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Women in the Curriculum Spring 1995

U N I V E R S I T Y O F M A I N E

WIC Grant Recipients

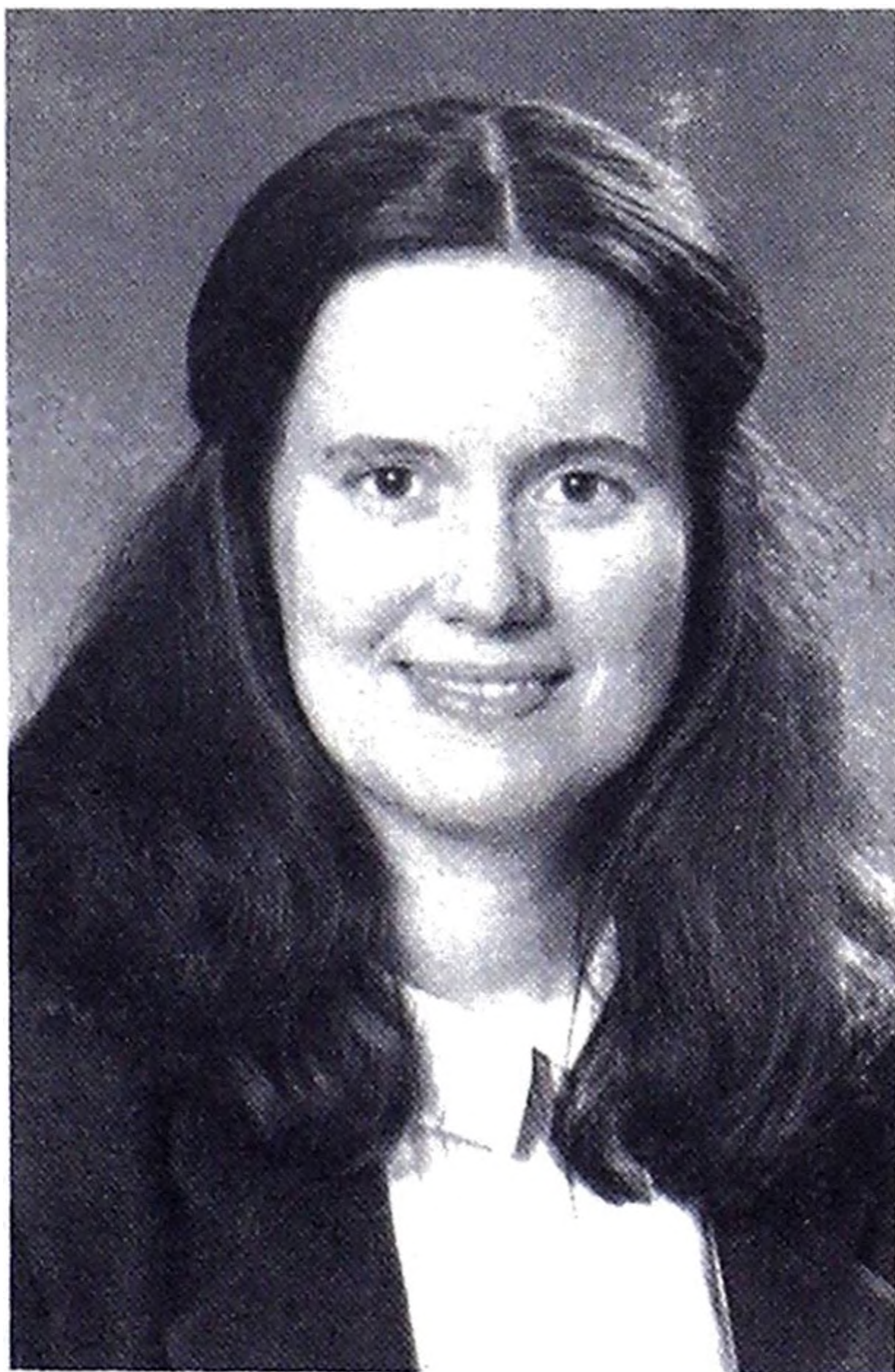
Each year WIC offers a number of grants to faculty members interested in revising or expanding existing courses in order to create a more gender-balanced classroom experience. Three of the 1993 grant projects are featured below. They include a program to improve the departmental academic climate for women in physics by Sue McKay, a curriculum revision project by Cynthia Mahmood in the field of anthropology, and a team effort to teach a class on ethics by Tina Passman and Jean Symonds. To receive the 1995 grant guidelines, contact the WIC office at x1-1228.

