Cara Goldberg, a Psychology honors student and a Women’s Studies minor, gave the graduation address at the October 2001 convocation. Here are a selection of her comments to the graduating class:

As our class prepares to join the ranks of over 68,000 SFU Alumni, let us reflect upon how far we’ve come since first wandering the maze-like corridors of the AQ… Each student has come to university from a unique background and has different aspirations upon completion. For some, the degree is just a beginning, to be followed by many more years in school. For others, it symbolizes a final release from formal education. Some of us are entering the workforce for the first time; whereas others have never left it… Indeed, we are a diverse graduating class.

But today we celebrate our common experiences together. We shared those caffeine-filled all-nighters, in which we crammed volumes of information into our heads, or, alternately, tried to articulate our thoughts onto ominously empty word documents. We also shared the intense relief of polishing off that last chapter just before the exam or of printing off that 15-page masterpiece five minutes before it was due. We shared the temptation to skip those afternoon classes when the sun shone on the grass and the steps, or when our friends begged us to

Cara Goldberg

Theresa Cowan Wins Robert C. Brown Award

Theresa Cowan graduated with a joint major in English and Women’s Studies in June and was the recipient of the Robert C. Brown Award. This award is given to a student in the Faculty of Arts who has completed at least 60 credit hours and who has “demonstrated a combination of outstanding academic achievement and outstanding performance or leadership in another endeavour at Simon Fraser. This may be in athletics, in service to the University, or in representing the University to the community at large”.

Theresa Cowan had an outstanding record of academic performance at SFU. She graduated with a CGPA of 3.92, held an SFU scholarship, and was on the Honour Roll for several semesters. One of her Women’s Studies instructors, Marusya Bociurkiw, who taught Theresa in both a lower and an upper level course described her as a student who “did a great deal to deepen class discussion, both from a social and a theoretical perspective. She provided students with a model of integrated feminist, queer, class and race politics embedded in theoretical practise, and did so with a great deal of wit and sophistication”.

...continued p. 2

Helen Leung New Faculty in Women’s Studies

The faculty, staff, and students in Women’s Studies are delighted to welcome Dr. Helen Hok-Sze Leung to the department. Dr. Leung received her BA in English Language and Literature from Oxford and her MA and PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. After completing her PhD in 1999, Dr. Leung returned to Vancouver to take up an Izak Walton Killam Postdoctoral Fellowship in Asian Studies at UBC. Dr. Leung’s doctoral thesis, “Bordering on the Impossible: Articulations of Community in Contemporary ‘Third World’ Fiction and Films” explored Chinese and African fiction and film. She has expertise in Hong Kong cinema and has explored queer, bicultural, and transgendered images in Hong Kong cinema in several of her publications. She has taught courses on Queer Theory, Chinese Literature, English Composition, Art History, and Women’s Studies. In addition to her research and teaching, Dr. Leung has organized conferences including Intersecting Asian Sexualities at UBC in April 2002, is on the advisory board of Third Space: Feminist Graduate Journal, was the Coordinator of the Comparative Literature Students’ Association at the University of Wisconsin, and has done volunteer work with Monsoon (Organization of Asian Lesbian & Bisexual Women of Vancouver) and ASIA (Asian Society for the Intervention of AIDS). We welcome Dr. Leung and look forward to working with her and benefiting from the many research, teaching, and service contributions she will make to Women’s Studies and to the SFU community over the coming years.

Helen Leung

Theresa Cowan

...continued p. 2
...continued from p. 1 — Cara Goldberg

stay for another round at the pub. We shared the satisfaction of expressing our views and gaining valuable feedback from our peers. We shared those truly insightful classes, the ones that stuck with us, leading to stimulating conversation and debate that continued long after we'd left the lecture hall or seminar room.

Although SFU is host to amazingly picturesque views, as well as a network of fabulous hiking and biking trails, we often hear that its architectural motif of grey concrete, combined with Vancouver's winter rain, breeds apathy. However, many of today's graduates forged through this fog to seek out and create pockets of energy on campus. We attended performances put on the Contemporary Arts students. We organized and rallied around a variety of social issues. We stole cafeteria trays and played in the snow. We worked out at the gym and cheered on the Clan. We lived in residence. We ate vegetarian lunches in the Forum Chambers. We contributed to the Peak and other campus publications. We assembled at pub nights. We got involved in dozens of different clubs, associations, and special interest groups.

Together we survived the bus strike, which began conveniently during April exams and lasted the whole summer semester. In fact, in a circumstance that threatened to strand thousands of bus-dependent students, we demonstrated our resourcefulness. On-line message boards were erected, where hundreds of students, faculty, and staff requested and offered rides. Class car pools were created. Motorists stopped to pick up hitch-hikers. To our credit, if the rides got from the bottom of the hill are at all representative, the impromptu transit system that emerged during the strike provided friendlier and more efficient service than Translink at its best. This situation exemplifies how, when it really mattered, despite our many differences, we pulled together as a community to help one another out. All in all we have much to be proud of.

Soon this ceremony will be over and we will disperse to continue our separate celebrations. As we leave here today, degrees in hand, SFU's motto reassures us that we are prepared to move on to the next stages of our lives. It is finally time to put all that theory into practice. Let's hope that we are ready, que nous sommes prêts.

...continued from p. 1 — Theresa Cowan

In addition to excellent performance in her classes, she engaged in a number of academic endeavours while at SFU. In June 2001 she won the Jane Austen Society Undergraduate Essay Award. She had an outstanding set of publications for an undergraduate, including one academic peer-reviewed publication, a conference paper, and a number of creative works including short stories, poetry, and chapbooks. In addition she did a number of spoken word performances, and curated several others. She served as a Research Assistant for two different professors in the English Department. She has accepted and plans to pursue graduate work at the University of Alberta.

In addition to her most impressive academic record, Theresa Cowan showed outstanding performance and leadership abilities at SFU. Her contributions to CSJF spanned a number of semesters. She was the producer and producer for two ongoing shows: Speak and Destroy: Politics and Art, and the b-hive: art that people talk about. In addition she also worked on programming and production for a number of special programs including those for International Women's Day, Gay Pride, Black History Month, Prisoner Justice Day, December 6, and Asian Heritage Month. These contributions represent an ongoing commitment to the SFU student community through which she and others were able to share their ideas and their creative work.

Through this work as a radio producer, she provided the space where artists and academics could come together to listen to each other, exchange ideas, learn from each other's work, and create links between the intellectual and creative communities.

In addition to her work with CSJF she participated in Speaking Out Against the War: Poets in Action, a spoken word performance sponsored by SFPRDG, the SFU Women's Centre, and Out On Campus. She also taught a Performance and Public Speaking Workshop for the Women's Centre at SFU. Many of her other spoken word performances and curatorial work in the larger community have reached people associated with SFU, and more important, have served to connect Simon Fraser University to the larger community.

Message from the Chair
Meredith Kimball

Welcome to the third issue of the SFU Women's Studies Newsletter. We are using the newsletter as a form of an "annual review" to celebrate the many activities and accomplishments of the students, faculty, and staff in the department. The events reported in this issue of the newsletter occurred between the summer of 2001 and the summer of 2002. And what a year it was! We were very busy with many activities and new initiatives. We hired both a new junior tenured faculty member, Helen Leung, and a new Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor (RWWW), Sue Wilkinson. Feature stories about both of the new faculty are included in this newsletter.

Another very big event was our external review that was very successful, and lots of work on the part of members of the department and the reviewers. In addition there were many community events throughout the year including a continuation of the very successful Writers' Series, the Poetry Matters Workshop, and the Bowen Island Retreat. Articles in this newsletter cover these events and many others related to the research, teaching, administrative, and public service activities of faculty, staff, and students in the department.

The Women's Studies program was approved by Senate in July of 1975 and the first undergraduate course was offered in January of 1976. In 1985 an MA program was established. In the early 1990s several joint majors were established, and in 1995 a major in Women's Studies was established. As you will see in this newsletter we are developing two new curriculum initiatives. The first is a minor in Gender Studies which will be based in the department and draw courses from several departments. We hope to start offering this degree in September 2003. The second is a PhD in Women's Studies. The first students should enter this program in September 2003.
The department has grown over the years and now includes eight faculty, four of whom hold joint appointments with other departments; the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor; eight Associate Faculty; and two staff positions. In addition, a number of people teach sessional courses for the department each year. Over 300 students have graduated with undergraduate majors or minors in Women's Studies and 40 students have received MA degrees in Women's Studies.

We are proud of our many accomplishments and hope that you will find much that is of interest to you throughout the newsletter. We always welcome comments and questions. You can contact me either by phone (604-291-5526), Fax (604-291-5518), or e-mail (kimball@sfu.ca). For general information about the department consult our web page (www.sfu.ca/womens-studies) or call the general office (604-291-3333).

Women's Studies Staff
Running the Department

The staff in Women's Studies are the people who both keep the department running efficiently and are two of the people you are most likely to talk to or meet if you call or come to the department. Billie Korsstrom, the Departmental Assistant, manages the budgets for the department and the Ruth Wynn Woodward endowment, advises Women's Studies majors, joint-majors, and minors about their program requirements, works with the Undergraduate Chair on curriculum design and revisions, and provides organizational support for all of our community events. Christine Goodman, the Receptionist/Department Secretary/Chair's Secretary and Graduate Secretary, handles inquiries about the department, keeps departmental files, designs posters for public events, processes book orders, outlines, and library reserves for all undergraduate and graduate courses, and works with the Graduate Chair and graduate students to ensure their successful progress through the MA program.

How To Find Us

Interested in more information about Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University? You can visit us on the web at http://www.sfu.ca/womens-studies. If you're on campus you can come to our offices on the fifth floor of the AQ (directly above the East Concourse Cafeteria), the main office is AQ 5102A. Our FAX number is 604-291-5518 and you can reach us by phone at 604-291-3333. You can write to us the old fashioned way at Women's Studies Department, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6. We have a brochure describing all the activities of the department, and more detailed booklets describing undergraduate and graduate programs which can be sent on request.

Congratulations to...

Jillian Deri who received the Anne Peters Pinto Graduate Scholarship.

Karlene Faith who was awarded one of three Dean's Medals in the Faculty of Arts in recognition of academic excellence in teaching, research and service.

Rachel Hurst who received an SFU Graduate Fellowship and the National Council of Jewish Women Graduate Scholarship.

Christa Ovenell who received the Evelyn Lett Scholarship and the Saturn Canada 2001 Commitment to Excellence Scholarship.

Noel Patten who received an SFU Graduate Fellowship.

Angela Thachuk who received an SFU Graduate Fellowship.

Ingrid Vander Kloet, who won the C.D. Nelson Entrance Scholarship and the Grace McInnis Entrance Award.

Baharak Yousefi who received the Maggie Benston Memorial Graduate Bursary

Women's Studies' External Review

Review Committee 1 to r. Roxana Ng, Pat Armstrong, Steve McBride, & Shree Muley

Periodically every department at SFU is reviewed by a team of academics from other universities, who examine the research, teaching, and service activities of the department. The first review of the Women's Studies Department was held in 1994-1995. Our second review occurred last year. In preparation for the review the department prepared an Internal Report that reviewed our accomplishments and examined areas where change might be desirable. We also conducted two studies to gain student input to the Internal Report. The first was a survey that was distributed to all undergraduate classes in January 2002. This allowed us to get a broad representation of opinion from current WS students. In order to gain more in depth information from students, we also conducted a focus group study with a smaller number of WS students who volunteered to engage in group discussions about the curriculum and teaching in Women's Studies. Amy Skinner, a WS MA student, conducted the focus group study. The results of both of these studies appear in this Newsletter in the Undergraduate News section. The final Internal Report contained information on the history of the department, governance structures, resources, the Ruth Wynn Woodward Profeshon, faculty including sessional instructors, staff, students, undergraduate and graduate programs, research and grants, service to the SFU and wider community, and future directions for the department. The short history of the department that introduced the Internal Report also appears as a story in this Newsletter.

After the Internal Report was finished it was sent to the reviewers. Dr. Shree Muley from McGill University served as the Chair of the Review Committee. Other members were Dr. Pat Armstrong of York University and Dr. Roxana Ng of the Ontario Institute for Studies.
in Education. Dr. Steve McBride of the SFU Political Science Department served as the internal member of the committee. The reviewers read the Internal Report and other information sent to them by the university before they came for their visit. The actual review was held May 15, 16, and 17, 2002. These were busy days, especially for the reviewers. After meeting with SFU administrators, they attended a luncheon meeting with the whole department. Following this, they met with groups and individuals including faculty, undergraduate students, graduate students, sessional instructors, associate faculty, staff, librarians, and the co-op coordinator.

After the site visit was completed, the reviewers met and discussed what they had learned and in July 2002 submitted their report including 20 recommendations for consideration by the department. Overall, the report was very positive about the department. It begins by saying "Overall, based on our knowledge of Women’s Studies in Canadian universities, we would rank the Women’s Studies Department at Simon Fraser University amongst the best in terms of the quality of its programs, research output, the governance structure, and collegiality amongst faculty members". The recommendations concerned the undergraduate program, the graduate program, academic research, community outreach, academic renewal, library resources, and staffing issues. In the fall of 2002 the department will meet to discuss the report. Based on this discussion the department will prepare a response that will be forwarded along with comments from the Dean of Arts to the Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP). SCUP will then present its recommendations to Senate.

