

Women's Studies Teaching Circle Year End Summary, Academic Year 2007 – 08

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As stated in our initial proposal for a teaching circle, our goal “is to explore and develop ways to engage students and faculty across campus in dialogue and active learning in scholarly issues in the field of women’s studies.” Toward that end, we posed the following questions and concerns:

- How can we more effectively integrate ideas and strategies from the fields of feminist theory and feminist pedagogy into our classrooms?
- How can we as faculty more effectively serve as resources for one another in our respective areas of expertise, and how can we encourage and build this network across the entire faculty?
- How can we as concerned faculty foster an academic environment that encourages faculty and students from across the university to explore/conduct scholarship in women’s studies?

We then generated a list of possible courses of action, including:

- developing a campus-wide network of faculty who can serve as resources for one another and for students on research in specific issues in women’s studies (nursing faculty who could be available to speak about issues in women’s health, psychology faculty who could be available to speak on issues in gender development, etc.)
- holding a lunch and learn colloquium (or a series of such events) for faculty campus-wide on strategies for addressing issues in women’s studies in the classroom
- developing a regular round-table forum in which students, faculty, staff, and members of the community can discuss particular issues in women's studies (perhaps in partnership with the Southern Women’s Institute and the campus chapter of the National Organization for Women Campus Action Network)
- inviting a guest women’s studies scholar to provide MUW faculty with training in feminist pedagogy
- addressing current issues in the Women’s Studies minor, including how to integrate service learning into our course offerings, the possible need for a theory/capstone class for students in the minor, strategies for recruiting/retaining students in the minor, and the possible need for a coordinator/director for the minor
- developing a gender awareness workshop for local high school instructors in which they could earn CEUs

We feel that through our activities this year, we have not only accomplished our major objectives, but have also made great strides in the planning and execution of our other courses of action.

Our major activity was a Faculty Lunch-and-Learn Colloquium, which combined our objectives for a colloquium and a guest speaker. Our colloquium, entitled “Countering Gender Stereotypes,” was held on Friday, March 7. Drs. Jacob A. Blickenstaff and Molly Clark Hillard, both from University of Southern Mississippi, were our guest speakers and workshop guides. Thirteen faculty outside of our teaching circle participated in the event; their responses to the workshop are included in the addendum. Blickenstaff and Hillard led the participants through demonstrations and activities designed to eliminate gender bias in the classroom.

Most of our activity this year was in preparation for the colloquium, including surveying the faculty for possible topics, researching possible speakers, and finalizing plans with Blickenstaff and Hillard via conference call. We met after the colloquium to analyze the participants’ responses and to discuss plans for the next academic year.

An initial inquiry was made with regard to CEUs for high school teachers. At our final meeting, we discussed the possibility of hosting a five hour workshop next year on gender issues in the high school classroom.

Our future plans also include developing a network of faculty who could serve as interdisciplinary resources for campus classes.

Our expenses this year were as follows:

Honorarium for speakers	\$237
Food	145
Publicity flyers	18
Total	\$400

Please find attached:

- 1) Tally of colloquium participant responses