



The Graduate School and University Center
of The City University of New York

Center for the Study of Women and Society / Box 135-192
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June 13, 1983

Ms. Gladys Chang Hardy
Program Officer in Charge
Education and Culture Program
The Ford Foundation
320 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Ms. Hardy:

Enclosed is a proposal "Center for the Study of Women and Society: Plans for Expansion and Future Development." The period covered for the project is October 1, 1983 to August 31, 1984; the total amount is \$ 49,690.

I am very excited about these plans and would be pleased to discuss them with you in greater detail if you wish. I will be away until the middle of next week, but then, will be at the Center through mid-August.

Sincerely,

Mary Brown Parlee
Director

Countersigned by:

Paula Carien
Director, Office of
Sponsored Research

June 13, 1983

Center for the Study of Women and Society
Plans for Expansion and Further Development

Mary Brown Parlee, Director

As a result of work over the past two and one half years, supported in part by a development grant from The Ford Foundation (\$57,000) and in part by the Graduate Center (\$84,500), the Center for the Study of Women and Society is beginning to do in fact what it was established to do in principle. It has begun to serve as a focus for coordinated activity among faculty and students throughout the 21-campus City University of New York. This occurs through the Newsletter (Appendix A), the newly-formed CUNY Feminist Network, the directory of CUNY feminist researchers and scholars (Appendix B), and renewed interest among faculty in working toward increased communication and coordination of research and Women's Studies activities among the campuses.

This development of the Center has occurred despite the considerable structural barriers operating to oppose the functioning of CUNY as a university.¹ Such persistence by faculty and students strongly suggests that the Center's activities are meeting real needs of the individuals involved. Given the potential of the City University of New York to be the premier urban university in the country, combining a strong faculty, a historic mission to serve middle and working class populations, and a diverse student body, it is encouraging - indeed, exciting - to see that feminist scholars, researchers, and students have been in the forefront of building organizational structures that seem to work, in a small way, toward combining and developing these strengths.

The development of a continuing organizational structure to facilitate and support women's research at CUNY is a necessary first stage in our effort to reach out to other institutions and populations in New York City and to integrate women's research into mainstream teaching and research within the university. Thus far, we have been most successful with this effort through two sets of activities.

In the area of health concerns, one of the principle research foci of the Center, substantial connections with researchers at Mt. Sinai School of Medicine (a part of CUNY) are beginning to bear fruit, not only in the form of our highly successful seminar series, but also in identification of individual researchers who now have appointments at both Mt. Sinai and at the Graduate Center or other CUNY campus. A group of women has also formed at

Mt. Sinai and has received funding to assess the feasibility of establishing a research group in Community Psychiatry. The Center has been represented in these discussions by Charlotte Muller, a member of our Executive Committee, and I keep in touch with the organizers (Myrna Weiss, Marcia Hurst, Sam Bloom). Our thinking is that once the group is established at Mt. Sinai, closer coordination with the Center at the Graduate Center will be formalized. Our hope is that this would strengthen not only joint research efforts, but also the emergence of a coordinated graduate curriculum in health and the behavioral sciences (which continues to be discussed at the Graduate Center), a curriculum in which women's health issues would be an integral part from the beginning.

The second way in which the Center's outreach activities are beginning to pay off is through the CUNY Feminist Network and through related efforts that I participate in with a group of research center and women's studies directors in the the New York metropolitan area. The CUNY Feminist Network is a broad-based, grass-roots group of CUNY faculty and students who meet to discuss both intellectual/personal/political issues around the integration of sex, race, and class perspectives in the content and forms of academic life and also political actions in support of women and minorities at CUNY.

In the meetings of the Network there is an excitement that I think has been too often missing in feminist scholarship and women's studies recently: a feeling of creative excitement and personal commitment to the role of intellectual activity in the struggle for social justice. In my experience, it is groups of this kind that most consistently focus on the interconnectedness of issues around gender, race, and class, and which know and act on the understanding that the body of researchers and scholars has to be diverse (in race, age, sexual orientation, and the like) if the body of knowledge produced in the academy is to be true and useful for effecting social change. It is the creative potential of groups such as this which compensates for the additional work and occasional frustration I encounter in trying to mesh the energy of the group with the organizational structures through which changes will have to be made in CUNY.

