

# Our Universities' Best-Kept Secret: Women's Studies in Canada

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## Introduction

THE CANADIAN WOMEN'S STUDIES PROJECT, in four interconnecting phases, is aimed at exploring the emergence of women's/feminist studies<sup>1</sup> in Canadian universities by focussing on the professors. Briefly, the project involved: (i) collecting calendars and other official documents pertaining to women's studies in 1988; (ii) identifying and surveying 892 professors who had taught at least one women's/feminist studies course in a Canadian university or college; (iii) in-depth interviews with a sample of 100 female professors and 83 male professors;<sup>2</sup> and (iv) interviews with 30 contemporary feminist authors/thinkers identified by the professors in the second phase.<sup>3</sup> Data collection for the first three phases took place from 1987 to 1989. Phase 4 is nearing completion at this writing.

In this paper, we are concerned with providing an institutional backdrop for the professors' accounts, as it appears in the calendars and other official documents supplied by the universities. In another recent attempt to supply a national overview of existing programmes and courses, Brodribb (1987) compiled women's studies information by consulting university calendars and all special brochures for 1985-86. She also had access to documentation produced by the universities attempting to establish Chairs of Women's Studies in 1984, as well as survey results supplied by the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). In addition, Brodribb relied on other secondary sources, the personal knowledge of interested individuals, and short interviews and phone calls where necessary. Her analysis provides an overview of all programs related to women's

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studies in 1984-85, including undergraduate and graduate programmes, courses offered that are not women's studies degree specific, and other related courses available for non-degree programmes. She has also included additional projects, such as the University of Alberta community-action programme on the needs of immigrant women in Edmonton. However, Brodribb attests to the difficulty of identifying feminist research and study environments; her recommendation that all universities indicate the existence of women's studies by including information about courses, research centres, study collectives, and other supports and resources in the calendar index deserves some thorough follow-up. Other guides to women's studies programmes and courses have been completed by Villemure (1983) and Vandelac (1989) for the Quebec universities and community colleges. In addition, there are several descriptions of women's studies at individual universities (Collette-Carrière, 1983; Fulford and Pritzker, 1983; Kimball, 1985; Porter, 1983) and some more general discussions of the overall progress of women's studies across Canada (Nemiroff, 1989; Staton, 1980; Strong-Boag, 1983).

We have chosen to limit our analysis to a description of the calendars and other documentation provided by the universities in order to focus on the institutional visibility of women's studies. We have also decided to analyze the documents as they appear in a linear, roughly formal to informal sequence, ignoring for the moment that they are likely not ordinarily read in this fashion. We settled on this strategy because we wanted to focus on the institutional layers of documentation, recognizing as Smith (1973) has suggested, that documents may "stand in" for the reality of how we actually communicate with one another within women's studies. Finally, while we will not attempt, until a later paper, to explore the administrative, political, or pedagogical consequences of the existing documentation, we will turn to information supplied by the professors in Phases 2 and 3, in order to assess any serious discrepancies between the official records and the professors' versions of women's studies.

## Method

For Phase 1, we began by writing to the registrars of all universities and colleges in Canada which offer at least a bachelor's degree,<sup>4</sup> and requesting copies of their calendars and any other information they could provide related to women's/feminist studies. Requests were sent to a total of 166 institutions, drawn from the Directory of Universities and Colleges (1985-86), including 59 major universities and colleges, and 107 affiliated colleges and associated institutions. Although we soon found that we had written to two colleges which were closed, and to a few residential colleges or colleges which do not confer degrees,<sup>5</sup> we were pleased with our initial results. Most registrars responded by providing copies of their 1986-87 or 1987-88 undergraduate calendars. In most cases, they also sent calendars for part-time studies, correspondence courses, and graduate studies, along with additional pamphlets and other printed information about women's/feminist studies.<sup>6</sup> Our response rate after the first mailing stood at 76%, increased to 81% after one follow-up letter, and eventually reached 97% after all the registrars (including those who had not responded in the first round) had been given the opportunity to check our initial findings.

Our first step was to do a careful content analysis of all the documents. We began by checking each calendar's table of contents and index. We were looking specifically for the terms "Women," "Women's Studies," "Feminist Studies," "Gender," "Sex," "Interdisciplinary Studies," or any reference to the presence of an official interest in the perspectives of women. We then moved to the relevant calendar pages and other documents for information about specific programmes, electives, Women's Studies Chairs, course listings, and so on. In many cases, we were able to find the names of professors identified with women's studies,<sup>7</sup> and we added these names to our mailing list for the Phase 2 survey of professors. As it turned out, this step provided some important clues in our search for discrepancies.

