Program Background:

For years, members of the faculty of the Women's Studies Program, as well as faculty affiliated with the Program, have been working closely with graduate students to assist them in developing a current, robust understanding of the current trends in the literature on transnational feminist studies, global feminisms, and gender. Feminist research in a variety of disciplines has expanded rapidly over the past several decades, and Women's Studies faculty have often handled this work, as well as the thesis and dissertation service that goes with it, on a case-by-case basis (often using directed reading courses). In the late 1990’s it became clear to us that a better and more efficient use of our time, as well as a better graduate experience for our students, required development of organized graduate level education in Women’s Studies at Manoa.

Our Graduate Certificate in Advanced Women's Studies (“certificate program” or “program”) began admitting students in Fall of 2001. It was originally intended to be quite small—no more than 5-6 students per year, but due to student demand for graduate level work in Women’s Studies we have more recently capped enrollment at 15 certificate students and submitted an ATP for an M.A. in Women’s Studies.

The certificate program has enabled faculty in Women's Studies, and our affiliate faculty in other departments, to organize the work we had been doing with students on a case-by-case basis. It has also permitted graduate students interested in gender and feminist studies to earn a credential that accurately reflects their training and experience. The program is both flexible and non-polemical; the content is largely, but not exclusively, driven by the student's own academic interests and concerns.

(I) **Is the program organized to meet its objectives?**

The certificate program does its work by connecting to other graduate and professional programs in the university. It can be thought of as a "value-added" program – enabling students in other fields to enhance their work in their home disciplines by developing feminist research skills, bases of knowledge, and analytic abilities. Our certificate students then use what they have learned in Women’s Studies to extend and enhance their M.A., Ph.D., or professional studies degrees. We contribute to the development of excellent feminist scholarship at the graduate level by enhancing the feminist components of graduate education across the university.

Our certificate students are already admitted to other graduate degree programs, and they self select to engage in additional and rigorous program in feminist and gender studies. As such, we have not excluded students who want to study with us even if they do not have prior background in feminist or gender studies; our approach has
been to steer such students into upper division undergraduate courses so they can obtain appropriate background and determine whether they are, in fact, interested in engaging in graduate level feminist/gender studies before actually matriculating into our program. We have also developed a new graduate course intended to serve as a primer for students who do not have extensive background in feminist and/or gender studies and beginning Spring 2008 will steer some students to this course before suggesting they enroll in feminist methods or feminist theory.

The specific learning objectives of the certificate program concentrate on four arenas within the general rubric of feminist and gender studies:

A) Feminist methods of inquiry and theoretical analysis. Students explore sex/gender as an analytical category by asking what this category means, what purposes the prevailing binary notions gender serve and how gender is constituted in past, current, and future social, biological, cultural, and economic contexts. They work in a range of feminist theories with an emphasis on transnational and global theories and approaches to issues such as political action, reproduction, and sexual orientation.

B) Feminist knowledge. Students learn about the pervasive impact of gender relations on thoughts, actions, and prevailing constructions of reality. They also become conversant in array of feminist theories and arguments about such issues as political action, reproduction, and sexual orientation.

C) Sex/gender as social-political categories of power and privilege. Students examine the interaction of sex/gender with race/ethnicity, class, sexuality and other primary vectors of power and privilege as relevant to nearly all domains of human experience. They have opportunities to explore the dynamics of these interactions with emphasis on the evolving multicultural milieu of Hawai‘i and the Asia/Pacific region with a strong program emphasis on transnational analysis.

D) Sources of sex/gender differences. Students examine both the empirical and philosophical debates concerning sameness and difference as these relate to gender. Sources of gender/sex differences as well as the significance of these are considered.

We offer eight different courses at the graduate level and opportunities for directed study through WS 699. We typically offer 2-3 graduate level courses per semester, including our regular faculty seminar series through which women’s research and related issues are highlighted. The seminar series is open to the public and typically draws 30-60 visitors, many of whom come from other campuses and the community to listen to presentations. The series includes the work of faculty from various UH and other campuses, visiting researchers, and local community members. This seminar series is also the venue through which certificate students present their capstone papers each semester.
(2) Is the program meeting its learning objectives for students?

