DePaul University Academic Program Review  
Cycle 4: Spring 2001--Spring 2002

Memorandum of Agreement Progress Report – June 2003

Women’s Center  
within Academic Affairs

Actions agreed upon for the coming academic year (2002-2003)

1. *Develop a Strategic Plan.* In the coming year, the Center will develop a strategic plan that will formally revise and articulate the Center's goals for growth, direction of programming and integration within the University community, as well as within the larger Chicago-metropolitan community.
   a. In anticipation of developing a strategic plan, the Center will develop a mechanism to solicit and collect information from the current Advisory Board. The information will be used as part of the process toward reconfiguring the Advisory Board and its function. The Center will consider broadening representation on the Advisory Board to reflect the university-wide audience of the Women’s Center.
   b. To inform plans for future programming and activities, the Center will collect and analyze information (e.g. through questionnaires) about the different groups of people who participate in Women’s Center programs, such as faculty, staff, students, community members.
   c. The strategic plan will examine the resources currently available to the Center and evaluate whether these resources and the expanded activities of the Center are compatible, and whether priorities should be set among the center’s current and future possible activities, in terms of subject matter and/or audience.
   d. As part of its commitment to the urban community, the Center will work to provide advocacy on women's issues by developing and maintaining a network of community resources.
   e. The Center will confer with representatives of the Office of Academic Affairs about where it is best located within the university structure, given its mission.
   f. The Center will clarify with its home unit any expectations concerning its seeking external funds, its generating funds from its programming, and any expectations concerning contributions to the University.

Comments:

**Action:** Develop a Strategic Plan.

**Status:** On-going. During the 2002-2003 academic year the following steps have been undertaken to achieve this goal:

The Center has initiated a preliminary inquiry to solicit and collect information from the current Advisory Board. The first stage has focused on developing a process...
which will allow Board Members to provide meaningful, detailed feedback. As with any data collection activity, part of the challenge is developing a process which will facilitate and encourage response. Once collected, the information will be used as part of the process toward reconfiguring the Advisory Board and its function.

The Center has collected and continues to analyze information (e.g. through questionnaires) about the different groups of people who participate in Women’s Center programs, such as faculty, staff, students, community members. This information will be included in the Center’s Annual Report and will be used to help inform plans for future programming and activities. One of the assessment areas which will require further study involves collecting data from community groups, agencies, and organizations with which the Center collaborates in advocacy work and policy initiatives which do not necessarily result in a program or event and which can not therefore be assessed using the standard audience assessment measures.

As part of the process of developing the strategic plan, the Women’s Center continues to evaluate both the resources available to it and the activities which we have undertaken, especially in relationship to the University’s urban mission and to the urban community. It is becoming increasingly clear that as we work in the community, providing advocacy on women’s issues and working with our community partners, that demands on the Center’s resources could continue to increase. Should that occur, it may be necessary, as part of the strategic plan, to develop a system to prioritize areas where the Center will focus its efforts and resources.

Subsequent to the signing of the final MOA, the Women’s Center’s Advisory Board met to discuss available options and alternatives regarding the Center’s home unit. A follow up meeting was scheduled to explore how the Center’s mission fit within the identified College. After that meeting, further investigations and conversations were delayed pending the outcome of administrative changes at the Executive level of the University.

2. **Form Community Partnerships.** In the coming year, the Center will work to form partnerships with groups in the community to focus on women’s issues, with the understanding that these outreach efforts need to be focused and prioritized given the Center’s limited resources.
   a. Joint efforts with other DePaul groups. The Center will continue conversations with other departments, centers, and institutes within the University regarding possible collaboration on community outreach programs. The Center will also have conversations with the College of Law, the Office of Community-Based Service Learning regarding the possibility of developing a joint project on the issue of domestic violence. The Center may also consult with Charles Strain on developing fundable programs for the Steans Challenge in conjunction with these other groups.
   b. Partnership guidelines. To maintain the quality of its programs, the Center will develop guidelines when entering into collaborative partnerships with organizations and entities outside the University. These guidelines will insure that DePaul University’s mission, values, and the Vincentian perspective are clearly articulated within and incorporated into all activities and collaborations.

