An Interview with Professor Karen Peterson
by Kristen Eshman, MPH student in GSPH Dept. of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences

Karen Peterson

1. Please tell us your academic background, including degrees you’ve earned and universities you’ve attended.

I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1953 with a baccalaureate degree in nursing. I moved around the country before moving to Pittsburgh in 1967. I had taken some courses in public health at Portland State University, Oregon. Public health was my favorite rotation in nursing and these additional courses convinced me that this was what I wanted to do as a career. I received the MPH degree from the University of Pittsburgh GSPH in 1970 and immediately began employment as a public health nurse with the Allegheny County Department of Health (ACHD). After a year with the ACHD I was employed as a program coordinator for the Family Service Center at Mercy Hospital, Pittsburgh. The focus of care at the Center was maternal and child health – prenatal care, immediate postpartum care, family planning, and pediatric (well-baby) care. The emphasis was health education and promotion.

2. What brought you to the University of Pittsburgh and how long have you taught here?

Dr. John Cutler, the Chair of the Department of Health Services Administration at that time, knew about my work at Mercy Hospital and asked if I would like a position as Assistant Professor with the GSPH in HSA. Of course this was an opportunity I could not refuse because of the position and because it would give me the opportunity to pursue doctoral studies at Pitt, which I began in GSPHA in public policy and administration. I have been a member of the faculty since 1972.

3. What are some of the other responsibilities you have had and now have at the university?

I have held several positions while at Pitt (my rationale for not completing my doctoral studies). I have maintained my faculty position as a non-tenured faculty member. Prior to 1983, I was responsible for student counseling for the MPH students in the Department. From 1983-1984 I was Director of Admissions for the GSPH and from 1984-1990 I was the Assistant Dean for Student & Alumni Affairs for the GSPH. During that time I also taught classes in the Department. In 1990 I returned to the Department to continue my teaching and research responsibilities. In 1992 to the present time I have been the Coordinator for the Doctoral Program. In 1998 I also assumed the responsibilities of coordinating the MPH Program in the Department. Recently I was appointed Associate Chair for Educational Programs for the Department. Currently, I am also responsible for teaching four courses, advising master (MPH) and doctoral (DrPH) students concerning their independent studies, essays, theses and dissertations and assisting them in the process of obtaining internships. Additionally, I am on the Steering Committee of the Women’s Studies Program. I have the opportunity, as well, to serve on a number of Department, School and University Committees.

4. You are currently teaching a graduate course in Women’s Studies, “Population Policy and Reproductive Health.” What is the goal of this course?

The purpose of this course is to help the class participants understand how population policies, national and international, as well as organizational frameworks and policies, have evolved and what impact these policies and structures have had with respect to the delivery of reproductive health care to Third World women and, also, how the reproductive rights of women have been and are affected.

5. What kinds of issues are being addressed in this class?

The emphasis on reaching demographic goals (i.e., reducing fertility rates) rather than providing comprehensive reproductive health care has been a primary issue. Other issues that are being covered are discussions concerning how perspectives based on Multiple Thinking, Eugenics, and the medicalization of birth control services have affected international family planning programs specifically. Specific abuses with respect to birth control such as sterilization abuse and policies and campaigns using incentives and disincentives that do not allow women (and men) to exercise their right to choose the method of birth control that would be right for them are topics for discussion. These discussions cover the restrictions that have been implemented and are in place with respect to reproductive rights and the responses that have been articulated and are being said about what is necessary to protect our reproductive rights and assure that all women have access to comprehensive and appropriate reproductive health care.

6. What texts are you reading in this class?

The texts include: Betsy Hartmann, Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control and Sandra Coliver, “The Right to Know: Human Rights and Access to Reproductive Health Information,” as well as selected chapters from various other books, journals, and the Internet provided as handouts.

7. Can you tell us a little bit about some of the other courses you’ve taught?

Two other courses I teach, “Seminar in Family Planning” and “Introduction to Population Problems,” have similar emphases. The Family Planning Seminar explores the history of the birth control movement and where we are today with respect to programs and services, including sexuality education. The Population course explores the rationale for and issue of population control and the population control movement with discussion of how we are today. The emphasis in both courses is to help class participants gain an understanding of the historical, social, and political context within
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Carol Stabile

The past several months have witnessed a series of terrifying, bewildering, and other overwhelming global events. From the beginning of this conflict, feminists have been working collectively to make sense of the world we now occupy. Feminists have long been engaged in the brutal oppression of women under the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. Feminists have long criticized and opposed militarism, the use of violence in resolving conflicts, and the use of gender in wielding power over women. As Rosalind Peteschley put it at a teach-in at Hunter College on 25 September 2001: "While we have a responsibility to those who died in the disaster and their loved ones, and to ourselves, to mourn, it is urgent that we also begin the work of thinking about what kind of world we are now living in and what it demands of us."

Putnam, students, and members of the wider community here in University of Pittsburgh began to do just this in early November. The Women's Studies Program sponsored "Women in the Current Crisis: An Activist Workshop." At the workshop, we began conversations by examining the gaps in our own knowledge about international events. We tried to focus attention on the kind of information we need to act as citizens in our society. These forms of information, participants largely agreed, were lacking in media coverage of the war on terrorism, as well as political debates addressed to these media outlets.