The certificate program was designed to provide a rigorous, dynamic, multidisciplinary graduate program of study in transnational feminist scholarship and global feminism with an emphasis on Hawai‘i, Asia and the Pacific that combines project-focused research and community involvement with coursework. As such, additional and important subjective assessments of program effectiveness such as the number and level of participation of core faculty, response and degree of support from students’ MA, MFA and Ph.D. advisors, response and degree of community involvement in research and/or community involvement projects, etc., has been ongoing. We continuously evaluate whether students are meeting program learning objectives and whether those learning objectives remain appropriate.

We currently use the following three (3) criteria in our ongoing assessment of program objectives and student learning:

A. Assessment of student learning in the four arena outlined above occurs through evaluation of student capstone paper projects. These capstone projects require both a publishable quality paper and conference style presentation at the faculty seminar series that runs each semester. All faculty attend student capstone presentations and evaluate each certificate student before they complete the program, regardless of whether the faculty member worked directly with the student on their capstone project.

B. Student enrollment, degree progress, and rate of program completion are assessed as means of evaluating program responsiveness to student needs and interest, applicant qualification, and program coordination criteria. (See 6. below.)

C. In addition, student course evaluations are completed for each course every semester. Overall program evaluation also includes curriculum evaluation and revision such as the Spring 2005 curriculum study that resulted in several new graduate courses and cemented our commitment to offering an M.A and eventually a Ph.D. in Women’s Studies at UHM.

(3) Are program resources adequate?

We are a diverse faculty and approach our work to meet the mission of our Program as an interdisciplinary. The program’s seven faculty include three transnational feminist experts with research interests in the area of Asia and the Pacific: Mire Koikari, Monisha Das Gupta, and Aya Hirata-Kimura. Dr. Koikari is a sociologist whose work examines gender, race and nationalism in colonial and post colonial environments, Dr. Das Gupta is a sociologist who studies gender, race, class intersections among East Asian immigrant workers in New York City and Hawaii, Dr. Hirata-Kimura is a rural sociologist whose research in Indonesia focuses on gender, class, and nationalism intersections as they relate to food science and who also works in the area of gendered science and nanotechnology. All four (4) remaining faculty members, Meda Chesney-Lind (sociology), Kathy Ferguson (political science), Susan Hippensteele (psychology and law), and Ruth Dawson (German), conduct some or all of their research in or about Hawaii and the Pacific region.
All program faculty teach global gender and/or transnational feminist courses and all routinely incorporate Asia-Pacific and Hawai`i material into their course offerings. In addition, a large proportion of our forty-one (41) affiliate faculty teach courses and/or conduct research related to Hawai`i and Asia-Pacific.

With the exception of Dr. Hirata-Kimura, who has just arrived at UHM, all core faculty are members of the graduate faculty and most currently sit on one or more thesis and/or dissertation committees. Most of our affiliate faculty work with graduate students.

Women’s Studies recently received permission to hire a new faculty member with area expertise in indigenous women’s health. This is a key hire for the development of the graduate program in Women’s Studies and will bring critical resources. Along with this hire Women’s Studies has been working to develop a research initiative in indigenous women’s health that will provide funding and serve as a catalyst for students, faculty and community-based researchers interested in indigenous women’s health issues.

Program budgetary information may be found on the Academic Program Cost and Revenues Template (“Cost Template”) and Associated Narrative for Cost template for the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Women’s Studies (“Narrative”).

(4) Is the program efficient?

The quantitative information generally considered when evaluating efficiency measures is contained in the Cost Template and Narrative.

It is also important to note, however, that certificate programs are (or can be) highly efficient in ways that do not necessarily show up on a Cost Template insofar as they encourage broad collaboration across disciplines and among faculty from a range of programs. In doing so, they allow for unique synergies to form and enable programs to expand their reach and also efficiently evaluate the level of interest in expanded graduate level education.

In our case, the relatively large number (41) of affiliate faculty who are available to work collaboratively with students, the significant level of cross disciplinary teaching done in our program (67% of our courses are cross-listed), and the wide range of students entering our certificate program\(^1\) has enabled us to make the most of our “value-added” approach and share human and even space resources in an efficient, collegial, cross, and interdisciplinary manner that is not necessarily reflected in Cost Template data.

