

Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies
Resolution 2013-14A

Resolution to Establish a Master of Arts Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Approved, Commission on Graduate Studies and Policies	December 4, 2013
First Reading, University Council	February 17, 2014
Second Reading, University Council	March 3, 2014
Approved, President	March 3, 2014
Approved, Board of Visitors	
Effective Date	Fall 2015

WHEREAS, Women's and Gender Studies programs across the country offer unique perspectives on many social, political, and global issues which are highly sought after by state, federal, and private organizations in higher education, policy analysis, humanitarian aid, economic development, and human resources who seek consultants who have training in understanding gender relations; and

WHEREAS, understanding how gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, aging, disability, and sexuality can help make sense of conflicts and opportunities, particularly in an increasingly digitally connected world; and

WHEREAS, students completing the Master of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies (M.A. in WGS) degree from Virginia Tech will obtain critical thinking, research, and analytical skills in addition to hands-on advocacy and outreach work that will prepare them for a variety of career opportunities in which strategizing for gender equality, assessing gender stratification, and advocating for women and minorities are of primary concern; and

WHEREAS, there is no other standalone M.A. in WGS program in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and emphasizing both theoretical and practical aspects of gender studies offers unique and diverse opportunities for graduates seeking to uniquely situate themselves to participate in transnational scholarship, conversations, actions, and engagements in a variety of professions where gender is a key issue; and

WHEREAS, the Women's and Gender Studies Program, with support from the Department of Sociology and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, has increased its faculty to include a diverse and rich range of research expertise, has increased its collaborative teaching and research efforts across the campus, including in STEM fields, and has increased its standing with a successful international conference, positioning the Virginia Tech WGS Program to create this new degree;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the M.A. Degree in Women's and Gender Studies be established, effective Fall 2015, and the proposal forwarded to the President, the Board of Visitors, and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for approval, and to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) for notification.

Virginia Tech Degree Approval Process
Master of Arts in Women's and Gender Studies
(CIP: 05.0207)

Type of degree action (circle one): New Spinoff Revision Discontinuance

Program description

Virginia Tech has a strong tradition in service, engagement, and outreach in addition to its commitment to excellent scholarship and teaching. The Women's and Gender Studies Program at Virginia Tech is strong in all of these areas with its various service and outreach projects, outstanding research and scholarship, and excellent teachers across the disciplines. Like many Women's and Gender Studies programs across the country, WGS at Virginia Tech was founded on service and advocacy principles, with the purpose of achieving equality for women and underprivileged groups. Together with scholarly rigor, its foundations in service make it particularly suited to an institution like Virginia Tech where service, engagement, and outreach are integral parts of the university's educational mission. Many scholars in Women's and Gender Studies center their intellectual pursuits in service work, working to understand theoretical approaches of social, political, economic, and international issues to inform the ways that service organizations can better achieve empowerment of women and equality for all. The WGS program and its affiliate partners from across campus bring together scholars and professionals from Advance VT, the Women's Center, Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Engineering, and Agriculture, among others to create research, scholarship, and service projects and to provide students the opportunities to pursue these goals within or across disciplines.

We therefore seek approval for a new Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Women's and Gender Studies (WGS), to commence in Fall 2015. WGS programs and curricula offer unique perspectives on many social, political, and global issues. Individuals trained in WGS are highly sought after by state, federal, and private organizations in higher education, policy analysis, humanitarian aid, economic development, and human resources. Understanding how gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, aging, disability, and sexuality can help make sense of conflicts and opportunities, particularly in an increasing technological and digitally connected world where issues of health disparities, bioethics, and environmental policies are continually changing. Those trained in Women's and Gender Studies concepts and theories are poised to live, work, and lead in this new, diverse, and transnational world. The proposed M.A. degree in Women's and Gender Studies therefore consists of an interdisciplinary curriculum representing a range of intellectual pursuits.

