Bylaws of the Women’s Studies Program
Central Michigan University

GOALS:

Teaching and research on the diversity of women’s roles and achievements is the focus of Women’s Studies at Central Michigan University. Members of Women’s Studies promote gender-based research in the various disciplines, contributing to the growing literature in the multi-disciplinary field of women’s studies. The curriculum of Women’s Studies offers to CMU students the opportunity to gain:

*** an awareness of women’s roles in and contributions to society --- past, present, and future;
*** a view of women’s experiences from their diverse perspectives;
*** theoretical and methodological perspectives to analyze gender, including its intersection with other systems of inequality;
*** skills that help women and men to analyze their experiences and design effective strategies for change; and
*** an understanding that social patterning of female and male roles has a fundamental impact on human behavior, and that changes in these roles occur over time in response to environmental and cultural influences.

MEMBERS OF THE WOMEN’S STUDIES PROGRAM:

I. Governance Council [voting members]

Eligibility for participation in the governance of the Women’s Studies Program shall be based on the following criteria:

(1) faculty who teach, or have previously taught, courses on the Women’s Studies program;
(2) faculty and staff conducting research or professional activities relevant to feminist concerns
(3) faculty and staff currently working on committees of the Women’s Studies Program;
(4) The Director is also a member of the Governance Council, in an ex-officio and non-voting capacity.

Any person meeting any of the above criteria can become a Governance Council member by indicating their commitment on a “statement of intent” form that will accompany the Women’s Studies newsletter each semester and be distributed widely to interested parties during the first two weeks of each academic year.
II. ACADEMIC COUNCIL

The academic council consists of the faculty members on the Governance Council. The academic council is responsible for all curricular and faculty personnel matters.

III. Constituency [friends]

The history of the Women’s Studies program at CMU reveals a tradition of many people who attend programs or social events, and want to remain knowledgeable of women’s studies activities. A variety of media may be used as a vehicle to keep the constituency aware of accomplishments, news, plans for the future, and the on-going programmatic and academic work of the Women’s Studies program faculty, staff, and students.

DIRECTOR:

The Director shall normally be a tenured faculty member who meets the eligibility criteria for the Governance Council. In special circumstances, a temporary faculty member may be appointed. The Director is elected for a three-year term by the Governance Council and eligible for re-election at the end of the term.

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR:

The Director of the Women’s Studies program is responsible for:

1. advising and signing Women’s Studies minors;
2. approving independent studies courses with the WST designator requested by students;
3. coordinating the scheduling of Women’s Studies classes with the respective departments;
4. in consultation with the WST academic council, teaching the capstone seminar (WST 496) or arranging with the academic council for another Women’s Studies faculty member to teach it;
5. representing the Women’s Studies program on appropriate college, university and diversity committees;
6. chairing regular meetings of the Women’s Studies Governance and academic council;
7. completing day-to-day administrative activities, supervising staff, preparing a budget, coordinating budget requests, and writing special reports as required;
8. serving as an ex-officio non-voting member of all committees of Women’s Studies;
9. maintaining a liaison with the Park Library;
10. holding regular meetings with committee chairs;
11. coordinating public relations, communication, publicity, and fund-raising activities; and
12. writing grants.

COMMITTEES:
Committees will be composed of individuals who submit a “statement of intent” form by September 15 each academic year; the Director will send out a form to the mailing list during the first two weeks of the fall semester. Volunteers will serve for a year and may continue on the same committee for up to three years. Each committee will appoint a chair and establish a schedule of meetings as appropriate to their tasks. The committee chairs will keep the Director abreast of all activities, including the submission of minutes from each meeting. Committees should report on current activities at the monthly governance meeting. Final decisions on committee recommendations will be made by the Governance or academic councils, as appropriate.

The following standing committees and sizes are recommended; it is assumed additional members will be recruited as needed for special projects:

(1) colloquium and speakers committee (2)
(2) Women’s Studies Paper Prize Committee (4-5)
(3) Women’s History Month committee (2)
(4) Ad hoc committees as needed. (e.g., elections committee)

MEETINGS:

1) The Director shall conduct a monthly meeting with the Women’s Studies Governance and academic council.
2) Committees shall meet as needed and report on any committee activities at the monthly meeting of the WST Governance Council.
3) Governance Council members who cannot attend a scheduled meeting may submit a proxy vote in writing to the Director; every effort should be made to attend the meeting.
4) Timely notice of meetings shall be sent to Governance Council members, along with the agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting.
5) A quorum for the Governance Council shall consist of five members plus the Director or her designee.
6) Other meetings as necessary.

ELECTIONS:

Director: The Director of Women’s Studies shall be elected by secret ballot for a three-year term by a majority of the Women’s Studies Governance Council. This meeting shall be announced two weeks prior to the election. Members who cannot attend the meeting may submit a proxy vote in writing to the chair of the elections committee.

In December of the third year, the elections committee shall call for nominations and applications for the position. This position shall be posted internally and elections shall be held the following February.
In the event that a vacancy in the position occurs unexpectedly and it is too late to hold an election, the elections committee shall act expeditiously to select a temporary Director for one year or one semester, as appropriate. A regular election shall be held as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs, with the regular Director’s term beginning at the end of the semester or year.

CURRICULAR MATTERS:

1. The Multidisciplinary Program in Women’s Studies consists of those courses which have been submitted by departments of Central Michigan University and approved by the Women’s Studies academic council for inclusion in the program, in accordance with university curricular processes. It also includes courses housed in Women’s Studies, which include WST 496 (Capstone Seminar in Women’s Studies), and WST 297 and WST 497 (Special Topics in Women’s Studies), and WST 298 and WST 498 (Independent Study in Women’s Studies).

2. Additions of Courses to the Women’s Studies Program: At any time after a course has been approved through department, college and university curricular processes, that course may be submitted to Women’s Studies for inclusion in the program. The following procedure will be followed:

   (a) The department or individual will submit to the Director of Women’s Studies the approved master syllabus, a rationale for including the course in the Women’s Studies program explaining its appropriateness and contributions to the goals of Women’s Studies (see page 1 of these bylaws), and a vita of the faculty member(s) who intend(s) to teach the course.

   (b) The Director will review these materials and make a recommendation to the Academic Council at a regularly scheduled meeting.

   (c) All materials concerning the course will be placed on file and the academic council will be so notified at least two weeks prior to any vote on the course.

   (d) The academic council will vote by secret ballot on the inclusion of the course. Once the vote has been completed, the department will be notified of the decision and formal university curricular processes will be followed. When the curricular processes are completed and the course included in the program, the Director will then update all Women’s Studies materials, as expeditiously as possible, to reflect the change.

3. Deletion of Courses:
   Proposals for deleting a WST course, including the rationale for doing so, may be brought by an individual or group of individuals. The same procedure shall be followed as for inclusion of courses, as outlined in 2(b) through 2(d). The department in which the course originates shall be notified in advance and be given the opportunity to comment.
4. Women’s Studies Designator:

The university recognizes the WST designator for Women’s Studies courses that are cross-listed and for the following courses that will be housed solely in Women’s Studies:

- WST 496 Capstone Seminar
- WST 297,497 Special Topics
- WST 298,498 Independent Studies(variable credit)

None of the WST courses listed above will duplicate existing courses within the university curriculum.

AMENDMENTS:

Amendments to the Bylaws shall be made by a majority of the Women’s Studies Governance Council members present at a meeting. Members who cannot attend the meeting may submit a proxy vote in writing to the Director prior to the meeting. The proposed amendments and a notice of the meeting shall be distributed at least two weeks before the meeting.

Revised and
Amended, April 2004