



to: Dean White

date: May 31, 1985

our file:

from: P. Clements
Assistant Dean

your file:

subject: New Initiative in Women's Studies

Here is the finished proposal for a New Initiative in Women's Studies. The Vice-President's Women's Studies Advisory Committee looked at it yesterday, and Dr. Hall will be writing to you in support of the proposal.

I would like to suggest at this point that if the proposal is approved, the Women's Studies Advisory Committee be included in deliberations on the appointment: since the person appointed in Women's Studies is going to need to work very closely with that committee, and since there will certainly be a proposal, perhaps soon, for a degree in Women's Studies, it is important that the selection committee include representation from that group.

The Women's Studies Advisory Committee was delighted at the prospect of some swift action and very pleased indeed at the willingness of the Faculty of Arts to move in this area.

Patricia Clements

encl.

Faculty of Arts Proposal for a New Initiative in Women's Studies

Background, Context, and Justification

Women's Studies has been a developing academic field in Canada since the nineteen-sixties, when, as Naomi Black writes, "the revived Women's Movement gave a focus to concerns about the rigidities and biases of the established academic disciplines." The Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970) documented the situation of women in Canada and demonstrated "the urgency of developing a scholarship that would eventually be incorporated into the curriculum."¹ Since then, the field of Women's Studies has grown dramatically: in the past fifteen years, there has developed an extensive and sophisticated theoretical literature, and scholarly research and publication abounds. New journals have appeared, as have research institutes and centres for study of women. By all of these means, feminist scholarship has opened the academic disciplines to a new and productive examination.

Women's studies is now firmly established in university curricula in this country and elsewhere. There are degree programs in Women's Studies at numerous American universities and colleges, including the Universities of Cornell, Yale, Michigan and California at Berkeley. In Canada, degrees in Women's Studies are offered by Simon Fraser, Mount Saint Vincent, Concordia, Toronto, Guelph, and York. A 1983 number of Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation Sur la Recherche Féministe²

Studies at other Canadian Universities: at Carleton students can concentrate on Women's Studies in a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies; Laurentian offers a certificate in Women's Studies; McGill, Manitoba, and Memorial University all offer a minor in Women's Studies; Ottawa offers an interdisciplinary program in Women's Studies; Ryerson Polytechnical Institute offers a Women's Studies program in the sociology department; Vanier College offers a major; and Wilfrid Laurier University offers a Women's Studies Option, to be taken in combination with any general or honours program. Among universities which do not offer degrees (or any formal program) but which do include women's studies courses among their offerings are UBC, Bishop's, McMaster, OISE, Université du Québec à Montréal, Queen's, St. Francis Xavier University, St. Mary's University, Sherbrooke, Trent, and Windsor. In 1983, when Resources for Feminist Research published its survey, the University of New Brunswick, St. Thomas University (Fredericton, New Brunswick), and Conestoga College of Applied Arts & Technology were preparing Women's Studies programs.

Our nearest neighbours are also engaged in Women's Studies education: at the University of Calgary, Women's Studies has the status of a minor field of study in the Faculty of General Studies or it can comprise either a major or an honors program in Humanities, Science or Social Sciences; and Athabasca University is in the process now of developing a full program in Women's Studies.

Women's Studies at the University of Alberta

At the University of Alberta the possibility of a Women's Studies program was raised in the Senate Task Force Report of 1975 and following positive student response to A Women's Studies Sampler (a lecture series organized in 1973 by Professor Jean Lauber), which demonstrated one of the kinds of interdisciplinarity suitable to work in Women's Studies. Reflecting persistent and growing student demand, there has been an increasing activity ever since: various departments and Faculties have offered credit courses with Women's Studies content -- the AWA has for several years published a list of these for students' use at registration -- and the Woman's Program in the Faculty of Extension in 1981 has developed an extensive list of non-credit courses.

Most recently, the activity has crystallized around two events, the application (by a Committee chaired by Dr. Zelmer) for one of the Chairs in Women's Studies which have been funded by the Secretary of State and the establishment of the Vice-President's Advisory Committee on Women's Studies (Chaired by Dr. Hall). Though our application for the Chair was not successful, its preparation made us aware of our resources: it showed clearly that this University is well equipped to support both teaching and research in Women's Studies. The work of the Vice-President's Advisory Committee has also demonstrated the breadth of interest at this University in creation of a full program in Women's Studies. It is comprised of, among others, members of the Faculties of Arts, Education, Business, Law, Physical Education, Home Economics, Extension, and Science.

