Office Hours
Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM

About the Center
The Women’s Center provides and cosponsors outreach programs in residence halls; in classrooms; and for sororities, fraternities, student-athletes, and other groups and organizations. The Multicultural Center houses a lending library with books, journals, magazines, audio- and videotapes, DVDs, and news clippings focused on multicultural and diversity issues, and our Women’s Center collection includes resources on women's history, health, empowerment, and concerns. Our holdings may be accessed online via the University Libraries’ website. The Women's Center Lounge and Conference Room are available for students, faculty, staff, and community members to study, visit with friends, hang out between classes or on breaks, and hold meetings. The Multicultural Center also has a board room, computer room, lactation room, activity room, multipurpose room, and a kitchen for use by reservation.

Mission
The Women’s Center's mission is to promote gender equity through education, support, and advocacy, and to respond to issues affecting the status of female students, faculty, and staff on campus, as well as women in the community and in society.

Commitment
Since its establishment in 1986 as an outgrowth of the Western Organization for Women, the Women’s Center has been committed to being a vital resource for individuals and groups of women, and men, on campus and in the community.

Objectives
The Women’s Center seeks to address the distinctive needs of the women of Western Illinois University and the surrounding communities. To fulfill this goal, the objectives of the center include the following:
• To recognize, celebrate, and promote awareness among women and men of the multicultural realities of women's lives, particularly with regard to race, age, class, sexual orientation, religion, and ability.
• To help women develop positive self-concepts as well as the skills and strategies needed to function effectively in society.
• To increase awareness of the unique needs and concerns of women.
• To build a sense of community and identity among women.
• To provide information about and referrals to local resources in such areas as women's health, education, finance, and employment.
• To provide advocacy for female students and employees in the University community.
• To increase awareness among women and men of women's contributions to society.
• To assist anyone who wants to help create a world in which girls, boys, women, and men have equal opportunities at home, at school, in the workplace, and in society.
• To ensure that gender inequities, disparities between women and men, and violence against women are addressed, reduced, and eliminated.
Women’s Center Staff and Volunteer Opportunities

We have many student assistant positions and volunteer opportunities available for women and men who are passionate about gender issues and have a genuine interest in feminism. Involvement opportunities include publicity flyer creation and distribution; resource library organization and maintenance; program planning, presentation, and facilitation; Women’s Voices Open Mic and publication facilitation; women’s athletics support; liaisons with the Women’s Studies, Social Work, Recreation, Park and Tourism Administration, and other academic departments; men’s outreach; and staffing information and resource tables in the Union concourse during Student Orientation and Registration (SOAR) and for other events throughout the year. Staff and volunteers connect people with resources on campus and in the community, region, and nation. They can also help with the following:

• Research papers and class projects
• Resident Assistant programs and Greek educations
• Providing a place to hold small group meetings
• Resources and support in understanding and confronting gender-based discrimination and violence
• And much more

The Women’s Center director is available for personal assistance and consultation. Call or stop by for an appointment, or contact her at J-Cavicchia@wiu.edu. Visit our website or come by and take advantage of the wealth of information, resources, programs, services, and opportunities for involvement we have to offer!

Groups and Organizations

A variety of empowerment groups and student organizations meet in the Women’s Center. Participants decide when and how often to get together to network, meet others with similar interests, and share knowledge. If you have a group or would like to start one on campus, the Women’s Center may be a good place to meet. Several organizations are directly affiliated with the Women’s Center and are advised by the Women’s Center director and graduate assistants:

• **Campus Girl Scouts** – CGS members volunteer their skills and talents in program activities with girls and teens and provide services at schools, in the community, and in the local Girl Scout Council. Facebook: WIU Campus Girl Scouts

• **Feminist Action Alliance** – The FAA is a student organization created to increase awareness of feminist issues on campus and in the community through education and action. Facebook: WIU Feminist Action Alliance

• **Organization of Adult Students for Interaction and Support** – OASIS and its Student Parent Association (SPA) subcommittee provide opportunities for nontraditional students to gather for educational and social activities and support. Facebook: OASIS – Western Illinois University

Several other groups meet upon request when there is enough interest, including the Feminist Reading Group, groups for international women, student-parents, women of color, and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender students.

Collaboration

The Women’s Center reports to the Associate Vice President for Student Services, who also supervises the other two centers that are housed in the Multicultural Center: Casa Latina Cultural Center and Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center. The staff and student organizations in all three centers work collaboratively to provide a variety of multicultural- and diversity-related programs, resources, and services for all WIU students, faculty, and staff as well as community members. The Women’s Center and the Department of Women’s Studies have distinct, yet complementary, missions. Women’s Studies is an academic department offering a major and a minor. The Women’s Center is a department in Student Services that offers support for students, faculty, staff, and community members. Both provide learning opportunities, support, and advocacy for women; bring women together to build community; and place women at the center of inquiry and action. Both have a long history of working together and collaborating with other departments and organizations toward achievement of gender equity and the elimination of sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, ableism, and other forms of discrimination and oppression on campus and in society. The Center staff also collaborate with the Center for the Study of Masculinities and Men’s Development (CSMMD); the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Ally (LGBTQA) Resource Center; and the Interpersonal Violence Prevention Initiative, among other departments, offices, and organizations.

The key to a women’s center’s ability to advance social justice and women’s equality within an institution of higher learning rests firmly on its ability to create effective working relationships with other agencies and groups on campus and its willingness to engage in advocacy on behalf of the women whom it serves. –Beth A. Firestein

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