Students interested in understanding how gender relations impact scientific research, social and behavioral research, the arts, and humanities will find a curriculum that helps them pursue career goals across the disciplines. This unique combination builds on the interdisciplinarity of existing WGS courses (taught by faculty across disciplines) and the WGS Program's associations with many departments across campus in international development, environmental sciences, engineering, business, leadership, the natural

sciences, the humanities, social sciences, religion and culture, and public health. Students will have opportunities to tailor their program of study to meet their career goals while simultaneously preparing them in theoretical and methodological foundations of WGS. The M.A. in WGS will focus on theory and mixed research methodologies, and will prepare the students for doctoral study, professional training in their field, applied research, and community outreach. It will also provide a thorough grounding for students who wish to bring gender studies perspectives to future careers in physical, life, environmental, or medical sciences. Students can choose to focus on applied research where they select courses from other departments to prepare them for their chosen career and their programs of study may include education abroad opportunities, internship, and field study from a variety of choices.

Curriculum summary

The M.A. in WGS consists a two-year program, comprising 36 credit hours:

Required Core Courses for M.A. in Women's and Gender Studies (15 credits)

WGS 5114: Foundations of Women's and Gender Studies (3 CR)

WGS 5454: Feminist Perspectives on Pedagogy and Academe (3 CR)

WGS 5914: Feminist Theory (3 CR)

WGS 5924: Feminist Research Methodologies (3 CR)

WGS 5934: Sexualities and Queer Theory (3 CR)

Required Special Topics (3 credits)

WGS 6004 Special Topics (with course options including Gender, Bodies, and Technology; Feminist Activism; Women in Agriculture; Women and the United Nations; Women and Technology; Women, Environment, and Development in a Global Perspective, among others)

Required Field Study/Internship (WGS 5964), or Independent Study (WGS 5794) (3 credits)

Students are required to take either an internship or field research, or independent study course, each of which requires a written report. Internships include work in approved professional settings relating to the curriculum. Field research includes observation/participant observation of various approved professional, educational, or research settings. These provide students with practical experience in conducting applied research and/or working in a professional setting. For WGS 5964: Field Study/Internship, students can work as GRAs for various international programs across campus, such as the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Collaborative Research Support Program (SANREM CRSP) or for Women and Gender in International Development (WGD), both managed by the Virginia Tech Office of International Research, Education, and Development (OIRE), and use such experiences to fulfill this requirement. In addition, the WGS Program already has established internships with such organizations as the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Washington, D.C., New River Valley Women's Resource Center in Radford, Blacksburg Planned Parenthood, the local chapter of NOW, and the Virginia Tech Women's Center. Students also have the option to find summer internships in their hometowns or other locations with approval by the director.

Students may be employed by the internship agency but must do extra work to receive academic credit.

Restrictive Elective Courses (9 credits):

WGS 6004: Special Topics: Gender, Bodies, and Technology (3CR)

WGS 5564: Women and Globalization (3 CR)

WGS 5424: Identity, Migration, and Place (3 CR)

WGS 5064: Study Abroad (3CR)

PSCI/WGS 5644: Women's Rights as Human Rights (3 CR)

SOC 5034: Social Inequality (3 CR)

SOC 5624: Women and Work (3 CR)

STS 5444: Issues in Bioethics (3 CR)

STS 5584: Environmental Politics/Policy (3 CR)

AFST 5354: Topics in Africana Studies: Health Disparities (3 CR)

AFST 5434: Race and Social Policy (3 CR)

HD 6404: Systems Theory and Family Therapy (3 CR)

HD 5324: Marriage and Family Relationships (3 CR)

HD 5344: Perspectives on Human Sexuality (3 CR)

HIST 5934: Gender and US History (3 CR)

PHS 5004: Fundamentals in Public Health (3CR)

PHS 5034: Health Behaviors and Health Education (3CR)

GRAD 5204: Citizen Scholar Seminar (3 CR)

LDRS 5454: Leadership Foundations for Diverse Contexts (3 CR)

LDRS 5464: Leadership in a Global Society

In addition to these elective courses, with director approval, students may also take courses in other disciplines that help them achieve their goals. For instance, if students are interested in the impacts of environmental policies on gender relations, they might investigate taking courses in the Department of Agriculture and Applied Economics such as International Agricultural Development and Trade (AAEC 5154) or Rural Development (AAEC 5244).

