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## The Status of Women's and Gender Centers at Public Research Universities

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## Journal for Women & Gender Centers in Higher Education

**Journal for Women and Gender Centers  
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### **The Status of Women's and Gender Centers at Public Research Universities**

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#### **Abstract**

This research examined women's and gender centers at land-grant universities classified as Carnegie R1 institutions in the United States that were also APLU and AAU member institutions. The purpose of the inquiry was to understand how descriptive information about commonalities and standard practices among existing women's and gender centers at these types of higher education institutions could be compiled from publicly available information and analyzed for use towards establishing support for new centers. Sixteen data points were collected from a final sample consisting of 12 centers that met the research criteria. These women's and gender centers provided programs, services, referrals, and resources for students, faculty, and staff. All but one of the centers included all genders, half addressed the inclusion of individuals from all races, ethnicities, and the majority engaged with other multi-cultural organizations. The centers were primarily managed by the divisions of Student Affairs, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. All of the centers were separate entities from the universities' Title IX offices. Common practices maintained by the centers included having dedicated space on campus, providing annual reports, employing professional and student staff, and publicizing programming, resources, and events. These centers are vital to creating inclusive campus communities.

*Keywords:* public research universities, descriptive analysis, organizational structures

## **The Status of Women's and Gender Centers at Public Research Universities**

In 2022, individuals, organizations, and communities across the United States celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Title IX Education Amendments of 1972, reflecting on the advancement of women in higher education, athletics, and society. The work of campus women's and gender centers is a vital, shared part of this history. The first center was established in 1960 at the University of Minnesota, followed by many more during the 1970s and 1980s, alongside women's studies programs (Goettsch et al., 2019). These centers and their programs provide the visible, physical spaces, resources, and community to advocate for gender equity and social justice and address long-established patterns of sex discrimination (Goettsch et al., 2019). Yet, women's and gender centers remain largely absent from most four-year institutions in the United States: approximately 260 centers compared with over 700 public and 1,500 private, nonprofit four-year institutions (Irwin et al., 2022; NWSA Women's Centers Committee, 2015).

Given the historical legacies of exclusion and discrimination and ongoing, contemporary, and distinctive patterns of inequity and harm that women continue to experience (Cardona, 2022), the need for women's and gender centers on university campuses persists. However, garnering support at a university to establish a new center can be a challenge. This study was motivated by an interest in using a strategic, data-driven approach to help advocate for a new women's and gender center. The central question was: how can meaningful, descriptive information about existing centers be compiled and analyzed, to be used toward support for establishing new centers?

In this contemporary era of academic rankings, metrics, and peer comparisons (and competition), the authors decided to use the following approach to address this question: 1) identify institutions that share a set of defined academic characteristics, and 2) compile and analyze data to characterize the common features of existing centers at those institutions. For this task, the institutions we identified were land-grant universities with a Carnegie R1 ranking that were Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and also Association of American Universities (AAU) member institutions. Land-grant and/or public universities are state-supported institutions with revenue models that differ from private universities. They also have explicit service and outreach missions. R1 universities that are members of the AAU represent the nation's leading research universities and have considerable influence in shaping

higher education policies and practices. Collecting and classifying descriptive information about this group of universities can contribute to a rationale for new centers at similar institutions.

## Literature Review

The half-century timeframe marked by the anniversary of Title IX provides a useful “before and after” reference point to mark both the remarkable progress achieved by women in academics and athletics and the persistent inequities that women continue to face. For example, in 1970, women earned 43.1 percent of bachelor’s degrees, and 31.6 percent of master’s degrees. By 2017, these percentages had climbed to 57.3 percent and 59.4 percent respectively (American Association of University Women, 2022). By 2020, participation of women in sports at the college level had increased by seven times the pre-Title IX rate (National Women’s Law Center, 2022b).

However, progress in participation in higher education institutions measured simply by number of degrees attained or number of athletes engaged in sports masks the complexities of underlying patterns of inequity. In academics, women may be earning more degrees, but they are disproportionately represented in (and pushed toward) lower-paying areas of study with career-long implications that magnify compensation disparities compared to men (American Association of University Women, 2022). Women also hold significantly more outstanding student debt (almost two-thirds or about \$929 billion), with the proportion even higher for women of color (American Association of University Women, 2022). In collegiate athletics, women may be participating at higher rates, but they remain underrepresented in leadership roles with only 41.1% of head coaching positions across all women’s sports held by women (Lapchik, 2021).

