

University of Pittsburgh Campus Climate Preliminary Results of a Survey of Students in 2001–2002

During the 2001–2002 academic year, a group of researchers from the Women’s Studies Program, with the assistance of a part-time graduate student research assistant paid for by the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, surveyed 910 students. Students were given an anonymous survey in an undergraduate classroom. Of this total sample, we were able to analyze the data from 863 students in detail.

Most of the students were undergraduate students (all but 1.6%). We attempted to find students throughout all the undergraduate programs, although our sample is not statistically representative of the undergraduate student body. Twenty percent of the sample were from CAS humanities courses, 20% from social sciences courses, in CAS and 31% from CAS natural science courses (of which the largest percentage were from psychology). In addition, our sample was 9% General Studies classes, 12% business courses, and 9% nursing classes.

The general survey we administered contained a number of demographic items, several questions about how positively the students felt about the campus, and questions about actions of professors in terms of sexism, racism, and other prejudicial behavior.

Results indicated that women, younger students, and those who attend religious services more frequently were the most satisfied with the campus climate. The group least satisfied was black males. There was an effect for those who had not taken Women’s Studies courses to be more satisfied. There was also an effect for those students who did not want to live in Pittsburgh after graduation to be less satisfied with the campus climate.

Many of the students had had experiences of prejudicial behavior in their instructors, and having such experiences was associated with lower campus climate satisfaction. For example, 35% of students reported having at least one instructor telling a sexually explicit joke unrelated to course content. Thirty percent reported hearing jokes or comments that put down women, while 37% reported jokes or

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comments putting down men. More than one third of students (38%) said that an instructor treated male and female students differently.

Other items asked about racism in instructors. This appeared to be less common. Eleven percent of students said an instructor had made jokes or comments putting down Blacks or other ethnic groups. About 17% of students reported an instructor treating Blacks or other minority students differently than other groups.

Other reports on instructors indicated that 12% had made comments or jokes putting down gays, lesbians, or bisexuals, while 22% had made jokes or comments relating to religion. Fifteen percent of students felt an instructor was insensitive to the needs of religious students or those with deeply held moral convictions. Seventeen percent stated that an instructor had made jokes that put down other groups and 11% said an instructor had made they feel uncomfortable because of “who I am.”

On the positive side, 53% of students said that an instructor had expanded their awareness of issues relating to gender, 62% for issues relating to ethnic or racial minorities, and 24% to issues relating to gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.

Draft prepared by Irene Frieze, August 7, 2002

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Frequencies/percentages of demographics of entire sample (N = 910) (*Note: percentages may not equal 100 due to missing data)

Sex

- 280 (32%) males
Pittsburgh)
- 583 (68%) females
Pittsburgh

States

Year

- 370 (43%) freshman
- 214 (25%) sophomore
- 157 (18%) junior
- 106 (12%) senior
- 15 (2%) other

Race/ethnicity

- 734 (85%) Caucasian
- 71 (8%) African American
- 9 (1%) Hispanic
- 29 (3%) Asian/Asian American
- 19 (2%) other

SES

- 15 (2%) very top of ladder
- 189 (22%) near top of ladder
- 571 (67%) middle of ladder
- 82 (6%) near bottom of ladder
- 2 (0.2%) very bottom of ladder

Women's Studies courses

- 480 (56%) not yet, but plan to

Living preference

- 123 (14%) where grew up (not
Pittsburgh)
- 140 (16%) general region of
Pittsburgh
- 332 (39%) other part of United
States
- 40 (5%) other country
- 227 (26%) don't know

Sexual orientation

- 831 (96%) heterosexual
- 15 (2%) homosexual
- 13 (2%) bisexual
- 3 (0.3%) unsure

Political views

- 17 (2%) very conservative
- 115 (14%) conservative
- 423 (50%) moderate
- 241 (28%) liberal
- 54 (6%) very liberal

Feminist views

- 20 (2%) strongly anti-feminist
- 68 (8%) anti-feminist
- 594 (69%) neutral
- 157 (18%) feminist
- 19 (2%) strongly feminist

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- 276 (32%) no, no plans at this time
- 84 (10%) one
- 14 (2%) two or more
- 4 (1%) earning a certificate or Women's Studies major

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Classroom Experiences. Percentage reporting “yes” to questions about whether a professor or instructor at Pitt has ever:

Item	Males	Females
Told a sexually explicit joke unrelated to course content	39%	33%
Made a sexually suggestive comment to a student in the class	17%	12%
Made jokes or comments that put down women	28%	32%
Made jokes or comments that put down men	39%	35%
Treated male and female students differently	36%	38%
Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being sexist	11%	11%
Been known to be sexually involved with a student in the class	10%	5%
Helped expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to gender	48%	57%
Made jokes or comments that put down Blacks or particular ethnic groups	10%	11%
Treated African American/Black or other minority students differently than other students	18%	16%
Helped to expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to ethnic or racial minorities	53%	68%
Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being racist	7%	8%
Treated students differently on the basis of their sexual orientation	9%	7%

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Made jokes or comments that put down gays, lesbians, or bisexuals	16%	11%
Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being prejudiced toward gays, lesbians, or bisexuals	7%	4%
Helped to expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to gays, lesbians, or bisexuals	24%	26%
Made a joke unrelated to course content concerned with religion, religious beliefs, or deeply held moral convictions or directives	28%	20%
Was insensitive to the needs and concerns of religious students or those with deeply held moral convictions	14%	16%
Made jokes or comments that put down other groups	17%	18%
Made me feel uncomfortable because of who I am	10%	12%

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RESEARCH STUDY ON EXPERIENCES AT PITT

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. We know of no risks involved in this research.