Although the workshop was attended by sixty people, a fraction of the wider University community, the work began November evening continues across the University. A Web page grew out of the event (www.pitt.edu/~wstudies). So did the January teach-in described elsewhere in these pages. A faculty group, called Professors for Peace and Justice, was also inspired by that evening's dialogue—particularly in response to the example that student activists were providing in their organizing efforts across campus. It is these efforts that should give us some hope in disemal times. Student organizations across campuses and within communities are coming together. They are mobilizing to question the war, but to educate themselves about the Patriot Act and the racial backlash in our communities and our country, about the ever deepening inequality between the rich and poor in this country. They are mobilizing to support a whole range of progressive issues that have been put on the backburner in our post-9/11 world. The work of thinking through what kind of world we are living in, what it demands of us, as well as what we will demand of it, has indeed begun.

With Gratitude

The Women's Studies Program would like to extend its sincere thanks to the following alumnae: current or former faculty, staff, and students; Board of Friends members; and friends. Without your support, we would not be able to fund student research. Please remember us and consider giving through Pitt's Annual Giving Fund, our annual Program appeal, or any time that is convenient for you!

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All new $100 contributors receive a Women's Studies mug.

Thank you!

Diversity Statement

Pitt's Women's Studies Program is committed to training and representing women in their real social diversity, which includes their differences in race, age, sexuality, culture, religion, and other factors. The program provides opportunities for women to acquire knowledge and skills, and to participate in scholarly and professional activities. The program also provides opportunities for women to engage in research, public service, and community service.

Women's Studies News is a twice a year publication of the Women's Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh. 901E Cathedral of Learning • University of Pittsburgh • Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-6438 • Fax: 412-624-6492 • E-mail: wstudies@pitt.edu • http://www.pitt.edu/~wstudies

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Please send any pertinent news to our office. We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Deadline for the fall issue is August 15, 2002.

The University of Pittsburgh as an educational institution and as an employer, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, or marital, veteran, or handicapped status. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations. All relevant programs are coordinated through the office of Affirmative Action, 901 William Pitt Union, University of Pittsburgh, PA 15260, 412-624-7860.

Thank you!

PAULA KANE published Gender Identities in American Catholicism (Orbis Press, 2000), which deals primarily with gender issues in one religious tradition. The book draws together original documents spanning the last 200 years of American Catholic history and addresses issues such as gender in the family, workplace, reform movements, and religious life. On contemporary conflicts such as the death penalty, homosexuality and lesbian identity, and patriarchy in the Catholic Church, there are commentaries by authors such as Helen Prejean, Jeannine Gramc and Joan Chittister, and Mary Daly.

JANET MONTELARO was nominated to the Student Government Board’s Faculty Honor Roll 2002. She was also nominated for the Tina and David Bellet Teaching Excellence Award 2001-02.

AUDREY MURRELL accepted the Community Relations Council Award during the Pittsburgh Job Corps Center Scholarship Dinner on October 18. She was recognized for “care and concern in her work with students...and for her community involvement.” She was awarded the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award for her Leadership through Classic and Contemporary Literature and Film that she presented at the Teaching Excellence Fair on November 16, 2001.

MAUREEN PORTER was awarded the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award for her LINCS: The International Service-Learning Course Sequence that she presented at the Teaching Excellence Fair on November 16, 2001.

KAREN VANDERVEN is the Project Director for Educating Intergenerational Teams in Prevention/Literacy Strategies to Promote Positive Child Development and School Achievement for development of a new course.

ALUMNI UPDATE

Kim Grazini-Hunt has been accepted in the MPA program at the University of Chicago and Pitt.

Naomi Greenberg (’00) was accepted at Smith College where she will be getting her MSW beginning this summer.

Larissa Myaskovsky (’01) is doing a two-year, post-doctoral research fellowship in clinical epidemiology at the Western Psychiatric Institute, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Tanisha Jackson (’02) was accepted into William and Mary School of Law where she will begin this fall.
NO ASSOCIATION BETWEEN FERTILITY DRUGS, OVARIAN CANCER

Robert Ness, M.D., Assoc. Professor of Epidemiology
Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences

Fertility drugs do not put women at a higher than average risk of ovarian cancer, according to a study published in the Feb. 1 issue of the American Journal of Epidemiology. The largest analysis to date, conducted by University of Pittsburgh GSPH, found no association between ovarian cancer and fertility drugs. The study does point out a link between ovarian cancer and certain specific causes of infertility—namely, endometriosis and “unknown” reasons for infertility. The study suggests that some women who receive fertility treatments develop ovarian cancer because of underlying conditions that cause infertility, not because of the treatments themselves. Infertility was defined as prolonged unsuccessful episodes of trying to conceive. “We are actively working to better understand what are new unknown causes of infertility. Understanding this better will give us a window into the biology behind ovarian cancer and it will help to define the women in this high-risk group,” said Ness.

AFRICAN AMERICAN POETS

Toi Derricotte, Professor of English

Along with friend and fellow writer Cornelius Eady, Toi Derricotte created the Cave Canem Foundation, which offers workshops for black poets. The foundation held its first weeklong workshop in the summer of 1996 with 24 participants from ages 19 to 85. Today, more than 200 people apply with only 60 applicants accepted. These workshops are held at Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hill, MI, New York City, and Minneapolis, MN.

ANGELA Y. DAVIS

by Andrea DeChellis

The Black Action Society and Women’s Studies Program are proud to present speaker Angela Y. Davis April 5 at 8 p.m. in David Lawrence Auditorium. Dr. Davis will deliver a lecture based on her lifetime of activism, titled Globalism, Terrorism, and Gender. Dr. Davis will also lead a student teach-in regarding resistance movements the following day, Saturday, April 6, beginning at 9 a.m. in 2M-2P56 Posvar Hall. After an opening address, student organizations will facilitate break-out groups to educate the community about topics ranging from the prison industrial complex to racial profiling to retention of students. A lunch reception will follow at noon.