Campus climate can influence women’s success in both academics (Settles et al., 2006) and athletics (Rankin et al., 2016). Yet safety issues, a key component of climate, seem to be worsening. For example, rape prevalence estimates among college students increased from 1 in 4 college women to 1 in 3 between 1985 and 2015 (Koss et al., 2022), and more than “50 percent of women faculty and staff and 20–50 percent of women students encounter or experience sexually harassing conduct in academia” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018, p. 65).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also underscored and exacerbated long-standing structural disadvantages related to caregiving, with burnout and mental health challenges significantly increasing for women. Morgan et al. (2021) summarized the multi-layered unequal impacts of parenthood for faculty during COVID-19: "...women have borne a relatively greater share of increased childcare needs in addition to their extra service and teaching efforts while still earning substantially less despite broadly increased financial pressure" (p. 6). The COVID-19 pandemic could send progress in gender equality back a generation (Stanford University, 2022).

The reversal of *Roe v. Wade* (one day after the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX) presents a new round of challenges, including obstacles associated with access to comprehensive women's health care (McNutt & Dzau, 2022) and a patchwork of changing state laws across the U.S. Old barriers have been re-erected, making it more difficult for women to successfully complete post-secondary career pathways, particularly for low-income women and women of color (Lumina Foundation, 2022), as "access to abortion enables women to complete high school and higher levels of education, improves labor force participation, and enables economic independence" (National Women's Law Center, 2022a, para 3, lines 2-3). Furthermore, when only eight percent of single mothers who start college earn a 2- or 4-year degree within six years (Bombardieri, 2018), support for single mothers is increasingly urgent.

Against this turbulent backdrop, women's and gender centers continue to play crucial, relevant roles in supporting women. The University of Minnesota, home to the first campus-based women's center founded in 1960, continues to document why women's centers are needed, organized around the broad topics of education, woman's leadership, athletics, STEM, the earnings gap, media, gender-based violence, and the confidence gap (University of Minnesota Women's Center, 2019). Furthermore, women's and gender centers have had to reckon with their origins and history where "the racial and gender demographics of those occupying and utilizing resources and those in leadership has overwhelmingly been cisgender and white" (Blair-Medeiros & Nelson-Alford, 2021, p.13). Many centers have broadened their missions to focus on advancing gender equity across multiple identities, a reflection of the broader understanding that "the many inequalities often intersect, giving rise to compounded discrimination. It is, therefore, impossible to talk about gender inequality without talking about these pervasive and corrosive inequalities, including racism and other forms of discrimination" (Kelemu, 2022, p. 1).



For colleges and universities with students, faculty, and staff seeking to establish a women's and gender center, existing centers provide inspiration, guiding information, and lessons learned -- about how centers operate; how they are financially supported; whom they serve; what resources they provide; what physical space they offer; how they connect with multicultural centers, women's studies, LGBTQ+ communities and other programs; what challenges they face; and what difference they make in fostering community and an equitable university climate. In this paper, the authors focus on analyzing these characteristics for R1 public universities that are APLU and AAU member institutions.

## Methods

Women's and gender centers at R1 and land-grant universities that were also APLU and AAU member institutions were analyzed during the timeframe of June and July 2022 to determine commonalities and standard practices among these centers in these categories of U.S. higher education institutions. The guiding research question was: how can meaningful, descriptive information about existing centers be compiled and analyzed, to be used toward support for establishing new centers?

The data collection and analysis were part of a summer research internship course required for the completion of a Ph.D. degree in higher education leadership by the primary author. This study design is categorized as descriptive research, which examines a situation as it currently exists (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). An internet-based research method was used (Krantz, 2010). Steps of the methodology included the determination of the sample, the collection of publicly available data from the university websites, and then the refinement of the sample based on the central question of interest. Given that the purpose of this study was to inventory and characterize the landscape of women's and gender centers at a specific type of university, a theoretical framework was not employed. The information provided in this study could provide a foundation for future research on these centers.

The authors are both white, cisgender women who are employed as administrators at an R1, public, land-grant university located in the southeastern United States. The authors are also members of the Commission on Women and the committee for the Title IX 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

celebrations at the university. The primary author is a member of the university's Council on Diversity and Inclusion.