In this survey, you will be asked a variety of questions about your attitudes and your experiences at the University of Pittsburgh. All of your responses to these questions will be kept anonymous. Your individual responses will not be identified to anyone and this survey will have no effect on your grade in this course. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE ANSWER SHEET.** Feel free to skip any questions you would rather not answer. We do ask that you answer each question you do choose to answer as accurately and honestly as possible. This survey is being conducted by the Women's Studies Program to investigate the campus climate. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Irene Frieze at (412) 624-4336.

1. Have you done this survey before in another class?
 - a. No. Please mark "a" for item 1 and continue with the survey
 - b. Yes. Please mark "b" for item 1 and return your survey and scantron to the proctor.
We would appreciate your describing any experiences you have had that have affected your view of the campus climate. Ask the proctor for a form.
2. Your age: a. Under 18 b. 18-20 c. 21-22 d. 23-30 e. 31 or older
3. Your sex: a. Male b. Female
4. Year in school: a. Freshman b. Sophomore c. Junior d. Senior e. Grad or other
5. Your race or ethnicity:
 - a. White or European American
 - b. Black or African American
 - c. Latino/a or Hispanic

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- d. Asian or Asian American
 - e. Other
6. Are you a native English speaker? a. Yes b. No
7. How far do you plan to continue your education?
- a. Probably won't complete college
 - b. Graduate from college
 - c. Some training after college
 - d. Obtain an advanced professional degree
 - e. Don't know or unsure
8. What religion do you believe in?
- a. Catholic or Orthodox Christian
 - b. Protestant or Other Christian
 - c. Jewish
 - d. Other
 - e. No special religion
9. How often do you attend religious services?
- a. Never
 - b. Once a year or less
 - c. Less than once a month
 - d. Less than once a week
 - e. Once a week or more
10. Where would you like to live for the majority of your adult years? a. In the general location where you grew up (if not Pittsburgh) b. In the general region of Pittsburgh
- c. In another part of this country
 - d. In another country
 - e. Don't know

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11. Thinking about people in the United States, and considering those who have the most money and the most respected jobs and the most education at the top of the ladder and those worst off at the bottom, where would you rate yourself and your family?
 - a. Very top of the ladder
 - b. Near the top of the ladder
 - c. Around the middle of the ladder
 - d. Near the bottom of the ladder
 - e. Very bottom of the ladder

12. How would you describe your sexual orientation?
 - a. Heterosexual
 - b. Homosexual [lesbian or gay]
 - c. Bisexual
 - d. Questioning or unsure

13. How would you describe your general political views?
 - a. Very conservative
 - b. Conservative
 - c. Moderate
 - d. Liberal
 - e. Very liberal

14. How would you describe your views of feminism?
 - a. Strongly anti-feminist
 - b. Anti-feminist
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Feminist
 - e. Strongly feminist

15. Are you actively working on political causes?
 - a. Extremely active

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- b. Active
- c. Occasionally active
- d. Inactive

16. How would you describe your current living arrangements?
- a. On campus. Dorm or fraternity or sorority
 - b. Off campus with unrelated roommates or alone
 - c. Off campus with lover, spouse, and/or children
 - d. Off campus with parents or other family members

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Use this scale for the next questions:

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly agree

In thinking about the campus as a whole, use the above scale to answer this section:

- 17. This university cares about its students
- 18. There are numerous sources of support here for students who want to learn.
- 19. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- 20. The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- 21. Faculty care about me as an individual.

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The next section of questions deals with your classroom experiences. Use this scale:

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- a. Never
- b. Once or twice
- c. Several times
- d. Often
- e. Very Often

Has a Professor or Instructor at Pitt ever:

- 22. Told a sexually explicit joke unrelated to course content.
- 23. Made a sexually suggestive comment to a student in the class.
- 24. Made jokes or comments that put down women.
- 25. Made jokes or comments that put down men.
- 26. Treated male and female students differently.
- 27. Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being sexist.
- 28. Been known to be sexually involved with a student in the class.
- 29. Helped to expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to gender.

Scale:

- a. Never
 - b. Once or twice
 - c. Several times
 - d. Often
 - e. Very Often
-

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Has a Professor or Instructor at Pitt ever:

30. Made jokes or comments that put down Blacks or particular ethnic groups.
31. Treated African American/Black or other minority students differently than other students.
32. Helped to expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to ethnic or racial minorities.
33. Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being racist.
34. Treated students differently on the basis of their sexual orientation.
35. Made jokes or comments that put down gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.
36. Been challenged or criticized by members of the class for being prejudiced toward gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.
37. Helped to expand my awareness of or interest in issues related to gays, lesbians, or bisexuals.
38. Made a joke unrelated to course content concerned with religion, religious beliefs, or deeply held moral convictions or directives.
39. Was insensitive to the needs and concerns of religious students or those with deeply held moral convictions.
40. Made jokes or comments that put down other groups.
41. Made me feel uncomfortable because of who I am.

.....

During your years at Pitt:

42. Have you ever taken a course cross-listed with Women's Studies at Pitt? [Use the highest category that applies].
 - a. Not yet, but plan to take a Women's Studies course

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- b. No, have no plans at this time
- c. One
- d. Two or more
- e. Earning a Certificate or Women's Studies Major

Report on Open-Ended Data Collected as Part of the Campus Climate Survey

In the fall of 2001, we administered the campus climate survey to a sample of students in Introduction to Psychology. This version of the survey included some additional psychological measures, and a page where students were asked, "Please describe your general experiences at Pitt as they relate to the campus climate relating to women and men." They were also asked, "Please describe the campus climate in terms of racial and ethnic minorities" and "What changes should be made to improve the campus climate?" Responses of 237 students to these questions were coded and results are summarized here. We coded every response made. Since many students wrote more than one codeable response, the percentages within each group add to more than 100%.