Because we wanted to be sure that our information accurately reflected all of the women's/feminist studies programme offerings for 1988,<sup>8</sup> our next step involved returning our data summaries to the registrars (including those who had not responded in the first round) with a request for corrections and additions, and telephoning them in cases where we needed additional clarification. At this point, some registrars took the time to write additional explanations and some passed our questions along to another qualified person, such as the women's studies co-ordinator. This final step improved our earlier response rate to 97%. Since the missing 3% consisted of five affiliates of universities for which we had obtained information, we feel confident that our information represents the official institutional representation of women's/feminist studies in Canada in 1988.

### The Documents

Our attempts to construct an institutional backdrop for the work of women's/feminist studies professors began with the early recognition that we had, in fact, received documentation of three very different types:

- (i) the official calendars;
- (ii) a wide variety of special publications, such as pamphlets and brochures; and
- (iii) an assortment of less formal bits of information provided in the form of comments, letters, and photocopies of course outlines.<sup>9</sup>

Since all of the items came through the offices of university registrars, we came to consider all three forms of information to represent the OFFICIAL INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTATION of women's/feminist studies. As we began the task, however, of compiling a composite picture of the various programme offerings, we were so struck by the underrepresentation of women's studies in the calendars that we became increasingly uncomfortable with the task we had set for ourselves, and increasingly concerned about the visibility of women's/feminist studies to the registering student.

One problem has to do with the political function of calendars in achieving institutional

credibility and visibility. We recognized that, by including non-calendar information, we would run the risk of over-representing the institutional status of women's studies. We also realized, however, that if we were to exclude the non-calendar items, we would be unable to provide an accurate account of where women's studies are actually taking place. Because we were also interested in exploring some of the discrepancies between the official documentation and the professors' accounts of their experiences of teaching women's studies, we settled on a strategy of including as "official" all of the information supplied by the registrars, while maintaining the distinction between the three types of documents. What we ended up with is not so much a picture of discrepancies as it is perhaps an illustration of the difficulty of expressing what is being done in calendar formats, that is, in institutionally reportable and officially recognizable terms. While we found some key inconsistencies, the documentation, TAKEN ALL TOGETHER (it bears repeating that we are not just referring to the calendars), is not an unreasonable representation of what is actually being done in women's studies in 1988. Perhaps this is the best for which we could hope. As one professor commented:

it's that kind of patchwork creation ... it seems that the patchwork continues to be a feature of the presumptions about female activity still ... and this rather than a formal and significant commitment of funds and energies at the top administrative level to women's studies per se. (#1764)<sup>10</sup>

Another problem with the different document formats concerns the visibility of women's/feminist studies to the registering student. The Arts and Science calendar (Table of Contents and/or Index) for the University of Toronto, for instance, provided no information with respect to its women's studies programme, which actually includes (as we were to discover through the other documents) a major in women's studies, a combined major, a minor, a specialist programme, and some graduate level electives.

A final issue has to do with the major universities and their constituent colleges. In the case of Dalhousie University, for example, it was unclear

whether the women's studies programme is one programme, available to Dalhousie students as well as to the students who attend its affiliate, the University of King's College, or if there are actually two separate programmes, each available to its own student body. York University is another example. York has three separate women's studies programmes, one housed at Founders College and available to all seven of its constituent colleges, another at Atkinson College for part-time students, and a third at Glendon College, a bilingual institution.<sup>11</sup> In the end, while sorting the data by document type, we found it necessary to collapse the information from constituent colleges and affiliated institutions into the 59 main universities. These findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 2 provides more detail with respect to programmes and course offerings; as it demonstrates, of the 59 main universities, only 23 indicated women's studies in their calendars. We should note at this point that we did not include course offerings which are in the calendars, but inaccessible through the table of contents and/or index. Nor did we make an attempt to determine the quality of course offerings according to the range and extent of calendar information provided. We were interested in the calendars as a book of rules and processes for students and faculty, and our reason-

ing was that women's studies courses would be found only by chance if not made accessible through these regular entry devices.

