Correction: On the Campus

The Feminist Press

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Between the Caucus and the classes is maintained. Moreover, members of the Women's Caucus publish the bi-weekly Feminist News, and plans are underway for publishing an anthology of writings by CSUS women for use as a textbook.

The Women’s Studies Board is the only group on campus where student control is a reality; determined students, faculty, and staff women finally obtained approval for student control and collective leadership. However, most of the committees and departments on campus cannot accept this and continue to try to pin down a single leader or head of the Women’s Studies Board.

To date only one decision has required a formal vote, despite the fact that a variety of political factions are represented on the Board, including male-left-identified women and gay women, and both moderate and radical feminists. Feminist/socialist priorities as well as gay/straight issues have divided the Board in the past and no doubt will continue to do so.

The Women’s Studies Program makes a clear distinction between the Minor and the Program itself. A minor must be approved by Chancellor Glenn Dumke, head of the Board of Trustees of the California University and College System. A program needs only the approval of the Academic Senate and the president of each individual campus. The Women’s Studies Minor is purely academic, important to the academic community. The Program is more significant, special, as it serves both academic needs and movement goals. Besides classes, it provides speakers, programs, and films for the school and the larger community. Small consciousness-raising groups often evolve from Women’s Studies courses, for example. The Women’s Radio Collective broadcasts every Monday night from five to ten p.m. on CSUS station KERS 90.7. A Women’s Self-examination Learning Clinic, held once a month in conjunction with the Program, is a constant success.

The Program is unique in that it has evolved from a grass-roots base into a collective, cooperative effort of the three groups of women on campus. It is intended to serve: staff, faculty, and students. Since the major impetus has come from the last two groups, they have provided most of the financial support. For example, the Program received $1,200 for 1972-73 from the Associated Students of California State University, Sacramento; this money is used for student-related items such as books, tapes, periodicals, and other library materials. The Program also received $500 this year, in the form of a checking account, from the School of Arts and Sciences, to pay four work-study students.

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Eighteen units in Women's Studies courses (out of approximately fifty-four) are taught by women directly involved in the women's movement. As introductory courses are considered very important in terms of the women's movement, next semester “Introduction to the Women’s Movement” will have a sequel, “Women's Movement: Advanced Theory and Practice.” This will involve more intense movement work, including projects in the community.

At present the Women’s Studies Program is allocated 1.8 faculty positions and the power to grant joint appointments with other departments. Two such joint appointments have been made: Mary Mackey in English and Betty Chmaj in Humanities. For the fall of 1973 we are requesting 1.2 additional full-time positions in Women’s Studies and nine additional joint appointments.

Although basic consciousness-raising is still a part of almost all of the courses, we no longer draw so many “fighters,” students who would say, “I want to find out more about women’s lib’ so I can more effectively put it down.” Another change can be seen in the fact that male students no longer bait the instructors. In “Introduction to Men’s Liberation,” the men are now forming small groups, and they wish more men would participate. Chicano men have reacted well to the classes and would like to see a class for them taught by a Chicano.

Minority women now participate, due in part to the classes for Asian women and Chicano women; next semester we will offer classes for black and, hopefully, native American women. The minority women have a strong ethnic identity. When middle-class women discuss something generally exclusive to middle-class whites, ethnic women point this out. Their criticism keeps white movement women aware of the realities of their Third World sisters’ lives.

The perennial shortage of funds, due to Governor Reagan’s budget cuts, is a major problem. While funding would be easier if the Program became a major—departments with majors are given additional faculty positions more readily—becoming a major does not seem to be an urgent need. Many new courses are badly needed: more self-help courses and community offerings, an advanced self-defense course, and a biology class for women, about women. A course on women’s health needs is essential, as is a psychology class for women. In general, we need to consolidate and improve current classes, rather than simply expand.

From the beginning, Women's Studies classes have faced the problem of reconciling academic “straightness and respectability” with the needs to be “sensitive to the needs of women.” While this can be solved in part through an interdisciplinary approach by a sympathetic teacher, most often we need an active women's movement person to provide the latest perspective on the condition of women. So we have tried to hire teaching assistants with community movement experience, and these women always teach the required introductory class, “Sociological Perspectives on the American Woman.” In the words of one Board member: “While we have not always achieved the academic balance the administration might like, we do not feel that we have sold out simply for academic respectability. In all likelihood we will continue to walk this tightrope for some time to come.”

CORRECTION:
In the Fall 1972 Newsletter we mistakenly included U California at San Francisco among the MA and BA programs in women's studies. In both cases this should have been San Francisco State University.