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WHERE ARE THE WOMEN SUPERINTENDENTS?
Jacqueline P. Clement

Women in elementary and secondary education have watched with envy these past few years as their sisters in higher education formed caucuses and affirmative action committees; consulted with and documented for HEW officials their institutions' hiring practices; and generally moved ahead to seek new opportunities in employment and training for women. Women were in demand in university presidents' offices, as assistants to deans, and as members of advisory committees to prestigious councils. Colleges and universities holding government contracts were responding to Presidential Executive Order 11246 which required them to demonstrate that their hiring practices were non-discriminatory with regard to sex as well as race.

Much has been written about this complicated, multi-faceted, delicate, and painful process which is now evolving under the rubric of affirmative action; but while initial activity raised expectations to new heights, closer examination of the current scene suggests that despite all the rhetoric no area will be so resistant to change as the persistent, pervasive discrimination against women in all aspects of employment. The impact of Executive Order 11246 has nowhere near matched the hopes that it engendered.

NEW OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSES
Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt

What follows is part of the Introduction to a new anthology of syllabi, bibliographies, descriptions of courses and programs called Female Studies VII: Going Strong, available from the Clearinghouse for $4.00 plus .50 for postage and handling.

The growth of women's studies in the past two years has been phenomenal. In 1971, when Female Studies III (the last volume in this series with similar content) was published, there were about 600 courses, about twenty programs. There are now well over 2000 courses and over eighty programs. Geographically they range in the United States from Orono, Maine to Honolulu, Hawaii, and there is a small but growing number of courses in the United Kingdom and Canada. In editing this volume I examined descriptions of some thirty programs and syllabi for over 200 courses.

KALAMAZOO: A MODEL FOR CHANGE
Carol Ahlum

The Superintendent of Schools in Kalamazoo, Michigan has made one of his performance objectives the elimination of sexism in schools. This action came at the suggestion of his administrative staff, and since September all school personnel have been directed to take this goal as one of their objectives. As the Superintendent informed me, these objectives are not rhetorical. All administrators and teachers are required to keep descriptive records about how they are eliminating sexism.

This fall, Kalamazoo's elementary school teachers are countering sex-stereotyping in a newly-purchased Houghton Mifflin reading program by using a supplementary book-length collection of revisions to their teachers' guides entitled Recommendations for Eliminating Sex Discrimination in the Reading Program. This collection was devised by a School Board committee of teachers, administrators and parents.

Since last spring, all books and audio-visual materials bought by the Kalamazoo Schools Instructional Media Department are evaluated before purchase to ensure the acquisition of nonsexist and nonracist materials. The guidelines used in this evaluation were developed under the direction of the Media Director, Lee Jameson, who is in charge of the system's libraries and the audio-visual department.

These developments in the city of Kalamazoo are unique in public education. In no other community are administrators initiating such far-reaching changes in their own practices and formulating programs to influence the development of nonsexist attitudes and behavior in their colleagues. How has this happened and why? I spent a week in Kalamazoo talking with both educators and citizens to find out.

A group called the Committee to Study Sex Discrimination in the Kalamazoo Schools (CSSD), created by the School Board in December 1971, has been the impetus behind this change. After eighteen months studying major aspects of the school system (personnel, physical education, elementary textbooks, selected high school courses, student-oriented issues), this committee produced five well-documented reports that include comprehensive short and long-range recommendations to the school system. Two additional reports are forthcoming.
WOMEN'S STUDIES (continued)

As when Female Studies III was published, the largest categories are still History, Sociology, and especially Literature, along with a consistently large group of interdisciplinary courses. But Education and Psychology are increasingly well-represented, and Political Science, Anthropology, and Law are making gains. A hopeful development is the increase in courses in the area of Health Sciences, Home Economics, etc., which focus on issues ranging from Human Sexuality and the pragmatics of contraception and abortion to Child Care and Alternate Life Styles. . . .

