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NWSA BUSINESS



FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

By Elaine Reuben

During the final weeks of preparation for the First NWSA Convention last spring, various National Office tasks and concerns had to be postponed to a less hectic time we called "After Kansas." There was such a peaceful moment: it lasted just about as long as it took for the National Office staff to return from Lawrence to begin counting down days and deadlines "Before Indiana."

"After Kansas/Before Indiana" we have been responding to congratulations received on our first Convention and to suggestions for the second; filling requests for information or materials from the 1979 meeting and beginning to publicize the 1980 one; writing thank-yous and paying bills; assembling and reproducing committee reports and preparing this year's financial accounting; seeking and beginning to work with those who will take responsibility for the Bloomington Convention.

Establishing an annual rhythm of follow-up and continuity marks an organizational milestone less vivid, but certainly no less important, than the achievement of the first Convention. NWSA's rhythm, in truth, is not yet quite a smooth one. As this report goes to press, next year's Program Committee is not fully in place. A complete calendar of regional meetings for the coming year could not be assembled. Monies at least

equivalent to last year's Ford Foundation grant supporting NWSA Convention planning and organizational development have yet to be found, and thus staffing patterns after September remain uncertain.

"Nearness only counts in horseshoes," but the odds do seem good, as of this writing, for approval of NWSA's proposal to the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. That project, to improve service learning (internships, field placement, practicum) in women's studies, would — if funded — begin this fall, and, if the first year's work were successful, continue in the 1980-81 academic year. A coordinated NWSA-Women's Studies Newsletter marketing and promotion campaign, beginning this fall, also involves timetables that extend "Beyond Indiana."

Annual continuity ultimately depends on several-year cycles of planning and commitment. Goals that may not be realized until 1981 and after require efforts begun in 1979.

Many such first steps were undertaken at Kansas. It was exciting to meet members who had only been names on lists, and exciting to see or learn about their coming together. A working meeting of regional newsletter editors, the beginnings of a network of women's studies program administrators, the first working sessions of

NWSA standing committees — these and other formal and unofficial, planned and spontaneous groups began to define priorities and projects that may not be fully shaped until after the Bloomington Convention.

Conversely, some of the frustrations experienced at Kansas arose from assumptions of organizational continuity that didn't yet exist, or unfamiliarity with that which did; from differences in perception of NWSA's rhythm and capacity to plan, communicate, and act; from dilemmas that seemed to call for *either* "catching up" or "moving ahead" when *both* are clearly necessary. Similar frustrations are interwoven with our sense of accomplishment in the National Office.

Along with other ongoing and forward-planning work here, this summer we are involved in catching up to move — to a new and larger space on the University of Maryland campus. By fall, NWSA will be sharing a suite of offices with the Women's Studies Program and with *Feminist Studies*.

Donna Whittlesey, who began as a National Office volunteer last summer, and subsequently became a part-time and indispensable member of the staff, will be continuing full time, with particular responsibility for work on membership and financial affairs. Sharon Hagan, who has worked for NWSA since this office opened in January 1978, will be a graduate student in economics and one of the graduate assistants to the Women's Studies Program; she is also the newly elected Staff Caucus representative to the NWSA Coordinating Council. Denni Johnson-Claggett, an intern in the NWSA Office last spring, will be an assistant in the *Feminist Studies* office.

Reflecting on the history and development of the Association as I begin my second contract as its Coordinator, I realize that the nature of our enterprise makes inevitable a continuing sense of accomplishments and certainties "not yet" achieved (and once achieved no longer remarkable); but our survival and growth will depend on the capacity to move beyond moment-to-moment: into the rhythm of year-to-year, of several-year cycles, and then of decades.