

Report from the Chair

My first year in my current term as Chair (I've been Chair before) was a learning experience, beginning with a round of hiring and ending with a decision to organize an on-campus conference on the body. The two new hires, Lisa Siew, as RWW Assistant, and Katherine Hunter, as Graduate Secretary, successfully integrated into the staff and have been most helpful to me in my position. This past summer when Lisa left for a full-time job, we hired Andrew Wickerson to take her place.

One of the highlights of the 2006-2007 academic year was the conference put on by the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor, Kate Braid, in April 2007. The conference, entitled "Tradeswomen: A Winning Ticket," was the first conference on women in trades in BC since 1993. With the financial and organizational help of the BC Construction Association, the BC and Yukon Building Trades Council, and other business associations, as well as the BC Federation of Labour and provincial ministries, the conference attracted twelve researchers and several dozen tradeswomen. A Report prepared by Kate Braid and Heather Menzies as well as a set of recommendations from the conference are posted on the department website. Ida Chang, Minister of Community Services, Seniors' and Women's Issues presented a cheque for \$100,000 to initiate a STEP for Women program to help place women in construction.

Another high point was the Maggie Benston Lecture in Social Justice, held on March 1st at the Vancouver Public Library. Maude Barlow spoke on the topic: "Have We Won? The Need for Canadian Women's Stewardship in the Emerging Struggles of Our Time" to an audience of 200, most of whom were community activists.

The past year marked the third year of the new PhD program in Women's Studies. Four of the eight current PhD candidates admitted in the past three years completed the comprehensive exams and two of them have also defended their dissertation proposals. This same year saw six of the sixteen current masters level students defend their theses or extended essays and three of them are going on to PhD programs here, at McGill University, and at Temple University in the United States.

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