

***Feminism Spoken Here:***  
**A History of Women's Studies at the University of Georgia**

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This article was completed due to considerable guidance and support from Dr. Patricia Richards. The initial research was conducted by Joy Strickland, BJ Ard, Luke Bennett, and Martie Whisnant.

This paper serves foremost to document the successes of a group of inspiring civil rights activists and feminists to whom we can thank for the current women's studies program at the University of Georgia (UGA). This historical record not only educates the reader on past events, but provides insight into the lived experiences informed by political and structural challenges that ultimately led to the creation of women's studies at Georgia's flagship university. This paper offers focus and guidance to current women's studies advocates. Over thirty years have passed since the inception of UGA's women's studies program, yet women's studies scholars and gender activists are met with dilemmas based on the same core issues as those faced by their predecessors.

### **Literature Review**

Among the university's multiple functions is the vital role of creating and transferring knowledge that dictates policy, molds American culture, and impacts individual lives. Those who steer academic progress and, consequently, shape and define our shared reality do so with a perspective gleaned from their personal experiences and academic training. The influence of the civil rights movement on academic structure is varied and includes, notably, the birth of the field of women's studies in the late 1960's. The demand for women's studies represented a deliberate effort to transform and elevate academia and hold the university accountable for its contribution to society at large. Because very little research has been conducted on the history of women's studies at University of Georgia, this section provides a general outline of the emergence of women's studies nationwide and serves as a point of reference for the remainder of this paper.

The premise of women's studies originated outside the Institute and grew from the consciousness-raising groups of the women's movement in the late 1960s. Female academics, new to positions of authority in the private sector, struggled to gain acceptance in a profession dominated by white middle-class males. Professors across the nation independently developed women's studies courses motivated by three unifying objectives: to solicit awareness around the male-centered curriculum, to supplement the traditional curriculum with courses that addressed women's accomplishments, and to legitimize women's knowledge, experiences, and perspectives as a valid research topic.<sup>1</sup> The first official women's studies program emerged as the results of fervent efforts by approximately twenty female faculty, staff, students, and community feminist activists at San Diego State University in 1970.<sup>2</sup> While administrators debated the staying power of women's studies, *Newsweek* magazine boasted women's studies as "one of the hottest new wrinkles in higher education."

Concurrently, Betty Freidan accurately predicted that, "women's studies will one day fill libraries and create whole new courses in psychology, sociology, and history."<sup>3</sup> In consideration of the fledgling field's multiple objectives and the reality that promotions and funding derived from traditional programs, the young, untenured female professors adopted an interdisciplinary model that ultimately challenged the power structures within the academy and classrooms to produce new approaches to pedagogy and research.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Seven Years Later: Women's Studies Programs in 1976

<sup>2</sup> When Women Ask the Questions: Creating Women's Studies in America (page 9)

<sup>3</sup> "Women's Studies," *Newsweek*, Oct. 26, 1970, 61.

<sup>4</sup> The First Ten Years Are the Easiest, Florence How, Selections 1975-82

Women's studies professors constructed architecture that countered the institution's "hallmark hierarchy, competition, adversarialism, and sexism."<sup>5</sup>

Because the introduction of women's studies coincided with academia's increased demand for research and the influx of female students, student interest and an unprecedented production of literature and research facilitated rapid growth and increased depth from feminist discourse while other programs were cut.<sup>6</sup> By 1976, women's studies practitioners and students became cognizant of the need to incorporate issues of class and race into the feminist narrative.<sup>7</sup> Women's Studies literature progressed to address the question of gender by the mid-1970's.<sup>8</sup> The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) held its first conference in 1979.<sup>9</sup> Today, the NWSA statement of purpose conveys the pledge to be guided by "a vision of a world free not only from sexism but also from racism, class-bias, ageism, heterosexual bias – from all the ideologies and institutions that have consciously or unconsciously oppressed and exploited form for the advantage of others."

## **Research Methods**

The purpose of this study was to explore and document the history of Women's Studies at the University of Georgia (UGA). Specifically, the researchers sought to

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<sup>5</sup> Strengthening Women's Studies in Hard Times: Feminism and Challenges of Institutional Adaptation

<sup>6</sup> When Women Ask the Questions: Creating Women's Studies in America (page 2)

<sup>7</sup> Seven Years Later: Women's Studies Programs in 1976 (p 31)

<sup>8</sup> When Women Ask the Questions: Creating Women's Studies in America (p 141)

<sup>9</sup> Remapping the University: The Promise of the women's studies PhD

record the voices and perspectives of key contributors. To date, no in-depth research has been conducted on this topic.

The study was initiated in fall 2006 by a group of UGA students enrolled in WMST 4011: Feminist Research Methodology under the direction of Dr. Patricia Richards. Of the four students, Martie Whisnant, BJ Ard, and Elisabeth Joy Strickland (the author of this paper) majored in Women's Studies while Luke Bennett completed Women's Studies minor. Bennett and I continued with the research the following semester; the results of which were presented at The 2007 Women's Studies Student Symposium (UGA). As a graduate student, I spent an additional semester (Spring 2008) compiling and interpreting the data.

We conducted face-to-face semi-structured interviews comprised of open-ended questions. Project development was guided by interview procedures described by Esterberg (2002). Fifteen individuals agreed to participate. The first interview was conducted by all four researchers at the Benson Building. The following interviews were carried out by individual researchers according to times and locations specified by the participants. The average interview lasted approximately one hour. Participants were emailed the interview guide in advance and encourage to follow-up with any additional insights since the majority of the participants discussed events that occurred ten to thirty years prior. Additionally, three participants corresponded via email. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed shortly after the interview occurred.

Data extracted from the narratives was supplemented with information from archival sources such as newspaper articles, notes from various meetings, curriculum outlines, and petitions. The documents were secured from the Institute of Women's

studies and one of the participants. The data served to provide a concrete framework; the interviews provided emotional narrative and provided individual perspective and insight.

