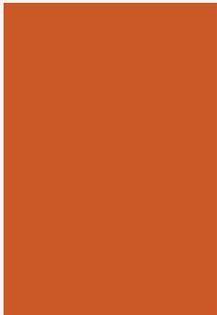
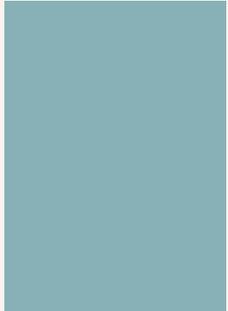




Creating Your Future, Creating Change



a career advice handbook written
for WGS students by WGS alumni



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for the Department of Women's and Gender Studies**



a note from the authors

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Dear Future WGS Cohorts,

Welcome to DePaul's Women's and Gender Studies M.A. Program! We are both graduates of the '10-12 cohort and are proud to be connected to you as alumni.

During the next two years, you will be faced with a number of decisions that will affect how you want to use your WGS education in a career. Whether your passions lie in continuing your education at a Ph.D. level or looking for full-time career opportunities, you will learn (as we did) that the work of social justice presents unique challenges.

We developed this handbook in response to the many questions that arose during our own graduate study here at DePaul University. These questions ranged from identifying internships, finding post-graduation career possibilities, and researching Ph.D. programs both in the field of Women's and Gender Studies and in other disciplines. Thusly so, this handbook has been organized into three sections that address these thoughts accordingly:

Section I: Building Experience in Year One - Advice on finding an internship or volunteer opportunity in the first year and using this as a stepping stone for your career development.

Section II: Exploring Career Choices for Life After WGS - Explores campus, departmental, and online resources for navigating the job market after graduation.

Section III: Continuing Your Education - Online, faculty, and alumni advice on how to take the next steps in higher education.

The Women's and Gender Studies Program at DePaul offers a unique atmosphere that encourages scholarly development while also emphasizing the value of building community. This handbook was created with the intention of keeping this sense of community alive through the years. It is our pleasure to help future cohorts of our program succeed, and we hope you are able to achieve your greatest goals with this advice in hand.

Sincerely,

Anna Assenmacher and Julie Eun Kyung Froslan

gratitude

We extend our deepest thanks to all the faculty and alumni who made this handbook possible. Special thanks to our contributors, Professor Ann Russo, Abbey Fox, Tanja Messing, and Dunja Antonovic. An additional thanks to WGS directors Professor Beth Catlett and Professor Laila Farah for overseeing the project and helping with its content.

Finally, a special thank you to our own cohort, whose friendships inspired us to keep our sense of community alive and passed on to future WGS generations.

Section One: Building Experience in Year One

Why should I get involved during my two years of WGS?

What resources are available to me right now?

What questions should I be considering as I work through my first year?

This section is for students who are interested in making the best of their first year by taking advantage of the opportunities put in place by the department for future academic and career success. Interning or volunteering with a community-based service organization is the first step in building a career oriented towards social justice and change. These experiences not only help you strengthen your professional skill set and resume, but can also help you create connections outside of the WGS Department that will serve as an important network post-graduation. The contacts, friends, allies, and mentors you meet through your internship or volunteer experiences will be invaluable to helping you identify job opportunities once you have graduated.

First year resources

There are numerous departmental resources available to students seeking internship and volunteer work. Aside from using faculty connections and recommendations to familiarize yourself with potential opportunities, WGS students can be connected through the Yahoo! Listserv Group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wmstudies-depaul/>) and the DePaul WGS Grad Students Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/263600937074008/>).

Additionally, the WGS Service Learning and Internship Program (SLIP) will help you identify opportunities relevant to your interests. During the 2011-2012 school year, the Beck Research Initiative for Women, Gender, and Community organized this program to help students identify internship, job, and volunteer opportunities while engaged in a service learning course at DePaul University.

The WGS SLIP Program is designed to help you integrate theory and praxis, to engage in the work of social justice, and to help you develop practical experience that is essential to the learning process as you prepare for a career after graduation. Other benefits to consider include:

- Gain valuable work experience that is relevant to your career, scholarship, and activism
- Obtain practical experience that enhances your qualifications as a potential candidate
- Create possibilities to transition into a full-time position with the organization
- Develop a valuable network of mentors, contacts, and references

At www.beckresearch.org/slip/internship, you will find resources ranging from an internship and job board, a robust database of community organizations that are focused on doing the work of social justice in Chicago and its surrounding communities, and other information detailing ways to get involved. Participation in the WGS Service Learning and Internship Program will set the important foundations for transitioning into a social justice career.