Sue McKay Physics

WIC interviewed Sue McKay, Associate Professor of Physics, in order to find out more about her project, which is a continuing effort to bridge the gender gap in physics by changing the academic climate.

When she was an undergraduate and a graduate student, McKay recalls, there were very few women in physics. McKay brought these observations to the University of Maine and is working "within the physics department to make it a more comfortable place for women students." She adds, "Physics is a field where there are very few women...at every level...and the small numbers of women tend to create a climate where individual women do not feel completely comfortable, and we wanted to try and combat that." McKay used the grant that WIC gave her to enable her to continue the work that has been an ongoing priority for her.

For the past three years, McKay has used a three-pronged approach to implement this project. First, every year several women physicists have been invited to speak to undergraduate and graduate students about their experiences in the field of physics. These renowned



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New Videos on Women's Issues

The Women in the Curriculum Program has just purchased eight new videos on the diversity of women in the U.S. and women's issues world-wide with funds provided by a Bird and Bird Instructional Improvement Grant. Faculty members Sandra Haggard, Assistant Professor in Liberal Studies, Margaret Lukens, Assistant Professor in English, and Cynthia Mahmood, Assistant Professor in Anthropology, served on the committee selecting the videos.

Fire Eyes

Somali filmmaker Soraya Mire, who was herself subjected to female genital mutilation at age 13, has explored various viewpoints on this "rite of passage" with women and men in Africa and the United States. Medical and cultural ramifications of ending this practice are also discussed. (60 minutes)

Hidden Faces

The filmmaker, an Egyptian woman living in Paris, journeys to her family home and documents complex friction between modernity and tradition in Cairo, El Minia, and rural villages. This documentary deals with the contradictions of feminism in a Muslim environment and the profound attachments to traditional family life in Egypt. (52 minutes)

I Is a Long-Memored Woman

This striking combination of monologue, dance, and song chronicles the history of slavery through the eyes of Caribbean women. Based on the award-winning poems of Guyanese British writer Grace Nichols, this performance piece describes the conditions of slavery on sugar plantations, as well as the acts of defiance and rebellion that led to freedom. (50 minutes)

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physicists from across the country made formal presentations to the entire department and then spoke informally to female students on the barriers they have faced and the rewards they have found as women entering a male-dominated field. McKay used these visits as a "nucleus to build a group for women in physics."

Secondly, a mailing list was developed of first-year students already registered for introductory courses. This helped the department keep in better touch with students to tell them about upcoming events within the department. McKay feels that all first-year students, but especially women students, are not given enough support to make them feel comfortable with their decision to pursue a career in physics.

The third prong was the implementation of a new program for training TAs. McKay feels that "the way the TA treats each student can be crucial in establishing that student's view of physics." She notes that often the TA's "transition from student to teacher occurs with very little guidance or instruction. The training program is designed to provide TAs with information on general issues related to teaching, as well as to give them the opportunity to meet other teachers in the department and get to know them early in the semester." McKay goes on to say that "this training can smooth the transition for new TAs and give them more confidence as they begin their duties." Thus she set up four TA training sessions for the first week of school and plans to continue training sessions throughout the semester.

The first training meeting emphasized the importance of the TA's duties. The department chair, Kenneth Brownstein, provided an overview of the introductory courses and described the professional conduct that is expected of every TA. This discussion included the importance of 1) beginning class on time, 2) holding scheduled office hours, 3) treating students with respect, and 4) reporting missing or troubled students.

For the second meeting, a staff member from the Office of Equal Opportunity led a discussion on sexual harassment. The presenter stressed that TAs have to be aware that they are going to face new situations as teaching assistants and offered ways to handle any concerns that might arise. Also, TAs were reminded that they were role models for undergraduates and that they should act accordingly.

Next, a panel of experienced TAs and faculty discussed communication strategies. The TAs were left with handouts that provided suggestions on ways to deal with situations in the classroom and laboratory. Such guides included "ways to encourage women and minority students in science...and communication styles that favored participation by a large number of students rather

than dominance of classroom discussion by only a few students." They also included strategies for handling a disruptive or rude student, identifying students' areas of difficulty, getting students to participate and be active learners in class and lab, and intervening to help lab groups with interpersonal difficulties."