Thesis Project or Capstone Project, Two Options for WGS 5994:

Graduates of the M.A. in WGS will be required to complete either a research thesis or a capstone project. The research thesis requires six hours of WGS 5994. The capstone project requires three hours of WGS 5994 and three additional internship or field study hours.

Option 1: Thesis research (6 hours): This directed research thesis can be an in-depth academic study about a particular issue in WGS and will consist of a full-length manuscript, approximately 75-100 pages. An oral defense of the directed research thesis will be required. All theses must consist of original work of excellent quality as determined by the committee. In order to graduate from the program, a student's thesis must be approved by a majority of the three-member committee.

Option 2: Capstone project (3 hours WGS 5994, 3 hours WGS 5974): Students may complete a directed capstone project in lieu of a traditional research thesis. This project, integrated with an independent study or field research, may consist of a “creative” project or applied research. For the creative project, students might construct a performative, artistic, and/or experimental text with an accompanying written rationale. With director approval, the form and length of the creative capstone project will depend on the project and the accompanying written rationale must be 25-35 written pages. For the applied research project, students will complete specific field study and a written report consisting of approximately 25-35 pages to accompany specific applied research or internship activity. With director approval, the applied research may consist of practical, on-site study. For instance, students may investigate internships or service work with organizations such as Roanoke’s Refugee Resettlement, Americorps or Engineers without Borders and combine that work with research. An oral defense of the directed capstone project will be required. All capstone projects must consist of original work of excellent quality as determined by the committee. In order to graduate from the program, a student’s project must be approved by a majority of the three-member committee.

Relevance to university mission and strategic planning

The proposed M.A. in WGS reflects Virginia Tech’s mission through its interdisciplinary courses and opportunities, its commitment to outreach, service, and engagement, and its global approach to understanding international issues. In addition, the M.A. in WGS seeks to advance the university’s aspiration as an AAU organization, which includes status as a comprehensive, research intensive, public university. As an interdisciplinary degree grounded in understanding gender relations for the advancement of minority groups, the M.A. in WGS provides new ways of researching and teaching gender equality for the betterment of communities and to improve the quality of life for all groups. Coursework and original research in the M.A. affords students the opportunity not only to contribute to their communities but also to discover issues important to their personal lives as they become productive citizen scholars. The proposed M.A. in WGS also reflects the University’s strategic plan to attract more quality graduate students by offering progressive graduate programs with opportunities for interdisciplinary collaborations, including collaboration with engineering, agriculture, other technology fields, and encouraging women and girls in male dominated disciplines.

The proposed graduate degree supports the University’s and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Science’s goals to attract and educate global citizens who are informed about the complexities of gender, gender expression, and diversity in ways that encourage and support individual and social transformation. Building on the WGS Program’s existing education abroad and internship opportunities, the proposed M.A. in WGS also supports the University’s and the College’s goals of international learning, opportunities for service and activism, and engagement with various communities both locally and transnationally.

Justification for the proposed program

Virginia Tech’s WGS Program reflects the strengths of many WGS programs across the country with its commitment to merging engagement opportunities with educational

pursuits. However, WGS at VT is unique for three reasons: 1) First, VT's WGS program founded the internationally acclaimed Gender, Bodies, and Technology (GBT) initiative, which builds on VT's strengths in the STEM fields and innovatively fuses technology, research on gender, and arts and humanities perspectives on technology practices; 2) This degree builds on Virginia Tech's already existing programs in environmental and agricultural issues (such as the Women and Gender in International Development (WGD) program in OIRED and the Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Program sponsored by USAID), public health (through courses in the new Masters of Public Health), and several international initiatives to encourage students to understand these issues through gendered perspectives; and 3) this degree combines practical experience with academic study, preparing students for a variety of professional pursuits. Across the globe women's roles in agricultural development and practices, environmental conservation and protection, and military service are increasing and therefore calling for more experts in gender issues. VT's existing certificate in WGS and the proposed M.A. in WGS offer graduate students a unique program with strong partnerships across the university.