UGA's Institute of Women's Studies is the product of the efforts and support of a great many individuals, not all of whom were represented in documents noting only professors, committee members, and a few key administrators. Dr. Richards provided us with our first participant, Dr. Judith Preissle, Professor and Coordinator of the Qualitative Research Program, who was involved in the development of Women's Studies at UGA from 'the beginning' and was willing to provide feedback on the interview questions. Other participants were selected based on suggestions from Dr. Preissle and information culled from a historical outline found on the Institute of Women's Studies website. We asked each interviewee to recommend additional participants.

Participants were individuals involved in the inception of Women's Studies at UGA. We sought representatives from the four tides as well as viewpoints from students, professors, and administrators. Additionally, we met with the participant responsible for the Multicultural Women's Studies course because the Women's Studies Institute places great emphasis and value on multicultural perspectives.

Everyone interviewed supported the development of Women's Studies in Athens, Georgia. As I pursue future interviews, I would like to meet without someone who did not support the program. Currently, such views are only represented through the archival documents. I recognize that the documents do not adequately explain the opposing viewpoint, just as the documents available to date do not give voice to the participants from whom we collected narratives.

The development of the interview guide benefited from the input and critiques of four researchers and a supervising professor. The structure of the interview guide began with questions regarding the participant's personal background, and then moved to inquire after the environment and events that inspired and produced a Women's Studies department. In constructing the interview guide, we were cognizant of our initial assumption that efforts to establish women's studies presence on campus was primarily met with opposition and sought to minimize the influence of our opinions.

## **Findings and Discussion**

This section presents the history of women's studies at the University of Georgia guided by the participants' voices. Specifically, it addresses the inception of women's studies at UGA in four stages, or rising "tides," a term chosen in part to indicate the inevitable, almost methodological surge of activism around women's studies and women's rights on campus and in part as a nod to the 'waves' of feminism and the relationship between the activism that ensued over a shorter period of approximately four decades on a single southern campus and the larger feminist movement. The discussion is preceded by an overview of early environmental factors and related activities relevant to the emergence of women's studies as a field of study.

### Athens, GA (1969 – 1975)

The initial fight for the addition of women's studies as a legitimate field of study was a fight for the validation of women's voices, perspectives, and contributions. The victory was not reserved for women inside the UGA community. Rather, it signified growing acceptance of women in the academic and professional spheres. It meant

directly impacting the views and expectations of future community leaders.

Consequently, this section discusses various organizations and issues relevant to women as a whole, sometimes, positioned outside the immediate UGA community, which ultimately informed the success of women's studies in Athens, Georgia. Referenced in the section are the student activist group WOMEN, the Rape Crisis Center, isolated gender-related college courses, the Georgia Commission on the Status of Women, the League of Women Voters, and the Jeanette Rankin Foundation.

This section addresses the scene, from approximately 1969 to 1975, which led<sup>10</sup> into the first tide. By all interviewee accounts, the local 1970s university climate paralleled that of the larger Bible belt in being decidedly conservative and religious. Women were not admitted as students at UGA until the 1920s and people of color were not admitted until the 1960s. Prior to the 1990s, the Alma Mater excluded reference to students of any sex or gender other than male.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, UGA did not escape the effects of the larger social movements sweeping the nation. Linda Chafin, feminist and a student activist during this era, recalls, "The climate on this campus was still very conservative and very Greek dominated. But, there was a sizable countercultural presence too. Mostly having to do with anti-war activities."<sup>11</sup> Female professors were sparse; Chafin notes, "You could probably count on one hand the number of female professors I had the whole time I was in college."<sup>12</sup>

Chafin was an active officer in Women's Oppression Must End Now (WOMEN), founded by students Vicky Webb and Linda Millhouse in 1971. An exceptionally active

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<sup>10</sup> *WSP* *Progress*, Volume 3, No. 3. Spring 1990.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, Linda Chafin. 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, Linda Chafin. 2008.

student organization, WOMEN meetings spilled out of the classroom. During the first year of its existence, WOMEN officers met with Moe Phelps, Director of Admissions, to protest the campus policy of admitting a freshman class comprised of 50 percent men and 50 percent women; the outcome of the policy held women to higher standards for admittance since women routinely scored higher on standardized tests and earned higher grade point averages. Chafin recalled Phelps' response as, "Well, if we changed it (the policy), we would just have a student body full of Home Ec majors." In May of 1972, WOMEN activists led an organized march to the President's office and demanded a meeting to discuss a variety of gender related issues, including their desire for co-ed dormitories. The sit-in resulted in the jailing of several students. WOMEN activists also collaborated with the larger feminist community, faculty and staff included, in the early seventies to respond to a serial rapist. The result of their efforts was the Rape Crisis hotline, the beginnings of the still present Sexual Assault Center of Northeast Georgia. Chafin recalls, "We would go and sleep on the floor next to the telephone. I mean, I can remember when we finally got call forwarding in the later 70's...we thought 'this is so great', but those first years you had to go and stay and wait by the phone."<sup>13</sup>

A few WOMEN affiliated students coupled activism with academia when possible. Women's Studies courses preceded the Women's Studies discussed in this article. Independent and unaffiliated with the move for a women's studies program, history professor Charlie Crowe taught 'women's studies' courses to a group of at least four students beginning in fall 1971. The first course conducted under Dr. Crowe's tutelage was 'American Women's History'. He followed the course with 'British

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<sup>13</sup> Interview, Linda Chafin. 2008.

Women's History', based on several texts including *Suffer and Be Silent*, the next semester.<sup>14</sup>

As the country quickly shifted its position on women's contribution to the larger culture, the effects of such a monumental change materialized on campus and included the women's studies advocates. In fall 1972, Louise McBee, the then Vice-President of Academic Affairs who proved a key champion of Women's Studies and later served as the first woman to represent Athens-Clarke County in the Georgia House of Representatives, and Linda Chafin were appointed to a commission formed by Jimmy Carter called the "Georgia Commission on the Status of Women." The conference was held at the Georgia Center on the UGA campus.<sup>15</sup>

Outside the confines of campus, a number of women associated with UGA met through the local League of Women Voters in the early seventies. This became a site where dissatisfaction with various gender discrepancies at UGA was aired.<sup>16</sup> By 1974, the Jeanette Rankin Foundation (JRF), a non-profit organization that awards collegiate scholarships to low-income women over the age of 35, formed with the assistance of several UGA affiliates.