The fourth training session was instrumental in the creation of a "more uniform grading system." During this session, TAs met with the faculty members who were coordinating their particular courses and discussed the grading standards that were to be expected.

As McKay points out, the training has continued with informal discussions of how things are going and what improvements can be implemented in the introductory courses.

This is an ongoing project which has been readily accepted by the department as a novel way to help change the academic climate in physics. Sue McKay has dedicated a great deal of time and effort to making the academic climate in physics more gender-balanced. For more information on the project or to get a copy of the guides on communication strategies, contact Professor McKay in the Physics Department at x1-1019.



"Women and Class: Can We Talk"?

This fall the **Women in the Curriculum Program**, **Women's Resource Center**, and the **Maine Women's Studies Consortium**, hosted the ninth annual **Maine Women's Studies Conference**, "*Women and Class: Can We Talk?*" Over 700 women and men from across the state and beyond attended the day-long program of speakers, presenters, exhibits and round-table discussions. **Angela Davis**, political activist, theoretician, author and professor, opened the conference with a keynote address, and Maine author **Carolyn Chute** closed the conference with a reading from her latest novel, *Merry Men*. WIC routinely videotapes all the speakers it brings from off-campus. Those who would like to view a video of one of the major speakers from the conference, the plenary panel, or the presentation of the Feminist Oral History Project's readers' theater, "The 'Somebody Else' Was Us," should contact Brenda Collamore in 101 Fernald Hall.



Cynthia Mahmood Anthropology

WIC interviewed Cynthia Mahmood, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, about her curriculum revision project to develop a course entitled "*Gender and Anthropology*." The following dialogue highlights that interview.

Q: Why do you think that there is a need for a gender-based course in anthropology?

CM: Because anthropologists know that gender is an important factor in human societies all around the world and if an anthropology curriculum doesn't have a gender-based course, there is a big gap. But on the other side of it, I think that a cross-cultural view in understanding gender is an important complement to Women's Studies courses offered currently on campus as well.

Q: How did you go about collecting materials for this course?

CM: I started out with a syllabus from a course on gender that Joann Kovacich taught in the department during a previous year. From there, I used a guidebook that the American Anthropological Association puts out on sources of information on gender and anthropology. I used the bibliography at the end of the AAA publication to locate other sources of information. It was a snowball effect.

Q: How did you go about selecting the material that you would use in the class?

CM: I wanted to do the course as a sequence of separate topics because I felt that since this was a small seminar class, I would get the most feedback from the students if I did this. So, I chose topics that would evoke discussion, such as sexuality and gender, religion and gender, and class and gender.

Q: How did WIC help you in your work?

CM: WIC, for me, is a fundamental system of support. Not only do you have a whole group of people supporting what you are working on, but they are there to help you at any time and in any way that you may need help. WIC gives legitimacy to what you are doing.

Q: How can a feminist understanding affect the field of anthropology as a whole and in theory?

CM: There are lots of different ways that feminism is impacting anthropology and it's not only in the study of gender, per se. That's the superficial one, but now people pay attention to women's roles and views when studying other cultures. But in a more theoretical sense, general criticism of the objective science model in anthropology suggests that the consequences of what we do as scholars matters, that we all speak from political viewpoints and not from a stand of neutrality. Therefore,



to exclude the question of gender from scholarship would not benefit the field as a whole.

Q: How did the students respond to the class?

CM: The students were very positive about the class, and for some it was a personal growth period.

This work has also benefited Professor Mahmood's research program. She is currently continuing her research on the Sikhs and, more specifically, the role that women play in Sikh militancy.

WIC has developed a full listing of the videos on women and women's issues available at the **Fogler Library, Bangor Campus, Honors Center, Art Department, and Sociology Department**, in addition to those housed in 101 Fernald. Call 581-1228 for a list.

Upcoming Conferences

Consider attending one of these important Women's Studies conferences later this year.

New England Women's Studies Assoc.