**Table 1:** *Carnegie-classified R1, Land-grant Universities that are APLU and AAU Member Institutions (n=17)*

University Name	
University of Arizona <sup>a</sup>	Purdue University
University of California, Davis <sup>a</sup>	University of Minnesota <sup>a</sup>
University of Colorado Boulder	University of Missouri <sup>a</sup>
Cornell University <sup>a</sup>	The Ohio State University <sup>a</sup>
University of Florida	Pennsylvania State University <sup>a</sup>
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign <sup>a</sup>	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
University of Maryland at College Park	Texas A&M University <sup>a</sup>
Massachusetts Institute of Technology <sup>a</sup>	University of Wisconsin, Madison <sup>a</sup>
Michigan State University <sup>a</sup>	

<sup>a</sup> Twelve of these women's and gender centers are programmatic in nature and not academic departments. These 12 centers were included in the final analysis as described below in the section titled "Refining the Sample and Data Points."

## Analysis

This section outlines the collection of the data and analysis of the data. The findings are addressed after this presentation of data collection and analysis.

### *Determining the Sample*

As a first step to establish the sample set for this research, universities categorized as R1, land-grant institutions with membership in the APLU and AAU organizations were identified. Institutions classified as R1 doctoral – very high research activity – as designated by the Carnegie Classification system were determined (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2022). APLU members and land-grant universities were listed on the APLU website (Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, 2022). AAU member universities were listed on their website as well (Association of American Universities, 2022). An excel data table was established and populated with an initial sample set of 17 universities that met the four institutional categories. Table 1 includes a list of the universities in this initial sample set.

**Table 2:** *Data Points Initially Identified to Analyze Commonalities and Standard Practices among Women's and Gender Centers (n=36)*

Data Points		
center name	counseling services	career advice and services
date established	resources	mentoring programs
audiences served	resources provided by the center or a mix of center and related organizations	speaker series
“about” summary	internships and volunteer positions	boards and committees
mission	awards and scholarships	women's studies academic curriculum
vision	publications	relationship between curriculum and center
space on campus	helpline	connection with Title IX office
staff	advocacy	faculty and staff services support
staff titles	research	administrative unit
genders included	student organizations	vice president area
event calendar	affiliated organizations	contact information
programs	degree and nature of engagement with multicultural centers	URL link



### *Analysis Data Points*

After reviewing a report written by university students that assessed gender equity programming offered by U.S. universities (Chelak et al., 2021) and an external scan conducted by students enrolled in a Women’s Studies Gender Equity on Campuses course at the authors’ university (O’Shields et al., 2021), the authors selected data points that appeared most frequently. Then, the authors collaborated to expand upon this and decided on 36 key data points for purposes of data collection for the research presented in this paper. An excel data table was created and used to track each of the 17 universities’ 36 data points. These data points are presented in Table 2.

**Table 3:** *Refined Subset of Data Points to Provide a High-Level Overview of the 12 Centers (n=16)*

Data Points		
center name	space on campus	degree and nature of engagement with multicultural centers
audiences served	staff	boards and committees
genders included	programs	publications
mission	resources	awards and scholarships
date established	relationship between curriculum and center	
administrative unit	connection with Title IX office	

### *Refining the Sample and Data Points*

The primary author reviewed the websites of the 17 Carnegie-classified R1, land-grant universities that were members of the APLU and AAU (Table 1) from the initial sample set and populated the categories in the data table. Notably, all of these 17 universities had academic programs that offered undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates in women’s and

gender studies. These academic departments and curricula were sometimes called women's, gender, and/or sexuality studies.

The vast majority (70%) of these institutions – 12 out of 17 – had women's and gender centers that were not academic departments, consortiums, or curricula-based units. The authors elected to proceed with an analysis of these 12 women's and gender centers that were programmatic in nature and were not academic departments. This subset of 12 universities with programmatic women's and gender centers is noted in Table 1.

In addition, of the 36 data points collected for each university, a refined subset consisting of 16 of these categories was used to provide a high-level overview of these centers for this manuscript. The 16 data points selected for this high-level overview are listed in Table 3.

## **Findings**

These findings summarize the refined 16 data points for the final sample set of 12 Carnegie-classified R1 universities that were APLU and AAU member institutions. In some cases, related data points were grouped together into sub-sections, so that there were 11 total sub-sections presented in these findings.

### ***Center Names, Audiences Served, and Included Genders***

Eleven of the 12 (92%) university centers had the word “women” in their name. Three of the 12 (25%) centers included the word “gender” in their name, and in two cases also with “women” (Figure 1). Center names at these 12 universities included Women's Center (3), Women's Resource Center (3), The Women's Place, Women and Gender Resources Center, Women's Resources and Research Center, Women and Gender Services, Women\*s Student Services, and Gender Equity Center. Fifty-eight percent of the centers (7/12) served students, and 42% (5/12) served students, faculty, and staff (Figure 2). There were explicit public statements that men and all genders were included and welcome to be involved with the centers in all but one of the 12 (92%) universities (Figure 3).