As can be seen in Table 3, both males and females generally agreed that males and females were treated equally on campus (57% of men and 62% of women reported this). Generally positive or neutral responses were also common, with these reported by 30% of men and 38% of women. Some students did mention that there was sexism on campus, but only 9% of men and 10% of women said this. Three percent of students reported that the faculty treated men and women equally, but other students were prejudiced.

Our sample included 4 Black males and 17 Black females. Our Black sample was more likely to report that the sexes were treated differently (14% of Blacks compared to 0% of Whites). The Blacks were also less likely than Whites to say the sexes were treated equally.

Looking at our question about the climate relating to racial and ethnic minorities, as shown in Table 3, 42% of the sample made positive comments about the climate and 15% made a neutral statement. Twenty-six percent of the sample felt that the races were treated equally. There was some evidence of possible problems. Overall, 17% of students felt there was racism on campus. Both women and men mentioned that there was a pattern for the different racial groups to self segregate, with women (46%) mentioning this more than men (20%). A lack of diversity on campus was cited by 4% of men and 7% of women. Looking at Black-White differences on this question, it can be seen that Whites tended to be more positive than Blacks. Overall, Black females were most likely to state that they saw evidence of

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racism, with 35% saying this. None of the Black males mentioned racism, although 18% of the White males did.

Our final question asked about suggestions for improving the climate (see Table 4). Here the most common suggestion was that there should be more activities on campus that involved people of different racial groups getting together (mentioned by 26%).

Appendix

Open-ended questionnaire and two student's answers.

Table 1. Codes developed for classifying responses.

Table 2. Percentage of respondents using each code for Question 1

Table 3. Percentage of respondents using each code for Question 2

Table 4. Percentage of respondents using each code for Question 3

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Table 1: Open-Ended Question Codes for Climate Questions

1. *Please describe your general experiences at Pitt as they relate to the campus climate relating to women and men:*

1. Positive comment about the gender climate (include “diverse”)
2. Neutral comment about the gender climate.
3. Men and Women Treated Differently
4. Men and Women Treated Equally (include “no discrimination”)
5. (Some) Sexism exists on campus
6. Reverse Discrimination. Women are treated more favorably than men.
7. Self-Segregation/Segregation. Men and women do not interact.
8. Some Positive, Some Negative comments about gender climate
9. Other responses that were not codeable into other categories.
11. Faculty treats equally, students do not
12. Evidence of gender Stereotypes in respondent
13. Lack of Diversity in terms of gender.

2. *Please describe the campus climate in terms of racial and ethnic minorities:*

1. Positive comments about the climate relating to race. (include “diverse”)
2. Neutral comments about the climate relating to race
3. Races Treated Differently
4. Races Treated Equally (include “no discrimination”)
5. (Some) Racism exists on campus.
6. Reverse Discrimination. Blacks are treated more favorably than whites.
7. Self-Segregation/Segregation. Blacks and Whites do not interact.
8. Some Positive, Some Negative comments about the racial climate
9. Other responses that were not codeable into other categories
11. Faculty treats equally, students do not
12. Evidence of Stereotypes in respondent

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13. Lack of Diversity in terms of race.

3. *What changes should be made to improve the campus climate?*

1 – positive (very satisfied with climate)

2 – neutral nothing (nothing needs to be changed, things are OK, none, nothing)

3 – more integrative activities, clubs or groups for student body that will bring groups together and encourage groups to interact

5 – more education on different groups / awareness programs

7 – more minorities recruited/accepted into school

9 – other (includes “don’t know” and “not sure”, as well as isolated or irrelevant answers)

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“Academic Feminism: The History of Women’s Studies at the University of Pittsburgh” Marcia Landy (1973)¹

This paper proposes to examine the chronological events, the actors involved, and the nature of group relations in the movement for a Women’s Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Names have not been included; but, in appropriate cases, a fuller description of the individual in terms of her institutional role and the role she played in the history of Women’s Studies is cited. The paper also examines the history of Women’s Studies against the background of other events in the women’s movement at the University without which the events relating to Women’s Studies would not be comprehensible. It is hoped that out of this description will emerge a picture that is relevant to an understanding of events at Pitt, but also a picture that will evoke similar images in relation to the history of Women’s Studies at other schools. For those schools still struggling to establish programs, it may provide illumination about content and strategy.

II

One day three years ago, a band of approximately ten women met to discuss the possibility of appearing before the largely all male faculty university senate to demand equal treatment for women, child care services, general considerations of the problems of women at the University of Pittsburgh

¹ This document was written by Professor Marcia Landy in 1973 and describes the events leading up to the founding of the Women’s Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh. Professor Landy is now Professor of English and Film Studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

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and women's studies. They knew very little about each other, some were more whole-hearted in their commitment to the women's movement, and most of them had never addressed a large body and were terrified about parliamentary procedures. For days, they debated the possibility of such a strategy and up until the meeting day itself, were never quite sure that they would carry things off at all.

The day arrived and most of the women involved appeared in the assembly hall, with perspiring hands, confused about strategy, but determined to struggle through. After being recognized by the chair and presenting the case through the efforts of the leading member of the women's movement at Pitt (the University Committee on Women's Rights), the proposals were debated and killed, for the most part, except for a resolution which expressed good will about the plight of women.