Bociurkiw Film Launched

Marusya Bociurkiw’s film, Unspoken Territory, (Moving Images Distribution (mailbox@movingimages.ca) was launched at the Western Front in November 2001. The film depicts the ‘lost’, unspoken moments in Canadian history, told through the stories of First Nations, Immigrant and Quebecois women. The film goes back to the days of Chinese railway workers; the desolate setting of a Ukrainian internment camp in 1915; the shock of a Japanese woman learning of her father’s internment only after his death. Combining documentary, dramatic re-enactment and animation, this film uses a lyrical approach in its questioning of ‘official’ Canadian history and the seamless narratives of archived information. Poetic interludes, spoken over landscapes shot from moving cars and trains, demand an honest recounting of history, via ancestral voices and family conversations. SFU owns a copy of Unspoken Territory. Marusya is completing her PhD at UBC and has taught many WS courses as a sessional instructor at SFU.

Olena Hankivsky Joins Department

Dr. Olena Hankivsky has joined SFU as the Faculty of Arts Research Grants Facilitator with an appointment as an Adjunct Faculty member in both Women’s Studies and Political Science. Dr. Hankivsky has a PhD in Political Science from the University of Western Ontario and holds a post-doctoral fellowship in Political Science at UBC before coming to SFU. She is currently a Research Associate with the BC Centre for Excellence for Women’s Health and has been a Research Associate with the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. She has conducted research and published analyses of sexual harassment against women in sport, the economic costs of sexual abuse and violence against women, women’s health, social justice and gender equity. She currently has two major grants, one with Status of Women Canada, “Trade Agreements and Women’s Health”, and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, “Assessing the Therapeutic Aspects of Redress for Institutional Abuse Survivors in Canada”. She has taught courses in public policy, political philosophy and political ideologies, social policy with an emphasis on health policy, and quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

Meredith Kimball

In the summer of 2001 both of my parents died. Altogether I made four trips back to Hastings, Nebraska where I was born and raised to visit my parents and to attend each of their memorial services. This picture was taken in the late afternoon on a spring day in the cemetery where they are both buried. I am always attracted to perspective which to some extent comes from growing up in flat country where any parallel lines converge in the distance. Here the two converging lines of trees and the contrast of light and dark appealed to me. In my imagination I would like my parents, especially my mother who loved trees, to have experienced something like this when they left this life for whatever lies beyond.

Each year the SFU Art Gallery sponsors a show by SFU faculty, staff, and students. Meredith Kimball’s photo, The Light at the End of the Tunnel was selected to be in the 2001 Photography Exhibit.

Roksana Bahramitash Post-doctoral Fellow in Women’s Studies

During last year Dr. Roksana Bahramitash was a post-doctoral fellow in Women’s Studies. She worked on Dr. Marjorie Cohen’s MCRI grant, Neo-Liberal Globalism and Its Challengers: Sustainability in the semi-periphery. Dr. Bahramitash received her degree in sociology from McGill University. She has taught a number of Women’s Studies courses including Gender and Environment, Women in

Women’s Studies 103
Special Topics: Thinking About Gender
Spring 2003

Note: This course is equivalent to Gender Studies 200 which will be offered for the first time in 2003-2004. It can be applied to either a Women’s Studies minor, major or joint major or to the Gender Studies Minor.
The second wave of feminism was accompanied by the development of feminist theory and research on women. By 1970 a number of SFU students and faculty were becoming interested in establishing a Women's Studies program at the university. In fall 1971, SFU's first course with a focus on women was offered as Geography 404: The Geography of Gender, and was team-taught by Margaret Benston, Pat Davitt, Wendy Eliot-Hurst, Bob Horsfall and Andrea Lebowitz. In 1972 and 1975 further non-credit courses were offered through Continuing Education at SFU.

Bolstered by the enthusiastic response to and high enrollments in these credit and non-credit courses, students, staff, and faculty who became the founding committee for Women's Studies conducted a survey among SFU students and researched existing WS programs throughout North America. The responses of the 209 students who took the time to fill out the survey indicated significant support for the program. Although there were numerous examples of Women's Studies programs being developed in American universities since the late 1960s, Simon Fraser was among the first Canadian universities to develop a program. The proposal for a WS program at SFU, completed in July 1974, was written by Margaret Benston, Cindy Cole (Kligore), Sara David, Wendy Eliot-Hurst, Jamilla Ismail, Dana Janssen, Andrea Lebowitz, Honorée Newcombe, Bertie Rush, and Marilyn Webb. After two years of development and long negotiations with Senate committees, it was approved by Senate on July 7, 1975. In January 1976, the first WS Minor course was offered. This course, WS 100: Introduction to Women's Studies, was taught by Anita Fellman and enrolled 40 students. Twenty-six years later in January 2002, there were 302 students enrolled in 12 courses in WS at SFU.

The WS Minor was the first undergraduate credential offered. Other curricular developments have been added in response to student demand and as faculty and staff resources became available. The first major development was the MA program in WS. In the early 1980s the department decided to develop a graduate MA program rather than an undergraduate major because of limited resources. An MA program allowed faculty to combine research interests with graduate instruction. Work on the MA proposal began in 1981 and the first students enrolled in January 1985. The other major development in the 1980s was the establishment of the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professorship (RWWP). In 1985 SFU received one of the five $500,000 grants from the Women's Program, Secretary of State to establish an endowed chair in Women's Studies. In the fall of 1985 the first appointment to the endowed chair was made, and by 1987 the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professorship became the first fully funded ($1,000,000) endowed chair at SFU.

Since 1990 there has been a rapid expansion of undergraduate and graduate programs. In 1990, the certificate program in WS was established. In preparation for a major and in response to student demand, two joint majors were established, one with English in 1991 and one with Psychology in 1992. The curriculum revisions necessary for the establishment of a full WS major were also completed. In December 1994 Senate passed the proposal for an undergraduate major in WS, and the first students enrolled in September 1995. Five other joint majors have been added to the curriculum since 1995: joint majors with Political Science and Sociology/Anthropology in 1997, and joint majors with Criminology, History, and Humanities in 2001. The most recent curriculum development is the proposal for the Gender Studies Minor to be administered by the department. We hope to have this in place by September 2003. At the graduate level the course-based MA was proposed in 1999 and the first students were admitted in September 2000. Currently a proposal for a PhD is in the process of being approved and hopefully the first students will enter the Ph.D. program in WS in September 2003.

The growth of faculty and staff has provided the necessary resources to develop Women's Studies from a small program to the highly visible department that it is today, both at SFU and in the wider academic and feminist community. In the beginning the decision was made that all tenure track faculty positions would be joint appointments with other departments. Meredith Kimball (WS and Psychology) was the first permanent WS appointment in 1976. In 1977 Mary Lynn Stewart (WS and History) and Sue Wencill (WS and Philosophy) were appointed. The early 1980s saw a significant growth in faculty. Veronica Strong-Boag (WS and History) was appointed in 1980, Kaja Silverman (WS and Centre for the Arts) in 1981, and Margaret Benston (WS and Computing Science) in 1982. At this point the financial recession made further appointments impossible. However, in 1988 when Kaja Silverman...
UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

Undergraduate News
Mary Lynn Stewart
Undergraduate Chair

In 2001-2002, the Undergraduate Studies Committee focused on making two related changes: introducing the introductory course for a proposed Gender Studies Major and preparing a Full Proposal for a Minor in Gender Studies.

Our new tenure-track colleague, Helen Leung, drafted an outline and syllabus for an engaging course entitled “Thinking About Gender,” which was subsequently approved by the Library and by the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee. Incidentally, the Library report found that Simon Fraser University Library had one of the best collections on gender in comparably-sized university libraries in Canada and Curriculum Committee members expressed interest in the new course and especially one assigned book, Debbie Norkin, ed., Flying Cups and Saucers: Gender Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy (Edgewood, 1999). The new course proposal goes to Senate for approval in 2002-3 and the short description should be included in the university calendar for 2003-2004.

Over the fall and winter of 2001-2002, the Letter of Intent for a Minor in Gender Studies was considered and approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning, colleges and universities throughout the province, and the University Council. In the spring of 2002, Mary Lynn wrote a draft Full Proposal for a Minor in Gender Studies and the Department approved the Proposal. This document then went to the subcommittee of the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee that vets new programs, which asked for a few revisions to clarify how some of the courses in other departments incorporated gender into courses approved for the Gender Studies Minor. With these revisions, the document was approved by the Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee (FACC) at its July meeting. We are very grateful to Ann Travers of Sociology and other members of the FACC who were very helpful in the approval process. In the fall of 2002, the proposal will go to Senate for final approval, and the Minor should be included in the 2003-2004 calendar.

Compared to previous efforts to introduce new programs associated with Women's Studies, there was little controversy at any stage of the review process. The most significant criticism, which was made by two representatives of other universities and one member of the Curriculum Committee, was a friendly one. These colleagues worried that the Minor might be perceived as, or actually be, a first step toward replacing Women’s Studies with Gender Studies. The Full Proposal specifically addressed their concern by noting that, unlike some Women's Studies Programs that had chosen to become Gender Studies in the early 1990s, the Women's Studies Department at Simon Fraser University was a well-established entity with a major, a masters program, and many minor options, and that the Department had no intention to become a Gender Studies program. However, it is worth keeping the warning, especially about perceptions, in mind in the years to come.

Congratulations to Women’s Studies Graduates

The following students convocated in October 2001 and June 2002 with degrees in Women’s Studies.

Women’s Studies Major
Christina Barrett, Kelly Ferguson, Shiraz Ramji, Dianne Reedsman, Rachel Rees, Christina Savage, Laura Schechter, and Sarah Turnbull

Women's Studies Minor
Shani Danzig, Cara Goldberg, Michelle Grady, Marie-Claude Lacome, Bindy Kang, Krista Koochin, Bonnie Murray and Julie Thorsen

Women’s Studies Coop Student Works at Transition Housing Society

Christine Hutchins, a Women’s Studies major with an extended minor in French, completed her first Co-op work term during the summer semester 2002. She worked as the Receptionist/Archivist at the Ishtar Transition Housing Society (ITHS). ITHS is a non-profit organization that provides counseling, support, and safe accommodation for women and their children who are experiencing or have experienced abuse. Named after an Assyrian goddess who symbolized love and fertility, Ishtar was established in 1973, the first transition house in British Columbia. Currently ITHS runs two different transition houses with 22 beds in total, and offers a variety of counseling services including individual and group counseling, educational information, and employment counseling. Each summer ITHS usually has a number of student career placements available including Receptionist/Archivist, Childcare Worker, and Childcare Worker/Support Worker.

During her placement at ITHS, Christine engaged in a wide range of activities as Receptionist/Archivist with the organization. She attended meetings; processed donations, gift certificates, and bank deposits; performed basic clerical duties; created memos, flyers, pamphlets, and signs; updated the ITHS's scrapbooks, read old newsletters, visited transition houses, and learned about abuse; and helped clients on the phone and in person. Reflecting on her experience, Christine says “Working for this organization gave me the opportunity to apply my knowledge and skills. As a result I gained valuable work experience.
working for this organization which deals specifically with abuse. The combination of both inside and outside the classroom exposure to abuse has lead to a greater understanding.”

Christine Hutchins, WS Co-op student and colleagues at ITHS. L to r: Rana Androusek, Jacquelin Malbour, Sherry Baker, and Christine

Women’s Studies and Arts Co-op
Caroline Rose

The Ministry of Children and Families, UBC Hospital, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services, Anti-racism and Multiculturalism Unit - these are just some of the employers who hired Arts Co-op students this fall. These employers were looking for students with a well-rounded education in the social sciences, research and writing skills, and an ability to see things from a unique perspective - all the qualities that come from majoring in Women’s Studies and the reason why we need more students from this department. The number of Women’s Studies Majors in Arts Co-op is slowly increasing, but they are still far outnumbered by other departments like Political Science, Economics and Psychology.

Something new to Co-op: If you are considering Co-op Education you can now begin the application process in your first year of university with the new Bridging on Line (BOL) course. BOL is the first step to applying to Co-op and covers the basic pre-employment curriculum you’ll need for the beginning of your Co-op experience. It is an asynchronous course, which means you can do the course work at anytime of the day or night. It only takes several hours per week to complete the two-week course. For more information please see the Arts Co-op web site at www.sfu.ca/coop/arts or visit us in our new office space - AQ 6046.

words of love
T. L. Covian

tis a poem
about where words go
t when people don’t
want to hear them

an echo,
empty and hollow,

a choked swallow
in the car

when I tell him

my lover
made the biscuit
he is eating

for words
that are heard
and not listened to

Question: I am happy

Answer: We need gas

for words
ignored
in fear and disgust

his face contorts, distorts, isproperty;
imagined, wished for, deliberate

Greatness/

for the poet
ignored
in fear and disgust

he steals away

his youngest daughter;
his little sons and;

wife too

(I love the sinner, hate the sin)

this is a poem
for sinners

“daddy,
i love her”
Christa Ovenell Wins Scholarship

Christa Ovenell, a Women’s Studies minor and English major, has been recognized for achievements as a student and as a volunteer fundraiser. A resident of Bowen Island who has used innovative ideas to raise thousands of dollars for non-profit organizations was one of five Canadian women students to win a Saturn Canada 2001 Commitment to Excellence scholarship. The scholarship recognizes both outstanding achievement and community service. As she puts it “The volunteer work I do is on a very small scale, very close to home. But this sort of an honour proves you don’t have to be moving mountains to be making a real contribution—what is important is to work within whatever community you are connected to”.