An understanding of the necessity for diversity in formulation of activities, ideas, and strategies has also been the basis of the first coordinated activity to be carried out by the New York Metropolitan research and women's studies group.² We are planning an event in the fall to begin the development of curricular materials and discussions of teaching that will enable faculty to incorporate race, sexual orientation, and class perspectives into traditional content and modes of instruction. The fall event will bring together a very diverse group of

individuals concerned with these issues; specific ways of formulating the topic and planning coordinated activities will come out of this expanded group. (A series of workshops on different campuses, followed by a general conference to discuss the outcomes and strategies for the future is one possibility the smaller planning group envisaged.)

The planning meetings for this effort by the New York Metropolitan group have been held at the Center. This has been done with the explicit assumption that CUNY would be the natural place to locate, both because of the size and diversity of the student body and its faculty, and also because of CUNY's image - an accurate one - as a public institution committed to the interests of the diverse publics it is intended to serve. I have agreed to coordinate the mailing lists as we begin to work, and, not surprisingly, the existence of CUNY Feminist Network list and the directory of CUNY faculty and students means the work of getting this new, regional, network off the ground is already well underway.

The Center for the Study of Women and Society at CUNY's Graduate Center is thus beginning to serve as the kind of coordinating, facilitating umbrella organization for CUNY that was planned at its inception. Our need now is to strengthen these ongoing activities and to plan systematically both for expansion and for more effective coordination over the next few years. In order to strengthen the CUNY network of researchers and scholars, our goals over the next year are 1) to identify and actively recruit more minority scholars interested in research on women and society and 2) to integrate their activities with ongoing and new research projects in the Center. Both the active recruitment and the development of specific research projects incorporating sex, ethnicity, and class perspectives are essential if the Center is to promote research and scholarship that are appropriate for the mission of the university and the urban constituencies it is intended to serve. Even if we were located in an elite private institution, however, incorporation of broader and more diverse perspectives (almost always related to a more broadly diverse group of researchers) is necessary if research and scholarship about women is to fulfill its initial promise of developing more complete and more accurate knowledge than traditional scholarship has done.

Like many organizations, even with substantial minority group participation in its formal governing structures, the Center's day-to-day outreach activities have been only moderately effective in attracting faculty and students whose research focusses on concerns of women and men of different ethnic and racial minorities. During the next year we propose to recruit and involve more such researchers through a two stage process.

On the one hand, we will restaff and restructure our major outreach activities to highlight work of minority scholars within CUNY that is related to women's issues. This will be done through the Newsletter (the "cover story", the books reviewed, the reviewers), the CUNY Feminist Network Conference (a major address and workshops by minority scholars have already been scheduled for Fall, 1983, conference), and through active efforts to identify and integrate minority scholars working on women into the next revision of the CUNY feminist research directory (revision planned for Spring, 1984).

To expand and strengthen our networks within CUNY takes time, money, and a concentrated effort to reach the target groups of minority faculty and students. The Center now has the necessary organizational structures in place to focus on this active recruitment with a reasonable likelihood of success.³ It also now has a group of people involved in the Center who genuinely want to strengthen and diversify their research networks, and who have identified appropriate faculty and students in the university who can guide and assist this effort. Specifically, the 16 minority researchers and scholars who have indicated their interest in being included in the CUNY feminist research directory will be asked to serve as a steering committee to recommend people and procedures for 1) substantially expanding the network of minority researchers and scholars, 2) developing programs and projects to highlight their research and other work incorporating sex, ethnicity, and class perspectives, and 3) integrating this work with that of other scholars at the Center. Because CUNY faculty have generally heavy teaching loads, particularly at the community colleges, we are requesting released time for a core group from (or recommended by) the steering committee so that they can spend time at the Center to carry out this work. We are also requesting seed money and a part-time research assistant to support some of the programs and research projects (in their pilot form) which the group recommends.

The second phase of the Center's effort over the coming year will be to use the expanding networks and their activities to develop working relationships among researchers who want to or are already working on projects where multiple perspectives (based on sex, ethnicity, and class) must necessarily be taken into account in the research. Thus far, four such projects have been identified as possibilities (see Appendix C). Two of them involve integration of feminist and minority perspectives into "mainstream" research; one involves a continued focus on women's health issues with minority concerns more clearly integrated into the research; one involves integration of feminist and minority-feminist perspectives with the research of a minority male faculty member at the Graduate Center. We hope that other such opportunities for collaborative

research with multiple perspectives will develop as the result of interactions among researchers in the Center and at the Graduate Center over the course of the year. We are requesting released time or research assistant support for participation in the projects already identified so that minority scholars associated with the Center can have substantial input into the projects from their earliest stages.

