Council for the
Advancement of Standards in Higher Education

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We are pleased you are interested in the Standards and Guidelines developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). This CAS member association has permission to post a link to this standard on their website. Standards are developed through a consensus model of member associations and other experts, including the association on whose page this link is found. You are invited to use the attached CAS statement in the design and assessment of your programs and for your staff training and development. *This statement may not be duplicated for other purposes without permission from CAS.*

This standard and all other standards are available along with information on self-assessment procedures in the most recent edition of the ***CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education*** book. You are particularly encouraged to examine the learning and developmental outcomes (see www.cas.edu and in the standards book) in the design and assessment of your programs.

This standard has a Self Assessment Guide (SAG) available for purchase from www.cas.edu for use in program evaluation.

CAS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is to promote the improvement of programs and services to enhance the quality of student learning and development. CAS is a consortium of professional associations who work collaboratively to develop and promulgate standards and guidelines and to encourage self-assessment.

CAS STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Each CAS standard contains 12 common criteria categories (referred to as "general standards") that have relevance for each and every functional area, no matter what its primary focus. In addition to the general standards, all functional area standards are comprised of both specialty standards and guidelines. All standards use the auxiliary verbs "**must**" and "**shall**" and appear in **bold print** so that users can quickly identify them. Guidelines are designed to provide suggestions and illustrations that can assist in establishing programs and services that more fully address the needs of students than those mandated by a standard. CAS guidelines appear in regular font and use the auxiliary verbs "should" and "may."

OVER THIRTY YEARS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement and in general to promote good citizenship, CAS continues to create and deliver a dynamic and credible Book of Professional Standards and Guidelines and Self-Assessment Guides that are designed to lead to a host of quality-controlled programs and services. These standards respond to real-time student needs, the requirements of sound pedagogy, and the effective management of 43 functional areas, consistent with institutional missions. Individuals and institutions from nearly 40 CAS member organizations comprise a professional constituency of over 100,000 professionals.

DISCLAIMER

The standards and guidelines published in "The Book of Professional Standards for Higher Education" by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and referred to in each of the "CAS Self-Assessment Guides" (SAGs) are developed through the voluntary efforts of leaders of professional associations in higher education. The purpose of the standards and guidelines is to identify criteria and principles by which institutions may choose to assess and enhance various areas of their academic, administrative, or student affairs programs and services. CAS specifically disclaims any liability or responsibility for any perceived or actual shortcomings inherent in the text or application of the standards. Further, CAS does not certify individuals nor accredit programs. No institution, whether it has met some or all of the CAS standards, is authorized to indicate that it is "approved, endorsed, certified, or otherwise sanctioned by CAS." Institutions that have conducted a self-assessment of one or more functional areas addressed by CAS Standards and Guidelines using the appropriate CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) may, where that self-assessment provides evidence that an institution meets these standards, are free to make accurate representations to the effect that the designated program or service meets the CAS Standards.

Direct your questions to the CAS Executive Office, One Dupont Circle NW Suite 300 Washington, DC 20036-1188, 202-862-1400, (email contact: Marybeth Drechsler Sharp, Interim Executive Director, www.cas.edu)

The Role of Women Student Programs and Services

CAS Standards Contextual Statement

History

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) refer to campus offices that support women and advance gender equity, including women's centers, offices for women, and other units. In 2009, there were over 490 such programs housed within colleges and universities across the U.S., including public and private institutions, two-year and four-year schools, historically black colleges and universities, tribal institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, Asian American- and Pacific Islander-serving institutions, and institutions serving deaf and blind students (National Women's Studies Association, n.d.). The first women's center was established in 1960 at the University of Minnesota ("About Us," 2009) at the cusp of an era of tremendous change in higher education, and these centers continue to serve as catalysts and leaders of positive institutional change.