WSSU Has an Active Year

The Women’s Studies Student Union (WSSU) was very active this past year. In the fall of 2001 Stephanie Chatterton and Corinne Longworth set up meetings for interested students. In the spring, the WSSU took part in and sponsored several events. They collaborated with the Women’s Centre Collective in putting on Women Speak for International Women’s Day. This event which took place on March 8, 2002 was held in Convocation Mall and consisted of two hours of continuous women’s voices, reading poetry, articles, their own writing, song lyrics, etc. The event was broadcast live on CJSF. Stephanie Chatterton was the student interviewed for the International Women’s Day special in The Peak, “A Day of Our Own: International Women’s Day History and Perspective” by Farah Moosa and Taiga Bilk.

As a part of their focus on women living in poverty in BC and more specifically, how the Liberal budget cuts have affected poor women in this province, the WSSU organized and sponsored a panel discussion on March 13 which was held in Halpern Centre and attracted more than 40 people. There were three speakers, Anti-poverty activists and authors Sheila Baxter and Jean Swanson and BC legal aid and poverty law expert Anne Beveridge each spoke and answered questions from the audience. It was a lively and informative exchange with many questions and a role playing exercise in the aid of generating possible actions for people to take.

Several students took an active part in the WSSU. Deidre Pollard served as Treasurer, Kate Whitehorn served as interim Forum representative and Kate and Stephanie Chatterton were the departmental representatives. The WSSU took part in the departmental external review, attending open events and organizing a group of students to meet with the reviewers when they were here in May.

WSSU always welcomes students who want to be more active in student politics and in the department. All students who are taking a WS degree or WS courses are eligible to belong.

There is one voting representative position on the Women’s Studies Undergraduate Studies Committee and two voting representatives on the Women’s Studies Coordinating Committee, i.e., department meetings. Anyone interested in information about or getting involved with the WSSU please contact Stephanie Chatterton (smchatte@sfu.ca).

Expanded Services in WS Student Computer Lab

We have added a new computer to the WS Computing Lab, so that there are now two up to date computers with internet access and one printer in the lab. It is open during Monday to Friday during the day and available to all WS students, both grads and undergrads. The room is AQ 5101. If you come up and the room is closed, either Billie or Christine can open it for you. There is also a table and this is a good place for small group meetings to work on assignments or other projects. The WSSU lounge is directly across the hall and it is open 24 hours a day.

Women’s Studies Student Survey

Meredith M. Kimball

Questionnaires were distributed to all Women’s Studies classes in January or February 2002. Instructors were asked to either provide class time for students to complete the survey or to distribute the questionnaires to students along with envelopes in which the students could return them either to their instructor or directly to the department. Students in the Distance Education Women’s Studies 101 class received the survey in the mail along with a stamped envelope in which to mail the survey to the department. In all 147 questionnaires were filled out and returned.

This represented 49% of the 302 students registered in Women’s Studies spring 2002. Because some students were registered in more than one course and were asked to complete the survey only once, the actual response rate was somewhat higher. This report was also posted on the WS web site and all instructors were asked to announce to their classes that the report could be found on the web site, thereby making it available to those who did not participate as well as those who did.

Ninety six percent of the respondents were women, four percent were men, and one person checked ‘other’ for gender. Students ranged in age from under 20 to over 50 with the majority (74%) aged 25 or under. Seventy three percent indicated an ethnicity of white, Caucasian, or European. The second highest ethnic group was Asian (14%) which included Chinese, Korean, South Asian, and Filipino. Other reported ethnicities included Jewish (3%), Muslim (3%), First Nations Metis (2%), Black Caribbean (2%), Latina (1%) and Mixed (1%). Even though mixed ethnicity without other qualifiers was a small percentage, many students indicated a mixed background. In particular linking Canadian, European, or Asian with another ethnicity. Of the 128 students who indicated a sexual orientation, most (85%) described themselves as heterosexual or straight. Lesbian was chosen by 6%, bisexual by 5%, Queer by 3% and homosexual by 1%. Similarly of the 136 students who indicated a social class, the majority (74%) described themselves as middle or upper middle class. Twenty two percent percent described themselves as lower, working, or lower-middle class, 1% as student and 2% said none or no class. Of the 123 students who answered the question about disability, 90% said they did not have a disability. Of the 10% who said yes, they often qualified the answer, e.g., "x, but does that count?" or "y, but I don’t let it interfere, so no".

These students had entered SFU from high school, as transfer students from BC colleges or other universities, and as mature students. Of the 141 students who responded to this question, 50% had entered SFU directly from High School, 21% had transferred from a BC college, 14% had transferred from another university, and 15% had entered as mature students. Among the 74 respondents who indicated that they were taking or considering taking a WS major, joint major or minor, 43%... continued p. 24
Women's Studies Focus Group Study
Amy Skinner

After scheduling five focus group sessions for early February 2002, an email was sent to each Women's Studies professor, instructor, and teaching assistant asking them to allow me to come to their classes, explain the study, and ask for volunteers. A brief presentation was made in the WS 102 tutorials, and in 8 of the 10 other undergraduate classes offered in the spring semester. WS 101 (distance education) students were sent an email explaining the process and offering them a chance to participate either in person or by e-mail if they were out of town.

The presentations took place between January 28 and February 1, 2002. Each presentation consisted of a brief explanation of the external review process, the purposes and goals of focus groups within this process, and guidelines of participation. Each student was given a sheet that further explained the focus groups, on the back of which was listed the dates/times of upcoming sessions and space for participants to write their contact information. Students were asked to read both sides, and if they wished to participate, to complete the contact information and indicate the times they were free to come to a focus group. If they wished to participate, but were not free at any of the times indicated, they were told they would be contacted by e-mail. Students who did not wish to participate were asked to leave the form blank. Then students were told to fold the form in half and place it in the envelope provided. A total of 266 students were registered in the 10 courses.

...continued p. 27

Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants and Tutor Markers are an important component of the Women's Studies instructional staff. Both of our first-year courses, Introduction to Women's Issues in Canada and Introduction to Western Feminisms, have tutorials taught by Teaching Assistants. In addition both of these courses are offered by Correspondence and Tutor Markers. These courses are taught by the main contact students have with SFU. During the past year, Megan Bulloch, Claudia Kroehl, Amber Dean, Jillian Deri, Taryn McCormick, Jamie McCough, Amy Skinner, have worked as either Teaching Assistants or Tutor Markers.
Women’s Studies Sessional Instructors

Sessional instructors form an important part of the Women’s Studies’ teaching program. Over the years many people have taught in the department, either bringing an expertise to the Women’s Studies classroom that is not represented among the regular WS faculty, or teaching a regular course when faculty are on leave. The department advertises regularly throughout the year for sessional instructors. The minimal qualification is usually an MA degree and some teaching experience. If you would like to receive our job advertisements, contact the Departmental Assistant, Billie Korstrom (291-3593 or korstrom@sfu.ca). The following courses were taught by sessional instructors between the fall of 2001 and the summer of 2002:

Marusya Bociurkiw, WS 205, Women and Popular Culture; WS 314, Race, Class and Gender Relations; WS 412 Women and Film; and WS 310, Special Topics: Feminism and Art.

Miriam Eguchi WS 207, Introduction to Feminist Theory


Lynne Hissey WS 305, Women and Utopias; and WS 203 Female Roles in Contemporary Society

Rachelle Hole WS 320, Special Topic: Women and Social Work

Gaik Cheng Kho, WS 320, Special Topic: Politics of Dance Musicals

Larissa Petrillo WS 320, Special Topic: Native Women

Pega Ren, WS 301 Special Topic: History of Female Sexualities

Myra Rutherford, WS 304 Women and Religion

Laura Wood, WS 303 Special Topic: Women and the Law

Women’s Studies Orientation

Each fall the department holds an orientation for Women’s Studies students. Usually this is held on the fourth Wednesday in September. In 2001 it was held on September 26 in Halpern Centre. Lunch was provided, information handed out and several people spoke about different aspects of the department including Sue Wendell, Graduate Chair; Mary Lynn Stewart, Undergraduate Chair; Billie Korstrom, Departmental Assistant; Paulette Johnston, Arts Co-op Program; Christine Goodman, Department Receptionist; and Meredith Kimball, Department Chair. About 30 students attended the event. If you are a Women’s Studies student or thinking about taking a Women’s Studies course, you are invited to come to the 2002 orientation to be held Wednesday, October 9 in QA6106, 12:30-2:00. It’s a great chance to meet other students, some of the instructors, WS staff, and, of course, enjoy a free lunch.

Information Evening 2000

On June 3, 2002 the annual SFU Information Evening was held. Information brochures were mailed to students who had been offered admission for 2002-3. Over 1000 students and their parents who attended were able to pick up information and talk with representatives of all SFU departments, faculties, and many other programs as well, such as Co-op. The Women’s Studies table was busy as over 150 people, both students and parents, stopped to visit, ask questions, and/or pick up information about the Women’s Studies department. There were lots of questions and comments including: “Are all the students feminists?” and “This is something I really want to take.” A number of mothers dropped by the WS table to talk, sometimes with their daughters or sons and sometimes not. One mother wanted to know if there were many immigrant women in WS and if she could stop by to pick up information for his daughter because he wanted her to take WS. As in previous years, the two most common questions were: 1) What do you learn in Women’s Studies courses? and 2) What kinds of jobs do Women’s Studies students get? For answers to both of these questions, see some of the articles in this newsletter. A detailed report of a survey of WS graduates was published in last year’s (2000-2001) WS Newsletter. If you would like a copy of last year’s newsletter, you can call the department (604-291-3333) and we will send you a copy of it along with our brochure that describes all our various programs as well as some of the jobs our graduates have taken.

GRADUATE NEWS

GRADUATE NEWS

Sue Wendell, Graduate Chair

This has been another busy year for graduate Women’s Studies. Over the summer of 2001, I met with students in the course intensive MA program to create procedures for the Field Exams, which were then amended and approved by the Graduate Committee. The first four students, Monica Bhutara, Claudia Kroebl, Amy Skinner, and Stacey Smithers passed their Field Exams this year to complete our new course intensive MA program. Claudia and Stacey graduated in October 2001, and Amy in June 2002. Monica will graduate in October 2002.

Seven new students arrived in September, 2001: Megan Bullock, Jillian Deri, Emily Edwards, Rachel Hurst, Amanda Oster, Noel Patten and Baharak Yousefi. They have all completed their first year of graduate study. In this year’s admission process, we offered admission to 16 new students for September, 2002 (not all 16 are coming). One of our newly-admitted students, Ingrid Vander Kloet, won the prestigious C.D. Nelson Entrance Scholarship in a university-wide competition.

As Graduate Chair, I took the proposal for a new PhD in Women’s Studies at SFU to the Faculty of Arts Graduate Studies Committee (where it passed) and the Assessment Committee for New Graduate Programs (where it awaits feedback from external reviewers). We hope to be able to admit students to the PhD program for September, 2003.

This year, graduate students contributed to the External Review of the department and took part in the hiring interviews for our new faculty member, Helen Leung, and our new Ruth Wynn Woodward Chair, Sue Wilkinson.

First Students Graduate from Course-Based MA

This past year saw the first four students complete the course-based MA program. Each student took six courses in WS or other departments and completed two field exams based on two of their WS courses. Congratulations to all of them. The students who completed and the areas of their field exams are:
Monica Bhatara Women of Colour in Canada; Women's Autobiographies, Memoirs and Journals

Claudia Kroehl Psychology of Women; Methodology

Amy Skinner Sexual Economics; Methodology

Stacey Smithers Feminist Literature, Methodology

Little did I expect when I completed my MA that the road would take me to the police station at Main and Hastings. Walking into the police station on my first day of work, armed with a lot of feminist theory and a few episodes of Law and Order, was like travelling to a different dimension. My main activity that first day was also the scariest: to start to build a relationship with my police partner. That is one aspect of policing that television represents with some accuracy: the partnership is the primary unit in police culture. The foundation of my job is a good working relationship with one’s police partner.

I think of that relationship building process in this context as an exercise in “mutual ethnography”. The counsellors in our unit have backgrounds that range from women’s studies to social work to counselling psychology. We partner with police officers whose culture involves a military model of hierarchy, guns, crowd control, and emergency response. One can only imagine the bizarre, animated, often intense and frequently hilarious discussions we have in our office. And what is key about the job is that, in building these relationships, none of us remains unchanged. I now know way more about policing and investigation than I could have ever imagined I would. (I’ve even met a female sniper!) And the police officers in our unit now know a lot more about feminism, social justice, advocacy and counselling than their peers in the rest of the police force. Guns aside, it is one of the visions of our unit that the counsellor and police officer roles would begin to merge so that one is not exactly sure who is the counsellor and who is the cop. Heck, my police partner is even talking about taking a women’s studies course.