In sum, then, we are proposing to devote the next year largely to active efforts to integrate minority group members and research on women of different ethnic and racial minorities into the workings of the Center. The first phase will be to expand and strengthen the Center's network of CUNY feminist researchers by explicitly focussing our major outreach activities on research about minority women's issues and by minority scholars. The second phase will be to integrate these researchers and their work and perspectives into specific ongoing and developing research projects in the Center and in other units of the university. Our budget request is for support to do this in the way most likely to be effective and productive within the organizational structures of the City University and of the Center. We see these efforts as critical to the development of a first-rate research center, one where the work is both intellectually incisive and practically relevant. It is the next step in building an organizational structure we think can make a difference in the university and in the knowledge it produces, as well as in the ways research is developed and used outside the university.

Footnotes

¹The barriers include the history of independence and rivalry among the senior colleges, the status-related tensions among community colleges, four year colleges, and the Graduate Center, and the usual money- and turf-related pressures against work in a research center at the Graduate Center rather than in traditional departments at the campuses. In addition, there are the practical problems inherent in developing any CUNY-wide activity: lack of coordination of class schedules and other activities at the campuses and the geographic spread of the units of the university.

²This group was convened by Cathrine Stimpson, Director of the Rutgers University Institute for Research on Women. It has met monthly for the past eighteen months. It consists of representatives from Rutgers, New York University, Barnard, Sarah Lawrence, The New School for Social Research, and the City University of New York (Hunter College, the Graduate Center). Mariam Chamberlain, of the Russel Sage Foundation, also is a regular participant.

³While it might have been desirable to make ethnic and racial diversity in research perspectives the major focus of the Center since its inception, it took some time to gain a foothold within the institution and, in doing so, to appreciate the ways in which homogeneity is almost invariably maintained by traditional organizational structures. We now believe that explicit positive actions, supported in the financial terms that those in the institution understand, are necessary to overcome this organizational inertia.

Requested Budget
(October 1, 1983 - August 31, 1984)

	Requested from Ford	CUNY Contribution
Director's salary		\$41,910*
Secretary/admin. asst. (20 hrs/wk)	\$4,500	4,500
Newsletter	3,000	
CUNY Feminist Network		
Student assistant (15 hrs/wk, 4 wks)		552
Conference		2,000
Directory of CUNY women's studies faculty and students (updating, Spring, 1984)	750	
Steering Committee		
Faculty released time (3 faculty, 1 course each)	9,000	
Consultant fees (10 faculty, 300 each)	3,000	
Graduate Assistant - Steering Committee (15 hrs/wk; 10 mos)	2,340	
Research Assistants (4 @ 15hrs/wk; 10 mos) or additional faculty released time	23,400	
Seed Money (research expenses)	2,600	
Supplies, postage, xerox	500	1,500
Computer Time		800
Telephone	600	200
Annual Dues, NCRW		100
Totals	49,690	51,562
	(Requested from The Ford Foundation)	(CUNY Contribution)

* All salaries and wages include fringe benefits: 27% for Director's salary, 20% for research and support staff.

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample copies of the Center for the Study of Women and Society's Newsletter.

Appendix B: Draft copy of the CUNY Feminist Directory. (It will be printed in July, 1983).

Appendix C: Research projects integrating sex, ethnicity, and class perspectives in which minority scholars in the Center could collaborate.

Appendix C

Research Projects integrating sex, ethnicity,
and class perspectives

- A. Women activists in community organizations and neighborhoods. (With Professor Marilyn Gittell, Department of Political Science and Director of the Community Project at the CUNY Graduate Center).

- B. Nutritional and other health-related behaviors during pregnancy in urban adolescents. (With Professor Mary Parlee, Department of Psychology and Director of the Center for the Study of Women and Society, and with Professor Barbara Katz Rothman, Department of Sociology at CUNY's Baruch College and the Graduate Center).

- C. Hispanic and Caribbean Peoples in American Foreign Policy, an Educational Project. (With Professor Ronald Helman, Director of the Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies, CUNY Graduate Center).

- D. Development of Early Reading Strategies in Kindergarten. (With Professor Dalton Miller-Jones, Department of Psychology).