

What Can You DO with a Women's Studies Education?

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One question that will, without doubt, surface time and again for Women's Studies Programs as they seek to develop and expand is "What Can you DO with a Women's Studies Major?" (or Minor). In an increasingly commodified educational market, our programs will not escape having to formulate responses to the question of the occupational "worth" of women's studies curricula. While I have no doubt it is true that it is demanded of women's studies and similar programs to address workforce development more often and more pointedly than many other programs, potentially in an effort to devalue them, we still must be prepared to address the issue in our proposals.

I do recommend following the advice of many on the PAListserv of NWSA: Redirect the question as best you can to focus on the contributions of your program to university diversity initiatives. Also, focus on how women's studies prepares students to meet societal needs of analyzing social inequities and initiating change, of civic engagement, of confronting social injustice. Women's studies graduates are politically active in the broadest sense, from confronting gender inequities in their own relationships, families, and workplaces, to participating on school boards and committees for their children, to feminist art and writing, to traditional political activism. Finally, you might liken yourself to other baccalaureate programs that also are not occupationally focused, such as philosophy, English, psychology, which have enjoyed a long and funded life in the academy, presumably because of the kind of thinking citizens they "produce."

In my own work as Director of Women's Studies, I have resisted mightily having to craft arguments about jobs. My interest is in turning out thinkers, not workers. I am concerned about turning out an educated populace, mindful citizens, who then will be prepared to pursue "job training" elsewhere. But I have found that after I have made all these arguments, people were still waiting with, "Yes but what can you DO with a women's studies education?," as if I had not yet considered the question, much less answered it. So reluctantly, I went about gathering information so that I could answer the question to the satisfaction of the administrators who would, or would not, fund future development of our program. The good news is, our graduates ARE working, are doing social change through that work, are gainfully employed even as they are civically engaged and confronting injustice. Many women's studies programs across the country have used the study by Luebke & Reilly (1995) to support this claim (*Women's Studies Graduates: The First Generation*. NY: Teacher's College Press).

Now ten years later, I have conducted a study of occupations of Women's Studies graduates, based on alumni reports posted online by women's studies programs across the country, finding over 200 occupations in which our graduates are working. In what follows, I first list these jobs, most of which seem to have been attained by baccalaureates, and among these also are listed graduate areas of study pursued post-baccalaureate. I have eliminated those jobs that would most clearly require advanced-level training. Second, I list the skills many women's studies programs have identified as emerging from women's studies training, which I have drawn, again, from program websites in the U.S. Finally, I list some online resources to which you can direct your women's studies students who are seeking job-related information. I have edited these lists for consistency in language and to avoid overlap while still allowing list items to attend to different nuances. Each occupation listed represents one or more graduates.

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I. Occupations of Women's Studies Graduates

*Based on alumni reports posted online on Women's Studies program web pages in the U.S.**

The following positions are held by recent Women's Studies graduates:

1. Acupuncturist
2. Administrative Coordinator in the Office of the University President
3. Advocacy for Women and Children
4. AIDS Project worker
5. Americore Volunteer for HIV program at a women's health center
6. Americorps Volunteer
7. Arts Fundraising
8. Assistant Director, Alumni Association
9. Assistant Director, Residence Hall Learning Community
10. Assistant Director, University Alumni Association
11. Assistant Features Editor at *Elle*
12. Assistant Manager of Investor Relations at a research company
13. Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
14. Assistant to the Director of Women's Studies
15. Assistant, Manuscripts Department at Tulane
16. Associate Residence Hall Director
17. Author
18. Battered Women's Center Administrator
19. Bilingual Case Manager
20. Breast Cancer Support Group Facilitator