Undaunted by this experience, a smaller group went to the executive body of the Senate, the Senate Council, and again laid forth similar issues. The atmosphere in that meeting was one of incredulity and wide-eyed confusion. Smiles and smirks were to be seen all around the table. Particularly in reference to the demand for a Women's Studies Program, the members of the assembly were disbelieving. Questions about the success of the Black Studies department were raised, insinuations about the proliferation of further "ethnic" programs also, and, of course, questions about finances and the nature of such a curriculum were raised. Needless to say, no one believed in the seriousness of such an academic program. How could anyone possibly suggest that the study of

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women was a legitimate concern in a University that devoted itself to important research and scholarship issues that affected humanity and society?

The women, however, were very supportive of each other, reinforcing each other's ideas in every way possible, and covering their own awareness of so many unanswered questions with integrity and patience. They learned a great deal about presenting proposals that day and also the kinds of questions they needed to raise among themselves and the kinds of choices they would have to make about content and strategy. In those "early days," they were too busy, raising consciousness, formulating questions, presenting their cases wherever and whenever there was an available opportunity, to turn on each other, to be suspicious about another woman's motives, or to explore how society corrupts even the oppressed so that they begin to emulate the oppressor under circumstances of open negotiations for power. This state of affairs was to evolve later.

It should also be noted that at this same time, largely again through the efforts of the UCWR, the University was threatened with withdrawal of federal moneys through investigations by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. As a result of the entry of HEW, the University was forced to develop an Affirmative Action Program. However, rather than inviting the UCWR to assist in the framing of a program which could meet the needs of women, the chancellor constructed a new organization, the Advisory Committee on Women's Opportunities, composed of women from different

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areas of the University – medicine, the professions and arts and sciences, staff, administrative, faculty and student. The women were selected by the appropriate administrator (he himself chose four). In all, there were sixteen women. When the group was convened, it was obvious that a more heterogeneous group could not have been assembled. Some of the women were hostile to feminism, to radicalism; a few were knowledgeable but uncommitted; and others were definitely dedicated to the women's movement. Only one member from the UCWR was appointed, and she had great conflict about being isolated from her constituency, but decided to see what would happen, to see if the group could be radicalized and expanded in terms of both size and interests.

The group changed its name from committee to "council", did push (the symbolic reflection of its desire to be more than another university study committee) for an independent budget which was granted, and organized itself into task forces which could study various areas of the University according to the unique problems each area posed. An additional task force on childcare and Women's Studies was formed which was to become the working core for the later-established Women's Studies program. After conflict with the chancellor, more women were included and the group set to work.

The women devoted the first year to familiarizing themselves with the specific institutional problems confronting women – problems of hiring and firing, equal treatment, salary, grievance procedures, treatment of students, problems of black women (a Black Women's Task Force was

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organized), difficulties of women in the professions, health problems, maternity and paternity leaves, better working arrangements in terms of appointments and working hours, etc. Early during the first year, the UCWR handed a document to the chancellor with a comprehensive program outlined for childcare and women's studies (their Women's Studies program was much broader than a mere academic program). This document was not formally made available by the administration to the Advisory Council; it was indirectly made known that the document had received a "sympathetic" response from the chancellor and his assistant. (The formal statement they made when questioned by the Advisory Council, was that the document, among other documents, was being "studied" and "considered.") At this point, more tension was developing between the ACWO and the UCWR. While the ACWO was becoming increasingly busy studying and passing resolutions sent to the chancellor and other administrators, gaining more "credibility" throughout the upper echelons of the University structure, the rift between it and the UCWR was widening. Meetings were held to discover a basis for a rapprochement; another member from the UCWR joined the council as a replacement for the original member who had resigned and was devoting herself more to legal agitation and community projects. However, the distance between the two groups was bridged only slightly. The women on the Advisory Council were definitely the "insiders" and the UCWR, the "outsiders," which did not help the communication problems at all. While there was no planning to produce this state of affairs, it did come

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into being as a result of the role administration had played in organizing the Council and was playing in Affirmative Action.

It should also be added that as the Council continued its work, a group of women became identified as the “heavies,” women who because of their status in the university community (as tenured faculty or administrators), had managed to move to the forefront of council deliberations and were, for the most part, chair people of the task forces. Some of them even maintained personal contacts with administration, having access to information not shared by the entire group, and one of the women managing to balance and placate several power groups in the University, dispensing favor as the opportunity was favorable to her. Others – graduate students, staff, and black women – came increasingly to mistrust “the heavies,” even in instances where mistrust may not have been warranted. This problem of mistrust was to continue to plague the Council.

Against this background the chairwoman of the task force on child care and Women’s Studies began to work first with the problem of child care, gathering together women in the community and university, contacting community resources for child care, interviewing people who made requests for child care in an effort to provide a set of proposals which would cover not only the problem of a university structure (or structures) for child care, but also alternative proposals to the massive problem of child care and its impact on women in this society. When the report was presented to the ACWO

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(and passed and sent to the chancellor), it included (1) a statement of the problems of working women in relation to the care and raising of children, also to the woman desiring work but hampered by her domestic situation; (2) a first section on the ways in which work situations could be altered so as to make child care less of a burden, suggestions, such as: maternity and paternity leave; more reasonable working hours; cooperative child care arrangements near the place of employment; child care expenses included in salary negotiations, since so many families had to pay their own child care expenses (and this included women wanting to study); lifting of the nepotism clause; equal salary arrangements for men and women; development of more feminist-oriented child development center to study alternative family arrangements; an educational campaign to eradicate stereotypes about employers' preferences for men on account of women's child bearing responsibilities; and, the most relevant in relation to a Women's Studies, the creation of a Women's Studies program large enough to take in aspects of child care in terms of consultation, coordination, and curriculum. (3) The last section dealt with the construction of university childcare centers.