This is a critical time internationally in the field of Women's and Gender Studies. The United Nations recently created UN Women, whose mission includes "the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security." The WGS program at VT has long been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses with these goals—not only learning about how to solve problems through service work but also learning the underlying social, political, and economic theories that contribute to inequality. In addition to the United Nations, there are hundreds of activist and service organizations, many bipartisan, dedicated to the empowerment of women and to general betterment of society. For instance, former first lady Laura Bush founded the Bush Institute's Women's Initiative, the purpose of which is "to advance economic opportunity, good health and human freedom for women and girls. Women's Initiative programs are training women leaders in Egypt, raising awareness of Afghan women's progress and plight, and convening African first ladies, government officials and public-private partnerships to invest in women's health to strengthen Africa." In addition, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launched the Empowering Women and Girls through International Exchanges program and continues that work through the Clinton Global initiative. Across party lines equality, education, and adequate health care for women and girls are critical issues that national and international organizations have prioritized. With growing employment opportunities for graduates with specialized understanding of women's and gender issues, it is a critical time to begin an M.A. in Women's and Gender Studies at Virginia Tech. As the first program of its kind in the Commonwealth of Virginia, Virginia Tech would be a leader in producing graduates to fill the leadership and service opportunities increasingly available at non-profit and private organizations. With a master's degree in Women's and Gender Studies, Virginia Tech graduates can contribute to international work at the highest levels, making a difference in the lives of women and girls, and advocating for equality.

In its report of its 56th meeting in New York in March 2012, the UN's Commission on the Status of Women adopted six resolutions and one decision that include ending female genital mutilation; addressing situations of Palestinian women; releasing women and children taken hostage in armed conflicts; addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in natural disasters; eliminating maternal mortality and morbidity through the empowerment of women; addressing needs of indigenous women; and addressing needs of women and girls with HIV and AIDS.

It is widely accepted that equal treatment of women means the betterment of society as a whole. The global trend toward the endorsement of gender equality in political and economic decision-making structures is reflected in the practices and initiatives of international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union, the Council of Europe, and the Organization of American States. In addition to their individual programs, these organizations are cross organizing and establishing networks with national and local initiatives to advance women's empowerment. The economic logic and society benefit of promoting gender equality contributes to widespread equality across other issues, promotes democracy, and increases fair and effective global governance.

With the recent founding and creation of organizations such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (created by the United Nations in 2010), more and more graduates with expertise in issues of gender equality and gender relations are sought for employment in government and private positions. Gender equality continues to become an important issue globally as various nations, including the United States, seek to develop their social, political, and economic viability through the empowerment of women and people from minority groups. As the U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics indicate, an advanced degree in gender studies would make our graduates competitive for a range of employment opportunities, such as workers in various legal occupations, research analysts, and health and social services professionals. Women's studies courses have been offered in universities in the United States since 1970. The field has grown and matured since then, and now includes prestigious and competitive Ph.D. programs at universities such as Emory University, University of California at Davis, Arizona State University, and University of Maryland, among others. Many universities have expanded their women's studies programs to include gender and sexuality studies in response to the growing need to understand gender implications from theoretical, practical, and policy perspectives. Today, women's and gender studies is a starting point for students interested in critically examining issues of any minority group on the margins of society including race, class, immigrant, and disability statuses. WGS programs began with social justice and activist motivations, and programs across the country continue to investigate the ways that the rights of women and members of minority groups are evaluated, assessed, and advocated for. According to the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) website, "Today the field's interrogation of identity, power, and privilege go far beyond the category 'woman.' Drawing on the feminist scholarship of U.S. and Third World women of color, women's studies has made the conceptual claims and theoretical practices of intersectionality, which examines how

