

Women's Center Strategic Plan

I. Vision

To have a Women's Center that functions within the college as a nexus for research, education and activism towards gender justice and women's issues, and that provides a safe and generative space for all students. To integrate the Center and its core values and goals into campus life through active student and faculty engagement and participation.

II. Who we are

The Women's Center was founded in 1993 by students, faculty and staff who sought to support women students entering the male-dominated professions of criminal justice. Although the campus has a majority of female students they are being trained to enter professions that remain male-dominated. Today the Women's Center's thriving activism, educational programming, counseling and support services are central to the college's mission of educating for justice.

III. Mission Statement

The WC supports student success because it provides invaluable links between student centered research, peer networking, educational programming and clinical intervention. We provide education, outreach and activist opportunities on women's issues and gender justice. We provide direct services (crisis intervention, short term and on-going individual counseling, groups and referral services), educational programs (workshops, conferences, trainings), and a safe space for women students and their allies. We collaborate with groups inside and outside John Jay College to promote the physical, mental and sexual health of all students through activism and advocacy. We seek to advance knowledge of gender equity and women's issues and the opportunities and barriers students can face on campus and in society.

IV. Guiding Principles and Core Values

The Women's Center is guided by feminist ideals of social justice. The Center's senior staff is comprised of licensed clinicians, so the Center is also guided by professional codes of ethics for psychologists and social workers. Our core values set the foundation for the atmosphere of the WC space and all WC activities:

- Diversity - we are committed to equality for all genders and value their diverse contributions to the Center;
- Activism – we strive to help students connect their academic learning and life experiences to empowering action;
- Advocacy – we monitor issues on campus to ensure that women's concerns are addressed at all levels of the college, providing

an equal opportunity for educational and professional development for students, faculty and staff;

- Student Centered – our programming, outreach, and workshops are developed with input from students based on their needs and those of their peers;
- Personal and Professional Development – our core values see these learning areas as inseparable, and we work to provide opportunities for the enrichment of both through counseling, workshops, internships, mentoring, and research;
- Celebration – we aim to create a safe and celebrative space for women to explore, learn, and reach their maximum potential, and where men are empowered to co-create gender equity;
- Community - we value our connection to the academic setting, and foster connections to faculty, on-campus student groups, Centers, and off-campus resources working toward gender equity.

V. Governance

The Women’s Center Advisory Committee guides the general work of the WC ensuring activities support its stated mission and values. The Advisory Committee is comprised of the following constituencies:

1. Chair of Gender Studies who chairs the Committee. The central involvement of the GS Chair highlights the education and gender justice activism components of the WC.
2. Vice President for Student Development ensures the student service component of the WC mission.
3. Dean of Undergraduate Studies or a representative from that office serves to promote the educational components of the WC mission and ensure the needs of undergraduate academics are supported by WC activities.
4. Dean of Graduate Studies or a representative from that office serves to promote the educational components of the WC mission and ensure the needs of graduate academics are supported by WC activities.
5. A representative from Student Activities serves as a liaison to student clubs and to promote the student centered activities of the WC. (Serves for a 3 year renewable appointment).
6. A faculty member with research in the area of gender justice that differs from that of the Chair of GS, to support the research component of the WC activities and to ensure WC activities, values and goals are aligned with current research on gender justice. (Serves for a 3 year renewable appointment).
7. Director of Counseling shall be a member based on the clinical service and psycho-education components of the WC mission.
8. A student (undergraduate) involved in gender justice activism to present student centered needs for the WC, to be appointed yearly by Student Government.
9. Women’s Center Director will be a member.

10. Women's Center Clinical Assistant will be a member to ensure the clinical services of the WC are represented within the meeting.

The current WC staffing includes:

Director – Oversees and coordinates all functions of the Center; maintains departmental and faculty responsibilities; responsible for the timely planning and implementation of the policies and strategies of the WC ensuring adherence to its goals and values; functions as principal liaison to the WC Advisory Committee and represents the WC at meetings and events or/and appoints a representative; directly supervises Clinical Assistant; accountable to the VP of Student Development and the WC Advisory Committee.

Clinical Assistant – Oversees the clinical work of the Center; directly supervises Office Manager; assists in creating programming and outreach activities; directly supervises social work clinical or/and programming extern.