(5) Evidence of program quality.

We directly implement the vision of social justice, diversity, and focus on Hawai`i,

\(^1\) Current students represent Political Science, American Studies, Asian Studies, Sociology and Philosophy while past students have also included Urban and Regional Planning, Public Health, Educational Foundations, Social Welfare, and Theater and Dance.
Asia and the Pacific promoted by the Strategic plans of the University system and the Manoa campus through our classroom instruction, individual faculty research programs, and through our promotion of, and participation in, scholarship of application.

Several of our graduates have gone on to successful careers teaching in the filed of feminist, gender and women’s studies. One of our recent graduates had her capstone paper accepted into the highly prestigious feminist journal *Signs* and others have gone on to apply their work directly to positions with UH-West O’ahu, Honolulu Community College, local community non-profits, radio stations, and dance companies, and in teaching positions elsewhere in the U.S.

Women’s Studies faculty have consistently produced rigorous, expansive intellectual work that adheres to the very highest standards of scholarship. Our faculty's publications are recognized and valued in Feminist, Gender and Women’s Studies and in our disciplines of origin, thus allowing us to contribute to the development of transnational feminist and gender scholarship in a multitude of fields.

In addition, one Women’s Studies faculty member has been selected for the Board of Regents’ Medal for Excellence in Research, two have received the Hung Wo and Elizabeth Lau Ching award for faculty service to the community and one has received the Robert S. Clopton Award for outstanding service to the community. Women’s Studies faculty are also regular recipients of college level awards; overall, we earn well above our “fair share” of system, Manoa, and college-wide relative to our size.

While Women's Studies is a fairly new field, with the first programs appearing in the early 1970s, it has grown substantially in the last 35 years. Neither our disciplinary organizations nor the National Research Council at present, conduct assessments or rankings of Women's Studies, Feminist Studies or Gender Studies programs, but they have indicated their intention to do so in the future. Because our program includes several nationally and internationally known scholars and our overall expertise in the areas of transnational feminist scholarship may well be unrivaled, we are confident that we would rank near the top of any departmental ranking system established.

**Are program outcomes compatible with the objectives?**

Several of our graduate courses consistently enroll large numbers of students not enrolled in the certificate program. Some of these students were participants in our curriculum study and requested additional courses in Women’s Studies be developed that could be worked into their M.A. and Ph.D. programs in their home departments. This is consistent with our experience at the undergraduate level, in which Women’s Studies has consistently performed a high level of “service” teaching for other units that do not offer courses addressing feminist or gender studies.

The number of students enrolled in our graduate certificate program has increased since its inception (see, Table 1, below). For purposes of data clarification: thus far, graduate certificate students in our program have already been matriculated into M.A. or Ph.D. programs in other departments, so we have listed students enrolled in our
program as either “incoming” or “enrolled” students. Incoming includes those in the process of admission to the certificate program and who are already actively engaged in taking courses, attending the colloquium series, and seeking advising from Women’s Studies faculty. Enrolled students are those who are fully matriculated into our program and are working toward completion of all certificate requirements.

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Although a number of our graduates are still in their Ph.D. programs, as mentioned in 5. above, a number of our students have completed their degrees and entered the workforce, working in areas in which their expertise in feminist and gender studies is an unequivocal asset.

(7) Are program objectives still appropriate functions of the college and University?

There are more than 50 women's studies programs in the U.S. offering graduate certificates. All are interdisciplinary, although there is a tendency to neglect the life sciences and to over-represent the social sciences.

Our program continues to stand out for the following virtues:

- We are the only one with a focus on women and gender in Asia and the Pacific.
- We are one of the few requiring an original research project and the only one to require a full-length capstone presentation.
- We require 18 credits of work, while many require 15 or fewer.
- We are fully interdisciplinary, integrating humanities and life sciences as well as social sciences.
- Beginning Fall 2008, we will begin offering specialized coursework and research opportunities in indigenous women’s health.

a) The direct relevance of the contribution of the field of study to the professional, economic, social, occupational and general educational needs of Hawai‘i.

