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The present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges

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**The present status of women's and gender studies programs
at community colleges**

by

Alissa Kristine Stoehr

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

Program of Study Committee:
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Ames, Iowa

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wonderful parents,
Jan and Doug,
Who never gave up on me and loved me every step of the way.

My brother,
Peter,
Who has supported me every step of the way.

My grandparents,
Cay and Bill, Roy and Lucille,
Who always reminded me how proud they were of my accomplishments.

My major professor,
Larry,
I know I would not have finished without your constant support and mentoring.
You are one in a million!

My committee,
Carol, Susan, Frankie, and Gloria,
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And to my participants,
None of this would be possible without your voices.
I am humbled by your support and sisterhood.

This is all for you.

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ABSTRACT

According to the Women's and Gender Studies Program at State University of New York-Oneonta (2013), "women's and gender studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that takes gender as its main category of analysis, and works to reframe the place of gender as essential to the workings of social, cultural, political, and economic systems." These programs, especially at community colleges, have not benefitted from much research and/or scholarship within the last ten years. For this reason, I chose to explore the history of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and the creation and maintenance of such programs.

A qualitative case study methodology was used to conduct this study. Eight community college faculty, all who identified as women, were interviewed. Data were gathered from semi-structured interviews and analysis of institutional artifacts such as program reviews and sample syllabi. Through data analysis, specific themes emerged regarding women's and gender studies programs at the community college level, including faculty perspectives on why students enroll in women's and gender studies courses, issues of intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs, and the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges.

Several recommendations were provided that could help strengthen women's and gender studies programs at the community college level, as well as possible topics for future research. This study has implications not only for women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, but within higher education. All educational institutions—regardless of the students they serve and the level of women's and gender

studies courses offered—can benefit from learning about the involvement of community colleges and the value in creating alliances to further increase women's and gender studies programs throughout academia.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

College does not end at the classroom door. A significant aspect of the community college philosophy and mission is to be part of the community. Most community colleges are non-residential... Women's and gender studies as a field of study provides targeted opportunities for students to engage with community-based partners through activism, service learning, and internships which in turn support their learning and create tangible avenues to value themselves and their life choices (Berger & Radeloff, 2011, p. 52)

Women's and gender studies courses are not new to the curriculum found at community colleges. Throughout this study, you will read about community colleges throughout the United States that have had women's and gender studies programs included in their curriculum for over 40 years. These courses deal with issues of gender and the intersectionalities of identities such as race, class, and sexual orientation. However, these types of courses are usually introductory in nature, and are used to satisfy electives requirements in earning an associate's degree.

Feminist standpoint theory (FST) will be used as a way to put the life experiences of the participants into context. I chose FST as my theoretical framework in order to situate knowledge within the participants' experiences as women's and gender studies educators, and to also discuss how the participants handled their identity as a marginalized group—faculty at community colleges. Each participant held true to her voice throughout the study, and were able to articulate the traits associated with their marginalized identity, and how they navigated that space in a positive and/or negative manner. I also introduce the concept of feminism into this study to give added context to the content of women's and gender studies courses, and how it is one of the underlying emphases within this type of curriculum.

The academic field of women's studies was first established at San Diego State University in 1970 (Levin, 2007). The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) was founded in 1977 as a professional organization (Reynolds, Shagle, & Venkataraman, 2007). NWSA is committed to

The pursuit of a just world in which all persons can develop to their fullest potential—one free from ideologies, structures, or systems of privilege that oppress or exploit some for the advantage of others, and views women's studies as a comparative, global, intersectional, and interdisciplinary effort (Reynolds et al., 2007, p. 4).

NWSA also established the Mapping Women's and Gender Studies project to better understand trends within the field, and compare programs across the United States. However, this has since been deleted from the NWSA website and a directory of only member institutions has been created in its place.

For the last four decades, women's and gender studies programs have grown to include curriculum within every type of educational institution—from community colleges to four-year colleges and universities, from private to public institutions (Reynolds et al., 2007). According to Spanier, Bloom, and Boroviak (1984),

The integration of women's studies scholarship within and across disciplines has initiated a far-reaching and perhaps revolutionary transformation of traditional knowledge. Not only are women becoming part of the subject matter of disciplines where they were previously ignored, but research questions, methods of analysis, and traditional theoretical frameworks are being challenged. The very canons of literature, art, the natural sciences, and the social sciences are called into questions as women's studies scholars expand the boundaries of their fields of inquiry and as integration efforts bring this new scholarship into traditional courses (p. 9).

For the purpose of this qualitative case study, I chose to use the following definition of feminism, “a social movement whose basic goal is equality between men and women” (Lorber, 2010, p. 1). The goal of feminism as a political movement is to

make women and men more equal legally, socially, and culturally (Lorber, 2010).

Women's studies as an academic field originated during the second wave of the feminist movement. The demand to include women and other marginalized populations as subjects of study in higher education was influenced by feminist academics and others who started to focus more on issues of work and employment, family and parenting, sexuality, reproductive rights, and violence against women. The objective of offering courses in women's and gender studies was to improve women's status in society (Shaw & Lee, 2007). A commitment to personal change and a more equitable societal transformation helped establish women's and gender studies as a discipline (Shaw & Lee, 2007). Throughout all this advocacy and bringing the issue of gender to the forefront of the academy, the three main goals of women's and gender studies programs were: (1) raising awareness about male-centered curriculum being problematic, (2) challenging the status quo by adding women's studies courses to the curriculum, and (3) establishing women, gender, and sex roles as legitimate subjects for much needed research (Chamberlain, 1988).

During the 1970s, the focus of the field of women's and gender studies was to establish itself as a separate discipline with autonomous programs. The focus was then expanded in the 1980s to include "mainstreaming" women's studies throughout the already established curriculum which, in turn, incorporated feminist scholarship within many academic programs and departments (Guy-Sheftall, 2009, p. 56-57).

When thinking about the type of effect women's and gender studies programs have had on higher education, it is important to reflect on the importance of women's voices being heard for their values and accomplishments to become visible within the

dominant society. Furthermore, according to Stewart and Healey's identity model (1989), young women who grew up in an era so highly effected by the women's rights movement should have been more likely to have welcomed feminist ideals as part of their core belief and value system than older women (Zucker, 2004).

However, the term "feminism" has somewhat hindered the importance of women's and gender studies programs within academia because of stereotypes and ignorance about the actual tenets of the phenomenon. For example, among both male and female U.S. college students, the support for feminist ideals is higher than the actual label of calling oneself a "feminist" (Zucker, 2004). Most researchers assert societal perceptions of feminists as deviants who challenge heterosexual ideals figures prominently in the minds of young men and women (Zucker, 2004). The misleading and negative connotations associated with the word "feminism" play a major role in the societal backlash. This type of resistance is fueled by the ways specific groups believe they would lose from a redistribution of power if women were seen as an equitable gender within segments of society.

These groups, among other individuals and institutions, have attempted to discredit feminism, and, therefore, the field of women's and gender studies, by advocating for the following associations (Shaw & Lee, 2007):

- Feminists are angry women who find fault with everything and who also exaggerate discrimination against women.
- Feminists hate men and want to create systems of power over men.
- All feminists are lesbians.
- Feminists reject motherhood and all things feminine.

- Feminism is only a White, middle-class movement that discourages coalition building with other disenfranchised groups.

For example, Lynne Cheney's 1995 book, *Telling the Truth*, argued "the field [women's and gender studies] undermined the basis of American education by critiquing traditional Western heritage and ideas, ...and was politically motivated rather than fact-based scholarship" (McCaughey, 2009, p. 70)

This type of backlash is an example of how many women's and gender studies programs and departments have little security within their own institutions, which makes them vulnerable to budget cuts, termination, and declining control over curriculum (Butler & Schmitz, 1992). Women's and gender studies programs also struggle with scholars in the field who continue to describe the discipline as "marginal" within the university system (Luebke & Reilly, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

There has been a lack of scholarship and research published about women's and gender studies programs at the community college level. Using various strategies throughout this research endeavor, from 1990-1999, I found only approximately 30 articles, books, reports, and additional materials that introduced the topic of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. From 2000-2014, the number of resources increased by only 10 documents.

The last published comprehensive directory of women's and gender studies programs was the *Directory of Women's Studies Programs and Library Resources*, published by Oryx Press in 1990. There are also a few online listings of women's and gender studies programs—mostly just a collection of links to colleges, universities, and

research centers. In all the directories I used to find women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, such as the directory by Oryx Press and an online listing compiled by the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (<http://userpages.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/programs.html>), community colleges were not listed separately.

Most of the resources I did find emphasized women's and gender studies programs at four-year institutions. To better understand the nuances and emphasize the benefits of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, it was important for me to conduct this qualitative case study. It is important to provide credence to these programs, which affect students in positive ways by helping them become critical thinkers and social justice activists.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and also explain the creation and maintenance of these programs despite the backlash against curriculum in women's and gender studies. This study makes an important contribution to the literature because of its current analysis of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, which has been missing for quite some time. It also emphasizes the benefits these programs can add to a community college's curriculum, and reflects on the experiences of both faculty and students in these programs. It is important to understand the experiences of faculty who teach in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, so we may start to understand their unique experiences as faculty in a sometimes misunderstood academic field.

The reason that the topic of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges was specifically chosen for this study was that my entire teaching experience with this type of curriculum has occurred at a four-year university, and I was extremely interested in the similarities and differences of the curriculum between four-year institutions and community colleges. I am extremely passionate about teaching this type of curriculum, and want to see it increase throughout all our educational institutions—community colleges and four-year institutions alike. I strongly believe that this study will be a positive and much needed contribution to the limited amount of literature written on this topic.

Research Questions

Throughout this qualitative study, I wanted to explore the history of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. The focus was on the current status of these programs and their place at the community college level. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What is the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?
2. How are women's and gender studies programs created and maintained at the community college level?
3. How do faculty members perceive the effect women's and gender studies programs at community colleges have had on students?

Significance of the Study

This qualitative case study will be useful in several ways. As mentioned previously, this study adds more research to an already limited body of scholarship about women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and will prove useful to a

variety of stakeholders. This study was conducted to emphasize the importance of women's and gender studies programs in creating an awareness of the intersectionalities of gender, feminism, and other identities in studying the human experience within our society.

The faculty members in these programs also teach students about the skills of critical thinking, public speaking, and the importance of social responsibility, which will make them more well-rounded individuals. These experiences will be discussed more in Chapter Five. These skills also coincide with the creation of women's and gender studies as an academic field, and how faculty and additional stakeholders want students to become more aware of the world around them and graduate from their institutions as global citizens. Examples of students learning these skills within their women's and gender studies courses will be provided in Chapter Four.

I chose to focus on faculty who teach women's and gender studies courses using the research methods outlined in Chapter Three because I wanted to obtain a thoughtful and genuine reflection on the curriculum from the stakeholders who support these programs. I also wanted to acquire a faculty perspective on what women's and gender studies programs look like at the community college level.

Explaining the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges is helpful to a variety of stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators. Students who either already have an interest in issues of feminism and social justice, or just want to learn more about the world around them, and choose to start their education at a community college will discover these types of programs are available. Faculty, administrators, and other interested stakeholders will be able to

explore the successes and challenges that can occur when adding these types of programs to their institution's curriculum.

Audience(s) for the Study

This qualitative case study is aimed at three primary audiences—faculty members who teach in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, administrators at community colleges who have established women's and gender studies or who are thinking about establishing such a program, and students who are thinking about enrolling in women's and gender studies courses at community colleges. This study will be beneficial and informative for all faculty at all institutions who teach women's and gender studies, but especially faculty at community colleges. As the participants stated in their interviews, they are doing “real academic work,” and several of the courses are similar in content to the curriculum found at four-year colleges and universities. Other faculty members, especially from four-year institutions, might gain a better understanding of what it really means to teach women's and gender studies at a community college.

This study also gives faculty an opportunity to hear their colleagues emphasize the importance of these programs in the social sciences academic community. The results of this study will enhance a better understanding of the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and how it can be a worthwhile, beneficial addition to the curriculum.

Although this study focused on faculty members who teach women's and gender studies at community colleges, the information can be relevant to administrators at community colleges who currently have these programs or who are interested in

establishing these programs at their institutions. Throughout this study, they will find examples of faculty reflections, student experiences, importance of the curriculum, and ways campus climate has improved at some community colleges due to the existence of a women's and gender studies program. This research is the first study since Osei-Kofi and Maramba (2009) that looks specifically at women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Therefore, it will provide new information about these programs and their importance at the community college level.

While this qualitative case study will be useful to faculty teaching in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, it will also provide beneficial information to students who want to enroll in these types of courses, and even go on to earn an Associate's degree and/or certificate in this area. By reflecting on both faculty perspectives on student experiences as well as the importance of intersectionality and identity in everyday life, students will have the information they need to make informed decisions as to whether they have an interest in women's and gender studies.

Overview of Related Literature

Chapter Two provides a summary of the scholarship related to women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. The history of women's and gender studies in higher education is presented to give context to the programs and their effect on academia. The history of community colleges and demographics of students who attend these types of institutions are also presented for the reader to better understand the uniqueness of the community college and its students. The lack of scholarship pertaining to women's and gender studies is an important piece included in the literature review because it displays the "second-class" position community colleges sometimes face when

it comes to student choice, and also to the curriculum not being seen as academically rigorous at this level.

Conceptual Framework

In a qualitative study, the conceptual framework “explains the main things to be studied, such as the key factors and concepts, and the presumed relationships among them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18). The conceptual framework for this study, found in Chapter Two, is enveloped into the literature review and theoretical framework. These two elements help inform this study’s design and provide justification for the research (Maxwell, 2013).

While attempting to understand the experiences of the participants as they relate to their faculty experiences, the following topics are included in the literature review: information exploring the historical background of community colleges, demographics of community college students, the lack of scholarship on women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges, and the concepts found within these programs.

Theoretical Framework

Qualitative researchers use theory in four main ways. First, theory is used in a broad manner to explain behavior and attitudes, and may include variables, constructs, and hypotheses. Second, qualitative researchers use a theoretical perspective that provides an overall lens for the study of questions regarding gender, class, race, and other identities (Creswell, 2014). This perspective shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analyzed, and provides a call for social change. It also helps guide the researcher as to what issues to examine, such as marginalization and oppression, and what types of identities should be studied, such as gender and race. A

theoretical perspective helps the researcher to position herself or himself in the study, recognize how the final data should be written and analyzed, and create recommendations for social change (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative researchers also use theory as the end point for their study. This is “an inductive process of building from the data to broad themes to a general theory” (Punch, 2005, p. 38). This process consists of five steps (Creswell, 2014, p. 66):

1. The researcher poses generalizations or theories from past experiences and literature.
2. The researcher looks for broad patterns, generalizations, or theories from themes or categories.
3. The researcher analyzes data to form themes or categories.
4. The researcher asks open-ended questions of participants and records field notes.
5. The researcher gathers data through such processes as interviews and/or observations.

A theoretical framework creates a research structure that consists of “concepts and previous research that informs the phenomenon being studied” (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006, p. 16). The theoretical framework provides a way for the researcher to understand the study. This study used feminist standpoint theory as the framework. Feminist standpoint theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical discourse. It examines women's social roles, experience, interests, and feminist politics in a variety of fields, including education (Worrel & Johnson, 1997, p. 15). Chapter Two will provide a more specific description of feminist standpoint theory.

Summary of Research Approach and Design

According to Merriam (2009), “the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (p. 1). To fully understand the life experiences of faculty members who teach in women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges, this study uses a qualitative research design. Constructivism is the epistemological framework chosen for this study because one of the basic tenets is the interplay between researcher and participant (Crotty, 1998). The feminist case study methodology chosen for this study is comprised of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Stake (2000) affirmed case studies are less of a methodological choice than “a choice of what is to be studied” (p. 435).

This study is an example of feminist research. Research is considered “feminist” when it is grounded in the set of theoretical traditions that privilege women’s issues, voices, and lived experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, feminist research “studies the social conditions of women in a sexist, ‘malestream,’ and patriarchal society” (Stanley & Wise, 1993, p. 12). It includes methods used in research projects by people who identify as feminists or as part of the women’s movement (Reinharz, 1992, p. 6). Feminist research is research on women, by women, and for women. This study emphasized the voices of woman-identified educators in women’s and gender studies programs found at community colleges.

In this study, the issues of teaching women’s and gender studies at a community college and the participants’ experiences in teaching are the main focus of this research. Feminist research also supports issues of social justice. Therefore, throughout the

interviews, the context in which the participants taught their classes and built relationships with their students are grounded in social justice.

A “purposive panel” process was utilized to recruit participants (Maxwell, 2013). A panel is defined as a “people who are uniquely able to be informative because they are expert in an area or were privileged witnesses to an event” (Weiss, 1994, p. 17). Selecting the times, settings, and individuals who can provide the study with the necessary information to answer the research questions is one of the most important considerations in qualitative selection decisions (Maxwell, 2013).

The participants were faculty members at community colleges who taught in women’s and gender studies programs. Each participant completed one interview, which provided most of the data for this study. The choice for participants to complete only one interview will be explained later in the study. Document analysis was also utilized to provide context and to supplement the interview data. The data analysis technique used for this study was open coding for themes (Merriam, 2009). A variety of strategies to ensure trustworthiness throughout this study, including triangulation of data, member checks, and the use of an audit trail (Merriam, 2009).

Chapter Three provides a more descriptive explanation of each element of the qualitative research design.

Researcher Positionality

Abigail Stewart states “we, as researchers, must look at gaps within current social science research, and study women’s lives and issues, such as intersectionalities, and the ways that women struggle with their social devaluation and powerlessness within society” (Creswell, 2014, p. 30). As put forth in Chapter Four, some of the participants

expressed a sense of “social devaluation and powerlessness” when networking with colleagues from four-year institutions, especially at NWSA conferences. Participants were automatically “othered” because they taught at community colleges, and were made to feel like they were not qualified to teach women’s and gender studies. This type of elitism is discussed in Chapter Two and more explicitly in Chapter Four.

Stewart also emphasizes the importance of positionality. However, she sees the value in each woman’s life experience and believes that researchers should “avoid the search for a unified self or voice” (Creswell, 2014, p. 30). This is in contrast to the work of feminist sociologist Shulamit Reinharz. In her book, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, she states “personal experiences are a valuable asset to feminist research” (1992, p. 258). Jones et al. (2006) also state issues within the relationship between the researcher and participant should “always be at the forefront of the research process” (p. 96). As I reflect on how I choose to conduct feminist qualitative research, I strongly believe in the power of a unified voice. There is still room to tell the stories of participants’ specific life experiences, but it is also important to emphasize commonalities and intersectionalities to create a stronger message in feminist qualitative research.

