

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S STUDIES

PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE

PROGRAMME IN WOMEN'S STUDIES AND A CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

(May, 1985)

What we intend to propose is an undergraduate degree programme in Women's Studies, most probably a Bachelor of Arts. Related to the development of a degree programme is an autonomous centre or institute whose focus is Women's Studies.

The degree programme would in all likelihood be very similar in structure to the existing B.A. (Canadian Studies) degree. For instance, it would be a four-year (twenty course) program with a minimum of eight core Women's Studies courses. Specialization would be within an established discipline or across two disciplines or perhaps even a specialization of a multidisciplinary nature involving courses in more than one faculty.

Such a proposal for a B.A. (Women's Studies) raises at least two questions:

- (1) Within the existing structure of the university, who would offer such a degree?
- (2) Is there a need for some autonomous structure within the university whose focus is Women's Studies?

We believe that most students interested in Women's Studies will be those who wish to enrol in a liberal arts programme. Since the majority of the existing undergraduate courses dealing specifically with women are taught in Departments within the Faculty of Arts (see attached information), that faculty would appear to be the most logical "home" for a B.A. (Women's Studies).

However, academic staff are needed to develop and teach the new core courses in Women's Studies which are fundamental to the degree. Someone must also be responsible for ensuring the further development and coordination of appropriate courses in the traditional disciplines not only within the Faculty of Arts but within other faculties as well.

What we envision is a centre or institute which would provide not only a "home" and physical setting (e.g., the Emily Murphy House) but also a focus for Women's Studies at the University of Alberta. The name is not important at this stage, but for the sake of convenience, we call it the Centre for Women's Studies. Several such centres and institutes already exist on this campus: for example, the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, the Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies, and the Centre for Advanced Study in Theoretical Psychology.

There are also several institutes in Canada with both a teaching and research function whose focus is Women's Studies such as the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at Concordia University in Montreal and The Institute for the Study of Women at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. Numerous such centres and institutes exist in the United States.

The proposed Centre for Women's Studies would have a director/coordinator and secretarial/administrative support but be primarily comprised of members of the academic staff from various faculties who are responsible to the Centre and also their home department (joint appointments or temporary secondment). Eventually, the Centre would attract research scholars from other institutions and universities as well as developing its own research activities.

Members of the Centre for Women's Studies would be responsible for student advising, program planning and overall programme decisions in the B.A. (Women's Studies) in collaboration primarily with the Faculty of Arts but also other faculties/departments who agree to offer approved Women's Studies courses. Members of the Centre would also teach the core Women's Studies courses as well as the approved courses in their own disciplines.

Finally, the Centre for Women's Studies would seek to aid in the coordination of Women's Studies throughout the province through close cooperation with, for example, Athabasca University and the University of Calgary, both of which have already developed programmes in Women's Studies.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (MAY 29, 1985)

1. Need to specify details of the degree program
2. Feminist studies versus women's studies (given this and conflicting ideologies, don't push idea of control over course ideology too far)
3. Document student interest in program and need for space for students
4. Stress research -- statement of scholarly activities currently going on and in what ways centre will contribute to and expand on this
5. Graduate students and program
6. Show why we are not a duplication of Calgary and Athabasca
7. Relationship to Women's Program in the Faculty of Extension
8. Include the sciences
9. Separate unit (autonomy) versus remaining in the disciplines, if goal is to transform the disciplines
10. Justify administrator/bureaucracy to administer one (small) degree program
11. Separate cost of each part for budget purposes
12. Given that some courses will be outside the Faculty of Arts, will need to ensure that those faculties will accept our students (i.e., Faculty of Arts may be willing to let students take outside courses, but other faculties will not let them do so)
13. Why is a separate entity necessary; why not a program like Canadian Studies?
14. Given the two components (program and research centre), if funds are allocated for one component, do we then have the complete thing?