21. Business Assistant
22. Business Systems Analyst
23. Camp Counselor
24. Campus Organizer
25. Case Manager and Team Coordinator at the New England Center for Children
26. Case Manager for Women's Cancer Control Initiative at Women's Health Center
27. Children's Advocate
28. Community and Youth Leadership Fellow in the Community Division at a non-profit org.
29. Community Educator & Trainer for the Abused Women's Advocacy Project
30. Community Health Specialist
31. Community Victim Advocate
32. Computer Information Systems Specialist
33. Consulting business owner, "Just Peace Works"
34. Coordinator of Custodial Services and Indoor Air Quality Coordinator
35. Coordinator of Injury Prevention Program, Children's Hospital
36. Coordinator of Lesbian/Bisexual services
37. Coordinator of Youth Programs
38. Co-owner of 3 Pizzerias
39. Co-owner of a bowling alley
40. Corporate Event Planning
41. Corporate Trainer
42. Counselor for Domestic Violence Shelter
43. Court Facilitator
44. Crisis Advocate, Harriet Tubman Center
45. Customer Specialist for US West
46. Democratic Counsel to the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary
47. Development Assistant, Minnesota Orchestra Association
48. Development Director at a non-profit environmental organization
49. Director of a horseback riding school
50. Director of a women's center for continuing education
51. Director of Admissions
52. Director of Annual Giving and Special Events, American Red Cross
53. Director of HIV Services at a community healthcare center
54. Director of Holocaust Awareness Institute
55. Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development
56. Director of Make a Better Place, photography and creative writing for young people as a vehicle for leadership and social change
57. Director of Shelter Services at Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence
58. Director of Women's Center

59. Director of YWCA
60. Diversity Trainer, Cooch Consulting
61. Domestic Violence Victim's Advocate
62. Domestic Violence worker
63. Editor/Desktop Publisher
64. Editorial Assistant *Human Rights Review*
65. Education Coordinator at a Youth Shelter
66. English Teacher at an International School in Thailand
67. Event Planning and Development for the American Political Science Association.
68. Executive Director, Harbour Area Halfway Houses, for women transitioning out of prison
69. Executive Director, Hillel Foundation
70. Executive Director, OutFront Minnesota
71. Family & Housing Specialist, Project for Pride in Living
72. Feminist Majority Foundation Campus Organizer
73. Financial Aid Specialist at the University of Denver
74. Fiscal Analyst
75. Food Safety Coalition
76. Founder & Executive Director of Adopt-A-School Program
77. Fourth grade teacher
78. Fundraiser
79. Girls Equity Specialist, YWCA
80. Graduate School Admissions Counselor and Recruiter
81. Graduate student in American Studies
82. Grant funding for administration for non-profit organization
83. Grant Project Manager
84. Grant Writer
85. Graphic Designer
86. Graphic Designer for non-profit/education fields
87. Health Educator/Resource Coordinator
88. Healthy Maine Partnership Director
89. High tech and corporate public relations
90. Homeless Shelter Coordinator
91. Hospital Administrator
92. Housing Specialist at domestic violence shelter
93. Human Resources worker
94. Independent Consultant and Project Manager
95. Information technology industry analyst relations
96. Insurance Agent, Allstate Insurance Company
97. Intern at a public relations firm
98. International Education Advisor
99. Journalist
100. Knitting Instructor

101. Lactation Specialist
102. Law Clerk
103. Lead Organizer, The White House Project: Mobilizing young women and single women to engage in politics
104. Legal and Welfare Advocate, Casa de Esperanza
105. Legal Assistant
106. Legal Coordinator, Harriet Tubman Center
107. Legislative & Communications Specialist for the state
108. Library Reference Technician
109. Life Coach
110. Lobbyist
111. Magazine Editing
112. Manager of Family Planning Clinic
113. Manager, Center for Individual & Organizational Development
114. Maritime Management
115. Marketing Assistant/Exhibits Manager for a newspaper
116. Marketing Coordinator for world music, blues, jazz, alternative rock, and electronic music
117. Marketing Director for independent films company
118. Marketing Manager for Paris-based music label
119. Marketing Manager for publishing company in literature, theater studies, gender studies
120. Medical Clinic Administrator
121. Mental Health Professional, Scott County Human Services
122. Mental Health Therapy Aide
123. Mortgage Loan Consultant
124. Multi-county Transit and Youth Activities
125. Museum Educator
126. Nurse Midwife
127. Organizer with the American Civil Liberties Union
128. Outreach Coordinator at AIDS clinical trial unit
129. Outward Bound trip leader for at-risk youth
130. Owner of "Two Hands Paperie"
131. Owner of a catering business
132. Owner, Sales Management Consulting Firm
133. Paralegal
134. Patient Educator, Planned Parenthood
135. Peace Corp Volunteer
136. Pharmaceutical Ad Agency
137. Planner for Juvenile Females for the state
138. Policy Analyst on equity in public schools
139. Policy Analyst
140. Political Campaign Worker
141. Prenatal Coordinator

