



September 2012

## **Educational Support and Administrative Review**

Center for Women's Studies

**Dr. Lynne Rieff**  
**Director**

## 1. Overview of Department

### 1.1 Brief overview of department/area

The Center for Women's Studies (CWS) educates and informs the UNA campus and the local community about women's issues. Established in 2004, the CWS originally was known as the "Women's Center" and was located in one room in Bennett Infirmary. The "Women's Center" moved to its current location (663 Wood Avenue) in 2004. The CWS encourages the development of leadership abilities and the practical application of Women's Studies theories through the coordination of service-learning activities for Women's Studies students. The Center participates in projects that promote local and global outreach and coordinates exhibits and programs with community agencies such as Rape Response, Safeplace, and the Shoals Help Center.

### 1.2 Mission statement for the department/area

The mission of the Center for Women's Studies is to educate, support, and reach out to women on the UNA campus in the context of a global community. To achieve this mission, the CWS: (1) Maintains a visible presence as the locus of the practical application of precepts taught in the Women's Studies minor; (2) Offers interdisciplinary Women's Studies classes that examine women's experiences, contributions, struggles, goals, and triumphs as they are evident in a variety of academic disciplines; (3) Sponsors co-curricular activities and programs; (4) Encourages student leadership in community-building, outreach activities; (5) Builds associations and promotes cooperation between university programs and community agencies; (6) Offers referrals, education, and support around the issue of gender violence; (7) Embraces and celebrates the multicultural nature of women's lives across categories that include ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, and abilities.

### 1.3 Goals and objectives of the department/area

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Objective</b>
1. Improve administrative support of CVS.	1. Establish a budget for CVS. 2. Create & fund a staff position (Coordinator) for CVS. 3. Appoint & compensate Director.
2. Establish regular programming.	1. Director & Coordinator collaborate in planning programs & scheduling speakers.

3. Expand CWS collaboration with community agencies.

1. Director & Coordinator work with students in identifying service-learning projects, assisting community agencies with exhibits & projects on campus; participating in local and global outreach projects.

The CWS has undergone a dramatic transformation since 2007. The UNA administration established a small budget for the CWS in 2009--prior to that year, the CWS did not have a budget. Faculty and student volunteers staffed the CWS and assisted visitors. There was no regular programming. At the behest of faculty volunteers, the administration established a small budget for the CWS that provided for the employment of a Coordinator; the Coordinator's position was a temporary, part-time position from 2009-2011. In January 2012 the VPAA agreed to support the Coordinator in a full-time position; during the summer of 2012 a formal search was conducted that culminated with the transition of the Coordinator's position into a regular position. Additionally, the university appointed (with compensation) a faculty member to serve as Director of the CWS (2012). The establishment of the Coordinator's position and the appointment of a Director have been key in the CWS establishing and scheduling regular programs and speakers for the campus community. The creation of those positions also assisted with expanding the Center's collaboration with community agencies, such as Rape Response, Safeplace, the Shoals Help Center, the Northwest Alabama Community Health and Dental Clinic, the Lauderdale County Health Department, AIDS Action Coalition, and the American Red Cross.

#### 1.4 Governance structure of the department/area

The CWS Coordinator reports to the CWS Director. The Director reports to the Associate Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

#### 1.5 Brief description of the national status of the department/area (including emerging issues and trends.)

Although administrative support for the CWS has lagged, the CWS is ahead of other universities in coordinating academic and advocacy roles. Women's Centers at other universities frequently are under the purview of Student Affairs and employ staff members who schedule programs and activities that have limited (or no) faculty input and involvement. Departments of Women's Studies frequently function separately and focus exclusively on the academic component of teaching Women's Studies courses. The CWS is unique in offering academic courses (WS courses) and in supporting advocacy for women's issues (providing outside speakers a venue for programs and assisting students with identifying service-learning opportunities with local and global agencies).

## 2. Department/Area Evaluation

- 2.1 Description of the means of assessment of department/area goals. [Means of assessing outcomes should be based on typical and/or accepted assessment measures within the department/area]

Beginning in 2010, the CWS began collecting data regarding visitors to the CWS and their reasons for visiting. Additionally, the CWS asks WS students (WS 100 and WS 495 students who are required to attend CWS programs) to evaluate speakers and/or programs. Evaluation survey results are used in planning future programs.