Women Student Program and Services were established on campuses as a result of concerns about gender equity raised by students, administrators, faculty, staff, alumnae/alumni, and community members. Informed by women's; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI); African American; and other civil rights movements, they were developed to respond to individual and institutional needs to support women in achieving their educational goals, encouraging them to think more broadly about fields of study and leadership positions, and advancing women in higher education. Reporting lines for Women Student Programs and Services differ among institutions, with some embedded in the missions and services of divisions of student affairs and others with reporting lines reflecting other institutional organizational structures. In recent decades, scholars and practitioners have debated the use of the term women in both the field of women's and gender studies as well as in naming campus centers, offices, and programs that address gender issues. Some argue that the term women (as in women's center) reproduces an essentialist framework that privileges a monolithic category of women and that the term gender (as in gender studies and gender equity center) is more inclusive of individuals and their diverse experiences of gender and of gender-based inequity and discrimination. For some, gender also more explicitly encompasses masculinities and services for men, which women's centers have provided to varying degrees. Others worry that replacing the term women with gender erases the history of the struggle to put women's lives and experiences at the center of attention as well as opens the door to co-opting the goals of that movement and shifting resources, energy, and attention away from addressing the status of women (Berger & Radeloff, 2011).

Important Tenets

Women Student Programs and Services have varied missions that express the unique cultures and goals of the institutions within which they reside. Most of them include in their mission the need to address equity, including institutional change; education, including equal access, affordability, recruitment, retention, and professional development; support and advocacy; personal safety; and community development (Davie, 2002; Kunkel, 1994, 2002). Some provide services to students only, while others also provide services to faculty and staff, alumnae, and community members (Davie, 2002). Supporting the success of women-identified students involves working with individuals of all gender identities to raise awareness about and contribute to cultural change relating to gender issues more broadly, addressing concerns that affect all members of a campus community and beyond.

The unique experiences of women-identified college and university students require that the programs—regardless of its reporting structure—engage with every element of campus life, including collaboration with all sectors of student affairs, health and mental health services, residence life and housing services, campus safety and law enforcement, student conduct, campus Title IX coordinators, athletics, human resources, and other cultural and identity-based areas, including LGBTQI centers, academic and co-curricular units, and student organizations. Ultimately, the WSPS is dedicated to advancing knowledge of how historical and current imbalances of power between genders impact equity issues, both on campus and in society, with the goal of helping all people to reach their full potential. Women Student Programs and Services are informed by academic disciplines and professions such as women's and gender studies, queer studies, African American and critical race studies, cultural and ethnic studies, student affairs and higher education administration, student and public health, social work, continuing and adult education, among others.

Current Issues

When Women Student Programs and Services were first founded, they tended to focus on questions of access (i.e., assisting women in gaining entrance into academic institutions). Given that for the past 40 years the majority of students in higher education have been women (Allen, Dean, & Bracken, 2008), the focus has evolved to include

- supporting access for specific subsets of women who remain underrepresented in higher education
- fostering the full integration of women students once they are on campus;
- continuing to advocate for equity and change in the seemingly intractable area of traditional sex and gender roles
- challenging the explicit and implicit biases and stereotypes that continue to hinder women's progress in male-dominated fields of study such as science, technology, engineering and math (Hill, 2010).

The WSPS assumed leadership roles on campuses in conducting campus climate assessments and advocating for policy change at the institutional level and in forming collaborations to accelerate institutional changes so that campus climates reflect sensitive and inclusive policies. The programs and services demonstrate success in reaching traditionally underserved and underrepresented populations, including students of color, LGBTQI students, students with disabilities, nontraditional students, student parents, immigrant students, and international students.

Women Student Programs and Services operate in the context of historical roots in social justice, community activism, and social change efforts, as well as in student development theory and administrative leadership practice. Acknowledging the immense potential of higher education to improve the lives of people of all gender identities, they translate the richness of feminist and womanist community organization- and movement-based work to college and university settings, demonstrating the relevance of women to all aspects of higher education. Through support, advocacy, and education, the programs and services address sexual assault and other forms of power-based personal violence, sexual harassment, gender discrimination, sexism, and other barriers to student academic achievement that disproportionally impact women student success. With a commitment to the continuous examination of power, privilege, and the intersection of gender with other identities, the WSPS seeks to support and advocate

for the positive educational experiences of all members of college and university communities, while simultaneously maintaining a specific focus on gender and women. With increasingly limited resources, like other functional areas, the programs and services are creatively responding to increased demand for services through collaboration and the use of technology. In light of women comprising the majority of students enrolled in colleges and universities in the U.S., obtaining and sustaining funding and resources sufficient to fully actualize the missions of Women Student Programs and Services remains one of the most significant challenges facing them. These standards have been updated over time to reflect the changing focus and missions of women's centers and WSPS offices.

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WOMEN STUDENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

CAS Standards and Guidelines

Part 1. MISSION

The purpose of Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) is to promote a supportive, equitable, and safe environment for women.

