



Women's Studies Section Newsletter

Spring 2000
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*Note: this is an archived HTML copy of the spring 2000 WSS Newsletter.
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Table of Contents

- [Annual Program & Awards Ceremony](#)
- [Notes from the Chair](#)
- [WSS Award Winners](#)
- [WSS Discussion Group Report](#)
- [More on Women's Groups in ALA](#)
- [Core Lists on the Web](#)
- [Assistant Editor Position](#)
- [WSS Committee Reports](#)
- [WSS Annual Meeting Schedule](#)

You Are Invited to the First Annual WSS Awards Ceremony

Please join the Women's Studies Section in honoring Susan E. Searing and Lynn Westbrook, winners of the first WSS awards for achievement in women's studies librarianship. The ceremony will take place on July 10 at 9:30, at the start of the WSS annual program in Chicago. Check your conference program for the location.

[More on the award recipients](#)

WSS Annual Program:

Taking the Temperature of Women's Studies in the Year 2000

Monday July 10, 2000, 9:30-12:00

Come share your insights, ideas and experience of women's studies scholarship and librarianship at the turn of the millennium. Join one of four group discussions on the following topics:

- changes in the disciplines
- the impact of electronic resources and access
- changing modes of instruction
- the institutional location(s) of women's studies.

We hope the session will stimulate thought and discussion and help the Section chart new directions and initiatives.

Discussion facilitators:

Ellen Broidy
University of California, Irvine

Sarah M. Pritchard
University of California, Santa Barbara

Dolores Fidishun
Penn. State Great Valley School

Sandy River
Texas Tech University

Notes from the Chair

At a recent meeting of a women's studies faculty reading group at my institution, the evening was devoted to a discussion of an article called "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" by Wendy Brown (*Differences*, 1997). The essay offers a series of arguments (several having to do with the category of "woman" and the problem of defining a course of study) about why women's studies has become increasingly untenable as an academic discipline. The essay drew the largest number of faculty of any of our previous meetings. Everyone wanted to talk about Brown's essay, but no one seemed very sympathetic to her arguments. However, I personally found her description of some of the difficulties in building and maintaining a women's studies program in the nineties to be quite compelling.

The closest Brown comes to a recommendation is a question about whether current women's studies courses might make more sense if they were integrated into large interdisciplinary programs (not unlike the mainstreaming women's studies scholars talked about in the 80's). Although this certainly didn't sound like a solution to me, it did make me wonder (since I was prepared to grant some of her arguments), whether the moment might not have arrived to consider a similar step for women's studies librarianship. Do we still need women's studies specialists in academic libraries? I do agree with Brown that a great deal of excellent feminist scholarship has become an integral part of many (though I would say, too few) academic disciplines. Still, I am a long way from concluding that what we need is a more decentralized structure for acquiring or supporting feminist scholarship. I know that there are institutions without women's studies librarians, but I hope that they are not the model for the coming decade. Wendy Brown was an interesting read. One day there may be no reason to maintain a specific institutional locus for women's studies teaching or library support. For now I have to agree with my women's studies colleagues that the millennium has not yet brought us that moment.

If you are interested in discussing this or any number of other issues bearing on women's studies librarianship, please attend our program at ALA in Chicago. It will be called **Taking the Temperature of Women's Studies in the Year 2000** and it will provide the opportunity for in-depth discussion about both abstract and practical issues. These include interdisciplinarity, instruction, electronic resources and the place of women's studies in academic institutions. The program will open with the presentation of two new awards in women's studies. I hope to see many of you there.

--Marlene Manoff
Chair, ACRL Women's Studies Section
Associate Head/Collection Manager
Humanities Library
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
mmanoff@mit.edu

First Annual WSS Award Winners

The WSS Awards Committee is pleased to announce the winners of the first annual ACRL WSS awards for achievement in women's studies librarianship:

| |
|--|
| ACRL WSS Award for Career Achievement in Women's Studies Librarianship, sponsored by Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.: |
|--|

Susan E. Searing

This award honors significant, long-standing contributions to the profession over the course of a career.

ACRL WSS Award for Significant Achievement in Women's Studies Librarianship, sponsored by Routledge:

Lynn Westbrook

This award honors a single achievement which contributes significantly to the field of women's studies librarianship.

Searing and Westbrook will each be presented with their awards, a cash prize of \$1,000, and a citation at the WSS Program at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on Monday, July 10, at 9:30 a.m.