The students and faculty of the University of Pittsburgh are excited to welcome Angela Y. Davis, a strong force for political and social activism. She is also an accomplished cultural theorist and professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5
8 P.M.
120/121 DAVID LAWRENCE HALL

WYNNE S. KORR PROFESSOR,
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Fall semester I was privileged to be the first Zellerbach Visiting Scholar at the School of Social Welfare, University of California, Berkeley, while I was on sabbatical from my regular duties here. Before I tell you about my research, let me reflect on the notion of sabbatical. A sabbatical is a break in time, not just a day of rest, but a day in which duties may change, a day for readjusting one’s relationship with the world. Sabbatical has the same qualities. The routine changes dramatically. I could focus my time and energy on my research and writing. And thanks to the Zellerbach Foundation, I was able to do this in California.

In addition to writing a text on mental health policy, I conducted interviews as part of a case study about what is working well in mental health service delivery. The failures are highly publicized: people homeless or in jails; murders committed by a person with schizophrenia. The good news is that community-based systems of care have changed dramatically and attempt to provide culturally-appropriate, supportive services with a new-found goal of recovery. Some high level administrators have been able to move from the constant crisis of keeping people out of the hospital to planning to reduce disability among young people showing first signs of severe mental illness.

I was also able to continue my research with John Encandela from the Pitt Graduate School of Public Health. We have been examining factors that would facilitate or hinder providing HIV prevention services to persons with severe mental illness. We have been doing focus groups and surveys with case managers to understand how they might be able to do risk assessment and other prevention activities.

In another domain, Donald Brieland and I analyzed data from our survey of tenure practices in schools of social work. Despite everyone’s feelings about tenure, few such surveys have ever been done. Yes, schools in our sample report that the bar has been raised.

My work, as indeed all our lives, was disrupted by the events of September 11. I am extraordinarily proud of the social workers I know who volunteered their time to provide emergency services either in New York or in western PA. (I know that correlation does not prove causation, but last time I had a sabbatical, I was in Australia when the Gulf War started.)

Upon returning, I returned to directing the Social Work doctoral program while Esther Sales is on sabbatical. I am pleased that several applicants are interested in the graduate certificate in Women’s Studies.

WOMEN IN MOTION: 30 YEARS OF WOMEN’S STUDIES AT PITT.

Next fall marks the thirtieth anniversary of Women’s Studies at Pitt and we have begun to plan events to celebrate the occasion. In September, we will be having a potluck for all faculty affiliated with the Program. Dr. Robin Wiegman, Director of the Women’s Studies Program at Duke University, will be lecturing on the future of Women’s Studies in September as well. In addition to the PACWC reception in early October, we are planning an event celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Title IX and we have invited Dr. Stephanie Coontz (History, Evergreen State College) to give a talk for our 30th Anniversary Celebration and reception on 24 October. We are also working on a special edition of our newsletter that will feature articles by alumnae, faculty, and current students.
The Limits of Personal Experience

by Megan Hamm
(Undergraduate)

The following is an excerpt from a paper done as a final project in Feminist Theory. The project was to examine my personal experiences of birth control in relationship to the experiences of women whose lives differed from mine along the axes of race, class, and nationality, following the tradition of the “feminist movement, which encouraged women to understand their individual experiences as part of broader social patterns” (Tone 2001:247). This excerpt is the section of the paper in which the experience of birth control in relation to “nationality” (quite loosely defined) is examined.

Nationality, as I mean to examine it, is intricately tied to both race and class. Differences in the experiences and perceptions of birth control do vary across the borders of countries, but often they vary more as functions of differential wealth and race between nations than as a function of culture. Hence, most of this analysis will focus on differences in birth control use between “First World” nations and “Third World” nations. Granted, cultural (rather than economic) differences certainly do play a part in how birth control is perceived and used. Modern forms of birth control (i.e., the Pill, Depo-Provera, IUDs, diaphragms, etc.) were preceded by non-medical forms of birth control, and most, if not all, cultures have indigenous forms of controlling and regulating pregnancies and inducing abortions (Newman 1985). If nothing else, lactation can be used as birth control, as “in all but the best nourished populations, nursing functions as a contraceptive by preventing ovulation” (Gaulin and McBurney 2001). Thus, some form of birth control is available and used across cultures, and the most preferred forms from one culture may not be the same in another culture.

However, modern forms of birth control are often foisted upon non-western, third-world countries not so much as a means of allowing individual women to control their reproduction but as a means of controlling population, often at the expense of the health of individual women. Population control, as we shall see, has a distinctly colonialist bent. It also places the reproductive needs and preferences of individual women in a position that is subservient to the broader needs of any one nation or a group of nations to control population growth. Consequently, the experience of modern forms of birth control in other cultures can be, like the experience of birth control in non-white “races” and poorer classes, one of exploitation and control.

The colonialist bent of population control can be seen in the development of modern population control programs by Western nations such as the United States to be implemented in “Third World” nations such as India. The Khanna Study, a notoriously famous population control program conducted by Harvard in the 1950s-1990s, is one such example. The study attempted to curb population growth in Khanna, an extraordinarily densely populated area in Northern India, through the distribution of birth control technology (mostly condoms in this case). It failed miserably (and to the bafflement of the Harvard researchers who conducted it) because it failed to take into account the cultural context in which it was operating—that of colonialism-induced poverty. In the context of such poverty, children are an economic resource rather than an economic burden to a family, as the children can either sell their labor or provide labor within a household. Thus, Western notions that smaller families achieved through population control mean “better lives” for those families as familial resources can be divided among fewer people in such cases were lost on a group of people who felt that they needed large numbers of children to survive. Additionally—and quite notably—the condoms meant to create lower birth numbers were distributed to men alone, leaving women and their reproductive needs solely at the whim of men (Alter 2001).