WSPS must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their missions. The mission must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with professional standards. The mission must be appropriate for the institution's student populations and community settings. Mission statements must reference student learning and development.

The mission is accomplished by

- **empowering students to create a campus culture that values all women and their diverse identities and experiences**
- **providing, coordinating, or participating in comprehensive sexual violence risk reduction programs and services for survivors of sexual violence**
- **educating all students on the ways in which gender is constructed and shapes social structures and individual experiences**
- **assessing the climate for women and advocating for the diverse needs of women**
- **providing information and referrals about issues that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual harassment, relationship violence, rape, and disordered eating**
- **sponsoring speakers, performers, events, and activities that address gender issues**
- **creating opportunities for women's voices to be heard**

Part 2. PROGRAM

The formal education of students, consisting of the curriculum and the co-curriculum, must promote student learning and development outcomes that are purposeful, contribute to students' realization of their potential, and prepare students for satisfying and productive lives.

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must collaborate with colleagues and departments across the institution to promote student learning and development, persistence, and success.

Consistent with the institutional mission, WSPS must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes from among the six domains and related dimensions:

Domain: knowledge acquisition, integration, construction, and application

- **Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life**

Domain: cognitive complexity

- **Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity**

Domain: intrapersonal development

- **Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness**

Domain: interpersonal competence

- **Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership.**

Domain: humanitarianism and civic engagement

- **Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility**

Domain: practical competence

- **Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life**

[LD Outcomes: See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Developmental Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

WSPS must

- **assess relevant and desirable student learning and development**
- **provide evidence of impact on outcomes**
- **articulate contributions to or support of student learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed**
- **articulate contributions to or support of student persistence and success**
- **use evidence gathered through this process to create strategies for improvement of programs and services**

WSPS must be

- **intentionally designed**
- **guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development**

- **integrated into the life of the institution**
- **reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population**
- **responsive to needs of individuals, populations with distinct needs, and relevant constituencies**
- **delivered using multiple formats, strategies, and contexts**

Where institutions provide distance education, WSPS must assist distance learners to achieve their educational goals by providing access to information about programs and services, to staff members who can address questions and concerns, and to counseling, advising, or other forms of assistance.

WSPS staff must address the needs of undergraduate and graduate women students by incorporating the dimensions of ethnicity, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and other aspects of identity through programs and services. WSPS must promote unrestricted access for full involvement of women in all aspects of the collegiate experience.

WSPS must provide programs and services that address institutional environment, social justice, campus support services, networking opportunities, and other educational issues of significance to women.

WSPS may address issues of equity for staff members, faculty members, and women in the surrounding community.

To address the institutional environment, WSPS must

- **advocate for a campus culture that eliminates barriers, prejudice, and bigotry, and creates a hospitable climate for all women**
- **assess and monitor the campus climate for women in areas of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and collaborate with on- and off-campus partners to create institutional policies, education, and programs to work toward the elimination of violence against women**
- **advocate for assessment of the campus environment for the presence of gender bias in areas including but not limited to employment, educational opportunities, and classroom climate**
- **advocate for the elimination of institutional policies and practices that result in an inequitable impact on women as students or employees**
- **promote awareness in ways in which gender bias intersects with racism, classism, and homophobia**
- **serve as a resource in helping campus constituencies identify and create equitable practices**

WSPS must advance social justice through opportunities for involvement in global, national, state/provincial, and local action initiatives related to improving women's lives.

WSPS should provide models of non-hierarchical and collaborative leadership.

WSPS should provide social activism opportunities that allow for the integration of theory with practice.

WSPS must address the provision of campus support services including

- **advocacy, resources, and referrals related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, cyber-harassment, stalking, and relationship violence**
- **academic support that addresses concerns such as flexible scheduling, the environment for women students in traditionally male-dominated disciplines, and gender equity in the classroom**
- **resources and referrals for prevention, counseling, medical services, healthcare, disordered eating, physical and mental health, and equitable access to wellness, fitness, and health services**
- **resources and referrals for under-represented or under-served communities**
- **the need for adequate, accessible, affordable, and flexible child and family care**

WSPS must facilitate networking opportunities that

- **create support systems and communication networks for women students**
- **identify role models by recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women on and off campus**
- **encourage liaisons between global, national, state/provincial, and local women's organizations and campus-based women student programs and services**

WSPS must provide educational programs that promote awareness of the way in which gender is constructed and shapes social structures and individual experiences. WSPS must offer experiential opportunities that explore oppression, privilege, and racism to increase students' understanding of the intersections of sexism with racism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression.