Leah Vosko Canada Research Chair at York

Leah Vosko, who received her MA in Women’s Studies from SFU in 1994, is now a Canada Research Chair in the School of Social Sciences (Political Science), Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, York University. After completing her M.A. in Women’s Studies, she did a Ph.D. at York University, a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellowship at the Institute for Research on Women at Rutgers University, and then worked as an Assistant Professor in Labour Studies, Women’s Studies and Political Science at McMaster University. Leah moved to York University in July 2002. She is currently the Principal Investigator of a Community University Research Alliance grant on Contingent Work, involving researchers from three universities, Statistics Canada, several research institutes and eight community groups. She is also a co-investigator on a SSHRC grant project on Workers and Social Cohesion, the director of a Gender and Work Database Project funded by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, and the principal investigator in a research project on the global feminization of employment. Leah is currently writing a book, whose working title is “Rethinking Feminization: Gendered Precariousness and the Crisis in Social Reproduction” and she has just completed an edited collection (with Wallace Clement) entitled Changing Canada: Political Economy as Transformation (McGill Queens, 2002).

From Interdisciplinary Studies To Interdisciplinary Workplace

Jacky Coates

I do not really carry a gun, but my partner does.

You might wonder but, since I graduated from the MA program in Women’s Studies in 1997, I have not been recruited by Charlie’s Angels, nor do I work for organized crime.

For nearly four years, I have worked as a community counsellor in the Domestic Violence Unit, a collaborative partnership between Family Services of Greater Vancouver and the Vancouver Police Department. The Unit consists of three teams, each partnering a counsellor with a police detective constable to provide a specialized follow-up service to abused women. The teams work on the most high-risk cases of domestic violence and with women marginalized by factors such as language barriers, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and substance use, who might otherwise have most difficulty accessing protection through the police and criminal court system. Our model provides intensive emotional and practical support, together with thorough police investigation, with an aim to enhancing and promoting the safety and well-being of women and children.

Amy Skinner (right) and her mother at graduation

Jacky Coates (one with the gun) and her police partner, Alex Clarke
In all there were 37 performers. In addition to Taryn and Amy they included Adriana Buzc, Anna Busch, Lisa Camerio, Nicole Deslauriers, Jasmine Dobranski, Lindsay Drummond, Rebekah Grayston, Stina Hanson, Lesley Howie, Aisling Joe, Tania Jordt, Amy Judd, Tiffany Jung, Bindy Kang, Jennifer La Placa, Jaclyn MacKinnon, Maureen Matsusaka, Jamie McGough, Steph McKinnon, Amelie McLean, Sidney McLean, Ange Muir, Heather Murray, Jane Osborne, Corina Pifay, Melanie Ratard, Lindsay Reels, Colleen Riley, Elena Romero, Laura Roke, Alieka Rudder, Gisele de Silva, Annika Simpson, Kelly White, and Teresa Wood.

The Vagina Monologues performances were part of the V-day campaign to end violence against women and to proclaim Valentine’s Day as the day to celebrate women and demand the end of abuse. This was the fourth year of the V-Day College Initiative that works with colleges and universities around the world to support dramatic productions of The Vagina Monologues.

It turned out that I had applied to work for a new residential program for girls, which was being developed as an alternative to secure custody (jail). I was excited about the new job because in the interview I had disclosed that I was a feminist, a dyke, and a prison abolitionist, so when they still wanted to hire me I felt confident that their commitment to “custody alternatives,” “female empowerment” and “gender-specific programming” was more than just lip-service.

You can imagine my dismay when I discovered on my first day that some of the staff’s idea of “gender-specific programming” boiled down to doing hair, nails, and makeovers! Fortunately, I was put in control of staff training, so I was able to provide a crash course in feminism, and was lucky enough to have the training I developed supported by some fabulous guest speakers from the Justice Institute and other progressive organizations in Vancouver. By the end of the training, the staff team was committed to looking at the ways that a lifetime of oppression on the basis of sex, race, and poverty, not to mention abuse, had contributed to the so-called “inappropriate behavior” exhibited by the young women who were put in our care.

However, it proved impossible to put everything we had learned during the training into practice. Pressure from the program funders (probation officers working for the ministry for Children and Families) conflicted with providing a service to young women that was truly “alternative.” Obviously balancing the demands of funders with a desire to try something new and untested is not easy. However, the balance that was created here involved what I call the “add gender and stir” approach: provide staff training on issues of importance to women and girls, make a commitment (on paper) to programming that addresses girls’ issues, but then impose a basic structure that is oppressive and was designed for male youth in another program run by the same agency. The desire to be allies to the girls was destroyed by rules that required we monitor and/or restrict their phone calls; subject them to constant surveillance (right down to hourly bed checks); force them to follow a daily schedule into which they were offered no input; and wear alarms, keys, and radios at all times, creating an environment not unlike...you guessed, prisons!
Needless to say, the young women resisted these attempts to exert control over all aspects of their daily lives. However, instead of taking this resistance as a sign that we were doing something wrong, it was taken as a sign that even more control and greater surveillance was needed. After six months of trying to turn things around and bring the program into line with what it purported to be on paper, I decided that I could not with conscience continue my work there and resigned. Since that time, the reins of control have been tightened further and there has been at least one slashing and one suicide attempt, as well as several attempts at escape. Sadly, these events are not considered to be signs that the program isn’t working, but are simply explained away as symptoms of the many problems the young women are dealing with.

What’s worse, the young women become further criminalized through charges of “breach of probation” imposed when they try to escape or break program rules in an attempt to regain some sense of control over their daily existences.

While I certainly don’t pretend to hold the magic key that would allow us to really make a difference in the lives of the young women I met through the program, I do know that programs like these are more a part of the problem than a part of the solution. Instead of providing advocates or allies for young women, programs such as these simply create an environment in which the staff and probation officers (who are usually white and usually middle-class) get to dictate how young women should behave, what they should value, and how they should live their lives—an environment in which young women who don’t conform to white, middle-class standards for what is “healthy,” “normal,” or “appropriate” are punished. I had hoped that my Women’s Studies education and critical feminist analysis would be valued in an environment that purported to embrace a model of “female empowerment.” Instead, I learned that it will probably take many more Women’s Studies grads, working collaboratively, to create programs that might offer true alternatives to young women in conflict with the law.

Graduate Student Publications


Deri, Jillian. (2002). Little Gray Boxes. This is My Blood Zine, August. Scarlet Tide Bridget Collective, Simon Fraser University.


Welcome New Graduate Students in Fall, 2002

Kelly Asula, Simon Fraser University
Natasha Patterson, Trent University
Angela Thachuk, University of Alberta
Ingrid Vander Kloet, Brock University (BA), Wilfred Laurier University (MA)
Anna Ziolek, Western University

WS Grad Student Research Forum
Rachel Hurst

In May of 2002, the graduate students in Women’s Studies began a weekly research forum in the interests of supporting and sharing each other’s work. This forum was established to address a common concern held particularly by students who were in the thesis writing stage of their degree, but also students in the course intensive option. While thesis students enjoyed the experience of doing research independently, many felt they were working within a vacuum as they had finished their coursework and were not in regular contact with their peers. Course option students expressed a desire to share final research papers of their courses because these papers were often only read by themselves and the course director. We felt that a significant part of a graduate student’s learning came from exchanging work with other students, and with that intention we began this forum.

In the 2002-2003 academic year, we hope to extend our research forum to all Simon Fraser University students who are pursuing feminist research in an effort to make connections with other feminist scholars. We also hope to organize a panel devoted to Women’s Studies graduate research at the university, with the goal of gaining more experience presenting our research and increasing visibility of the Women’s Studies department. For more information regarding our meeting times, please contact Rachel at rahurst@sfu.ca.
Housing Society for Women whose 20 year effort to build housing for women in the Downtown Eastside culminated in the opening of apartments, Bridge Housing for Women a year ago. They hope to construct more housing for needy women in the future.

**Marilyn MacDonald:** I am finishing the second phase of a study of the incorporation of feminist critiques of science into the teaching, research and community service activities of faculty in Canadian universities (phase 1, Women’s Studies; Phase 2, Natural and Applied Sciences). I am also collaborating with Ruby Heap to organize a WS and Science and Engineering portion of an international conference of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) (Ottawa, 2002); and writing a chapter for a book on women and science and engineering (eds. Ruby Heap, Monique Frize). I am continuing the development of a course on “In whose image? gender and creativity in feminist critiques of science and religion, as explored in women’s science fiction”, and an ecological critique of ecofeminist theory.

**Mary Lynn Stewart:** This summer, I revised a paper entitled “Fabric and Femininity” on how ultra-feminine fabrics were used to alleviate the anxieties aroused by the allegedly masculine straight lines and trousers of interwar ladies fashion and submitted it to the Textile History Journal. I am still revising a paper on haute couture designers’ responses to illegal copying of their designs in the interwar, which I now link to a larger process of democratization of fashion in the period between the two world wars. In addition, I am beginning to read and research a paper tentatively entitled “Reading Fashion Magazines in France” which I will present in the Print Culture series in the spring of 2003. Otherwise, I have been busy writing major grant applications so that I can complete the research for and write my book, now tentatively entitled Fashioning Meaning: Dressing Modern Frenchwomen, 1919-1939.

**Jackie Levitin:** On a SSHRC grant, I have been working with a group of researchers (all women) on the topic of women’s health and its relationship to housing in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. My particular participation has been as a videographer, and since I thought the women of the Downtown Eastside had received more than their share of video scrutiny, I thought I’d put the camera in their hands. I taught a video workshop at the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre last summer, and this year I am writing, producing, and directing a video (Bridge Housing for Women) about the efforts of the Bridge

**Habiba Zaman:** My current research interest focuses on immigrant women/women of colour in Canada as the central point in my analysis while exploring the role of globalization on women’s migration, labour rights, especially women workers’ rights, and women’s mobilization against multi-layered globalization ranging from economic to military forms.

**Building Bridges Between WS and the Natural and Applied Sciences**

Marilyn MacDonald

In her 1986 book (The Science Question in Feminism) on what would become feminist science studies, Sandra Harding suggested that two questions have been asked in this relatively new field. The first was the “woman question in science” - what have been women’s past roles in science, and how can future participation be more effectively supported? The second was the “science question in feminism” - can something as embedded in patriarchal capitalism as modern industrial science ever be safely a part of social justice? All too often, the answers to those questions have seemed to come from two deeply-divided and mutually antagonistic groups. Certainly, only 6 years later, in 1992, Anne Fausto-Sterling led a discussion, to which Sandra Harding, Ruth Hubbard, Nancy Tuana, and Sue Rosser contributed (in the National Women’s Studies Association Journal, Vol. 4 Fall), on ways to bridge these two solitudes. And in 1997, when the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) funded five Chairs on Women in Science and Engineering, to investigate ways
to increase women’s involvement, neither the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council nor the approximately 35 Women’s Studies programs at Canadian universities participated significantly. Yet, by the time that this 5-year NSERC project was drawing to a close, there was some evidence of a beginning dialogue.

From July 27th to 31st, 2002, the 12th International Conference of Women Engineers and Scientists (ICWES 12) was held in Ottawa, largely through the efforts of two of the NSERC Chairs, Dr. Monique Frieze and Dr. Claire Deschesnes. It was held in conjunction with the 9th Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science and Technology, whose president, Hiromi Matsumi, is responsible for affirmative action initiatives for the Applied Sciences Faculty at SFU. About 600 people attended the conference, which covered a wide range of topics including climate change, affirmative action, career development, ethics and science, women’s health, and many more.

For the first time in the history of the Conference, it was agreed by conference organizers that a full-day session would be held on/over Women’s Studies. This was to be organized by Dr. Ruby Heap (who had worked with Monique Frieze on a history of women in science and engineering in Canada). In 2000, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Heap at the University of Ottawa, through a Bank of Montreal Visiting Scholar award, to develop an introductory gender and science course (for the Faculties of Engineering and Science), and also to help in the organization of the WS session for ICWES12. In its final format, the WS session began with a keynote address by Dr. Sue Rosser, who talked about the usefulness of feminist lenses as analytical tools for change in science and engineering. There were two sessions of contributed papers, by people working for social change in/through science and engineering. Finally, there was a panel on building bridges between WS and the natural, applied and health sciences that was partially supported by a grant from the Institute for Health Research and Education and the VP Research Office at SFU. If one idea seemed to summarize the discussions of these sessions, it is that we need a much more coordinated effort, if ever we hope for environmental health and the full participation and well-being of women scientists.

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Faculty Research Grants

**Marjorie Griffin Cohen and Habiba Zaman** are involved in a 5-year, $1.4 million dollar Major Collaborative Research Initiative (MCRI) grant which focuses on a multi-nation research project, *Neo-Liberal Globalism and Its Challengers: Sustainability in the Semi-periphery*. A total of eighteen researchers from Canada, Mexico, Norway and Australia will work together to develop research projects to examine the economic, ecological, political and social sustainability of globalism. Marjorie will be heading the team on economic and ecological sustainability. Part of the grant will be used to fund the research of graduate students at SFU who will be working on issues related to globalism.