The surge of energy and determination that fueled the above efforts emerged from the same dissatisfaction with women's level of involvement, inclusion, and opportunity in society that materialized as the relentless movement for Women's Studies at UGA. The women who found each other through organizations like WOMEN and JRF realized the need for change and spearheaded the move for women's inclusion in all facets of

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<sup>14</sup> Interview, Linda Chafin. 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Interview, Heather Kleiner. 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, Heather Kleiner. 2008.

academia. Thus, the local Women's Studies program, like others across the nation, adopted a necessary political component and advocated equality on campus and in the community even prior to formalization. Later, the experiences faced in forming the program and the knowledge that emanated from Women's Studies demanded further action.

### 1<sup>ST</sup> Tide (1976-1983)

The drive to develop a women's studies program was sparked by informal conversation among untenured faculty. Judith Preissle, one of the original women's studies advocates, notes, "[We] were thinking about studying women as women...studying gender as an issue. We just got together and talked."<sup>17</sup> The mostly chilly climate experienced by female academics and proponents of women's studies informed the perceived need for a women's studies program. However, because the 'new' female faculty members were placed across campus, their experiences were largely defined by the culture of their perspective departments.

In 1977, a proposal for a women's studies program, authored by Dr. Abbie Beiman, Dr. Shanna Richman, and Dr. Maija Blaubergs, was approved by the College of Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee.<sup>18</sup> By 1978, the Women's Studies Committee, composed of those committed to developing a women's studies program on campus, boasted thirty-one members. The Steering Committee was comprised of five individuals

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<sup>17</sup> Interview, Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Women's Studies Steering Committee Meeting Notes. April 20, 1977.

including Dr. Maija S. Blaubergs, Dr. Charles Crowe, Dr. Emily Calhoun, Dr. Janice G. Crumrine, Dr. Nelle Scholz, and Dr. Abbie Willard.<sup>19</sup>

The Athens Daily News reported that only three percent of full professors were female at UGA in 1979, “a lower percentage than eight other Southeastern Conference Schools.” In March of 1983, Myrtle Reul was quoted on her experience as a UGA professor, “As a woman, you have to be good. You have to be more than good... Your publications have to be acclaimed more widely. At a meeting, your contribution might be minimized. But a man makes it and he’s praised.”<sup>20</sup> Teague recalls the regular use of the term ‘the Girls’ to reference UGA’s female faculty. Priessel expounds, “There was really a mix of attitude. There were people who didn’t want the world to change. And, it showed up in all kinds of weird ways. The president would send invitations to faculty to social gatherings and the men got their invitations to ‘Dr. and Mrs.’ And, those of us who were married, to ‘Mr. and Mrs.’ And, everyone saw everyone’s invitations. So, it was all this funky kind of stuff that was kind of minutia and not important and discouraging. It builds an environment.”<sup>21</sup> Until the early 1980s, when UGA began to actively recruit highly qualified female faculty, UGA served as a ‘revolving door’ for female academics; “Those first few years [were] when people, especially women, were hired and then left or were fired or run off or made it through tenure and promotion and said, ‘I can’t stand this place. It’s so, it’s so unfriendly,’” noted Del Rey.<sup>22</sup> Feminism was far less appreciated than the addition of female faculty. Dr. Patricia Del Rey, an early advocate of women’s studies programming, recalled a incident during her first year at UGA in 1978 when she

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<sup>19</sup> Memo to Women’s Studies Committee from Maija S. Blaubergs. March 21, 1978.

<sup>20</sup> *Athens Daily News*. ‘Sex bias suit not resolved, 6 years later.’

<sup>21</sup> Interviews. Fran Teague and Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

placed a sticker that read ‘feminism spoken here’ on her office door. Her boss quickly deemed the sticker ‘political’ and demanded its removal. Meanwhile, the professor across the hall continued to display references to Jesus without reprimand.<sup>23</sup>

Like feminism, the reception of women’s studies was often chilled. An impressive score of letters supporting the program were sent to various university administrators, but there is no doubt that the initial establishment of women’s studies courses was a struggle, and that advocates faced sincere and significant opposition.<sup>24</sup> In 1975, the women’s studies steering committee met with the Dean for the Colleges of Arts and Sciences. Del Rey recalled his abrupt response, “I don’t believe in Women’s Studies.”<sup>25</sup> Dr. Karen Calhoun, UGA professor and women’s studies supporter, recalls, “... in the early days it was a new idea and it was just something they couldn’t quite fit in the standard, traditional ways of running the university. And it wasn’t a department, it was something else and maybe a little threatening, you weren’t sure what these women were going to do if you gave them money and support.”<sup>26</sup>

The Women’s Studies Advisory Committee distributed a letter to faculty on April 12, 1976. While the percentage of faculty reached and the response rate are unknown, the purpose of the letter was to inform the readers of the movement for the establishment of women’s studies, describe the philosophy and scope of already established women’s studies programs, and introduce the new committee. Attached was a survey intended to gauge faculty interest in the program. Of the ten questionnaires unearthed through archival research, responses to the question, “As a faculty member, what is your reaction

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<sup>23</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Collected Letters of Support for Program. 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>26</sup> Interview. Calhoun. 2008

to the development of Women's Studies at the University of Georgia?" were tallied with seven 'favorable', 2 'unfavorable', and one 'neutral.'<sup>27</sup> Responses included:

*This type of thing has gone completely too far. I would not be in favor of a study program for tall people, heavy-set people or slender people.*

*I'm all for people increasing their awareness about their need and others' needs to realize their full potential. If this program attempts to appeal to both men and women on such philosophical basis, I think it will benefit UGA.*

*Titles such as Women's Influence in History, Women Writers, Women and Politics are sexist*

*It is not the best use of time for women to study women. The mastering of professions is the key to emancipation. Two areas need attention: consciousness raising of men and women and preparation for more roles in the political area. I don't think a highly-structured, lengthy program is necessary to attain these goals.*

*I would hope the program does not function to reduce the woman student's opportunity to compete with men students since coping with men is an important professional skill for a woman.*

As noted above, women lacked representation in the professional sphere and political arena as well as academia. The motivations that drove the development of the women's studies program, including that for women and women's voices and perspectives to be valued, informed its functions. Women's studies proponents understood that the realization of said goals would necessitate a drastic shift in the way society functions. Consequently, the functions of the program were political and social as well as academic in nature.