To delve even further into feminist qualitative research, we must look beyond valuing women’s unique and situated life experiences as knowledge. Feminist researchers such as Alison Jagger recognize emotion as a critical aspect of knowledge seeking, and emphasize that the importance of emotions and values should be validated within the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2013). According to Jagger (1997), “it is unrealistic to assume that emotions and values will not affect the data, especially because

emotions often motivate the researcher's selection of topics and questions as well as the methods by which those topics and questions are studied" (p. 188).

As I reflect on the research topic and the interview guide created, I do recognize the interview questions asked of the participants were topics I wanted to know more about, and concepts I thought would add to the limited amount of scholarship currently available concerning women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Even though each interview question was asked of every participant, there were several instances where participants would start talking about additional topics they thought should be included in this study, such as instances of elitism from colleagues at four-year institutions and the NWSA. These instances of topics not directly related to the three research questions mentioned previously in this study added an extra component of data richness and the importance of participants' life experiences.

In November 2014, I attended the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) annual conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. There I found a group of colleagues who would greatly influence my research and my interest in women's and gender studies programs at community college. NWSA provides several caucuses and interest groups for specific identities, institutions, and groups of people. I chose to join the Community College Caucus. When I started to talk about my proposed research plan, the members were in full support of my research because they wanted an advocate for them where they believed their voices were not being heard. I was then named the Director of Research for the NWSA Community College Caucus. I will be working with the members on publishing more scholarship on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, while promoting inclusivity and acceptance at future NWSA

conferences. In November 2015, I presented my dissertation research at the NWSA Conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

I also chose this topic as the basis for both my capstone and dissertation research because one of my bachelor's degrees is in Women's Studies and most of my teaching experience is in the area of women's and gender studies. The knowledge base and expertise I have acquired throughout my education have enabled me to use a critical lens based on gender and intersectionality when looking at women's and gender studies programs at the community college level. This research topic is also of great personal interest to me as I start to look at employment opportunities after earning my doctoral degree. While I have started to look at specific institutions where I would like to teach, I have broadened my scope to include community colleges because of their rich history in student engagement, involvement, and success.

I want to better understand the history of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and am confident this research can make a contribution to a body of literature that is lacking any current scholarship. There has not been much written about women's and gender studies programs at the community college level during the last 20 years, so I want to be able to bring meaning and importance to this exciting and worthwhile body of research.

There seem to be several perspectives on the importance of positionality within feminist research. I recognize the fact I need to ensure I do not "other" my participants. It is impossible to understand their story if I do not have any shared experiences with my participants. I believe it is unethical for me to try to tell their story as I think it should be told to create the greatest effect on specific stakeholders such as the administration at

their own institutions. I believe my role in feminist qualitative research is to capture the words and experiences of my participants, and work with them to tell their story how and when they see fit. However, this again makes me question the validity and trustworthiness of my research. Does this mean that I, as a researcher, should just pick a specific mindset and use it throughout a research? Is there one school of thought more important than another? Is there one right way to perform feminist research? Will I be seen as less of a qualitative researcher if I pick one perspective over another? These are all questions I deal with in my journey to become a qualitative feminist researcher.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for use throughout this study:

Classism: Attitudes, actions, and institutional practices that subordinate working-class and poor people on the basis of their economic condition (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 12).

Critical consciousness: The ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppressions and to take action against the oppressive elements of society (Freire, 2005, p. 257).

Feeder institutions: Community colleges that enable a large percentage of their graduates to enroll in specific colleges and universities or specific programs at these institutions (Campus Explorer, 2015).

Feminism: A social movement whose basic goal is equality between men and women (Lorber, 2010, p. 1).

Feminist pedagogy: A theory about the teaching and learning process that guides our choices of classroom practices by providing criteria to evaluate specific educational

strategies and techniques in terms of the desired course goals or outcomes. These evaluative criteria include the extent to which a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly toward one another and the subject matter, and to apply this learning to social action (Shrewsbury, 1993, p. 8).

Feminist standpoint theory: Feminist standpoint theorists make three principal claims: (1) knowledge is socially situated, (2) marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for non-marginalized groups, and (3) research should begin with the lives of the marginalized (Bowell, n.d.).

Intersectionality: Study of how various biological, social, and cultural categories such as gender, race, and class interact on multiple levels contributing to the systematic injustice and social inequality (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139)

National Women's Studies Association (NWSA): This international organization was established in 1977 to promote and support the production and dissemination of knowledge about women and gender through teaching, learning, research and service in academic and other settings. NWSA includes more than 2,000 individual and 350 members (National Women's Studies Association, 2015)

Oppression: Prejudice and discrimination directed toward entire social groups, and promoted by the ideologies and practices of all social institutions. Group phenomena where institutional power and authority are used to support prejudices and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systematic ways (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2010, p. 12)

Transformative pedagogy: An activist pedagogy combining the elements of constructivist and critical pedagogy that empowers students to critically examine their

beliefs, values, and knowledge with the goal of developing a reflective knowledge base, an appreciation for multiple perspectives, and a sense of critical consciousness and agency (Ukpokodu, 2009, p. 43).

Women's and gender studies: Interdisciplinary field that uses gender as its main category of analysis, and works to reframe the place of gender as essential to the workings of social, cultural, political and economic systems (SUNY-Oneonta, 2013)

Summary

This qualitative case study focuses on the history and present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. This study includes data pertaining to faculty perspectives on why students enroll in women's and gender studies courses, issues of intersectionality and identity in women's and gender studies programs, and the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges.

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to women's and gender studies programs at the community college level, and an outline of this study, including research questions, theoretical perspective, and rationale for the chosen research design. Chapter Two provides a literature review of the history of women's and gender studies in higher education, history of the community college, demographics of community college students, the lack of scholarship on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and an introduction to the current scholarship written about these programs. Chapter Three describes the research design, and also provides an explanation of the constructivist epistemology, critical inquiry theoretical perspective, feminist case study methodology, and methods, both interviews and document analysis, utilized in this study. I also provide background on

the chosen research sites, participants, data collection and analysis techniques, process of goodness and trustworthiness, coding procedures and processes, ethical issues, delimitations, and limitations present in this study. Chapter Four provides profiles for each of the study participants, and an explanation of the study results through analysis of interview data and document analysis. Finally, Chapter Five provides a synthesis of the findings, recommendations for practice for women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The literature review helps situate this study by emphasizing the existing scholarship pertaining to the specific research. The history of women's and gender studies in higher education is discussed to provide the reader with a context with which to situate this qualitative study. The history of community colleges is also discussed so the reader can better understand the uniqueness of this type of educational institution and to also provide a context for this study.

Literature specific to the demographics of community college students will add some background for the reader to help understand the general student body population, and why students may enroll in women's and gender studies courses.

The limited scholarship related to women's and gender studies is discussed to emphasize the significance of this study, and to provide context to the importance of these programs at community colleges. A description of concepts found in women's and gender studies programs is also provided so the reader can have a clearer understanding of what these programs offer students, and why faculty teach in these programs.

History of Women's and Gender Studies in Higher Education

In 1845, women's rights advocate Margaret Fuller reflected on the needs of the American woman:

What woman needs is not as a woman to act or to rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her... (Chevigny, 1976, p. 248).

This quote emphasizes the importance of women's and gender studies as an academic and social movement that has transformed the way people think and teach about women.

The 1920s was an important time in the lives of women, since they gained “their highest proportion of the undergraduate population, of doctoral recipients, and of faculty members. They also constituted nearly 45% of the professional academic work force” (Graham, 1978, p. 764). However, between 1920 and 1960, more college-educated women began to marry earlier, have children, and pursue more personal goals (Perun, 1982). As early as the mid-1920s, some women's colleges—like Vassar and Smith—created courses more structured for female students and their roles in society, such as home economics.

In 1947, Lynn White, then president of Mills College in Oakland, California, led a movement to create a specific feminine curriculum so women could take courses suited to their aptitude (Stimpson, 1986). In 1953, the American Council for Education established the Commission on Educational Opportunities for Women. The feminist movement of the 1960s emphasized the importance of organizing and social justice, which led to the creation of a women's history course at The Free University of Seattle in 1965, and the first women's studies course at the New Orleans Free School in 1966 (Stimpson, 1986). Women's education was finally coming to the forefront and the importance of creating more educational opportunities for women was becoming acknowledged.

During this time, some saw women's and gender studies as the “academic arm” of the feminist movement (Stimpson, 1986). With this recognition came three major tasks:

(1) teaching the subject of women properly, (2) ending sex discrimination in the P-20 educational pipeline, and (3) integrating feminist activism with feminist thought (Stimpson, 1986). A new pedagogy was being created that was more participatory and personal—a “feminist pedagogy” (Berger & Radeloff, 2011). Shrewsbury (1993) defined feminist pedagogy as

A theory about the teaching and learning process that guides our choices of classroom practices by providing criteria to evaluate specific educational strategies and techniques in terms of the desired course goals or outcomes. These evaluative criteria include the extent to which a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly toward one another and the subject matter and to apply that learning to social action (p. 8).

As this type of pedagogy started to integrate into academia, the area of women’s and gender studies became more specific in the goals it was trying to meet—document the exclusion of women’s experiences from traditional male-defined curriculum and pose interdisciplinary questions and analyses across the social sciences, humanities, and STEM fields (Berger & Radeloff, 2011). Spanier, Bloom, & Boroviak (1984) were more specific:

The integration of women’s studies scholarship within and across disciplines has initiated a far-reaching and perhaps revolutionary transformation of traditional knowledge. Not only are women becoming part of the subject matter of disciplines where they were previously ignored, but research questions, methods of analysis, and traditional theoretical frameworks are being challenged. The very canons of literature, art, the natural sciences, and the social sciences are called into question as women’s studies scholars expand the boundaries of their fields of inquiry and as integration efforts bring this new scholarship into traditional courses (p. 9).

The connections between women’s and gender studies and other areas such as sociology, history, and literature began to change curriculum as well as enrollment at American colleges and universities. The first women’s and gender studies program was

established at San Diego State University in California in 1970 (Guy-Sheftall, 1995, p. 3).

History of the Community College

The community college has been an integral part of higher education for approximately 114 years. Joliet Junior College, the first public community college in the United States, was established in 1901 (Baker, 1994, p. 219). In 1907, the California State legislature passed the Caminetti Act, which permitted the board of trustees of any city district, union, joint union, or county high school to propose post-graduate courses of study for its students. In 1910, Fresno Junior College, the first in California and second community college in the United States, opened its doors with 20 students. The institution now has an enrollment of at least 30,000 students annually (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2015). In 1917, the states of Arkansas, Kansas, and Michigan passed similar legislation permitting local organization of junior colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Furthermore, in 1917, California was the first state to pass legislation that authorized state funding of public junior colleges (Tollefson, 2009).

The Caminetti Act also required that “a school district must have had an assessed valuation of \$3 million before it could establish a junior college, and it provided for state funding at the same per-student funding rate as specified in the formula for funding public schools” (Tollefson, 2009, p. 388).

In addition to state legislation, the federal government enacted the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 with a two-fold purpose: (1) establish a federal-state program for vocational education and (2) create a Federal Board of Vocational Education responsible for

vocational rehabilitation programs for disabled veterans (Colorado State University, 2009).

The purpose of this new type of institution was to provide a lower-cost and more accessible alternative to a four-year institution (Baker, 1994, p. 113). During the 1920s and 1930s, junior colleges in Arizona were organized as separate junior college districts. In Mississippi, junior colleges were an extension of county agricultural high schools. In other states such as Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and South Carolina, public universities organized junior colleges to expand their feeder institutions. Furthermore, in 1934, other junior colleges were established through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which granted federal funding to states to establish community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

In 1944, as World War II (WWII) was ending, Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Otherwise known as the GI Bill, "this act provided financial assistance to WWII veterans who wanted to pursue higher education opportunities" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). In 1947, the Truman Commission Report was published, calling for the creation of a network of publicly supported community colleges "that would charge little or no tuition, serve as cultural centers, be comprehensive in their program offerings with emphasis on civic responsibilities, and would serve the area in which they were located" (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). The Commission emphasized the importance of higher education being more accessible to the nation's people. Furthermore, one of the most well-known statements in the Truman Report (1948) was

that approximately 50% of U.S. citizens were capable of completing the first two years of college; thus, emphasizing the importance of the community college:

Equal opportunity for all persons, to the maximum of their individual abilities and without regard to economic status, race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or ancestry is a major goal for American democracy. Only an informed, thoughtful, tolerant people can develop and maintain a free society (p. 3)

The Truman Report also emphasized several functions that community colleges should and would endorse (Tunnell, 1987), such as: (a) transfer education, (b) occupational education, (c) general education, (d) adult and continuing education, (e) developmental and remedial education, (f) human resources services for students, and (g) community services.

After the passing of several key pieces of legislation and federal acts, the number of junior colleges increased at a consistent rate. By 1961, there were 678 junior colleges in the United States. Furthermore, between 1961 and 1973, the number of junior colleges almost doubled to 1141 to provide higher education opportunities to the baby boomers, who were reaching college age in the mid-1960s (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). During this time, educational institutions also began using the name “community college” instead of “junior college” to better describe their mission (Vaughan, 2000). The enactment of the Higher Education Act of 1965 provided federal financial aid to students who needed it, which came in the form of grants, loans, and work-study opportunities.

Throughout its history, the community college has evolved from seven streams of educational innovation: (1) local community support, (2) rise of the research university, (3) restructuring and expansion of the public education system, (4) professionalization of teacher education, (5) vocational educational movement, (6) increase in adult, continuing,

and community education opportunities, and (7) open public access to higher education (Baker, 1994, p. 4). When looking at the ways colleges and universities are classified, the Carnegie classification system becomes important. Higher education in the United States is described in terms of five categories—research universities, doctoral-granting universities, comprehensive institutions, liberal arts colleges, and two-year colleges (Baker, 1994, p. 5). However, community colleges, junior colleges, and technical colleges are all lumped together into one category.

The programs and training now offered by community colleges have benefits for every segment of our population—from a student who just graduated from high school to a blue-collar worker who wants to learn a trade to a company president who wants to learn a new skill. The community college “provides higher education with a flexibility and adaptiveness to local social needs” (Baker, 1994, p. 14).

The mission of the community college has been summarized by Vaughan (2000) as a series of goals and commitments, which include the following: (a) providing access to all segments of society with equal and fair treatment to all students, (b) offering a comprehensive education, (c) serving the local community, (d) teaching, and (e) providing opportunities for lifelong learning.

Demographics of Community College Students

Currently, 45% of all undergraduates are enrolled in the United States’ 1,108 public, independent, and tribal community colleges (American Association of Community College, 2016). Forty-nine percent of White students, 22% of Latina/o students, 14% of African-American students, 6% of Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 1% of Native-American students are enrolled in community colleges for credit. Thirty-

six percent of community college undergraduates are first-generation students, while 57% are women (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016). The average age of today's community college student is 28 years old, while 17% of students are single parents, 4% are military veterans, and 7% are classified as non-U.S. citizens (American Association of Community Colleges, 2016).

As will be discussed in Chapter Four, women's and gender studies programs have the opportunity to help community college students, especially women, become more socially aware, and emphasize how the intersectionality of their given and chosen identities can influence themselves and their relationships with others.

Lack of Scholarship on Women's and Gender Studies Programs at Community Colleges

While conducting an extensive search of several academic abstracts and databases, including Journal Storage (JSTOR), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Google Scholar, I found approximately 40 scholarly publications on the topic of women's and gender studies programs at the community college level. From these publications, I was able to recognize three main themes in the literature: (1) status of women's and gender studies programs at the community college level, (2) general characteristics of the student body at community colleges, and (3) teaching and learning techniques and pedagogical strategies at a community college.

When the extent of scholarship is examined, it is clear the bulk of scholarship written about women's and gender studies programs is written in relation to four-year colleges and universities. Hutcheson (1999) explains, "in general, historians of higher education have paid little, if any, attention to the community college" (p. 307).

Stereotypical images of community colleges, its students, and faculty portray these types of institutions as “the polyester of higher education—a synthetic education, in other words, substituting for ‘real’ college” (LaPaglia, 1994), or as “the WalMart of higher education” (Parnell, 1985). Similarly, even feminist scholars have not written much scholarship about women’s and gender studies programs at the community college level (Lichtenstein & Orr, 2005).

Women’s and gender studies courses can be found within the community college curriculum since the beginning of the academic field over four decades ago. The first women’s studies program was established at San Diego State University—a four-year institution—in 1970 (Shaw & Lee, 2007, p. 4). According to the database I completed for my capstone project, there are currently 69 programs at community colleges that offer Associate’s degrees and/or certificates in women’s and gender studies (Stoehr, 2014). However, little has been written about women’s and gender studies programs at the community college level.

Additionally, feminist scholars, who have emphasized greater attention to women’s and gender studies programs over the past four decades, have been ignored (Elovson, 1980). There have also been few studies examining the relationship between community colleges and women’s and gender studies programs from a feminist perspective (Townsend & Twombly, 1998). Because of the ignorance and delegitimization of this important academic field, the importance of women’s and gender studies programs at the community college level has not been told.

Further evidence of this untelling of history comes from simply looking at the literature published not about women’s and gender studies programs at the community

college level, but about women's experiences at community colleges. In 2008, two journals, *New Directions for Community Colleges* and the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, published issues with an emphasis on the life experiences of female faculty, female administrators, and female students at the community college level. Furthermore, Elovson (1980) authored the most comprehensive publication on the presence of women's and gender studies programs at the community college level. While she called for further scholarship on these programs, there has been very little published on the topic.

Important Concepts Found Within Women's and Gender Studies Programs At Community Colleges

According to Leder, Plotnik, and Venkateswaran (1999), students, mostly female, who completed women's and gender studies courses showed an increase in self-knowledge and self-confidence, and a clearer understanding of structural inequities within their own social context. Fiol-Matta (1996) recognized that students who enroll in women's and gender studies courses at the community college level are seen as somewhat more diverse than other students. Most scholars who study the relationships between women's and gender studies programs and community colleges assert that student characteristics, teaching and learning techniques and relevant pedagogy, and the involvement of community make women's and gender studies courses an ideal addition to the community college curriculum.

Jill Adams, an Assistant Professor of English and Women's Studies at Jefferson Community and Technical College in Louisville, Kentucky talked about the connection between community and women's and gender studies (Berger & Radeloff, 2011):

College does not end at the classroom door. A significant aspect of the community college philosophy and mission is to be part of the community. Most community colleges are non-residential... Women's and gender studies as a field of study provides targeted opportunities for students to engage with community-based partners through activism, service learning, and internships which in turn support their learning and create tangible avenues to value themselves and their life choices (p. 52).