Questions to consider during the first year

Be sure to take advantage of the noncommittal research time you will have as a first year student! The second year will be an absolute blur, so now is the time to think about your interests, your talents, and, essentially, how WGS can best serve your future.

Please use the following questions as an exercise to organize these thoughts:

What issues am I most passionate about?

What fields am I most interested in?

Where are my curiosities now?

How can I leverage my previous work experience into a career oriented towards social justice?

alumni voices

I remember being so intimidated the first week of class! It seemed most of the students were grounded in women's and gender studies but me, and because I came from a business and finance background, I felt particularly ill-suited to be discussing some of the very difficult and complex issues we examine in WGS. That said, as the program progressed, I began to understand - and indeed appreciate - my earlier professional experiences and gain clarity into how these seemingly divergent disciplines could enhance my efforts both in school, as a scholar, and post-graduation, as Assistant Director of the Beck Research Initiative at DePaul. For me, the skills I developed in my career prior to graduate school - including project management, strategic planning, and resource management - were valuable to my research and continue to be valuable in my current role with the BRI. But I feel the most important and valuable skill I developed in WGS is the ability to think critically. My feminist lens informs everything I do - the way I lead a team, run a project, interact with community members and organizations, formulate ideas about politics and current events, and carry myself day to day. So my advice to anyone coming from outside of the field is - don't be afraid! WGS offers something to all we do and to all we are.

Anna Assenmacher, '10-12 Cohort

Thoughts for the summer

Congratulations! June is finally here and you can now proudly check off year one. While self-care and relaxation are without-a-doubt important to include during your summer break, spending a few hours a week thinking about your final project will help you be most prepared upon returning in September. Take this time to freely and thoroughly explore your chosen topic (or topics!). Make more notes and connections in your bibliography or check on new research being released. And even if you do not feel completely ready, try writing a mock proposal just to get your thoughts on paper. You may start your second year in the exact same place, but at least you can assuredly move on, knowing you are well-versed in your topic and ready to start the year prepared.

alumni voices

When summer started, I thought I had a pretty strong grasp on my thesis topic of international adoption. While I definitely spent most of the summer indulging in a no-school zone, I did spend some time looking up additional sources and getting a more thorough feel beyond what I covered in my literature review. By doing this, I realized my ideas on identity conception and transracial adoptee experiences were already well-studied, so I made finding a fresher take my goal for Fall Quarter. Once back in school, I contacted the professors and people I read up on during the summer, many of whom helped me with my official project proposal. Additionally, I used the summer to think about the skills I already had and how I could use the final project as a place for practice and refinement.

While I definitely had moments where I didn't think I was going to finish on time (perhaps due more to false anxiety than reality), I'm glad I took a few moments to think about things without the stress of coursework and line up questions that ultimately changed my topic's direction. When you think about it, you will really have only 10 weeks to devote all your time and energy to your project, so it's best to take these downtime moments to deeply engage with your field and ask what route makes the most sense for you now and for the future.

Julie Eun Kyung Froslan, '10-12 Cohort

Section Two:

Exploring Career Choices for Life After WGS

I'm about to complete my second year, and I know I want to be in a career committed to social justice work.

What can I do now? How do I enter and navigate this field?

Where should I even start?

Section Two is dedicated to the very daunting reality of pulling your education and experiences together and entering the job market. As you move into your last year, complete final projects, and turn your attention to graduation, the prospect of finding a socially conscious job creates new challenges. However, the Department of Women's and Gender Studies and DePaul University campus offer students and alumni many job search resources.

Departmental resources

Within the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, students are encouraged to discuss their career interests with WGS Faculty. Here, one will find there are often relationships already in place that can be helpful for making your own connections with community-based organizations or groups. Furthermore, having a recommendation in hand from a connected faculty member will greatly help in a field that relies on community relations.

In addition to working with WGS Faculty, the Community Organization Database, hosted by the Beck Research Initiative, is a valuable resource for students who are looking to identify community organizations doing work in their area of interest. There are close to 200 organizations included in the database, organized according to specialization--- i.e. domestic violence, LGBTQ, anti-racism, public policy and advocacy, etc.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the Women's and Gender Studies Yahoo! Listserv (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wmstudies-depaul/>) has been responsible for placing multiple alumni. Make sure you are signed up with this important resource for job postings, networking events, conferences, community events, and more.

Campus resources

Familiarizing yourself with the DePaul University Career Center is an important step for strengthening and refining resumes and interview etiquette while continuing to gather information about prospective job fields.