The 23 universities which put forward women's studies in the table of contents and/or index represent less than 40% of all universities, and exactly half of the 46 universities where we found women's studies professors. Within these, we were able to identify only 32 separate programmes, ranging from ONE (of the five) Endowed Chairs in Women's Studies, and two research institutes to a few scattered electives and non-degree offerings.<sup>12</sup> Two provinces, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, indicated no programmes at all.

By extending our search beyond the calendars to the specially printed documents, the pamphlets and brochures supplied by the registrars, we were able to find an additional 12 institutions which offer women's studies programmes. In fact, the number and variety of programmes represented in special publications is extensive. Here we found descriptions of 38 programmes, including three more Endowed Chairs in Women's Studies, another research institute, many major and minor programmes in women's studies, and a host of special concentrations, electives, and non-credit programmes designed to reach women outside of the university

TABLE 1  
Women's Studies Offerings (1988) by Official Document Type

	<i>n</i>	<i>% of all inst. n=59</i>	<i>% offering WS n=46</i>
Institutions offering WS according to professors <sup>a</sup>	46	78.0	100.0
Institutions offering WS according to calendars and/or special publications and/or informal documentation <sup>b</sup>	44	74.6	95.6
Institutions offering WS according to calendars and/or special publications	35	59.3	76.1
Institutions offering WS according to calendars (table of contents; index)	23	38.9	50.0

(a) Calculated from responses in Phase 2.  
(b) Special publications include pamphlets and brochures; informal documentation includes information in form of comments, letters and photocopies of course outlines.

**TABLE 2**  
**Women's Studies Offerings at Canadian University and Colleges, 1988**  
 (as represented by information supplied by registrars)

<i>University</i>	<i>Calendar Contents, Index</i>	<i>Pamphlet, printed document</i>	<i>Letter, photocopy, comment, etc.</i>
<b>ALBERTA</b>			
Alberta, University of		Major; Minor; Lecture Series (NC); Some electives (theological-G)	Continuing Ed. Some electives
Athabasca University	Some electives	Outreach	Proposed: Major
Calgary, University of	Minor	Major	Honours; Combined Major; Continuing Ed. Proposed: Institute for Gender Research. Some electives (G).
Lethbridge, University of			Some electives. Proposed: Multidisciplinary Major.
<b>BRITISH COLUMBIA</b>			
British Columbia, University of	Concentration of electives.		Some electives (G). Some electives (theological-G).
Royal Roads Military Coll.			
Simon Fraser University	Chair in WS. Interdisciplinary Masters (G).	Minor.	Outreach. Proposed: Certificate in WS.
Trinity Western University			
Victoria, University of		Minor.	Continuing Ed. (ND).
<b>MANITOBA</b>			
Brandon University	Some electives.		Outreach (NC).
Manitoba, University of	Minor.	Joint Chair WS (with Winnipeg).	Major. Concentration of electives (theological-G).
Winnipeg, University of	Concentration of electives.		Joint Chair WS (with Manitoba). Combined Major.
<i>G=Graduate programme NC=Non-credit programme ND=Non-degree programme "Some electives"=Programme may include up to four courses "Concentration"=elective programme which includes more than four courses</i>			

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**Women's Studies Offerings at Canadian University and Colleges, 1988**  
 (as represented by information supplied by registrars)

<i>University</i>	<i>Calendar Contents, Index</i>	<i>Pamphlet, printed document</i>	<i>Letter, photocopy, comment, etc.</i>
<b>NEW BRUNSWICK</b>			
Université de Moncton	Institut d'étude et d'apprentissage féminins.		
Mount Allison University			
New Brunswick, University of		Minor.	
St. Thomas University			Honours. Major.
<b>NEWFOUNDLAND</b>			
Memorial University of Newfoundland	Minor.		
<b>NOVA SCOTIA</b>			
Acadia University			Some electives (theological-G).
Cape Breton, U. College of			
Dalhousie University	Concentration of electives.		
Atlantic School of Theology			Some electives (theological-G).
Mount Saint Vincent University	Honours. Major. Minor. Institute for the Study of Women.		Chair in WS.
Nova Scotia Agric. Coll.			
Nova Scotia Coll. of Art and Design			Some electives.
Sainte-Anne, Université			
St. Francis Xavier University			
Saint Mary's University			
Technical University of N.S.			
<p><i>G=Graduate programme NC=Non-credit programme ND=Non-degree programme "Some electives"=Programme may include up to four courses "Concentration"=elective programme which includes more than four courses</i></p>			