- 2.2 Summary of the results of the assessment/s

The number of visitors to the CWS increased steadily since 2009 with the implementation of regular programming. Evaluation survey results indicated specific programs/speakers that students (and other visitors) found informative and relevant to their interests/concerns as well as those that audiences found less useful.

- 2.3 Recent improvements based on the results of the assessments

Evaluation survey results are used in planning future programs for the CWS. The Director and Coordinator are reviewing the process of collecting demographic data for the CWS and how such data might be used in scheduling programming and broadening the Center's outreach with the campus and local community.

- 2.4 Appropriate documentation to support the assessment of departmental/area goals

Documentation of all assessment data is kept on file in the CWS.

- 2.5 Brief analysis of those areas in need of improvement and an action plan for improvement in these areas

The CWS must continue to expand its programming and outreach activities both on campus and in the Shoals community.

## 3. Facilities and Resources that address the adequacy of resources and support services to support the goals and objectives of the department/area

- 3.1 Equipment

The CWS presently has inadequate equipment. Since the CWS was established without financial support, an ongoing problem has been obtaining equipment. Computers in the CWS are older computers (taken from other offices that received new computers) and

need to be replaced within the current academic year (2012-2013); two new computers are requested. The furniture in the student commons area is showing wear and new furniture (sofas & chairs) will need to be replaced within the next couple of years. A new security system is needed because the CWS is a designated “Safe Place” for any individual on campus who is in a domestic violence situation and who seeks temporary assistance. Additional equipment (e.g. desks, shelving, lectern) may be needed. A budget increase of \$6000 is requested.

### 3.2 Space

The facility where the CWS is located is inadequate; located in a 1930s bungalow house (663 Wood Avenue), the structure of the building is declining. The facility is not handicap accessible; it cannot be made handicap accessible without significant expense that is not financially feasible (given the age and condition of the building). The CWS is located on the perimeter of campus--the location of the CWS is a problem in trying to attract students, faculty, and staff to programs. Additionally, there is not adequate space to hold programs. The largest room can accommodate an audience of approximately 20 people (and that is crowded); the layout of the room makes it difficult for an audience of twenty to hear and view a presentation.

### 3.3 Staff

The employment of a Coordinator (2009), the transition of the Coordinator’s position into a full-time, regular position (2012), and the appointment of a Director (2012) have dramatically impacted the programming and outreach of the CWS.

### 3.4 Other

Travel money is needed so that the Director and Coordinator can attend conferences (request \$1000). In 2012, the CWS began sponsoring students to attend the Leading Edge Institute (leadership training course for college women held annually at Judson College)—request for LEI course fee \$2000.

## 4. Achievements

The Director, Coordinator, and two WS students participated in the Leading Edge Institute (LEI) at Judson College June 25-July 1, 2012. LEI is a nine-month leadership course that entails students identifying and implementing a service project on their college campus. A Winter Summit will be held in Birmingham in February 2013; the Director and Coordinator believe that these students will be the first UNA students to complete the LEI course and graduate from LEI. In May 2012 the Director and the Coordinator participated in the Southeastern Association of Women’s Centers Conference held at the University of Alabama.

5. Responses to Previous Review Recommendations

This is the first five-year review for the Center for Women's Studies. As such, there are no previous review recommendations.

6. Vision and Plans for the Future of the Area

A priority for the CWS over the next five years is to relocate to a larger space in the center of campus. Because of its programming and referral services, the CWS needs to be located in an area of campus that has a high volume of student traffic and is easily accessible to the campus and local community. The CWS needs a larger facility that includes an area dedicated to speakers and informal programs, a work area for student interns and service-learners, a commons area for students, and office space for the Coordinator and Director.

7. Unit Recommendations

7.1 Recommendations for changes, which are within the control of the department/area, if appropriate

The Director and Coordinator will continue to develop the CWS's relationship with Student Affairs. The CWS serves as a bridge between Academic and Student Affairs; we want to work more closely with Student Affairs in planning programs and activities that inform and assist our students. The Director and Coordinator will work to expand the Center's local and global outreach projects and to identify new leadership and service-learning opportunities for students.

7.2 Recommendations for changes that require action at the Vice President, Provost, or higher levels.

Relocate the CWS to a new and larger facility in the center of campus is requested. Equipment (e.g. computers) and furniture in the CWS are dated and need to be replaced; a new security system is needed. Additionally, the CWS requests funds for travel and to pay the LEI course fee. A budget increase of \$9000 (excluding Coordinator's salary and Director's stipend) is requested.