"Surviving and Thriving: Women's Studies in the 1990s"
April 22, Storrs CT

National Women's Studies Association

"Women's Movements: Cultural, Intellectual and Political (R)evolutions"
June 21-25, Norman OK



Other Women's Studies conferences you may be interested in are listed below. For information on NWSA, NEWSA, or any of the others, ask to see the conference folder in the WIC office, 101 Fernald.

"Women and Power"

March 3-4, Murfreesboro TN

"Women in Film: Constructing a New Reality"

March 24-25, Norman OK

"Creative Tensions: Women Across Ages"

March 29-April 1, West Lafayette IN

"Surviving in the Borderlands"

March 31-April 2, Plattsburgh NY

"Transitions, Environments, Translations: The Meanings of Feminism in Contemporary Politics"

April 28-30, New Brunswick NJ

"Toni Morrison Conference"

April 6-8, Louisville KY

"The Enduring Spirit: Women As We Age"

April 6-8, Omaha NB

"Exploring Myths: Sex, Stories, Football and Feminism"

April 9-12, Portland OR

"Reclaiming Women's History Through Historic Preservation"

June 17-19, Bryn Mawr PA

1994 WIC Summer Grants

Seven individual faculty members and a team of two faculty members, a classified employee, and a professional staff member last year received summer grants totaling \$14,000 from the Women in the Curriculum Program. Funded work included curriculum transformation, projects designed to investigate and improve the academic climate for women students, and research. For information about this year's grants program, please contact WIC Director Ann Schonberger, x1-1228.

Laura Cowan, Associate Professor of English, "A Negative Force: Rebecca West's Return of the Soldier as a Feminist Analysis of World War I," a research project.

Carol Gilmore, Professor of Management, "Academic Career Paths of Women Students in Business Administration: Decision Choices and Supportive Strategies to Increase the Likelihood of Success," a research and academic climate project.

Sandra Haggard, Assistant Professor of Biological Science, "An Exploration of Global Feminism and International Women's Studies Emphasizing Science," a curriculum development project.

Marie Hayes, Assistant Professor of Psychology, "Post-partum Depression: Etiology, Course, and Impact on the Development of Mother-Infant Attachment," a research project.

Elizabeth Hoffman, Assistant Professor of Art and Art Education, "Women and Their Art: Methods, Materials, and Curriculum," a curriculum development project.

Kristin Langellier, Associate Professor of Speech Communication, **Lanette Landry Petrie**, Secretary at Employee Assistance Program, **Rhea Côté Robbins**, Communication Coordinator of the Centre Franco-Américain, and **Kathryn Slott**, Associate Professor of French, "An Anthology of Franco-American Women's Voices from Le Forum," a curriculum development project.

Kathleen March, Professor of Spanish, "Development of Curriculum Materials on Native Women," a curriculum development project.

John Moring, Professor of Zoology, "Teacher: The Influence of Julia Melville on American Theater of the Late Nineteenth Century," a research project.

Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice

A life-long portrait of her journalist career and anti-lynching crusades, this video features many early photographs. Toni Morrison reads from Wells' journal and letters. (53 minutes)

Fannie Lou Hamer

Using archival footage and an on-camera interview, this portrayal of Hamer—a dominant force in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s—recreates the movement as she lived it. (50 minutes)

Not Without My Veil

This video, which features interviews with a variety of women in Oman, challenges the Western view that the veil is an instrument of oppression for women in Islam. (29 minutes)

Water for Tonoumassé

Filmed in Togo, West Africa, this video chronicles the vital roles the women of a village played in all phases of a well-drilling project, much to the surprise of the men. (28 minutes)

Wilma P. Mankiller: Woman of Power

This profile of the first female Chief of the Cherokee Nation follows her through one day of her life and shows how she has achieved ground-breaking work in governance, community development, and furthering the cause of her people. It effectively shows modern tribal life as well as raises questions about women and leadership. (29 minutes)



The Women in the Curriculum Program and the Women's Resource Center have also acquired these videos on science and technology:

Breaking Through

These "slices of life" depict the lives and work of three women—a mechanical engineer, a biomedical scientist, and a physicist—and demonstrate the importance for students of continuing studies in mathematics and science. (29 minutes)

Career Encounters: Women in Engineering

Produced by the Women in Engineering Program Advocates Network, this video portrays women working in a variety of engineering careers in areas including the paper industry, telecommunications, and the environment. Academic preparation, mentoring, and family life are also discussed. (15 minutes)

On the Surface

A relaxed discussion among three women who work in deep sea biology, this interview covers the nature of their work, life aboard a research submarine, and their lives as women in science. (39 minutes)

All the videos are available for classroom and personal use. They can be previewed at our offices in 101 Fernald, if the conference room is not in use, or checked out for 24 to 48 hours. You can reserve them for specific times for classes or programs by calling Brenda Collamore, WIC Administrative Assistant, at x1-1228. She can also send you a complete list of our video collection on request.