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<i>University</i>	<i>Calendar Contents, Index</i>	<i>Pamphlet, printed document</i>	<i>Letter, photocopy, comment, etc.</i>
<b>ONTARIO</b>			
Brock University			Some electives.
Carleton University		Joint Chair in WS (with Ottawa).	
Institute for Women's Studies		Concentration of electives. Concentration of electives (G).	
Coll. dominicain de philo- sophie et de théologie			
Guelph, University of		Combined Major. Minor	
Lakehead University			
Laurentian University	Concentration of electives.	Correspondence courses.	
McMaster University			Some electives.
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education	Concentration of electives. Centre for WS.		
Ottawa, University of	Concentration of electives.	Joint chair in WS (with Carleton). Major. Combined major. Special concentration.	
Queen's University	Honours.	Combined Major. Special concentration.	Major. Minor. Some electives (theological-G).
Redeemer Reformed Christian Coll.			
Royal Military Coll. of Canada			
Ryerson Poly. Institute	Continuing Ed. (NC).	Outreach (NC).	
Toronto, University of		Specialist.; Major; Minor.	Combined Major; Some electives (theological-G).

*G=Graduate programme NC=Non-credit programme ND=Non-degree programme "Some electives"=Programme may include up to four courses "Concentration"=elective programme which includes more than four courses*

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<i>University</i>	<i>Calendar Contents, Index</i>	<i>Pamphlet, printed document</i>	<i>Letter, photocopy, comment, etc.</i>
<b>ONTARIO (continued)</b>			
Trent University	Combined Major.		
University of Waterloo	Combined Major.	Diploma WS (ND).	Minor. Some electives (G).
Western Ontario, University of		Concentration of electives.	Proposed: Combined Honours; Major; Combined Major; Special Concentration.
Wilfred Laurier University	Combined Major.	Diploma WS (ND).	
Windsor, University of	Certificate in WS (ND).		
York University	Combined Major.	Major.	Special Concentration. Women's Caucus. Proposed: Interdisciplinary Masters; PhD electives (G).
<b>PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND</b>			
P.E.I., University of			Some electives.
<b>QUÉBEC</b>			
Bishop's University	Minor. Diploma in WS (ND)		
Concordia University	Major. Minor. Certificate in WS (ND). Simone de Beauvoir Institute.		Proposed: Masters in WS (G).
Université Laval		Concentration of electives (G). Groupe de recherche multi- disciplinaire féministe (GREMF).	Chair in WS.
Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean			
<p><i>G=Graduate programme NC=Non-credit programme ND=Non-degree programme "Some electives"=Programme may include up to four courses "Concentration"=elective programme which includes more than four courses</i></p>			

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 (as represented by information supplied by registrars)

<i>University</i>	<i>Calendar Contents, Index</i>	<i>Pamphlet, printed document</i>	<i>Letter, photocopy, comment, etc.</i>
<i>QUÉBEC (continued)</i>			
McGill University		Minor.	Some electives (G). Centre for Research and Teaching on Women.
Montréal, Université de		Some electives (ND).	Some electives (G). Groupe Femmes, Gestions, Entreprises.
Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM)		Concentration of electives. Groupe interdisciplinaire pour l'enseignement et la recherche sur les femmes (GIERF)	
Sherbrooke, Université de			
<i>SASKATCHEWAN</i>			
Regina, University of		Outreach (ND).	Some electives.
Saskatchewan, University of			Some electives.
<i>G=Graduate programme NC=Non-credit programme ND=Non-degree programme "Some electives"=Programme may include up to fours courses "Concentration"=elective programme which includes more than four courses</i>			

setting. Although it seems highly unlikely that the special publications would be made available to every registering student, these documents improve the official portrayal of women's studies to almost 60% of all institutions, and to 76.1% of the universities where we found women's studies professors. Interestingly, it is here that we found women's studies portrayed in the most exciting terms. All of the pamphlets and brochures are assembled, printed and packaged in inviting and attractive formats. Again, though, we have no way of knowing how available they are to students.

Our third source of documentation came primarily from our follow-up attempts to reach every registrar and to clarify certain offerings. This included telephone calls. Although we considered this information to be official, in the sense that it came from the university registrars (or in some

cases from professors identified by the registrars as people who could fill in some of the details we were seeking), it is clear that most of the information which came to us in this way would be almost entirely invisible, and indeed inaccessible, to the registering student. Nevertheless, the number of additional programmes we found was substantial, as we were able to count another 48 offerings, from nine institutions not represented in our calendar and special publication search.

