it needs publicity and higher enrollments in order to make.
   b. Summer 2009 and Fall 2009 schedule in progress: let Van Ingen know of any courses that should be included in the Women’s Studies course schedule.
   c. Instructor for WS220 (“Introduction to Women’s Studies”): Two issues have emerged regarding the WS220 course: 1) how often it should be offered (once a year or twice fall/spring) and 2) who should teach it.
      i. 1) How often WS220 should be offered: This year WS220 is being offered twice (fall/spring), with Van Ingen as the instructor both semesters. Van Ingen reported that the Spring 09 enrollment for WS220 is good (17 students as of 11/12), especially as it comes immediately after the Fall 08 offering with 26 students. The goal is to build the WS Program with new students so the back-to-back offering of the Intro course builds momentum for the Program and increases the likelihood of recruiting new WS Minors. The original plan (dating back to when Van Ingen was hired to direct the WS Program in 2007) was that the WS220 Intro course would be offered one semester while the WS420 advanced class would be offered the other semester. However, because there are not enough students to fill the WS420, Van Ingen has offered the WS220 twice this year. The WSAC discussed this situation, and made the following points regarding the twice-a-year offering: building and keeping momentum with the two (fall/spring) offerings of the WS220 Intro class is necessary to build the program; growing pains come with building a program, so it may take offering the WS220 Intro twice a year for several years before we can have the numbers of students to offer the WS420 as a course; we should build on the collaborative relationship we have developed with the Honors Program by offering the course twice a year; Cost/benefit issues seem to favor a twice-a-year offering, as the original plan (with WS220 and WS420 each year) has the same instructor load. The current WS420 students are being taught as independent studies by Van Ingen. After discussion, WSAC voted in favor of offering the WS220 “Introduction to Women’s Studies” twice a year (fall/spring) (Khan/Hughes; all in favor).
      ii. 2) Who should teach WS220: There was discussion about having the WS Director teach the WS220 Intro course. Van Ingen reported that this is seen as a problem for some because the director becomes too identified with the program. Van Ingen pointed out,
however, that since becoming the director she has a heightened appreciation of the role the WS220 Intro course plays in building the program. Teaching the course is key to directing the program in terms of recruiting students, advising students, designing and implementing assessment, developing new aspects such as a service learning component, and working with students for the APR process. She would like to continue teaching the WS220 for another year or at least until the program stabilizes with a stronger student base. There was some discussion about the challenges of securing an instructor for WS220. Essentially WS “borrows” a faculty member from a department and that department is compensated the price of an adjunct replacement for a course. Currently the History Department is able to hire an adjunct to replace Van Ingen’s course releases to both teach and direct the WS Program. This is more difficult for departments that do not have a graduate program with a pool of recent MA graduates, and this has been a difficult challenge in the past. Van Ingen pointed out that it would take time to identify and develop a curriculum with a new instructor for WS220, and that this should be done long in advance of course scheduling deadlines. Other comments regarding instructors for WS220 included the possibility of creating a team-teaching format; looking into graduate student support/instructor for the WS220 class; and hiring an adjunct directly to teach the WS220. Overall there was a consensus that Van Ingen should teach the course in the short run and that we would look into long-term plans for a more sustainable instructor format.

iii. The WS420 Senior Seminar was briefly discussed. Like the WS220 course, this is also a required course, but because enrollments are low, students meet with Van Ingen as independent studies. If the WSProgram grows, then we will have more students at the senior seminar level to offer a class.

d. Service Learning component for WS220: as discussed in the context of both Assessment and the WS220 course, Van Ingen has implemented an optional service-learning component into the WS220 course. Students volunteer at the Kearney Safe Center, FAN, and the UNK Women’s Center. This has been a great help to the Women’s Center. This new component needs further development and assessment.

4. Budget Update: no updates

5. Women’s Center: McKellips reported that the priority of the Women’s Center for next semester is to apply for grants to fund staffing for the Women’s Center. Currently, the WC operates with a faculty advisor who is employed part-time by Counseling Care, and has the help of a graduate assistant from Counseling (McKellips), the Women’s Studies Workstudy student, and volunteer students. The goal is to have the WC open for students in need, but many times this is not possible due to the limited hours of both the GA, workstudy and volunteers. WC programming is organized by the GA, and for the remainder of the semester include co-sponsorship of the Disability Awareness Week beginning November 15, a Brown Bag by Julie Campbell, “Healthy Relationships” on November 19 (noon, Fireside Lounge, Union) and a “Hot Cocoa & Tea” open house on Wed., December 10 from 10-2pm during dead week before finals to help students cope with stress.

6. WGSO/Triota students: The Women’s & Gender Studies Program sent their condolences and flowers to Triota chair Sarah Elger for the loss of her brother.

7. QSA (Queer/Straight Student Alliance): McKellips reported that Linda Shaw, advisor of the Women’s Center, is working with QSA. Lewis pointed out that new student groups should get registered with Student Senate.

8. Extra-curricular Programs:
b. Follow-up on Fall WS Affiliated Faculty & Student Reception at MONA (November 6 from, 5-7pm): Many thanks to Darleen Mitchell and Anne Foradori for their piano and vocal performance at the event. About 30 people attended the reception at MONA, half were students. There was some discussion about how to increase the number of affiliated faculty at these fall gatherings. Some suggestions included personalizing the invitations and having the faculty reps from each college deliver them; highlighting the aspect of recognition including a certificate. There was general agreement that we should host an affiliated faculty and student reception again next fall.

c. 20th Anniversary Celebration for Spring 2009: a number of events are being organized. WS plans to publicize these events in one promotional poster that celebrates the Program’s 20th Anniversary (1989-2009):
   i. Feb 5-6: “Vagina Monologues” Fine Arts Recital Hall (organized/directed by Grant)
   ii. Feb 12: Dr. Stephen Behrendt; “Recovering Romantic-era Women Writers” (co-sponsor with Explorations Lecture Series; has been funded by A&L grant). WS will provide reception following the lecture: WSAC discussed where this reception should be held, and decided that the hallway outside of the speaker’s room would make the most sense in terms of getting people from the speaker event to the reception, especially in winter. (talk is in 142 Copeland Hall - organized by Benzel)
   iii. March 9: (Women’s History Month): Jan Harriott’s recital, “Celebrating Women Composers: A Recital of Clarinet Works.” Fine Arts Recital Hall at 7:30 pm. (organized/contact Darleen Mitchell).
   vi. TBA: Women in Afghanistan? (organized by Khan)
   vii. Alumni invitation? When? What? There was some discussion of bringing a feminist comedian to the Alumni House. Lewis will look into possible performers; Van Ingen will look into the budget and how to invite alumni.

9. No Limits Undergraduate Research Conference – in Omaha on March 6& 7. The CFP is out and due January 30th. WS plans to take students. Do you have students with research projects? For more info see http://www.unomaha.edu/wmst/conference.php

10. Other business:
   a. Buy a turkey for Campus Kitchen –$20 in cash donations was made by members to support this worthy cause.
   b. Follow-up on Initiative 424. Van Ingen reported that the Gender Equity Committee has been following this issue. Passage of 424 will affect admissions and scholarship procedures; employment still follows the federal Affirmative Action guidelines. The University apparently is awaiting legal interpretations of what to do. Passage of 424 will not affect WS as it is an open enrollment program and scholarships are based on whether one is a WS minor, not on gender or race.

The meeting adjourned at 5pm (Moore/Mitchell).

Next meeting is on Wednesday, December 10th at 4-5pm in History Conference room.