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<sup>27</sup> Survey. Drafted by Women's Studies Advisory Committee. April 12, 1976.

The letter referenced above read, “women were absent from history books, often misrepresented by male writers, an enigma to psychologists and sociologists, and of concern to anthropologists only if they were from primitive cultures.”<sup>28</sup> To professional academics, the exclusion of women’s experiences from general academia and literature was painfully apparent. Preissle describes the young professors’ responses, “And, I think those of us who were graduate students in the 60s and 70s then came into the academy with our doctorates ready to go, ready to say, “ok, we don’t want the same kind of education we’ve had. We don’t want the kind of education where half the population is ignored or everyone is assumed to be one kind of person.” Nearly absent from scholarship, women, women’s experiences, and women’s values were marginalized and devalued.<sup>29</sup> Del Rey recalls scanning textbooks, “So. You’d have the whole book and whatever the content was and one chapter on women. People were graduating where they could not do a dissertation on women – on a women’s issue, on a woman author. You couldn’t have it....it wasn’t considered knowledge worth knowing....It’s not knowledge if it’s about women.”<sup>30</sup> From the History department, Margery Holt notes, “...our history books were generals and wars and achievement of inventors and it was 99.9% about white men.” Teague’s interest in women’s studies was prompted by her astonishment that no one had ever edited the writings of Queen Elizabeth: “Here is one of the most recognizable cultural figures – Queen Elizabeth the first of England. Um, not to know what she said is unbelievable. When I was doing work on her and her speeches, one of the things I was constantly asked was, ‘Did she write her own speeches?’ And I

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<sup>28</sup> Survey. Drafted by Women’s Studies Advisory Committee. April 12, 1976.

<sup>29</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>30</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

remain fascinated. No one, as far as I know, has every asked, ‘did King James write his own speeches? Did King Charles write his own speeches?’ The woman spoke nine languages. She ran a country that was really quite powerful and to be asked if she wrote her own speeches is just jaw-dropping to me”.<sup>31</sup> Preissle later asserts, “I think that most of use that were involved in the initial Women’s Studies curriculum were simply hungry for scholarship on women and women’s experiences...historically, women’s experiences as creative artists and literary figures who were interested in women’s writing and women’s everything.”<sup>32</sup>

Several interviewees involved in first tide activities referenced previous involvement in civil rights or the feminist movement as motivation for a women’s studies department. “Probably the way that I came to women’s studies before there was women’s studies was through women’s lib! And bra-burning! And the Feminine Mystique! And Ms. Magazine! And my colleagues, my fellow students and I were passionately into the Women’s Movement, which at that time was not necessarily an academic movement”, notes Preissle on the political implications of the program.<sup>33</sup> Because of the token status of female professors across campus, some viewed women’s studies as a forum to meet and network with women in similar positions. Teague reconstructed an incident early in her career when she received an invitation to the UGA Women’s Club. Instructed by colleagues as to the importance of the organization, she attended the meeting only to discover that membership was comprised of the less than welcoming wives of faculty. She confides that she attended one of the first organizational women’s studies meetings

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<sup>31</sup> Interview. Fran Teague. 2008.

<sup>32</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

for similar purposes; “It turned out to be a great opportunity because there were a whole bunch of other young faculty like me – young women who were interested, probably very casually, sometimes centrally, with women’s studies. And, it was as much to our advantage to be in touch with one another ‘cause we were all in the same places in our careers.”<sup>34</sup>

The Women’s Studies Program adopted an interdisciplinary model. African American studies, which developed almost simultaneously at UGA, employed a similar model. Both programs emerged, at least in large part, in response to the absence of an entire group’s experience from classical academia and structure. As new disciplines, both camps were in the process of accessing and developing language and scholarship. Much of the scholarship was informed by that already present in departments such as history, sociology, and the physical sciences, but needed to be collected, interpreted, and analyzed from a new positionality. However, because women’s studies was decentralized, affiliate faculty were forced to beg for time from their departments or pick up an overload to teach women’s studies courses.<sup>35</sup>

“Here’s how brilliant Mia was,” attested Del Rey, referring to Maija Blaubeurgs, the first coordinator of UGA’s women’s studies, “She was a College of Education faculty member and she put through a program in the College of Arts & Sciences...she’s not part of the college in which the program would be offered.”<sup>36</sup> In 1978, Barbra Reynolds worked part-time as the program’s secretary, via a \$2000 budget amendment, in an office space provided by Blaubeurg’s home, the Department of Educational Psychology. During

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<sup>34</sup> Interview. Fran Teague. 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

this period, the Women's Studies Committee members met at least quarterly "to consider and recommend policy". By 1980, the steering committee included members Dr. Patricia Del Rey, Dr. Karen Calhoun, Dr. Susette Talario, Dr. Jean Friedman, and Dr. Margaret Holt.

Despite opposition, Mia Blaubergs relentlessly led the fight for a women's studies program. Over two decades later, Priessle would assert, "I got away with it. And that's exactly what I want you to say. Use the phrase, "I got away with it" because I had a really smart department head who said, 'you can do anything you want in your research as long as you're putting out. You can do what you want, just don't do this other (women's studies) stuff. Don't teach. But mostly, don't spend time in administration, what we call faculty governance, because it will kill you.'"<sup>37</sup> Blaubergs, she would reflect, did not receive the mentorship that the interviewees from this period emphasized as vital to a young professor's academic success. Instead, Blaubergs skillfully fulfilled the absolutely essential role of leader, administrator, and visionary. Optimism and excitement spread between women's studies advocates who celebrated the establishment of the women's studies minor and certificate. In camaraderie and with energy renewed, they looked to further develop the program and instigate serious social change. Their efforts halted suddenly when Blaubergs was denied tenure for the third time in 1979.