### Discrepancies

By adding the special publication information and the less formal bits of documentation into our calendar analysis, we found a remarkably good representation of our Phase 2 survey population. In fact, we found only 16 professors (less than 3%) from our survey population whose work was not

officially documented at all. Ironically, though, we also began to find some interesting over-representations.

We had been using all of the information, as it came in, as an important source of professors' names and addresses for the purpose of compiling our mailing list for Phase 2 of the project. This involved, among other things, searching each item for the names of the professors identified as teaching in the area. In this way, we were able to add an additional 164 names to the mailing list.<sup>13</sup> This step produced some startling responses. Here is one example, from a professor who disqualified herself from our study population, but who was named clearly as teaching within a "Women's Studies Option."

I have taught a course which has been included as an elective in the women's studies programme here, but have never taught a course in women's studies as such and certainly not from a "feminist perspective." I discuss such perspectives from time to time, but that's it. (#1282)<sup>14</sup>

In all, 53 of the professors (approximately 6% of our Phase 2 population), whose names we acquired from official documentation, responded to the questionnaire by indicating that they had never taught a credit course in women's/feminist studies, and were therefore ineligible to participate in our survey.<sup>15</sup>

While we have only a limited amount of information about the work of the professors who disqualified themselves as not having ever taught such a course, we can say that of the 53 professors named in the documents, 32 (61.5%) came from only three universities (University of Ottawa, Western Ontario, York), while the remaining 19 were spread across 8 other institutions. Seven of the names came from calendar entries, and were clearly marked as women's studies "advisors," "resource people" or "associated faculty." Four other names came from a women's "research group" publication, and another seven were named in a photocopy of women's studies electives. An astounding 35 names came from pamphlets with titles such as "Women's

Studies at ...[name of university]." Only a few took the time to offer an explanation.

I teach [names of two specialized courses], both offered within a faculty of [name of natural science]. Neither involves women's issues. You could probably call me a feminist, but I don't address such issues in my teaching. (#1294)

I have never taught a course in women's studies or from an explicitly feminist perspective. Although I was women's studies co-ordinator at [name of university], I had little to do since [name of discipline] never has had a joint major. Most of the faculty are, at best, neutral. The courses I taught did not lend themselves to an explicitly feminist perspective, and I (regrettably) have very little background in feminist thought. My mild attempts at feminizing the [name of course] I did teach (by using female names for entrepreneurs, discussing accessibility problems for single parents, especially women) were met with a lot of flak (and snarky remarks on course evaluations) from men in the course... (#1531)

Apart from this type of unsettling finding, the other type of discrepancy we found involved one university which had documented courses where we found no women's studies/feminist professors (although this could be readily explained as our failure to contact the correct people, or their unwillingness to participate),<sup>16</sup> and four universities where we found professors but no documentation. Taken all together then, the official record of women's/feminist studies (again, not just the calendars, but all of the information obtained through the registrars) seems an adequate representation, although it seems elusively and disturbingly hidden in layers away from the registering student. By the same token, it also suggests that our representation of professors in Phase 2 is a good one.

If we assume that students are normally attracted to courses which are advertised in the usual way, the lack of calendar space given to women's studies is distressing. Less than half of our survey population is represented in the calendars. Four of the five Endowed Chairs are missing, as are eight of the ten major programmes, and ten of the sixteen