categories of identity (e.g., race, class, gender, age, ability, etc.) and structures of inequality are mutually constituted and must continually be understood in relationship to one another, and transnationalism, which focuses on cultures, structures and relationships that are formed as a result of the flows of people and resources across geopolitical borders, foundations of the discipline.” (nwsa.org, 2013). This critical stance on social issues, then, makes students with WGS training highly qualified and competitive in varying employment and academic opportunities. This is evident in Michele Tracy Berger (University of Chapel Hill) and Cheryl Radeloff’s (College of Southern Nevada) recent book, *Transforming Scholarship: Why Women’s and Gender Studies Students are Changing Themselves and the World* (Routledge Press, 2011). Berger and Radeloff surveyed over 900 women’s and gender studies graduates (1995-2010) from around the globe ranging from Georgia State University to University of Ghana about their experiences as a student and their career paths, creating the largest global data set about contemporary women's and gender studies graduates. In their study, they concluded that students graduating with courses, minors, and degrees in WGS were more competitive than their counterparts without such experience because of their knowledge about issues of gender inequity and inclusivity. Berger and Radeloff join the recent scholarship in WGS that highlights the significance and importance of research within WGS that contributes to other disciplinary understandings of political, economic, and social issues of gender (Women’s Studies on the Edge, Duke University Press, 2008 and Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies, Routledge, 2011, for example). These and other studies like them make it clear that “Far from peripheral to the mission of the university, women’s studies works through conversation and debate across disciplines and fields” to be part of the connection between the university and the public. “In this respect,” argues Katherine Romack, “the ideal mission of the global university is nowhere better expressed than in [WGS] hybrid departments, programs and fields” that “favor a vision of knowledge production that is holistic and collective, historically situated, critical, and pragmatic” (“Women’s Studies in the Post-Feminist University” pp. 250-251).

An M.A. in WGS will provide students with an interdisciplinary and applied education with an emphasis on gender issues, which are important to a variety of professions. Employment opportunities for WGS graduates also include higher education, policy analysis, humanitarian aid, economic development, and human resources. There are currently no stand-alone graduate programs for WGS in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The WGS graduate program at University of North Carolina Greensboro is the only stand-alone WGS graduate program in the region; therefore, the Virginia Tech M.A. in WGS target population includes students seeking expertise and employment in these areas in addition to those who wish to remain in the southwest region of Virginia, without having to re-locate in order fulfill their educational goals.

In addition, the Virginia Tech M.A. in WGS formalizes what largely exists and builds on the strengths of the interdisciplinary collaborations already occurring among VT faculty across the disciplines. The graduate certificate students currently enrolled in VT’s WGS program a mix of M.A./M.S., Ph.D., and MFA students across the university from such programs as Geography, Public Policy and International Relations, Human Development, Sociology, Political Science, Educational Psychology, Science and Technology in

Society, Planning Governance and Globalization, Communication, Curriculum and Instruction, Rhetoric and Writing, and Creative Writing, among others. Building on the strengths existing in the current certificate program, the proposed program will prepare students for further academic work at the best WGS Ph.D. programs in the country such as those at University of California at San Diego, Emory University, University of California at Davis, or Rutgers University. Additionally, many Ph.D. programs in traditional disciplines (such as English, History, Sociology) seek WGS master's degree holders as they continue their doctoral work. With greater attention to trans, intersex, and other "biologically-based" gender categorizations, the field of WGS has become increasingly interested in the fields of genetics, hormones, neuroscience and other natural and physical sciences. An M.A. in WGS at Virginia Tech can offer students interested in these issues cutting-edge perspectives and opportunities to both initiate and participate in these conversations. The M.A. in WGS will also prepare future doctoral students in Ph.D. programs at Virginia Tech, including the Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical, and Cultural Thought program, Sociology, Rhetoric and Writing, Human Development, and Science and Technology in Society, among others. Each of these programs strongly supports students' commitment to the critical study of gender in these fields and many students in these departments currently take WGS courses in their selected programs of study. The M.A. in WGS Target Population, therefore, not only serves students who wish to continue their education and pursue employment in Virginia, but will also attract students from around the country and the world who wish to prepare for doctoral study.