"It was moribund in 1980," confided Priessle, "...Mia was denied tenure in maybe 1979... and that was devastating for everyone. People in the department said, 'I told you this would happen.'"<sup>38</sup> Most women's studies advocates interpreted Blaubergs' predicament as punishment for her involvement in women's studies. The climate swiftly

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<sup>37</sup> Interview. Judith Priessle. 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Interview. Judith Priessle. 2008.

moved from optimistic to bitter. Blauberger responded by suing the University for sexual discrimination in May 1979.<sup>39</sup> In October 1980, the *Red and Black* reports, “Blauberger’s suit claims a University advisory tenure committee denied her promotion and tenure because of her position as coordinator of the Women’s Studies Program.”<sup>40</sup>

The Blauberger trial found national spotlight. She was denied tenure via a confidential peer review that yielded votes in a ratio of six to three. Virginia Trotter, UGA’s then-Vice President of Academic Affairs, publicly supported the results. Of the six committee members called to testify and justify their votes, Professor James A. Dinnan refused to reveal his vote. He argued, “If academic freedom is not the right to judge one’s peers free from outside pressure or intimidation, then what is?” However, Federal District Court Judge Wilbur Owens Jr. determined that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 demanded the court assess whether Blauberger was given fair consideration. Consequently, for each day that Dinnan continued to withhold evidence, Judge Owens Jr. fined the professor \$100 and sentenced him to 90 days in jail for contempt of court. Dinnan entered the jail at Florida’s Eglin Air Force Base adorned in full academic robes.<sup>41</sup> In August 1980, Blauberger responded to media coverage in the *Athens Observer*, “I’m not going to be intimidated by the amount of sympathy he has gotten. Dr. Dinnan volunteered to go to jail. He is not being punished for his stand. He is being coerced to obey the law. I think he should have gone to jail earlier.” Further, Blauberger

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<sup>39</sup> *The University of Georgia Community News*. April 12, 1976.

<sup>40</sup> *The Red and Black*. ‘Blauberger in law school while awaiting action on bias suit.’ October 7, 1980.

<sup>41</sup> *Time Magazine*. ‘Growing Rover over ‘Peer Review’’. October 6, 1980.

is reported as contending that the media “discredit[ed] her case, treating it as a ‘frivolous’ action only secondary to the professor’s bold stand.”<sup>42</sup>

The suit continued and grew. On October 7 1980, a page 2 headline of the Red and Black read, “Blaubergs in law school while awaiting action on bias suit.”<sup>43</sup> The law suit continued for over six years and, in August 1980, extended into a class action lawsuit that sought “\$10 million in back wages allegedly denied 400 women faculty members because of what they charge is a campus-wide policy of sex discrimination.”<sup>44</sup> Ironically, Blaubergs received an invitation to apply to UGA’s law school followed by a scholarship based on her LSAT scores. She accepted the scholarship and a job as staff attorney with the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upon graduation.<sup>45</sup> She indicated that the coverage of the suit harmed her chances of securing a professorship elsewhere and concluded, “I’ve lived here for 10 years...Hopefully there will be a new life for me in New Orleans, and I’m looking forward to that. But, it’s not a choice I would have made.”<sup>46</sup>

The lawsuit created a culture of fear and prompted untenured professors to disassociate from the women’s studies venture. Several advocates worked to build an environment that would ultimately embrace women’s studies through avenues such as research. Teague describes the unwavering devotion to the project, “we were going to hunker down and get ourselves promoted because once you were promoted you were in

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<sup>42</sup> *The Athens Observer*. ‘Blaubergs says Dinnan case hurt her job chances.’ June 7, 1980.

<sup>43</sup> *Time Magazine*. ‘Growing Rover over ‘Peer Review’. October 6, 1980.

<sup>44</sup> *The Athens Observer*. ‘Blaubergs says Dinnan case hurt her job chances.’ June 7, 1980.

<sup>45</sup> *Athens Daily News*. ‘Sex bias suit not resolved, 6 years later’

<sup>46</sup> *The Athens Observer*. ‘Blaubergs says Dinnan case hurts her job chances.’ June 7, 1980.

the middle ranks and you could change that. And, that's exactly what happened. Some of us got dismissed. But, many of us got promoted."<sup>47</sup>

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Tide (1983-87)

Progress stagnated during the second tide, dating from 1983 to 1987. Many Women's Studies proponents were disillusioned over Blaugberg's experience. Others were infuriated, but publicly disassociated from the program rather than risk their professional future at the university. A few crucial supporters who sought to account for the program's remnants and regroup were met with a largely disorganized and disengaged administration but, fortunately, gained Louise McBee's counsel. Despite the quiet nature of the period, the persistence of actors such as Del Rey and Calhoun ultimately secured a future for the UGA Women's Studies program.

Sociologist Dr. Linda Grant recounts, "when I came to the University of Georgia in 1985 ... I asked to meet representatives from the women's studies program and I mentioned that to the humanities and the chair of sociology, who is retired, and he seemed a little bit taken aback and he said, 'well of course we'll try to do that, but I'll have to get back to you about that.' And he called me back, maybe about a day later, and he said, 'I'm sorry, I know you wanted to meet people from women's studies, but the program isn't here anymore. There used to be a program here, but everybody who was in it either left or got fired and there's nobody for you to meet.'"<sup>48</sup>

Following Blaugberg's dismissal, Del Rey and Karen Calhoun approached Jack Payne, then Dean of Arts & Sciences, to discuss the future of the women's studies

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<sup>47</sup> Interview. Fran Teague. 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Interview. Linda Grant. 2008.

program. Payne, unaware that the program was housed in Arts & Sciences, insisted that the program did not fall under his auspices. After spending considerable time maneuvering through the university's beaucratic maze, Del Rey determined that that program was definitely Payne's responsibility and sent him a letter indicating as much and "reintroducing [him] to the original points of [their] meeting... Who is in a position to act as interim coordinator and therefore spend the money that [was] already budgeted? What plans [were] made for the self study for the program? What plans [were] made to seek a new coordinator for the next year?"<sup>49</sup>