TABLE 3  
Project Population by Documentation Type

UNIVERSITY	DOCUMENT			PHASE 2 POPU.	
	1	2	3	Taught WS 87/88	Self-defined as ineligible
<b>Alberta</b>					
Alberta, U. of		X	X	21	1
Athabasca U.	X	X	X	1	
Calgary, U. of	X	X	X	15	
Lethbridge, U. of			X	5	
<b>British Columbia</b>					
British Columbia, U. of	X		X	19	
Royal Roads Mil. Coll.					
Simon Fraser U.	X	X	X	14	
Trinity Western U.					
Victoria, U. of		X	X	11	
<b>Manitoba</b>					
Brandon U.	X		X	1	
Manitoba, U. of	X	X	X	10	
Winnipeg, U. of	X		X	7	
<b>New Brunswick</b>					
U. de Moncton	X			2	
Mount Allison U.					
New Brunswick, U. of		X		10	
St. Thomas U.			X	5	
<b>Newfoundland</b>					
Memorial U. of Nfld.	X			12	
<b>Nova Scotia</b>					
Acadia U.			X	5	
Cape Breton, U. Coll. of				1	
Dalhousie U.	X			10	
Atlantic Sc. of Theology			X		
Mount Saint Vincent U.	X		X	11	
N.S. Agric. Coll.					
N.S. Coll. Art & Design			X	1	
Sainte-Anne, U.					
St. Francis Xavier U.					
St. Mary's U.				4	
Technical U. of N.S.					
<b>Ontario</b>					
Brock U.			X	6	
Carleton U.		X		19	2
Coll. dominicain de philo. et de théol.					
Guelph, U. of		X		13	1
Lakhead U.					
Laurentian U.	X	X		5	
McMaster U.		X	X	9	
Ont. Inst. for Studies in Education	X			11	
Ottawa, U. of	X	X		19	10
Queen's U.	X	X	X	13	
Redeemer Reformed Christian Coll.					
Royal Military Coll. of Canada					
Ryerson Poly. Inst.	X	X		5	
Toronto, U. of		X	X	41	
Trent U.		X		6	1
U. of Waterloo	X	X	X	19	7
U. of Western Ontario		X	X	22	12
Wilfred Laurier U.	X			4	
Windsor, U. of		X		14	
York U.	X	X	X	49	10
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>					
P.E.I. U. of			X	2	
<b>Québec</b>					
Bishop's U.	X			4	
Concordia U.	X		X	20	4
U. Laval		X	X	19	
Coll. militaire royal de Saint-Jean					
McGill U.		X	X	14	
Montréal, U. de		X	X	16	4
U. du Québec à Montréal (UOAM)		X		24	1
Sherbrooke, U. de				5	
<b>Saskatchewan</b>					
Regina, U. of		X	X	9	
Saskatchewan, U. of			X	10	
<b>OTHER (including doubles and outside Canada)</b>					
				44	
<b>MISSING</b>					
				14	
<b>TOTAL</b>					
				601	53

Document 1: the official calendars;

Document 2: a wide variety of special publications, such as pamphlets and brochures.

Document 3: an assortment of less formal bits of information provided in the form of comments, letters, and photocopies of course outlines.

minors. Furthermore, although the specially printed pamphlets and brochures present a more illustrative and detailed account of women's studies than we were able to discover through the calendars, they also raise some crucial questions with respect to their practical purposes, and the contexts in which they are expected to be read and understood. It could be argued, for instance, that pamphlets and brochures are distributed in key locations and to key individuals for the purpose of improving visibility. This situation, however, is clearly complicated by the fact that 53 professors named in these documents turned out to be teachers who said that they had never taught women's studies or any course from a feminist perspective. Apart from this, the number of programmes we were able to uncover by extending our search to the less formal documentation implies that, while they are clearly taking place, they are not entirely visible in usual organizational terms.

### Discussion

According to Smith (1973), experience may be constituted in documentary form only insofar as it is seen to be a "reportable matter," and only insofar as it can appear in an "administratively recognizable and standardized form capable of yielding sense to the standard procedures for reading it" (p. 11). Given the fact that women's/feminist studies is given short shrift in the calendars, we may easily conclude that women's studies has little official status and institutional support; that the field is not yet perceived as sufficiently legitimate to be considered reportable. Data from our telephone interviews in Phase 3—although we did not address this question directly—sheds some light on this issue. As one professor indicated, new initiatives require administrative and budgetary commitment, and there may be a lingering perception that women's studies is not legitimate, and hence not reportable.

There is a concern about new initiatives and the costs that may be incurred in terms of re-configuring units, hiring people, that kind of formal commitment and the atmosphere of constraint in which we live. And often the budgetary anxiety means a failure to listen or a failure to be sufficiently imaginative ... I've

been aware of an academic vice-president, for example, expressing skepticism about how far is this going to be a flash in the pan, or is there a basic re-negotiation of the academic enterprise. (#1764)<sup>17</sup>

However, to assess the stability of women's studies according to its calendar status is misleading. We found almost 900 professors who stated that they had taught in the area, more than 120 separate programmes across the country, and seven new proposals in the works. To claim that our weak position in the calendars demonstrates a lack of official commitment is clearly too simplistic. What we need to understand is why women's studies seem so detached from the institutions' regular documentation procedures, most notably the calendars, and therefore hidden from the view of all but the most interested students.