Interactions and relationships with on-campus organizations like the Center for Student Engagement, the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention, the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology, and the proposed Center for the Study for Human Rights, together with relationships with off-campus organizations such as Refugee Resettlement in Roanoke, Imani Nahla (founded by a WGS graduate certificate student and Ph.D. in Sociology and continued by Women's Center and WGS undergraduate students), and others already exist widely across the Virginia Tech community and specifically with WGS faculty and students. Developing formal internship and research study programs will be relatively seamless as many of our students are currently engaged in these programs. Similarly, the Director of Women and Gender in International Development (WGD), who is a WGS Affiliate, provides several international research opportunities for graduate students. The WGS Program at Virginia Tech regularly provides presentations, workshops, and visiting lectures to expose students to international and interdisciplinary opportunities and collaborations.

Several of our undergraduates have indicated on their exit interviews and in a separate survey that they would like to continue their WGS studies at Virginia Tech upon graduation and then go on to pursue a Ph.D. in a another discipline. Other students stated their desire to remain at Virginia Tech while they prepare for the job market and add to their credentials to make them more competitive. One student pointed out Virginia Tech's Corps of Cadets as a unique space where issues of gender arise. She stated,

"I think Virginia Tech has a lot of potential for examining unique gendered issues being a part-military university. Virginia Tech is one of only two universities to

have a civilian body and full-time Corps of Cadets on our campus, which I believe causes a multitude of gender related issues. Also, being in SW VA [southwest Virginia] fuels gendered issues due to rural culture. We are the perfect place to have WGS Master's program.”

Virginia Tech's strong military history, together with support from the Provost's office for an active Women's Center, combined with the Women's and Gender Studies program, make Virginia Tech a unique place for a graduate degree in Women's and Gender Studies. In addition, given Virginia Tech's reputation as a prestigious institution in architecture and design, agriculture, cultural geography, and engineering, we will attract students who are particularly interested in the ways gender has affected these fields. Indeed, faculty and students in STEM fields are already providing innovative courses, research, and study abroad opportunities for WGS students.

The proposed M.A. in WGS is designed to highlight experiential learning, activist scholarship, and engaged pedagogies, all of which are instrumental in the women's and gender studies field and in fact are features that feminist studies has contributed to teaching and learning in higher education institutions. According to a special study conducted by the NWSA, “Women's Studies has key lessons to offer about fostering civic engagement at the course level that will deepen student learning in the college setting, contribute respectfully to communities in which they become involved, and produce lifelong civic leaders. In a nutshell, Women's Studies regards civic learning as most effective when students understand how social problems emerge from interconnected systems of inequality and simultaneously learn how to challenge those systems” (Catherine Orr, “Women's Studies as Civic Engagement: Research and Recommendations.” Working Paper, National Women's Studies Association, 2011, pp. 9-10). The proposed Virginia Tech program therefore is specifically designed to meet these challenges by asking students to take courses in theory and practice so that they can deeply understand the issues and learn about ways to make changes.

These historical and contemporary issues exemplify the ever-important emphasis on understanding women's issues and gender components to any issue nationally and internationally. Students in WGS undergraduate and graduate courses at Virginia Tech understand these issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and in many cases are preparing themselves to play critical roles in participating in change for the greater good. Students working with the Center for Student Engagement, Refugee Resettlement, the Women's Center, and the Women's Resource Center in Radford, among others, are all advocating either locally or nationally in ways to further the goals of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women. The WGS Master's program will further provide students with opportunities to intern or participate in various study abroad programs, such as working at preschools in Sri Lanka where single mothers need assistance and other study abroad experiences where engagement and advocacy are a critical part of the learning experience.

