1-31-1977

Memo by Pat Coontz on Eastern Washington State College's Women's Studies Program

Patricia Coontz

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To: H. George Frederickson, President

From: Pat Coontz, Coordinator for Women Studies

Date: January 31, 1977

Subject: Notes to Supplement your Notes on our Conversation Monday, January 24.

Okay--I was prepared to discuss three aspects of Women Studies: State of the program, rationale for the program, and needs of the program as I see them.

I. State--only academic minor in the area (WSU working on one) -- Junior colleges in Spokane a heavily financed program but often non-credit, not strictly academic

A. Organization--Advisory Board of faculty, students, community women; in the past I have researched courses that different departments might offer and then approached them with suggestions for the course.

--Steiner pays for work study person in Women's Commission Office and for my travel to state and national meetings;

--English Department pays for most of library ordering, sometimes travel, all of secretarial help and supplies for notices, etc.

--Continuing Ed. does the publicity for all academic courses taught in Spokane.

(The college public relations man has been singularly disinterested in Women Studies, or women's activities of any kind)

--Hoekendorf has been cooperative and enthusiastic, providing overload pay for teaching the courses and even hiring an extra faculty member when a regular one is not available.

II. You told me you didn't need a rationale. But if the rest of the school does, I would be prepared to point out the advantages of women studies to the individual (both men and women), to the college, and to society (as John S. Mill said long ago "the subordination of women is now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement").
III. Problems and Needs:

A. Funding—it's now catch as catch can. I beg a lot.

B. Central control 1) so departments don't kill each other off—for example, since I spoke with you on Monday, both the Art Department and the Graduate School of Social Work are planning courses for spring quarter. The department heads did not check with me, and I learned of it only through the instructors who are friends and felt I should know. The same thing has happened with the Department of Business—"Women in Management" was scheduled same quarter as "Technical Communication for Women." Too bad. 2) Establish a closer working relationship with Continuing Education. Besides publicity for all Spokane classes (including women's classes), Continuing Education offers non-credit programs for women. Couldn't we consolidate things, somehow? For example, Isabel Green, from Continuing Education, as an administrative assistant for all women's programs as well as putting her in charge of the non-credit offerings? Then we could be all together, the left hand would know what the right was doing, and we'd have two women aiming publicity and public relations where they will do the most good. (Everyone in Spokane knows the two women who run the Community College programs, which doesn't hurt their enrollments at all.)

C. Everybody gets grants but us. Actually, one priority for Women's Education Equity Act this year is "rural areas." We should qualify, and I had to find it out at a national conference.

D. Grab Bag: There are no academic women in Central Advising or in Counseling or Guidance, and there are no special programs or special information on new employment opportunities for women in the Placement Office. There are no women in History, in Government, in Sociology, in Economics—all of which makes an introduction to Women Studies course rather difficult. There is no special section on women's programs in the catalogue, and we've never had any kind of brochure such as those put out by the Junior Colleges in Spokane.

E. I need released time without hurting my short-handed department. I have too much to do—three different courses to teach, keeping up with new developments in women studies so I can notify other faculty of new scholarship in Psychology, Anthropology, History, etc. (they don't always pay attention, but maybe they will in time), ordering books for library, contacting and speaking to women's groups in Spokane, scheduling classes, etc. and etc.
F. Finally, we need some kind of base, a Woman's Center. 1) Whether this should incorporate everything to do with Women (student and faculty center with assertiveness training, job counseling, family planning information, etc. mixed in with publicity, non-credit courses, and my coordinating of the academic program), I don't know. It seems to me that an administrative assistant could organize all this from one center. 2) Or there's the other possibility of being a part, in some way, of the inter-disciplinary program now under discussion. Certainly, women studies must be interdisciplinary, but my only worry is that an all male program (and the proposed program will most likely be all male since there are virtually no women faculty in the disciplines involved) might swallow us up in tradition on the grounds that women studies have a note of advocacy and thus are not academically respectable.

PC:df

Thanks very much for your attention and time. We (Women Studies Teachers and Board) really appreciate it.