Our graduate certificate program emphasizes transnational feminist studies with a particular focus on Hawai‘i, Asia and the Pacific. It is the only Women’s Studies graduate program of its kind. Since its inception in 2000 our program has grown in size and scope while continuing to emphasize our unique strengths. We attract local students as well as students from the continental U.S., and many international

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2 Of the thirty-five students who have been admitted to our graduate certificate program, only two have failed to complete the program—one ran out of funding and had to return to her home country, and a second was offered a full-time faculty position at UHM. Two additional students self selected out after submitting applications.
students. We have begun talks with Outreach College about the feasibility of offering graduate degrees online because of the level of interest expressed from neighbor island students for graduate level study in Women’s Studies that will enhance their professional qualifications and opportunities.

b) A “national needs factor” that emphasizes the direct relevance of the field of study to national needs and where Hawai‘i and the University have unique or outstanding resources to respond with quality.

Certificate students have told us the formal credential has had powerful implications for them in the job market. One recent Ph.D. graduate from another department who had taken Women’s Studies graduate courses but did not earn a certificate contacted us after being interviewed for positions to express her regret for not earning a certificate. She had come to believe that a graduate certificate in Women’s Studies would enhance her marketability, given the many jobs now available in academia where feminist/gender studies expertise is highly desirable.

c) An “international needs factor” that emphasizes the direct relevance of the contributions of the field of study to international needs and where Hawaii and the University have unique or outstanding resources to respond with quality.

See (a) above. In addition, we note a significant and growing number of international students entering our certificate program. This is due in part to the unique, transnational feminist focus of our program and the expertise of our faculty but also to the growing acceptance at an international level among NGO’s and other prospective employers that increased sophistication in feminist and gender analysis is a desirable job skill. Students are becoming increasingly likely to view our certificate as a credential likely to increase their marketability in the international arena.

d) An educational needs factor that indicates the direct relevance of a field of study to basic education needs for which there is a demand by Hawai‘i’s population.

Since April 1975, when the Board of Regents unanimously approved the establishment of the Women’s Studies Program at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, our program has explored the history and experience of Hawai‘i’s women. Our innovative and wide-ranging courses enrich and expand the offerings and degree options within the College of Arts and Sciences. At the graduate level, we have recently developed courses specifically aimed as teaching graduate students how to teach women’s studies and we offer graduate students opportunities to actually learn feminist, egalitarian, classroom pedagogy that they will take with them as they begin their own careers as teachers.

We have additionally developed women’s social policy courses and are in the process of developing women’s health and indigenous health policy courses that will both augment our program offerings but will also significantly enhance the workforce implications of our program.

e) The relevance of a field of study as a necessary supporting discipline for quality programs identified by the above criteria.
We are a fully interdisciplinary program, integrating the humanities, social sciences, and life sciences into an energetic and productive feminist intellectual space. It makes more sense to call us an interdiscipline. Our work takes place at those exciting intersections where the labor of the traditional disciplines converge to provoke boundary-crossing inquiries. We do not simply add together other fields, nor do we simply incorporate women into existing disciplines. (This is known as the "add women and stir" method of inquiry.) Instead, we integrate theories, methods, and trajectories of inquiry from a variety of fields around central feminist questions. This is why Feminist, Gender and Women’s Studies Programs have existed, and will continue to exist and grow as unique and separate (inter)disciplines.

Nationally and internationally, Women's Studies is well established at the undergraduate level and has been growing at the graduate level. In the U.S. there are now more than 50 departments granting graduate certificates, 15 departments granting Ph.D.s, approximately 50 granting master's degrees, 11 granting graduate level minors, and many joint M.A.’s and/or Ph.D.’s in combination with other departments. Announcements for new and exciting joint degree programs between Women’s Studies programs and law schools, schools of public health and social welfare, and others are mailed to the UHM Women’s Studies office on a regular basis, along with announcements for new graduate degree programs Women’s Studies in the U.S. and abroad.

Feminist scholarship in the 21st century is increasingly a dialogue among scholars, teachers, and activists around the world. Our curriculum and publications reflect the diminishing of western-centric scholarship in favor of thinking that is more fully pluralized and transnational in teaching scope and expectations of student and faculty scholarship. We are perhaps best situated to help educate the next generations of scholars, teachers, and activists because we are already well ahead of the curve due to our diverse faculty and extensive course offerings in transnational feminist and global gender scholarship.