Susan E. Searing is Library and Information Science Librarian at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Ms. Searing has been instrumental in the creation, development, and recognition of women's studies librarianship as a field. Through her truly exemplary scholarship and her dedication to and passion for the field, she has served and continues to serve as a role model for many. Ms. Searing was a founding member of the Women's Studies Section, and served as the Women's Studies Librarian for the University of Wisconsin System from 1982 to 1991. Among her publications are *Women's Studies: A Recommended Core Bibliography, 1980-1985* (co-authored with Catherine R. Loeb and Esther F. Stineman, Libraries Unlimited, 1987), and *Introduction to Library Research in Women's Studies* (Westview Press, 1985). She was the 1992 recipient of the ALA's Scarecrow Equality Award.

Lynn Westbrook is Assistant Professor in the Texas Woman's University School of Library and Information Studies. The Significant Achievement award honors the important research presented in Westbrook's book, *Interdisciplinary Information Seeking in Women's Studies* (McFarland & Co., 1999). *Interdisciplinary Information Seeking in Women's Studies* provides information critical to any librarian involved in the support of women's studies scholarship in an academic setting, and addresses fundamentally important questions for women's studies librarianship that have not been previously explored in a systematic way. The data Dr. Westbrook presents, as well as her analysis, represent a major step forward.

--Jessica Grim
Chair, Awards Committee
jessica.grim@oberlin.edu

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Do you have news from your library or university to share with the rest of the section? A conference, collections of note, outreach efforts? The WSS Newsletter welcomes submissions. Contact [one of the editors](#) for more information.

Women's Studies Section Discussion Group
ALA Midwinter Meeting
January 17, 2000

Members of the Women's Studies Section (WSS), the Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship (COSWL), and the Feminist Task Force (FTF) met during the Midwinter meeting to talk about ways in which the goals and work of these three groups intersect. During the meeting, participants worked to identify

important issues, to pinpoint the shared work of WSS, COSWL and FTF, and to develop some strategies for future action.

Participants in the discussion identified the lack of pay equity for women in the field, the necessity for cooperation among the women's groups in ALA, and the urgent need to recruit new members to these groups as three issues of critical concern. The following actions were suggested accordingly:

1. The heads of WSS, COSWL, and FTF will meet at the annual ALA conference to re-establish connections and cooperation between the groups
2. Group members should become more involved in Council elections and sessions. Resolutions that emerge in Council sessions that relate to women's issues should be posted on the WSS and Feminist listservs.
3. The Introduction to Women's Groups in ALA should continue, and perhaps be renamed as Introduction to Women's Groups and Issues.
4. All three groups should explore ways to facilitate the collection of comprehensive salary statistics to support initiatives that address pay equity problems.
5. New ways to increase membership in WSS, COSWL, and FTF need to be explored. Possible methods for improving recruitment include: the establishment of closer ties to local ALA chapters, better outreach to groups like ALA's New Members Round Table and to library schools, more consistent submission of articles and announcements to American Libraries to communicate our projects and successes, and the development of a combined brochure for the three groups to distribute at conferences and library schools.

Participants also addressed other concerns, including the need for better salary and job negotiation skills for women, more career path mentoring to help women move into management positions or to move from one work environment to another (e.g., academic library to commercial sector), the marginalization of women's studies programs on academic campuses, and the lack of existing research relating to technology and gender issues.

*--Regan Brumagen
Research and Instruction Librarian
Hartwick College
brumagene@hartwick.edu*

* * * * * **How to Find Out More About Women's Groups in ALA** * * * * *

Attend:

The Introduction to Women's Groups at ALA is held each Annual conference. This year's session will be on Saturday, July 8 from 11:30-12:30. Check your conference program for the location, or watch WSS-L or FEMINIST.

Not a member of those listservs? Then...

Subscribe:

To join WSS-L, the Women's Studies Section listserv:

- Send a message to listproc@ala1.ala.org
- Leave the subject line blank
- In the body of the message, type

subscribe WSS-L [your name]

To join FEMINIST, the Feminist Task Force's listserv:

- send an e-mail message to listserv@mitvma.mit.edu
- Leave the subject line blank
- In the body of the message, type

subscribe feminist [your name]

On the Web:

ACRL Women's Studies Section

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/wgss/wgsshyp.html>

Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table

<http://www.lib.wayne.edu/fff/>

Committee on the Status of Women in Librarianship

<http://www.ala.org/coswl/>

LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group

<http://www.ala.org/lama/committees/div/wadmin.html>

Core Lists in Women's Studies: A WSS Project

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/core/coremain.htm>

The 2000 Core Lists are now available! They are intended to assist librarians in building women's studies collections. Each list consists of 20 to 75 books currently in print, with the most important five to ten titles starred. Each January, the lists are updated to drop out-of-print books and add newly published titles.