Perhaps even more telling of the colonialist nature of population control than the Khanna study is the fact that “receiving any foreign aid [from the U.S. during the 1960s at least, if not still today] usually obligated receiving nations to undertake population-control programs in accordance with U.S. State Department specifications” (Gordon 1980:393). Thus, rich nations (America) agree to financially help poor nations only if they agree to curb the growth of their population (and hence, typically, the growth of non-white populations).

In this racially and financially charged sphere, the health, human rights, and needs of women are often placed on the back burner, so to speak, to the all-important decline in population growth: as long as women cannot conceive, the aims of population control have been achieved. The condoms that were used in the Khanna study, as well as many other forms of birth control that can be controlled by a woman (such as the Pill) are typically no longer used, precisely because the woman controls them and hence can choose not to use them. In China, for example, where population control has become an important goal of the government (as opposed to colonial influences, in this case), “women are told to have an IUD inserted after having one child. Even though the woman might prefer oral contraceptives to an IUD, she is not given that option because ‘she could not be trusted to take the pills regularly’” (Macklin 1996:183). Should a woman insist on being given oral contraceptives instead of an IUD, her privacy and her control over the contraceptive are violated as, in such (rare) cases “a [government] worker [comes] to the home and insists[s] on observing women taking their pills” (Macklin 1996:184). In India, the IUD is a popular form of birth control because the woman has little control over it after it is implanted. Women experiencing the unpleasant (and harmful) side effect of heavy menstrual bleeding from their IUDs are often told by clinic staff that “their uterus is being ‘cleansed’” by the bleeding and “face difficulties getting the IUD removed on their own request” (Hartmann 1987:205). In Nigeria, to give a final example, long-acting contraceptives such as Depo-Provera are widely distributed with little or no medical follow-up to monitor the effects of the drug on the bodies of the women who use it. In fact, Depo-Provera injections are even sold, literally, “on the side of the road” in some areas (Pearce 1996:195-196) despite the fact that “with medical interventions such as long-acting contraception, an individual’s body will, in the final analysis, bear the brunt” of the consequences of such population control achieved through such drugs in the form of physiological side effects (Pearce 1996:199).

As a final factor in this (regrettably brief) analysis of the experience of birth control in Third World countries, the use of Third World women as guinea pigs in hormonal birth control experiments and the dumping of harmful forms of birth control on the Third World must be examined. To begin with, the first large-scale cli-
The limits of personal experience

Continued from page 5

cal trials of the Pill were conducted in Puerto Rico rather than in the United States where the drug was developed. Puerto Rico was chosen primarily for such noble reasons as “geographic isolation,” location outside of the United States and hence “away from the probing American media,” and its “quasi-colonial status” in relation to the United States which meant that “should a crisis arise, the implied threat of American intervention might keep Puerto Ricans in line” (Tone 2001:222). Thus, the very origins of “modern” forms of birth control contain the exploitation of Third World women. Puerto Rican women were chosen for subjects, rather than white American women, because they were isolated on an island, lacked the protection (dubious as it may be) of a watch-dog media, and could be forcibly controlled by the United States should the drug trials cause massive problems. Although what could be appropriately termed “massive problems” did not arise, two women in the study died and numerous others had adverse side effects such as headaches, nausea, and dizziness. According to the researchers conducting the trials, “none of these effects could in any way be attributed to the Pill” (Hartman 1987:177). One researcher, however, did feel that the Pill “caused too many side reactions to be acceptable” as a reasonable form of birth control, despite its effectiveness (Tone 2001:222). Gregory Pincus, the creator of the Pill and the head honcho behind the trials, responded to the researchers’ concerns by characterizing the side effects as purely psychosomatic, as (according to him) no such side effects were ever observed among the few American women who had used the Pill; he suggested, thus, that “Puerto Ricans were more suggestible than Americans” (Tone 2001:224). Apparently, Puerto Ricans, in contrast to Americans, were so “suggestible” that they could psychosomatically bring about death.

The exploitation of Third World women for birth control experimentation did not end with the Pill, though. Depo Provera, although available in the world at large for nearly as long as the Pill, was banned in the United States (where it was produced by Upjohn) until the early 1990s. Essentially, it was banned in the United States where its safety was not accepted, but it was allowed to be sold in the Third World until it could be proven harmful. According to Rosalind Petchesky, “Applying these perverted principles to millions of non-white [i.e., Third World] women sets up an imperialist double standard; it says, in effect, the risk of cancer [and other health-related side effects] matters less for these women than it does for North American women” (1984:176). As Petchesky makes clear, the lives and health of non-white, non-American women are valued less in the realm of birth control experimentation.

Along the same lines, it should be noted that when a particular form of birth control is deemed unsafe for the use of American women, the excess supplies of it are farmed out to the Third World at discounted rates. Take, for example, the Dalkon Shield model of IUD. The use of the Dalkon Shield was essentially discontinued in America after its severely flawed design caused tearing of the uterine walls, extreme intrauterine infections, septic abortions, and fourteen deaths, not to mention extremely painful insertion and removal processes. The left-over shields, which were manufactured for the United States but could not be sold there, were sold to the Office of Population Aid at a forty-eight percent discount for distribution in the Third World (Hartmann 1987:203). Likewise, when lower dose birth control pills (containing only 30 mcg. of estrogen) were determined to be much safer for use than high dose pills, the remaining stock of high dose pills (containing up to 80 mcg. of estrogen) were sold at discounted prices to the Office of Population Aid and, again, distributed to the Third World (Hartmann 1987:185).

