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HQ 1100 - HQ 1870: A Librarian's View of the Second NWSA Convention

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support of its women constituents in order to remain viable, but it also needs the support of the university administration in order to survive and grow. The hierarchical and competitive values of the institution and the egalitarian and democratic values of women's studies programs often come into conflict with each other. Many coordinators feel that they are caught in the middle, being held accountable internally under one set of criteria and externally under another set of criteria.

Considerable time at these meetings was devoted to discussing the role of the coordinators. One question loomed large: is there life after being the coordinator of women's studies? The demands on the coordinator are such that she is likely to get "burnt out" after a few years. Unless the coordinator has tenure or can go back to a traditional department, serious problems may arise. Deciding whether the coordinator should be a tenured or tenure-tracked faculty member or an administrator or a combination of both is a critical question of strategy.

The coordinators agreed on the need to devise new mechanisms for exchanging information with one another. (See elsewhere in this issue the announcement of a new publication, Network Notes, to meet this need.) Another suggestion called for the development of a pre-Convention training institute for coordinators. Such an institute would begin several days before the next NWSA Convention. The training program would emphasize administrative skills and models for program, curriculum, and faculty development in women's studies. A combination of grant support and support from participating institutions might fund such a program.

The coordinators outlined several ways for NWSA to be more directly helpful to women's studies programs. First, NWSA could provide some support services for the projected coordinators' newsletter. Second, NWSA could collect baseline data about the programs in existence, their instructional budgets, tenured positions, and degree-granting power. Third, NWSA could be a central repository and clearinghouse for all kinds of research related to women's studies. Fourth, NWSA could review and maintain a directory of consultants with whom women's studies programs could contract at a discount off the regular consultants' fees. In turn, what women's studies programs could do for NWSA would be to contribute institutional information, submit research reports for dissemination, and help with membership development for the regions and for the National Association.

King Ming Young is a graduate student at Stanford University School of Education who is planning to write her dissertation on the administration of women's studies programs.

**Library of Congress classification numbers for women's studies.**

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**HQ 1100 - HQ 1870**

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**A Librarian’s View of the Second NWSA Convention**

By Linda Parker

In the introduction to the NWSA Convention program, the Convention Coordinators refer to the necessity of building networks, disseminating new information and research, launching new campaigns for change, stirring new insights, and nurturing our growth as individuals. These concepts could form a feminist librarian's motto. Many libraries are bureaucratic monoliths which may seem impervious to change, but change is occurring because feminist library workers are challenging institutional policies and practices which form barriers to both women workers and women library users. Feminist librarians join NWSA for the same reason as anyone else—"to further the social, political, and professional development of women's studies at every educational level and in every educational setting"—but with a special emphasis on libraries.

Feminist librarians came to the Second NWSA Convention to communicate to other women the importance of libraries in the women's movement, to develop a supportive network which would serve as a stepping-stone for projects designed to build a stronger information base for women's studies research and practice, and to share ideas about methods for implementing change. By participating in this organization, feminist librarians wanted (and will continue) to make themselves visible not only within NWSA but also in their respective communities—the university or college, the city or town, the school, and the publishing industry.

Information gathering was an important aspect of the Convention. We discovered new publications, films, and archival resources which do not appear in the reviewing media. We talked to publishers who are feminists. We attended the sessions and experienced the excitement of learning about and sharing our knowledge with women.

The development of communication between librarians and other participants in the Convention was as important as the process of collecting information. In joint sessions with colleagues from other disciplines, and in informal conversations in the hallways, dining rooms, and buses, we stressed the function of librarians in the development of women's studies as an academic area of knowledge: acquisition of feminist source materials; organization of collections for research and dissemination of information about them; and creation of bibliographic tools. A growing enthusiasm emerged as faculty, students, and librarians exchanged information about new research, previously unknown resources, and the development of new methods of access to traditional materials.

Librarians actively participated in the Convention. We delivered papers and presented panels on library services to women's studies, on feminist publishing, and on development of networks to acquire...
and to preserve feminist literature. We formed a Librarians' Task Force to coordinate our program proposals for next year's NWSA Convention, to develop a voice for our concerns within NWSA, to sponsor projects relating to the development of reference sources about women, and to work with the feminist caucus of the American Library Association.

