

## PROPOSAL FOR A WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM AT BROOKLYN COLLEGE

In the past few years, a vigorous nationwide demand for courses in Women's Studies has created an imperative, first to introduce such courses into the traditional curriculum, then to form Women's Studies Programs. By 1972, such programs existed at over fifty colleges and universities across the country, many offering B.A. degrees in the field. The enrollment at Brooklyn College courses which have focused on Women's Studies reveals the interest and the need for a more extensive program.

In society at large the status and position of women is currently being examined and, in some cases, transformed with rapidity and enthusiasm. The background that such a program as the one proposed would offer to students would equip them to move directly into training programs for women in law, biology, psychology, education, business, and industry -- areas where sensitivity to women's special needs is increasingly being felt and where consequently women prepared to deal directly with women's problems will have increased job possibilities. Furthermore, M.A. degree programs in the field, such as the one recently established at Sarah Lawrence, will offer students an opportunity to continue their studies on a graduate level. The burgeoning of graduate and undergraduate programs in this field indicates a pressing need to begin training its future participants and teachers.

For the instructors in a Women's Studies Program, there is offered the opportunity to develop teaching methods that will become increasingly important in the context of mass education and as the need is increasingly felt to develop approaches to the material of our heritage that make it more accessible to students not groomed in the traditional manner for courses in the history of world culture. Teaching in such a program will also have the effect of encouraging and aiding the instructors in the development of their own research in this field. Since Women's Studies is an area in which research and publication is being vigorously encouraged, many of the courses offered in the program could stimulate some important contributions to the field.

Finally, there is a positive advantage to be derived on the part of the college itself from such a program, in that it brings together teachers and students from diverse parts of a college campus which itself draws both students and faculty from disparate geographical areas. A Women's Studies Program would offer a unique opportunity for intercommunication among schools and departments.

However, a mere collection of courses, which might superficially seem to satisfy the requirements outlined above, is not a satisfactory solution to the need for the study of women. It would inevitably involve much duplication and would invite administrative chaos. Although it is clear that Women's Studies is not a discipline completely separate from all others, it lends itself most profitably to being studied in an organized and programmed way. Women's Studies in fact needs this kind of structure more than other disciplines, which are self-contained and self-defined. Since, however, some controlling administrative and intellectual structure is a real necessity, we are proposing the one that follows.