WSPS should support the promotion of scholarship and research on women and gender in collaboration with a women studies program, if available, as well as with other departments.

Educational programs should focus on women's physical and mental health, personal safety, sexual assault and relationship violence, healthy relationships, leadership, spirituality, current events, and global issues.

WSPS should provide service-learning and internship opportunities.

WSPS should advocate curricular change to include women's issues and contribution to society.

Part 3. ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

To achieve student and program outcomes, Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must be structured purposefully and organized effectively. WSPS must have

- **clearly stated goals**
- **current and accessible policies and procedures**
- **written performance expectations for employees**

- **functional work flow graphics or organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority**

Leaders with organizational authority for the programs and services must provide strategic planning, supervision, and management; advance the organization; and maintain integrity through the following functions:

Strategic Planning

- **articulate a vision and mission that drive short- and long-term planning**
- **set goals and objectives based on the needs of the population served and desired student learning or development and program outcomes**
- **facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of goal attainment congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans**
- **promote environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and engagement**
- **develop and continuously improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of students served and evolving institutional priorities**
- **intentionally include diverse perspectives to inform decision making**

Supervising

- **manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, development, supervision, performance planning, evaluation, recognition, and reward**
- **influence others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit**
- **empower professional, support, and student staff to accept leadership opportunities**
- **offer appropriate feedback to colleagues and students on skills needed to become more effective leaders**
- **encourage and support professional development, collaboration with colleagues and departments across the institution, and scholarly contribution to the profession**

Managing

- **identify and address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement**
- **plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources**
- **use current and valid evidence to inform decisions**
- **incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities**
- **understand appropriate technologies and integrate them into programs and services**
- **be knowledgeable about codes and laws relevant to programs and services and ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities through appropriate training**
- **assess potential risks and take action to mitigate them**

Advancing the Organization

- **communicate effectively in writing, speaking, and electronic venues**
- **advocate for programs and services**
- **advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at appropriate divisional and institutional levels**
- **initiate collaborative interactions with internal and external stakeholders who have legitimate concerns about and interests in the functional area**
- **facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed**
- **inform other areas within the institution about issues affecting practice**

Maintaining Integrity

- **model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship**
- **share data used to inform key decisions in transparent and accessible ways**
- **monitor media used for distributing information about programs and services to ensure the content is current, accurate, appropriately referenced, and accessible**

In response to the assessed needs of women students, WSPS must play a principal role in creating and implementing institutional policies and programs developed.

In the case of student-run women's programs, student leaders should have access to policy and decision makers of the institution.

Emphasis should be placed on achieving an organizational placement so that activities of WSPS are not limited to a specific group of women students (e.g., solely undergraduate women) or specific service (e.g., solely counseling services).

WSPS should function as an autonomous unit rather than be housed as a component of other units on campus.

Individual units should be afforded the opportunity to organize in a manner that is efficient and best promotes equity.

Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish mission and goals.

Within institutional guidelines, WSPS must

- **establish procedures for staff recruitment and selection, training, performance planning, and evaluation**
- **set expectations for supervision and performance**
- **assess the performance of employees individually and as a team**
- **provide access to continuing and advanced education and appropriate professional development opportunities to improve the leadership ability, competence, and skills of all employees.**

WSPS should be staffed by persons with the credentials and ability to forge gender equity on campus to promote the integrity of the unit.

WSPS staff positions must be classified and compensated on a level commensurate with equivalent positions in other units.

WSPS must maintain position descriptions for all staff members.

To create a diverse staff, WSPS must institute recruitment and hiring strategies that encourage individuals from under-represented populations to apply for positions.

WSPS must develop promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, proactive, and non-discriminatory.

To further the recruitment and retention of staff, WSPS must consider work life initiatives, such as compressed work schedules, flextime, job sharing, remote work, or telework.

WSPS professional staff members must hold an earned graduate or professional degree in a field relevant to the position they hold or must possess an appropriate combination of educational credentials and related work experience.

The leadership must have knowledge of and preferably experience with gender issues and their impact on learning and development.

