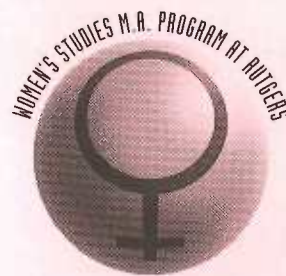


Newsletter Spring 1994



The Whitman Axe? Alice Kessler-Harris Addresses the Effect of Budget Cuts in Higher Education on the Women's Studies Program

"What about all the budget cuts? How have they been affecting me?" These are good questions, and the answer is not always apparent. Still, the new university budget doesn't look quite as bad as some recent ones, so it is tempting to breathe a sigh of relief. Better still, why not take this moment of respite to try to answer the question: how have the budget cuts affected us in Women's Studies?

The good news is that we've been growing by leaps and bounds. Compared to just a few years ago, we have a healthy crop of new majors and minors. At last count, 174 students had registered as majors and minors. 96 are majors and 78 are now minors, 41 are double majors. English and Political Science are far and away the most popular co-majors. One result of all this growth is that we've been able to strengthen our requirements: some of you may have noticed a new course called "Feminist Texts." Or you may have discovered that internships, honor's research, and independent studies are now accompanied by a seminar.

The down side of all this growth in a period of budget cutbacks is that we've been unable to offer nearly as many courses or sections as we need. You've probably noticed that classes are so crowded that it is impossible to get into some of them. We've had to cut back on sections of "Women, Culture and Society"; many students fear that they'll never get into one. Courses required for the major and minor are generally filled with Women's Studies students, leaving little space for anyone who just happens to be interested. Elective offerings have been pared to the bone. Other amenities have disappeared, too: our speaker budget has shrunk dramatically; our office staff is stretched to the point where we sometimes have difficulty even answering the phone; budget squeezes have forced us to limit the use of videos and films in classes.

Will any of this change soon? A lot of money will have to be restored before it does. We are preparing energetically for the new M.A. degree that will be launched in the fall. It's spring: if a bit short of cash, we continue to nurture high hopes and great expectations.

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Celebrate the End of the School Year!

**YEAR-END
❖WOMEN'S STUDIES❖
PICNIC**

Tuesday, May 3, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Antilles Field (next to Voorhees
Chapel), Douglass Campus

Relax, meet old and new friends, and
come pay tribute to our graduating
seniors.

Dr. Mary Trigg completes her term as an Instructor in our program this semester and will be greatly missed by students and staff alike. Her rare skills as a teacher and her wisdom, good humor, and sensitivity as a colleague have made the Women's Studies Program a welcoming academic home for many at Rutgers. In her years working for our program, she has guided many majors through internships on community projects and a range of women's studies classes, and initiated a few exceptional students into the difficult art of teaching through the "peer teaching" program. Mary is also treasured for her talents as an adviser both by those who have worked on committees with her and the many undergraduates who have sought out her counsel on their course of study. Few working on this year's group study "PUSH," analyzing sexual harassment in New Jersey schools, will forget the great energy and enthusiasm that she brought to the project.

Mary will be devoting the next year to completion of a book project on women activists. She expects to keep in touch with the Rutgers community through her continued involvement in the ongoing oral history project that focuses on the first class of women students admitted to Rutgers College (in 1974). We are all deeply in her debt and wish her every success in her scholarly pursuits in women's history.

Women's Studies M.A. Program Launched

In the fall of 1994, the Women's Studies M.A. program will welcome its first group of students. Three years in the planning stage, and the product of the combined efforts of a committee of graduate students, faculty and staff, the degree boasts an emphasis on global issues. We have a diverse applicant pool, including international students and women with a wide range of activist and academic backgrounds. We will also welcome our first graduate director, Meredith Turshen, Professor in Urban Studies at Rutgers. She brings special expertise in issues of gender, development, and public health policy to our program.