142. President of a small business
143. President of the Southern Maryland Tennis and Education Foundation
144. Presidential Management Intern
145. Professional Violinist
146. Program Director for a non-profit organization
147. Program Director for the American Heart Association
148. Program Evaluator at Wisconsin Legislature
149. Program Manager, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
150. Project Coordinator for Public Interest Research Group at a college
151. Project Officer in a university Office of Research Development
152. Public Education Director
153. Radio broadcasting employee
154. Rape Assistance and Awareness Program worker
155. Reporter for KQED
156. Reproductive Health Counselor and Education Coordinator
157. Reproductive Health Educator
158. Research Assistant
159. Research Assistant for urban designer
160. Research Support Specialist and Caregiver for Mentally Disabled
161. Researcher for WA State Legislature in Olympia
162. Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in Sri Lanka
163. Satellite Network Operations Supervisor
164. Self-employed artist
165. Service and Support Administrator, Board of Mental Retardation and Mental Disabilities
166. Singer/songwriter
167. Site Coordinator, Girls, Inc.
168. Small-business owner
169. Social Worker
170. Social Worker
171. Special Events Planning
172. Sponsorship Coordinator at Women for Women International
173. Staff Attorney, Battered Women's Justice Project
174. Steering Director of Operation and Development Works at Media Action
175. Store Manager
176. Strategic Alliances Manager
177. Student Services Coordinator
178. Stunt/Actor for Wild West Show at Disneyland, Paris
179. Teach for America Volunteer
180. Teacher Assistant
181. Trainer for a Coalition Against Rap
182. Trainer-Facilitator on diversity issues

183. Training and conference coordinator at adolescent healthcare working group
184. Vice President of an Interactive Media Services company
185. Volunteer Resources Coordinator, AIDS Foundation
186. Web Communications Editor at a University
187. Web Design
188. Web Developer
189. Webmaster for a Diversity Web site
190. Western Region Communications Director for Service Employees International Union
191. Women's Health Outreach Worker
192. Women's Health Care
193. Writing and Editing for Reuters (Internal Communications).
194. YMCA, Youth Program Director
195. Yoga teacher
196. Graduate student in Clinical Psychology
197. Graduate student in Cultural Studies
198. Graduate student in Digital Arts
199. Graduate student in Film
200. Graduate student in International Studies
201. Graduate student in Latin American Studies
202. Graduate student in Law
203. Graduate student in Library Science
204. Graduate student in Philosophy
205. Graduate student in Public Policy
206. Graduate student in Social Work
207. Graduate student in Sociology
208. Graduate student in U.S. History
209. Graduate student in Women Studies

II. Skills Acquired through a Women's Studies Education

*Based on claims made on Women's Studies program web pages in the U.S.**

Students educated in Women's Studies are prepared to:

1. Rethink academic disciplines from the perspective of women's experiences
2. Understand differences between women and similarities among them
3. Articulate differences between feminisms and similarities among them
4. Creatively pursue a struggle for justice and equality
5. Articulate the contributions of women to the arts, sciences, humanities, and politics

6. Support liberation movements that oppose the exploitation of women
7. Examine the causes and solutions to violence against women
8. Eliminate forms of illegitimate discrimination between girls and boys
9. Examine connections between personal issues and larger issues of social and political justice
10. Address issues such as sexual harassment, flextime, parental leave, pay equity and equal employment opportunities
11. Develop essential civic engagement skills
12. Understand the multiple intersections among racism, sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, classism, and other forms of oppression
13. Correct gender bias in academic literature and other cultural texts that have omitted, minimized or devalued the contributions of women
14. Seize, promote and sustain opportunities for women's leadership
15. Develop and refine both critical and abstract thinking
16. Organize and synthesize material in new and effective ways
17. Cultivate communication skills, oral speaking and presentation skills
18. Write clearly and creatively
19. Work collaboratively
20. Become an engaged and active learner
21. Learn new leadership skills
22. Effectively analyze and articulate competing perspectives
23. Practice creative problem solving
24. Apply research to social and cultural issues and identify solutions
25. Confront injustice and oppression
26. Support diverse individual efforts and choices
27. Analyze inequities and initiate change
28. Promote equitable treatment of all members of society
29. Imagine ways of transforming your world
30. Understand and use knowledge about power relationships and injustice