Thus, women’s personal experiences of birth control in the Third World (as opposed to my First World experience) are likely to be tinged with colonialism, population control at the expense of individual health and personal choice, experimentation, and the use of more dangerous methods of birth control in the absence of safer ones. Given the extreme negativity of this exploration of Third World birth control, however, it is important to clarify that Third World women are not a monolithic group of victims upon whom birth control has been thrust completely against their will. Third World women express a desire to control the terms of their reproduction—I do not wish to give the impression that they would prefer to breed unheeded were it not for those nasty population controllers. The women who participated in the original Puerto Rican Pill experiments were eager to try the drug, according to one of the recruiters for the experiment (taught though this statement may be by her relationship to the experiment) “they couldn’t get hold of it fast enough” (Tone 2001:222). The problem, thus, is not so much that Third World women do not want to use birth control as they are not given choice in what method they use, that they are not given adequate health care when using a medicalized form of birth control, and that they are treated as the gateways to population control at the expense of their own bodily health and freedom. Despite the somewhat large amount of research done on uses of birth control in Third World nations, there is, unfortunately, a paucity of actual dialogues from Third World women in the sources I was able to locate. When individual stories are even given (which is rare), they are “told” by the interviewee; there is no direct transcript of conversations (Gammeltoft 1999:99-104).

Thus, as in my analyses of race and class, I have attempted to locate broad experiential differences in how birth control “in general” is used in the “Third World” from how it has been used in my own experience. I would imagine that the use of birth control discussed above would create distrust, resentment, and frustration—as well as fear—in birth control dialogues of “Third World” women, despite the fact that it relieves them from bearing unwanted children. As Tine Gammeltoft explains, when discussing IUD use among Vietnamese women who are offered few birth control alternatives: “[They] want to control their fertility, yet lack safe and effective means to do so. [Women] experience IUD side effects as detrimental to their health, everyday lives, work, and well-being, but […] still accept the IUD since no better alternatives are available to them” (1999:104).

Have you noticed our Web site lately? We want to thank Denise for her donated time and expertise in keeping up our Web site.
CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY
by Professor Irene Friese

The Women's Studies Program is now conducting a Campus Climate Survey. The Campus Climate Survey is designed to examine how undergraduate students view the climate or atmosphere at the University of Pittsburgh and the classroom experiences they have had here in relation to gender and minority issues, as well as issues of sexual orientation. This project is funded by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

The survey is being administered to students in many different undergraduate classes. At this point, we have sampled classes from psychology, anthropology, sociology, linguistics, communications, business, and political science. We also plan on sampling mathematics and nursing courses in the near future. We intend to begin analyzing data at the end of the spring semester and through the summer.

We are looking for additional classes where the survey can be administered. The survey is done anonymously and asks about experiences of undergraduates in all their classes at Pitt. We do not ask about any one professor or classroom. The administration takes about 15 minutes of class time.

Please contact Irene Friese at friese@pitt.edu if you would like more information about the survey or would be willing to have us come and administer the survey. We are compiling a mailing list for distribution of the results when they are available. We also invite participation with the faculty group that is overseeing the survey.

THE ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN GRADUATE STUDENTS (OWGS)
by Susan Hallstead

The OWGS was founded this year and welcomes any interested graduate students to the organization. Our goals are to represent the interests of women graduate students across and within disciplines to create a forum in which women graduate students can freely and safely express their concerns about what they face as women and as grad students in the university, to challenge existing university structures that limit the possibilities and potential of female grad students such as the absence of funding opportunities for worthy candidates, and to explore the state of feminism/women's studies/gender studies in the academy and to revise this theorizing so that it can enable women grad students to realize their potential as scholars, teachers, and researchers. OWGS will be organizing seminars on professional development and will also develop new committees such as a reading/writing workshop, a speakers bureau that will include different speakers to Pitt, and an information clearinghouse that will publicize available data on grants, fellowships, and scholarships, and also a political action arm. To become a member of the OWGS or to participate in any activities contact owgs@hotmail.com and watch for flyers announcing meetings and activities.

Susan (HL&L) has been our TF (2001-02) teaching 0030 Introduction to Women's Studies. Susan and her husband, Juan Pablo Dobove (HL&L), have accepted teaching positions at the University of Colorado, Boulder; they will be moving this summer. Congratulations to Susan and Juan; we wish you the best!

FACULTY RESEARCH FUND
AWARDS FOR 2001-2002

The Women's Studies Faculty Research Fund supports research and scholarship on gender and women's issues by full time faculty at the University of Pittsburgh. Four projects were awarded funding for 2001-2002:

- Irina Livezeanu [History], "Women and Gender in Russia and Eastern Europe: A Comprehensive Bibliography," $1050.
- Lester Olson [Communication], "Archival Work in the Lesbian Herstory Archives." $1400.
- Maureen Porter [Education], "Masculinities on Parade," $1500.

The review committee was Irene Friese (chair), Ellen Detlefsen, Scott Kiesling, and Marcia Landy. This program was funded by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES: UNITING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY
MARCH 28-29, 2002

The first annual women's student organization conference will bring academics, professionals, activists, and students together to engage in a dialogue about contemporary local, national, and global issues, especially those affecting women. The Organization of Women Graduate Students, the Association of Women in Public Health, and the Women's Forum of the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh invites participants from diverse communities, disciplines, and backgrounds to discuss such issues as:

- Women and Globalization
- Equity, Gender, and Human Rights
- Women and the Current Crisis
- Human Trafficking
- Militarization, Conflict, and Refugees
- Protecting Women's Health
- Environment and Sustainability
- Gender-Based Violence
- Mobilizing Communities
- Women, Politics, and Decision Making
- Access to Trade, Technology, and Resources
- Changing Face of Feminism