The fate of the childcare report could have been said to be prophetic for future studies, reports, and demands. A Day Care Proposals committee was formed from representatives of the university and outside community, convened and chaired by a male administrator. One childcare center was developed, an expansion to the existing university experimental school; another proposal is **still** being

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considered. The University Child Development Center, which was in danger of being closed, was granted an extension of three years, and the committee discussed other proposals for childcare and sponsored a questionnaire. Many of the other suggestions have not been acted upon. Things were indeed moving slowly. A consistent pattern was developing on all fronts of studies and reports but minimal actually and material results. The ACWO, itself, was bogged down in many of these studies.

Nonetheless, the task force on childcare and Women's Studies turned now to the problem of the establishment of a Women's Studies program. Initial meetings were small and composed mainly of faculty and administrators from the ACWO. One of the women interested in Women's Studies was quite active in her own behalf contacting national so-called "heavies," sponsoring her own institutes to which she invited, whenever possible, nationally known feminists to act as resource people. In addition, she was responsible for bringing in prominent women as speakers – an aspect of her university position. Much of the discontent of women in the ACWO toward her had not to do with her energy and her making feminism more a part of university life through her institutes, speakers, and other activities, but, rather with what they felt was her way of handling events, her secrecy, her cultivation of people for personal exploitative ends, and her dimly-concealed personal need for control and power. In meetings she could out-talk everyone else; her statements were those of a militant feminist, but her behavior to feminist colleagues seemed to reflect rather that feminism was a

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convenient device to achieve personal ends. Why did she succeed? She used students who were flattered by her attention, but who were confused about her behavior. She also created a clique (or cabal) within the council of stronger women and they seemed to be in frequent agreement with her public positions. Others were perhaps intimidated, envious, or afraid to challenge her for fear of repercussions or perhaps because they nourished potential hopes of getting closer to her power. Still others may have taken her assertions at face value, assuming that she meant what she said and that the way she represented herself was indeed the truth. Nonetheless, feelings ran high and much divisiveness was to be perceived among members of the Council. Undergraduates seemed to be a group apart, relating merely to this woman and a few others friendly to her.

In addition, black women felt that their interests were not being adequately represented by the council and the feelings of some ran high. The administrative assistant, who was considered a voting member of the council, and was a member also of the Black Women's Task Force, was known to have made vitriolic and negative remarks about members of the council. Some felt that she, too, was using the council for her own personal advantage. Through the funding of the chancellor's office, and through access to administrative offices, it was possible for individuals to operate independently, although the basic understanding established at the outset was that contacts with administrative representatives were sanctioned only by the council and prescribed by the various projects under consideration. Some

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of the graduate students, too, felt their interests were not represented, and a few of them were swept up into the internal power conflicts of the council. And, finally, some of the faculty women felt confused, and bitter about the disintegrating group relations. Several discussions were attempted to ameliorate the problems all experienced. Social gatherings were also arranged but with little success. It seemed impossible to get to the source of the difficulties. No one even knew how to begin to ask helpful questions about the situation. Not that people had given up on the goals of the council, but they were depressed rather about the possibility of finding ways to improve affairs. No one was able at that time to confront questions of power and institutional roles in relation to their own oppression to personal and social conflicts and to constructive modes for social change.

This was the background for the intensive work in planning and establishing the Women's Studies Program. For months before actual work began, interested women began visiting conferences on Women's Studies. People began to get interested in various models of Women's Studies; they were beginning to want to hear more and to formulate more about the answer to the question: "What is Women's Studies?" This question was especially critical because looming always was the fact that if Women's Studies was to be considered a legitimate academic discipline, supporters would have to explore a rationale for it that would be acceptable to their male colleagues who would have a major role, by virtue of their number, in voting approval for the program. Not only a rationale but also a

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strategy was needed to make Women's Studies acceptable to the largely male faculty in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences who held the power over the creation of a formal program. The women who went to these conferences reported back on the plight of women at other institutions in the same situation, brought back literature addressing itself to the problems of establishing Women's Studies programs, and also brought back exciting questions about the possibilities for women of such a program. In addition, women from other schools came to the Council (at council expense) to discuss Women's Studies, to answer questions based on their own experiences, and also to learn from the situation at Pitt.

It should also be noted that predating the Council and the Task Force on Women's Studies was the establishment of two courses on women. The first course, "Literary and Social Views of Women," was established by a graduate student in history, who was one of the first to be doing her dissertation on women, and by a woman who was both in the Spanish department and an assistant dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. (An active feminist, she was to leave the following year.) A woman from the English department was involved in the planning, but did not teach the course. The course was offered the following year with a sociologist, and two members from the English department. A history of women course was also offered, as was a team-taught course in sociology. From then on individual courses began to proliferate, particularly in literature—English and Comparative Literature. On the

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basis of the interest shown in these courses, their high enrollments, the demand for more courses, it was possible to give “quantitative” evidence about the effectiveness and viability of Women’s Studies. Certainly, in the arguments later presented for the existence of a program, a strong part of the argument was based on the information gained about these preliminary courses.