The Career Center offers the following job resources:

- Resume feedback and advice
- Mock interviews
- Networking events
- Mentorship opportunities via the Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK) Program

For more information, visit the Career Center online at

<http://careercenter.depaul.edu/>

and register with DePaul.Experience at

<http://depaul.experience.com/> to get started.

Online resources

The following list was compiled by Professor Ann Russo and contains websites that specialize in nonprofit, WGS major specific, and/or social justice job postings.

Idealist

<http://www.idealist.org>

Lists over 44,000 nonprofit and community organizations in 165 countries. Make a profile and search for organizations, volunteer/intern opportunities, and job postings.

Feminist Majority Foundation

<http://www.feminist.org/911/jobs/joblisting.asp>

Search “Career Center” for jobs and internships in feminist and progressive organizations.

Nonprofit Opportunities

<http://www.npo.net>

Information on employment opportunities and nonprofit organizations with an emphasis on opportunities in Illinois, Indiana, Texas, and Wisconsin.

alumni voices

My last quarter at DePaul was spent primarily obsessing about my thesis project, so I didn't begin my actual job search until the end of the program, which was at the end of May for me. Once May hit, I was a big ball of anxiety and nerves, so I went to the Career Center at DePaul. They helped me completely re-vamp my resume, and gave me a couple of job searching books to read. I absorbed it all and started to learn about 'networking.' DePaul has this amazing program called ASK mentors, where you meet with alumni that will look at your resume, help you practice interviewing, and possibly connect you with other people in your field. I met with a total of five ASK mentors and this was an amazing thing to supplement the stress of sending out resumes every day. I was able to talk to these mentors about the process and it really satisfied my perfectionist attitude with feeling like I was "accomplishing" something – because when you send so many applications out and receive no word or rejections, it can be really disheartening.

I found my job at Catharsis at the end of the summer. It was a simple job posting on Idealist, and after gathering the skills I learned from the Career Center I was able to put forth a nice cover letter and resume. I also felt very connected to the work Catharsis was doing, so it was also very honest and authentic. A week later I was called into a 10 minute interview. 10 minutes! Again, I called one of my mentors and we practiced what a 10 minute interview might feel like. I researched the company so I knew as much as I could, and I also had a few questions prepared. A day later, I was called back for a full interview with the executive director. Again, I cannot underestimate how easy this was because I felt so prepared and also like this company was truly a nice fit for me. The next day, I was offered the job and I immediately began work. I have been with the company now for almost 2 ½ years and have had the opportunity for a promotion into a completely new position (i.e. Coordinator of Community Engagement) which is definitely an even better fit because I can utilize direct skills from my WGS degree.

In summary, my top tips would be: learn as much as you can about job hunting, networking, and resume building. Read books and blogs on those topics specifically. Ask so many questions and reach out to mentors from a plethora of fields. Practice intentional self care that is plentiful in positive affirmations (i.e. "I deserve a good job with a company that fits my needs."). And continue to reach out to alums about their process. Try to remember that transitions are difficult, but beginnings are exciting. It may take a while, but trust that the journey is unfolding in the ways that it is supposed to – and keep a really great community around you while you journey.

Abbey Fox, '08-10 Cohort

Career Opportunities for Women's Studies Majors

(Created by Michigan State University)

<http://www.msu.edu/~wmstdy/wsmjr3.htm>

Practical advice on starting a career with a WGS major. Contains (linked) suggestions of Internet and print resources.

Nonprofit Oyster

<http://www.nonprofitoyster.com>

Job postings with nonprofit agencies and nonprofit related positions in for-profit companies. Includes listings with research/academic institutes and universities, public television, public radio, foundations, grantmakers, and publishers.

OpportunityKnocks

<http://www.opportunityknocks.org>

Listing of nonprofit job opportunities. Post your resume and search through job listings.

EcoJobs

<http://www.ecojobs.com>

Search for environmental job opportunities, internships, and degree programs.

Volunteer Match

<http://www.volunteermatch.org>

Find volunteer opportunities and organization connections via location and interest.

Union Jobs

<http://www.unionjobs.com>

Lists job openings with labor unions from around the country.

U.S. Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs)

<http://jobs.uspirg.org>

Features policy work positions across the country. Headquartered in Boston with many career opportunities also in D.C.

Philanthropy Journal

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

Philanthropy and nonprofit jobs and resources from the Institute for Nonprofits at North Carolina State University.

America's Job Bank

<http://ajb.dni.us/>

Private and government job bank hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor. Tips on resumes, networking, interviewing, and salary negotiation.