The conference will open with keynote speaker, Cynthia Enloe, on the afternoon of Thursday, March 28th, and will be followed by a reception. A daylong seminar of panel presentations and discussion will occur on Friday, March 29th. Registration is $20 for professionals and non-students and $10 for students. For more information, please see our Web site at: www.pitt.edu/~kama1/conference.html or e-mail: pittconference@yahoo.com.
BOARD OF FRIENDS TAKES ON NEW PROJECTS

The Board of Friends of Women's Studies is completing two major projects for the 2001-2002 academic year. We are sponsoring a Teen Resource Web Site for adolescent girls in the western Pennsylvania area. Thanks to the tireless efforts of WS student Alison Bodenheimer and her colleague Geoffrey Maddock who researched over 100 web resources, we have an information site that girls can turn to for advice on health, academics, work, and recreation. Janet Montelaro supervised the project. Look for this site later this month. It will be linked to our Women's Studies Program home page.

The Board has also instituted the Board Raffle as an annual event, with proceeds dedicated to a different cause each year. Last year, the raffle raised funds to ship seven boxes of donated women's studies texts to Fatima Jinnah Women's University in Pakistan. This year, the proceeds will be dedicated to the new Women's Resource Center in Pittsburgh. This year's raffle winner will be announced on April 9 and the winner's name will be published in the Fall 2002 newsletter.

GROUP FOR SINGLE MOMS AT PITT AIMS TO CHANGE MEANING OF SINGLE MOTHERHOOD

Students at the University of Pittsburgh, with the support of the Women's Studies Program, are building an organization that aims to help single Pitt moms achieve their collective goal of academic success, while at the same time incorporating their children into the university environment. Many single moms attending the University of Pittsburgh also work at least part-time and that lack of study time is one of the main obstacles they must overcome to achieve academic success.

The organization hopes to change what it means to be a single student mother and, most importantly, what it means to be the child of a single mother. By contacting other interested student organizations and by establishing partnerships with graduate programs, it is possible to provide more than just babysitting for the children while their mothers are in class, but also to provide entertainment and classes for the children, which could be taught by interested graduate students or by members of various campus organizations. By exposing the children of single student moms to the diversity and wealth of knowledge available in the university, there will be both short-term and long-term benefits for these children. Statistics for children of single moms are discouraging, but by forming a group of this nature, it will be a big step toward changing those statistics. Also, children will benefit from feeling involved in their mothers' academic life.

We hope to be recognized as a university student organization by the end of the spring term. For more information, please contact Dr. Carol Stable, Director, Women's Studies Program, at cstabile@pitt.edu, or Ellen Boyd, single mother, full-time Pitt student, and full-time Pitt staff, at elb3@pitt.edu.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Aysegul Baykan did her graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh, receiving an MA in Philosophy (1986) and PhD in Sociology (1991), with strong emphasis on Cultural Studies. During her graduate studies, she taught at various colleges in the region and was a Research Associate at Women's Studies between 1990 and 1995 during which time she taught a graduate sociology class in Feminist Theory and Introduction to Women's Studies and participated in the writing and reading groups that pursued an interdisciplinary approach to matters of Cultural and Feminist Theory. She consequently returned to Istanbul, Turkey where she taught and informed by her seminars with Professor Spivak on Post-colonial Theory, participated in various international events and conferences which sought cross-cultural dialogue between women of different parts of the world and emphasized the need to overcome the North's hegemony over Theory whereby the issues concerning South were limited to empirical data. She also served as the International Dean of the International Women's University, Division of City, which was an experiment of intense graduate education (12 hrs. a day) for five months for women selected from across the world. She is currently working on a book on various elements of cultural-political presence of differences across Turkey and specifically Istanbul, which is said to be a crossroad for "East and West." If you are interested in her work, please write to her at avbl@pitt.edu or abaykan@ku.edu.tr.

TEACHING FELLOWS (TF'S) 2002-2003

Two teaching fellows will be joining us in the fall. Each will be teaching a section of Women and Society and we would like to take this opportunity to introduce them.

Lisa Coxson is a PhD student in English and a PhD certificate student in Women's Studies. Her current field of inquiry is subjectivity and African American autobiography. A graduate student teaching assistant/fellow for over five years, she has taught both composition (General Writing, Basic Reading and Writing, General Writing-Women's Studies) and literature courses (Women and Literature, Short Story in Context, and Literature of the Americas) in the English Department. She was also an eleventh and twelfth grade English and African American history instructor for the University of Pittsburgh's Upward Bound Program. She received her BA, as a double major in English and Women's Studies, from Rutgers University.

Andrea Lapin has taught for five years General Writing-Women's Studies and Women and Literature. In the English department, her classes have focused on texts in which women imagine new social contexts, and those in which women use literary tools as a means to “testify” and speculate about the world in which they live and work. Before going to Rutgers University for an undergraduate degree in Women's Studies, Andrea worked in metropolitan communities with women in transition, particularly in recovery from drug addiction. That work remains her “after school” project and ongoing obsession. Today, Andrea is at work on a dissertation about fitness magazines in the 1930s, in which she considers the connection between the idea of “physical fitness” and evolutionary “fit-ness,” and finds that class, like race and gender, is often written on the body. Calling attention to the texts we read without noticing, and the hails we answer without thinking, is her primary project as a teacher.
On January 25, 2002, at least 70 students, faculty, staff, and community members gathered for a Teach-In titled "The Complete Guide to the War on Terrorism." The five-hour event was the culmination of the hard work of many students and staff. Members of the Women's Studies community engaged in thinking through a creative feminist response to the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent U.S. bombings and other military actions in Afghanistan. The Teach-In was one fruit of this engagement.