Little is known about what occurred between Blaubergs' dismissal and the year 1987. Her absence left a definite hole in the movement. Junior faculty members were reluctant to assume the role of coordinator for fear of jeopardizing their careers.<sup>50</sup> A part-time professor of history described as occupying "the most marginalized, the most vulnerable, the weakest" position succeeded Blaubergs. Her appointment was perceived as a lack of institutional support.<sup>51</sup>

When the successor left the university in 1981, Calhoun and Talarico met with McBee, then Vice President of Academic Affairs, to discuss the dilemma in detail. They emphasized the faculty's desire to work towards implementing a serious academic program and identified two primary needs, "a secure faculty member to serve as director and administrative support for the program."<sup>52</sup> Calhoun describes McBee's response as sympathetic; McBee made three primary suggestions that she felt would appeal to administration: to define the program as academic rather than political and gain support

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<sup>49</sup> Interview. Calhoun. 2008

<sup>50</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>51</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Interview. Calhoun. 2008.

across campus: to emphasize the research function and avoid the concept of a center, thus to re-title the program and de-emphasize the certificate aspect; and to use the gerontology program or other interdisciplinary programs as a model. Following McBee's counsel, Calhoun and Talarico drafted a budget after soliciting advice from Nat Dean and Jack Burke, the Vice Presidents of Research and Service. That April, Dean and Burke named potentially interested faculty and suggested the program could receive a maximum budget of \$6000 or \$7000. Calhoun and Talarico briefed interested parties on their progress and offered up three options for vote via survey: "to disband the program and direct efforts at informal associations, to maintain the program at its current level and face the crisis of coordinator every year, or outline tasks for redefinition and redirection of the program." However, Trotter, who soon replaced McBee as Vice President of Academic Affairs, indicated that the interim proposals and budget requests were filed past deadline for consideration. Consequently, the program did not receive funding and the steering committee voted to resubmit the proposal the following year; the proposal included a request for "release time for faculty director, graduate assistant, part time secretary, minimal supplies and expenses... 23,000 dollars including release time."<sup>53</sup> Despite earlier turmoil, commitment to the future of women's studies at UGA remained constant and a strategic attempt to formalize the process endured.

### Third Tide (1987 – 2001)

The vision of the first tide was finally realized in the third tide, dating from 1987 to 2001. It was a time defined by energy, excitement, commitment and fierce determination. New leadership surged from within the current ranks and gained strength

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<sup>53</sup> Interview. Calhoun. 2008.

with the support of newer faculty. This section explores the strategy behind the success of the third tide as well as the effect on gender equality within the larger university community.

Early into the third tide, an exciting period marked by the resurrection of UGA's Women's Studies program, student reporters published articles saying, "A phoenix is rising in Room 230-F of The University of Georgia main library" and "From its nucleus on the second floor of the main library, the Women's Studies program is spreading out and gaining a hold in the University's conscience."<sup>54</sup> The third tide began in 1987 with the hiring of a part-time coordinator and extended to 2001 with the turnover of one hundred percent of women's studies administrators and a secured B.A.

By 1987, a small cohort of the professors that had been engaged in the original effort to implement a women's studies program remained on campus, finally secure in tenured positions and eager to revitalize the program. This time, however, the group was joined by a considerable number of passionate colleagues and supporters. While Blaubergs' peers patiently pursued tenure, new supporters had matriculated to UGA from across the nation. Of particular importance is that the newer colleagues, specifically recruited by university administrators for the impressive academic backgrounds and skills that drove UGA's evolution into a research institution, matriculated from places where women's studies departments, if not embraced, were already realized and respected.

A number of actors were key in the revamping of the program, Dr. Louise McBee, Dr. Patricia Del Rey, Dr. Heather Kleiner, and a single unidentified student among them. The student approached Kleiner, an advisor at the college of Arts &

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<sup>54</sup> New article. Source undetermined. 'Women's studies program is revived.' and *The Red and Black*. 'Women's Studies gaining momentum.' October 5, 1989.

Sciences, for direction in pursuing a women's studies certificate. Kleiner, surprised to find the certificate listed in UGA's catalogue, discovered that several courses were cross-listed via Robert Jones, the Associate Dean. Interested students were charged with the taxing challenge of seeking out department representatives to determine when the courses might be offered. Kleiner responded by volunteering to serve as an advisor for the makeshift program.<sup>55</sup>

“As luck would have it, Louise McBee was in the driver's seat,” Kleiner noted about the then Vice President of Instruction. Shortly after the discovery, Kleiner serendipitously ran into McBee, who relayed that a small group of faculty had recently rallied to champion the program. In August of 1987 Dr. Ellen R. Jordan, Acting Associate Vice President, distributed a memorandum announcing Kleiner's acceptance of the part-time position of Active Coordinator of Women's Studies and requesting that interested parties contact Kleiner to serve on the steering committee. On November 3, 1987, McBee appointed seven individuals to the Women's Studies Steering Committee including Dr. Pat Del Rey (Physical Education), Dr. Jean Friedman (History), Dr. Margaret Herman (Institute of Government), Dr. Linda Piper (History), Dr. Sharon Price (Child and Family Development), Dr. Susette Talarico (Political Science), and Dr. Ruth Weber (Social Work).<sup>56</sup> Marilyn Brownstein (English) was added to the roster a couple of weeks later.

Dr. Judith Priessle, a member of the cohort, recalls, “Mia (Blaubergs) initiated the program, Pat (Del Rey) got the program institutionalized...she did the transformation

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<sup>55</sup> Interview. Heather Kleiner. 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Memorandum to: Friends of Women's Studies from: M. Louise McBee, Acting Vice President. November 3, 1987.

work that's just crucial for any academic program."<sup>57</sup> Del Rey's exceptional strategic and administrative talents have been described in terms of 'energy' and 'New York street sense.' She contributed considerably to the program during Blauberger's tenure and, disillusioned and disgusted, elected to take a short leave of absence following the Blauberger affair. However, she also represented the significant number of professors who came to UGA from campuses with established women's studies programs. Del Rey notes, "feminism is more accepted (nationwide)... certain departments beg(a)n looking around and asking, 'where's my feminist literary critic? Historian? etc.'"<sup>58</sup> In fall of 1988, Dr. Linda Piper, Chair of the Women's Studies Search Committee, announced an internal search for a Director of Women's Studies, "a one to two year 50% position for a tenured faculty member" based on the Women's Studies Program Proposal.<sup>59</sup> Drafted by the Ad-hoc Women's Studies Committee, the proposal sought "to reassess, revitalize, and redesign the Women's Studies Program that operated successfully at the University of Georgia between 1976 and 1983.....The new Women's Studies Program continues the aims of the old. In order to carry out its goal, the Ad-hoc Committee proposes an independent Women's Studies Program to foster research, raise student interest, and provide for intellectual exchange on philosophical and pragmatic issues of gender." Del Rey recalls that in October 1988, "I was hired as Director. And the first thing I did – I remember... Here I am – standing and collaborating – in the Main Library. And I'm like,

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<sup>57</sup> Interview. Judith Preissle. 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>59</sup> 'Announcement of Internal Search' for Director of Women's Studies. Fall 1988.