One explanation lies in the extent of growth which has taken place over the past two decades. Only 10 professors from our survey population started teaching women's/feminist studies before 1970. Between 1970 and 1975, this figure increased to 161. Then, between 1976 and 1981, the number of professors who started teaching women's studies jumped remarkably to 281. Almost half (46.8%) of the survey population started their first course since then. Add to this the administrative work involved in adding a new course to the regular reporting procedures, and timing clearly becomes a crucial aspect of achieving calendar status.

A. I think I taught my first course in philosophy of feminism just three years ago.

Q. And since then, you've been teaching it regularly?

A. Yes, once a year. We just put the course in the calendar. It will be first officially in the calendar for the fall term of '88. (#0978)

A second issue concerns the interdisciplinary nature of the field. We counted 28 institutions which indicated that their women's studies offerings are shared between departments, including (to offer only a partial list) anthropology, sociology, history, classics, religion, Canadian studies, Canadian literature, French, English, philosophy, political science,

psychology, education, and business. This situation is also clearly reflected in findings from our survey population. Of the 819 professors still employed by a university in 1987, only 24 (3%) named women's studies as their first discipline of work. There is, of course, no consensus that women's studies do—or should—constitute a discipline.<sup>18</sup>

Another problem has to do with some ambivalence, on the part of the professors, with respect to the administrative structure. When we asked our Phase 3 respondents whether they would personally prefer to teach in a department of women's studies or a programme of women's studies, or whether they would prefer another type of administrative structure, we received a very mixed response. It is not possible to quantify the responses accurately since there is some obvious overlap based on differences over the short and long term, and some distinctions noted between what would be best in principle and what currently appears to be working in practice, and so on. However, a rough estimate indicates that only about 15% of respondents are clearly in favour of a separate self-contained department for women's studies. Following are some examples.

I'd go after something that the boys understand. They don't understand things like a unit, a collective, a programme. They look on that as sort of weak, wishy-washy, typical thing that ladies would do on their afternoons when they weren't bent over the sink. I think they understand the department. Now what we would do with it, whether we would do the same things and get into all the same old power struggles, and so on, you know, that would be regrettable if we did, but I don't feel us getting much respect, on another route, so I would go with the department. (#0567)

There's much more collective stimulation and you are not fighting, you know, ancient battles. I think it's very stimulating and you develop a kind of group approach. You're not fighting prejudices, and I just think that if we are going to develop feminist knowledge, that is essential. (#0232)

The rest divide themselves roughly into three groups: those who favour integrating a feminist perspective into other departments and across other disciplines; those who see a need for both approaches; and those who view the issue pragmatically in terms of its particular context. Following are three samples: first, from a proponent of integration.

I guess I think there is a need for people who have a feminist perspective to be spotted in other departments, and in other administrative units outside the women's studies unit, so that women's studies do not become isolated as something which is just a few courses, a few hours a day, and in certain rooms, so that people understand that a feminist perspective is required in all departments all across the campus and non-sexist research is required everywhere and non-sexist language in every department and at every administrative level. This isn't something that occurs between ten and eleven in class 101. Introduction to Women's Studies is more than that. It's a way of life. It's a philosophy toward women. (#0003)

A second quote comes from a professor who sees a need for a separate department, as well as continued efforts at integrating women's issues into other departments.

I'm quite happy teaching within a sociology department, but we need a women's studies unit, which would be autonomously responsible for women's studies minors, majors, and particularly graduate work, and to which we could be cross-appointed, and from which we could do research. So we need some kind of administrative autonomy, but I'm always a little leery about ghettoization, so I mean, if we have that, then we can go on hanging in in our own departments, and keeping the pressure on them. (#0278)

Finally, one professor who views the issue in terms of its particular context responded:

my feeling is that every university is quite different. In some settings, and with certain kinds of personalities, and certain kinds of funding structures, and so on, it's better to be a separate school or institute or department ... I guess my feeling is that women's studies people have to do the best they can, in terms of the situation that they're in, and there are, as with everything in life, there are advantages and disadvantages to having a separate existence, or to having a mainstreamed or integrated existence. What I would say is that women have to have a lot of political smarts ... and I guess I would say that you should never go for ... the least. You should always go for the most control, money, power, and so on, and depending on what situation you're in, that might mean different things in different settings. (#0079)

This situation directs us to look at how the categories, terms and procedures which present themselves in calendars get built into the processes by which courses come to be officially recognized, administratively organized, and presented to students. We plan, in a later paper, to explore the professors' experiences of beginning their work in women's studies, and the relationship of these initial attempts to the various forms of organizational activities and administrative structures. What we have discovered so far is that only half of what is actually being taught is formally put forward in documentation that is visible in customary institutional forms. Aside from the implications for students, who would be unlikely to analyze the information in similar detail, it is not hard to imagine the consequences of this lack of visibility and poor official profile, especially in terms of resources and hiring, administration, and so on. Readers who do not see themselves or their programmes in our data will know what we mean.