Such statistics, of course, tell us little about the content, method, or atmosphere of the courses themselves. Nor is this the place for a detailed analysis of these concerns. But I do want to make several observations which seem especially important. First, if anyone still has fears about the "academic validity" of women's studies, those fears may once and for all be laid to rest. The proliferation of specialized or advanced courses, particularly in Literature and History, but in other fields as well, itself bears witness to that validity: obviously the broad interdisciplinary course, or the broad disciplinary one, is no longer enough to encompass the work to be done, the materials to be studied. Instructors and students feel the need to focus on more concentrated areas, to ask more specific questions: Was Shakespeare a chauvinist, does it matter, and if so, to whom? Can sex be used as the basis for concerted political action? To what extent is there/should there be a female/feminist art? How much power do black women really have and how is it exercised? Specialization may take the form of a thematic focus, exemplified by but certainly not limited to the increasing number of courses examining feminism per se: Feminism as a Contemporary Social Movement, Rhetoric of Feminism, Feminist Politics, Feminist Thought Workshop. Or it may involve concentration on women of a particular class, or race, or era: Black Matriarchy, La Chicana, Woman as Intellectual in Modern European History. A promising variant on the latter approach encourages students to research local but often neglected materials on women in their institution's geographic area: Boston Women in the Progressive Era, for example, or the project assignment for the Nineteenth Century Woman Movement.

The trend toward specialization exists, of course, side by side with the interdisciplinary perspective characteristic of women's studies since its inception. The coexistence of these two approaches provides the field generally with both scope and depth. Obviously, though, the range varies with the institution. Instructors who wish to offer more specialized courses at schools lacking introductory ones often feel frustrated at having to spend course time on basics. Not surprisingly, the broadest spectrum of courses, from the general and introductory to the more specialized and/or advanced, is to be found at institutions with well-developed programs. That fact explains the inclusion here of more than one course from several such schools: SUNY, Buffalo; SUNY, College at Old Westbury; the University of Michigan; the University of Pittsburgh; and San Jose State University.

Women's studies courses, moreover, are characterized by a thoughtful structuring of topics, by lengthy yet selective reading lists—not infrequently including unpublished papers and manuscripts; by a careful articulation of the questions to be raised, often with a sophisticated conceptual framework; and by consistently high demands on the time and intellectual energies of both students and instructors. Many of them call for original research; virtually all require papers and/or projects. Few are simply lecture courses; time and again, the emphasis is on student participation, student responsibility—sometimes for selection and organization of materials, sometimes for reports, panels, project presentations, often for discussion or work in small groups. This emphasis no doubt reflects the connection of women's studies with the women's movement at large—its dislike of authoritarian techniques, but more, its sense that each woman is, at least potentially, an intelligent, productive, responsible being, capable of genuine contributions to the work of the group.

And at least part of the work in many of these classes is group-oriented. Individual competition for grades is de-emphasized, replaced by a stress on the cooperative production of useful materials, or some form of cooperative participation in both learning and teaching. Many syllabi suggest that projects be done in groups. In other classes—such as the introductory course at Buffalo, the economics course at San Diego; and the Women's Biography course at Sonoma State—the course is taught collectively, in the latter instance entirely by students who have taken the class in preceding semesters. The essay by Joan Borod, Susan Dorsky, Carol Hull and Ellen Keller of Case Western Reserve University, discusses the use of a collective methodology in class evaluation—an issue that will be of increasing concern in the future of women's studies. Again, the stress on cooperation rather than competition suggests the link between women's studies and feminist belief.

Obviously, many courses are more traditional in method. But one generalization I would risk: the quality of student performance in women's studies classes is unusually high. Perhaps that is because the work done in them is real work, for a real audience, not just another academic exercise. I have seen original research papers, excellent annotated bibliographies, almost professional curricular units for teaching women's studies in the public schools, imaginative and creative work, social histories based on interviews with members of the student's own family and additional research on the period. These courses, then, are exploring new methodologies, raising and answering new questions, and making available a wealth of new materials. Across the country, students and teachers in these classes have a sense of involvement in a collective endeavor—to discover women's history, their past; to understand their condition in the present; to play an active role in shaping the future.

