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WOMEN'S CENTER

NEWSLETTER

"keeping abreast of women's concerns"

Task Force Report: "THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...."

In January of 1972, President of the University of Maine, Winthrop Libby, commissioned a task force to assess the status of women on the Orono and Bangor campuses. In 1987, UMaine President Dale Lick charged a task force to study the status of women at UMaine; from students to faculty and administrators, to classified and professional employees.

Despite the efforts of the 1972 task force, which resulted in the creation of a short lived women's center, efforts to integrate women into the curriculum, an increase in women speakers and guests, and a hiring of more women professors, fifteen years later Lick's Task Force on the Status of Women finds that women's opportunities for personal and professional development continue to be limited.

The 1972 Task Force on the Special Educational Needs of Women presented their final report in April of

1973 with recommendations including the addition of more women to key administrative positions, creating more vacancies for women for policy-making committees, inviting more women to campus for lectures, workshops, and seminars, designing more women's studies courses, and finally, the establishment of a Women's Center.

It became apparent that it was time to examine the educational structure and its dedication to its women students. The task force stated that the "university environment must become a vital catalyst encouraging each women student to make the most of the educational opportunity [to achieve] her unique potential and develop a self-vision of herself as a responsible human being in personal and public life."

The 1973 Task Force resulted in the development of the Women in the Curriculum Program (WIC), which enabled faculty to design courses that integrated women's experiences and scholarship into the classroom. It created a general awareness of the treatment of women at the University.

The 1987 Task Force on the Status of Women examined the hiring practices, salaries, number and retention of women in various positions, opportunity for promotion and tenure, as well as the social climate and predominate value systems of the university and society at large. The Task Force report effectively incorporated statistical evidence along with anecdotal and narrative accounts in an effort to communicate the necessity to re-examine the commitment to women at UMaine.

Through open hearings at the Orono and Bangor campuses, the task force encouraged women and men to break the silence and speak out about the treatment of women in their environments. This time around, the task force went beyond its earlier counterpart in an attempt to look at the finer points of discriminative hiring practices, sex-segregated work, "chilly" classroom climates, sexual harassment, and rape.

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TO THE WOMAN I HAVE BEEN
PRETENDING FOR A YEAR
NOT TO NOTICE

You are always behind a cart;
always on the way to,
or way back from,
a load to load
again.

You are the classic working class;
always working,
while I watch
from my lounge (sip-sigh) ing
position.

And your back is stronger,
I am sure
than mine.

anonym

Brown Bag Lunch Series

Women in the Curriculum, or WIC, is an office at the University of Maine responsible for encouraging the integration of women and women's perspectives into existing courses. In cooperation with Equal Opportunity, the WIC office initiates and sponsors programs to further women's development. In addition, WIC is currently designing a program in Women's Studies. WIC also serves as an avenue for various projects and efforts on behalf of women students, faculty, staff, and administrators.

The (Brown Bag) Lunch Series is one of WIC's oldest and most visible program components. University

Support for Single Parents

If you are a single parent student this year and are interested in the give and take that a support group offers, there will be a Single Parent Student Support Group on campus, facilitated by Susan Hoovler, a single parent and non-traditional student majoring in Applied Sociology at UMaine. Hoovler also works part-time at Displaced Homemakers, at the University College Campus in Bangor, and at the Commuter Services, Memorial Union, UMaine.

There will be two brief organizational meetings to determine the most opportune time for everyone to participate in the group. Plan to attend one of these sessions so we know when to schedule a weekly meeting time. The meetings will be held in the Old Town Room, Memorial Union, on:

Wednesday, September 14 at 12:00 noon; or

Thursday, September 15 at 4:00 p.m.

For more information, call Commuter Services, Memorial Union, at 581-1820.

faculty, staff, students, and other community people each week present lectures, panels, and performances to a diverse audience. Occasionally guest speakers from other campuses are featured.

The 1988-1989 Brown Bag Lunch series will feature monthly themes, and each will be treated with depth and breadth. The yearly lunch program themes, and the first two lunch topics, are as follows:

* September - "Women's Health Issues," coordinated by Jean Symons.

Wednesday, September 7

"Media Depiction of Health Care Providers: A Historical Perspective"

Valerie Hart-Smith, MSN, RN, CS

12:15-1:30, Coe Lounge, Memorial Union

Wednesday, September 14

"Feminist Spiritual Experience from the Perspective of Health Care"

Jeannie Mullen Dubay, MED, RN

12:15-1:30, Sutton Lounge, Memorial Union

* October - "International Women," coordinated by Irene von Hoffmann.

* November - "Science, Science and Technology, and Science Fiction," coordinated by Sandra Haggard.

* December and January - "Women, Language, and Communication," coordinated by Sharon Jackiw.

* February - "Women's Lives and Women's Power," coordinated by Deo McKaig.