#### NOTES

1. Throughout the data collection process, we used the term women's/feminist studies so as to be inclusive rather than exclusive and not to impose some restrictive definition on people's (and institutions') activities. We examine, in a different paper, what labels professors use to identify themselves, whether they see a difference between women's studies and feminist studies, and how they describe this difference. See Eichler, 1990.
2. Our original plans called for a random sample of 100 professors from the entire population. Our decision to proceed with 100 interviews of female professors as well as with all of the men who could be reached was based on our finding many more men among the respondents than we had anticipated. See Eichler with the assistance of Tite, 1990, for a complete description of sampling and response rate.
3. Our intent was to identify the 20 most frequently named contemporary feminist authors/thinkers. The decision to add an additional 10 was based on our finding some variation in the names generated by francophone respondents. See Eichler with the assistance of Tite, 1990, for a complete description of the sampling and interview process.
4. The letter was written in English or French, where appropriate.
5. Eighteen institutions from the original mailing list were dropped from the analysis. These include residential colleges, non-degree granting institutions, and colleges which were found to be closed, as well as the five colleges for whom we had no information, and three which turned out to be duplicates.
6. Unfortunately, one item not specifically requested (and not supplied by the registrars) was the student registration form. As one reviewer of this paper pointed out, if women's studies is on the one form which students must check, this would be the most direct way of communicating the existence of women's studies. However, since we did request ALL relevant items, the fact that student registration forms were not sent by the registrars perhaps raises another political issue having to do with document visibility. Clearly, it would be interesting to follow up this study with one which explores what exactly is sent to registering students.
7. Professors listed as women's studies professors or advisors.
8. The original information was collected for 1987/88; the follow-up extended until February 1989, and thus covers 1988/89. The information is therefore in either case accurate for 1988. We did not seek information with regard to programmes gained or lost.
9. This category includes some photocopies of calendar pages which were sent in by the registrars. Calendar information obtained in this way was put into this category when it was found to be inaccessible through either the table of contents and/or index.
10. Quoted from a Phase 3 respondent in response to the question, "What resources does the administration provide, and what do you think is missing?"
11. We made a determined (and very time-consuming) effort to sort out the main university/constituent colleges problem by making many additional phone calls to registrars.
12. The following classification was employed: *Honours* includes programmes designated as major and/or honours; *major* includes programmes designated as general major; *combined major* includes double major, combined honours, and joint option; *special concentration* includes programmes designated as special field concentration or area of concentration; *some electives* includes programmes which offer up to four courses; *concentration of electives* includes programmes which offer more than four courses.

13. This represents only one part of a massive effort at finding names and addresses of professors. We also attended relevant conferences and distributed sheets with requests for names and addresses; we questioned knowledgeable informants; searched old documents; used mailing lists from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Canadian Women's Studies Association, Resources for Feminist Research, Groupe interdisciplinaire d'enseignement et de recherche féministe and Groupe de recherche multidisciplinaire féministe, and included a snowballing question on the questionnaire. See Eichler with the assistance of Tite, 1990, for a complete description.
  14. The exact wording of the question on the basis of which respondents declared themselves eligible or ineligible was as follows: "Have you ever taught at least one credit course at a Canadian university or college (which offers at least a bachelor's degree) in women's studies or from a feminist perspective?"
  15. The possibility that instructors rotate between courses and departments (or other) is not evident in the documentation, but becomes visible in Phases 2 and 3.
  16. Our response rate for Phase 2 was 81.7% if we exclude the ineligible. See Eichler with the assistance of Tite, 1990, for a complete description of response rate calculations.
  17. Quote taken from a Phase 3 respondent in response to the question, "How would you describe the attitude of the administration in your university with respect to women's studies? Has it become more positive or more negative over time?"
  18. An additional 10 professors define women's studies and some other discipline as their field of work. The vast majority of professors consider themselves as working with a feminist perspective in a variety of other disciplines. For a more complete appraisal of the naming issue, see Eichler, 1990.
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