Finally, without any relaxation in their demands, many of these courses are committed to the idea that the affective is a vital part of learning, and that learning itself will therefore have an impact that reaches beyond the classroom. Women's studies, since their beginning, have challenged the notion that scholarship is or can be "objective," that learning should be a sponge-like exercise in "enrichment" without any expectation that lives will be changed by it, or institutions questioned. This issue has been thoroughly discussed elsewhere, so I need not exhaust it here. But the belief that the subjective experience matters, that lives will be changed, that social and political institutions will be challenged, is reflected in these descriptions in several ways. Some instructors make this assumption explicit in their statements—the one from the introductory Adult Education course at the University of Wales, for example, or Education of Women in Historical Perspective, from Cornell. Most frequently, it emerges in the assignment for a journal: a "general recording . . . of your reactions to what you see-hear-feel going on about you in relation to women" (Images of Women in Music); or "a cumulative record of your cognitive and affective learnings" (Perspectives on Human Sexuality). These assignments are not substitutions for hard study and serious thought; rather they stress the seriousness of the academic endeavor by allowing the student to integrate what is learned in the classroom with what is lived outside. And some courses require projects that will formulate and even implement strategies for social change. Students are asked to design curricular units in women's studies, to initiate consciousness-raising groups, to create non-sexist worship services, to write non-sexist children's books or devise methods

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This graphic was used to announce the Minnesota League of Women Voters' fall 1973 Conference on Sex Bias in the Schools.

WOMEN'S STUDIES (continued)

for persuading publishers to eliminate stereotypical sex roles from their publications, to investigate cases of sex discrimination at their own institutions. These classes, then, do not stop with the personal, though unlike traditional college classes, they may stop for it.

In summary, the typical women's studies course is likely to provide for at least one, and often all, of the following: self-actualization and consciousness-raising; the feminist reinterpretation of "received doctrine" and familiar materials, or the discovery or creation of new or neglected materials; and the formulation of strategies for social change. They foster an understanding of both self and world, and the capacity to act on that understanding in a context larger than the classroom. And, judging from conversations and correspondence with teachers and students across the country, there is a final quality that many of them have in common: a sense of excitement, of discovery, of commitment, of the importance of the work in which the class is engaged. These courses seem to matter to those who are teaching and taking them, to matter profoundly; that alone may make them almost unique in academia.

NEWS FROM SCHOOLS

In addition to the Kalamazoo reports mentioned above and in addition to the ones we know about from New York, Berkeley and Ann Arbor (all listed in Feminist Resources which is available from The Feminist Press for $1.25), the following feminist documentations of sexism in particular school systems have come to our attention.

Sex-Role Stereotyping in the Boulder Schools by Education Task Force of Boulder N.O.W. Available for $2.75 from Sharon L. Menard, 2348 North 107th Street, Lafayette, Colorado 80026. The Time is Now and Choices by Women's Rights Committee of Dayton Public Schools. Available from Joyce Kaser, Communications Coordinator, Dayton Public Schools, 348 West First Street, Dayton, Ohio 45402.

Other Resources

Sexism in Schools: A Handbook for Action by Nina Rothchild. Available for $2.00 from author, 14 Hickory Street, Mahtomedi, Minnesota 55115. This book by a school board member, feminist and mother who writes from experience, is a practical guide for readers aware of the inequities that face girls in schools, and those who need to know how and where to start challenging school sexism. Includes bibliography of educational and legal resources. Although focused on Minnesota, useful for all teachers, students and citizens.


Education journals continue to produce special issues on sexism and feminism in the curriculum. Some recent ones we've seen include: Educational Leadership (November 1973), Phi Delta Kappan (October 1973) and Elementary English (October 1973).

There's a new magazine about women in sports that should be of use to public school teachers. The pictures and articles are a good source of information and offer the encouragement of role models to students. Good for bulletin boards. Write: Sportswoman, P.O. Box 7771, Long Beach, California 90807. Subscriptions: $4.50 per year.

Now there is a nonsexist version of the card game, Old Maid. Called Robot, it portrays men and women doing identical work. Available for $2.00 from Fundamentals, P.O. Box, South Pasadena, California 91030.

For home economics and industrial arts teachers creating nonsexist curriculum, the October issue of Social Education includes an article that may be of help. It's called "A Nonsexist Introduction to Practical Arts."

Female Studies VI, a collection of essays about teaching women's studies in language and literature, and about the outstanding women's studies program at Portland State U., is now available in a new format. First published in 1972, Female Studies VI is now in its second printing, this time as a bound paperback. Available for $4.00 (plus $.50 postage) from The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, N.Y. 11568.