The mission of the Oakton Women’s and Gender Studies Program is to introduce students and others in our community to feminist perspectives on women in history, the arts and the academic disciplines; foster creative thinking about how gender and sexuality shape our experiences; and promote social justice through active engagement and dialogue with our communities in the greater Chicago area.
My name is Josselyn Cruz and I am graduating in May 2021 with an Associate in Arts (A.A.). I was actively involved in clubs/organizations such as President of Early Childhood Education Club, Co-Secretary and Co-Communication Chair of UNICEF Club, Editor-in-Chief of OCCurrence, ANDALE! member, and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) member. I enjoy reading graphic and non-fiction novels during my free time.

At Oakton, I took an Introduction to LGBTQ+ Studies class because I need an Humanities class for my Associate in Arts. A faculty at Oakton introduced me to the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies concentration program. I did not know that there were concentration programs that Oakton offered. I pursue this concentration because I want to learn more about women's identity and perspectives and how it has been shaped over the years.

My WGSS capstone project is about my college experience as a first-generation Latina student of the challenges and obstacles throughout my college journey. The goal is to inspire other Latinx students and let them know they are supported at Oakton and in their future career path.

After Oakton, I will transferring to Northeastern Illinois University for Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education with a minor in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). My main goal is to be a Preschool or Kindergarten teacher in a school district in the suburbs area.

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My name is Sadia Durrani and I am a sophomore at Oakton Community College. I am passionate about learning; I believe that learning new things not only provides one with a sense of experience, but also allows one to develop new skills and improve existing ones. Secondly, I am passionate about Education; the teaching field is very rewarding, promotes lifelong learning, and allows one to not only help others in their learning process, but also provides consistent opportunities to learn from others.

I wanted to get a better insight into Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. My goal was to gain a more in-depth understanding of the inequalities that women face in society and how they have worked and continue to work to achieve social justice and transform society. As a woman, I intend to explore this further as a focus. I believe it is important to not only understand women’s history, but to also understand how to confront inequality and racism in our society. Having a thorough understanding of history and the prevalent issues that exist in our society, I can educate others in the field as well.

My project is about Pakistani women advocates; it discusses who they are and what they have achieved in society, such as campaigning for women’s rights and improving the patriarchal culture.

Presently, my major is in Liberal Arts. I plan to transfer to Northeastern Illinois University to pursue a degree in English studies and would like to become a teacher in the future. I also plan to minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

I believe it is important to not only understand women’s history, but to also understand how to confront inequality and racism in our society.
My name is Phoebe Kohl. I graduated from Maine West High School and have spent the last 2 years at OCC earning my Associate’s Degree with a concentration in both theatre and women’s and gender studies. I have always loved theatre, so I knew from the beginning of my Oakton career I wanted to pursue the theatre concentration. This semester, however, I decided to take a women’s and gender studies class and fell in love with it, and when I found out I was eligible for the concentration, I was over the moon and so grateful for the opportunity and the fact that it all ended up working out!

In my final semester at Oakton, I decided to take an intro to Women’s and Gender studies course with Professor Lindsey Hewitt. As the course went by, I realized how much I was enjoying it, and in one of the zoom calls with Professor Hewitt, we were talking about all the other classes I have taken and slowly realized that I may have already taken the required courses for the concentration. Once I realized how much I loved the Women’s and Gender studies course, I knew I wanted to do as much as I could with the area before I graduated.

My capstone project is a photo series about The Double Bind. In the series, I explore the different ways the double bind affects women. The can’t win situations. The damned if you do, damned if you don’t situations. With this photo series, I intend to highlight what it’s like to be a woman today with society’s impossible standards using the juxtaposition of images.

After Oakton, I have decided to defer my transfer for a year for many reasons. One of them is exploring Women’s and Gender Studies as a possible major because this one course has brought out a passion in me that hadn’t been explored yet. I have realized how much I love talking about social issues and human rights in general. This capstone project has also been so much fun, so in the future I would like to do more social justice projects with my photography. Overall, I could definitely see myself pursuing a career within Women’s and Gender studies in the future!

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