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### Guest Editorial

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Just a year ago the *Women's Studies Newsletter* announced the founding of the National Women's Studies Association. The network of a women's studies movement, often visible to its diverse participants only in the forum provided by this journal, had established an organization to support and promote feminist education and all feminists involved in that effort, at every educational level and in every educational setting. In this issue, NWSA announces the opening of its national office at the University of Maryland/College Park and my appointment as Coordinator.

Like those whose task it has been to coordinate women's studies programs or projects in their early stages, I am exhilarated and overwhelmed by the prospect of giving form to the ambitious, necessary purpose of the Association. Women's studies has always been "ahead of itself." Our accomplishments—and our expectations—have been incredibly greater than our resources. That creative paradox, along with the real and difficult tensions engendered by it, is part of the NWSA inheritance.

The National Women's Studies Association is not an end in itself. It must, however, develop organizational strength, coherence, and visibility if it is to meet the needs of all those who are and will be actively involved in the women's studies movement. It will require the capacity to develop alliances with those who share our goals, and it must be able to represent women's studies, with its multi-dimensional complexity, in ideological and institutional struggles for a world without oppression and exploitation.

Membership is an obvious and immediate priority, and I expect to facilitate a major membership drive as rapidly as possible. Adequate dues monies are crucial to our work, but so is the involvement of many feminists. The health of the representative structures by which NWSA governs itself depends on the active participation of members. NWSA membership is needed to map the terrain and boundaries of the women's studies landscape. Despite outreach and data-gathering efforts of the past several years we have barely begun, I believe, to know how many of us there are, let alone to create the structures by which we can collect and share information about our truly various activities and concerns.

The need for information has consistently been a theme in every women's studies gathering I have ever attended: information that allows each of us to have a more effective role in feminist education, to be more aware of our relationship to other parts of the whole. As knowledge, experience, theory, and practice develop in women's studies, so does the need to preserve and consolidate our history while expanding and enlarging our achievements. If NWSA can serve the functions for which it was created, there should be less waste of womanpower in "rediscovering women's studies" or defending its first premises, more opportunity for productively working together to conceptualize and create feminist education for a free society.

*Elaine Rubin*