Are you interested in creating a new list? You will be asked to update your list each year. We need volunteers to update the lists for philosophy, international politics, and politics. Please contact either of the editors for more information if you are interested.

Current editors of the lists are:

Megan Adams
McCabe Library
Swarthmore College
500 College Avenue
Swarthmore, PA 19081
(610) 328-8000
madams1@swarthmore.edu (as of June 15, 2000)

Bernice Redfern
Clark Library
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0028
(408) 924-2819
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Assistant Editor Needed!

The WSS Newsletter is looking for an assistant editor for 2000-01. The position begins right after the Chicago Annual Conference, and the person will serve as editor during 2001-02. This is a great opportunity to get published and learn all about the Section. Interested? Contact Regan Brumagen (brumagene@hartwick.edu or 607-431-4440) for more information.

Committee Reports

Social and Education Committee

Minutes, ALA Midwinter, 1/16/2000

Present: Pricilla Atkins, Sally Willson Weimer, Connie Phelps, Shelley Arlen. Absent: Melinda Brown, Jennifer Evans, Kalina Grewal, Anne Moore. Guest: Victoria Williamson

The Committee approved the annotated version of the Women's Political Activism Web Sites list that we have compiled. Shelley Arlen will finalize the draft and determine how to add it to the WSS web site.

In light of the committee's name change to Instruction Committee, we discussed what our goals should be and what projects we might work on. We believe that the committee should concentrate on Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan:

Provide development opportunities for academic and research librarians and other library personnel that enhance their ability to deliver superior services and resources.

We decided to create a web site for librarians who are or will be giving library instruction to women's studies classes--primarily of use to new librarians but also perhaps of use to those who have been teaching for these classes. We will particularly focus on electronic databases of use and give examples of good keyword and subject searching, using terminology of the field.

To begin, we will examine print and online sources. Shelley Arlen will find the citation for a related article by Ruth Dickstein, et al. (And here it is: "From zero to four: a review of four new women's studies CD-ROM products." (Women's Studies on Disc, Women's Resources International, Contemporary Women's Issues, Women "R"). Author: Dickstein, Ruth.; Evans, Marcia.; German, Lisa B. Source: *The Serials Librarian*. Date: 1998.)

Specific assignments were made:

Priscilla: World Cat, Psych Abstracts

Connie: Contemporary Women's Issues (First Search), Carl, Article First

Vickie: Contemporary Women's Issues (CD-ROM), Women's Resources International

Sally: Sociological Abstracts

Shelley: GenderWatch, Academic Index

For each database, we will give a brief description, tell how it is useful to women's studies, give examples of search strategies, use appropriate (and helpful) terminology where possible, and indicate truncation symbols.

Committee members who were not able to attend the meeting can email Shelley Arlen (shelarl@mail.uflib.ufl.edu) with their database choices to work on.

At the Annual Conference, we will bring drafts of our work and discuss further objectives, databases, etc.

--Shelley Arlen, Chair
University of Florida Libraries
shelarl@mail.uflib.ufl.edu

Electronic Resources and Access Committee

At Midwinter the committee continued work on the women's studies journals core list project. The committee appreciates all the suggestions that were sent in response to our postings on the section discussion list. During our discussion in San Antonio, we decided to create a short (25-30 titles) list that would be appropriate for any college or university library wanting to support study and research from a feminist perspective. The basic list we compiled at Midwinter includes these titles: *Differences, Feminist Collections, Feminist Periodicals, Feminist Review, Feminist Studies, Frontiers, Gender Issues, Hypatia, Journal of Lesbian Studies, Ms., National NOW Times, New Books on Women and Feminism, NWSA Journal, off our backs, Signs, Women's Review of Books, Women's Studies International Forum, and Women's Studies Quarterly*. In Chicago we will complete the project by adding titles more specifically relevant to the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

--Sandy River, Chair
Texas Tech University Library
lisar@lib.ttu.edu

Collection Development Committee

ALA Midwinter Meeting, 1/16/00

- Approved minutes of meeting at ALA Annual, June 27, 1999.
- Reviewed progress on a web site the committee is developing which has the working title, "Women's Studies Collection Development Resources." Discussed existing contents of the site and made plans for editing, rearrangement, and additions to it. Committee members agreed to make changes or create new sections for the resource.
- Discussed possibility of any or all of the web pages that constitute the site residing on an ALA server. The issue was deferred to the Women's Studies Section Executive Committee.