Women's Studies in the Faculty of Arts

The Faculty of Arts has been closely involved in the development of Women's Studies at the University of Alberta from the outset. Its departments are almost certain to have a critical presence in any Women's Studies program developed at the University of Alberta, for the reciprocal reasons that, on the one hand, the arts disciplines must be central to any feminist examination of culture and society, and, on the other, almost all of the arts disciplines are themselves affected by the development of feminist studies.

Departments in the Faculty of Arts have for some years now been offering courses in the Women's Studies areas. Among courses in the Women's Studies areas which have been offered recently are these in the Faculty of Arts: Anthropology 410: Sex and Status in Comparative Perspective; Canadian Studies 401: Canadian Feminism; Comparative Literature 366: Women in World Literature; English 470: Modern Novels by Women; English 670: Feminism and Literature; History 206: Introduction to the History of Women; History 371: History of Women in Canadian Society; History 413: Women in Modern European History; History 470: Seminar in Women and the Family; Sociology 301: Sociology of Sex Roles; Sociology 491: Gender Stratification and Differentiation; Sociology 577: Seminar in Sex Stratification and Differentiation.

This is, however, a relatively slender list, and not all of these courses are fixed offerings. The English courses,

for instance, were given under variable rubrics, and they were one-time only offerings by individual staff members and not permanent offerings of the Department. Moreover, in several of our disciplines, Women's Studies courses have not yet been developed; nor do we have any interdisciplinary courses in Women's Studies; and we have no courses in the "core" area itself. It is for development of curriculum in the area of Women's Studies that we are seeking support under the New Initiatives Program.

The Proposal

We propose two full time equivalent academic appointments in Women's Studies. One of these should be a new tenure-track appointment at the level of assistant professor, the other should consist of of a hard budget line for sessional replacement in various departments as need arises. The duties we propose for the two are outlined below.

The new appointment, whose training would be in a Women's Studies field, would have two chief responsibilities. The first would be to develop, establish, and teach two new full-course equivalents in Women's Studies. These would be "core courses" in Women's Studies: they would deal with the matter and methodology of Women's Studies itself. They cannot be described in detail at this stage, but they might resemble, for instance, "W.S. 210" and "W.S. 310" at Mount Saint Vincent University --"Introduction to Feminist Critique" and "Women's Studies Methodologies." Or they might resemble those outlined in the York University Proposal for

An Interdisciplinary Programme in Women's Studies for the Faculty of Arts. (See attached description of their core course, "On Woman": "An introduction to Women's Studies . . . [which] explores the situation of women in various social and cultural contexts. Using the tools and methodologies of the Humanities and the Social Sciences, it approaches the subject in multi-and interdisciplinary ways.")

The second major responsibility of the new appointment in Women's Studies, which would represent one-third of the appointment, would be co-ordination -- such co-ordination as is made necessary by the second part of this proposal and by the need to maintain close co-operation with the Women's Studies Advisory Committee as it works out its program in Women's Studies.

The second part of this proposal is for one full-time-equivalent in sessional replacement funds. The object of this part of the proposal is flexibility in course development. An FTE in the form of a variable and divisible hard budget line could release time for the development of courses in various disciplines and in interdisciplinary areas. These funds could release between three and six people per year (for one, two, or three year periods as required) for development and establishment of new courses. This release time would work as a kind of continuing seed money or incentive: the women's studies funds would support development and early teaching of a course in a departmental or inter-departmental area which would, after demonstrating its usefulness in the host departmental curricula,

become a departmental responsibility. The Women's Studies funds would then move on to some other area in which course development seemed necessary or desirable. (The Women's Studies Advisory Committee is currently establishing a precedent for this procedure in an arrangement with the Department of Philosophy: the Committee on its side has made available funds for the teaching of a course in the Department; the Department has agreed that if the course demonstrates its viability it will make it part of its regular offerings.)

The attachments to this proposal (lists of courses offered in Mount St. Vincent and in York Universities) suggest areas of possible development under this scheme: Women's Studies courses could be developed in practically every area in the Faculty of Arts and in several of them in combination with one another.

Cost

At present rates, this proposal would cost \$29,720 (floor of assistant professor) plus \$21,450 (1 FTE sessional replacement, estimated at \$6,500 per fce plus 10%), for a total of \$51,170.

Administration

The Faculty of Arts has models for the administration of such appointments in the early stages of its Canadian Studies Program and in its Film Studies Program, which, in the absence of a departmental organization, have been administered by the Arts Faculty Office.

Notes:

¹Naomi Black, Co-ordinator, and the Women's Studies Committee of York University, Faculty of Arts, Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Programme in Women's studies for the Faculty of Arts, unpublished document dated 13 January, 1983, p.1.

²Somer Brodribb, with others, "Women's Studies Canada 1983/Études féminines au canada 1983," Resources for Feminist Research/Documentation sur la recherche féministe, XII.3(November, 1983), 53-69.