However, there is still a lack of knowledge about the experiences of community college students in narratives surrounding social activism and women's studies (Leder et al., 1999).

Since the entire body of literature about the relationship between women's and gender studies programs and community colleges is not as diverse as it could be, we lose an opportunity to fully recognize, understand, and analyze the area of women's and gender studies at the community college level. Historical studies, empirical data, and ... "deep engagement of the structural and material realities that impede the advancement of women's and gender studies at the community college level as an intellectual and political project" (Osei-Kofi & Maramba, 2009, pp. 10-11) are definitely needed to fully appreciate the effect these programs can have on the educational experiences of community college students.

The presence of women's and gender studies programs can be seen in several forms within the community college curriculum—courses, concentrations, certificates, and actual two-year programs. One of the first steps in recognizing the presence of women's and gender studies programs at the community college level is to collect information about all the institutions that offer any sort of women's and gender studies courses and/or programs (Osei-Kofi & Maramba, 2009). This was the basis for my capstone project. According to the database I completed, there are currently 69

community colleges that offer Associate's degrees and/or certificates in women's and gender studies (Stoehr, 2014). This is an increase from both 2002 data that showed only five women's and gender studies programs at community colleges (Pikul, 2005), and 2007 data from NWSA that showed 15 women's studies programs at community colleges (Reynolds et al., 2007).

We also need to discuss the teaching experiences of faculty in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Faculty members make a dedicated commitment to these programs because they usually have higher teaching loads and usually do not have a specific appointment in a program or department (Roy, 2009). Jill Adams described her experiences teaching in women's and gender studies at her institution (Berger & Radeloff, 2011):

Teaching college students can be exciting in and of itself, but teaching in a community college setting makes it the amazing experience it is...the unique element of women's and gender studies within a community college setting is that these students are collectively living marginalization and power inequalities both in their personal lives—as do students at all academic institutions—but additionally in their perception of and access to education itself...The women's and gender studies discipline offers students a credible, respectful, authentic, and authoritative means of acknowledging—and perhaps validating—their experiences and choices. They see themselves in the course material; indeed they are the course...The community college setting is a living testament to the values, concepts, needs, and impact of women's and gender studies; and the field is vital to supporting student voices that can be marginalized even within higher education (p. 52).

Feminist Standpoint Theory

Feminist standpoint theory was utilized in this qualitative case study to explore and provide context to the life experiences of the participants. This theoretical framework was created in the 1970s and early 1980s, with its intended goal to begin to understand how relations of domination are gendered in certain ways (Naples, 2007). In

her 1986 book, *The Science Question in Feminism*, Sandra Harding first defined feminist standpoint theory as an approach to emphasize the importance of situating knowledge in women's experiences. According to Gilligan (1993), one of the main concepts of feminist standpoint theory is to analyze the nature of gender inequality. It begins with the assumption society is structured by power relations which create unequal social locations—one location is occupied by members of the dominant group, and all other locations are inhabited by members of the subordinate group (Wood, 2009, p 397). This can be translated into the divide between faculty who teach women's and gender studies courses at community colleges, and faculty who teach at four-year institutions. There is a level of privilege that some faculty from four-year institutions will use to negate the importance of the area of women's and gender studies at the community college level.

Feminist standpoint theorists make three principal claims: (1) knowledge is socially situated, (2) marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for non-marginalized groups, and (3) research should begin with the lives of the marginalized (Bowell, n.d.).

This type of feminist approach to epistemology seeks to establish the production of knowledge from a woman's perspective. A further element of this approach is that from personal experience comes knowledge which helps each person understand life experiences from a different perspective (Bartkowski & Kolmar, 2005). Community college students are often marginalized because of their different identities—predominantly women, single parents, non-traditional, and first-generation (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). With these identities, these students must negotiate personal, familial, financial, and other obstacles to claim their education and

have their voices heard within their communities. A feminist theoretical framework will help faculty find an outlet for their voices, and make their values and accomplishments become visible within the dominant society.

According to sociologist Dorothy Smith, “racially and economically privileged men are [the people] most likely to be in positions of power” (Sprague, 2005, p. 44). Women who come from disenfranchised backgrounds are relegated to positions of second-class citizens, and are forced to follow the rules and regulations of any system even if they find them unfair. Their voices are not being heard because of their low status. Often, their concerns about the systems are not seen as valid or worthwhile and nothing changes. They are not invited to or involved in the decision making process. This can happen too many times in an academic setting where there are few women in power, whether as administrators or faculty.

Patricia Hill Collins explained the process of “epistemological gatekeeping,” which is “influenced by the standpoint of the existing community of experts (administrators) applying their standards of credibility, and also by the way the larger culture defines certain groups as more credible than others” (Collins, 2000, p. 203). This way of thinking can be seen within the area of women’s and gender studies where claims of delegitimization of the field and lack of rigor of the courses are present.

Summary

One of the main goals of this research is to add to the literature about women’s and gender studies programs at the community college level, and continue the discussion on the effect these programs can have on the institution itself as well as the life experiences of the students these institutions serve. The literature review was separated

into six areas: (1) history of women's and gender studies in higher education, (2) history of the community college, (3) demographics of community college students, (4) lack of scholarship on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, (5) concepts found within women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and (6) feminist standpoint theory.

Chapter Three will explain the methodology used in this qualitative study, including epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. The chapter will also provide a description of the data sources utilized, how this study was conducted, and explain all other methodological decisions.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Overview

The professional and personal experiences of faculty members who teach courses in women's and gender studies at community colleges were sought and analyzed for this qualitative case study. The purpose of this study was to explore the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and also explain the creation and maintenance of these programs despite the backlash against curriculum in women's and gender studies. Qualitative research is appropriate because it enables researchers to fully understand the richness of the participants' life experiences. When employing a qualitative approach, all the components of the research design must be connected to one another to support the process. The four required elements of a qualitative research design are epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods [ETMM] (Creswell, 2014, p. 5).

Epistemology is defined as the theory of knowledge that provides context in both the theoretical perspective and the methodology (Crotty, 1998). Theoretical perspective is defined as "the philosophical stance that informs the methodology, provides a context for the process, and grounds its logic and criteria" (Crotty, 1998, p. 25). Methodology is defined as the strategy and process that justifies the choice and use of specific methods, and also links this choice to the desired outcomes of the research (Crotty, 1998). Methods are defined as the procedures used to collect and analyze data to help answer the research questions included in a study (Crotty, 1998).

Epistemology: Constructivism

Because this qualitative case study examines the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, a constructivist epistemology is most appropriate. According to Crotty (1998), constructivists place emphasis on the "meaning-making of the individual mind" (p. 58). Making meaning is created during one's life journey as one participates in his/her own life experiences. Furthermore, the goal of this type of research is to rely as much as possible on the experiences of the participants involved to answer the research questions within the study. The participants in this qualitative study construct their meaning of women's and gender programs through their academic backgrounds and teaching experiences.

By interviewing faculty who taught in women's and gender studies programs in community colleges, I had the opportunity to understand how they made meaning of their teaching experiences that were sometimes influenced by stereotypes around their choice of program and/or institution. I was also able to explore what these types of programs meant to them and what kept them teaching in what sometimes is a misunderstood curriculum. This is the main reason why I chose constructivism as the epistemology for this qualitative case study.

Theoretical Perspective: Critical inquiry

A critical theoretical perspective was used in this qualitative case study. According to Crotty (1998), "the theoretical perspective provides a context for the process involved, and a basis for its logic and its criteria" (p. 66). Within this perspective, critique is at the center of qualitative research (Budd, 2008). In critical

inquiry, the goal is to “critique, challenge, transform, and empower” (Merriam, 2002).

Crotty (1998) states:

It is a contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and a research that challenges...between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression...between a research that accepts the status quo and a research that seeks to bring about change (p. 113).

A critical theoretical perspective is concerned with empowering individuals to overcome the barriers placed on them by race, class, and gender (Fay, 1987; Merriam, 2009).

According to Hesse-Biber (2013), a critical theoretical perspective also allows for an examination of the intersections of difference that create women’s identities, such as gender, race, age, educational level, and socioeconomic status. Exploring this level of intersectionality provides us with a more informed insight into the ways in which society shapes identity. Crotty (1998) states “the goals of critical theory are a just society, freedom, and equity for everyone” (p. 113). These goals are recognized throughout Chapter Five in the experiences of the faculty who teach in women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges, and in the content of their courses.

Critique also requires an examination of both action and motivation—it includes both what is achieved and why it is achieved (Given, 2008). In this qualitative study, I looked at current women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges, and the faculty who teach within these programs. I examined what these programs do for students (action), and why the faculty teach in these programs (motivation).

In case study research, a theoretical perspective is required to help focus the study, and gain a better understanding of the data collection and analysis processes. A

critical theoretical perspective was especially utilized in the data analysis stage of this qualitative study to understand the way the different identities of the participants intersected with their own ideologies and ways of teaching.

Methodology: Feminist case study

Feminist methodology is based within the three waves of the feminist movement. During the first wave, women fought for the right to be educated (Solomon, 1985). During the second wave of the feminist movement, women advocated for additional goals related to education, such as the right to be critical of the current and accepted body of knowledge, the right to create knowledge, and the right to become educators (Reinharz, 1992). Currently, third wave feminists are continuing the struggle to bring women's voices to the table in all aspects of education, research, and societal inquiry.

The position of women in relation to men in all aspects of society has always been a contentious subject in the context of feminism. As a result, feminist claims to knowledge have been enveloped in three main sources of criticism. First, challenges to feminist ways of knowledge have been criticized for failing to create adequately rational, scientific, or unbiased knowledge (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Feminist thought has historically been treated in many academic arenas as "marginal" or "intellectually inferior" to existing ways of thought (Stanley, 1997). Second, the breadth of women's life experiences dealing with cultural differences, social divisions, and power relations are challenged (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Furthermore, claims that patriarchy, sexuality, or reproduction are the main components in the oppression against women ignore other intersectionalities and identities that shape women's lives in different ways and complicate relationship building between women (Moraga & Anzaldua, 1983). The

third challenge to feminist ways of knowing is the struggle between knowledge of gender relations that take the existence of women for granted, and theories that deconstruct feminist claims to knowledge in treating “women and gender as products of ideas rather than of embodiment, patriarchy, or social construction” (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002, p. 4).

These criticisms of feminist methodology have merit in the sense that feminist methodology is defined differently by different groups of feminists. Each group creates its own meaning of the methodology and uses it to place their qualitative studies in context. However, this can lead to confusion in clarifying how feminist knowledge is created, and the emphasis placed on different epistemological, political, and ethical implications (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). The decisions that we make, as qualitative feminist researchers, influence our study and the way our participants’ voices are effectively heard and their life experiences are contextualized.

Methodology creates the theoretical framework that will ground the research process used in a particular study. The type of methodology chosen defines the specific data collection and analysis methods that researchers will use to complete their study. Feminist philosopher Sandra Harding defines methodology as a “theory and analysis of how research does and should proceed” (Harding, 1987, p. 2).

I used a feminist case study methodology for this qualitative study. A qualitative case study “examines a phenomenon within its real-life context” (Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2012, p. 14). Furthermore, the primary purpose of a case study is “to understand something that is unique to the case(s)” (Guest et al., 2012, p. 14). According to Maxwell (2013), the researcher selects the case and then states the questions in terms

of the specific case selected. Using a feminist case study approach, I selected community colleges at different stages in their programs so I could capture a clearer picture of the variety of women's and gender studies programs offered at community colleges. I interviewed faculty members from each institution. The rationale for choosing this type of methodology is to delineate the specific successes and challenges that community colleges have faced and will face when adding women's and gender studies programs to the curriculum at their respective institutions.

Data Sources

The focus of this qualitative case study was on the experiences of faculty and administrators at community colleges that offer a women's and gender studies program. Participants were part of a purposive panel. The criteria for the panel were established from the searchable database created for my capstone of all the community colleges in the United States that offer a women's and gender studies Associate's degree and/or certificate at their institution (Stoehr, 2014). The criteria included program type, length program has been established, faculty gender, and geographic location.

Lasagna's Law, otherwise known as the "funnel effect," played a part in this qualitative study. This law is defined as the researcher's tendency to overestimate the pool of available participants who meet the inclusion criteria, and also willing to participate in the study (Gul & Ali, 2009). There are numerous variables that can affect a person's willingness to participate in a research study, such as personal, contextual, or research, or researcher-related factors (Harris, 1998).

My difficulty with recruiting participants was two-fold: research-related factors and the small number of community colleges that offer women's and gender studies

programs. Twenty-five faculty members initially expressed interest in this qualitative study. Study expectations can make demands on participants' schedules that they may find troublesome or overwhelming such as the length of the study or choice of research methods. After explaining the study's expectations to the first group of potential participants, most of the reluctance to participate in the study was due to time constraints. Faculty members expressed their desire to participate in this qualitative case study, but were overwhelmed with their teaching loads and other academic commitments. I found this interesting since I was only asking for no more than two hours of their time to complete the interview, and another hour or so to collect specific documents for analysis. However, I had to remember that teaching loads at community colleges can be quite demanding and look a lot different than other academic responsibilities at four-year institutions.

Another hurdle to recruiting and retaining participants was the small number of community colleges that offer women's and gender studies programs. With a small population of faculty members teaching in these programs, I already knew I may not receive a large response from participants who wanted to complete this study. This was the main reason I sent recruitment information in a variety of ways to a wide assortment of organizations and groups.

After talking with all the potential participants, I found that eight faculty members chose to participate in this qualitative case study. I do believe I collected enough rich data for this study to provide me with a window into the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges.

One of the objectives for determining the number of participants recruited in qualitative research is to reach data saturation (Seidman, 2006). I interviewed eight community college faculty who teach women's and gender studies courses, and determined data saturation had been met since only 69 community colleges offer Associate's degrees and/or certificates. According to Charmaz (2006), data collection stops when the themes are saturated or when gathering more data no longer reveals new themes or concepts. The funnel effect became a part of this study because I believed the more organizations and community colleges knew about my study, the more people would want to participate. The faculty who were interviewed added rich and solid experiences to the study.

Recruitment and Retention of Participants

In November 2014, I met with members of the NWSA Community College Caucus at the NWSA Annual Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico and explained the research I wanted to complete for my dissertation. This was an informal conversation, since I was awaiting IRB approval. After IRB approval was granted on January 30, 2015, I used a recruitment email and script to find participants for this qualitative case study using a purposive panel process (see Appendix A: IRB Approval and Study Documents). Greatest priority was given to potential participants who met the specific selection criteria for this study: a) identify as either a faculty member or an administrator at a community college that offers a women's and gender studies program, b) type of program, and c) length that program had been established. Variables such as gender or geographic location were not used as factors when recruiting participants.

One of the sources of potential participants utilized in this qualitative study was the searchable database created for my capstone project that included all the community colleges that offered an Associate's degree and/or a certificate in women's and gender studies (Stoehr, 2014). I also sent recruitment information to the American Association of Community Colleges, National Women's Studies Community College Caucus, WMST-L listserv (an international e-mail forum for discussion of issues surrounding Women's Studies teaching, research, and program administration), American Association for Women in Community Colleges, American Student Association of Community Colleges, and the Community College Research Center.

After the recruitment information was sent to this variety of sources, approximately 25 potential participants responded. After discussing the study's expectations with these 25 potential participants, 14 participants initially agreed to participate in the study. However, only eight faculty members completed this study. This was due to issues of time and work load on behalf of the participants. After conducting interviews with eight participants, it was determined data saturation had been met.

The main reason given for the other six participants not to finish this study was lack of time because of increased work load and other constraints. These types of retention issues posed a challenge to me as the researcher because I wanted to include as many voices as possible and ensure my research findings were valid. According to Patel, Doku, and Tennakoon (2003), retention refers to creating and maintaining relationships with participants to encourage them to continue participation for the duration of this study. I thought providing potential participants the power and flexibility to schedule

their interviews when they were available would aid in retention and I would be able to interview the initial 14 faculty members. However, this was not the case. I interviewed eight participants from seven different community colleges across the country, and recognized that their voices were important enough to be heard.

After the recruitment information was sent to a variety of sources, twenty-two potential participants who identified as faculty members and teach in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges answered the original recruitment email. Most of the interest came from the WMST-L listerv and the database created for my capstone. I did not receive any response from community college administrators.

After providing a more complete explanation about the purpose of this study, expectations, and selection criteria, eight faculty members from seven different community colleges met the desired selection criteria and were invited to participate in this study. I then contacted each institution where the remaining potential participants were located to investigate their IRB process for conducting research with members from their respective campus. IRB approval from Iowa State University provided satisfactory permission for each institution to allow its faculty members to participate in this qualitative study. After the recruitment process was completed, I collected data during Spring, 2015.

Data Collection

Interviews

I used in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection. To understand the purpose of interviewing, Seidman (2006) stated "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the

meaning they make of their experience” (p. 9). I wanted my participants’ voices to be heard, and to give credence to their experiences as women’s and gender studies faculty members at community colleges. Interviews are one of the most commonly recognized forms of qualitative research methods (Mason, 2002, p. 39). They can become extremely useful when participants cannot be directly observed in their own environment (Creswell, 2014). However, a limitation of using interviews in qualitative research is the data are collected in a specific place rather than the participant’s environment (Creswell, 2014). These were some of the advantages and limitations I had to reflect upon before choosing the methods I would use to collect data for this study.

Before conducting semi-structured interviews with the participants, I explained the study protocol and confidentiality measures used, and had each participant sign an informed consent document (see Appendix A: IRB Approval and Study Documents). I used Skype, email, or telephone to conduct the interviews since all the participants were located in different states. In each case, I emailed the informed consent document to the participant, and had them scan or fax it to me with her signature. A semi-structured interview guide was created, and both open- and closed-ended questions were asked to provide participants with the greatest opportunity to explore their own experiences. Each participant chose a pseudonym that was used throughout their specific interview.

Merriam (2009) describes a semi-structured interview as a data collection technique that includes both structured and unstructured questions to guide the interview in no particular order. To organize questions and help the interviews flow as naturally as possible, questions were thematically grouped into three sections: (1) questions about

participant background and their respective programs, (2) reflections on their interest in teaching women's and gender studies, and (3) the discipline itself as a whole.