**Jacqueline Levitin** has been working with a team of researchers headed by Dara Culhane, of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at SFU, on a SSHRC Strategic Grant documenting the effects of good and safe housing on the lives of women in the Downtown Eastside. She has completed a video on a joint project involving researchers and women in the Downtown Eastside community, *Summer Mini-Research Project*. Currently she is making *Bridge Housing Society for Women*, a video on the history of this Downtown Eastside group and their accomplishment—building of low cost housing for women in need.

**Marilyn MacDonald** received a grant from the VP Research to investigate the impacts of conceptualizations of "medial model" in professionalization on research, teaching and community service in Women’s Studies and Environmental Studies at Canadian universities. Megan Bulloch and Jilian Deri were research assistants on the grant. Megan did a review of the literature to see how the term ‘medical model’ was used by different disciplines. Jilian reviewed websites for medical schools in terms of core and elective courses, disciplinary fragmentation, and origin stories.

**Mary Lynn Stewart** received a SSHRC Small Grant to continue her research in the archives of the industrial relations board covering the textile and fashion sector in Paris for her book, tentatively entitled “Fashioning Meaning: Dressing Modern Women in Interwar France”.

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Mexico City Conference

In February three members of the Women’s Studies Department took part in the Mexico City Conference on *Challenging Neo-liberal Globalism in the Semi-periphery*. This was a four-day conference and meeting of the Globalism Project. The Globalism Project is a network of researchers from four countries who are working on the issues of globalization for countries on the semi-periphery of world power. These countries are Canada, Mexico, Australia and Norway. The conference was held February 10-21, 2002.

Two members of the SFU Women’s Studies faculty, Habiba Zaman and Marjorie Griffin Cohen, are continuing members of this five-year project and Roksana Bahrami, a post-doctoral student associated with the project, carried out her research this year through the SFU Women’s Studies Department. All three gave papers at the conference, met with Mexican researchers, and participated in the future planning of the project.

The conference itself dealt with a range of issues and relied heavily on the participation of Mexican academics and community activists. One fascinating session given by Mexican activists dealt with two issues: how activists from Canada, Mexico, Norway, and Australia might work together, and how to achieve popular or national sovereignty in the era of neo-liberal globalization. This panel, which occurred on the first day of the conference, set the tone for much of the discussion of the conference itself. Maria Teresa Gutierrez-Haces, an economist at the Autonomous University of Mexico, who has frequently spoken at SFU events, chaired it.

SFU participants gave papers in three different sessions. In a session on the *Commodification of the Commons* Roksana Bahrami gave a paper entitled “Theorising Women, Nature and the Commons in the Semi-Periphery”. The discussant on this paper was Habiba Zaman. Marjorie Griffin Cohen gave a paper entitled “Electrical Deregulation’s Dirt Secret: The Environment” and the discussant was David Schneiderman from the University of Toronto Law Faculty.

In the session on *Strategizing Resistance* Habiba Zaman spoke about “Commodifying Immigrant Female Labourers in Canada: Intersections of Globalization, Migration & De-skilling.” The discussant was Rhonda
Sharp, a feminist economist from the University of South Australia.

In session *Governance Under Globalism* Marjorie Griffin Cohen spoke about “Electricity Deregulation and the General Agreement on Trade in Services.” The discussant was Leticia Campos Aragon, an economist from the Autonomous University of Mexico.

The papers that were presented will be part of edited volumes that will be published by ZED publishers in England.

**Faculty Publications**

Below is a list of some of the publications, conference papers, and talks published and presented by Women’s Studies faculty, associate faculty, and instructors throughout the past year.

**Publications**


**Cohen, Marjorie Griffin.** (2002). *Electricity Deregulation, Privatization and Continental Integration*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

**Cohen, Marjorie Griffin.** (2002). *Public Power and the Political Economy of Electricity Competition: The Case of B.C. Hydro*. Vancouver: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.


**Cohen, Marjorie Griffin.** (2001). *Do Comparisons Between Hospital Support Workers and Hospitality Workers Make Sense?* Vancouver: Health Employees Union.

**Cohen, Marjorie Griffin, Ritchie, L., Swenarchuk, M. & Vosko, L.* (forthcoming).**


**Zaman, Habiba** (forthcoming). Commodifying Im/migrant Female Laborers in Canada: Intersections of Globalization,
Conference Papers and Academic Presentations


Leung, Helen “Transgender Subjectivity and Queer Visuality in Hong Kong Cinema,” Intersecting Asian Sexualities, Asian Centre, University of British Columbia, April, 2002.


Community Talks

Cohen, Marjorie Griffin “The Deregulation of BC Hydro,” International Woodworkers of America, staff local for the BCTF, April, 2002.

Cohen, Marjorie Griffin Main speaker at public meeting on the deregulation of BCH and ICBC, Hotel Vancouver, ‘Hands Off BC Hydro and ICBC,’ March, 2002.

Cohen, Marjorie Griffin Discussion resource person after play, Thirsty, Headlines Theatre, Vancouver, April 4, 2002.

Cohen, Marjorie Griffin Speaker, SFU Student Rally against Tuition Increases, February, 2002.

Cohen, Marjorie Griffin Speaker, BCTF Teacher’s Rally against government cuts – Surrey, Cloverdale Arena , January, 2002.


Cohen, Marjorie Griffin “Comparisons Between the Work of Hospital Support Workers and Similar Work in Hotels,” HEU provincial staff, Vancouver, October, 2001.

Leung, Helen “Queer Expressions in Hong Kong Cinema,” Inside Out, the 12th Toronto Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival, Sexual Diversity Studies, Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association, OISE/University of Toronto, May, 2002.


Karlene Faith Wins Dean’s Medal

Karlene Faith was awarded one of three Dean’s Medals in the Faculty of Arts in recognition of academic excellence in teaching, research, and service. Karlene received her PhD in the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1981. In 1982 she joined SFU Centre for Distance Education and the School of Criminology as the director of the Distance Education Program in Criminology. She moved to the School of Criminology as an Associate Faculty in 1989 and is currently a Professor.

Karlene has an outstanding research record with 10 books, over 30 journal articles and book chapters and many conference presentations. Her most recent books (Madonna: Bowely & Soul, 1997 University of Toronto Press; and The Long Prison Journey of Leslie Van Houten: Life Beyond the Cult, 2001, Northeastern University Press) focus on issues of social justice for women in prisons and the social construction of “bad” girls and women. These two topics are the focus of much of her work.

As a teacher, Karlene has taught an impressive range of courses. Some of these courses are Women, Law and the State; Women and Criminal Justice; Gender Theories of Crime and Punishment; Restorative and Transformative Justice; The Uses of Biographies in the Study of Crime and Punishment; Foucault and Feminism; and the History of Women’s Music. She has also been active as a supervisor and committee member of graduate thesis committees. She has supervised 5 MA theses and one PhD thesis. She has been on more than 10 graduate committees, including three women’s studies MA thesis committees.

In addition to her teaching and research, Karlene has been an active citizen at SFU and in the wider community. She has been a member of the SFU Feminist Institute for Studies on Law and Society since 1990 and served as the Director in 1993-1994. She is a founding member and on the advisory board of Strength in Sisterhood (SIS) which is a parolee support network. She served as the chair of the ASC Women in Prison Task Force and Decarceration Committee. She has given over 40 public lectures and workshops. She also has found the time to give media interviews, and has produced several videos on the criminal justice system. In recognition of her many contributions to the profession and to society she received the International Helen Prize for Humanitarian Works in 2000 and the Life Achievement Award from the American Society of Criminology, Division of Critical Criminology.

Marjorie Griffin Cohen Media Activist

During the past year, most of us have heard Marjorie Griffin Cohen at one or more times on local media being interviewed and debating issues as far reaching as BC Hydro, provincial and federal budgets and budget cuts, electricity deregulation, union issues, and welfare reform. In 2001-2002, Marjorie gave 14 interviews on CBC, CKNW, CFAX in Victoria, Co-op Radio, and held several press conferences.

Special Issues Focus on Women and Disability
Sue Wendell

In 2000, I interrupted my work on psychosomatic medicine to focus on helping to produce two Special Issues of Hypatia on Women and Disability and writing a new article to be included in the first issue. Although I regretted this interruption to my major long-term research project, I felt that my commitment to fostering feminist philosophical work on disability required me to accept the invitation from the Hypatia editors to co-edit the special issue (which became two issues because of the number of good articles submitted). The article I contributed to the first issue, “Unhealthy Disabled: Treating Chronic Illnesses as Disabilities,” was based on my recent reading in disability studies and the development of my thinking since the publication of The Rejected Body in 1996.

The articles in Part I of the Hypatia Special Issue on Feminism and Disability addressed theoretical dimensions of women’s disability identity. The articles in Part II have a more practical orientation. Some address issues arising from disabled women’s efforts to practice feminist politics, either by achieving effective dialogue with non-disabled feminists or by organizing women with disabilities separately. Some discuss ethical concerns arising from professional activities in relation to disability. Some apply the authors’ experience with the disability of family members to debates about disability in ethics and political philosophy. And some explore the implications of recognizing the many forms of human dependency, including profound disability, for a feminist ethics and politics of care. The authors, who offer perspectives on disability from India, Australia, the United States and Canada, all bring personal experience and practical concerns to their philosophical inquiry.
Meredith Kimball Endowment Created
Mary Lynn Stewart
Sue Wendell

Before Meredith Kimball retires in September 2004, we want to create a permanent tribute to her extraordinary leadership in shaping and sustaining the Department of Women’s Studies at Simon Fraser University. The two of us have begun an endowment fund to establish a scholarship in her name. After consulting Meredith, we agreed to create the Meredith Kimball Graduate Entrance Scholarship in Women’s Studies.

We will begin by fundraising for the scholarship among colleagues at SFU, and then among alumnae and friends of Women’s Studies. Our goal is to build a healthy endowment of $10,000 to produce the scholarship annually in perpetuity. To date, $2500 has been raised toward the goal.

Below is a brief summary of Meredith’s contributions to Women’s Studies and Simon Fraser University:

Since her appointment in 1976 as the first faculty member in Women’s Studies, Meredith Kimball has made extraordinary contributions to building, sustaining and expanding the Women’s Studies Department at Simon Fraser University. When Women’s Studies was still a Program, Meredith was coordinator for a record five and a half years; she then served as Chair of the Department of Women’s Studies from 1991 to 1993 and again from 1999 to 2003. Meredith prepared the Program’s successful bid for what became the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professorship in Women’s Studies, led the process of becoming a department, and facilitated the introduction of the Master’s Program in Women’s Studies and the (still pending) proposal for the PhD Program. Recently, she has led the department’s effort to appoint new faculty in response to the pending retirement of the first generation of Women’s Studies professors and established the Summer Visitors Program for Women’s Studies instructors in colleges in B.C. and Yukon.

In addition to this outstanding contribution to building Women’s Studies at SFU, Meredith has been the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, chair of three major faculty committees, and chair of undergraduate and graduate studies in her other department, Psychology. In both her departments, she has participated in almost all departmental committees. In addition, Meredith sat on Senate and several Senate committees between 1983 and 1986, and on the University Tenure Committee from 1998 to 1999. She acted as an Advisor and an Investigative Committee Member of the Harassment Policy Office between 1995 and 1997. Moreover, through her impressive professional and community service, Meredith has promoted the status of women psychologists, the development of research on the psychology of women, and the growth of Women’s Studies throughout B.C. and Canada.

Community Events
Sue Wilkinson New RWWP

Sue Wilkinson

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Sue Wilkinson to the Women’s Studies Department as the new Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor (RWWP). Her appointment is from September 2002 to August 2004. Dr. Wilkinson is a Professor of Feminist and Health Studies in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University in England. She received her BSc (Hons) in Psychology from the University of Leicester and her PhD from Loughborough University.

Dr. Wilkinson has been a leader in developing feminist psychology in England and internationally. She has done extensive research and published in the areas of feminist psychology, feminist methodologies, including focus groups; women’s health, particularly breast cancer and lesbian health issues; sexuality and sexual identities. She was the founding and is the current editor of *Feminism & Psychology*, one of the top Women’s Studies journals. She was a member of the steering group that lobbied for the Psychology of Women Section within the British Psychological Society that was founded in 1989 after a four-year campaign. She was also a member of the steering group that led to the formation of the Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section that was formed in 1998 after a nine-year campaign.

Dr. Wilkinson has taught a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses. At the undergraduate level she has taught Women in Society, Feminism and Psychology, Research Methods, Health Psychology, and Human Sexualities. At the graduate level she has taught Women’s Bodies, Women’s Minds, Sexualities in Social Contexts, Contemporary Issues in Feminism, Feminist Research Methods, Qualitative Research Methods, Achieving Research-based Practice, and Health Psychology.

In the community, Dr. Wilkinson has been involved in peer support, community outreach work, and consultancy for Breast Cancer Care, a national British organization. Working within
asleep after lunch! On the second day, SAAH a capella singers entertained with some of their own songs and some wonderful arrangements of familiar tunes. The four singers, Holly Denny, Anne Mullins, Alisa Nada, and Suki Seggu, added musical harmony to the poetic harmony of the rest of the weekend. Each day, at the end of the scheduled readings, an open mike was held and this program was full with volunteer poets from the audience. Nadine Chambers and Dionne Brand were great MCs for the open mike. A contest was held in which audience members could write a poem using lines from each of the poets' readings. Dionne judged the entries and three prizes were awarded. The prize was a choice of book of poetry from the Women in Print book table. Thanks to Carol Dale, Louise Hager, Shayna Hornstein, and Alexandra Wilson of Women in Print who took the effort to make each of the poets' books available.