**Comments:**

**Action:** Form Community Partnerships.
Status: On-going.

The Women’s Center has continued to work toward maintaining and expanding its network of community partnerships. This past year, in collaboration with faculty, the Center developed several new programming initiatives (immigration issues, women and HIV, welfare reform). In order to develop programs around those issues, the Center expanded its outreach activities in the community widening its network of community partners to include agencies/organizations working in those areas: Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Project VIDA, Chicago Women’s AIDS Project).

In addition to strengthening collaborations for program development, during the past year, the Center has focused outreach efforts on its advocacy role forming partnerships which may ultimately result in policy initiatives. The Center continues to work with the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Women, the Mayor’s Office on Domestic Violence, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, and the Family Law Center on domestic violence and housing issues.

3. Monitor the Center’s Activities. The Center will continue to evaluate and monitor the quality of its programs on an ongoing basis and routinely share what it learns with the unit to which it reports.
   a. When programs develop into ongoing projects, the Center will explore ways to develop a process for monitoring and assessing outcomes and efficacy.
   b. The Center will more clearly document how its programs, projects, and improvements are developed on the basis of feedback and input received from the communities it serves, which will be reflected in the annual report.

Comments:
Action: Monitor the Center’s Activities.
Status: On-going.

As noted above, during the past year the Center has collected and continues to analyze information (e.g. through questionnaires) about the different groups of people who participate in Women’s Center programs, such as faculty, staff, students, community members. This information will be included in the Center’s Annual Report and will be used to help inform plans for future programming and activities.

Also as noted above, one of the assessment areas which will require further study involves collecting data from community groups, agencies, and organizations with which the Center collaborates in advocacy work and policy initiatives which do not necessarily result in a program or event and which cannot therefore be assessed using the standard audience assessment measures.

4. Internal Collaboration.
   a. The Women’s Center will collaborate with other Centers in order to maximize the use of limited resources and to prevent programming overlap.
   b. When possible, the Women’s Center will share its yearly calendar of activities to prevent programming overlap and competition with the same audience. The possibility of having a central, university-wide calendar for all Centers & Institutes’ programming will be discussed with the Centers & Institutes Advisory Board and Academic Affairs at the General Memo of Agreement meeting (see university-level issues below).

Comments:
Action: Internal Collaborations.
Status: On-going.

In designing on-campus programs for the coming year, the Women’s Center has worked closely with other University Centers, Institutes, and programs (Center for Black Diaspora, Cultural Center, Women’s Studies Program) to develop joint programs. Developing these jointly sponsored programs should serve both to maximize the use of limited resources and to minimize program overlap and competition. Whenever possible, this approach to program development should continue to be explored.
Issues on which there is joint commitment to continue working

1. **Staffing, space, and facilities.** The Center will develop models to illustrate needed staffing patterns and space usage in anticipation of developing the Center’s Strategic Plan.
   a. The Center currently has adequate office space in the Student Center at Lincoln Park campus but will develop models to illustrate the best use of this space to support programs.
   b. The Center will consider expanding its activities to the Loop campus, but understands there are resource limitations. The Center may work with Loop-based centers to offer a few occasional programs or special events there on a trial basis to determine the need and potential audience at the Loop Campus.

Comments:
Action: **Staffing, space, and facilities.**
Status: Unchanged.

2. **Coordination with DePaul’s schools and departments.** The Women’s Center will continue to explore ways to integrate women’s issues in the DePaul curriculum. In conjunction with faculty members in the disciplines, the Center will continue efforts to develop courses within disciplines like Women’s Studies, Latin American/Latino Studies that would integrate advocacy issues and concerns within the broader discipline areas, including community-based service learning.

Comments:
Action: **Coordination with DePaul’s schools and departments.**
Status: Ongoing.
   The Women’s Center continues to explore ways to integrate women’s issues in the DePaul curriculum. As noted above, the Center continues to work closely with other University Centers, Institutes, and programs (Center for Black Diaspora, Cultural Center, Women’s Studies Program) to develop joint programs.

Elsa Saeta
Director
June 27, 2003