After months of visiting conferences, of talking to visiting feminists, of small meetings with the core of working on the Task Force, and after talking with students in the existing women’s courses, the Task Force was ready to draft a preliminary document. With the help of a few other women, notably a couple of graduate students, the chairwoman began to draft a document which could serve as the basis for discussion in the Council of a proposal for a Women’s Studies Program. The essential document contained, first of all, a rationale for the program. It cited problems confronting women studying in the university; it also referred to the broader cultural, and, therefore educational, implications of the oppression of women. Their socialization, the narrow and constraining role expectations imposed on them, the judgements about their “nature” upon which expectations of the behavior and roles were based play a massive role in their feelings of oppression, the document asserted.

In order to challenge these assumptions, in order to tackle the massive questions about women and society raised by feminists, it was necessary to have a special place within the university structure in order to be able to question, explore, and answer the many questions about women in society,

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questions relating to the biology of women, their psychology, their use of language, also questions relating to the nature of social structure. It seemed impossible to explore these questions in individual departments alone, particularly because of the parochial and biased interests of so many disciplines, but partly because the questions raised demanded integrated approaches utilizing theory and information drawn from several disciplines, an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspective. More pragmatically, since departments had a preponderance of men on the faculty, and since the chairmen were, for the most part, men, and there was little receptiveness to the overall concerns of women, it was not possible to begin Women's Studies on any large scale in departments.

The document also addressed itself to the specific benefits that Women's Studies could offer to departments, to the university, to women, in particular, and to society. It hypothesized the kinds of courses which could be generated through a Women's Studies Program, and it went further to construct a model for such a program, discussing the nature of courses drawn from departments, those generated independently in the program, the nature of faculty to be recruited, and the kind of responsibilities foreseen in the creation of a new faculty. Institutional questions relating to tenure and job protection, appointments, and the nature of the administrative structure were stressed. The central fear addressed by the document was the fear of exploitation of such a faculty, that they would not be considered legitimate faculty but rather marginal. This fear led to the conclusion that appointments

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should be jointly shared by the departments and the Women's Studies Program, and decisions for promotion and tenure, and work evaluation should also be shared jointly by the department and Women's Studies. Since heavy stress was laid on the interdisciplinary nature of Women's Studies, it was argued that the program should not draw solely for its personnel from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, but from other faculties in the university like Law, Medicine, Public Health, Education, and Child Development. As for the administrative structure, it was proposed that Women's Studies be free to construct its own model rather than being constructed to conform to existing administrative patterns. (More will be said about this point later.) In general, then, the document tried to confront the necessity of such a program and its intellectual content; it also tried to create a flexible design for it, and also tried to protect it from the potential hazards that are characteristic of existing academic units.

The document was then presented to the Council, and for two long and involved meetings, revisions were made with an eye to clarifying ambiguities and to strengthening its rationale, in particular. The document was then passed unanimously. The discussions were characterized by interest, excitement and a cooperative spirit. The nature of the debate, the quality of the interaction argued well for the ensuing work to be done on the question of strategy.

The chairwoman called for volunteers to work out strategy and the response was enthusiastic from undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and part-time faculty, as well—all women. Meeting attendance

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was high, in contrast to the earlier meetings where general approaches to the question of Women's Studies were the issues. In particular, the undergraduates were highly active. Undergraduates also held their own meetings to organize, went to talk with individual chairmen to proselytize on behalf of Women's Studies, and even went to the chancellor to speak on behalf of the program. They were devoted to the courses they had taken, wanted more of them, and several of them eager to take a major in Women's Studies. For them, old conflicts in the Council were put aside, and their dedication to the existence of a Women's Studies Program was their major concern. As a matter of fact, this attitude can be said to characterize all of the people now involved on the Task Force. Status no longer seemed to be a central concern, nor did one individual member's role seem to be more significant or troublesome than that of another. Not since the early activities at Pitt on behalf of women's liberation had there been such a sense of solidarity, mutual respect of people for each other, and commitment.

The proposal then went through a designated route in the bureaucracy, from the College of Arts and Sciences Council, where it was considerably pared down, debated and passed; to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Council where the distilled resolutions were again hotly debated. Members of the Task Force went to those meeting to speak on behalf of the resolutions. The Council voted to send the proposal to the entire Faculty of Arts and Sciences meeting for final approval. This was the crucial step. The Women's Studies Task Force increased the amount of its meetings, wrote position papers for

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publicity and circulation. More contacts were sought with faculty and particularly chairmen. Since the group was particularly concerned that major opposition to the program would be couched in financial terms, it was decided that as many as possible should go to talk with the chancellor and ask for his support, since he had on another occasion spoken favorably on the subject of Women's Studies (a far cry from his response two years earlier.)

A group of twenty women, therefore, composed of graduates, undergraduates, faculty (including representatives from the Black Women's Task Force who had also worked closely with Black Studies in terms of understanding the nature and the evolution of Black Studies and relating it to Women's Studies) went to the chancellor to request his presence at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Meeting, so that he could give reassurance to the faculty, particularly the department chairmen, of adequate funding. Although the chancellor did not attend the meeting, advised that he would alienate faculty by seeming to interfere with the autonomy of an academic unit, he did send a letter to the Dean, directed specifically to the financial question but also generally indicating support.