The graduate offerings in Women's Studies are being expanded and revised in order to integrate multicultural and international perspectives more fully into the curriculum. A two-semester sequence in feminist theories (988:582 Feminist Theories and 988:583 Feminist Paradigms) will replace Theories of Female Creativity. Women and Social Change and Women's Studies Research Methods are being revised to reflect our renewed cross-cultural emphasis. Beginning in the fall, faculty teaching in the graduate program will also participate in a seminar funded by the Ford Foundation. Drawing on outside consultants with expertise in global women's issues, the seminar will train faculty to teach cross-cultural courses more effectively.

The new M.A. students as well as current Graduate Certificate students will benefit from the revitalized graduate curriculum. We hope, too, that undergraduates at the University will keep the program in mind when making plans for future study.

Women's Studies Staff Rutgers-New Brunswick

Alice Kessler-Harris, Director
Barbara Balliet, Associate Director
Adelina Rodriguez, Secretarial Assistant
Jan Lambertz, Graduate Assistant
Office Assistants: Liz Felter, Nadezhda
Pryadko, Kaitita Simmons

The Women's Studies Peer Teaching Program

Now in its second year, the Peer Teaching Program initiated by Women's Studies offers a challenge to committed undergraduates interested in improving the college learning experience both for themselves and other students. Women's Studies staff members spoke to three past and present peer teachers during the semester, Naomi Cohen ('95), Winsome Gayle ('95), and Maria Marolis ('94), eager to hear about their positive moments in (and gripes with) the program. Gayle currently peer teaches with Cheryl Clarke in the introductory "Women, Culture and Society" course, while Cohen and Marolis both signed on as peer teachers with Mary Trigg's Women's Studies Internship course. Their impressions varied enormously, but each encountered similar basic pleasures, satisfactions, and difficulties.

Professors, move over! Despite the enormous time commitment and moments of doubt involved the three find themselves interested in careers involving teaching. "I never thought I would before!" was one response, while all three regret that the peer teaching opportunity itself was not a two-semester "ordeal" for them. The one-semester plan nonetheless provided hard-going training in a range of skills. Peer teachers devise strategies to help students work cooperatively in groups. They also help professors design discussion questions and structure goals for individual class sessions. For example, Gayle designed a debate for students on gay/lesbian marriage. In the internship course peer teachers made on-site visits to students' placements. Taken together, these duties can add up to "the most difficult task I've ever had," as one told us. Our peer teachers also felt their perspective on being a student had changed markedly: newly aware of the thought and preparation that goes into each class meeting, their tolerance for students who came unprepared to participate in class decreased markedly.

Despite exertions on the part of our

peer teachers, their role in the classroom has not always been completely clear to either themselves or to students. A typical issue was finding oneself a peer teacher to students whom one encountered in other classes. While the role confusion made them uncomfortable at first, Naomi Cohen, for instance, learned quickly to ignore "the weirdness of it." Students vary, too, in how willing they are to use the peer teacher as a resource or give her some authority. Some students refused to take their requests seriously, others largely ignored their presence, while still others exaggerated their role, assuming they had a hand in assigning grades (they do not). But these obstacles are hardly insurmountable. If not always a surefire solution, Marolis recommended making sure that students know from the outset that "they could always come to me as a fellow student," while also being insistent that the peer teacher has a role that is different from being "just another student."

Are you contemplating working as or with a peer teacher? What kind of qualities make for a good peer teaching candidate? Maria Marolis argued that being "secure with yourself and your beliefs" is crucial. But self-confidence is hardly enough, she argued; another quality seems crucial: the capacity to listen to students. Cohen, too, spoke of the importance of having "a sense of yourself," clear goals, and the capacity to set boundaries.

The peer teaching program was funded with help from Douglass College Capital Campaign. We gratefully acknowledge their help.

The Humanities Gender Group presents:

**Elizabeth Lunbeck (Princeton, History) on
"Gender and Psychiatry in the Early
20th-century U.S."**

with comments by Marcia Ian
and Ana Douglass (Rutgers, English)

Friday, April 22, 12:00 p.m.