* March and April - "Women and Social Change," coordinator needed.

For more information about the lunch series or the WIC program contact Evelyn Newlyn, 325 Shibles Hall, 581-1128.

A Breakthrough in Birth Control

According to a recent issue of Mother Jones, there's a new birthcontrol pill on the market in Europe. This pill is not to be taken before pregnancy, but after. It is an anti-progesterone steroid called RU 486, and can terminate an unwanted pregnancy up to three weeks after a missed period.

RU 486 is significantly different from the morning-after pill: it is safer, can be used much longer after conception, and is more effective. When coupled with a small dose of prostaglandin, RU 486 is over 90% effective.

It is not likely, however, that women in the United States will be able to obtain RU 486 anytime in the near or even the distant future. Why? The big problem is funding.

RU 486 acts as an abortifacient, or abortion pill, and thus cannot qualify for government funded research. Since much research and development (R&D) of new pharmaceuticals is government funded, RU 486 would have to be developed by the private sector. Unfortunately, the R&D of new birth control technologies does not yield a high enough profit for large drug companies.

Undoubtedly this pill would revolutionize birth control and abortions in the U.S. More than 90% of abortions are performed in the first three months of pregnancy. RU 486 is a prescription drug that could eliminate the need for abortion clinics. A woman wouldn't even have to know if she were pregnant. Political pressure is needed to get research going on this drug that could save many women around the world from death by a botched abortion.

Shannon Lunn

Task Force Report

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These phenomenon are evidence of a cultural value system that continues to objectify and devalue women's contributions and achievements. The findings suggest that UMaine, not unlike culture at large, is "an environment in which women tend to play only marginal or subsidiary roles; a system of values in which those interests more exclusively dominated by men are consistently more positively valued and more highly rewarded; and a climate in which women, most of whom diverge from norms defined by experiences of men, are less likely to flourish."

Salary studies and research on women faculty, staff, and administrators uncovered discrepancies in salaries and opportunities for advancement in faculty ranks as well as in the upper echelons of the university hierarchy. Women staff members at UMaine struggle with the societal problems of sex-segregated work, devalued and underpaid jobs, and a lack of flexibility for women with families. Faculty women suffer salary discrepancies of up to \$2,000 and in some cases also operate as "tokens" in their departments resulting in an increase in responsibilities.

These women are likely to be asked to serve on more committees to contribute a women's perspective (as if all women had the same perspective!), play larger advisory roles for women students who may want access to them, and continue to produce scholarly works without compensation or recognition for added tasks.

The second part of the Task Force's report focuses upon influences of the university climate that affect women's perceptions of competence, self-esteem, and opportunity to learn and develop. The students that attended the hearings overwhelmingly stated that sexist language in the classroom and in textbooks was a hindrance to their learning. Furthermore, despite the non-sexist language policy at UMaine, students feel that some faculty fall short on their obligation to "good teaching" practices by not understanding that using sexist language in the classroom can be exclusionary.

Women students also expressed dissatisfaction at the conspicuous absence of women faculty in some disciplines. Again, women seeking a mentoring relationship with the same sex faculty member find that one or two women in their field cannot meet their needs. Women's experiences and ways of learning need to be addressed and listened to in and out of the classroom. This shift in emphasis will require that faculty be more aware and sensitive to women's educational and developmental issues.

A recommendation proposed by both the 1973 and 1988 Task Force reports was the establishment of a Women's Center on campus. Students as well as faculty and administrators felt that a physical space for women on campus would provide a network for women with which

to connect, both formally and informally. A center for women could also offer all women students a comfortable place to work, to socialize, and to obtain information on important services for women.

The Task Force heard testimony to hostility and violence committed against women. Women on this campus are probably at the same risk for such crimes against them as women outside the "ivory tower." Because so many rapes go unreported, some feel that there is not a problem. There are rapes on this campus and the first step toward a plan of action is to openly acknowledge their occurrence.

The Task Force recognized the need for more resources for women such as the re-establishment of the "hot-line" for victims of violence, educational programs geared to raise awareness of women's issues, expanding current care and counselling for rape victims, and providing fraternities with live-in advisors. In addition, the university must find ways to deal with the perpetrators of these crimes more effectively.

The Task Force on the Status of Women has, once again, provided an opportunity for men and women on this campus to make changes. The 1972 Task Force is a painful reminder that unless we work sincerely as a collective whole on this issue, very little can actually be accomplished. The challenge ahead for the university community is not only to re-examine salaries and to hire a "critical mass" of women for positions in all ranks, but to look deeper and confront our own biases and cultural internalizations.

sue jones

ANNOUNCEMENT

As an outgrowth of last year's Leadership Conference, a Woman's Leadership Program will be developed during this year's fall semester to be implemented during the spring semester. The purpose of this program will be to raise awareness regarding women in leadership positions and to gain essential leadership skills. The program will validate the leadership abilities of women that include caring, nurturing, and the importance of relationships. Leadership styles, communication skills, assertiveness training, financial skills as well as networking and mentoring with women leaders at the University and in other fields are topics to be addressed in such a program. Students, faculty, and staff interested in participating in the planning committee to develop this program may contact Maxine Harrow, Commuter Services, Memorial Union, or call 581-1820.