Figure 1: Center Names with "Women" and/or "Gender"



Figure 2: Audiences Served



Figure 3: Included Genders

### Center Missions

These women’s and gender center mission statements focused on the need to foster an inclusive campus community with improved campus climate for women students through visibility, advocacy, support in personal and educational pursuits, and programming through an intersectional lens. For example, the mission of the Women’s Resource Center at Cornell University (2022) was to support “women’s education, empowerment, and advancement at Cornell and beyond” and “strives to be a welcoming space for people of all genders and identities” (para. 1, lines 4-7).

Likewise, the Women’s Resources Center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s (2022) mission “is to improve the campus climate for women students, which we do by developing and implementing programs that address social issues through an intersectional lens” (para 2, lines 1-4). A mission statement from Texas A&M University (2022) was as follows:

The mission of the Women’s Resource Center at Texas A&M University is to pursue equity and enhance the campus climates for women through visibility, advocacy, support, and programming. The center advocates by educating campus and community constituents on women’s issues and functions as a resource and

referral center. The center strives to ensure a community in which women and men can live and work together in a mutually respectful, safe, and supportive environment where equality, responsibility, and personal empowerment are encouraged and fostered. The center further serves as a symbol for the university's commitment to inclusion and equal access for women faculty, staff, and students, and thus celebrates the achievements of women while calling attention to and challenging the barriers that inhibit the full inclusion of women in the Texas A&M community and beyond. (paras. 1-2)

These three sample mission statements indicated that women's and gender centers were dedicated to enhancing the experiences for women on their campuses and in their communities, were inclusive in nature, and provided programming for their constituents. Six of the 12 women's and gender centers (50%) specifically addressed the intersectionality of multiple identities in their mission statements (Cornell, 2022; Michigan State University, 2022; University of Arizona, 2022; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022). These center mission statements explicitly stated that their work occurred at the intersection of many identities, including race, class, ethnicity, ability, religion.

### ***Dates Established***

The date of establishment of the 12 women's and gender centers analyzed varied widely from 1960 through 2019. Some of the older centers have been renamed since their inception. The long timespan of the formation of these women's and gender centers indicates that not only did the need for these centers exist as many as six decades ago, but that a need to establish these centers remains in the present day. The three oldest centers were established in 1960 (University of Minnesota, since renamed The Women's Center), 1971 (University of California, Davis, renamed Women's Resources and Research Center in 1974), and in 1975 (University of Missouri Mizzou Women's Center). The three newest centers were established in 2001 (Texas A&M Women's Resource Center), 2009 (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's Women's Resources Center), and 2019 (Michigan State University Women\*s Student Services) (Figure 4).

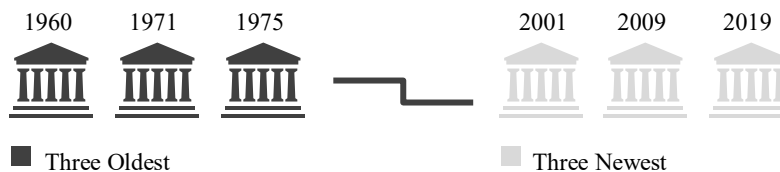


Figure 4: Oldest and Newest Centers

### ***Administrative Unit, Space on Campus, and Center Staff***

The vast majority of the women’s and gender centers were housed in the student affairs administrative unit. Nine (75%) of the 12 centers reported to the Vice President/Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Three (25%) of the 12 centers were in units led by the Vice President/Vice Chancellor for Equity and Diversity; Diversity and Inclusion; and Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Administrative Unit

Without exception, all of the centers had dedicated space in campus buildings, and all but one of the 12 centers (92%) were professionally staffed. The majority of these 11 centers with professional staff employed student staff as well (73%) (Figure 6). The average number of professional staff at the women’s and gender centers was three employees. The average number of student staff was between two and three students.



Figure 6: Staff

### ***Programs Offered***

A key research finding was that 83% (10/12) of the non-academic based women’s and gender equity centers offered robust programming and services. As an example of a center with robust programming, the Women’s Resources and Research Center at the University of

California, Davis (University of California, Davis, 2022) provided the following programs: (a) academic programs: Joy Fergoda Library, STEM for Girls, STEM Café and WISE Mentorship Program, Scholarships; (b) awareness programs: Equal Pay Day, International Women's Day, Black Futures Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Gender Equity Awareness Month, Sexual Assault Awareness Month; (c) community building programs: Davis Feminist Film Festival, WRRC Scholarships and Awards Reception End of Year Banquet, Family Activities Night, Graduate Outreach Programs, OpenHouse, OurStories; and (d) wellness programs: Chillin' on the Porch, Creative Circles, Faculty and Staff Womxn of Color Group, Write to Thrive, Free Space for LGBTQIA+ Students, and Inside Out.

These aforementioned programs at the Women's Resources and Research Center at the University of California, Davis (2022) focused on women students' activities, awareness, wellness, and overall community building. Other categories of programs offered by the women's and gender centers included: (a) leadership programs (Michigan State University, 2022; Texas A&M University, 2022; The Ohio State University, 2022; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022; University of Missouri, 2022); (b) career and salary negotiation programs (Cornell University, 2022; Michigan State University, 2022, Texas A&M University, 2022; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022; University of Minnesota, 2022); (c) mentor programs (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2022; Michigan State University, 2022; Pennsylvania State University, 2022; Texas A&M University, 2022; The Ohio State University, 2022); and (d) sexual assault, domestic violence, and prevention programs (Pennsylvania State University, 2022; University of California, Davis, 2022; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022). Additionally, many of the women's and gender centers provided workshops, hosted book clubs and discussions, and celebrated specific days and months related to women.

Another finding was that the vast majority of these women and gender centers publicized their own programming and related programming. Specifically, eighty-three percent (10/12) of the centers provided online event calendars. Also, most of these calendars displayed events that were a mix of center events, center-hosted events, and related organization events.

### ***Resources Offered***

Most of the resources provided by the women's and gender centers were a mix of center and related-organization resources. In other words, the centers served as a hub for university and community resources for women's and gender issues. The broad categories of resources offered

by these women’s and gender centers consisted of those provided by the centers as well as by other entities on campus and in the community.

In a typical example of resources listed by a center, the University of Minnesota (2022) Women’s Center included web links for the following: Lactation Advisory Committee; Gender Equity Employee Network; University Indigenous Women and Women of Color; Women’s Faculty Cabinet; campus partner resources; and a 20 Facts About Gender Inequity hand-out.

### ***Center and Academic Curriculum Relationship***

All of the 12 R1, land-grant universities that were APLU and AAU member institutions had academic curricula related to women’s and gender studies. However, only three of these 12 universities referenced the academic curricula at their university on their public websites. Academic and programmatic collaboration is an area of opportunity at these universities, given that the vast majority (75%) of these centers did not reference their women’s and gender studies curriculum (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Relationship to Academics

### ***Connection to Title IX Office and Engagement with Multicultural Centers***

All 12 of the universities had Title IX offices that were separate from the women’s and gender centers. Additionally, all but one of the 12 women’s and gender centers maintained a significant degree of engagement with other multicultural centers on campus. This engagement was demonstrated by the web links and text about other multicultural centers provided on the women’s and gender center websites. Examples of these links to other multicultural centers on campus included: (a) student organizations focused on the LGBTQ+ community at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2022) Gender and Sexuality Campus Center; (b) Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, Health Promotion and Wellness, and the Paul Robeson Cultural Center at the Pennsylvania State University (2022) Gender Equity Center; and (c) Feminist Student Union, Language Partners, Organization for Student Parent Success, Organization for Women on Campus, Women of Mizzou, Department of Social Justice, Gaines/Oldham Black

Culture Center, LGBTQ Resource Center, Multicultural Center, and the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center at the University Missouri (2022) Mizzou Women’s Center.

Eight of the 12 centers (67%) had statements on their websites about ties with organizations that focused on multiple cultures and identities (Cornell University, 2022; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2022; Texas A&M University, 2022; The Ohio State University, 2022; University of Arizona, 2022; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2022; University of Missouri, 2022; University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2022). These organizations included those that focused on race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, social justice programming, and cross-cultural identities (Figure 8).



Figure 8: Engagement with Multicultural Organizations

### Boards and Committees

Only three of the 12 (25%) programmatic women’s and gender equity centers had affiliated committees (Figure 9). These three committees were: (a) the Women’s Resources Center Advisory Committee at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2022) Women’s Resource Center; (b) the Gender Justice Advocacy Center, formerly known as the Women’s Resource Center Executive Board, at Cornell University (2022) Women’s Resource Center; and (c) Allies and Advocates Advisory Committee at The Ohio State University (2022) The Women’s Place.



