



Women's Studies Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting

April 30, 1996

Faculty: Meena Alexander, Roz Bologh, Rachel Brownstein, Sandi Cooper, Kay Deaux, Joyce Gelb, Dorothy Helly, Patricia Laurence, Nancy Miller [Florence Howe, Jane Marcus]
Students: Jennifer Disney, Tania Levey

1. The meeting began with an acceptance of the minutes from the previous meeting.
2. Joyce opened the meeting by presenting a list of achievements of the Women's Studies Certificate Program and the Center for the Study of Women and Society over the last 3 years, highlighting the AT&T-funded Internship Program, the creation of a Center Advisory Board and the then upcoming Book Party sponsored by President Horowitz. Joyce also took the opportunity to publicly thank Pat Laurence for the significant contributions she has made as Deputy Director of the Center, working consistently even without release time.
3. Joyce Gelb began the dialogue of the future of Women's Studies by outlining three areas for discussion:
 - A. Rotation Between Social Sciences and Humanities:
No room for succession?
 - B. Timing of Term:
When does the Coordinator's term end: June 1996 or December 1996?
 - C. Relationship Between Women's Studies and the Center:
Should they stay together?

Joyce raised the issue of whether or not a hard and fast rule of mandatory rotation is always best. She made the point that it often takes time to get your foot in the door, make contacts, and build relationships, particularly with foundations. Dorothy Helly commented that many Women's Studies departments around the country have 5-year rather than 3-year terms.

Nancy Miller pointed out that the rotation idea was part of a democratizing move toward inclusion when at the program's inception it remained too long in the hands of a few people. She also commented that there is no need for an extension of the 3-year term because despite the claim to interdisciplinarity, the students feel the social science/ humanities divide. Sandi Cooper also supported the rotation idea particularly because the CUNY consortium offers a special opportunity for the commitment to and respect of diversity both among and between the campuses.

Meena Alexander noted the complexity of the issue for her by acknowledging both the importance of the need for rotation while at the same time understanding the desire for follow-through when ideas and events have been set in motion. Kay Deaux agreed that the idea of rotation was important for Women's Studies, especially given the richness of faculty, yet also put forth the view that maybe 3-year terms with mandatory rotation is not the best approach for the Center. The commitment to rotation of the WSCP coordinator was confirmed.

4. The decision about whether or not to split the Women's Studies Certificate Program and the Center for the Study of Women and Society was taken up next. Joyce Gelb stated that such a decision will involve the disposition of the outgoing and incoming coordinator as well as how the President feels. President Horowitz seems inclined to keep the two together since it has worked successfully the past 3 years.

Whether or not the current combined administration actually saves or costs the Graduate Center money depends upon how the coordinators are being paid. Roz pointed out that Joyce negotiated a full time appointment, which resulted in the combined administration of the WSCP and the Center. This is comparable to 2 course releases. Joyce also mentioned the difficulty of running programs that are physically separate.

5. The timing of the end of the WSCP Coordinator's term has been confirmed in writing by the Provost's Office and the President as both June 1996 and December 1996. There was some discussion of extending the term to December so the outgoing and incoming coordinators could work together to facilitate a smooth transition period. Rachel Brownstein felt that if anyone should have a strong say in that decision, Joyce should. Joyce responded by saying that it depends on both her fall schedule and the feelings of the candidate for succession.

6. The process for choosing a new Coordinator for the WSCP was discussed. The president solicits nominations from Women's Studies faculty and students. If consensus can be reached on one candidate, the faculty as a whole can then make a recommendation to the President, who ultimately makes the decision. If there are multiple candidates, many recommendations can be made. Electa Arenal is one candidate whose interest was confirmed at this time.