Poetry Matters Creates Magic Among Women Poets and Readers

Dancing with Rex
Beth Cuthard

There's lightning in the sky
horses prancing in the wind
light and dark
playing tag around the big top.

There's dust devils flinging sand
on clouds travelling in groups
and Indians at a powwow
promenading around the big top.

Auntie with her hand bag crosses
her hands demurely over her ample lap.
She sits tutting at all the young clouds looking to score.

Me and Rex are brushing the dust
off our boots. His canine teeth
glint in the light of lightning
and his heart beats audibly in tune to the drums.

A most sedate owl dance is starting,
under the big top.
Hey, Rex, says I, shall we dance?

Well now, girl,
says he, can you keep up with me?

Hey, Rex, says I, if I step on your feet
or gig too wide, it's just me
having a good tone. Don't sweat the small stuff.

Rex laughs a laugh, so big
you can count his teeth.
Hey, girl, that's all I want to know.

So we dance and Auntie watches us closely.
She doesn't like Rex
says he acts too smart,
shows off and never takes
things seriously.

We dance in time:

ta-dum

ta-dum

ta-dum

ger-thunk

(that's Rex stepping on my feet)

Hey don't sweat the small stuff.

Rex laughs so long and loud
that the old ladies shake their heads
and even the young men
laugh nervously.

Reprinted with permission from Voices in the Waterfall by Beth Cuthand (Tiuans Books Ltd.) Beth Cuthand was one of the poets at the Poetry Matters Workshop.
RWWP Writers’ Series Big Success

After a major success in the spring of 2001 which saw audiences of 50-100 in the
One major public event organized by Dionne Brand, the Ruth Wynne Woodward Professor (RWWP) over the past year was the Writers’ Series. During the spring of 2001 four writers, Constance Backhouse, Lorna Goodison, Eden Robinson, and Kerri Sakamoto spoke to enthusiastic audiences of 50 to 110 people. In the fall of 2001 three more writers continued this most successful series of third Thursday readings in September, October, and November. Again audiences were large and enthusiastic ranging between 60 and 100 people who came to hear the author’s read and engage in dialogue with them. At each of the events Carol Dale, Louise Hager, Shayna Horneinstein, and Alexander Wilson of the feminist bookstore, Women in Print, sold the authors’ books and there were long lines of people waiting to have their books signed at the end of the evenings. Each evening there was a lottery and winners were able to choose one of the writer’s books from the Women in Print book table.

In October, Dionne Brand, the RWWP professor, took her turn in the series and read from her newest book of essays, *A map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*. The essays and sketches in this book is a meditation on the Black Diaspora using the Door of No Return—the places on the West Coast of Africa through which the slaves passed on their way to North America—as the historical and imaginary places which exists for her and for Black people throughout the Diaspora. Dionne has a national and international reputation as a creative writer. Since 1978 she has published seven books of poetry, two novels, three books of essays, one book of short stories, and three works of non-fiction. Her work has been chosen for a number of anthologies including among others the *Anthology of Canadian Literature, Poetry by Canadian Women, Black Poetry*, and the *Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse*. Even more impressive are the literary prizes she has been nominated for and received. Her book of poetry, *No Language is Neutral* was nominated for the Governor General’s Award for Poetry and the Trillium Award in 1990. In 1996 her novel, *In Another Place, Not Here* was nominated for the Trillium Award and the Chapters/Books in Canada First Novel Award. In 1997 her book of poetry, *Land To Light On* won both the Governor General’s Award for Poetry and the Trillium Award.

In November, the Writers’ Series came to a close with Anita Rau Badami’s reading from her most recent novel, *The Hero’s Walk* which won the regional Commonwealth Prize for Best Book. Her first novel, *Zamarrid Mem*, was released in Canada and India in 1996 to much critical acclaim, and became a Canadian bestseller with over 40,000 copies sold to date. It has also been published in the Britain, the US, and translated into German.

The Writers’ Series was a wonderful public event. A number of people came to all seven of the readings, and many had words of praise for the series and expressed their disappointment that it had come to an end after Anita Rau Badami’s reading in November. Fortunately the *Poetry Matters* (see story in this newsletter) was still to come and many also attended that event in June 2002. The Women’s Studies Department is grateful to Dionne Brand for all the work she did organizing these events and for her wonderful network of writers who were delighted, at her invitation, to come and share their work with people from SFU and from the wider community.

Bowen Island Retreat Creates Conversations Among Women’s Studies Instructors

In 1988 the Women’s Studies Department held the first biennial Women’s Studies Retreat for college and university instructors of Women’s Studies in BC and Yukon. May 3-5, 2002 the eighth retreat was held at the CNIB camp on Bowen Island. The Ruth Wynne Woodward Endowment sponsored the event.

Back row, l to r: Billie Korstrom, SFU; Helen Leung, SFU; Janet Mayr, Selkirk; Carolyn Moore, Yukon; Melissa Munn, NWCC; Dionne Brand, SFU; Meredith Kimball, SFU; Shelly Moore, Douglas College. Front Row, l to r: Leanne Borchman-Épp, NWCC; Tineke Hellwig, UBC; Heather Harper, Northern Lights

As in past years, each college and university in BC was invited to send two delegates who either teach Women’s Studies or are planning to develop Women’s Studies courses. The day before the Retreat, the BC WS Articulation meetings were held. At the articulation meetings several issues were discussed including transfer credits, how to publicize courses and encourage enrollments, and
pedagogical issues in the classroom. Carol McCandless from Capilano College attended in her new capacity as the liaison between the WS committee and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) and Jennifer Orum attended as a representative of BCCAT. The good news from many colleges is that Women’s Studies enrolments have remained steady or increased which has to some extent protected WS courses from many of the budget cuts experienced at the colleges.

Dionne Braid

At the Retreat, there was a combination of formal and informal programs. Dionne Brand as the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor (RWWP) gave the keynote event. She read a paper about the process of writing poetry and read from her new book of poems, Thirsty. Other events included a writing workshop led by Kate Braid and a paper, “Queer Visibility and Transgender Subjectivity in Hong Kong Cinema” given by Helen Leung. On the Saturday evening people gathered around the fire and shared some of their favorite writing from a wide range of sources including non-fiction, novels, and poetry. There was also much socializing, some shopping, and relaxing in the hot tub each evening.

Eleven college, university college, or university Women’s Studies programs were present for the Articulation Meetings, the Retreat, or both: Capilano College (Karen Lind), Douglas College (Claudia Beaven and Shelly Moore), Langara College (Patty Moore), Northern Lights College (Heather Harper), Northwest Community College (Leanne Boschman-Epp and Melissa Munn), Okanagan University College (Ruth Frost and Jennifer Gustaf), Selkirk College (Janet Mayr), Simon Fraser University (Dionne Brand, Meredith Kimball, Billie Korstrom, and Helen Leung), University of British Columbia (Sneja Gunew and Tineke Hellwig), University of Victoria (Sikatsi Banerjee and Christine Welsh), and Yukon College (Carolyn Moore).

Kate Braid (left) and Billie Korstrom

The next Bowen Island Women’s Studies Retreat is scheduled for May 1-3, 2004. If you are interested in more information about it and/or wish to be sure you get information about the next Bowen Island Retreat, you can contact either Billie Korstrom (604-291-3593 or korstrom@sfu.ca) or Meredith Kimball (604-291-5526 or kimball@sfu.ca).

Farewell to Dionne

Dionne’s farewell dinner

Eleven college, university college, or university Women’s Studies programs were present for the Articulation Meetings, the Retreat, or both: Capilano College (Karen Lind), Douglas College (Claudia Beaven and Shelly Moore), Langara College (Patty Moore), Northern Lights College (Heather Harper), Northwest Community College (Leanne Boschman-Epp and Melissa Munn), Okanagan University College (Ruth Frost and Jennifer Gustaf), Selkirk College (Janet Mayr), Simon Fraser University (Dionne Brand, Meredith Kimball, Billie Korstrom, and Helen Leung), University of British Columbia (Sneja Gunew and Tineke Hellwig), University of Victoria (Sikatsi Banerjee and Christine Welsh), and Yukon College (Carolyn Moore).

Dionne guaranteed that many excellent writers were delighted to come to SFU and share their writing with the enthusiastic and large audiences that came to these events. During her time here, she published a book of essays, A Map to the Door of No Return and a book of poetry, Thirsty. We wish her all the best now that she has returned to Toronto and look forward to many wonderful books that she will write in the future.

Melissa Munn 2002 Community College Visitor

Building upon the success of our new Women’s Studies and Criminology courses, I decided to apply to the Visiting Scholars program to develop a Women and Crime course. I felt that if Northwest Community College could offer this course, it would give students in the north more opportunity to examine women’s experiences. Historically, the study of crime has treated women as an afterthought or an addendum, assuming that women’s experience of crime is the same as men’s and I didn’t want this to happen in our newly developing criminology stream. I wanted our first second year criminology course to be about women and crime. More current work examines criminality from feminist perspectives and this work is exciting and I wanted to expose students to it; but, beyond this, I wanted to develop a course that spoke to rural, isolated and Aboriginal women’s issues. As a student in university I remember reading study after study on urban crime and services available to urban dwellers. I was from a small community and couldn’t locate my experience in any of those works.

Dionne Braid

Enjoying the hot tub, l to r: Sikatsi Banerjee, Meredith Kimball, Patty Moore, Heather Harper

After two great years as the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor (RWWP), Dionne Brand finished her term in August 2002. Dionne came to the department with an outstanding reputation as a novelist, poet, and essayist. She shared her expertise with the department in many ways. The Writers’ Series and Poetry Matters Workshop were her inspiration and, given her reputation, an invitation from

Melissa Munn and Cosmo
Later, working as an activist in the Northwest, I found that rural women who came in contact with the law often felt disadvantaged because of the lack of services and supports available to them. When Mederith called to tell me I was accepted to be a Visiting Scholar, I was, to say the least, excited beyond words at the opportunity.

Working in the Women’s Studies department made the task of developing a course much easier. Having access to a major library with a vast array of criminology and sociology books was what I most needed. The ability to find that ‘book next to the book you thought you were looking for’ is something that can only happen when you are standing in the stacks. Being able to dialogue with a colleague and swing by their office for some materials is one of the other elements that makes course development much more effective. Of particular note is the extreme generosity of Dr. Karlene Faith who made her women and crime course outline available to me and who inspired me to keep pursuing the issue of rural women and crime. By being a Visiting Scholar I was able to confirm that the experience of Canadian rural women and crime is largely ignored in the literature and I have begun to work on research which examines this issue.

Community College and University College Visiting Scholar Program

This program sponsors instructors involved in Women’s Studies programs from the colleges and university colleges in BC and Yukon to work and study at SFU during the summer. The program began in the summer of 2001. In the first summer there were two visitors, Jennifer Gustafson from Okanagan University College and Serena Patterson from North Island College. During summer 2002 Melissa Munn from Northwest Community College was the visitor. There is an article by her in this Newsletter.

Instructor(s) are sponsored for one month (May, June, or July) during the summer to study and work at SFU. Relocation expenses to and from the lower mainland are reimbursed, either airfare or $ .35 per kilometer. For visiting scholars who are from outside the lower mainland a housing allowance up to $1000 is provided. If a visiting scholar requires child care, an allowance up to $400 is provided. A visiting scholar is provided with a computer account, a library card, an office or shared office space in the Women’s Studies Department, and a limited photocopy budget.

There are one or more visitors per summer, depending on the budget for the year and other planned programs. There are a number of possibilities. People from the lower mainland are welcome to apply, however, relocation and housing costs are not covered. If a local visitor incurs extra child care costs because of taking this position, these are covered up to $400. Because there are lower costs associated with visitors from the Lower Mainland, there is the possibility of several visitors, but the budget limits the number of visitors from outside the Lower Mainland. However, if institutions are willing to share the relocation, housing, and child care costs, it might be possible for two visitors from an institution to come.

Applications should consist of a short proposal (3-5 pages) and a résumé. The deadline for summer 2003 is November 15, 2002. The proposal should focus either on a research project or a course development project. An individual can apply more than once, but preference is given to people who have not previously held a visiting scholar position. Preference is given to community college and university college instructors who are teaching or developing Women’s Studies courses or programs. Others who are teaching courses in other disciplines with a focus on women and women’s issues may apply but will be given a lower priority.

Send applications to: Meredith Kimball, Chair, Women’s Studies Department, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC V5A 1S6. Questions about the program should be directed to Meredith Kimball by phone or e-mail (604-291-5526 or kimball@sfu.ca).

Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowment Community Events

One of the ways in which the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowment moneys are used to fulfill the mandate of community outreach is through the sponsorship and co-sponsorship of speakers, events, and conferences both on and off campus. From September 2001 through August 2002, the endowment was used to sponsor and co-sponsor speakers and events. The main events this year included a continuation of the RWWP Writer’s Series, the Bowen Island Retreat, and the Poetry Matters Workshop. All of these events are described elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Funds also were used to co-sponsor two other public events. One was the Women and Pensions Conference held in November 2001. This event was sponsored by a number of community groups with the main organization provided by Women Elders in Action (WE*ACT) which is a diverse coalition of women and organizations committed to social justice. The keynote speaker was Monica Townsend. The weekend included many workshops concerning a range of issues such as private pensions, government pensions including OAS, GIS, and CPP, homemaker pensions, aboriginal women’s pensions and immigrant women’s pensions. The other event was a public lecture by Dr. Sima Samar that was co-sponsored with Women for Women in Afghanistan, Vancouver Chapter. Dr. Samar spoke in December 2001 at Harbour Centre about the struggle for women’s rights in Afghanistan. Dr. Samar was exiled in 1984 from Afghanistan. She continued her work for women’s health and education in Pakistan and shortly after her talk in December she was appointed Minister for Women in the interim Afghan government. She has received the John Humphrey Freedom Award for her work supporting women’s rights.

The department also co-sponsored the Vagina Monologue performances and made contributions to the SFU Women’s Centre in support of their Women’s Health Series, December 6 commemoration, and the celebration of International Women’s Day.
moved to the University of Rochester, the position was retained and Jackie Levitin (WS and School for Contemporary Arts) was appointed.

Since 1990 there has been both growth and loss in faculty. In 1991 Cathy Nesmith (WS and Geography) was hired. In 1993 she chose to move full-time into Geography. In 1991 Veronica Strong Boag moved to UBC to become Head of the new Centre for Research in Women’s Studies and Gender Relations. Although her position was retained, the joint search with History in 1992 for her replacement was unsuccessful because of a hiring freeze. In 1991 Marjorie Cohen, who had served as the RWWP in 1989-1990, returned to SFU as a tenure track joint appointment in WS and Political Science. When Margaret Benston died in 1991, the first full-time tenure-track WS appointment was authorized in the area of women and science. Marilyn Mac Donald was hired to fill this position in 1992. In 1994 Sue Wendell chose to move full-time into Women’s Studies. In 1995 Habiba Zaman was hired in a full-time position in Women’s Studies. In 1997 Andrea Lebowitz moved from the English Department to Women’s Studies, and in 2001 she took early retirement. Her replacement, Dr. Helen Leung, joined the department full-time in September 2002.

In summary, the department currently has four joint appointments (Cohen, Kimball, Levitin, and Stewart) and five full-time appointments (Leung, Mac Donald, Wendell, and Zaman, and the RWWP which is a limited term one or two year appointment). This represents an equivalent of seven full-time faculty positions, two full-time equivalents more than the five specified in the original proposal passed by Senate in 1975.

Staff positions have been equally critical to the continued growth and maintenance of excellence in the department. When the program began in 1976, WS shared a single staff person with several other programs. In 1988, this position became full-time in WS and in 1989 a second position was added. Between 1983 and 1993 Sandy Shewe, who served in the staff position when it was shared with other programs and later became the first full-time Departmental Assistant (DA). Billie Korstrom replaced her in the DA position in 1993. A second staff position was established in 1993. This position which includes the duties of department receptionist, graduate secretary, and chair’s secretary is currently held by Christine Goodman.

Faculty, staff, and students need adequate space to carry out their work. When Women’s Studies began in 1976, there was one office for the part-time staff person. Joint appointments, as they were made, had offices in their home departments rather than in Women’s Studies. As the program grew more space was needed. During the 1980s, there were often two or three offices in addition to a staff office in the Classroom Complex (CC). Two of these offices were shared by sessionals, teaching assistants, and graduate students. The third was for the occupant of the RWWP. These offices were separated from the staff office and further separated from the offices of each of the joint appointments. Everyone got lots of exercise. In 1989 the program obtained a set of five small offices and a shared xerox office near the Dean of Arts Office in the Academic Quadrangle (AQ). In 1994, the opening of the new West Mall Complex liberated a significant amount of space in the AQ, and Women’s Studies received a significant increase in space. The current space includes seven large offices for staff and faculty; seven small offices for graduate students, teaching assistants, sessionals, visitors, postdoctoral fellows and research associates; a student computer lab; a meeting room which is shared with the Humanities Department; and a departmental lounge with mail boxes, a xerox machine, and some amenities such as comfortable furniture, a small fridge, and microwave. The lounge is used by faculty, staff, and graduate students as a gathering place and lunch room. It is also used for small social gatherings including a reception for graduating students and their family and friends on convocation day. Within the department area there is also a student union lounge which is shared by the Women’s Studies and Latin American Studies undergraduates.

Like all university departments, WS exists and functions as part of a larger bureaucracy. When the program was being developed in the early 1970s, significant support came from Bob Brown who was then Dean of the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (FIDS). The Faculty was crucial in providing support for the development of, and a home for, interdisciplinary programs and departments. It is hard to describe the importance for the development of Women’s Studies of the existence of FIDS, which provided a sense of safety for and commitment to Women’s Studies within the larger university at a time when there was much direct and indirect hostility towards the implementation of the program. In 1983 FIDS was eliminated as part of the ongoing budget cuts and the programs and departments moved to other faculties. Women’s Studies moved to the Faculty of Arts, where we have continued to receive strong support. In October 1991 Senate approved a change in status from program to department for Women’s Studies. Although this change did not result in immediate practical changes in the day to day functioning of faculty and staff, it was highly significant symbolically. Women’s Studies at Simon Fraser University had come of age. As a department Women’s Studies is one of the smaller departments in the Faculty of Arts which is by far the largest faculty at SFU. Over the years we have had both good working relations with and support from the Dean of Arts Office. This is critical as the university budgets have been decentralized and most of the financial decisions which affect the department (departmental budgets, staff and faculty positions, and temporary instruction allocations) come directly from the Dean of Arts.

...continued from p. 8 — WS Student Survey

had entered SFU directly from high school, 24% were transfer students from a BC college, 12% were transfer students from another university, and 20% were mature students. In comparison to SFU students as a whole, these figures are fairly similar for all the categories except mature student. WS students, and in particular WS majors and minors, are much more likely to enter as mature students than is true for SFU students as a whole. Fifteen percent of the students taking courses and 20% of those indicating an interest in a WS degree described themselves as mature students in comparison to the overall figures for SFU where only about 3% are mature students. Even allowing for some discrepancies between the student’s and the university’s definition of mature student (23 years of age or older who are not eligible for admission under another category), it is clear that WS students, and particularly WS majors, joint majors, and minors are much more likely to be mature students than are SFU students as a whole.

The students who responded to the survey were equally likely to be at various points in their university career. Twenty seven percent had taken less than 30 credits, 24% had taken
between 31 and 60 credits, 21% had taken between 61 and 90 credits, and 28% had taken more than 90 credits. Most (88%) indicated that they were engaged in study either full time or mostly full time with only 12% indicating they were studying part time or mostly part time. Most (78%) spent less than 10 hours a week involved in housework and child care, although 6% of the students (mostly single mothers) reported more than 40 hours a week in housework and child care.

A number of students were either working or had student loans. Although 34% reported no hours of paid employment per week, 20% reported 1-10 hours a week, 24% reported 11 to 20 hours a week, 14% reported 21-30 hours a week, 4% reported 31-40 hours a week, and 4% reported more than 40 hours a week in paid employment. Thirty one percent reported currently having a student loan. These ranged from less than $5,000 to $40,000 with an average of $12,000. When asked if they expected to have a student loan debt by the time they graduated, 52% of the students said yes and indicated values ranging from less than $5,000 to over $50,000 with an average of $19,000.

The most common way students reported finding out about WS at SFU was through the SFU calendar (68%) or from other students (31%). Some students (11%) had seen information at their high school or college, or some form of WS advertisement or poster (10%). Other ways they had heard about WS included from a mother, relative, or teacher (3%); from taking a course at a college or other university (3%); from a web site (1%), or another university’s calendar (1%). Almost half of the students responding (49%) had taken one WS course, and another third (31%) had taken more than three WS courses at SFU.

When asked to indicate what they had found useful in the WS course or courses they had taken, more than 40% of the students checked each of the options listed: increased knowledge about women (82%), understanding the world differently (78%), interdisciplinarity (50%), diversity (73%), academic skills (44%), and increased confidence or self esteem (44%). In open-ended responses others added increased political, historical, or general knowledge (13%), knowledge about oneself (3%), or contact with other women (1%). When asked what they found missing or problematic in WS courses they had taken, many said nothing or left the question blank (53%). The most common criticisms were that there was not enough information about diversity, particularly about men or about race (10%), problems with course scheduling or structure, including the frequency, and timing of courses and the lack of distance education options beyond the 100 level courses (10%), the content was too feminist or counter arguments were not presented (5%), specific courses that were problematic (4%), too much ‘consciousness raising’ or ‘group therapy’ (1%) and negative responses from others who were not taking WS (1%). One student said that students in the class were not tolerant and another that there was not enough emphasis on forming a strong argument. Eleven students said that the content or definitions were unclear. However, nine of these students were in the second week of the introductory WS class.

When asked whether what they had learned in WS had helped them in other classes, 73% said yes, 10% no, and 17% left the question blank or said they were not sure or didn’t know. Those that said yes, listed a number of examples. Thirty nine students indicated courses in other departments in which they had used what they learned in WS courses. Twenty four students described academic skills they had learned in WS courses including critical thinking, interdisciplinary writing skills, and increased perspective taking. Thirty three mentioned increased knowledge, and of these 16 specified increased political knowledge. Five mentioned that the focus on women had been useful and 12 said yes without giving an example.

Forty three students indicated that they were taking or planned to take a WS major, joint major, or Post-Baccalaureate Program (PBD). Sixteen of these indicated they were taking or planning to take a major, 24 were taking or planning to take a joint major (8 with Political Science, 5 with English, 4 with Psychology, 4 with Sociology and Anthropology, 2 with Criminology, and 1 with History). Of the students taking another major, the majority (68%) were taking a major in the Faculty of Arts in Psychology, School for Contemporary Arts, English, Criminology, Sociology and Anthropology, Geography, Political Science, History, Humanities and Economics. Ten percent were taking majors in Applied Science (Communications and Kinestiology), 7% were Bachelor of General Studies students, 6% were in Business, 4% in Education, 2% in Science, and 3% described themselves as undecided.

Students were asked if they planned to take a minor as part of their degree. Of the 124 who answered this questions, 40% said yes, 27% said no, and 33% were not yet sure if they would of not. Of those who answered the question yes, 33 or 58% were taking or planning to take a WS minor. Others were planning or taking minors primarily in Arts departments: Sociology and Anthropology, English, Political Science, Criminology, Labour Studies, Psychology, Latin American Studies, Economics, Geography, Mathematics, and First Nations Studies. Several were also planning to take minors in Communications or Education.

The 77 students who planned to take or were taking a WS degree (major, joint major, minor) described one or more factors led them to this decision. Most common were reasons related to interest, enjoyment and personal growth (43) and support for feminist and social justice goals (35). Other reasons included support for career goals (13), that Women’s Studies complemented their studies in other disciplines (13), the academic skills they learned in WS such as thinking critically and interdisciplinarity (5) and the structure of the department in terms of providing flexible options (2). Students who had chosen not to take a WS degree gave as reasons for this decision other interests (14), that WS was not related to their career choice (13), that they preferred other disciplines (12), that they did not have the time or resources to add to their degree requirements (7), and problems with WS course offerings (4).

Most students were aware of the possibility of doing Co-op as 132 out of 147 students answered the question asking them if they were taking or planning to take the Co-op program as a part of their degree. Thirty seven percent of those answering indicated that they were in or planning to take Co-op.

When asked to describe their occupational goal(s), 25 students left the question blank or said they did not know or were undecided at this time. The other 122 students listed one or more possibilities they were working toward. In general their plans were for careers in education (37); counselling or social services (22); politics, public policy, international relations, community development (21); creative or artistic (17), law or law enforcement (10); communications or media (9); business (5); and science (3). Ten others mentioned working conditions they were seeking rather than specific job, e.g., a job that
paid enough or was not too boring or stressful. One student said she planned to work with her own First Nations' culture.

Specific jobs were wide ranging and included among others: create my own theatre company, human rights work with Amnesty International, high school teacher, freelance journalist, college instructor, minister, clinical psychologist, graphic designer, lawyer, politician, work with the United Nations, RCMP officer, community development work, detective, university professor, filmmaker, editor of a woman's magazine, chartered accountant, human resources management, artist, French immersion teacher, law reform, run my own business, occupational therapist, sex therapist, architect, novelist, women's shelter worker, and social worker.

In order to meet some of these occupational goals, a number of students had plans to continue their education beyond a BA. Thirty one planned to go to graduate school in the social sciences or humanities, twelve planned to do graduate work in Women's Studies, three in education, and eight indicated graduate work without specifying a discipline or program. Many also planned to go to professional schools including law school (15), Education (PDP) (12), MBA (5), and Social Work (3). One student each planned to pursue further education in publishing, holistic Chinese medicine, alternative health, acting, art, counselor training, interior design, police academy, and BCIT.