I chose to complete one interview with each participant because the structure of the interview guide was such that the questions allowed the participants to fully deconstruct their experiences teaching women's and gender studies courses at community colleges. I also recognized that two important variables within my data collection process—being location bound and the ease of interview completion for the participants—were important in my choosing this type of interview protocol. With the knowledge I had gained from informal interactions with the membership at the NWSA Community College Caucus meetings, I believed that I could use this informal data collection technique as the “first interview.” I ensured that I did not violate any IRB rules before receiving approval from Iowa State. I did not formally recruit any participants, nor did I interview them. I had informal conversations with caucus membership about my research, and they shared information in my presence about the history of women's and gender status programs at community colleges, and the current status of such programs.

The “second” interview was completed once participants had signed the informed consent document, and agreed to participate in the study. I realized it was extremely important for them to sometimes “lead” the discussion even though I created a guide to help focus the interview. When this occurred, I allowed the participants say what they needed to say and refocused the interview to ensure all the interview questions would be answered. It was important for me to have the participants' voices heard and have them describe their life experiences in their own way. Furthermore, I had collected most of the

artifacts used in the document analysis phase of this study before the interviews and believed that these data would complement the data collected from the interviews. The “third” interview was the member-checking process. This was a two-prong approach. I had to contact some participants after their first interview to provide some clarification to their answers. I also emailed a draft of Chapters Four and Five to each participant in order for them to read my results and conclusion, and ensure that their voice was accurately portrayed.

The main goal for choosing this topic for the study was to start the process of adding current information to the limited amount of scholarship about women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges. I also recognized the fact there would be future research topics that could come out of the interviews and document analysis that I would look at once this study was completed. After reflecting on the number of participants I was able to recruit to complete this study, I decided to have each participant complete one main interview. After talking with participants about the goals of this study and the expectations, I sensed that more than one interview might be too much of a time commitment for the faculty members and could decrease participation in this study. I wanted many voices to be heard, and recognized I made the right choice because of the richness and quality of the stories about the faculty’s experiences teaching women’s and gender studies and their dedication to the discipline.

Building rapport

To establish a beneficial relationship with participants and ensure they understood all study procedures, I sent the interview guide, informed consent document, and list for document analysis via email. This was not a mandatory step in the study process, but I

wanted to ensure all the participants understood the study's expectations and the content of the interviews. After one week, I followed-up with each participant to answer any questions she may have, and asked for the return of a signed copy of the informed consent document. Contacting all participants to ensure their complete understanding of the study procedures, to coordinate the sending of documents for analysis, and to answer any and all questions allowed me to establish a rapport with them so the interview process would be smooth. Marshall and Rossman (1999) state "interviewers should have superb listening skills and be skillful at personal interaction" (p. 110). As an educator, I am confident in my ability to relate to people and to establish relationships.

Document analysis

I also used document analysis to supplement the interview data, and create rich descriptions of the participants' experiences as faculty members teaching in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. When planning to incorporate document analysis into a study, there are five main questions that need to be reflected upon (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 81):

1. Who has the information?
2. What part of it is needed?
3. Where is it?
4. When was it prepared?
5. How will it be collected?

There are four categories of documents that have the potential for analysis: (1) the Internet, (2) private and public records, (3) physical evidence, and (4) instruments created by the researcher (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011, p. 81). These documents have the

opportunity to provide a rich source of information which can supplement interview data. Document analysis is a common data collection strategy used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009).

Marshall and Rossman (1999) recognize “the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, which is rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting” (p. 116). I tried to collect these documents before I conducted the interviews with the participants to help provide some context to the interview process and to also ensure the questions were sufficiently specific in nature. During the participant recruitment phase, a list of specific documents to obtain was created during the data collection phase. The artifacts included the following:

1. Mission and purpose of program: I was interested in the goals of each program, as well as how each program defined their purpose in context of its institution.
2. Curriculum Plan: I wanted to see the content of the degrees and/or certificates that were offered within each program, and how they were similar and/or different between each institution.
3. Program Review: I wanted to examine the program reviews for each institution to see how they had been evaluated to gain information on the strengths and weaknesses of each program.
4. Sample Syllabi: I wanted to review the content of the courses that were offered within each program, and how they were similar and/or different between each institution.
5. Program History: I was interested in the history of each program, and any challenges and/or opportunities that institutions faced when creating their respective programs.

Some of the participants were unable to submit all the requested documents due to issues such as length of program and the specific record-keeping protocol of the program. The lack of some of these documents did not have any significant impact on my

document analysis process. After all the data were submitted to me, I analyzed the documents each program was able to submit. Pseudonyms were used for each participant to ensure confidentiality. Table 1 summarizes which participants were able to submit which documents.

Table 1. Document Review Submissions From Each Participant

Participant	Mission and Purpose	Curriculum Plan	Program Review	Syllabi	Program History
Susan	X	X	X	X	
Lisa	X	X	X	X	
Angela	X	X	X	X	
Jane		X		X	
Elizabeth	X				
Dana	X	X		X	X
Dee		X		X	
Rachel			X	X	X

Ethical Considerations

In measuring the “goodness” of a qualitative study, one must ensure it was conducted in an ethical manner (Merriam, 2009). I protected the participants by obtaining IRB approval from Iowa State University, as well as approval from their respective institutions, if required. There was little risk, if any, to the participants. However, I still emphasized the ethical nature of this study by reminding them their involvement was voluntary, they could skip any interview questions they did not wish to answer, they could refuse to provide me any documents for document analysis, and that pseudonyms would be used to protect their identities.

Data Analysis

As each interview was completed, the audio files were sent to a professional transcription company, Rev.com. When the transcription was finished and each interview was returned to me, I then started the data analysis process to immerse myself

in the data and understand what the participants had said. I also listened to each audio file on my own so I could “become increasingly intimate with the data” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 152), and check for any potential transcription errors.

After all the interviews were returned, open coding was utilized to create a set of descriptive codes for the interview data. Open coding is a method by which the researcher creates a detailed description note for each distinctive comment in the transcript margins (Esterberg, 2002). After the coding process was completed for each transcript, common patterns and themes were identified in all the participant’s stories. I created a coding guide in which the answers from the participants to each interview question were grouped together (see Appendix F: Coded Interview Guide). Merriam (2009) wrote “conveying an understanding of the case is the paramount consideration in analyzing case study data” (p. 203). Patterns and themes that were identified throughout the analysis stage provided me with a background to write Chapter Four of my dissertation.

Process of Goodness and Trustworthiness

Within qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness is used to describe the overall quality of a study (Merriam, 2009). Internal validity and reliability are two examples of criteria used in evaluating the trustworthiness of a study (Merriam, 2009). Trustworthiness also includes explaining how any threats to validity of the study data were handled. Triangulation of data, member checks, and an audit trail were used as the strategies to ensure trustworthiness throughout this study.

Triangulation of data

Triangulation is one of the most common strategies utilized to increase the validity and enhance reliability of a study (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation does not ensure validity, but it does enhance the depth and rich description of the participants' experiences. Maxwell (2013) listed several important strategies for beneficial triangulation including "the use of multiple sources of data and several different methods of collecting data" (p. 94). The process of triangulation also examines the data from all the sources, and uses this information to build a strong justification for the themes used in the analysis stage of the study (Creswell, 2014). The interview data in conjunction with the secondary data sources used in document analysis allow a deeper understanding of each participant's experiences.

Member checks

Another common strategy used in qualitative research to increase validity and strengthen reliability of a qualitative study is member checks (Merriam, 2009). By sending interview transcripts and an analysis to the participants through email, member checks were completed. Participants were provided an opportunity to comment on the transcripts and the analysis, and made any revisions they deemed appropriate. All the participants responded they were quoted correctly, and their story in my dissertation is accurate. I also contacted participants throughout the data analysis process if I had simple questions or if I needed further information. My goal as a qualitative researcher is to accurately depict their experiences in the most genuine and transparent way possible.

Audit trail

I used an audit trail to enhance the reliability of this study. Merriam (2009) explains “an audit trail describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were throughout the inquiry” (p. 27). I compiled a chronological data collection list to ensure I kept to a strict schedule throughout the research process. I also created a coded interview guide to help me construct the themes and sub-themes of this study.

Delimitations

The purposes of this qualitative case study were to present the status of women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges, and explore the creation and maintenance of these programs. The experiences of faculty within these institutions were analyzed. The interview process was somewhat hindered by geographic location since I do not drive. Therefore, this study was delimited by where the institutions were located. However, this obstacle was overcome by the flexibility I offered the participants when we met, how long we met, and the freedom to answer the interview questions as they wanted.

Another delimitation was the findings may not be applicable to other community colleges that offer a women’s and gender studies program. Each institution has its own culture, and there could be many variables that could contribute to the same or different experiences for faculty. Even with the above delimitations, this study can still be useful to other community colleges who want to create a women’s and gender studies program or who already have such a program.

Limitations

Since travel was a challenge for me to complete this qualitative study, I was flexible when recruiting participants and did not limit myself to a specific geographic region because of the use of Skype and email to conduct the interviews. I was also cognizant of each participant's time, and scheduled their interviews, document analysis, and member checks in a manner that stayed true to the research procedures.

There is an assumption when using interviews as a method of data collection that participants will be transparent and respond to the questions in a truthful and genuine manner. I relied on their willingness to tell their stories in their own way. In building rapport with the participants and establishing common goals, I remained transparent throughout the data collection process. I also ensured I met the participants' needs, such as scheduling interviews during different time zones, so I could share their rich and genuine stories throughout this study.

Another limitation was the non-presence of the male voice in the study. I know that there are male faculty that teach women's and gender studies courses at community colleges through my networking within NWSA, but no men chose to participate in the study. This would be an interesting topic for future research: the male voice within women's and gender studies programs at community colleges.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology and methods used in this qualitative case study, including rationale behind the methodological decisions made and how they related to qualitative research. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through

triangulation, member checking, and the creation of an audit trail. Ethical considerations, delimitations, and limitations of this study were also discussed. Despite the aforementioned limitations, a rigorous methodological approach was taken because of the significance of this study. The data in this study will be utilized to help faculty who teach women's and gender studies courses at community colleges aggregate more legitimacy and emphasize the importance of the skill set students graduate with when enrolling in these classes. Chapter Four will provide participant profiles, and describe the findings and results of this study.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

Overview

The results of this qualitative case study are presented in this chapter. Each participant will be profiled, along with her interest in women's and gender studies, description of degree and/or certificate offered, age of program and department, and the teaching experiences being described. Since the study data are presented and analyzed through coding and document analysis, three main issues will be discussed.

Participant Profiles

A brief description and synopsis of each participant's background are presented to provide context to the findings of this study. Each participant was given a pseudonym for confidentiality. Additionally, each participant teaches at a public two-year institution.

Table 2. Table of Participant Profiles

Name	Racial Identity	Position	Age of Program	Region
Elizabeth	African-American	Assistant Professor	17 years	Midwest
Dee	White	Instructor	42 years	Midwest
Lisa	White	Instructor	40 years	West Coast
Jane	White	Associate Professor and Coordinator	5 years	South
Angela	White	Professor and Chair	12 years	West Coast
Dana	White	Associate Professor and Chair	30 years	Midwest
Susan	White	Chair and Instructor	40 years	West Coast
Rachel	White	Professor	14 years	East Coast

Elizabeth

Elizabeth identifies as an African-American woman who holds the rank of Assistant Professor of English, Speech, and Theatre at her institution. According to the institution's website, "Midwest Community College #1" has a population of approximately 14,000 unduplicated students. Elizabeth's institution has maintained a Women's and Gender Studies program since 1998, and also offers an Associate's of Arts

degree with a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies.

In the Women's and Gender Studies curriculum at Elizabeth's institution, there is no introductory course. The challenge with creating this type of course is if the course is housed in one specific department, only the faculty members in that department can teach it. If the course is created with an interdisciplinary focus and emphasis, anyone with a Master's degree at "Midwest Community College #1" would be eligible to teach the course. Courses offered within the Women's and Gender Studies curriculum include Sociology of Sex and Gender, Biology of Women, Women's Literature, and Women in the Creative and Performing Arts.

During her interview, Elizabeth emphasized:

More students and faculty across all areas of academia are becoming more aware that faculty at community colleges are doing real work within the discipline of women's and gender studies. We have had some more opportunities to do some cross-programming with and reaching out to four-year institutions in the area. This has been a great opportunity to recruit and build more knowledge about our programs. However, there have been some barriers to producing research and networking at conferences such as work overload and lack of adequate professional development funding.

Dee

Dee identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Instructor of Women's Studies and Anthropology at her institution. According to the institution's website, "Midwest Community College #2" has a population of approximately 15,000 credit-seeking students. Dee's institution has maintained a Women's Studies Department since 1973, and also offers an interdisciplinary certificate in Women's Studies.

The course topics in the certificate program range from the Female Divine to Women and Empowerment. The Female Divine course explores the ancient history of

current cultural views on the modern woman. Drawing from such areas as goddess traditions, mythology, literature, and art, students explore archetypal feminine symbolism in the context of both matriarchal and patriarchal value systems from around the world. The Women and Empowerment course uses creative expressions and experiences of women to examine the journey from powerlessness to power. Students also learn about a variety of empowerment tools and experiences, from personal narratives to involvement in social change movements.

During her interview, Dee talked about student interests:

I think that students enroll in women's and gender courses at my institution because of their strong interest in social activism, anti-oppression work, and personal growth. They are seeking some place to learn about their own gender identity and related issues. We get a lot of students from the Human Services, Law Enforcement, and Addiction Counseling programs who want to obtain new skills or strengthen old skills to help deal with different populations, such as the homeless and people with mental illnesses.

Lisa

Lisa identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Instructor of Women's Studies at her institution. She also coordinates a sexual violence prevention program at her institution and held the position of Chair of the Women's Studies Department in 2010. According to the institution's website, "Western Community College #1" has a population of approximately 51,000 credit-seeking students. Lisa's institution offers an Associate's of Arts degree in Women's Studies and a Sexual Health Educator Certificate. "Western Community College #1" offered the first Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies at a community college, and also created the first Women's Studies Department at a community college in 1975.

At Lisa's institution, a Sexual Health Educator Certificate is offered. It is a 16-unit certificate which can be completed in one semester. The curriculum for this certificate trains students as paraprofessionals in sexual health education, including violence prevention and intervention, HIV and STI (sexually transmitted illnesses) prevention, and the promotion of safe, healthy, and mature intimate relationships. Required courses in the certificate program include The Politics of Sexual Violence, Ending Sexual Violence: Peer Education, Human Sexuality, and HIV/STI Prevention Education. Students also choose four units from elective courses ranging from Psychology of Stress to Gay Male Relationships.

The Peer Education Program at "Western Community College #1" works in congruence with the Sexual Health Educator Certificate Program. The peer education program trains students to facilitate campus presentations to promote healthy relationships, and to help students with strategies for identifying, avoiding, and leaving abusive relationships. Students interested in training to be peer educators are required to enroll in two courses about sexual violence.

During her interview, Lisa talked about her interest in teaching women's studies courses at a community college:

I started doing "third world liberation poetry" in the mid-1950s, and my feminist consciousness deepened as I became a mother. I approached the former chairs of the department, and got my class within the arts. I then started teaching a violence against women course, and doing rape prevention work at a nearby medical center. I wanted a full-time job, so I created my position. I teach these courses because it is a political commitment, and a devotion to social justice issues. I also have a working class consciousness, so I love working with these types of students. I feel a real devotion to feminism.

Jane

Jane identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of Women's and Gender Studies at her institution. According to the institution's website, "Southern Community College #1" has a population of approximately 13,000 credit-seeking students. Jane's institution has maintained a Women's Studies Program since 2010, and also offers a certificate in Women's and Gender Studies.

Jane's institution offers an Introduction to Women's Studies Course for both the Humanities and Social Sciences. The remaining courses in the certificate program are interdisciplinary—ranging from Folk Studies to Peace Studies. The Introduction to Women's Studies in the Social Sciences course provides an introduction to the major concepts and theoretical frameworks of feminism and women's studies. There is also a strong emphasis on intersectionality with other social identities such as race, ethnicity, age, social class, and sexuality.

During her interview, Jane talked about the effect women's and gender studies courses have on students and faculty:

Students have never thought about these issues before. They are thinking more about gender inequities. More of our nursing students are taking these courses, and evaluating their own discipline. They know they need to know about these issues. Conversations on our campus are now happening differently. Faculty are talking more, and senior faculty are also introducing activism projects into their courses. The courses are making the difference, not necessarily the certificate itself. Students are finding their voice.

This reflection mirrors the work of Leder, Plotnik, and Venkateswaran (1999), who state students who complete women's and gender studies courses show an increase in self-knowledge and self-confidence, and a clearer understanding of structural

inequities within their own social context. According to Jane, “the moment that students find the language they need, and affirm their experiences is so important.”

Angela

Angela identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Professor and Department Chair of Sociology and Women’s and Gender Studies at her institution. According to the institution’s website, “Western Community College #2” has a population of approximately 24,000 credit-seeking students. Angela’s institution has maintained a Women’s and Gender Studies Department since 2001, and also offers an Associate’s of Arts degree in Women’s and Gender Studies.

Angela’s institution offers a wide variety of courses that will prepare students to eventually transfer to four-year institutions, such as Women in the Global Economy and Philosophy of the Body, Feminism, and Gender. The Women’s Studies Department also offers a course on Community Organizing and Activism. This is an entry-level course that encourages a social activism relationship between students interested in working with feminist-based organizations and those local organizations seeking assistance. Students learn about the history of the feminist movement, and the basics of organizing and action. The final project is the establishment of a community service project that will create social change through grassroots organizing efforts.

During her interview, Angela talked about the effect women’s and gender studies courses have had on the campus climate at her institution, and also how some view women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges:

The faculty that teach the women’s studies courses and the courses themselves increase the number of safe spaces for lots of different kinds of students. I have seen a huge shift in our students over the last 15 years in terms of their attitudes

with things like LGBT issues. We are having larger campus discussions about inclusivity, sexual orientation, and disabilities. People talk a really good game about social justice and research inequalities. It's like community colleges don't even exist in NWSA. We need to publish about ourselves because no one knows what we do. I don't even know if they go to the extent that you are going to in your research.

Dana

Dana identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Associate Professor at her institution. She is also the Program Chair for Women's Studies in her state's liberal arts transfer institutions system. According to the institution's website, "Midwest Community College #3" has a population of approximately 500 students. However, the institution has a population of 10,000 across all the campuses within the system. Dana's institution has maintained a Women's Studies Program since 1985 and also offers an Associate's degree of Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Women's Studies. A certificate in Women's Studies is offered only to students who decide not to earn an Associate's degree.

