

1980

Program Notes- Jan. 1980

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WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM
NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Vol. 5, No. 1

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PROGRAM NOTES

UNI'S WOMEN'S COALITION "WORKS"

The new UNI Women's Coalition may still be in its formative stages, with its structure only recently approved and its member groups or caucuses (faculty, black women, students, Latina and Lesbian) still in the initial stages of organization, but already the coalition spirit of collaboration and cooperation among women on this campus has begun to make itself felt in very real ways.

Panel Presentation: Women and Power

During the fall term, members of the identified caucuses of the Coalition met in their own groups as well as together to consider Coalition organization and for programs of general interest to all women. Of the latter, a significant contribution was the panel presentation on "Women and Power," given by five faculty women from two departments on December 11, 1979. The session drew upon the expertise of Donna Iven-Qureshi, Martha Thompson, Mary Ann Schwartz (Sociology), Ellen Cannon and Valerie Simms (Political Science), each of whom addressed the topic of power from a different perspective.

Iven-Qureshi defined power and presented strategies for its achievement. She stated that women must be organized and do their "homework." Goals must be specific and to reach them women first must exhaust all channels within the given hierarchy (the University), and all of them must be willing to contribute their energies in a collective effort. If necessary, confrontation politics should be used.

Ellen Cannon answered the questions of whether women's being in power makes a difference, whether we should re-define power and how the existing framework affects women. It is not unhealthy, she maintained, for women to become part of the existing framework, but they must accomplish this collectively, for the presence of a few individual women in positions of power does not indicate change or affect the traditional control by men.

Valerie Simms spoke to the notion of co-optation, a bargain that is made between the co-opters (those in power) with the co-optees (those who seek power). She observed that the latter are usually confined in chaos-producing or unpredictable environments and hold marginal interests. In their "bargain" with co-opters, they gain access to information but lose their capacity to "surprise," often must share responsibility for unwanted decisions, and, in working with the co-opters, must recognize them as persons

to whom they are prone to develop loyalties. In exchange, the co-opters also take risks. In particular, they risk their established stability and predictability. Martha Thompson demonstrated the distribution of power within this University using a flow chart showing that power goes down through a hierarchy of positions which grant to persons in those positions a designated amount of power. Informally some rules may be broken by "by-passing" positions and making alliances with those holding greater power. Power-seekers must make themselves visible and (especially faculty) select goals that are relevant to those of the University.

Mary Ann Schwartz summarized the session by emphasizing and expanding upon previously made points. She affirmed that power is the reality in which we live and that it is always successful in achieving ends. If it isn't successful, it isn't power. Those who have it act as though they do and maintain that they speak for numbers of people, i.e., the "majority." They are identified with an organization and are skilled and competent. In general, the session spoke to the importance of the coalition concept. If women are to "tip" the balance of power in their favor they must work collectively and energetically toward recognized and agreed upon goals. They must demonstrate their right to authority by making use of and sharing their skills and knowledge in public ways, and they must acknowledge that in doing so they are indeed exercising power.

Sexual Harassment Brochure in Progress

It was around their shared concern over sexual harassment on this campus that Northeastern women first demonstrated their unanimity and from which the notion of the Women's Coalition emerged. In October, fortified with last year's survey of women from all segments of the University on the incidence of sexual harassment, a selected group of women administrators, faculty, Civil Service personnel and students (most of whom were involved in Women's Studies, Women's Services or the Feminist Club) met with President Ronald Williams and the University's Vice Presidents to discuss, among other issues, its incidence and possible courses of action to counter or eliminate it.

With President Williams' sympathetic response and agreement to issue a policy statement against the practice of sexual harassment, a group of women volunteered to work with Barbara Hursh, Assistant to the President/Affirmative Action Officer, to research the subject and develop a brochure that will include Williams' statement, informational material, coping strategies and a University grievance procedure. Jill Omansky of the Women's Services office is now the convenor of this group of women, which has been meeting regularly since November and hopes to complete the brochure this spring.

Women's Film Festival

This same spirit of collaboration is being demonstrated in plans for a festival of films and video tapes by women, which is scheduled for three days, March 12-14, at UNI. Initiated by Women's Studies, Women's Services, the Office of Affirmative Action and the Feminist Club, the festival planning committee now includes representation from CCAB and the expertise of Karen Peugh, Producer/Director - TV Services, and Maria Moraites, Associate Professor, both of Learning Services. At this writing, the program will include two days (Wednesday and Friday) of films and video tapes by Chicago-area women including documentaries, biographies and artistically expressive works, and one day (Thursday) of films addressing contemporary social issues of concern to women. Local film-makers will be present to speak about their own works, and critics will lead discussion sessions regarding feminist content, aesthetics and methods.

The entire program, then, will be planned and sponsored by women from throughout the University and if it elicits enough interest, it may be repeated next year.

BROWN BAG SEMINARS

Sponsored by the Women's Studies Program at Northeastern Illinois University. Informal discussions will alternate with special programs on women's issues. Men as well as women are invited. Bring a bag lunch and drink; coffee will no longer be available. Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.; second floor of the Commuter Center.

Tuesday/February 19, 1980 1:00-2:00 p.m. cc-217

NEW ROLES FOR MIDWIVES Sue Meyering
Historical perspectives of midwifery in the United States. Controversies facing modern midwives with a focus on home birth.

Tuesday/March 18, 1980 1:00-2:00 p.m. cc-214

ASTROLOGY, MYTHOLOGY AND FEMINISM Linda Hodshire
An exploration of the role of women in mythology and astrology; folk lore and legends of the Cosmos. A look at the horoscopes of famous feminists and a discussion on a newly discovered planet and its possible connection with the feminist movement.

Tuesday/April 1, 1980 1:00-2:00 p.m. cc-214

LATINA POETS AND THEIR WORK Edward Hayes
Mr. Edward Hayes of the Foreign Language Department, Oak Park-River Forest High School, will present a program on five 20th century Latina poets. He will read, in Spanish, selections that express their experiences and feelings as women and Latinas, paraphrasing the selections and commenting in English.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Women's Studies Symposium

The Women's Studies Program will hold its third Symposium of Papers in Women's Studies next fall in mid-October. We are asking persons who wish to present papers to submit typed abstracts, not to exceed one page, to the Women's Studies office, C-520, by August 22, 1980.

Announcements from Women's Services

The following seminars are offered through the office of Women's Services, B-114. For further information, call X375. Coordinator of Women's Service: Marge Witty; Secretary: Jill Omansky.

1. On Tuesday, February 26, Ingrid Magan-Eng will present an hour long seminar on Self-Defense for Women. This will be oriented toward women with no prior training. A film, "Rape: Victim or Victor," will be shown and a non-lethal chemical weapon will be demonstrated and will be available for purchase. The seminar will be held twice; at 12:00 p.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. in CC-217.
2. On Thursday, March 13, Renny Golden will present her slide show, "Come a Long Way to Stand Here," the stories of four women's lives in Chicago. This will be held at 12:00 noon in the Commuter Center as part of the Women's Film Festival.

The Office of Women's Services is offering a support groups for women who are victims of incest. This group is open to the community free of charge. To join, contact Joan Margolis at 583-4050, X375 on Thursdays.

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PROGRAM NOTES
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