31. Engage in social activism and encourage others to be active
32. Critique and evaluate social issues and problems
33. Analyze cultural events and texts; articulate how they impact people's lives
34. Develop new agendas for old problems
35. Become a social change agent through discussion, written work, collaborative projects and real world involvement
36. Critically analyze gender and the pursuit of knowledge about women
37. Become politically active
38. Critically examine your personal life and public roles
39. Connect what you study with how you live and work
40. Practice collective activism
41. Shape thoughts and actions into a coherent vision of a better, more humane society
42. Create strong families and social relationships
43. Appreciate women, their ideas, their contributions and their resources
44. Empower others to create change
45. Understand language as a means of liberation or discrimination
46. Use, and understand the function of, gender inclusive language in written and oral communication
47. Prepare to face a professional environment where women are supervisors, colleagues and subordinates
48. Question and challenge dominant ideologies by highlighting the importance of traditional women's spheres, such as nurturing, family and community
49. Proficiently find and use information on contemporary social issues
50. Question social boundaries and expectations
51. Incorporate information technologies and community service learning experiences
52. Develop links to the community, and business and professional sites

53. Foster a deeper connection with community and political life
54. Identify cutting edge issues facing women and articulate their impact
55. Seek out hidden histories and the lessons we might still learn from them
56. Listen to, and work to understand, others' thoughts and ideas
57. Enter the workforce with open minds about the challenges of the workplace
58. Train the next generations with a better understanding and appreciation of our diverse and multicultural world
59. Utilize knowledge to change the world in positive, life-affirming ways

III. Job Resources for Women's Studies Graduates

- 1. Feminist Majority Foundations – Careers**
<http://www.feminist.org/911/jobs/911jobs.asp>
- 2. Idealist.org**
<http://www.idealist.org/if/idealist/en/AdvancedSearch/Job/default?sid=38036730-317-TIZsR>
- 3. Feminist.com**
http://www.feminist.com/resources/links/links_work.html
- 4. National Women's Studies Association**
<http://www.nwsa.org/jobs.html>
- 5. INFORM - University of Maryland- WS jobs database**
<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/WomensStudies/Employment/>
- 6. Financial Aid and Career Opportunities - University of Maryland, Baltimore County**
<http://research.umbc.edu/~korenman/wmst/jobsetc.html>
- 7. About.com – Job resources for women**
<http://jobsearch.about.com/library/blwomen.htm?once=true&>
- 8. Portland State Career Center**
<http://www.pdx.edu/careers/>
- 9. Michigan State University**
<http://www.msu.edu/~wmstdy/wsmjr3.htm>

10. UNC- Chapel Hill

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wmst/jobs/jobpostings.shtml>

11. **Bibliography for job resource information in print** (Bibliography compiled by Katherine Side at the Department of Women's Studies, Mt. Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

<http://research.umbc.edu/%7Ekorenman/wmst/side.html>

Many of the following links were found at:

http://www.womenstudies.wisc.edu/WSP/WSP-Career_Jobs.htm, University of Wisconsin-Madison Women's Studies Program Career and Job resources site.

12. Social Service related jobs

<http://www.socialservice.com/>

13. Jobs Abroad International Job Opportunities

<http://www.jobsabroad.com/search.cfm>

14. Philanthropy Careers

<http://philanthropy.com/jobs/>

15. Non profit organization jobs – Community Career Center

<http://www.nonprofitjobs.org/>

16. Webgrrls – Job Information

<http://www.webgrrls.com/wfs.jhtml?/jobbank/info.phtml>

17. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/pp2/portal/aboutus/jobopenings/?sessionid=CA5D859F7049702845F93507C02A71D7>

18. NARAL – Pro-choice America

<http://www.naral.org/about/jobs/index.cfm>

19. NOW- National Organization for Women

<http://www.now.org/organization/work.html#jobs>

20. US Dept of Health and Human Services

<http://www.4woman.gov/violence/state.cfm>

21. Advancingwomen.com

<http://www.advancingwomen.com/awcareer.html>