The professional staff should possess the academic preparation, experience, professional interests, and competencies essential for the efficient operation of the office as charged, as well as the ability to identify additional areas of concern for women. Staff members should have coursework in women's studies or demonstrated experience in advocacy on women's issues. Specific coursework may include organization development, counseling theory and practice, group dynamics, leadership development, human development, and research and evaluation.

Professional staff should demonstrate a commitment to improving women's lives and a respect for the diversity of women's identities and experiences.

Professional staff should (a) develop and implement programs and services; (b) conduct assessment, research, and evaluation; (c) advocate for the improvement of the quality of life for women as students, faculty members, and staff members; and (d) participate in institutional policy and governance efforts to ensure that policies and practices take into account the unique experiences of women.

WSPS professional staff members must engage in continuing professional development activities to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect their programs and services.

WSPS must have technical and support staff members adequate to accomplish their mission. All members of the staff must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their job functions, be knowledgeable about ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training and resources to support the performance of their assigned responsibilities.

Technical and support staff should be sufficient to perform office and administrative functions, including welcoming, sharing resources, problem identification, and referral. In the selection and training of technical and support staff members, special emphasis should be placed on skills in the areas of crisis response and management, public relations, information dissemination, problem identification, and referral. A thorough knowledge of the institution, its various offices, and relevant community resources is important.

Degree- or credential-seeking interns or graduate assistants must be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience. These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision. Supervisors must be cognizant of the roles of interns and graduate assistants as both student and employee and closely adhere to all parameters of their job descriptions, work hours, and schedules. Supervisors and the interns or graduate assistants must agree to compensatory time or other appropriate compensation if circumstances necessitate additional hours.

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained, supervised, and evaluated. They must be educated on how and when to refer those in need of additional assistance to qualified staff members and must have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments. Student employees and volunteers must be provided clear job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing development.

WSPS should provide student staff with training and development that fosters an understanding of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ability, and other identity formations. Wherever possible, efforts should be made to ensure that student staff reflects the diversity of women students.

All WSPS staff members, including student employees and volunteers, must receive specific training on institutional policies pertaining to functions or activities they support and to privacy and confidentiality policies and laws regarding access to student records and other sensitive institutional information.

All WSPS staff members must receive training on policies and procedures related to the use of technology to store or access student records and institutional data.

WSPS must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable about and trained in emergency procedures, crisis response, and prevention efforts. Prevention efforts must address identification of threatening conduct or behavior of students, faculty and staff members, and others and must incorporate a system for responding and reporting.

WSPS must ensure that staff members are knowledgeable of and trained in safety and emergency procedures for securing and vacating facilities.

To remain current and effective in understanding and addressing needs of women students, staff members should be encouraged to enroll in credit courses and seminars and be given access to published research, opinion, and relevant other media.

Part 5. ETHICS

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must review relevant professional ethical standards and must adopt or develop and implement appropriate statements of ethical practice.

WSPS must publish and adhere to statements of ethical practice and ensure their periodic review by relevant constituencies.

WSPS must orient new staff members to relevant ethical standards and statements of ethical practice and related institutional policies.

Statements of ethical standards must specify that staff members respect privacy and maintain confidentiality in all communications and records to the extent that such communications and records are protected under relevant privacy laws.

Statements of ethical standards must specify limits on disclosure of information contained in students' educational records as well as requirements to disclose to appropriate authorities.

Statements of ethical standards must address personal and economic conflicts of interest, or appearance thereof, by staff members in the performance of their work.

Statements of ethical standards must reflect the responsibility of staff members to be fair, objective, and impartial in their interactions with others.

Statements of ethical standards must reference management of institutional funds.

Statements of ethical standards must reference appropriate behavior regarding research and assessment with human participants, confidentiality of research and assessment data, and students' rights and responsibilities.

Statements of ethical standards must include the expectation that WSPS staff members confront and hold accountable other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

Statements of ethical standards must address issues surrounding scholarly integrity.

As appropriate, WSPS staff members must inform users of programs and services of ethical obligations and limitations emanating from codes and laws or from licensure requirements.

WSPS staff members must recognize and avoid conflicts of interest that could adversely influence their judgment or objectivity and, when unavoidable, recuse themselves from the situation.

WSPS staff members must perform their duties within the limits of their position, training, expertise, and competence.

When these limits are exceeded, individuals in need of further assistance must be referred to persons possessing appropriate qualifications.