The WGS program at Virginia Tech has developed a stellar academic reputation in recent years. Recent accomplishments of affiliate faculty and students exemplify the strength of

the program. WGS core faculty and affiliates publish many books and articles that garner national and international attention, including citations in international journals, presentations at international conferences, and invitations as speakers at colleges and universities across the globe. They serve on university, state, and national committees and hold leadership positions in their fields. In addition to these activities, faculty are coordinating several international initiatives, including two international conferences. WGS undergraduate and graduate students have also excelled with the mentoring of an excellent faculty. Recent WGS graduates have found employment as market analysts, tenure track assistant professors, directors of women's centers, and advocates in non-profits. One WGS graduate student was chosen as the recipient of the 2011 Advancing Women Award and one student has a USAID grant to study gender roles in water collection and quality in Mozambique. Furthermore, the program's faculty has successfully developed and launched the Gender, Bodies, and Technology (GBT) initiative, including hosting its bi-annual conference with wide international participation and acclaim, is now recognized as a leader in this burgeoning area of research, and is supported by Robotics and Mechanics Laboratory (RoMeLa), Bioinformatics, and Science and Technology in Society at Virginia Tech. The program recently hired a faculty member in this area, which builds on the STEM strengths of Virginia Tech, and is a key unique component to the M.A. in WGS with a new course in development currently taught as WGS 6004: Gender, Bodies, and Technology. The GBT initiative within the WGS program is uniquely interdisciplinary, bringing together scholars from fields as wide-ranging as engineering, computer science, visual arts, the humanities, medicine, and the social sciences. As such, it provides an important foundation for the kind of collaborative work in which Virginia Tech hopes its students can successfully engage.

Student Demand

Two surveys were sent to WGS students and alumni in Fall 2012. In addition, students are regularly surveyed and interviewed upon their graduation. Based on the survey and interview data, some students obtaining their bachelor's degrees at Virginia Tech would like to stay at Virginia Tech to pursue graduate work in WGS rather than relocate to programs outside the state. The director receives several inquiries a year asking if Virginia Tech offer a masters degree in WGS. Students sending these requests are often already employed in the region and wish to remain in the area to pursue their graduate work or are undergraduates wishing to pursue graduate study in Virginia and seeking WGS graduate credentials before seeking employment.

Of the top Women's and Gender Studies programs in the country, most are focused on either a practical or applied track or an academic track. Rutgers University, one of the most prestigious programs in the country (together with Emory University which does not offer an M.A.) has 184 undergraduates in major and minor degree programs, 33 students in the Ph.D. program, and 21 students in the M.A. program. George Washington University admits 10-15 students per year and about one-third of their graduates go on to earn doctoral or other professional degrees. Both Rutgers and GW focus on public policy and the humanities. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro advertises its program as the only masters degree in the central south region. While its program offers academic preparation and professional application emphases, its program focuses on the

humanities. Therefore, both in terms of location and in terms of curriculum, Virginia Tech's program is well poised to fulfill student need. Geographically located in the middle of existing programs and offering a unique curriculum and opportunities will make Virginia Tech an attractive option for Virginia students and students across the country.

Relatively few master's programs are available in the eastern part of the country. Only two programs, at ODU and GMU, offer MAs. However, these degrees are offered through other venues: ODU's degree is through the Humanities Institute and has a particularly strong and historically significant BA program. Its curriculum focuses on humanities perspectives, and many students in Criminal Justice and International Studies earn Certificates in WGS. Virginia Tech's program will offer additional perspectives in the STEM fields through its GBT emphasis, in addition to the social and human sciences. GMU's strength lies in its interdisciplinarity, offering an MA through its Interdisciplinary Studies program. Virginia Tech's distinction from GMU will be the course opportunities in public health, STS, Gender, Bodies, and Technology, and the other growing GBT initiatives of the existing WGS Program.