Dana's program offers a wide variety of courses, including Introduction to LGBTQ Studies. The Introduction to LGBTQ Studies course takes an interdisciplinary focus on how the central concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity work within such areas as technology and philosophy. Students also develop an understanding of the intersectionality between privilege and oppression as they relate to LGBTQ culture. One of the assignments in the course is entitled "Photovoice Project: Understanding Social Privilege, Heterosexual, and/or Cisgender Privilege." Students are asked to take pictures that represent their understanding of the term "heterosexual" and/or "cisgender." They then write a reflection piece to contextualize the meaning of their picture.

During her interview, Dana reflected a lot on why she thinks students enroll in women's and gender studies courses, and how these courses might also influence general education requirements at her institution:

A lot of the women's studies courses are also designated as interdisciplinary studies, which is a requirement for the associate's degree. A lot of the students find the material in women's studies courses to be compelling and new, and really helpful for understanding their own lives. Students have much less of a sense of entitlement here. I really think that it's about class and being first-generation, so students do push back sometimes and resist. But, very seldom do I have students who are angrily and forcefully resisting the ideas, partly because maybe they have a sense that they wouldn't know how to do that. There is also just a lack of understanding, but it's also a refusal to see structures of inequality for what they are and see them in it. Sometimes, there is a discussion on whether or not we are offering too many women's studies courses. There has been some concern that the popularity of our classes are negatively impacting other disciplines. We impact the curriculum in fairly positive ways, especially as our institution focuses more on globalization, communication skills, awareness, inclusion, and diversity.

Susan

Susan identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Instructor and Department Chair of Women's Studies at her institution. According to the institution's website, "Western Community College #1" has a population of approximately 51,000 credit-seeking students. Susan's institution offers an Associate's of Arts degree in Women's Studies and a Sexual Health Educator Certificate. "Western Community College #1" offered the first Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies at a community college, and also created the first Women's Studies Department at a community college in 1975.

Susan's department offers a wide variety of courses in the Women's Studies Department, including Introduction to Women's Studies: Feminist Demystified and Politics of Sexual Violence. In the introductory women's studies course, students learn

about the origins, purpose, subject matter, and methods of Women's Studies and the feminist perspectives on a variety of social issues affecting women from diverse life experiences. The importance of intersectionality is also emphasized.

During her interview, Susan reflected on feminism and the effect women's studies courses have on students at her institution:

There is a growing interest in our culture about feminism. The impact of social media seems to be changing some trends. A lot of students come to us identifying as feminists or already having a gender analysis. They want some academic experience with feminism. Other students take women's studies courses to satisfy general education requirements.

This is all about transformative pedagogy and education for liberation. Women's studies transforms a sense of possibility for students and for their world so that they can be involved in their communities. We see that students, particularly in other representative groups of higher education, have higher GPAs and increased levels of academic success at our college than students who have not taken a women's studies course before. I think that women's studies have taught students to be more engaged in their own education.

Rachel

Rachel identifies as a White woman who holds the rank of Professor of Language and Literature at her institution. According to the institution's website, "Eastern Community College #1" has a population of approximately 10,000 credit-seeking students. Rachel's institution has maintained a Women's Studies Program since 2001 and also offers an Associate's degree in Liberal Arts with a Women's Studies emphasis.

Rachel's institution offers a unique major for students who seek a general education by exploring the liberal arts courses areas while focusing on the study of women in society, their cultural contributions, and the issues they face in their everyday lives. In the Introduction to Women's Studies course, students have the chance to present projects on various topics such as Women and Politics, and Theories of Gender.

During her interview, Rachel emphasized the history of her program and the deactivation of the Women's Studies Certificate due to low enrollment:

The Associate's degree in Liberal Arts with a Women's Studies emphasis has been active since the 2001-2002 academic year. The degree was originally developed in response to the needs and experiences of some of our adult students who participated in a leadership institute for women in Washington, D.C. These students reported that the institute had changed their lives, and that they wanted courses at the institution that emphasized the experiences of women. The degree also closely parallels the requirements for the first two years of study at the institutions to which our students most frequently transfer. It is a highly transferable major, and the main measurement used to gauge its success is the ease with which our students can transfer to four-year institutions. The Women's Studies Certificate always struggled with low enrollment. Since its creation in 2001, only three students have completed the requirements. However, no students have been enrolled since 2008. The Certificate was deactivated in 2011.

Throughout the interviews, participants were very willing to talk about their experiences as faculty teaching in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Even when there were hurdles along the way—from budget issues to combatting stereotypes about the discipline—all participants discussed having positive experiences in these programs.

Concepts and Themes

The concepts and themes discovered through completing each interview and subsequent coding and document analysis process are as follows:

1. The impact of women's and gender studies courses on students: Faculty perspectives.
2. There is a strong emphasis on issues of intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs.
3. Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important.

The first concept introduces faculty perspectives on why students enroll in women's and gender studies courses at the community college level. The interpretations

of faculty as they relate to change in campus climate, the relationships created with students, and issues of student/faculty engagement are also explored.

The second concept explores the strong emphasis on intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. The uniqueness of these components within the curriculum was a major theme with participants when discussing their roles as faculty. Participants discussed in detail the relationships between women's and gender studies programs and community colleges from an intersectional analysis.

The third concept provides evidence of the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges as seen through the eyes of faculty. Participants talked about three main issues: (1) importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges within higher education, (2) importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges on student experiences, and (3) the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges on faculty experiences

The impact of women's and gender studies courses on students: Faculty perspectives

Throughout the data analysis stage of this study, a recurring theme was the positive experiences most students had when enrolling in women's and gender studies courses at their respective community colleges. For example, Jane talked about a different type of student population taking these courses:

In our community college system, we offer higher education opportunities to female inmates, including a section of Introduction to Women's Studies to approximately 25 female inmates every semester. They are able to earn time served for credentials earned. Our Provost taught the very first women's and gender studies course at the prison.

At her institution, Dee said that because of their involvement in women's and gender studies courses, students tend to be more active in naming issues they see on campus because they feel supported by their professors. She also talked about students commonly reporting on course evaluations that they find women's studies courses to be life-changing, empowering, and feel they should be required for everyone:

Courses address anti-oppression work, intersections with multiple oppression dynamics, and offer students a way to find a stronger voice and presence in their lives which are often undervalued in the larger society... Our students are generally ambitious, and they want to make their lives better and to support their families economically and in other ways. They tend to have high aspirations as far as seeking to understand how issues of equality, sexism, and other oppression dynamics impact their personal lives, their communities, schools, and faith structures. That brings a strong focus and deeply connected discussion around issues that equally personal and academic into the classroom.

Informally, she saw many students changing majors, after taking women's studies courses, to academic areas that are more politically informed. However, Dana talked about how the increase in students becoming women's studies majors can increase the level of "emotional labor" faculty deal with because of the types of issues discussed in these courses—from violence to gender discrimination. She stated that "teaching is social work, especially when you are working with disenfranchised populations." In talking about whether or not she saw a change in campus climate because of the presence of a women's and gender studies program at her institution, Dana agreed the increase in course enrollment is surely an indication of this shift. At one time, the program estimated approximately 10% of the student population were enrolled in women's studies courses.

Susan was passionate about the impact she saw on her students who take women's and gender studies courses, and the place that her program had within a larger feminist community:

It is really about transformative pedagogy, and education for liberation...that is how students are reflecting in our classes. Women's studies transforms a sense of possibility for students and for their world so that they can be involved in their communities. I think that women's studies have taught students to be more engaged in and accountable for their own education.

Around 1971, we were a faculty that were very active in theorizing feminism, and bringing it to our community college. We were engaged in feminist efforts to move the process of consciousness-raising to the community college. We wanted to offer classes that were meaningful to our students, met their needs, and responded to their concerns.

The types of events the program and additional campus partners create go a long way to establish her institution as a safe place for students. For example, her campus has an LGBT Studies department—extremely rare at the community college level. Dana stated her institution eventually added an LGBT studies course in 2013, which marked the beginning of a shift towards a more inclusive, broader language and understanding of what women's studies really looks like.

Elizabeth realized several of the students who enroll in women's and gender studies courses at her institution are either trying to satisfy their general education requirements or have an actual interest in women's and gender studies. She described her experience in these terms:

Some students come in with no knowledge of the actual terms and/or a certain level of bias. The goal for me at that point is to say that I am not trying to change your view, but am just trying to have you be open to the possibility that other people have different views, and to respect those differences. I can hold my view, and also listen to a number of different views without feeling like I need to change you. I just need to understand and respect your difference just as you can learn to understand and respect mine. There is less need from students to push back when taking this approach. You try and get them to simply have an intellectual understanding of the issues and people's perspectives, and see that both views are valid on some level.

There is a strong emphasis on issues of intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs

The concept of intersectionality within women's and gender studies programs is extremely important to help students understand their own life experiences, as well as the experiences of other groups. Learning how to apply intersectionality in society is also beneficial. This skill can be utilized by students in all areas of employment to accomplish what is best for their own company and for others.

Berger and Guidroz (2009) state identities such as race, class, gender, and sexuality are integral to one's place in society. The fact some programs have switched their names from women's studies to women's and gender studies strengthens the notion that gender is a socially constructed identity, and not the only identity that helps students to understand societal issues and their own personal activist transformation.

Dana discussed how her work is influenced by intersectionality:

Our work is so informed by intersectionality, and helps us to think broadly about what women's studies actually is. We are working in the margins in a lot of ways. We are doing certain work that we is easier to do because we exist in this liminal space and the in-between, like a program versus a department. However, can intersectionality be seen the same as interdisciplinary? Are we too interdisciplinary to be our own discipline?

Jane's experiences with students match the basic tenets of intersectionality. She stated:

Students are finding words for what they are experiencing, like discrimination...They see intersectionality as a framework for social change as opposed to just dealing with identity and oppression. Intersectionality should be embedded in every course where it is prioritized in terms of theoretical frameworks.

Reflecting on the history of women's and gender studies, this curriculum grew from a concern about the way the histories and perspectives of women were being

ignored. Feminist scholars took the charge and started teaching courses about women, which eventually led to the creation of women's and gender studies programs and departments (Appalachian State University, 2015).

Dee emphasized the immense need for students to “understand the oppression mentality in all its intersections. Women's Studies is often the destination for students wanting to study anti-racism work, queer studies, poverty, classism, and social justice movements.”

Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important

The importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges was the main reason the participants agreed to be interviewed for this study. Susan talked about her reasons for teaching these types of courses:

Women's studies is transformative, and has the potential to genuinely transform people's lived experiences, their lives, and their sense of possibility for themselves and the world. There is such a sense of the students' lives and their whole person. One of our principles in our department is to improve communication, and promote healthy behaviors in our students' personal, social, and work lives. We help our students take ownership of their lives and their decisions. This interdisciplinary discipline allows us to address the full experience of people's lives. For us to be able to do that in our work as educators is profound.

Sub-themes

During the data analysis stage of this study, I discovered three sub-themes voiced by the participants during this part of the interview process: (1) women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important within a higher education context, (2) women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important for students: faculty perspectives, and (3) women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important for faculty: personal perspectives.

Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important within a higher education context

Several participants believed that telling their stories could be an excellent way to emphasize they are doing real academic work, just at a different type of academic institution. Dana stated that “programs are poorly funded, and there is not a lot, if any, professional development money. I am not able to network if I can't travel to conferences.” There is also a distinct lack of current scholarship about women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Jane found the lack of research “embarrassing.” Angela agreed by stating that “we need to publish about ourselves because no one knows what we do. I don't even know if they even go to the extent that you are going to in your research.”

Another reason why participants believed this topic was so important is the perceived lack of support from the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA). At past annual conferences, participants talked about the feeling of elitism within the organization of four-year institutions that have women's and gender studies programs and departments against community colleges who have the same types of programs. Dana stated that “there is not a great network, especially in NWSA,” while Angela mentioned that “it's like community colleges don't even exist in NWSA.” Jane agreed that “there is elitism and no sisterhood at NWSA.”

There was also a concern among most of the participants about the perception that women's and gender studies is not seen as a serious and rigorous academic program. As mentioned previously, this concern resonates with the fact that women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are seen as less rigorous and academically

challenging than programs at four-year institutions. Jane was worried about her students who want to transfer to other institutions with a women's and gender studies program, especially in her region. She stated that she was "very concerned with our students' transfer experiences. Some of them have heard about stereotypes made by both students and faculty about community college students not being as good as students at four-year institutions."

However, Dee mentioned that "as women's and gender studies programs have grown at community colleges, it allows us more legitimacy. We often have to justify course development according to transfer school's curricula, so expansion and success allows us to grow." Elizabeth reflected about the current status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges:

More people are becoming aware that at community colleges, we are in fact doing real academic work. We are also becoming more involved with cross-programming opportunities and reaching out to four-year institutions in the area. This is a great opportunity to recruit and also build more knowledge about our programs.

Susan reflected on feminist education within her state:

We are developing a new major and transfer degree in social justice studies. The legislature charged us to work together with other community colleges and ensure that our courses articulate, and make it easier for transfer to state institutions and then graduate within a certain amount of time. There seems to be a growing interest in feminist education. I do have a sense that we have the strongest and most established program here in our state.

Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important for students' experiences: Faculty perspectives

The importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges also includes positive student experiences in the classroom. Dee talked about how students' aspirations inform their experiences in the classroom:

Our students are generally ambitious, and they want to make their lives better and to support their families economically and in other ways. They tend to have high aspirations as far as seeking to understand how issues of equality, sexism, and other oppression dynamics impact their personal lives, their communities, schools, and faith structures. That brings a strong focus and deeply connected discussion around issues that are equally personal and academic into the classroom.

Elizabeth reflected on similar experiences in that “students start to really recognize and appreciate diversity, and how their own identities differ them from other students. It adds another point of awareness for students, and supports them in opening their minds a bit.”

Susan agreed that “having this strong program at our institution does offer transformation to students. This is a student population that has not always had access to discussing these types of issues.”

Women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges are important for faculty experiences: Personal perspectives

The importance of women’s and gender studies on faculty experiences was also an important subtheme. Most of the participants made specific decisions to teach at community colleges. For Susan, it was a conscious choice:

I am definitely at the community college level because of being able to work with a broader base of students, specifically those students from under-represented groups. After I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts degree in Feminist Studies, my goal was to be involved in education for critical consciousness. That was my version of changing the world—looking at the role of education in not only producing workers, but also community education. It is also about labeling what I teach “women’s studies.”

Elizabeth commented that her background in writing and literature, and her love of teaching brought her to the community college:

The challenge of learning to work with varying levels of prior knowledge and background is just exciting to me. I love teaching. I love working with students

and getting that “aha” moment. I feel like I make a real difference who students who sometimes actually need more exposure to cultural things...some of my students had never read a novel before. I also like to work with students who are looking to go deeper, and learn to think more critically. I feel like my work is a work of empowerment. I can actually support students before they give up hope that they can actually make a difference as well. Here are the tools you need, and you can do whatever you want to do.

Jane started to network with other faculty who were teaching introductory women’s and gender studies courses:

It became game-changing for me both professionally and personally. The world needs it. We need more social justice. Everyone needs to have a voice, and a way to talk to students. Teaching is activism.

Lisa was very driven by her feminist ideals:

It is a political commitment, and a devotion to social justice issues. I also have a working class consciousness, so I love working with these types of students. I feel a real devotion to feminism.

Dana felt a connection with her students:

I feel that I have a real life impact on my students. This is education changing people’s lives. I feel the work I do is social justice work.

Susan’s experience was very telling of how women’s and gender studies is an actual academic discipline that is rigorous as well as transformative:

Women’s studies is transformative, and has the potential to genuinely transform people’s lived experiences, their lives, and their sense of possibility for themselves and the world. One of the principles in our department is to improve communication, and promote healthy behaviors in our students’ personal, social, and work lives. We help our students take ownership of their lives and their decisions. This interdisciplinary discipline allows us to address the full experience of people’s lives. For us to be able to do that in our work as educators is profound.

Summary

The findings of this qualitative case study were presented in this chapter.

Participants’ profiles were provided at the beginning of the chapter to provide context for

the findings. This provides readers with a better understanding of each participant's experience. In discussing the findings, data were organized into three main themes:

The first theme—**The impact of women's and gender studies courses on students: Faculty perspectives**—described the positive experiences most students had when enrolling in these types of courses. In this section, faculty reflected on their experiences with students, and how their respective institutions were impacted by having a women's and gender studies program. The most salient quotes that addressed this theme came from Susan and Dee:

It is really about transformative pedagogy, and education for liberation. Women's studies transforms a sense of possibility for students and for their world so that they can be involved in their communities. We see that students have higher GPAs and levels of academic success at our college than students who have not taken a women's studies class before. I think that women's studies have taught students to be more engaged in their own education. (Susan)

Our students are generally ambitious, and they want to make their lives better and to support their families economically and in other ways. They tend to have high aspirations as far as seeking to understand how issues of equality, sexism, and other oppression dynamics impact their personal lives, their communities, schools, and faith structures. That brings a strong focus and deeply connected discussion around issues that are equally personal and academic into the classroom. (Dee)

The second theme—**There is a strong emphasis on issues of intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs**—described the importance of intersectionality within the discipline, and how it is used to help students understand themselves and their life experiences. Identity was also discussed and the influence it has on the specific name of such programs. The most salient quotes that addressed this theme came from Dee, Jane, and Angela:

There is an immense need on our campus, and along the spectrum, to understand oppression mentality in all of its intersections. Women's studies is often the

destination for students wanting to study anti-racism work, queer studies, poverty, classism, and social justice movements. (Dee)

Class is very important. We don't feel a sense of entitlement from students. The students are finding words for what they are experiencing. We see intersectionality as a framework for social change as opposed to just dealing with identity and oppression. It also shows students ways to effectively strategize on how to create change in a system that already oppresses us all educationally. (Jane)

Only talking about one perspective is not going to get through to our students. In order to make our classes have an impact, we seek out opportunities to use examples from their experiences. That means talking about class, race, sexuality, and ability. It's a really important part of women's and gender studies. The name women's and gender studies has been in a space over the last few decades where it's been this place where people with marginalized identities in the institutions have found a safe space where it's queer studies, LGBT studies, disability studies...they found safe spaces in the women's studies classrooms. The name, women's and gender studies, is limiting because of this idea of intersectionality. The adding of gender is inclusive, because it forces people to realize that it is about other marginalized identities. It is not talking about women specifically. It definitely takes a more political turn when you add gender. (Angela)

The third theme—**Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important**—produced three emphases: (1) the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges within higher education, (2) the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges on students' experiences, and (3) the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges on faculty experiences. This section provided information on how women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are viewed within academia, and the effect these programs have on students and faculty. The most salient quotes that addressed this theme came from Susan and Angela:

Women's studies is transformative, and has the potential to genuinely transform people's lived experiences, their lives, and their sense of possibility for themselves and the world. There is such a sense of the students' lives and their whole person. One of our principles in our department is to improve

communication, and promote healthy behaviors in our students' personal, social, and work lives. We help our students take ownership of their lives and their decisions. This interdisciplinary discipline allows us to address the full experience of people's lives. For us to be able to do that in our work as educators is profound. (Susan)

I get to teach students how to think critically think about structural inequalities, whether it be class, race, sexuality, ability, or gender. Students start to recognize that they are not alone in their life experiences. This is social justice work. I teach women's studies at a community college because that is the choice that I have made, not because I am not qualified to teach anywhere else. (Angela)

Chapter Five will provide a discussion of the research questions, and relevant literature will be revisited. Recommendations for practice and future research will be also discussed.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to present the status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and specifically explore the creation and maintenance of these programs. According to Jane, "there have been growing caucus conversations and a stronger presence at NWSA, but we are still somewhat invisible." Furthermore, there is a lack of research on the current status of these programs which makes it difficult to adequately present a clear picture of the past, present, and future of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. While conducting an extensive search of several academic abstracts and databases, including JSTOR, ERIC, and Google Scholar, I located approximately 40 scholarly publications and reports on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges.