‘ok, now what?’ I went to pick up a box of materials the committee set up. The curriculum box. That’s all I had. A box.”<sup>60</sup>

Del Rey notes, “I realized I had to do two things. One was get a space and one was get a prefix.”<sup>61</sup> Fiercely determined to succeed, she negotiated an office in the main library, a central location on campus; “So, I went up to the library and the space was tiny, tiny, tiny. But, it was right next to the Georgia Review...one of the best literary magazines in the country...I found furniture in warehouses...we had five small offices and a hallway...It wasn’t a pretty place, but we had a table and everything.”<sup>62</sup> By March of 1990, Del Rey was quoted in *Columns*, “Since space is a real problem on campus, we were thrilled to get this place – but we’ve outgrown it already.”<sup>63</sup> The *columns* reporter followed with, “As it is, the office can barely accommodate Del Rey and the rest of the staff: Heather Kleiner, who serves as her assistant, plus a secretary, a work-study student, an assortment of volunteers who come and go on various projects, and six working committees who hold meetings here.” Soon after, Del Rey secured the Benson building, a free standing building and the current site of the UGA Institute for Women’s Studies. She strategically chose Benson, a small building off the university bus line route, for the classrooms; “I wanted the classrooms. I wanted the students to be coming in, especially the students who weren’t women’s studies majors...If there were no classrooms, who would come by? No one. The faculty was going to be in other departments, so it would be me alone with Heather (Kleiner)...I knew I had to build the program. From the

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<sup>60</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>61</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>62</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>63</sup> *Columns (The University of Georgia)*. ‘Pat Del Rey promotes women’s studies both on campus and in the Southeast.’ March 19. 1990.

beginning, I had to think of ways to increase numbers. So, we took Benson.”<sup>64</sup> In 1989, the University Curriculum Committee approved the WS prefix for women’s studies courses.

Del Rey approached the project with professionalism. Because UGA faculty and staff opinion of the program varied, she “always wanted things to go through even more justified than necessary and showing the academic content of our program....I tried to make it extremely academic.”<sup>65</sup> The endeavor was to have a women’s studies course cross-referenced in every department on campus. Consequently, Del Rey immediately formed committees to investigate outlets for offering a Minor and a Graduate Certificate. Dr. Fran Teague provided invaluable support early into the third tide by introducing the program to faculty and staff or, as she describes her efforts, “[making] it clear that we were not bad people. And that we were not actually planning to burn down anyone’s building or threaten anyone’s marriage.”<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile, Del Rey’s work focused on visibility and outreach so that by 1990 she served as the president of the Southeast Women’s Studies Association and as co-chair of the University Center’s Women’s Studies Consortium.

In 1989, Del Rey approached Dr. Bill Prokasy, Vice President for Academic Affairs, with a proposal and request for funds. Prokasy’s support proved instrumental. He joined UGA in 1988 after serving as a Department Head at the University of Utah where he assisted a group of five young, untenured female professors in organizing a women’s studies program. Dr. Prokasy reminisces, “No matter what, the women’s

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<sup>64</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>66</sup> Interview. Fran Teague. 2008.

studies program by definition is going to be political to some degree. More obviously political than most academic programs because of the times... fighting stereotypes and that kind of thing, which means you had to step on toes, but for good reasons... It was a whole array of things which you saw in developing programs like women's studies/gender studies because there were lots of traditions that had to be broken, shaped, and reshaped in order for it to survive."<sup>67</sup> Dr. Del Rey describes their initial meetings, "Bill Prokasy said to me many times, 'I don't want a political program.' He didn't want it political and I would smile, 'it's not political.'... I didn't engage the argument that everything else was political. I was on to him with the budget."<sup>68</sup> The result of their meetings was not only an approved budget, but also faculty positions.

The search commenced in 1989. Prokasy initially agreed to fund one position through the women's studies program. Del Rey recalls her reaction to the eventual first hire, Cindy Jenefsky, "I remember walking into this room and Cindy Jenefsky was giving a talk. And I just saw her and I knew that she would be right. Everyone was listening to her give this really good academic talk. So, we offered her the position. But, we had so many others in the pool that were great. So, I went back to Bill (Prokasy) and said, 'We need a second one.' So, he said, 'OK.' We got the second position within the same search. Pretty amazing when that happens."<sup>69</sup> Even more amazing is that the exceptional qualifications of the candidates led Del Rey to request funding for a third position, for which he was able to procure half a line. Del Rey recalls, "we were flying high."<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Interview. Bill Prokasy. 2008.

<sup>68</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Interview. Bill Prokasy. 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

Of notable interest is the strategy behind the recruiting process. The Women's Studies Program Steering Committee approached the process with serious regard for the implications of the placements. On November 16, 1989 Del Rey released an updated memo <sup>71</sup>outlining the concerns that would inform the search process:

1. The joint appointments must be in departments that demonstrate receptivity to women and women's scholarship. The 'hires' should be able to work in a supportive environment;
2. The positions should be in departments where we do not have feminist scholars represented;
3. The positions ideally should be in departments that provide a high number of "core" courses thereby increasing student exposure to feminist scholarship;
4. The "hires" should demonstrate both promise in their respective fields and also commitment to the goals for the Women's Studies Program, i.e., program development and curriculum integration;
5. The "hires" should be able to teach core Women's Studies courses, namely Introduction to Women's Studies and Feminist Theory

The job announcement read, "The Women's Studies Program of the University of Georgia invites applications and nominations for two jointly appointed tenure-track positions at the assistant professor level... applicants should have an interest in program development and curriculum integration projects."<sup>72</sup> Del Rey forwarded letters to the heads of departments in the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Education announcing that the Women's Studies Program was preparing to fund two professors with half-time appointments between women's studies and the other departments in question.<sup>73</sup> Based on the above concerns, she required that interested departments reply to the following questions: (i) What support would the senior faculty in your department

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<sup>71</sup> Memorandum From: Patricia Del Rey. November 16, 1989.