Market/Employer Demand

The range of employment opportunities for WGS graduates is growing and the WGS program at VT is well poised to recruit students and produce graduates that come from an institution where service is central to the university's mission. Graduates with an M.A. in Women's and Gender Studies will successfully compete for jobs in research, health services, and community programs as research analysts, policy coordinators, and directors of women's centers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows jobs in these fields will increase between the years 2010 and 2020 from 16% to 41%. A graduate with an M.A. in WGS will have the skills needed for these fast growing occupations while having additional expertise in gender. Most notably, recent employment advertisements seek advanced education in gender research and education, including a "Gender Intervention Manager" for Agribusiness Systems International in Washington, D.C. and a "Program Manager" for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in New York, New York. In these and other related job opportunities, applicants are sought with expertise in gender relations, gender assessment, gender equality strategizing, and mobilizing programs to support equal opportunities for women.

Employees, researchers, and activists in employment areas such as international and national public policy, human rights policy and advocacy, communication and media, labor, health research, market research, etc., use their academic training in Women's and Gender Studies to effect real world change. Using the lens of gender and the knowledge that feminist studies has generated, WGS students, faculty, and professionals bring important perspectives to understand and mitigate the effects of violence, addiction, depression, and widening economic stratification. Emphasizing these perspectives "encourages students to critically rethink the values they've been taught and that society institutions justify" (Janell Hobson, 41). These abilities to critically question and rethink social and political structures are exactly the skills that organizations like the Bill and

Melinda Gates Foundation, Human Rights Watch, and Doctors without Borders, and Engineers without Borders, among others, are looking for as they work toward creating social change. In a recent study conducted by Michele Tracy Berger, professor of women's and gender studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and author of *Transforming Scholarship: Why Women's and Gender Studies Students are Changing Themselves and the World*, 72 percent of WGS students "were active in various organizations during their undergraduate careers—suggesting an incredible drive by students in the field to connect theory to lived experience. Such activism in local, state, national and global organizations helps shape life-long commitments to social justice and provides tools for leadership roles after graduation" (Berger 42, See article in Appendix G). This commitment to connecting theory to lived experience and practice is a primary goal of the existing WGS Programs at Virginia Tech, both its undergraduate program and its graduate certificate program. The proposed M.A. in WGS will build on this commitment and create opportunities for students to further connect their studies with their goals as activists and researchers.

Issues of Duplication

Across the country there are fewer than 50 stand-alone WGS MA programs; most opportunities for students come through traditional disciplinary tracks where they can earn a graduate certificate or a WGS concentration. In Virginia, there are no stand-alone programs: two universities offer degrees through either interdisciplinary studies or humanities and only three others offer graduate certificates or concentrations (Virginia Commonwealth University, Old Dominion University, George Mason University). The nearest stand-alone programs are at the University of Maryland and UNC-Greensboro. Virginia Tech's proposed M.A. in WGS emphasizes both theoretical and practical aspects of Women's and Gender Studies and therefore offers diverse opportunities for students to link their course of study with their career goals. An emphasis on diverse methods of inquiry, together with critical thinking that translates into practice, will help graduates to uniquely situate themselves to participate in transnational conversations, actions, and engagements in whatever profession they choose--to improve the lives of women and members of minority groups. The proposed program at Virginia Tech would offer one of the few stand-alone programs and would attract students both in Virginia and across the country interested in either academic or applied Women's and Gender Studies-related opportunities.

Resource Needs/Savings

No new resources are requested for this degree. We currently have 7 tenured or tenure-track faculty, one Visiting faculty, and one adjunct faculty to cover the curriculum for this degree. We have hired two tenure track faculty in the last two years in anticipation of building this graduate program. The College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences has allocated 6 GTA lines (existing monies) to be used for the M.A. in WGS. No other resources are requested.

RESOURCE	ESTIMATED COSTS (use NA if not applicable)
Faculty	0
Administrative Staff	0
Graduate Teaching/ Graduate Research Assistants	0
Space	0
Library	0
Equipment	0
Other	0