Since there is a paucity of research on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, this study will add valuable scholarship to the body of knowledge related to this topic. According to Townsend and Twombly (1998), there have been few studies published that examine the relationship between community colleges and women's and gender studies programs through a feminist lens. Because of this lack of research, the story of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges has not been accurately told.

This study will also be a helpful tool to faculty, students, and administrators who have an interest and/or are involved in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges so they can gain a clearer understanding of how important these programs really are to all involved. It is imperative that new and current research be

utilized when looking at women's and gender studies programs at community colleges to be completely mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of these types of programs, and what type of effect they can have on community college curriculums.

The literature review included knowledge that helped guide this study, including information on history of the community college, demographics of community college students, the lack of scholarship on women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and an introduction to the current scholarship written about these programs. Feminist standpoint theory was utilized in this study to provide participants a voice when talking about their experiences as faculty in a somewhat struggling academic area.

A qualitative research design was employed to help both myself and the reader fully understand and acknowledge the experiences of faculty members who taught within women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. A feminist case study methodology was used to fully understand the experiences of the participants.

Eight women who currently serve as faculty members in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges participated in this qualitative study. Each participant completed one interview, either on the phone, through Skype, or by e-mail. The participants were also asked to submit specific documents for analysis that were available to them including program reviews and sample syllabi. These documents provided valuable background data which proved beneficial in the data analysis process of this study.

After the interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service, Rev.com, open coding was utilized to analyze the data (Esterberg, 2002). Through this process, a great level of understanding of the participants' life experiences was

understood. After data analysis was complete, the participants' stories were arranged into three major themes as discussed in Chapter Four.

The first theme—**The impact of women's and gender studies courses on students: Faculty Perspectives**—described the perspectives faculty have on why students enrolled in women's and gender studies courses at community colleges. The reflections of faculty on change in campus climate and the relationships created with students were also explored. The second theme—**There is a strong emphasis on issues of intersectionality and identity within women's and gender studies programs**—explained the strong emphasis placed on these concepts within women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. Participants discussed the relationship between women's and gender studies programs and community colleges from an intersectional analysis. The third theme—**Women's and gender studies programs at community colleges are important**—provided evidence of the importance of these types of faculty. The participants talked about the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges within higher education, importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges on students' experiences, and the importance of their experiences within these types of programs.

Summary of Findings

The following research questions guided this qualitative case study:

1. What is the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?
2. How are women's and gender studies programs created and maintained at the community college level?

3. How do faculty members perceive the effect women's and gender studies programs at community colleges have had on students?

Research Question One: What is the present status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?

This question focused on the current status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, and where participants found strengths and weaknesses in these programs. Most participants believed that more people were becoming aware that there is real academic work being completed at community colleges, but there still was a sense of elitism from four-year institutions, even within the National Women's Studies Association. Elizabeth reflected on struggles at her institution:

In 2003, we were fighting against an older generation of professors who just wanted to stay focused on the discipline and didn't see the reason to talk about women's and gender studies. There is currently a much more liberal understanding on our campus, and we have been working in the interests of both the students and the institution. We are moving things forward, and really thinking about those issues outside of the classroom that can impact the academic lives of the students. Our program has earned respect over time, and we have really established that what we do is really purposeful work.

Part of this issue is that several of the participants discussed they did not have time to publish or attend conferences because of an overabundance of work responsibilities. Furthermore, some of the programs were poorly funded which led to a lack of funding for professional development opportunities, including travel funding.

Dana expressed her frustration:

Programs are poorly funded, and there is not a lot, if any, professional development money. I am not able to network if I can't travel to conferences. Within the larger fiscal crisis within education, the smaller programs, like women's studies, are the first to go. There is a perception that women's studies is not a serious and rigorous academic discipline.

Angela held that “we need to publish about ourselves because no one knows what we do.” Susan also reflected on struggles at her institution:

I think convincing our colleagues that women’s studies is valuable. I do not see evidence of a nuanced understanding of some of the pedagogy or feminist goals. It is frustrating to not have buy-in. The current administration seems to have some level of animosity towards the diversity department. Our goal is to be progressive and stand up for justice. The accrediting agency wants us to have more of a narrow mission which we see as taking the “community” out of “community colleges.” I think the underlying assumption may be that women’s studies is not necessary for students to get a job, to get framed as workers in our culture, or for them to get a feminist education. The underlying hurdle is that we don’t have that buy-in on that basic idea across the state. We need to convince people how transforming women’s studies is to our students. The students are very articulate about how women’s studies has been important to them.

This was also an issue for Katie Hogan, a former faculty member at LaGuardia Community College (LCC) in New York. She attempted to establish a women’s and gender studies program at the institution between 1997 and 2003. Because of several obstacles and low levels of support, she left LCC to direct the women’s and gender studies program at Carlow University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She reflected on her experience (Pikul, 2005):

People in power don’t really want to fund women’s studies. If you want to do it all on your own, as an unpaid project, that’s fine. But if you want full-time, tenured faculty and administrative support, that’s a problem.

Even with all these burdens, participants were willing to continue advocating for their programs, and to emphasize the importance of women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges.

Participants also talked about positive traits of their programs and the support they did receive from their institution. Elizabeth stated her institution “has enjoyed a lot of support from the administration, especially from the President and Vice-President, in

terms of the activities and projects that we are creating and also maintaining.” Dana reflected on the influence that women’s and gender studies courses have on the curriculum at her institution, and the way the campus climate has changed because of the women’s and gender studies program:

We impact the curriculum in fairly positive ways, especially as our institution focuses more on globalization, communication skills, awareness, inclusion, and diversity. On my campus, I have definitely seen a shift in the campus culture and climate. The increase in class enrollment is surely a distinction of that shift. At one time, we estimated that about 10% of the entire student population on our campus were enrolled in women’s studies courses.

Susan mentioned the elitism within the discipline in that “we try and counter that ivory tower mentality, or writing that is not accessible or understanding.” She also talked about state support for women’s and gender studies:

In our state, we are developing a new major and transfer degree in social justice studies. The legislature gave us the charge to make our courses articulate and make it easier for students to transfer and then graduate within a certain amount of time. There seems to be a growing interest in feminist education. I do have a sense that we have the strongest and most established program here in our state.

The participants in this study experienced a variety of struggles and accomplishments while establishing their programs, and teaching women’s and gender courses. However, the overwhelming theme most of them expressed was a sense of being comfortable in their careers, and a desire to continue to fight to keep their voices heard.

Research Question Two: How are women’s and gender studies programs created and maintained at community colleges?

Approximately 50% of the participants had Women’s and Gender Studies Departments at their institutions, while the remainder offered programs, certificate programs, or concentrations in Women’s and Gender Studies. All the institutions offered

a variety of courses, from Sociology of Sex and Gender to Global Rights of Women. All participants talked about students using women's and gender studies courses to satisfy their general education and/or cultural diversity requirements. Elizabeth reflected on the types of students who enroll in women's and gender studies programs at her institution:

Students come from all over the city with different ages, socioeconomic, and racial statuses. Some students come in with no knowledge of the actual terms, or a certain level of bias. The goal at that point is to say that I am not trying to change your view, but just try and be open to the possibility that other people have different views and respect that difference. I can hold my view, and can listen to a number of different views without feeling like I need to change you. I just need to understand and respect your difference, just as you can learn to understand and respect mine. There seems to be less need to push back when taking this approach. You get them to simply have an intellectual understanding of the issues and people's perspectives, and see that both views are valid on some level. Students can see that there are more nuances than maybe they thought there were. Other students come and are ready to go, and they understand the terms and issues. They want to know how to use the knowledge in their real life. You need to balance those conversations so that they can learn from each other; because even those who come without an awareness have come with life experiences that certainly speak to those issues, and they just were not aware.

However, there are just as many students who have a working knowledge of the issues and use these courses to earn an Associate's degree and/or certificate in women's and gender studies, or to strengthen their workplace skills in the areas of diversity.

Students are learning to become critical thinkers and to express a growing interest in having a dialogue about social justice and diversity issues. The concepts these students are learning in women's and gender studies courses make them more responsible, contributing members of society, and, in turn, better employees.

The community colleges that have these programs use them as ways to show the community they offer alternative academic perspectives to enrich the social and cultural lives of their students, and to foster a comfortable learning environment for all.

Dee reflected on the importance of her program at her institution:

Our program was developed early in the history of the academic movement. It was, and still is, important on our campus because of the diversity of our student population. Courses address anti-oppression work, intersections with multiple oppression dynamics, and offer students a way to find a stronger voice and presence in their lives which are often undervalued in the larger society.

These programs are also used to build relationships with community organizations in terms of service-learning opportunities, internships, and cooperative experiences.

Community colleges, including the institutions where Jane and Lisa are located, are also starting to offer women's and gender studies courses or social justice courses to additional audiences, such as prisoners and high school students. Again, these programs create partnerships between educational institutions and their communities. Dana mentioned that "there was a desire as a state institution to engender these conversations about social justice issues around the state." Dee talked about the influence that women's and gender studies courses have had on the campus climate at her institution:

Our students tend to be active in naming issues they see on campus supported by the work in our courses, so issues are challenged and we tend to bring in events and programming that involve students and employees in learning more, raising awareness, and partnering with community agencies.

Research Question Three: How do faculty members perceive the effect women's and gender studies programs at community colleges have had on students?

All the participants talked about the positive effects women's and gender studies programs have had on students. These programs offer a variety of courses that are dual purpose—students can satisfy their general education or cultural diversity requirements while at the same time learn a variety of social justice issues while becoming critical thinkers. Elizabeth stated that "students start to really recognize and appreciate diversity, and how their own identities differ from other students. These courses also add another

point of awareness for students and support them in opening their minds a bit.” Angela stated that “these courses teach students how to critically think, and open their minds. They learn about diversity and inclusivity, and expose them to things that some other classes are not.” Susan stated that “we see students, particularly in other representative groups of higher education, have higher GPAs and levels of academic success at our college than students who have not taken a women’s studies class before.” In all these instances, students are again finding the skills they need to become better social consumers and critical thinkers.

Students are also finding ways to advocate for themselves in a number of ways. Dee talked about the influence women’s and gender studies courses have on the diverse student population at her institution, in the sense that “courses address anti-oppression work, intersections with multiple oppression dynamics, and offer students a way to find a stronger voice and presence in their lives which are often undervalued in the larger society.” When Susan talked about the history of the women’s and gender studies department at her institution, she noted “we were engaged in feminist efforts to move the process of consciousness-raising into the community college. We wanted to offer classes that were meaningful to our students, and that met their needs and responded to their concerns.” All the participants talked about the importance of social justice issues outside the classroom that can influence the academic lives of students.

Throughout this study, there have been examples and first-hand experiences of the importance of women’s and gender studies programs and courses and their influence on students. All the experiences have been positive, and can only provide the students with the life and academic skills they need to be successful both in and out of the classroom.

As discussed in Chapter Two, feminist standpoint theory was used as the theoretical framework for this study. According to Bowell (n.d.), feminist standpoint theorists assert that knowledge is socially situated, while marginalized groups are also socially situated in a way that it makes it easier for them to be aware of how gender inequality affects their life experiences. Bowell also states that research using a feminist standpoint theoretical perspective should begin with the lives of the marginalized. With community college faculty who teach women's and gender studies being identified as the marginalized group, the knowledge that is created through a lens of gender inequality helps the participants make meaning of their life experiences.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings from this qualitative case study have implications for various stakeholders, including faculty, students, and administrators. By exploring the life experiences of faculty members who teach women's and gender studies courses at community colleges, this research provides different types of information for faculty who are already teaching these courses, faculty who want to teach these courses, students who want to know more about issues in women's and gender studies, and administrators who either already have these programs at their institutions or are interested in starting a women's and gender studies program on their campus.

The reflections of faculty on the status of women's and gender studies within higher education may be of special interest to administrators when evaluating their programs to determine if their faculty have the tools they need to be successful, such as professional development funding.

Information about the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges should be valuable to faculty who teach in these programs at four-year institutions. The data will provide a sense of what type of academic work these faculty are involved, and should help reduce the level of elitism that undervalues faculty at community colleges who teach women's and gender studies courses.

Students can utilize the information in a number of ways. They can learn what women's and gender studies programs have to offer, and where their knowledge level will best fit. The reflections of student experiences in women's and gender studies programs can be beneficial to students looking for some academic and/or personal enrichment, and the value of an Associate's degree in this area can provide in either transferring to a four-year institution or directly entering the job market.

Administrators at community colleges can be considered stakeholders in this research. There have been a variety of examples presented that can frame the conversation about the benefits of having a women's and gender studies program at a community college. Administrators can use this knowledge to reflect on their own programs, and see where there are strengths and weaknesses. This study can also be utilized as a blueprint for students who want to create this type of program.

This study can also be used as a tool for the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) to use when reaffirming their commitment to women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. As several participants stated, they expressed a sense of elitism within the organization. This research can help continue the conversation and strengthen relationships between members and NWSA. We are all teaching about feminism, intersectionality, and social justice. The only difference is the institution in

which we teach. This study can also be useful to NWSA, who serve to empower students, especially from disenfranchised groups who are unable to attend a four-year institution.

Furthermore, the database of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges that offer Associate's degrees and/or certificates can be used as a resource on the NWSA website for use by students, faculty, administrators, and others who have an interest in this growing discipline.

Throughout this study, there have been a plethora of examples provided of the wealth of possibilities that women's and gender studies programs can have for faculty, students, and administrators, as well as the importance of the curriculum at the community college level.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several opportunities for future research to continue exploring women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. This qualitative case study focused on faculty experiences in these programs. However, it would be valuable to conduct a qualitative study of students and their first-hand experiences with these kinds of programs. Faculty perspectives on student experiences are helpful, but it might be even more beneficial to have students talk about their perspectives. The experiences of students enrolled in these classes, especially males, is also a topic that can be addressed in a future study.

Even though little research exists on students' experiences in women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, even less is known about the experiences of administrators with these programs. A feasibility study with administrators could provide

much needed information about the positive and negative implications of establishing a women's and gender studies program at a community college. This study might also help bridge the gap between administrators and faculty in terms of what a women's and gender studies program really is and the impact it can have at a community college.

Final Thoughts

In conducting this research and learning about the experiences of my colleagues who teach women's and gender studies at the community college level, I experienced several emotions—from happiness to frustration. I was excited to learn more about the discipline that is my passion, and wanted to help my colleagues by letting their voices be heard. Completing this research has strengthened my interest in feminism and social justice. I was able to reflect on the different ways that we, as educators, talk about these types of issues with our students. The depth in which the participants believe in what they are doing was inspiring.

I was frustrated about the level of elitism still present in our own international organization (NWSA). Therefore, when I was asked to be the Director of Research for the NWSA Community College Caucus and work with a team of faculty on writing about the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, I took the position with a sense of humbleness. I do not have any experience in teaching women's and gender studies at community colleges. My experience has only been at four-year institutions. However, I was aware of the academic rigor of these community college programs, and knew there was not much difference between how faculty at four-year institutions and community colleges taught women's and gender studies courses due to hearing about the experiences of my community college colleagues. I understood the

importance of helping my colleagues find an outlet for their voices, and helped add to the small body of scholarship pertaining to women's and gender studies programs at community colleges. If I can be a beneficial advocate for my colleagues, then my goal has been accomplished.

This qualitative case study has culminated into a collection of voices—voices of my sisters who are fighting the fight, and emphasizing the importance of women's and gender studies within our societal conversations. I believe Susan stated it best when she reflects on why she teaches women's and gender studies courses at her institution:

Women's studies is transformative, and has the potential to genuinely transform people's lived experiences, their lives, and their sense of possibility for themselves and the world. There is such a sense of the students' lives and their whole person. One of our principles in our department is to improve communication, and promote healthy behaviors in our students' personal, social, and work lives. We help our students take ownership of their lives and their decisions. This interdisciplinary discipline allows us to address the full experience of people's lives. For us to be able to do that in our work as educators is profound.

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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4566
FAX 515 294-4267

Date: 1/30/2015

To: Alissa Stoehr
1620 Lagomarcino

CC: Dr. Larry Ebbers
N256 Lagomarcino Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: The State of Women's and Gender Studies Programs at Community Colleges

IRB ID: 14-658

Approval Date: 1/30/2015 **Date for Continuing Review:** 1/29/2017

Submission Type: New **Review Type:** Expedited

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials** in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.
- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study**, when documented consent is required.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

APPENDIX B. RECRUITMENT EMAIL AND TELEPHONE SCRIPT

(Date)

Dear (Name of potential participant),

My name is Alissa Stoehr, and I am a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Iowa State University. I am contacting to see if you would be interested in participating in the study I am conducting for my dissertation research entitled *The Status of Women's and Gender Studies at Community Colleges*.

The purpose of my study is to present the state of women's and gender studies programs within higher education and explore the creation and maintenance of this discipline at the community college level.

Your participation would include the following:

- I will send you an informed consent document to sign and return to me by email giving your permission to participate in the study. I will answer any questions that you may have throughout the consent process.
- You will be asked to participate in an interview lasting no more than 90 minutes.

Interviews will be conducted via phone or Skype during Spring 2015.

If you are interested in participating in the study, please read and sign the attached informed consent document and email it back to me at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions during the consent process, please feel free to email me at astoehr@iastate.edu or call me at 515-451-9359.

Thank you very much for supporting my dissertation research!