<sup>72</sup> Position Announcement: Two Tenure-Track Joint Appointments in Women's Studies.

<sup>73</sup> Minutes of Steering Committee January 14, 1990.

give to a women's studies scholar? (ii) What resources does the department have to evaluate scholarship in women's studies? (iii) Would your departmental curriculum committee support the development of a course within the new faculty member's area of expertise that focus on women.<sup>74</sup> Ten departments replied including Anthropology, Sociology, Drama, Music, Religion, Classics, English, Speech, Philosophy, and Recreation.<sup>75</sup> In 1990, the Women's Studies program began hiring faculty positions.

The women's studies appointments reflected the program's early commitment to diversity. Candidates were selected from direct applicants and departmental short-lists. The steering committee was enthusiastic with the new joint-appointments: Dr. Cindy Jenefsky with Speech Communication, Dr. Josephine Beoku-Betts with Sociology, and Dr. Miranda Pollard with History. Pollard brought experience as the former Assistant Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at Columbia University while Jenefsky and Beoku-Betts added their experiences based on involvement with the women's studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.<sup>76</sup> At this juncture, the structure of the women's studies program evolved to include three core faculty and 59 affiliate faculty.<sup>77</sup> The core courses solidified with the addition of WS 301 Feminist Theory, initially taught by Dr. Pollard.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, the new professors immediately began to craft the curriculum with special topics including Gay and Lesbian studies (Pollard), Gender, Race and Class (Jenefsky), and Global Feminisms (Beoku-Betts).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Letter. Drafted by Patricia Del Rey, Director to Department Head. November 15, 1989.

<sup>75</sup> Minutes of Steering Committee January 14, 1990.

<sup>76</sup> Memorandum From: Patricia Del Rey. November 16, 1989.

<sup>77</sup> Interview. Patricia Del Rey. 2008.

<sup>78</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 4, No. 2. Winter 1992.

<sup>79</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 4, No. 1. Fall 1990. and *WSProgress*. Volume 4, No. 2. Winter 1992.

By fall 1991, a search was underway for a women's studies/biological sciences position.<sup>80</sup>

It was not until August of 1989 that the Women's Studies Program, initiated thirteen years prior, awarded the first Women's Studies undergraduate certificate to Patricia Thruston, a Winterville Elementary School librarian. Thruston completed a thesis on gender roles in the Nancy Drew series and carried the perspective gleaned from her participation in women's studies courses outside academia by ordering "many books about women for the school library, including a 25-book biographical set on women in America."<sup>81</sup>

By this time, the climate at UGA was markedly warmer towards female professors and women's studies, but still lagged behind other areas in the country in terms of accepting diversity. One female professor's display of a poster relating the spread of the AIDS epidemic to political indifference was met with shock in the history department; she notes that colleagues responded as though she "[had] naked ladies dancing on the wall." A closeted colleague voiced the evident surety of the professor's imminent dismissal when she agreed to serve as advisor to student leader Lawson Sullivan and the student group *AGLA, Athens Gay and Lesbian Organization*.<sup>82</sup> The personal was clearly political. In response, the culture surrounding women's studies continued to empower women and breed political activism. In 1990, *WSSO: Women's Studies Student Organization* formed to "to give students a deeper understanding of

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<sup>80</sup> *WSP* *Progress*. Volume 5, No. 1. Fall 1991.

<sup>81</sup> *Athens Star*. 'School Librarian Earns First Women's Studies Honor.' September 6, 1989.

<sup>82</sup> Interview. Anonymous Professor. 2008.

women's issues and to make students aware of the women's studies program".<sup>83</sup> With over half the student body identifying as female, Dr. Nancy Rubin, from the Classics Department, led the effort to alter the language of the school's alma mater to reference more than one gender. With the support of President Knapp, the Faculty Senate, and the University Council Rubin rallied women's studies students and faculty. Their efforts were successful after much struggle against contentious arguments such as "our Alma Mater is an ancient piece of heritage that should not be tampered with!"<sup>84</sup>

The Winter 1991 edition of *WSP* *Progress*, the women's studies newsletter, announced "UGA/Athens boast three new women's groups." Jenefsky served as advisor to the *UGA Women's Coalition*; grounded in feminism, "the group's top priority [was] to foster a respect for and inclusion of diversity."<sup>85</sup> The goal of *WSAN, the Women's Support and Action Network* was printed as, "We resolve to transform the images of Women in society and to reflect the diverse and actual experiences of women and to live our own lives as we define them." Lastly, the *WFC, Women's Faculty Caucus*, including the 44 women who attended the first meeting on November 16, 1991, resolved to serve as a political voice for women on campus. By the second meeting, the group formed five Task Forces to address Harassment and Rape, Child Care, Governance, Mentoring, and Promotion and Tenure. Throughout the nineties, the group demanded the administration bridge the wage gap. Their efforts resulted in stricter regulation of salary increases and promotions.

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<sup>83</sup> *WSP* *Progress*. Volume 8, No. 2. Spring 1995.

<sup>84</sup> *WSP* *Progress*. Volume 3, No. 3. Spring 1990.

<sup>85</sup> *WSP* *Progress*. Volume 4, No. 2. Winter 1992.

Positive outcomes continued to materialize as a result of the relentless efforts of women's studies affiliates. In 1990, thirty-two students enrolled in the first women's studies courses offered independent of other departments.<sup>86</sup> By 1991, the program was advertising the women's studies minor.<sup>87</sup> