Operating Policy – Women and Gender Equity Network (WGEN)

1. Mission/Purpose
   1. To educate the McMaster community and continually work toward the goal of a campus free from rape culture, sexual violence, and prejudice and discrimination on the basis of gender expression and/or gender identity;
   2. To serve as a participant in supporting survivors of gender-based oppression, sexual violence, and/or related forms of violence and oppression;
   3. To provide a physical safe space and contact point for anyone who identifies as a womxn, under the trans umbrella, outside the gender binary or as gender non-conforming, and survivors of gender-based and sexual violence of all genders;
   4. To continue to develop and strengthen relationships between McMaster students, staff, and the members of the surrounding communities by providing information, resources, programming, and on-campus advocacy around the aforementioned societal issues (rape culture, sexual violence, gender-based harassment) and/or related issues.
2. Operating Parameters
   1. The WGEN will cater to all students and members of the greater McMaster community, and those from the surrounding areas;
   2. The WGEN shall work with various University departments and relevant stakeholders to ensure the safety of students and a high quality of service within the University;
   3. The WGEN shall offer a safe(r) space in its associated spaces for womxn, trans folks, those who identify outside the gender binary and as gender non-conforming, all survivors of gender-based and sexual violence, and their supporters to come and feel welcome and secure;
   4. The WGEN shall provide structured events to create a sense of inclusion and community among womxn, trans folks, those who identify outside the gender binary and as gender-nonconforming, and all survivors of gender-based and sexual violence;
      1. Events will reflect the diversity of the community, including created closed spaces for folks with intersecting identities such as being racialized, 2STLGBQIA+, and disabled or experiencing disability;
   5. The WGEN shall provide a variety of support services regarding experiences such as harassment, sexual violence, domestic and intimate partner violence, and gender-based discrimination and/or violence. The support shall include, but not be limited to: community/discussion groups; referrals; one-on-one peer support bookings; and drop-in peer support;
      1. Any personal information divulged at these meetings shall be held in the strictest confidence and will not be shared outside of the support session without written permission or threat of imminent danger to the parties concerned;
   6. The WGEN shall be involved in and advocate for the elimination of rape culture, sexual violence, social injustices, and instances of institutionalized oppression and discrimination at McMaster University and ensure the safety and equal treatment of all people on campus and in the community;
   7. The WGEN will operate with fully open hours throughout the week during the academic year;
      1. The scheduling of these hours will be set by the Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator;
   8. The WGEN and its personnel shall operate within an Anti-Racist, Anti-Oppressive, Trans-Inclusive, Survivor-Centric, and Decolonial Intersectional Feminist Framework;
   9. To ensure confidentiality of sensitive disclosures, the Coordinator, executive members and volunteers must:
      1. Be bound by law and ethics to safeguard service users’ privacy and the confidentiality of their personal information and disclosure of an experience of gender-based or sexual violence;
      2. Be able to identify students in crisis in order to provide them with support and be able to protect the University community. If there is reason to believe that a student is a danger to themselves or others, that information may be communicated to the appropriate Health Care and Emergency services. This service is also bound by privacy legislation.
3. Personnel Structure
   1. The WGEN Personnel Structure shall consist of:
      1. The Part Time Manager (Coordinator) position;
      2. Five Executive positions selected by the WGEN Coordinator through an application and interview process;
         1. The Executive positions would be that of the Community Events and Planning Executive, Logistics Coordinator, Promotions Executive, Research Coordinator, Resources Coordinator, Social and Political Advocacy Coordinator, and the Volunteer Coordinator;
         2. The hiring process shall prioritize applications and interviews from survivors and folks who are racialized, 2STLGBQIA+, and/or disabled/experience disability;
      3. Volunteer positions selected by the WGEN Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, and various other Executives with sufficient training through an application and interview process;
         1. The Volunteer positions would be that of the Events Committee Volunteer and Safe(r) Space Volunteer;
         2. The hiring process shall prioritize applications and interviews from survivors and folks who are racialized, 2STLGBQIA+, and/or disabled/experience disability;
      4. The McMaster Womanists, a working group under the WGEN;
   2. The Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Oversee overall activities of the WGEN;
      2. Attend monthly PACBIC VAW-GBV, PACBIC and AVN meetings and receive consultation about programming and events;
      3. Act as a consultant in the various University committees around violence against womxn, trans-inclusive spaces, consent, and gender;
      4. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Coordinator job description;
      5. Be hired by a hiring committee struck by the Executive Board that shall consist of:
         1. The outgoing Coordinator;
         2. The Vice-President (Administration);
         3. One (1) Executive Board Member;
   3. The Community Events and Planning Executive(s) (2), who shall:
      1. Be responsible for the creation and planning events for the communities the WGEN serves, including womxn, trans folks, those who identify outside the gender binary or as gender-nonconforming, survivors of gender-based and sexual violence of all genders, and other members of the WGEN;
      2. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Community Events and Planning Executive job description;
   4. The Logistics Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Be responsible for considering logistical aspects of event creation and planning including, but not limited to: accessibility needs; booking rooms; obtaining necessary resources (i.e. equipment, refreshments, etc.); and scheduling;
      2. Be responsible for the facilitation of, communication with, and generally oversee the Events Committee;
      3. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Logistics Coordinator job description.
   5. The Promotions Executive(s) (2), who shall:
      1. Be responsible for advertising events and campaigns related to the WGEN mandate through various media;
      2. Be responsible for the coordination of the WGEN social media pages;
      3. Be responsible for the creation of promotional material for events and campaigns;
      4. Perform duties outlines in the WGEN Promotions Executive job description;
   6. The Research Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Be responsible for research and content development for educational events and campaigns;
      2. Keep up to date on current events and issues related to the WGEN community;
      3. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Research Coordinator job description;
   7. The Resources Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Be responsible for the maintenance of an online and offline WGEN Library for McMaster University;
      2. Be responsible for the upkeep and organization of space resources, including bra donations, binders, and menstrual products;
      3. Connect with clubs, services, and groups on campus and in Hamilton to further obtain or make accessible the WGEN resources;
      4. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Resources Coordinator job description;
   8. The Social and Political Advocacy Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Be responsible for imparting change while building awareness on campus about various social and political issues relevant to communities served by the WGEN, such as trans students and students who are survivors;
      2. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Social and Political Advocacy Coordinator job description;
   9. The Volunteer Coordinator, who shall:
      1. Be responsible for the outreach, scheduling, and coordination of Safe(r) Space Volunteers;
      2. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Volunteer Coordinator job description.
   10. The Events Committee Volunteer(s), who shall:
       1. Act as the Events Committee along with the Community Events and Planning Executives and Logistics Coordinator;
       2. Be responsible for assisting the Executives in the planning of events;
       3. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Events Committee Volunteer job description;
   11. The Safe(r) Space Volunteer(s), who shall:
       1. Be responsible for regular weekly hours facilitating the safe(r) space and offering peer support;
       2. Perform duties outlined in the WGEN Safe(r) Space Volunteer job description;
   12. The McMaster Womanists, who shall:
       1. Act as a working group under the WGEN;
       2. Be responsible for co-facilitating Black & Gendered, a community/discussion group;
       3. Be responsible for communicating actions, plans, and needs with the WGEN Coordinator.