Office Manager – Directly supervises work study and volunteers; assists with administrative tasks; assists in creating programming and outreach; maintains bulletin board; creates outreach materials including event and fact fliers, organizes tabling.

Work study and volunteers – Students trained to conduct outreach advocacy and activities.

Five year plan for staffing (NOTE: completion of this staffing plan is an action step/objective for Goal #1 of the Strategic Plan outlined below and contingent on availability of funding):

Director (Faculty) – Responsible for the functioning of the WC while ensuring adherence to its stated goals and values; initiates the development and implementation of fundable research, programming and service initiatives; oversees development of campus training programs for students, faculty and staff; maintains faculty and department responsibilities.

Assistant Director/ Program Development Specialist (HEO) – Oversees grant-writing activities and develops fundable programming initiatives for the WC; coordinates fundraising; liaisons with other Centers and on and off campus entities for programming and outreach; supervises programming extern (depending on extern's area of study); responsible for the administrative work of the Center; assists with supervision of WC personnel; responsible to attend administrative meetings; works with Clinical Assistant and Office Manager to develop outreach materials for students, faculty and staff.

Clinical Assistant/Coordinator – Provides and coordinates the clinical services of the WC; conducts and organizes outreach around mental health and violence issues; directly supervises clinical intern and possibly the programming extern (depending on her/his program); conducts and organizes ongoing and short-term support groups for students; assists with grant writing to fund WC initiatives and research initiatives when appropriate.

Office Manager – Directly supervises all work studies/peers and volunteers; assists with administrative tasks; works with the AD/PC and CA/CC to develop effective outreach activities, programming, and materials, and maintain accurate referral information; mobilizes work studies and volunteers to design and maintain educational, activist oriented and engaging bulletin boards; coordinates tabling and other outreach activities.

Clinical intern – Graduate level student to be supervised by Clinical Assistant; provides crisis intervention, short-term, on-going and group counseling; helps develop clinically oriented outreach materials with Clinical Assistant.

Program intern – SW, CSL, Women’s Studies Certificate Program or Higher Ed graduate student, supervised by Program Coordinator and Clinical Assistant when appropriate, assist with engaging students within the Center toward activism; help with organizing students on campus toward gender justice activism; partners with Men’s center/UMI on specific programming and research initiatives and liaison to other college centers and departments and community services on collaborative programming and projects.

Work study and volunteers – Students trained in the Counseling Peer training program to acquire professionalization skills or/and students involved in activist oriented activities to conduct outreach advocacy and activities; collaborate with other peers around the campus on programming, outreach and training to ensure all campus peers are aware of gender related violence and gender justice activism; assist Office Manager with the administrative tasks and research initiatives of the WC.

Research volunteers – Students engaged in research around issues of gender and violence, e.g. participatory action research, under the guidance of Director or/and gender studies faculty. Should have some overlap with students listed above.

VI. Strategic Goals

The WC supports student academic and personal growth in unique ways. Research conducted on an urban commuter campus similar to John Jay indicated that violence in students’ lives, in particular gender related violence (i.e. sexual abuse, dating and domestic

violence, stalking) occurred at higher rates than national averages for college students (see Gentile, et. al., 2007). Barberet, Fisher and Garfield (2008) conducted focus groups with John Jay students and found students regularly experience threats to their security, including assault and stalking. These experiences create particular impediments to educational, professional, and personal development for our students. It is well known that violence and trauma compromises the ability to reflect and engage in symbolic thought, both necessary to academic achievement. Additionally, anecdotal and clinical evidence from the WC suggests experiences of violence contribute significantly to students leaving John Jay before graduation. We know from research that peer networks are key to student retention and success, and an important point of intervention in ending gender related violence (see Raghavan, et. al., 2009). As noted, the work of the WC supports student success because it emerges from a nexus of gender justice activism and student centered research, peer networking, educational programming and clinical intervention.

The WC strategic goals reflect best practices for WCs as outlined by National Women’s Studies Association and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. They are as follows:

- 1) To develop and implement a comprehensive schedule of programming responsive to student needs.
- 2) Expand the use of the Women’s Center and services provided.
- 3) Advance gender equity on campus by integrating WC priorities into the college.