JobBank USA

<http://jobbankusa.com/>

US job search site with tips on resume and cover letter writing and interview etiquette.

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

<http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org/jobs>

Nonprofit job board for listings in Minnesota and surrounding area.

Nonprofit Career Network
<http://nonprofitcareer.com/>

Nonprofit jobs and volunteer opportunities. Listings and directory of organizations.

Community Career Center
<http://nonprofitjobs.org>

Nonprofit job postings. Allows candidates to upload resumes and create a profile for employers.

The NonProfit Times
<http://www.thenonproffitimes.com/>

Nonprofit management publication with resource marketplace and job listings section.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy
<http://www.philanthropy.com>

Online publication for jobs, resources, fundraising, and other philanthropic needs.

Connecting with WGS alumni

One of the most important resources to consider in your job search are the experiences of past WGS students. We created this handbook as a means of passing down the advice we acquired in our two years, but there are many alumni that came before us who can offer more advice and potential connections.

We encourage all students to stay connected through the WGS Yahoo! Listserv Group and the WGS Facebook Group. Additionally, the continual evolution of social media in the job market has made LinkedIn an important resource. We hope all WGS alumni will take advantage of the new DePaul Women's and Gender Studies Alumni LinkedIn group, which was designed to be a forum for past and present cohorts to stay connected via communicating, organizing, and networking together.

Section Three: Continuing Your Education

I am 100% committed to my research interests and want to share them with the world someday. What do I need to know about applying to a Ph.D. program?

It is not uncommon for post-undergraduate degree seekers to consider enrolling in a Ph.D. program. WGS Faculty Members have noticed this is a frequently stated goal in new cohorts, and a few WGS or WGS-affiliated alumni have gone on to achieve this dream.

Committing to the Ph.D. path takes a lot of thought and energy, and for this section, we have a few stories and tips from WGS folks who have experienced this process. Additionally, please use the following websites as a general primer for things to consider before applying:

Arizona State University Career Services: Graduate School
<https://students.asu.edu/career/gradschool>

Walks interested students through points to consider before applying to post-undergraduate programs. Advice and links for selecting a program.

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: Preparation for Research Doctoral Degree
<http://www.asha.org/students/academic/doctoral/chap2.htm>

Step-by-step advice on selecting a doctoral program and what decisions are involved in this process.

Artemis Guide to Women's Studies Programs
<http://www.artemisguide.com/>

Lists and links to Women's Studies programs from around the U.S. (Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral level).

PhDs.org
<http://www.phds.org>

Resource website created by former Dartmouth professor with the help of students. Up-to-date search and ranking tools for Master's and Doctorate programs. Includes career resources extras such as Getting into Grad School, Succeeding in Grad School, and Postdoctoral Life.

Lists and links to Women's and Gender Studies programs in the United States and internationally.

Five tips from WGS Professor Ann Russo

- 1) It's important to have a clear idea of why you want to pursue a Ph.D., what your research interests and questions are, what direction you'd like to develop your research/scholarship and teaching, and why the school you are applying to would meet your interests and goals. These questions are central to your personal statement--making sure that you are articulating your background and experience in a way that prepares you to pursue your particular interests and why this program will help you to develop your scholarship and education in this particular way.
- 2) Talk with professors in WGS and at DePaul about their suggestions for good Ph.D. programs in the areas in which you are interested. Gather recommendations and ideas along with potential contacts.
- 3) In reviewing potential programs, review the curriculum they offer to be sure there is significant overlap with your own interests. Also, be sure to review all of the faculty and their interests to see what kinds of synchronicity there might be with your own interests; and explore faculty and courses in related disciplines that you might be able to take advantage of while you are there.
- 4) Visit the school, try to meet with professors in your area of interest, and talk with graduate students in the program about their experiences in the program.
- 5) If you want to work with a particular professor, be sure to try to meet with them in person or talk with them over the phone. When you meet with them, be sure to have read their work, and be prepared to talk about your own interconnected interests. It's important to see what they are like, if you feel like you would have a good rapport, and if they seem open and available for meeting. I would also encourage you to talk with graduate students who have taken their classes and worked with them as well.

In-depth alumni advice

As we put together this section, we wanted to make sure some advice came from WGS community members who experienced the Ph.D. application process and will be finished in the next few years. We are proud to have the advice of WGS alumna, Tanja Messing, and WGS Certificate Graduate, Dunja Antonovic, posted online at www.beckresearch.org/wgs.

Please visit the site for an in-depth reflection on the steps Tanja and Dunja took to locate their programs, the questions they both encountered during this process, and any tips they have for students working towards this goal.