There had been a final meeting of the Task Force prior to the FAS Meeting, an organization meeting where specific plans were made for the debate. At that time, questions were anticipated; last minute strategies, and new strategies were discussed in terms of recent information gleaned about the nature of the opposition. Also at that meeting, the Task Force Chairwoman stated that she would not

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present the resolution to the meeting, and asked for someone else to volunteer for that role. Her motives were several. She had been intimately involved in the question of women's studies for several years and had had much exposure in the university through speeches, interviews, and general statements. She felt that the vote (and the debate would fare better if not associated with her too-familiar figure. Also she felt—but did not state this publicly—that there were power questions which had been laid to rest during the exciting planning meetings of the task force which it would be best not to take the chance of resurrecting. As a tenured faculty member and as a vocal person on behalf of many causes, she had been the target of criticism prior to the planning meetings of the Task Force; some of the graduate women students identified her with the “heavies.” Some of the general mistrust of the members of the Council had rubbed off on all the women, but particularly on those who had administrative or tenured positions. (This seemed to have arisen for several reasons that will be discussed later in connection with the events that ensued after the FAS Meeting.)

The FAS meeting itself went off beautifully. The resolution was introduced. There was scattered debate, the usual conservative objections -- but voiced by a minority. Some of the influential men on the faculty, namely the chairman of sociology and a highly-respected member of the History Department, spoke eloquently on behalf of the proposal along with the designated spokeswomen—one faculty member, a member from the Black Women's Task Force, and also an undergraduate. The resolution

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was passed, calling for the establishment of a Women's Studies Program, having an initial faculty of five, with joint appointments in a department and in the program, and this to be established for the following academic year (1973/74). The resolution also called for the establishment of a committee with the power of advice and consent to do the hiring, and it guaranteed funds from the budget for the coming year.

Now the difficulties began. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in conjunction with the Provost appointed the committee to do the hiring (the Provost's Advisory Committee on Women's Studies). The ACWO Task Force was not formally consulted on the membership of that committee—the announcements were merely made. The Task Force met and created its own list of desirable committee members. A much larger list was submitted, but other than assimilating a name or two, the administration followed its own plans. The chairperson also was appointed by the Provost's office; this appointment was not made in consultation with the Task Force either. The great majority of women who had worked for the establishment of the program were excluded. Nor did the committee as a whole after it was formed meet regularly with the Task Force. A meeting was at a certain point requested by the chairwoman of the ACWO Task Force in order to have fuller information about what was happening and in order to enable the Task Force to assist in the decisions about the nature of the hiring and also in the designation of the departments to be selected.

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Relations among women seemed to enter into a phase of deterioration again. Members of the Advisory Committee were concerned about the unilateral actions of the one member who had been designated chairwoman. Information did not seem to flow freely. Ultimately, in an attempt to counteract this confusion, the ACWO reorganized itself more democratically by designating another member to act as coordinator—not chairwoman and appointing responsibilities more equitably. However, the administration ignored this change and continued to consult with the chairwoman whom they had designated. The committee had also had some members on it, in minority to be sure, who really had not been involved in the preliminary stages, and who had very little knowledge of Women's Studies (one of whom, a man, could be said to be somewhat hostile). He later resigned. Internal organization had become an additional problem for this group. It became difficult to think of long-range questions that would involve the nature of the program, certain guarantees (such as the maintenance of the idea of five faculty) were not fully considered, and the fullest possible discussion of the departments to be selected could not be adequately confronted. Furthermore, some department chairmen were recalcitrant and certain departments were hostile places to put a woman at this stage. The committee had problems in all directions, therefore, in the process of negotiating appointments; several fell through as a result of administrative and departmental resistances. Throughout there were difficulties with the dean, the committee having one perception of their mission, the dean having another. In

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addition, reports of the committee's actions were very confused as far as the ACWO could ascertain, even though some of the members of the committee were also members of the ACWO. The final blow was the attrition of the stipulated faculty of five to three. Also, rumors about the bad relations between some members of the committee and members of the Women's Studies Task Force were rife and this uncooperative atmosphere pervaded Council activities too. Again discussion of restructuring the Council took place and more serious work toward that end began.

Ultimately three appointments were made in Women's Studies: one in English (the woman designated as the coordinator by the dean), one in History, and one in Psychology. The Sociology appointment did not materialize, and no other appointments were made.

The only other major activity taking place in relation to Women's Studies was a conference initiated, planned, and executed by the Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in cooperation with Council women and women particularly interested in Women's Studies—both students and faculty. The conference was on "Women and Education," and involved both women from within and outside the university. It was to focus on various disciplines and to be a discussion of teaching and its relation to feminist thinking. It was also to involve further assessments of Women's Studies. Resource People came from as far as California and Oregon -- both faculty and students. The conference was characterized by the same mistrust of people as we had been experiencing at Pitt; power accusations

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(reference to the “heavies”), accusations of personal aggrandizement, conflicts between radicals and so-called conservatives. Discussions in groups were difficult, for the most part, although a great deal was learned in retrospect. That experience taught many of the women a great deal about the nature of atomization and displacement of anger. Rather than focussing on common concerns, rather than investigating the nature of power and its manifestations, rather than exploring the nature of the newly-formed Women’s Studies programs, their philosophy, aims, curriculum, their relationship to society, to social change, energy was devoted to acting out difficulties inherent in communication, conflicts among interested groups, competitiveness, hostility and personal aggrandizement (making contracts but fortunately only by a minority). Only later in assessing the events of that conference through discussion and later correspondence with others, did several people begin to see that what had happened was typical of what was happening in so many places. It had certainly happened in the ACWO at Pitt and among several women’s groups, and it was a challenge to understand how it happened or what it represented because the answer may be related specifically to achieving the goals of women’s liberation and of alternatives in education such as Women’s Studies, new teaching styles, restructuring the decision-making process, to allow for more democratic and certainly humane arrangements among people in groups and institutions.