Figure 9: Affiliated Committees

### Center Publications

Several centers published annual reports (The Ohio State University, 2022; University of Minnesota, 2022) and newsletters (Texas A&M University, 2022; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, 2022; University of Minnesota, 2022). Examples of other center publications



included those by The Women’s Place at The Ohio State University such as *The Women’s Status Report on the Women at Ohio State*, the *Encyclopedia of Pathbreaking Women at The Ohio State University* and the *LGBTQ+ Staff and Faculty Resource Guide* (The Ohio State University, 2022). Also, the University of Minnesota published *20 Facts About Gender Inequity: Why We Still Need Women’s Centers* (University of Minnesota Women’s Center, 2019). This hand-out provided 20 facts about gender (in)equity in terms of education, media, leadership, STEM, athletics, employment, and gender-based violence (University of Minnesota Women’s Center, 2019).

### ***Awards and Scholarships***

Four of the 12 (33%) universities that had programmatic women’s and gender centers had annual award ceremonies and offered student scholarships (Figure 10). As an example, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (2022) Women’s Resources Center provided Strive Awards for students, faculty, and staff as well as the Phillip Money Penny Scholarship. The University of Minnesota (2022) Women’s Center offered multiple awards and scholarships for students, faculty, and staff. Offering awards to students, faculty, staff, and community members involved with women’s and genders centers could be another area of opportunity to engage a broader group of stakeholders on and off campus.



Figure 10: Awards and Scholarships

### **Findings Summary**

These women’s and gender centers provided programs, services, referrals, and resources for women students, faculty, and staff. All but one of the centers focused on the inclusion of all genders, so as not to exclude individuals who do not fall on the binary gender spectrum. Half of the centers specifically addressed the inclusion of individuals of all races, ethnicities, religions, ability, and other intersecting identifies in their mission statements. Most of the centers had statements on their websites about engagement with other multi-cultural organizations that focused on individuals representing multiple cultures and identities.

The oldest women's and gender center from this group of 12 universities was established in 1960, and the newest in this group was created in 2019. The divisions of Student Affairs and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion primarily managed these women's and gender centers. The centers had strong ties with other multicultural centers on campus and were all separate entities from the university Title IX offices. Having dedicated space on campus, providing annual reports, employing professional and student staff, and publicizing programming, resources, and events were common practices maintained by these centers.

## Conclusion

This research summarizes information about 12 women's and gender centers at R1, land-grant universities that were APLU and AAU member institutions. Women's and gender centers are needed to foster an inclusive campus community with an improved climate for students, faculty and staff through visibility, advocacy, support in personal and educational pursuits, and programming through an intersectional lens. For example, through a wide range of resources and programming offered by women's and gender centers, women could be supported in long-term career planning responsive to their needs that includes understanding the structural components of pay inequity, salary negotiation, financial planning, and leadership development. These centers could help provide information about access to reproductive health care in a frayed and dynamic environment, and advocate for university-level initiatives for reasonable caregiving accommodations and services. Connections to Title IX offices and their sexual assault resources and counseling remain essential to improve overall prevention and response by fostering awareness, understanding and use of these resources under changing regulatory regimes. Creating stronger connections between the centers and the universities' women's and gender studies academic curricula could be considered as an area of opportunity to enhance the overall campus engagement of these women's and gender centers. Additionally, welcoming and including individuals with intersecting identities including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality should be a practice that is prioritized.

In summarizing details about this specific set of women's and gender centers, this study is an example of one type of research that can advance knowledge and awareness of women's and gender centers: "descriptive pieces on WGC [women's and gender center] herstories, functions, purposes, and missions" (Wright-Mair & Marine, 2019, p. 160). For any university

embarking on the work of establishing a women's and gender center more than 60 years after the first centers were established, such descriptive information provides a valuable foundation. Moreover, using an approach that is structured around higher education classifications and rankings helps provide a contemporary and compelling context in which to move forward.

Many factors contribute to an equitable university culture, community, and campus climate. These include student, faculty, and staff achievements, an inspired intellectual environment, and contributions to society. With their commitment to improving campus climate, reckoning with their own history of spaces for white cisgendered women, and doing the work of connecting and empowering women to advance gender equity, women's and gender centers are vital to creating inclusive, safe, healthy, and resilient campus communities in which education, research, and service can flourish. We need more of them in higher education.



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