A diverse mix of students, faculty, and community resource people led workshops-style discussions. All were well-attended and featured informative presentations, lively discussions, and ideas for additional explorations. Topics included the International Criminal Court, alternatives to militarism, the role of women in the war on terrorism, and globalizing the war on terrorism. Part of the basic mission of the University is to facilitate difficult conversations, and to prepare students to participate in our common life. Women's Studies contributed to that mission by supporting the Teach-In.

The organizers appreciated the support of the community, especially the food donations! For more information about the Teach-In and its outcomes, visit the new Web site of related materials at http://www.pitt.edu/~wics/.

The Women's Studies Program announces the 21st annual prize competition for the best student research on women or gender issues and concerns. The purpose of the competition is to provide recognition for excellent student scholarship in the field of women and gender studies, open to all students at the University of Pittsburgh. Prizes up to $500 will be awarded for the best graduate and undergraduate papers. Deadline: May 31, 2002.

We are pleased to announce the continuation of our Research Associate Program for the 2002-2003 academic year. This is an UNFUNDED position. APPLICATION DEADLINE MAY 15, 2002 with notification in late May.

PURPOSE: The Research Associate Program is intended for scholars interested in research relating to women or gender that do not have a formal full-time affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh. RAs gain a stimulating intellectual environment for pursuing their research and meeting others with similar interests.

DESCRIPTION: Each RA will be selected for a two-year term. Preference is given to those working on topics related to research interests of our Program faculty. Two to four RAs will be selected. RAs will be able to use Women's Studies Program academic resources and have university library and computer privileges. It is also expected that each RA will present a formal colloquium and will become involved in Women's Studies activities. RAs may wish to apply for external grant funding.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:
- A curriculum vitae,
- Copies of recent or significant publications,
- A brief statement of what you would like to do as a RA,
- Names of at least two people who might be contacted for letters of reference.

SELECTION PROCEDURE: (All applicants will be reviewed by the Steering Committee)
- Relevance of the proposed project for Women's Studies at Pitt,
- Demonstrated research ability,
- Evidence that the position would be helpful for the career development,
- PhD or equivalent in research experience.

SEND TO: Women's Studies Program, University of Pittsburgh, 901 Cathedral of Learning, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
Continued from page 1

which policies and programs develop and what is required to assure that women throughout the world are provided reproductive health care and are not deprived of their reproductive rights.

The women’s health course that I co-teach with Dr. Christine Pistella deals more broadly with women’s health issues from a socio-political and public health perspective, including issues related to aging, women with disabilities, health needs of lesbian women, and to issues concerning infectious and chronic diseases that have a particular effect with respect to their health and well-being. The course also covers reproductive health issues and issues related to domestic violence.

8. Please describe some of your past research and any current projects.

My research has been limited because of teaching and administrative responsibilities. I have been involved in small projects evaluating the provision of particular services and have been a volunteer consultant to community-based organizations. At the present time I am providing some help (and learning at the same time) to the Homeless Alliance Subcommittee on Health in the development of a health needs assessment of the homeless population in the Pittsburgh region. I also hope to enlist the help of student volunteers in this endeavor. In the mid-nineties, I received some travel grants to investigate birth control decisions and generational changes in the lives of Mestizo women in Northern Ecuador.

9. Briefly describe some of the local community service activities with which you are involved.

I am a member of the Board of Directors of Women’s Health Services, which now is a subsidiary of Planned Parenthood of Western PA. I also am a member of the Planned Parenthood Education Committee that focuses primarily on the provision of sexuality education within junior high and high school systems. I am involved in advisory committees and task forces for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, focusing on provision of nutrition and other health education programs in food bank centers and other outlets that are in association with the Food Bank. I am a past Board member and Past President of the Pennsylvania Public Health Association and have served on other PPHA committees and statewide task forces and committees as a representative of PPHA. PPHA is the state’s public health professional organization, affiliated with the American Public Health Association. I am also a member of the 14th ward (Pittsburgh) Democratic Committee.

10. What are some of the more interesting projects your graduate students have worked on?

Because my background is in community health nursing, I was interested in two dissertation research topics relative to this discipline. One student looked at how a liberal arts education shapes the practice of community health nursing and the other student looked at the perceptions and abilities of community health nurses concerning identification of substance abuse and/or depression among their elderly clients. Both topics, using a qualitative methodology for the investigation, focused on the constraints of the training and the practice of community health nurses—the tension between dealing with application of technology and treatment of the presenting and acute situation and dealing with the need to holistically see a person’s need in the context of his or her life—the quick fix for what is easily observed or working with the client around development of solutions to some underlying problems.

11. What are some of the accomplishments you are most proud of during your time here at the University?

I am most proud of being involved in the lives of students who have gone on to doctoral programs or to research or administrative positions where they are now effective public health professionals. One recent accomplishment in which I had a very minor role was the campaign under the leadership of the Campus Women’s Organization to encourage the University’s Student Health Service to change its policy concerning emergency contraception and make this a service available to the University’s women students. It was wonderful to see that the strategies that were developed and implemented to effect this change in policy were so successful and I applaud the women student activists who participated in this effort.

They are, in fact, wild for vaginas in Pittsburgh! Campus Women’s Organization held its second annual V-Day celebration with three vagina friendly performances on February 13th, 14th & 15th.