Hello! . We at the Women's Center want to welcome all new students to the University of Maine and welcome back returning students. Here's to a wonderful year for us all here at UMaine.

Moving ahead through 1988 and into 1989, we will see colorful autumn change to white winter, and then the green spring will come. May our horizons expand, may we make exciting discoveries, and may we meet unexpected and extraordinary people.

For a start-off, we thought that students, staff, and faculty would be interested in having a list of some of the women's gatherings, meetings, and groups either on campus or nearby in Bangor. Contact any of them. They will be happy to welcome you. - Jane Thiebaud

*** WOMEN IN THE CURRICULUM (WIC):** Organizes weekly lunch seminars on women's topics, publishes a newsletter, sponsors Women's History Week, develops the Women's Studies Program, implements the non-sexist language policy at UMaine, and much more. For information contact Evelyn Newlyn, director of WIC at 325 Shibles, UMaine. Tel: 581-1110. Ask for WIC office. *(featured in this issue)*

*** OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** Shibles Hall, UMaine. Sue Estler, Director. Programs and resources related to equal opportunity and prevention of sexual harassment. Handles complaints and concerns related to discrimination and/or harassment within UMaine for students, staff, and faculty. Tel: 581-1110. Ask for them.

*** SINGLE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP:** A weekly support session for single parents to share ideas and frustrations. Located in the Memorial Union. For information, call Commuter Services. Tel: 581-1820. *(featured this issue)*

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WOMEN'S CENTER MEETINGS

Every Friday, 2-4 p.m.

Virtue Room, The Maples

A gathering of women who share an interest in the full spectrum of women's issues. We function as a club whose focus covers the traditional concerns of women students, and we create an information network for women's social services on campus and in the surrounding community. We have presented concerts, films, speakers and workshops, as well as co-sponsoring activities with NOW, WIC, MPAC, and Spruce Run. We also function as a support group. We welcome people who are interested in finding out what we are doing or sharing with us what they do. Come join us.

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*** AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN:** Just celebrated the 100th year of its Educational Foundation Program. For more information write or call Evelyn Dearborn, AAUW President for Orono-Old Town Branch; 5 Charles St., Orono 04469. Tel 866-4154.

*** WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY:** Meets 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month (as of October) from 6 to 7:30 p.m. For more information call 947-6697. Meets at the Unitarian Church, 126 Union St. Bangor.

*** SPRUCE RUN:** Services for abused women and women in crisis. Location confidential. P.O. Box 653, Bangor, Maine 04401. Telephone: 945-5102. Hot Line 24 Hours a day: 947-0496. Write for their brochure.

*** DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS PROJECT - TRANSITIONS:** Assertiveness training/ career/ life/ planning/ support group/ job search/ one on one counselling. Bangor Hall, University College. Tel: 581-6132.

*** TUESDAY FORUM:** Professional women's organization and network. Organizes luncheons in Bangor every Tuesday. Write for information on membership. P.O. Box 1090, Bangor, Maine 04401.

*** BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S GROUP:** For information contact Sandi Welch, 4 Windgate Court, Bangor 04401. Tel: 942-7075.

*** YWCA:** The oldest, largest women's organization in the world. Write for their fall program. 17 Second Street, Bangor 04401. Tel: 941-2808.

*** NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN (NOW):** The Greater Bangor Chapter can be reached by calling 989-3306.

*** STYLUS:** A group of women writers that meets twice monthly in Bangor. For information contact Judy Harrison, 27 Poplar Street, Bangor 04401. Tel: 942-1545.

*** MABEL WADSWORTH WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER:** 700 Mount Hope Avenue, Bangor 04401. Tel: 947-5337.

*** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS:** Voter education for everyone. Contact person Judy Harrison, 27 Poplar St., Bangor. Tel: 942-1545.

*** EASTERN REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN:** Regional branch of Maine Commission for Women. 61 Congress St., Bangor. Contact Person is Bobby Flynn, Tel: 947-2966 (home) or 941-2840 (office).

*** BANGOR AREA GAY LESBIAN STRAIGHT COALITION (BAGLES):** Contact Joanne Dauphinee, Tel: 989-3306.

This is an introductory list and does not pretend to be exhaustive. Please contact us if you know of other groups and we will include them on the updated version of this listing. Write us at the Women's Center, c/o Memorial Union, University of Maine, Orono, 04469.