

## **Catherine Murray Chair Report 2009-2010**

As a rebellious grad student at the U of Waterloo in Political Science, I remember looking at SFU's Department of Women's Studies in the 1970s as a pioneer in feminist theory. It is with great pleasure I come to the program on secondment for three years as Chair. Thanks to the collective wisdom of the members of the Department, the External Review Process has been an exceptionally good way to become grounded in the culture. I am pleased to be charged with implementing the name change process, and also with leading the drive to integrate the Status of Women's Chairs across the country on the occasion of their 25th anniversary. There are many priorities for this Fall, including re-opening graduate admissions, which is crucial to our sustainability. I include the copy of the summary of the three year plan for your information, which was approved in early Fall. We await Senate approval of the name change soon. I look forward to meeting and talking with each of our associates and discussing with you all the priorities in the coming months.

Here are some of the highlights which I look forward to seeing manifested:

### **Innovative Leadership**

- Building on its record for leadership as the first program in Canada established in 1975, the WS Department has proposed to Senate to change its name to the more inclusive Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, becoming the first such program in Canada to do so. The next three years will consolidate growth and extend these areas in the undergraduate curriculum.
- GSWS is unlikely to experience significant competition for undergraduate enrolments in these areas in BC, suggesting an important window for curriculum and program innovation, and distinctive positioning for the university.
- The name change implies continuing the redesign of introductory courses and development of the sexuality curriculum stream, consolidating and extending existing strengths with associate faculty who already offer relevant courses.
- GSWS has already shown significant track record in launching four new courses in past three years, with three new course proposals pending (Sex in the City, Women in Policy, and RWW Advanced Seminar) after dropping five.
- Its recent External Review lauds the Department as among the most "impressive" and productive of research faculty, consistent with three of SFU's strategic research themes: Health, Economic Organization; Policy; Culture, Society and Human Behavior.

### **Dynamic Enrollment Strategies**

- WS introduced a Gender Studies minor in 2003 and grew headcount by 27 percent (in the previous 3 years).
- The Department proposes to grow total undergraduate enrollments in the next three years by 20 percent from a target headcount from 896 in 2008/9 to 1100;
- We propose to work with Dean of FASS and seven partner departments in cooperative ways to count joint course enrollments and explore joint minors
- We propose to work with Co-Op and Community Organizations to develop co-op enrollments.

- To meet competition from the addition of two more Ontario universities to five already offering doctoral programs, we will initiate and complete a review of the graduate program.

### **Core Faculty Development**

- Attrition through past or pending retirement, in the view of the external reviewers has caused the Department to reach the point of unsustainability.
- Accordingly, WS will work with the Dean to stabilize the funding for the RWWP position, and seek two AP-4 positions proposed in years two and three of the plan:
  - In Policy and Feminist theory; and
  - Gender and Sexualities—to consolidate the sexuality curriculum reform, contribute to grad supervision and advance research.
- This is an exciting time for me to come on board as Chair. I am pleased to see that the department continues to remain optimistic about the future, and I look forward with anticipation to my task at hand!