Summer 1977

Editorial

F. H.

Follow this and additional works at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/wsq

Part of the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons

Recommended Citation


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives and Special Collections at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Women's Studies Quarterly by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact AcademicWorks@cuny.edu.
EDITORIAL

Cause for Celebration. Since 1969, the Clearinghouse on Women’s Studies has been recording the growth of women’s studies programs in colleges and universities. Originally it was a service of the Modern Language Association’s Commission on the Status of Women. Then, in 1971, the Clearinghouse became an educational project of The Feminist Press. In both cases, publishing a list of women’s studies programs helped students decide where to study and told faculty where they might find jobs. But there was still another reason for publishing such lists: programs like San Diego’s and Cornell’s (listed in 1970) and San Francisco State’s, the University of Washington’s, Richmond College/CUNY’s, and SUNY/Buffalo’s (listed along with 11 others in 1971) became “models” or sources of information for others wanting to organize women’s studies programs. Such record-keeping is exciting to follow: 2 programs in 1970; 15 in 1971; 75 in 1973; 112 in 1974; 152 in 1975; and now, reason to celebrate, 276 in 1977.

How can we account for the sudden spurt in 1977—a year of sharp retrenchment in which nothing new could possibly be begun? Partly, as in 1973, by noting that the period between surveys was 18 months, not 12. Moreover, there are at least four significant reasons for the current growth.

First, and most important, a strong social movement rooted in important shifts in consciousness and knowledge will continue to grow energetically, even on campuses alleged to have been “passive” or “quiet.” Being a women’s studies program implies a group of students, staff, and faculty particular visibility on a campus. As such, women’s studies programs can work effectively to change the curriculum.

Second, the explosion of knowledge about women has resulted in a concomitant explosion of women’s studies courses—in depth as well as in breadth. Students want preparation for work in a future world. Academic programs—offering minors, certificates, or degrees—must order the curriculum to provide students with skills and with coherent insights into these new bodies of knowledge.

Third, the costs of women’s studies programs—thanks to the inventiveness of pioneers, and the traditional willingness of women to work for causes in which they believe—have been, by academic standards, minimal. No budget we know of has gone over $75,000, and most of the large, degree-granting programs operate on budgets of $50,000 or less. Academic departments, even with but two full professors, would need budgets at least twice the size.

Finally, and in 1977 perhaps most to the point, there is the National Women’s Studies Association. Most of our information on new programs was gathered after the founding of the NWSA—and with the help of regional and state coordinators, to whom we are especially grateful. We expect that the NWSA will be as instrumental to the continued growth of women’s studies on campuses as in the wider community of schools, women’s centers, and other educational projects.

Causes for Confusion. If you have been a subscriber to the Women’s Studies Newsletter and you have recently received a subscription notice, even though you have also joined the National Women’s Studies Association, forgive us—and ignore the renewal notice. It is impossible for us to spend the human hours checking alternate lists before sending out such notices. Of course, as a member of the NWSA, you will receive the Newsletter free.

If you choose to renew your subscription (or have already paid for one in 1977), and you have also joined the NWSA in 1977, you won’t get two copies of the Newsletter. Your presence in a separate file means that we do not bill the NWSA for your Newsletter subscription. Thus, you have paid for your issues, and you have contributed an additional $7 to the NWSA.

—F. H.