Tina Passman & Jean Symonds

WIC interviewed Jean Symonds, Associate Professor of Nursing, and Tina Passman, Associate Professor of Classical Languages & Literature and Interim Director of Honors, to learn more about the course that they developed called "*Ethic of Care: A Feminist Perspective*" (LIB 500), which has been approved through the Master of Liberal Studies Program.

Joining forces, Symonds and Passman developed a course that ties a feminist perspective to ethical decision making. They proposed to do this by delving into the moral development of women, "out of which," Symonds and Passman point out, "the contemporary ethic of care evolves." As Symonds notes, there has been "a great push in recent years to get ethics into all majors." Also, a great deal of literature has been published in the last five years dealing with feminist ethics. So this seemed like the perfect time and opportunity to develop a course that dealt with the ethic of care.

Passman and Symonds use feminist pedagogical methods for teaching the course, which include 1) a consideration of the language used in teaching, so that bias regarding roles and stereotypes of gender, class, and race are not transmitted as part of the curriculum, and 2) an attention to classroom interaction. Their goal is to create an atmosphere of mutual respect, trust, and community in the classroom; shared responsibility and leadership; cooperative structures; integration of cognitive and affective learning; and action. Symonds and Passman used these feminist pedagogical methods in practice to bring together the theoretical and experiential aspects of the ethic of care.

The course begins with a discussion of what has become known as rule-based ethics and then looks at the

foundations for a different perspective. Students explore the historical context of women's moral development out of which the contemporary ethic of care evolves, and investigate ethical decision-making models as they apply to case studies, personal experiences, and novels. Required texts for the course include Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Sisela Bok's Lying, Nell Noddings' Caring: A Feminist Approach, and Carol Gilligan's In a Different Voice.

Symonds and Passman have taught Women's Studies courses for the WIC Program in past years and have brought feminist perspectives to the classroom setting. Passman drew on her work as a feminist scholar and researcher. Her latest research has focused on Amazon women. Symonds, Associate Professor of Nursing, was able to utilize her years of research on the subject of the ethic of care. They both decided that the organization of the class should be a circle, a practice many classrooms are implementing to create a more comfortable atmosphere for discussion and to change the power dynamics between faculty and students.

The grant that WIC gave Symonds and Passman enabled them to purchase the books that they needed to research the course. Once the books were available, they were able to discuss the focus and perspective they wanted the course to have and to start developing a syllabus. For a bibliography of the books purchased in the preparation of this course, please contact the WIC office.

John Moring Zoology

John R. Moring, Professor of Zoology, received a 1994 WIC Grant to pursue his research entitled: "Teacher: The Influence of Julia Melville on American Theater of the Late Nineteenth Century." Moring points out that Julia Melville was one of the most respected acting teachers of the 19th century and one of the few women in the profession at the time. She ran an acting school out of her home and influenced the theater for more than two generations. Moring used his research to further the academic knowledge we have on women in the theater and the influences that they had and still do have today.



Recent Library Acquisitions

During Women's History Celebration Week 1994, WIC received over 200 new books for the library in 101 Fernald. Some of those books are featured below.

Native American Women: A Biographical Dictionary by Gretchen Bataille.

Drawing from the Women's Well: Reflections on the Life Passage of Menopause by Joan Borton.

Menopause, Naturally by Sadjia Greenwood.

Feminism and Disability by Barbara Hillyer.

Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society, and Politics by Virginia Held.

The Issue is Power: Essays on Women, Jews, Violence and Resistance by Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz.

Unveiling by Rita Kiefer.

Women in Engineering: Gender, Power, and Workplace Culture by J. Gregg Robinson and Judith S. McIlwee.

The Last Generation by Cherrie Moraga.

The Persistent Desire: A Femme-Butch Reader by Joan Nestle, ed.

Global Gender Issues: Dilemmas in World Politics by Anne Sisson Runyan and V. Spike Peterson.

African American Women: A Biographical Dictionary by Dorothy Salem.

Radical Feminists of Heterodoxy: Greenwich Village 1912-1940 by Judith Schwartz.

Women in World Religions by Arvind Sharma.

Note

Barbara Hikel, Financial Assistant to the Vice President for Research & Public Service, has recently donated to the library shared by WIC and the Women's Resource Center a collection of books and pamphlets on women and cancer. For complete listing of these materials contact the Women's Resource Center at x1-1508.

A Note from the Women's Studies Librarian at Fogler...


Did you know that Fogler Library assigns a librarian to handle Women's Studies acquisition and research needs? My name is Nancy Lewis, a Social Sciences and Humanities Reference Librarian, and Women's Studies is one of the six academic areas I am responsible for.

Although there are zero dollars allocated for Women's Studies in the book budget, we are still able to acquire many pertinent materials. This is, in part, due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the field and to the Library's arrangement to receive most university (and some other) publishers' material on an approval basis. I compile a monthly bibliography of these new acquisitions for those teaching Women's Studies courses, and make an annual compilation at the end of the fiscal year.

I also provide library instruction for courses, at faculty request. This includes instruction in research skills and overviews of resources (both print and electronic) particularly suited to Women's Studies topics. I am also available to assist with extended reference questions.

Please contact me if you have any questions about Women's Studies acquisitions, library instruction for Women's Studies courses, or reference assistance. I look forward to talking to you.

Nancy Lewis
x1-3613, lewis@maine



The American Association of Retired Persons has recently donated to the library at 101 Fernald Hall a collection of booklets on women and aging. These include Women, Pensions, and Divorce, On Being Alone, Midlife & Older Women & HIV/AIDS, The Back-to-School Money Book, and Barriers to Living Independently for Older Women with Disabilities (a series). These and other pamphlets and journal articles are stored in the vertical files which are part of the library at 101 Fernald Hall.

Fellowships

Faculty interested in Women's Studies research should investigate the following:

Marian Cabot Putnam Fellowship in field of infant and child development, *Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute*, Radcliffe College (\$33,000, deadline January 15)

Research Associateships, *Five College Women's Studies Research Center*, Amherst, MA (residency, office plus library privileges, deadline February 1)

Affiliated Scholars Program in feminist theory, *Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women*, Brown University (residency and participation in series of seminars, deadline February 15)

Visiting Scholars Program, *Henry A. Murray Research Center*, Radcliffe College (deadline March 1)

Radcliffe Research Support Program for Postdoctoral Investigators for research drawing on the *Henry A. Murray Research Center's* data resources (\$5,000, deadline April 15)

Science Fellows Program, *Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute*, Radcliffe College (\$34,200, deadline September 15)

Visiting Scholars Program, *Centre for Research in Women's Studies and Gender Relations*, University of British Columbia (up to \$5,000, deadline October 31)

For more information on these and other research fellowships contact the WIC office at x1-1228.

WIC/WRC Library

Be sure to visit the Women in the Curriculum and Women's Resource Center library located at 101 Fernald Hall. The library includes over 2,000 volumes and a number of periodicals, many of which are not available at Fogler Library. Materials may be signed out on loan. WIC/WRC have recently formed a library committee to help establish guidelines for acquisitions and maintenance of this rapidly growing collection.

Women in the Curriculum

The Women in the Curriculum Program began in the fall of 1980 when Dr. JoAnn Fritsche, Director of Equal Opportunity and Women's Development at the University of Maine, convened a meeting to develop strategies for the inclusion of women's experiences and perspectives in the University's curriculum. Today the WIC Program administers an interdisciplinary course concentration in Women's Studies and encourages the development of departmental and interdisciplinary Women's Studies courses. It also continues a long-standing effort toward revising existing courses so that they represent equally the experiences, values, contributions, and perspectives of both women and men. In addition to Women's Studies and curriculum transformation, other WIC Program components include the Maryann Hartman Awards, weekly WIC Lunch Series, the Feminist Oral History Project, the University's Women's History Celebration, and additional programs of speakers and performers.

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