Voorhees Chapel, Room 5,
Douglass Campus

PUSH: NJ SCHOOLS (PROJECT TO UNCOVER SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS)

This project was originally conceived in the "Research Methods" course taught by Mary Trigg in fall of 1993. Carolyn Jacobus spoke on the American Association of University Women's report on sexual harassment in schools, "Hostile Hallways," in that class and suggested a similar research project in New Jersey schools. The class had the option of choosing either this project or an individual research paper. About half of the class chose this option. During the initial phase of the project members designed a survey and sent letters to New Jersey high schools (members sent a letter to their own schools, then broadened the project to include some rural and urban schools). The group experienced difficulty getting into schools; principals referred inquiry letters to school boards and boards showed some reluctance to go ahead with the project. The final survey group included seven high schools and two middle schools. Some funding was provided by the Institute for Women's Leadership and the Women's Studies Program. Students created and administered a survey using the AAUW report as a model. They worked as a group to develop a survey that would not be biased: one that would not predetermine results.

One of the challenges of the project was to work as a collective. The group agreed

Go North, Young Woman

We congratulate **Annette Igra**, who has worked tirelessly this year in getting our new M.A. program off the ground, on her exile to Minnesota. There, battling 20-foot snowdrifts, January temperatures dipping to -60° F., and the lures of nearby Minneapolis, she will embark on a teaching career in U.S. and U.S. women's history at Carleton College.

that it had to reach a consensus on all aspects of the project, including the introductory letter, the survey, and how work was assigned. The project involved as much learning about feminist process and consensus building as it did about sexual harassment. The greatest difficulty, some group members feel, was working in a nonhierarchical manner. They came to understand that what was important was to value each member's participation rather than to criticize the amount or kind of work each member was doing.

Several students wanted to go on with the work, to complete the report and write some of the results for publication. Eight students are continuing the work this semester as a group Independent Study directed by Dr. Trigg. The group had to learn Lotus 1,2,3 to enter the data and get assistance in learning how to interpret the data uniformly. Their main goal was to make sure students' voices would emerge from the mass of detail. As Deb Kirshner, a PUSH member commented, "we label some kinds of behaviors such as unwanted teasing and touching, sexual rumors, pictures and graffiti as sexual harassment. Yet younger students feel uncomfortable naming this behavior as sexual or harassment. They experience or see these behaviors every day and are baffled when PUSH members tell them such behavior is objectionable and can be resisted." "What do you mean? This is just the way people deal with each other" has been a typical reaction by high school students.

The collective will publish a report documenting their work. It will provide a rich source for discussing the impact of harass-

Social Science Gender Group Meeting

Thursday, April 28, 4:30 p.m.

"Getting Published: The Wicked World of Referees"

A forum for faculty & grad students in social sciences to discuss publishing strategies.

With **Ronnee Schreiber & Cynthia Daniels** (Political Science) & **Alice Kessler-Harris** (Women's Studies/History)

Voorhees Chapel, Room 5,
Douglass Campus

Looking Out for "Looking Out"

"Looking Out," the first of what is expected to be an annual New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Film/Video Festival, will be held April 22-24, 1994 at Rutgers and the State Theatre, New Brunswick. Organized under the aegis of the Rutgers Film Co-op, the Festival has been made possible by support from many departments and offices at the university, including the Women's Studies Program.

With two programs each evening, "Looking Out" will highlight new work by lesbian and gay film-makers that has not previously been shown in this area. Included among the scheduled screenings are the Academy Award-winning Chicks in White

Satin, about the wedding of two Jewish lesbians; Derek Jarman's last film, Blue, the Canadian documentary on "secret lesbian lives" of the 1950s, Forbidden Love; and Okoge, an entertaining narrative feature from Japan about a straight woman's relationship with two gay men. In addition, there will be screenings of Framing Lesbian Fashion, Living Proof: HIV and the Pursuit of Happiness, and a variety of short films and videos. The programs will be held on the College Avenue and Douglass campuses, with a special gala final evening on Sunday at the State Theatre in New Brunswick.