Promotional and descriptive information must be accurate and free of deception.

WSPS must adhere to institutional policies regarding ethical and legal use of software and technology.

Part 6. LAW, POLICY, AND GOVERNANCE

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must be in compliance with laws, regulations, and policies that relate to their respective responsibilities and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole. Examples include constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and case law; relevant law and orders emanating from codes and laws; and the institution's policies.

WSPS must inform staff members, appropriate officials, and users of programs and services about existing and changing legal obligations, risks and liabilities, and limitations.

WSPS must have written policies on all relevant operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal implications.

WSPS must regularly review policies. The revision and creation of policies must be informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education.

WSPS staff members must use reasonable and informed practices to limit the liability exposure of the institution and its officers, employees, and agents. WSPS staff members must be informed about institutional policies regarding risk management, personal liability, and related insurance coverage options and must be referred to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

The institution must provide access to legal advice for staff members as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

WSPS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

WSPS staff members must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans persons or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

WSPS must obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments. WSPS must purchase the materials and instruments from legally compliant sources or seek alternative permission from the publisher or owner. References to copyrighted materials and instruments must include appropriate citations.

WSPS staff members must be knowledgeable about internal and external governance systems that affect programs and services.

WSPS should serve as a resource to individuals and the institution on legal issues, institutional policy, applicable laws related to FERPA or Canadian Freedom Of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP), the Clery Act (the Campus Security Act), sexual harassment and discrimination, Title IX, and the rights and responsibilities associated with confidentiality.

Part 7. DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND ACCESS

Within the context of each institution's unique mission and in accordance with institutional polices and all applicable codes and laws, Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must create and maintain educational and work environments that are

- **welcoming, accessible, and inclusive to persons of diverse backgrounds**
- **equitable and non-discriminatory**
- **free from harassment**

WSPS must not discriminate on the basis of ability; age; cultural identity; ethnicity; family educational history (e.g., first generation to attend college); gender identity and expression; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; or any other basis included in institutional policies and codes and laws.

WSPS must

- **advocate for greater sensitivity to multicultural and social justice concerns by the institution and its personnel**
- **modify or remove policies, practices, facilities, structures, systems, and technologies that limit access, discriminate, or produce inequities**
- **include diversity, equity, and access initiatives within their strategic plans**
- **foster communication that deepens understanding of identity, culture, self-expression, and heritage**
- **promote respect about commonalities and differences among people within their historical and cultural contexts**
- **address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing culturally relevant and inclusive programs, services, policies, procedures, and practices**

- **provide staff members with access to multicultural training and hold staff members accountable for integrating the training into their work**
- **respond to the needs of all students and other populations served when establishing hours of operation and developing methods of delivering programs, services, and resources**
- **ensure physical, program, and resource access for persons with disabilities**
- **recognize the needs of distance learning students by providing appropriate and accessible services and resources or by assisting them in gaining access to other appropriate services and resources in their geographic region**

WSPS should be intentional about addressing race, ethnicity, class, sex, religion, sexual orientation, ability, and other aspects of identity in WSPS educational programs and services as well as in institutional policies and practices.

Part 8. INSTITUTIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must reach out to relevant individuals, groups, communities, and organizations internal and external to the institution to

- **establish, maintain, and promote understanding and effective relations with those that have a significant interest in or potential effect on the students or other constituents served by the programs and services**
- **garner support and resources for programs and services as defined by the mission statement**
- **disseminate information about the programs and services**
- **collaborate, where appropriate, to assist in offering or improving programs and services to meet the needs of students and other constituents and to achieve program and student outcomes**
- **engage diverse individuals, groups, communities, and organizations to enrich the educational environment and experiences of students and other constituents**

WSPS should maintain good working relationships with agencies such as counseling, financial aid, clinical health services, health promotion services, career services, recreational sports, athletics, residential life, multicultural affairs, and public safety. WSPS should maintain a high degree of visibility with academic units through direct promotion and delivery of services, involvement with co-curricular programs, and staff efforts to increase understanding of the needs of women students.

Program staff should be an integral part of appropriate campus networks to participate effectively in the establishment of institution-wide policy and practices and to collaborate effectively with other staff and faculty members in providing services.

WSPS should build effective partnerships with the community to articulate common concerns and share resources.