Regards,

Alissa Stoehr, M.S.
Principal Investigator
Doctoral Candidate
School of Education—Iowa State University
astoehr@iastate.edu
515-451-9359

APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: The Status of Women's and Gender Studies Programs at Community Colleges

Investigator: Alissa Stoehr, M.S.

This form describes a research project. It has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary. Please discuss any questions you have about the study or about this form with the project staff before deciding to participate.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to present the state of women's and gender studies programs within higher education, and explore the creation and maintenance of the discipline at the community college level.

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a professor or administrator at a community college that offers women's and gender studies programs. You should not participate if you do not meet this criteria.

Description of Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an interview either by phone (speaker phone) or Skype, whichever is decided upon by you and the researcher. All interviews will be audiotaped. Your participation will last for no more than 90 minutes: 15 minutes to explain and submit informed consent document, 60 minutes for the interview, and 15 minutes for answering any questions you may have after completing the interview. The interview will include topics such as the nature of the women's and gender studies program that you are a part of, the timeline of your program, how your programs was created, funding issues with your program, etc. You will also be asked to provide specific documents for a document analysis, such as a mission statement, program review, syllabi, program budget, etc.

Risks or Discomforts

There is a slight risk that identities could become known in the research because of the small community of community colleges that offer women's and gender studies programs. However, every and all protection will be taken to ensure confidentiality to the best of the researcher's ability.

Benefits

If you decide to participate in this study, there will be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by adding to the literature and emphasize the importance of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges, which has not had much attention in the world of higher education. In addition,

this study will add to the small amount of literature, and bring the topic current in the research.

Costs and Compensation

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Participant Rights

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any interview questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, irb@iastate.edu, or IRB Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: You and your institution will be assigned pseudonyms during the interview process. Each interview will be recorded using a hand held recording device. All study data and records, including audio recordings, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. All electronic data will be stored on my personal laptop, which is password protected. Everything will be done throughout your involvement in this study to ensure confidentiality, such as using pseudonyms and discussing general themes from the interviews and document analysis throughout the dissertation. However, total and complete confidentiality cannot be ensured.

Questions

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Alissa Stoehr at astoehr@iastate.edu or 515-451-9359 or Dr. Larry Ebbers at lebbers@iastate.edu.

Consent and Authorization Provisions

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document,

and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

Participant's Signature

Date

APPENDIX D. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Background information

Demographic information: Name
 Institution
 Position

In what year did your institution start offering women's and gender studies courses?

In what year was your department or program created?

Does your institution have a Department? Program? Focus or Concentration? Certificate? Associate's Degree? Letter of Recognition? Courses?

How many courses do you offer in women's and gender studies at your institution?

What subjects are covered in the women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

How does your institution define a women's and gender studies program?

How many students are enrolled in women's and gender studies courses at your institution? Male v. female?

How many students graduate from your institution with a degree, certificate, etc. in women's and gender studies? Do you see any trends?

What types of students enroll in women's and gender studies courses at your institution? Student characteristics?

Why do you think students enroll in women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Who teaches women's and gender studies courses at your institution? How many faculty teach in your women's and gender studies program?

Where are women's and gender studies courses/programs located within your institution?

How is your women's and gender studies program funded? What is the level of institutional support for your program at your institution?

How profitable are women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

If you have a program chair/coordinator for your program, does that person get compensated with course release, additional pay, etc.

Does your women's and gender studies program/department have a mission statement or a core set of values?

How do women's and gender studies courses impact general education requirements at your institution?

How do you think women's and gender courses impact students at your institution?

Why did you think the field of women's and gender studies needed to be added to your institution's curriculum?

What hurdles have you had to overcome when establishing a women's and gender studies program at your institution?

How do you recruit students to the women's and gender studies program at your institution?

Do you feel that the campus climate has changed because of the presence of a women's and gender studies program at your institution?

Reflections on the discipline of women's and gender studies

What is the current status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?

What events, beliefs, attitudes, and/or policies are currently shaping women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?

What type of impact has the history of women's and gender studies within higher education had on the field at the community college level?

How do you think student's aspirations inform their experiences in the women's and gender studies classroom?

What can we learn about the relationship between women's and gender studies and community colleges from an intersectional analyses?

Personal reflections on women's and gender studies

What is your interest in women's and gender studies at the community college level?

How did you get involved in teaching women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Why do you teach women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

APPENDIX E. AUDIT TRAIL- DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

Name	IC Sent	IC Rcvd	Document List Sent	Documents Rcvd	Interview Guide Sent	Interview completed	Transcript submitted	Transcript rcvd
Rachel	X	X	X	X	X	2/26/15 by email	-----	-----
Dana	X	X	X	X	X	2/27/15 1-2:30pm CST	X	X
Jane	X	X	X	X	X	2/27/15 4:10-5:40pm CST	X	X
Dee	X	X	X	X	X	3/1/15 by email	-----	-----
Elizabeth	X	X	X	X	X	3/13/15 10-11:30am CST	X	X
Angela	X	X	X	X	X	3/13/15 4-5:30pm CST	X	X
Lisa	X	X	X	X	X	3/14/15 12-1:30pm CST	X	X
Susan	X	X	X	X	X	3/16/25 4:30-6:00pm CST	X	X

APPENDIX F. AUDIT TRAIL-CODED INTERVIEW GUIDE

all identifiers have been removed

Background information

Elizabeth-Assistant Professor-English, Speech, and Theatre

Dee-Women's Studies and Anthropology Instructor

Lisa-Women's Studies Instructor and Program Coordinator; Former Chair in 2010

Jane-Women's and Gender Studies Instructor

Angela-Professor and Chair of Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies

Dana-Chair of the programs that exists on 13 campuses in the community college system within her state; lead instructor for the Introduction to Women's Studies course

Susan-Chair, Women's Studies Department

Rachel-Professor, Language and Literature

In what year did your institution start offering women's and gender studies courses? In what year was your department or program created?

Elizabeth-1998

Dee-1971/1973

Lisa-Spring 1971 (offered first course directed specifically to women's interests and educational objectives/1975

Jane-1986

Angela-late 90s (interdisciplinary courses)/2001 (program and department approved)

Does your institution have a department? Program? Focus or concentration? Certificate? Associate's degree? Letter of recognition? Courses?

Elizabeth-Associate of Arts with a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies

Dee-Women's Studies Department; 18-credit certificate program

Leslie-Women's Studies Department

Jane-Certificate program started in Spring 2010; 2 WGS courses and general education requirements (arts and sciences or humanities) make up certificate; can graduate with AA degree and certificate or just certificate; no program or department

Angela-started out as the Consortium for Women's Studies; Women's and Gender Studies Department (renaming official F15); Associate's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Dana-We are the only stand alone program at my institution; also have an online program; Associate of Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Women's Studies; offer a certificate only to students who don't earn an associate's degree

Susan-offered first AA degree in Women's Studies

How many courses do you offer in women's and gender studies at your institution? What subjects are covered in the women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Elizabeth-Sociology of Sex and Gender, Biology of Women, Women's Literature, and Women in the Creative and Performing Arts (no introductory course); challenge with creating and introductory course is that if the course is housed in just one department, only the faculty members in that department can teach it; who is also going to fund it; if make it an interdisciplinary studies course, anyone with a Master's degree can teach it

Dee-9 Women's Studies courses; 10 courses from other departments; Introductory course; Lesbian Culture; Gender and Culture; Women's Spirituality; Women and Empowerment; Women: Response to Violence; Ecofeminism; Women Poets of the World; Global Rights of Women

Leslie-WOMN courses, interdepartmental courses, and infused courses; all considered WS courses; 6 WOMN courses (5 for credit and 1 non-credit); 32 interdepartmental courses and 7 infused courses

Jane-2 WGS courses; introductory course in both Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences

Angela-Introductory course; women in religion; women and health; women in sports; anthropology of sex and gender; leadership for women in business; gender in society; psychology of gender; women's history; women's literature; activism; missing a women in science course

How does your institution define a women's and gender studies program?

Jane-interdisciplinary; prioritizes intersectionality in terms of theoretical frameworks; should be embedded in every course

Dana-We changed from Women's Studies to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies in 2013 (goes into effect Fall 2015). The program has historically had an interdisciplinary focus on the study of women and women's contributions to various disciplines. In 2013, we added an LGBT Studies courses which marks the beginning of a shift towards a more inclusive, broader language and understanding of what women's studies looks like.

How many students are enrolled in women's and gender studies courses at your institution? Male v. female?

Elizabeth-equally proportioned between males and females

Dee-730/year

Jane-100 students/year; offer section at women's prison=25

- state community college system-offers higher education opportunities to inmates; can earn time off for credentials earned; Provost taught first WGS course

Angela-500 students/semester

Dana-approximately 518 students/Spring 15 semester

How many students graduate from your institution with a degree, certificate, etc. in women's and gender studies? Do you see any trends?

Dee-approximately 10 students/year complete the certificate

Jane-7 graduates within last 5 years

Angela-The most that we had in one year is 3 graduates.

What types of students enroll in women's and gender studies courses at your institution? Student characteristics?

Elizabeth-Students that need to meet their gen ed requirements and/or have an interest in WGS; run out of classes to take; students from all over my state with all different ages, socioeconomic and racial statuses; some students come in with no knowledge of the actual terms and/or a certain level of bias; the goal at that point is to say that I am not trying to change your view, but just try and be open to the possibility that other people have different views and respect that difference. I can hold my view, and can listen to a number of different views without feeling like I need to change you. I just need to understand and respect your difference, just as you can learn to understand and respect mine; less need to push back when taking this approach; get them to simply have an intellectual understanding of the issues and people's perspectives; and see that both views are valid on some level; students can see that they are more nuances than maybe they thought there were; other students who come and are ready to go; they understand the terms and issues, and want to know how to use the knowledge in their real life; need to balance those conversations so that they can learn from each other; because even those who come without an awareness have come with life experiences that certainly speak to those issues, and they just were not aware.

Dee-student body is the most diverse in my state=87% are parents and one of the largest Muslim/Somali populations in the region; generally from a lower SES, living in central urban neighborhoods, underemployed, and often homeless or do not have stable housing; largely female, between 50-70% students of color; large number of LGBT students

Jane-very generational; 60% white; 90% female; 1/3 already know about WGS issues, 1/3 think it is fun, and 1/3 are there because it is required because the class counts for both a general education and a cultural diversity requirement

Angela-required courses increase gender enrollment; also helps if they are cross-listed; our campus is one of the most diverse campuses in my state; 71% Hispanic; average student age is 24

Dana-Our institution has a high rate of non-traditional age and first generation students; seem to be more women in the courses

Susan-We are an open enrollment institution, so we really see ourselves as serving the community. There has been pressure for us to become more of a junior college. We see our mission more broadly: includes students who want to transfer and who have other goals and are just looking for enrichment. Most students are ages 20-24, Asian, and female.

Why do you think students enroll in women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Dee-strong interest in social activism, anti-oppression work, and personal growth; concerned about growing inequities along gender oppression lines; seeking some place to learn about their own gender identity and related issues; Human Services, Law Enforcement, and Addiction Counseling programs draw students

Lisa-Interest in the Sexual Health Educator's Certificate which is linked to the sexual health program; personal enrichment, consciousness raising, and feminist engagement

Dana-A lot of the women's studies courses are also designated as interdisciplinary studies, which is a requirement for the associate's degree. Some of the courses also have an ethnic studies designation. A lot of the students find the material in women's studies courses to be compelling and new, and really helpful for understanding their own lives. Students have much less of a sense of entitlement here. I really think that it's about class and being first-generation, so students do push back sometimes and resist, but very seldom do I have students who are angrily and forcefully resisting the ideas, partly because maybe they have a sense that they wouldn't know how to do that. There is also just a lack of understanding, but it's also a refusal to see structures of inequality for what they are and see them in it...A sense of independence. That is the resistance; genuine curiosity and interest; feel it will help in their careers; interest in workplace issues such as diversity and globalization

Susan-Growing interest in our culture about feminism. The impact of social media seems to be changing some trends. A lot of students come to us identifying as feminists or already having a gender analysis. They want some academic experience with feminism. Other students take women's studies courses to satisfy general education requirements.

Who teaches women's and gender studies courses at your institution? How many faculty teach in your women's and gender studies program?

Elizabeth-primarily full-time faculty who are committed to women's and gender studies

Dee-6 faculty; 1 FT

Jane-2 FT faculty and 2 adjuncts; start online courses in Fall 2015

Angela-All the faculty come from their own departments. Part of that is that a lot of us did not have the opportunities to have degrees in women's studies; a lot of different backgrounds (Art History, English, Sociology, Business, Anthropology, etc.); PT instructor that will be housed in Women's Studies

Dana-All of the 14 faculty are affiliates, and housed in another academic department. You need to be approved to teach a women's studies course.

Susan-hired first full-time Women's Studies instructor in 1994

Where are women's and gender studies courses/programs located within your institution?

Elizabeth-located in their own department and/or discipline

Dee-Women's Studies Department and other departments

Dana-We are a self-sustaining program. We have our own budgets and Chair. We are the only type of this program within the state system.

How is your women's and gender studies program funded? What is the level of institutional support for your program at your institution?

Elizabeth-same funding that we get to teach any course; faculty are working with their own departmental funds; enjoyed a lot of support from the administration, especially with president and vice-president, in terms of activities and projects that we are building

Dee-state funding since we are a public institution; local budget based on enrollment; strong support at the institutional level; \$500/year including printing costs

Lisa-unrestricted general fund and grant funding

Jane-\$175/year; travel funding, etc. comes from home department

Angela-We are funded through the Humanities and Social Sciences division, where we have a special line item in the budget. \$1700-\$2000 which is enough for supplies, etc.; We are the only department in our division that actually has a special budget. During the recession, they cut all travel funds.

Dana-We are funded by money from online courses which is directly attached to how many classes we teach, funding for professional development and assessment (\$6000)

How profitable are women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Dee-Courses always fill, but there is generally not a direct profit; tuition only covers part of the expenses and we rely on state funding for the rest; full classes do not pay for themselves

Angela-Our tuition is \$46/unit. We are the cheapest community college in the country. We get funded by the state based on the numbers of full-time equivalent students that we have. During recessionary times, we deal with the amount the state gives us. Our classes range from 48-60 students, so we generate a lot of FTEs, and we only have one faculty.

Dana-Women's Studies is the online program at our institution that actually makes money.

If you have a program chair/coordinator for your program, does that person get compensated with course release, additional pay, etc?

Elizabeth-Committee for Women's and Gender Studies with two committee chairs that ensure things go well in terms of the concentration and also manage the Women's History Month program; no compensation or course release; voluntary basis

Dee-Coordinator receives 4 credits of release time/year to coordinate multiple departments; However, I do all of the coordinator jobs for Women's Studies

Jane-no course release; teaching load does not change

Angela-no course release

Dana-one course release/year; additional pay in summer (\$6000-\$7000)

Does your women's and gender studies program/department have a mission statement or a core set of values?

Elizabeth-offer alternative academic perspectives to enrich the social and cultural life and to foster a comfortable learning environment for our community; embraces the liberal arts tradition of examining and interrogating mainstream ideologies that restrict understanding of the varieties of human experience; develop and implement curricula that incorporate feminist ideology and pedagogy and offer alternative perspectives of sex, gender, sexuality, and the specific experiences of women; sponsor workshops and programs that give an empowered voice to women and to groups marginalized in terms of gender and sexuality; support and empower women—academically and socially—who bring with them the pressure that accompany the multiple roles expected of them; encourage a safe and comfortable learning and working environment for all students and members by providing and promoting resources that increase awareness of sex, gender, and sexuality

Dee-Help examine the world from the perspectives of ethnically diverse women and become an agent of positive change for women and their communities; explores women's

realities in a wide variety of academic disciplines; grounded in feminist thought and activism, women's studies will help you understand how race, social class, age, ability, appearance, and sexual identity intersect to affect women's lives and societies as a whole; women's studies course affirm cultural diversity, widen understanding of the impact of social institutions, and empower students to become thinkers, leaders, and activists

Dana-We have bylaws (guiding document), institutional mission statement, and the state system's mission statement.

How do women's and gender studies courses impact general education requirements at your institution?

Dee-Women's Studies courses are available as electives, and fill most of the 10 "goal areas" in our AA degree requirements

Jane-WGS courses count as both general education and cultural diversity requirements

Angela-We have two general education plans: one for the State System and one for the University system. Our women's studies 101 course counts as a social science option for the general education requirements. We really are intentional in making sure that the women's studies do fit in to the general education requirements.

Dana-Sometimes, there is discussion on whether or not we are offering too many women's studies courses. There has been some concern that the popularity of our classes are negatively impacting other disciplines. We impact the curriculum in fairly positive ways, especially as our institution focuses more on globalization, communication skills, awareness, inclusion, and diversity.

How do you think women's and gender courses impact students at your institution?

Elizabeth-Students start to really recognize and appreciate diversity, and how their own identities differ them from other students; adds another point of awareness for students and supports them in opening their minds a bit; also impacting students who are attending events like Women's History Month; has a partnership with 2 private women's colleges where students can get information about how to transfer to these institutions on a full scholarship; think that it garners a lot of respectability within the institution

Dee-Students commonly report on evaluations that women's studies courses are life-changing, empowering, and feel that they should be required for everyone. Informally, I see many students changing majors after taking women's studies courses to areas that are more politically informed

Lisa-part of Diversity Collaborative (includes 5 ethnic studies departments); brings gender into all of those departments; lots of intersectional programming; HS program

Jane-Students never thought about these issues before; think more about gender inequities; more nursing students are taking the courses-evaluating their own discipline and know they need to know about these issues

Angela-They teach students how to critically think, and open their minds. They learn about diversity and inclusivity, and expose them to things that some other classes may not.

Dana-Students are learning more life skills, and our faculty are putting in this type of “emotional labor” that is both rewarding and exhausting. Teaching is social work, especially when you are working with disenfranchised populations

Susan-It is really about transformative pedagogy, and education for liberation. That is how students are reflecting in our classes. Women’s studies transforms a sense of possibility for students and for their world so that they can be involved in their communities. We see that students, particularly in other representative groups of higher education, have higher GPAs and levels of academic success at our college than students who have not taken a women’s studies class before. I think that women’s studies have taught students to be more engaged in and onerous of their own education

Why did you think a women’s and gender studies program needed to be added to your institution’s curriculum?

Dee-Our program was developed early in the history of the academic movement. It was, and still is, important on our campus because of the diversity of our student population. Courses address anti-oppression work, intersections with multiple oppression dynamics, and offer students a way to find a stronger voice and presence in their lives which are often undervalued in the larger society

Lisa-Women were not included in courses

Jane-WGS is one more potential transfer option; growth of WGS in my state; very important subject; students have been interviewed and surveyed and they want more classes

Angela-There was a void in the curriculum. The women that started the program were second-wave feminists. They saw an opportunity, and decided to see what would happen.