Goal	Action Step/Objective	Assessment Method	Responsible Party	Due Date
To develop and implement a comprehensive schedule of programming responsive to student needs.	Design and conduct a needs assessment for students on campus to help engage WC workers to think about the role of the WC on campus and ways it could expand as well as to advertise the existing WC for students on campus;	Design and disseminate a needs assessment for WC activities – ideally a form of participatory action research where students engage other students in this process;	Director Clinical Assistant Related GS faculty to create PAR basics for assessment;	Fall 2011
		Include needs assessment of faculty	Engage CSL/other Peers in research process w/MCSR Group Director Clinical Assistant	Spring-Fall 2012

		and staff; Work with students to develop on on-line assessment tool through Survey Monkey to engage students, faculty and staff (where appropriate) in an evaluation of WC activities, including trainings;	Related GS faculty Director Clinical Assistant (lead) Office Manager Social Work Programming Intern	Fall 2012- Spring 2013 Summer 2010;
	Develop a strategic staffing plan based on needs assessment and funding goals		Director Clinical Assistant WC Advisory	On-going;
	Develop a marketing and outreach plan based on staffing and needs assessment including comprehensive website reflecting the standards in the field and interactive use of Facebook and other media.		Director Clinical Assistant WC Advisory VP Hoexter's Office	2012
Expand the use of the	Assess services that are	Develop logs to track:	Clinical Assistant	Fall 2010

<p>Women’s Center and services provided.</p>	<p>provided and numbers of students who use them to identify services we do not provide and populations who are not being served.</p> <p>Assess the number of students, faculty and staff who refer students to the WC for services;</p> <p>Develop contact list for students, faculty and staff who refer in order to further outreach efforts;</p> <p>Develop programming, services and outreach to expand use of the WC.</p>	<p>Phone calls Emails All in person contacts Tabling contacts Referrals to WC Referrals from WC</p> <p>Develop intake sheets for in person contacts</p> <p>Develop sheets to track faculty and staff who refer and to track student contacts through class presentations; workshops, orientations etc.</p>	<p>Office Manager</p>	
<p>Advance gender equity on campus by integrating WC priorities into the college.</p>	<p>Co-sponsor most WC programming with internal and external stakeholders;</p>		<p>Director Clinical Assistant Office Manager</p>	<p>Spring 2010</p>

	Co-sponsor one program each semester with a new Center or office on campus focusing on academic and service entities;		Director Clinical Assistant Office Manager	Spring 2010
	Attain representation through WC staff or Gender Studies faculty on all college academic and service committees		Director Clinical Assistant WC Advisory Cmte GS Faculty	Fall 2014
	Work toward developing proactive (vs. reactive) programming like current WC newsletter; this also based on needs assessment;		Director Clinical Assistant Office Manager Interns	Fall 2015
	Increase the WC's advisory, educational and training roles to further impact the campus atmosphere with more gender equity policies	Train all faculty and staff; Develop training materials for all student orientations; (possibly on-line as well as in person and printed materials)	Director Clinical Assistant Office Manager Peers Director Clinical Assistant Office Manager Interns Peers	Fall 2014 Fall 2015

		Raise consciousness of gender issues on campus	WC staff WC Advisory	On-going
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Progress towards the achievement of strategic goals will be determined at regular intervals during the assessment cycle. In the event that some goals remain unmet at the end of the planning process, these goals and the correspondent objectives will be re-assessed for appropriateness and where necessary, added to the next strategic plan.

Barberet, R., Fisher, B. & Garfield G. (2008). “Coming and Going: Commuter Students' Perceptions of Fear, Victimization and Crime Prevention”. Paper presented at the American Society of Criminology conference in St. Louis, MO, 11.

Gentile, K., Raghavan, C., Rajah, V., Gates, K. (2007). It doesn't happen here?: Eating disorders in an ethnically diverse sample of low-income, female and male, urban college students. *Eating Disorders: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*.15(5): 405-425.

Raghavan, C., Rajah, V., Gentile, K., Collado, L., Kavanagh, A.M. (2009). Community violence, social support networks, ethnic group differences and male perpetration of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(10): 1615-1632.