*--Flora Shrode, Chair
University of Tennessee Libraries
shrode@aztec.lib.utk.edu*

NEW -- Research Committee -- NEW

The Ad Hoc Research Committee met at ALA Midwinter to define the purpose of the Committee and discuss whether the group should seek regular committee status. For those who are not familiar with the genesis of this committee and where it is going I will give you some background. At Annual last year, a group of us were discussing the fact that many of us come to WSS from a research background, some of us not having women's studies as our main job description but still wanting to be involved in the library discipline. Some section members are interested in research in WS but gravitate to other committees in order to be involved in the section. It was proposed that an Ad Hoc Research Committee be developed in order to discuss whether this is truly a section need and to explore what the Committee would do. In addition, we could then propose that the group become a standing committee. Marlene Manoff asked that the group not meet during regular section committee meetings since many of its members are currently active in other committees.

The group, consisting of: Dolores Fidishun, Chair, Cindy Ingold, Kelly Hovendick, Laura Micham, Theresa Tobin, Marlene Manoff, Sue Searing and Kris Gerhard met over lunch after the discussion meeting. The group felt that a Research Committee would definitely fill a need within the section and that we should seek status as a regular committee. Some ideas of what the committee might do included: data collection for section use and general purposes (this came out of the discussion meeting), encouraging and facilitating research collaboration and consultation, disseminating publication and presentation possibilities, promoting research through the generation of research topics and publicizing funding possibilities (ex. grants.), propagation of good research and discussion of current research issues. The Committee also came up with ideas of various ways to do some of the above activities.

It was decided that we should propose that the committee be made official looking at the following schedule:

- Dolores Fidishun reported to the Executive Committee at Midwinter our intentions to propose an official committee.
- A charge will be finalized and the Committee proposed at Annual in Chicago.
- The Committee will be officially voted on at the membership meeting at Midwinter 2001.
- The Committee becomes official after Summer 2001 (with the new Committee appointments).

This schedule will allow input from WSS members and time for discussion, plus, it will allow those who wish to move to this Committee to transition off the committees and tasks they currently serve.

We invite anyone who is interested in this group to contact Dolores Fidishun at dx19@psu.edu or 610-648-3227. We will be meeting at Annual at 12:30 on Saturday after the Introduction to Women's Groups at ALA session. Location will be announced later.

We also invite comment on the draft of the proposed charge of the Committee (send comments to Dolores at the above address):

The Research Committee will identify needed research, facilitate collaboration in research, facilitate the acquisition of skills related to research and publishing, and promote an awareness of existing and ongoing research related or applicable to women's studies librarianship and resources.

WSS Meeting Schedule for the 2000 Chicago Annual Conference

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|---|
| Friday, July 7 | 2:00-5:30 | Awards Committee Meeting (SHER-Parlor F) |
| Saturday, July 8 | 11:30-12:30 | Introduction to Women's Groups at ALA (INT-Exchange) |
| Sunday, July 9 | 9:30-12:30 | All Committee Meeting (SHER-Superior B) |
| Sunday, July 9 | 2:00-4:00 | Executive Committee Meeting (HYT-Columbus H) |
| Sunday, July 9 | 4:30-5:30 | General Membership Meeting (SHER-Michigan A,B) |
| Sunday, July 9 | 5:45 + | Social Hour (location TBA) |
| Monday, July 10 | 9:30-12:00 | First Annual WSS Awards Ceremony and the Annual Program: "Taking the Temperature of Women's Studies in the Year 2000" (SHER-Superior B) |

Key: SHER = Sheraton Chicago, HYT = Hyatt Regency Chicago, INT = Hotel Intercontinental

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The *WSS Newsletter* welcomes contributions from readers. Send articles, items of interest, and news to the editors, preferably in electronic format. ©American Library Association, 2000 ISSN 0895-691X

WSS Officers 1999/00:

Marlene Manoff, Chair
Theresa Tobin, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect
July 18, 2013 G. Margaret Porter,
Member-at-large
Dolores Fidishun, Member-at-large

[Back to the WGSS Home Page.](#)

Send comments about the WGSS website to: Carrie Dunham-LaGree.

URL: <http://libr.org/wgss/newsletter/2000spring.html>

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