Dana-We needed to contribute to the fight, and give women a voice on campus. Gender inequality and pay still continues to be a big issue. There was a desire as a state institution to engender these conversations in communities around the state.

Susan-Around 1971, we were faculty that were very active in theorizing feminism, and bringing it to our community college. We were engaged in feminist efforts to move the process of consciousness-raising into the community college. We wanted to offer classes that were meaningful to our students, and that met their needs and responded to their concerns.

What hurdles have you had to overcome when establishing a women's and gender studies program at your institution?

Elizabeth-struggle with tracking students who are actual women's and gender studies students so we can help advise them and support them in transferring to a four-year college; no institutional support in tracking subprograms; all tracking has been built on informal connections faculty have with the students

Dee-The founders in the 1970s had to work hard to get acceptance for the idea, get additional courses approved, and to find a way to have faculty credentialed in a field that was not yet established; currently, we struggle with limited room for growth at a time when enrollments are down across the college even though the Women's Studies courses remains nearly fully enrolled; We do not want to lose women-focused curriculum in favor of gender-focused courses, so it has been difficult to meet the needs and interests in both directions; our only real hurdle is finding qualified adjunct instructors who understand our student population well enough to teach our curriculum; generally, we are a successful and well supported department.

Jane-At the system level, there have no real problems; the administration is very student and faculty friendly; However, may not be supportive in growing the program because of tight budget, but is personally and philosophically supportive; WGS classes fill right away

Angela-We have been institutionally very much supported, and a lot of that came from when the program was first being developed, the vice president and president from our division were feminists. There may have been some push back from male colleagues wondering why these types of courses were needed. There is also the crazy bureaucracy that is our state community college system. There are over 100 community colleges in my state. Any degree that is created has to go through the chancellor's office. We were the first to have an associate's degree in Women's Studies. The other problem with bureaucracy is that there isn't a top code for WGS (allows us to create classes at the community college level). For student backlash, I get more pushback based on religion than I do on feminism.

Dana-Currently, our state budget right now is a huge issue. We are looking at least a 20% cut in our base budget. Our institution is not at risk.

Susan-Convincing our colleagues that WS is valuable. I do not see evidence of a nuanced understanding of some of the pedagogy or feminist goals. It is frustrating to not have buy-in. The current administration seems to have some level of animosity towards diversity. Our goal is to be progressive and stand up for justice. The accrediting agency wants us to have more of a narrow mission which we see as taking the "community" out of "community colleges." The underlying assumption may be that WS is not necessary for students to get a job, to get framed as workers in our culture, or for them to get a feminist education. The underlying hurdle is that we don't have that buy-in on that basic idea across the state. We need to convince people how transforming WS is to our students. The students are very articulate about how WS has been important to them.

How do you recruit students to the women's and gender studies program at your institution?

Elizabeth-Students primarily come on their own; advertise through the course schedule, catalog, and post fliers; no real active recruiting because we know that all of the courses we offer meet a general education requirement; think we naturally recruit those students who are kind of curious or interested in women's and gender studies and also have the incentive of completing general education requirements

Dee-word of mouth and advisor recommendations

Lisa-2 minute presentations to get students interested in Project Survive and sexual violence courses; campus events; recruitment through the high schools

Jane-Word of mouth by both students and faculty, fliers, emails, and directly talking to students

Angela-fliers and posters; talk to students who are fulfilling their general education requirements; word of mouth; popular teachers; need to do a better job of intentional recruiting

Dana-Word of mouth; revising web info

Susan-word of mouth; use of program guide; Project Survive is also very helpful-becomes an entryway into women's studies for a lot of students; community presentations, campus events, and partnerships with other departments. We, as community colleges, offer such an important role in the bridge between academic feminisms. We try and counter that ivory tower mentality, or writing that is not accessible or understandable.

Do you feel that the campus climate has changed because of the presence of a women's and gender studies program at your institution?

Elizabeth-In 2003, fighting against an older generation of professors who just wanted to stay focused on the discipline and didn't see the reason to talk about women's and gender studies; currently a much more liberal understanding; have been working in the interests of both the students and the institution; moving things forward and really thinking about those issues outside of the classroom that can impact the academic lives of the students; earned respect over time and really established that what we do is really purposeful work

Dee-Our students tend to be active in naming issues they see on campus supported by the work in our courses, so issues are challenged and we tend to bring in events and programming that involve students and employees in learning more, raising awareness, and partnering with community agencies

Lisa-The campus is far less sexist. Women's Coalition pioneered the first few social justice courses and the study of intersectionality of identities

Jane-Conversations are happening differently; faculty are talking more; other faculty are introducing activism projects into their courses; classes make the difference, not necessarily the certificate itself—students find their voice

Angela-The faculty that teach the women's studies courses and the courses themselves increase the number of safe spaces for lots of different kinds of students. I have seen a huge shift in our students over the last 15 years in terms of their attitudes with things like LGBT issues. We are having larger discussion about inclusivity, sexual orientation, and disabilities.

Dana-On my campus, I have definitely seen a shift in the campus culture and climate. The increase in class enrollment is surely a distinction of that shift. At one time, we estimated that about 10% of the entire student population on our campus were enrolled in women's studies courses.

Susan-We are part of a meaningful feminist community, including Project Survive, the Intersecting Identities Conference, Women's resource center, Queer Resource Center, and the Diversity Project. These events go a long way in making this a safer place for all students. We have the first LGBT studies department in the nation.

Reflections on the discipline of women's and gender studies

What is the current status of women's and gender studies programs at community colleges?

Elizabeth-More people are becoming aware that at community colleges, we are in fact doing real academic work; more cross-programming with and reaching out to 4-year institutions in the area; great opportunity to recruit and build more knowledge about our programs

Dee-The status is shifting because of the pressure and need to create more gender-focused curriculum which is causing women-focused courses and departments to dilute and to some extent disappear

Lisa-When I was Chair, I was part of the NWSA Community College Caucus. We are losing touch with grassroots feminism that began the movement in the first place.

Jane-In the past 6 years attending NWSA, there have been growing caucus conversations; stronger presence at NWSA, but still invisible

Angela-We have a lot of work to do in my state. We need to emphasize an inclusive perspective. We have 110 community colleges, and only 10 of them have women's studies programs. Do we mirror the 4-year schools in terms of proportion?

Dana-Not a great network, especially in NWSA

Susan-In my state, we are developing a new major and transfer degree in social justice studies. The legislature gave us this charge: "You community colleges get together and

make your courses articulate and make it easier for students to transfer to our state institutions and then graduate within a certain amount of time.” (ex. English and psychology) There seems to be a growing interest in feminist education. I do have a sense that we have the strongest and most established program here in my state.

What events, beliefs, attitudes, and/or policies are currently shaping women’s and gender studies programs at community colleges?

Dee-That somehow women’s studies must be responsible for all curriculum related to gender in any capacity; frustrating that we are expected to give up important work to room for necessary expansion that should be funded in its own right

Lisa-Gender fluidity and transgender issues

Jane-NWSA experience; elitism and no sisterhood at NWSA; very concerned with students’ transfer experiences-stereotypes about community college students not being as good

Angela-People talk a really good game about social justice and research inequalities. It’s like community colleges don’t even exist in NWSA. We need to publish about ourselves because no one knows what we do. I don’t even know if they even go to the extent that you are going to.

Dana-Programs are poorly funded, and there is not a lot, if any, professional development money. Not able to network if I can’t travel to conferences. Within the larger fiscal crisis within education, the smaller programs, like women’s studies, are the first to go. There is a perception that women’s studies is not a serious and rigorous academic discipline.

What type of impact has the history of women’s and gender studies within higher education had at the community college level?

Dee-As it has grown, it allows us more legitimacy. We often have to justify course development according to transfer school’s curricula, so expansion and success allows us to grow.

How do you think student’s aspirations inform their experiences in the women’s and gender studies classroom?

Dee- Our students are generally ambitious, and they want to make their lives better and to support their families economically and in other ways. They tend to have high aspirations as far as seeking to understand how issues of equality, sexism, and other oppression dynamics impact their personal lives, their communities, schools, and faith structures. That brings a strong focus and deeply connected discussion around issues that equally personal and academic into the classroom.

What can we learn about the relationship between women's and gender studies programs and community colleges from an intersectional analyses?

Elizabeth-could do a better job of including intersectionality in my teaching; bringing different voices into the curriculum

Dee-There is an immense need on our campus, and along the spectrum, to understand oppression mentality in all of its intersections. Women's studies is often the destination for students wanting to study anti-racism work, queer studies, poverty, classism, and social justice movements.

Lisa-Intersectionality is one of our founding principles.

Jane-Class is very important; we don't feel a sense of entitlement from students; students are finding words for what they are experiencing (discrimination); Intersectionality is seen as a framework for social change as opposed to just dealing with identity and oppression; effective strategizing on how to help students and how to create change in a system that already oppresses us all educationally

Dana-Our work is so informed by intersectionality, and helps us to think broadly about what women's studies actually is. We are working in the margins in a lot of ways. We are doing certain work that is easier to do because we exist in this liminal space and the in-between (program v. department discussion); However, are we too interdisciplinary to be our own discipline

Susan-The institutionalization of intersectionality; interlocking systems of oppression and ways that difference can be defined; gender cannot be removed or isolated from the systems of oppression

Angela-Only talking about one perspective is not going to get through to our students at all. In order to make our classes have an impact, we seek out opportunities to use examples that their experiences. That means talking about class, race, sexuality, and ability. To understand that not all white people are privileged because a lot of them have this impression that all White people have money. It's a really important part of women's and gender studies. The name women's and gender studies has been in a space over the last few decades where it's been this place where people with marginalized identities in the institutions have found a safe space where it's queer studies, LGBT studies, disability studies...they found safe spaces in the women's studies classrooms. The name (women's and gender studies) is limiting because of this idea of intersectionality. The adding of gender is inclusive, because it forces people to realize that it is about other marginalized identities. It is not talking about women specifically. It definitely takes a more political turn when you add gender.

Personal reflections on women's and gender studies

What is your interest in women's and gender studies programs at the community college level?

Dee-Professionally, I am the only full-time person in the field. Additionally, I am passionate about the impact of these courses on student's views and personal growth.

Lisa-I started doing "Third world liberation poetry" in the mid-1950s, and my feminist consciousness deepened as I became a mother. I approached the former chairs, and got my class within the arts. I then started teaching a violence against women course, and doing rape prevention work at my institution's Medical Center. I wanted a full-time job, so I created the position.

Jane-mentor story

Dana-I attended a private women's liberal arts college, and took classes that talked about issues within women's studies, but was not getting that disciplinary framing.

Susan-Having this strong program at our institution does offer transformation to students. This is a population that has not always had access to discussing these types of issues. I am definitely at the community college level because of being able to work with a broader base of students, specifically those students from under-represented groups.

Angela-I realized that the publish or perish thing wasn't for me. I actually wanted to do social justice work. I wanted to actually teach students at this level who wanted an education. I also feel like I get more freedom to teach what I want in the women's studies program. I get to do something that I love without the restrictions of being the silo of my department.

How did you get involved in teaching women's and gender studies courses at your institution?

Elizabeth-wanted to teach writing and literature; started adjuncting at another community college in the area; challenge of learning to work with varying levels of prior knowledge and background is just exciting to me; was welcomed by female faculty members who were teaching women's and gender studies, and started attending committee meetings; a lot of on-the-job training; started working with the committee, started teaching emphasis courses, and then took over women's literature and children's literature

Dee-I shifted from my original discipline of Cultural Anthropology, and gradually moved more into the department as retirements and departmental growth created space for me

Jane-networking with women who were teaching introductory WGS course in the Arts & Humanities section; game-changing for me both professionally and personally

Dana-It was used as a tactic to hire me because I was hired to teach English.

Susan-After I graduated with my BA in feminist studies, my goal was to be involved in

education for critical consciousness. That was my version of changing the world—looking at the role of education in not only producing workers, but also community education. It is also about labeling what I teach “women’s studies.”

Angela-I was going to my institution’s website and saw this women’s consortium which was the beginning of the women’s studies program. I thought, “You know, regardless of what happens in my department, I know that there are people on campus that are committed to the same things I am committed to.” It is women’s studies that brought me here.

Why do you teach women’s and gender studies courses at your institution?

Elizabeth-I love teaching. I love working with students and getting that “aha” moment. ; great problem solving aspect to it; working with students who have a variety of different goals; feel like I make a real difference with students who need actually more exposure to cultural things-some of my students have never even read a novel before; also like to work with students who are looking to go deeper and learn to think more critically; want to empower students to make the world a better place; I feel like my work is a work of empowerment. I can actually support students before they give up hope that they can actually make a difference as well. Here are the tools you need, and you can do whatever you want to do

Dee-I believe deeply that the paradigm shifts that come from women’s studies transform lived, and transformed lives change society.

Lisa-It is a political commitment, and a devotion to social justice issues. I also have a working class consciousness, so I love working with these types of students. I feel a real devotion to feminism.

Jane-The world needs it; we need more social justice; everyone needs to have a voice; way to talk to students; help parents talk to their kids; Teaching is Activism!; helps people think differently

Dana-I feel that I have real life impact with my students. This is education changing people’s lives. I feel the work that I do is social justice work.

Susan-Women’s studies is transformative, and has the potential to genuinely transform people’s lived experiences, their lives, and their sense of possibility for themselves and the world. There is such a sense of the students’ lives and their whole person. One of our principles in our department is to improve communication, and promote healthy behaviors in our students’ personal, social, and work lives. We help our students take ownership of their lives and their decisions. This interdisciplinary discipline allows us to address the full experience of people’s lives. For us to be able to do that in our work as educators is profound.

Angela-I get to teach students how to think critically think about structural inequalities, whether it be class, race, sexuality, ability, or gender. Students start to recognize that

they are not along in their life experiences. This is social justice work. I teach women's studies at a community college because that is the choice that I have made, not because I am not qualified to teach anywhere else.

**APPENDIX G. WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES PROGRAMS THAT OFFER
ASSOCIATE'S DEGREES AND/OR CERTIFICATES AT
COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

<u>Name of Institution</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Type of Degree/Certificate</u>
Anne Arundel Community College	MD	Associate of Arts degree-Transfer Studies with an option in Gender and Sexuality Studies; Gender and Sexuality Studies certificate; Gender and Sexuality Studies letter of recognition
Bergen Community College	NJ	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with an option in Women's Studies
Berkeley City College	CA	Certificate of Proficiency in Women's Studies
Brookdale Community College	NJ	Associate of Arts degree with an option in Women's and Gender Studies
Bucks County Community College	PA	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with an emphasis in Women's Studies
Cabrillo College	CA	Associate of Arts transfer degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies
Casper College	WY	Associate of Arts degree in Women's and Gender Studies; Women's and Gender Studies Certificate
Central Lakes College	MN	Certificate in Women's Studies
Century College	MN	Certificate in Gender Studies
Cerritos College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Chandler-Gilbert Community College	AZ	Academic Certificate in Women's Studies
City College of San Francisco	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies; Sexual Health Education certificate
Clark Community College	WA	Certificate in Women's Studies
College of Lake County	IL	Associate of Arts degree with a concentration in Gender and Sexuality Studies
College of Southern Nevada	NV	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies
Community College of Allegheny County	PA	Certificate in Women's Studies
Community College of Baltimore County	MD	Associate of Arts degree in Humanities and Social Sciences with a Women's Studies Transfer Pattern
Consumnes River College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies-Women's Studies
Evergreen Valley College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in General Studies with an emphasis in Women's Studies
Foothill College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Fresno City College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Front Range Community College	CO	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Gateway Community College	AZ	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Women's Studies
Greenfield Community College	MA	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with an option in Gender and Women's Studies
Gulf Coast Community College	FL	Associate of Arts Transfer Track degree in Women's Studies
Harold Washington College	IL	Associate of Arts degree with a concentration in Women's Studies
Hawkeye Community College	IA	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies

Herkimer County Community College	NY	Associate of Arts degree in Gender Studies
Howard Community College	MD	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Women's Studies
Hudson County Community College	NJ	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Inver Hills Community College	MN	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Gender and Women's Studies
Jefferson Community and Technical College	KY	Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies
Lane Community College	OR	Associate of Arts Transfer degree in Women's Studies
Mercer County Community College	NJ	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a concentration in Women's Studies
Mesa Community College	AZ	Academic Certificate in Women's Studies
Minneapolis Community and Technical College	MN	Certificate in Women's Studies
Monterey Peninsula College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Montgomery College	MD	Certificate in Women's Studies
Napa Valley College	CA	Certificate of Completion in Integrative Studies in Women and Gender
Normandale Community College	MN	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies
North Seattle Community College	WA	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Gender and Women's Studies
Northampton Community College	PA	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies
Norwalk Community College	CT	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Liberal Arts with a Women's Studies sequence
Oakton Community College	IL	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies
Ohlone College	CA	Certificate of Accomplishment in Women's and Gender Studies
Onondonga Community College	NY	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a minor in Women's Studies
Paradise Valley Community College	AZ	Academic Certificate in Women's Studies
Parkland College	IL	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts with a concentration in Women's Studies
Pasadena City College	CA	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Gender, Ethnicity, and Multicultural Studies
Portland Community College	OR	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Women's Studies
Prince George's Community College	MD	Associate of Arts degree in General Studies with a concentration in Women's Studies
Queensborough Community College	NY	Associate of Arts degree in General Studies with a concentration in Women's Studies
Rose State College	OK	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Sacramento City College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Saddleback College	CA	Associate of Arts degree with a transfer major in Women's and Gender Studies
San Diego Mesa College	CA	Associate of Arts degree with a transfer major in Women's Studies
Santa Monica College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Santa Rosa Junior College	CA	Associate of Arts degree with a major in Women's Studies
Shoreline Community College	WA	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Gender and Women's Studies
Sierra College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Southwestern College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies
Suffolk County Community College	NY	Associate of Arts degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences with a specialization in Women's Studies
Three Rivers Community College	CT	Certificate in Women's Studies
Tompkins Cortland Community College	NY	Associate of Science degree in Liberal Arts and Sciences: Women's and Gender Studies
Triton College	IL	Associate of Arts transfer degree in Women's and Gender Studies
University of Wisconsin Colleges	WI	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies
Walla Walla Community College	WA	Associate of Arts-Direct Transfer Agreement degree with a major in Women's Studies
Walters State Community College	TN	Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in Women's Studies
West Valley College	CA	Associate of Arts degree in Women's Studies