NWSA provided an important forum for feminist educators to debate, explore, synthesize, and shape new ideas about women—a process in which librarians were actively involved.

Linda Parker is Women's Studies Librarian-at-Large for the University of Wisconsin System.

Problems and Pleasures of PreK-12 Involvement in NWSA: A Report after the 1980 Convention

By Martha Schultz

Women's studies is the educational strategy of a breakthrough in consciousness and knowledge. The uniqueness of women's studies has been its refusal to accept sterile divisions between academy and community, between the growth of the mind and the health of the body, between intellect and passion, between the individual and society. Women's studies, then, is equipping women not only to enter society as whole and productive human beings, but to transform it. . . .

The National Women's Studies Association actively supports and promotes feminist education, and supports all feminists involved in that effort, at every educational level and in every educational setting.

—From the NWSA Constitution

The divisions or hierarchies NWSA members refuse to accept on principle still affect us as individuals. Consider the hated hierarchy at a PreK-12 Caucus meeting at the National Convention. Several women in the dorm lounge are faculty members in schools of education—education, that least prestigious of academic disciplines: still, they conduct research, publish, and are aware that they teach women's studies. Then there are project directors who write curriculum, or coordinate inservice training activities, or publish newsletters. Frequently they are paid with grant money administered by agencies whose representatives attend the Convention but are conspicuously absent from Caucus sessions. Then there are Title IX coordinators in individual school districts, discipline-oriented secondary teachers, and finally, at the bottom of the pyramid, the women who work every day in elementary or primary classrooms.

The hierarchy becomes palpable when an elementary teacher suggests that secondary teachers might not be representative of all teachers, or when someone asks for a show of hands—"How many of us really teach preK-12?" We are about 20 people at a Convention of about 1,500, seated in a nonhierarchical circle.

The existence of this hierarchy is what I see as the central problem of preK-12 involvement in NWSA; our effort as a group to break through the hierarchy provides the pleasure.

Because of these "sterile divisions" I have described, we feel inadequate and isolated. Why don't we read more, organize more effectively in our own schools and in our professional associations? Why don't we publish more, be more scholarly? Because we seldom name our activities "women's studies," many of us feel that we are on the edge of the Association's concerns. Some of us are new to feminism and transform what "politically correct" means only after some embarrassment. If these problems weaken those of us who manage to attend a National Convention, they probably keep many teachers of "nonsexist education" and creators of "sex-fair" curriculum away from NWSA altogether.

As the Preamble to the NWSA Constitution affirms, however, our business is to break through these divisions. It is easy to document such efforts at the national level. First, we have a Caucus. This means we have a visible position in Association governance and in Convention planning. It also means that we have a place to meet where no one asks, "What college are you from?" If space in the Women's Studies Newsletter were representative of grassroots involvement, preK-12 teachers would be a major force in the Association. Every issue I have seen gives us recognition of some kind.

Within the Caucus, a few hardworking individuals have taken on the responsibility of promoting feminist preK-12 education and supporting feminists involved in that effort. The Caucus mailing list after the Founding Convention in San Francisco consisted of only 36 names. At the 1979 Convention, 15 people attended Caucus meetings. This year the group was slightly larger and more visible, partly because of the implementation of two 1979 resolutions: one, that academic credit be available to encourage the participation of preK-12 teachers and counselors; and a second, that special efforts be made to involve teachers who work near the Convention site.

Patti Lather, one of the coordinators of the project that arranged for graduate credit, reported that 145 people requested information about credit options. Among the 14 persons who registered for graduate credit in elementary or secondary education from the IU School of Education, 12 were recipients of grants made available through the Lilly Foundation.

Because an individual teacher would have to spend considerable energy convincing her principal and superintendent that she should be given release time and financial support to attend a women's studies national convention, these Indiana secondary and primary school teachers were awarded scholarships to attend the Convention. Recipients were selected on the basis of their commitment to and interest in women's studies.

Scholarship winners Sherry Henson, Pat Villas, and Mary Paul also participated in