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The disturbing events at the conference and the conflicts among women at Pitt in the year before the actual existence of the Women's Studies Program—bitter though these events might have been—were highly productive and educational. Although much was learned in painful and negative ways, women became much more aware of the importance of focussing on creating group arrangements that would protect against usurpation by a few, that would be protective also in circumventing incursions by bureaucratic diffusion, and that would facilitate an atmosphere of communication and cooperation.

III

This paper has stressed the larger context in which the establishment of a Women's Studies program was set. While many of the characteristics are similar to other situations, the particular nature of Pitt's unique cast of characters influenced the women to a great extent, and by the cast I refer not only to the women involved but also to the Pitt administration, Pitt faculty, and also to the decision-making events developed here to handle new programs and changes, in general.

Some factors relating to the administration to be isolated, in particular, in the history of Women's Studies at Pittsburgh are as follows:

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- 1) The first courses in Women's Studies developed individually and were, in part, due to administration in an indirect way. They grew out of the Dean's office as well as out of departments (e.g. History). In other words, they were not merely "grass roots."
- 2) The Advisory Council on Women's Opportunities was a creation of the Chancellor in response to the challenges set in motion by the University Committee on Women's Rights.
- 3) Affirmative Action plans were essentially set by the administration, with "input" only later by the women -- even though they had been selected to help create Affirmative Action goals.
- 4) Administrative action and style was geared to studies, reports, but to only as much action and expenditure was consistent with available funds and without altering existing administrative autonomy or, for that matter, departmental and faculty autonomy.
- 5) As for the Women's Studies program, the top administration, eager to fulfill affirmative action in the least taxing ways, verbally supported it, but left the burden to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences for the most part. Furthermore, neither the Dean nor many department chairmen could distinguish the difference between fulfilling Affirmative Action goals of hiring women and hiring a faculty member for Women's Studies.
- 6) The committee to implement the Women's Studies resolution was ultimately an administrative committee (the Provost's Advisory Committee). Although the group, for the

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most part, tried to function independently, it was hampered by administrative interference.

Furthermore, all the financial planning had to be tackled by the committee, since in this area the administration seemed curiously inactive.

- 7) The close individual ties that some women had with administration were bound to be suspect too, since the administration seemed too involved in events at every turn.

In general then, the shift of the role of many of the women from an outside pressure group to a quasi-legitimate university structure may have played a heavy role in the way the politics and group relations were carried out at Pitt. Activity was certainly closely involved all along the way with the university bureaucracy. Women felt overworked, tired, fragmented and were questioning the end results of what they were doing, almost seemed to lose sight of them in the mass of paper work, resolutions, meetings, conferences, and reports. It is significant that cooperation during the first feminist stirrings at Pitt was characterized by mutual respect, common concern for collective goals, and excitement, as were the meetings prior to the passage of the FAS resolution on the Women's Studies Program. It seemed that each time the administration got involved, the women began to turn on each other, and the particular mistrust and accusations began. Certainly the matter cannot be simplified to the aspect of administrative involvement, but this does play a significant role.

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Already cited too were the crucial roles of several women on the Council, but they too, cannot be held fully responsible for events. The group allowed a few women to manage its deliberations. Other women must also accept the responsibility for their own passive roles in the conflicts that were acted out.

Also, one must attribute difficulties to the inevitable confusion and conflict arising out of movements for social change. Inherent in these movements are so many questions about existing personal and social behavior, the nature of institutions, about appropriate goals and particularly about ways for groups and individuals to create new modes of live within hopefully altered institutions.

At the present time, the Women's Studies Program is functioning with great respect from women in the community, certainly with the help of many of the women from the ACWO and others as well. Courses in Women's Studies are increasing – in departments and in the program – but this is a story for others to tell. The ACWO has restructured into a Women's Center, sanctioned by the Faculty Senate; and this change is regarded hopefully as a rejuvenating factor in the women's movement at Pitt. If Women's Studies has its hands full coping with the academic content of the program, and with problems relating to administering and expanding the program, the Women's Center is envisaged as being concerned with other

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issues relating women – pushing for more child care, maternity /paternity leave, better health services, and more political ends in general.

Between the two structures – Women's Studies and the Women's Center – and with the availability of the accumulated experience which went into their formation and the continuing energy required to maintain and expand these women's concerns; the women at the University of Pittsburgh have as much work ahead as has been demonstrated they have



University of Pittsburgh

The *Women's Studies Program* extends the University administration's support for same-sex partner benefits, despite widespread support for the same in the University community. Faculty in the Women's Studies Program support the University of Pittsburgh employees to receive all the benefits available to employees' spouses. As an Equal Opportunity Employer, the University of Pittsburgh claims to support principles and practices of equality in the workplace. Benefits such as health insurance and tuition remission for family members are important elements of compensation for faculty and staff. The University's practice of denying these benefits to same-sex partners contradicts its commitment to fair and equal treatment of its employees. This denial also undermines the University's ability to attract and retain talented workers.

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We are deeply disturbed by the University of Pittsburgh's refusal to commit to the achievement of equal opportunity, particularly in light of Temple University's decision to extend benefits to same sex partners. There are times when University communities need to take a public stand against discrimination. Rather than hiding behind the homophobia of legislators and trustees, it is the University's responsibility to set an example for its students and the wider community. Therefore, we once again join the many other members of the campus community calling upon the University administration to extend equal eligibility for benefits to all partnered faculty and staff, including those denied state sanction of their unions by the Defense of Marriage Act.

Women's Studies Steering Committee

March 2003