For further program information, contact the Rutgers Film Co-op at (908) 932-8482.

ment on students and the schools' responsibilities for providing a safe environment. In addition, it will address New Jersey policies and national policies on sexual harassment in schools, and feminist process.

The group will also be presenting their results at the "Celebration of Our Work Conference" in May on Douglass Campus. All the students are continuing to do outreach work based on their experiences. Some are talking in schools in their hometowns or in schools where their parents teach.

The nine students this semester: Deb Kirschner, Maria Marolis, Heidi Weierstall, Aliza Best, Nadine Milecofsky, Chris Spiniello, Becky Davis, Joel Saperstein, Michelle Burke, and facilitator and advisor Mary Trigg. The first semester's team included the nine students above as well as Aisha Vay, Catherine Klein, and Alison Lazaar.

Spring Harvest: A New Crop of Assistants for 1994-95

The Women's Studies Program welcomes four new Teaching Assistants and one new Graduate Assistant aboard for the coming year. Some have previously taught courses for our program, and several will be familiar

to you as women's issues activists on campus. You will have encountered yet others as a mere blur dashing past on their way from meeting number four of the morning to lecture number two, from women's caucus to coffee truck and back again. All in fact promise energetic engagement in tackling their tasks for the program in the new semester. We welcome:

Jeanne Bowlan (History), T.A.

C. Lynn Carr (Sociology), T.A.

Kathleen Casey (Political Science), T.A.

Liz Felter (Political Science), G.A.

Priti Joshi (English), T.A.

The 12th Annual Celebration of Our Work Conference

Tuesday, May 17, Hickman Hall, Douglass

Keynote address by **Svetlana Slapsak**, Laurie NJ Chair in Women's Studies. Organized by the Rutgers Institute for Research on Women, this year's conference

will focus on **Transformations of Women and Gender at the *fin-de-siècle***. Topics range from African-American women's texts to the politics of welfare "reform" to identities in a transnational world.

Preconference registration by May 6. For further information, contact the IRW: (908) 932-9072.

The Information Superhighway: Just Another Route 18?

If you haven't yet heard that the coolest place to see and to be seen is on the NET, one can only wonder where you've been. A potential tool for redefining the academic experience, the net is shorthand for a network of networks (including the Internet), the so-called "information superhighway" that everyone from the vice president to the girl next door likes to cruise.

To get on the net you need only a computer with a modem (an internal modem with fax can be purchased as cheaply as \$150) and an account (set up for free through the Rutgers computer center), and you're ready to log on. Once you've discovered the joys of using IRIS at home, checking the job listings in the Chronicle of Higher Education weekly, and electronic mail (i.e., e-mail, as opposed to "snail mail," that stuff you get in your departmental and home mailboxes), it's time

to graduate to "lists" and bulletin boards.

There is a list on the net devoted to almost anything you would ever like to discuss. For people doing work in women's studies, there are several lists available. You might find wmst-1 the most valuable.

Moderated by the dedicated and fearless Joan Korenman, wmst-1 is devoted to issues of women's studies pedagogy. On a single day you may receive postings in your box on good women's studies graduate programs, hysterectomies in literature, Bahktin and the female body, Canadian pornography laws, and Nike's exploitation of women workers.

Subscribing to lists is very easy. Below are the names and addresses of some lists that may be of interest (h-women has some of the most interesting discussions). To subscribe, put the listserver address on the "To:" line and leave the "Subject:" line blank. Then send the message SUBSCRIBE LISTNAME YOURNAME (i.e., Subscribe WMST1 Eleanor Roosevelt).

List name

wmst-1
h-women
swip-1
gender
femrel-1
femecon-1

List Address

listserv@umdd.umd.edu
listserv@uicvm.uic.edu
listserv@cfrvm.cfr.usf.edu
comserve@vm.ecs.rpi.edu
listserv@umcvmb.umc.edu
mailserv@mitvma.mit.edu

Description

women's studies
women's history
women in philosophy
communications/gender
feminist theology
feminist economics

And, adds our correspondent, to protest the latest government offense, e-mail the White House at 75300.3155@compuserve.com.