WSPS must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for

- **communicating with the media**

- **contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services**
- **cultivating, soliciting, and managing gifts**
- **applying to and managing funds from grants**

Part 9. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have funding to accomplish the mission and goals. In establishing funding priorities and making significant changes, a comprehensive analysis must be conducted to determine the following elements: unmet needs of the unit, relevant expenditures, external and internal resources, and impact on students and the institution.

WSPS must demonstrate efficient and effective use and responsible stewardship of fiscal resources consistent with institutional protocols.

Although initial funding for WSPS may come from a combination of institutional funds, grant money, student government funds, fees for services, and government contracts, permanent institutional funding should be allocated for the continuing operation of WSPS.

Part 10. TECHNOLOGY

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have adequate technology to support the achievement of their mission and goals. The technology and its use must comply with institutional policies and procedures and be evaluated for compliance with relevant codes and laws.

WSPS must use current technology to provide updated information regarding mission, location, staffing, programs, services, and official contacts to students and designated clients.

WSPS must explore the use of technology to enhance delivery of programs and services, especially for students at a distance or external constituencies.

When technology is used to facilitate student learning and development, WSPS must select technology that reflects intended outcomes.

WSPS must

- **maintain policies and procedures that address the security, confidentiality, and backup of data, as well as compliance with privacy laws**
- **have clearly articulated plans in place for protecting confidentiality and security of information when using Internet-based technologies**
- **develop plans for replacing and updating existing hardware and software as well as plans for integrating new technically-based or supported programs, including systems developed internally by the institution, systems available through professional associations, or private vendor-based systems**

Technology, as well as workstations or computer labs maintained by programs and services for student use, must be accessible to all designated clients and must meet established technology standards for delivery to persons with disabilities.

When providing student access to technology, WSPS must

- **have policies on the use of technology that are clear, easy to understand, and available to all students**
- **provide assistance, information, or referral to appropriate support services to those needing help accessing or using technology**
- **provide instruction or training on how to use the technology**
- **inform students on the legal and ethical implications of misuse as it pertains to intellectual property, harassment, privacy, and social networks**

Student violations of technology policies must follow established institutional student disciplinary procedures.

Students who experience negative emotional or psychological consequences from the use of technology must be referred to support services provided by the institution.

Part 11. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have adequate, accessible, and suitably located facilities and equipment to support the mission and goals. If acquiring capital equipment as defined by the institution, WSPS must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life cycle costs. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated on an established cycle, including consideration of sustainability, and be in compliance with codes and laws to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

WSPS staff members must have workspace that is well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities. For conversations requiring privacy, staff members must have access to a private space.

WSPS staff members who share workspace must be able to secure their own work.

The design of the facilities must guarantee the security and privacy of records and ensure the confidentiality of sensitive information.

The location and layout of the facilities must be sensitive to the needs of persons with disabilities as well as the needs of other constituencies.

Facilities may be located in prominent, visible areas to visually demonstrate the institution's commitment to WSPS. Facilities should include private meeting areas and welcoming communal space. Facilities should be staffed beyond traditional business hours to ensure access for non-traditional students and other community members.

Part 12. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Women Student Programs and Services (WSPS) must have a clearly articulated assessment plan to document achievement of stated goals and learning outcomes, demonstrate accountability, provide evidence of improvement, and describe resulting changes in programs and services.

WSPS must have adequate fiscal, human, professional development, and technological resources to develop and implement assessment plans.

Assessments must include direct and indirect evaluation and use qualitative and quantitative methodologies and existing evidence, as appropriate, to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and intended outcomes are being met as effectively and efficiently as possible. The process must employ sufficient and sound measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other constituencies, and aggregated results must be shared with those groups. Results of assessments must be shared appropriately with multiple constituents.

A comprehensive evaluation of the on-going program should be carried out in accordance with the general practice of program review for other units of the institution. To assist staff in planning and program formation, WSPS should establish an on-going evaluation process.

Results of assessments and evaluations must be used to identify needs and interests in revising and improving programs and services, recognizing staff performance, maximizing resource efficiency and effectiveness, improving student achievement of learning and development outcomes, and improving student persistence and success. Changes resulting from the use of assessments and evaluation must be shared with stakeholders.

WSPS should inform constituencies and the institution of the results of assessment and evaluation. WSPS should engage the institution in climate-related research that addresses issues that might have a disparate effect on women.

General Standards revised in 2011;
WSPS content developed/revised in 1992, 1997, & 2005