When asked if they thought that WS would further their career or other goals, 107 or 73% said yes and many of these people indicated a reason. The reasons they gave included: increased knowledge and academic skills (40), reasons directly related to career (27), reasons indirectly related to career, i.e., increased confidence (11), personal growth (11), political awareness and action goals (11), and reasons related to other university studies (7). One student who mentioned increased academic skills said: "Yes. I want to help others think outside the boundaries; learning to think outside the box, see new perspectives—how could this not help you in life." Another who focused on political awareness said: "Yes. This course on the history of feminism helps me comprehend the struggles of females throughout time—can link it to my own personal struggles as a woman/human".

Those who thought it would help them either directly or indirectly in their careers thought it would inform their teaching, feminist counseling, work in theatre, art, dance therapy, writing and editing women's magazines, media studies of government issues, consulting work on employment equity, social services, work with refugees, sex education, and work with women in the criminal justice field; and deal with co-workers in the business world, make her aware of her rights as a woman worker, and give her confidence in a male dominated field. Several students were still unsure about what they planned to do, but thought what they had learned in WS would help them decide. One said: "Yes. Not sure what I want eventually to do but I think now that I have some useful tools to help me decide". Another said: "Yes. It has profoundly affected the way I think, the way I live, what careers I see as available to me."

Half of the students (51%) reported being engaged in volunteer work either within or outside the university. They reported a wide range of volunteer activities including: working in women's centers, shelters, and feminist organizations (20); unions, student government, and political parties (17); in schools, recreation centers, and sports programs (16); in hospitals, correctional facilities, and counseling programs (10); with creative arts organizations (11); programs for people with disabilities (8); in minority organizations including ethnic, lesbian, and gay groups (7); churches (6); environmental and animal rights groups (5); and food banks (3). The range of contributions made by these students is impressive. Specific activities and groups include among others Special Olympics, SFPRG, BC Heath and Stroke Foundation, SHARE Food Bank, Native Reserve Missions, Out on Campus, Canadian Cancer Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Rape Relief, Burnaby Youth Detention Centre, Disabilities Vancouver, End Legislative Poverty, West Coast LEAF, Vagina Monologues, UNICEF, Planned Parenthood, anti WTO rallies, India Mahilia Association, George Pearson Centre, and SFU Women's Centre. They have worked on political campaigns, worked against racism, poverty, and homophobia; worked in support of single mothers, immigrant women, and abused women; participated in women's centres; and attended rallies and marches.

In order to help in planning for the future of WS at SFU, students were asked to list courses that they would like to see offered, joint majors they would like added to the curriculum, and specifically about the proposed gender studies program. They had many suggestions about the addition of courses including courses in art and popular culture (13), diversity of women (11), sexuality (9), community development, globalization, international aid (8), practical courses emphasizing political organizing and work skills (7), criminology (4), health and science (6), war and world issues as they affect women (5), and communications, sport, and human geography (1 each).

A number of joint majors were also suggested. The most numerous suggestions included joint majors with Communications (9), Contemporary Arts (8), Business and Economics (5), sciences (4), Canadian Studies (2), and French, Labour Studies, Gender Studies, Latin American Studies, Ethnic Studies, Family Studies, Linguistics, and Education (1 each).

Students were very positive about the proposal for Gender Studies to be located in, but not merged with, Women's Studies. Students were asked if they would be interested in taking a Gender Studies minor and/or a Gender Studies course. Thirty one percent of all the students said they would be interested in taking the minor, and 82% said they would take a course in Gender Studies. Several students emphasized their yes with comments like "hurrah" or made several checks by yes.

Students were also asked for suggestions about how to publicize the department and courses and future directions for the department. For both of these questions several concerns stood out. Most important for the students who answered these questions was to work against the stereotypes that still exist about Women's Studies and to reach out to more students, especially men. These were seen as interconnected issues. The stereotypes that Women's Studies is about male bashing, bma burning, and militant lesbians continue. These are stereotypes that need to be addressed and worked against in order to reach out to male students and to many women students. In order to do this, students suggested the importance of outreach to other departments at SFU where WS is still misunderstood and the integration of Women's Studies curriculum into courses in other departments. Suggestions were also made to publicize WS at high schools and colleges, through web sites, the WSSU, and more generally through public events. Throughout these suggestions, creating positive images to counter stereotypes was emphasized. As one student put it: "As incorrect as it may seem, I
would suggest publicizing them [WS courses] in such a way as to make them more palatable to men. Not the courses themselves, perhaps, but their descriptions. Show men that it is in everyone’s best interests to fight for equality.”

The other main suggestion that came out of these questions was the request for practical courses and options. Although the absolute number of students making these requests was small, the request was consistent across the questionnaire. Most students knew about the Co-op Program and one third said they were planning to take or taking the Co-op Program. In terms of suggested courses the department could offer, seven students specifically mentioned “how-to” courses such as “women in political action/dissent—how to”, “how to set up an NGO”; and courses that are career oriented and action based. When asked about future directions for the department, eight students specifically mentioned developing practical options, including field schools, volunteer work for credit, community research/education/action projects, co-op options, and information that is applicable to the real world, and encouraging action on social issues within the university community.

Overall students were positive about their experiences in WS and made useful criticisms and suggestions for improvement. In response to the question about future directions for the department, several students simply said in one way or another to keep up the good work and grow, e.g., “bigger and better” “thank you for all the work that keeps the department growing”, “add more courses/new courses” “just get bigger”.

1. Note that for this question and several other, students were asked to check as many categories as were applicable, so percentages add up to more than 100 or numbers add up to more than 147.

...continued from p. 9 — Focus Group

Sixty nine students (26%) volunteered to participate in the study. Because some students were taking more than one course or were not in attendance for the day of the presentation, the actual participation rate was somewhat higher than 26%. Of the 69 students, 37 indicated a time they could participate in one of the focus groups. These people were contacted by e-mail telling them the time and location of their session and giving them a list of possible questions the focus group could discuss. At the start of each session, participants were given two consent forms to sign (one for them to keep and one to be kept by me) and a copy of the guideline questions they had been sent earlier by e-mail. They were asked to provide an email or postal address so that a summary of their focus group discussion and this final report could be sent to them. Each focus group was told that the questions provided were only guidelines and they should feel free to explore topics related to Women’s Studies in their discussion. There were five focus groups which ranged from 45 minutes to two hours. Between five and nine people were scheduled for each group, and between 2 and 7 people participated in each group for a participation rate of 57%.

The 32 students who volunteered, but were not free to attend one of the scheduled focus group were sent the questions by e-mail and 21 of these students sent responses by e-mail for a response rate of 41%. Each of those responding was sent an e-mail listing the responses of all the e-mail participants as well as copy of this report. This report was also posted on the WS web site and all instructors were asked to announce to their classes that the report could be found on the web site, thereby making it available to those who did not participate as well as those who did.

Many students in the focus groups noted that the existing WS 101 and 102 courses are a difficult introduction to Women’s Studies and are becoming out of date. Suggestions for improvement included focusing specifically on feminist theories prior to their application to a more narrow set of updated issues. As Women’s Studies requires students to think, analyze, write, and format essays quite differently than other departments students have requested that more time be spent clarifying these prior to assignments. Guilt was commonly mentioned as an issue felt by WS students. Students new to the field would appreciate some discussion on dealing with the guilt that arises from recognition of privileges.

Students reported wanting a greater selection of upper-division courses as some existing ones are felt to be repetitive. They request a wider range of designated (cross-listed) courses and have suggested that these be shared, or team-taught, by professors in each department so that each discipline is taught well and accurately. Upper division students feel that core theory courses are needed at each level for WS students. It has also been requested that course titles and subjects be determined prior to registration and that the titles accurately reflect the content to be covered. Several student expressed frustration at misleading titles and courses that changed significantly from their listed description. Students would appreciate consistency in course offerings (courses to be taught a regular intervals so that they may plan accordingly), particularly those taught by sessional instructors.

The following courses were suggested by at least one focus group participant: WS and political theory, Globalisation (economic, political, social), Social policy, Women in B.C. (history of immigration law re. Chinese immigrants, current politics and culture), Women and change (philosophies of revolution), Feminist review of traditional philosophy, Men in feminism, Women and popular culture (media analysis), Community activism (course integration with grass roots groups, how to organize/write grant requests and press releases; how to make practical use of information learned in courses), Women and criminology, Sociology of gender, Sociology of sexualities, Women and visual arts/culture, Women and science (cross-listed with a science course: Math/statistics, Introductory Biology, Chemistry, Kinesiology), Women and war, Goddess and Shaman, Women in Islamic and Judaic cultures, Dystopian literature, Women and education, Women and law, Women and family issues, Women in precivilisation, Women in professional sex work, Aging, Post-modernism, French Canadian women, Politics of language, Power, Girl children around the world, Changing perspectives of feminism, History of women from non-Western perspectives, Women in prison, Women as presented in medicine, Women and anthropology, Women and business, and Feminist achievements and the future (to dispel the notion that full and true equality has been achieved).

In general, students conveyed that they really liked how professors in WS teach and their level of approachability. Specific complaints related to lack of organization in class and of materials, rigidity in structure, and lack of analysis of historical influences. Frustration was expressed at the ‘pigeon-holing’ of certain professors in certain courses. Requests for the next Woodward Chair include an activist with conveyable passion; former politician; theologian; scientist; visual artist, Angela Davis.
Students who are majoring in WS would like the opportunity to complete an Honors program and would like a thesis option. They particularly like that existing 3rd and 4th year courses are weighted as 4-credit, which facilitates discussion time. Some students noted that completing a joint major in WS and Political Science is difficult because of the lack of joint-listed courses. However, the development of joint major programs in WS and Criminology, WS and Contemporary Arts, and WS and Biology were requested.

Students would like to see more balance between theory and its application in terms of events and courses. This was expressed in requests for growth of the co-operative education program, development of a field school program, and a course that permits participation in local activism with class work. Career options workshops, job fairs, and networking opportunities are desired. Several students identified a fear of lack of related employment and believe that there should be a clear and consistent effort or program to bridge WS students and related work.

For the most part, respondents expressed support for and anticipation of the Gender Studies program. They expect that men and women intimidatd by the “Women’s Studies” title will be more comfortable enrolling in courses under the new program name. However, some students were suspicious of the purpose behind this program. They wondered if it was a tactic to attract male students or dilute feminist analysis. There was an expressed fear that Gender Studies will be a neutralized form of WS that will contribute to hiding women’s issues, or that a segregated system of WS for women and Gender Studies for men will result.

Students queried whether this program would offer breadth requirements that can be used towards their WS degree. It was suggested that Gender Studies appear separate from WS in the University calendar so that department visibility is increased. As WS is often the last, or near last, section of the calendar and can be easily lost or forgotten by students not already aware of the program, a separate section for Gender Studies (with a by-line suggestion to see WS for further information) will alphabetically bring the department to the forefront. A number of possible gender studies course that at least one participant suggested include: Queer theory, Queer sexualities, Queer rights (marriage, adoption, parenting, visibility), Construction of masculinities and femininities, Gender at life stages, Mental illnesses, and Queer Identities from non-Western perspectives.

Most students identified that WS and feminism still carry the reputation as an isolated respite for ‘man-hating’ and ‘bra-burning.’ Most commonly, students are confronted with confusion about WS, not hostility. There are frequently asked about the employability of WS and what remains for feminists to fight for (there seems to be a common perception that “women have equality” and no longer face oppression). The most derogatory perspectives and treatment of feminism, gender, and women’s issues were cited as coming from professors, instructors, and teaching assistants in other departments at SFU. Several students experienced situations wherein teachers spoke negatively and inaccurately about WS courses and feminism in front of entire classes. This has occurred recently in philosophy, introductory political science, history, and communication courses.

To combat these perceptions and publicize the department students suggested a week of classes open to everyone (students, outside faculty, and community members) that introduce courses taught, a briefing of feminist perspectives, the relevancy of WS and feminism to women’s lives, and how oppressions affect every person. This was proposed as a publicity event that would inform all people about the department and could be developed into a career options and networking opportunity for students. To further raise awareness, students recommend that designated courses be identified as such under each department in the University Calendar. Students feel that this would highlight the interdisciplinary nature of WS and draw in students from other departments. (Several participants first came into WS through designated courses).

In order to publicize the department it was argued that a good department website is essential. Up-to-date information and events, course listings, descriptions and changes, as well as student and faculty achievement are all requested. The existing website is not kept up to date, the information does not feel relevant to students, and does not foster a sense of community. Students advocate some sort of campaign or initiative be developed to depict actual feminists, their work, and how feminism factors into everyday life (i.e. access to contraception, fight against wage differentials, etc.). Regularly submitted feminist contributions to The Peak and website were suggested to do this. Also, some instruction or assistance from the department in advertising WS student events on university media (SFU homepage, SFU News, televised information is the Academic Quadrangle) is requested.

Increased visibility of the department at high school career days was mentioned repeatedly. Students suggest that a representative and department display appear in high schools on career and university planning days. Any mechanism to have department material sent with application packages was advised. One student suggested the creation of an incentive-type scholarship for the highest-scoring student in each first year course that could be advertised widely.

1. A Women’s Studies-Criminology joint major is offered. This joint major was established in September 2001.

Department Mascot: Blue

Thanks to Bob Birtch, LIDC, for masthead design, Juan Sanchez for masthead artwork, and Anita Mahoney for layout design.