Evie Ensler interviewed over 200 women about the always-taboo subject—the vagina—and took her play to Broadway where it became a huge hit and won several awards. Four years ago she started a College Campaign that allows colleges and universities across the country and now the world, to perform “The Vagina Monologues” in an effort to raise awareness about issues surrounding women and to raise money for local charities that support women. “The Vagina Monologues” are the fund part of a serious movement, V-Day, which is an organized response against violence towards women. V-Day is Valentine’s Day, to celebrate women and end violence. This year over 800 V-Day events took place around the world! This year’s cast of Pitt’s “The Vagina Monologues” brought together a diverse group of female undergraduates, graduate students, and employees of all ages. Thirty-four women performed in the show and many more helped make the event possible. An estimated 1,300 people attended the three performances and helped raise roughly $10,000 for local charities. This year, $3,000 was given to Planned Parenthood and $3,000 to the Women’s Resource Center. Another $3,000 was given to Spotlight on Afghanistan, a campaign started by V-Day. This money will go to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). We received an e-mail from Karen Obel, Director of V-Day College Campaign; our check to RAWA was the single largest check from a member of the College Campaign!
WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD:
FINDING IN-ROADS TO COMMONALITY IN A RACIALLY DIVIDED SCHOOL
by Sheila Mag-Stein (Writing Major & WS Undergraduate)

The first year I began a creative after-school writing club at East Hills International Studies Academy (Pittsburgh Public School) people roller their eyes and told me I was nuts. After all, it was me—and 52 kids. What kind of writing could we possibly do? It was a question I often asked myself. Some kids came for the cookies. It pushed my comfort zones. I came home in tears more than once. However, I was delighted and renewed when I reviewed the crumpled composition books, in which it seemed so little writing was done.

My kids school, East Hills, is a uniquely divided place. Located amid housing projects, it contains 68% African-Americans, mostly from the neighborhood, and 32% (primarily Caribbean) children. Their achievement gap exists between the races. I sent my three children there because I wanted them to experience diversity in race, class, and gender, but by second grade, the kids self-segregated themselves. My daughter came home and said, “Mommy, all the black kids are ignorant and wild.”

Clearly, opportunities existed to help the children find commonalities and respect differences. In an effort to provide this opportunity, I created Kokopelli’s Writing Adventure Club, an arts-based creative writing club in which all learning (and speaking) styles were meant to be accommodated. We collaborated, old paper maché, danced and rapped. We listened to Beethoven and gospel. We read Dunbar, Greenfield, Joyce Carol Thomas, Walt Whitman, and Robert Herrick. We wrote and wrote, and in the writing, an unexpected dynamic began to be present.

Thoughts
I have thoughts. Wonderful thoughts. Like rushing water. Like singing trees. Like birds singing all day long. Thoughts. What are thoughts? Or are they us? Are they our souls? No one knows no one ever will.

- Roland, fifth grade

The kids my daughter called “ignorant and wild” were far from the best writers. They consistently made unusual word choices, found strong verbs, though many, of both races, couldn’t tell me their verb was a verb, used unique imagery, and were brave enough to write honestly and personally.

The unexpected result I found was that boys, the population I had expected the most resistance from, seemed to understand the process of writing. They learned to express themselves and be faster and more willing to read next time. Girls blushed and shared their writing in pairs or small groups. They shared with each other. Once, when we talked about fear, a third-grade girl named Janellie perched herself on a table and kept up a running commentary on other children’s compositions. (“Oooh! She so stupid! She scared of spiders!”) They wrote about safe things.

My goal was to help the kids learn to respect their similarities and differences. The words initially resisted but eventually generally came around. The girls were much more reluctant to write about differences than the boys. Indeed, the girls, with a few exceptions, were quick to make fun of anything unusual produced by one of them. They were always those “weirdos,” who orbited outside of their particular racially- and economically-bound clique and wrote indifferent to the crowd.

If respect was the goal, I would have to find a way to make my club safe enough for girls to step out from behind their masks. I had to look at my own impediments to understand these kids.

I had begun seeing the children literally in black and white. I had not understood the complexities in their social groupings. There were the upper-middle class white girls from the east end, the black girls from East Hills, the middle-class black girls, the white girls who were lower middle-class, and all of these groups were, as the kids said, “trick’d, locked, locked,” that is, arranged in tight cliques with few, if any, movers between groups. I saw that there were girls who showed interest in each other and were friendly with other girls in those groups, but who couldn’t find a consistent way in. There was their own threat, and even fights. They had as little idea how to make friends as what divides them as adults do. This was harder job than I had expected.

I had thought we would read Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have A Dream” speech and unite. I had thought we would read Maya Angelou’s “Our Grandmothers” and straighten up in common pride and sisterhood. Apparently, sisterhood and brotherhood were more complex matters.

I am beginning my third year running the club, and I have made many changes in the way I do it. The faculty at East Hills is generous enough to give me their classes for no run poetry-writing workshops. Since the club now occurs during class time, there are no more cookies. Luckily, the kids still write. I have found a group of teachers who plan and implement lessons with me, including Pitt alumni Hazel Carr-Lefroy and Erin Brouk, an accredited teacher with a master’s degree in Women’s Studies. Most important is the designation of a “K-WAC literacy room,” generously set aside for our club by Principal Richard Nicklos.

It is the K-WAC room that holds the most promise for my group writers. Many of them have taken the room as their own. They help hang Jacob Lawrence posters. They make pictures with slogans such as “Girls Power” and “Writing is Power.” They eat lunch in there. They consider it their space.

I have to continue to help girls, and kids in general, find pathways to each other, regardless of differences in race, class, and gender. The K-WAC room will hold a “Girls’ Power Hour” for the rest of this school year, a time in which fifth-grade girls only will meet in heterogeneous groups to discuss poetry, media images, and each other’s writing. I am hoping that being with girls will help them relax and enjoy each other’s company. It might be a beginning to teach girls to value each other as individuals, not just with what separates them.
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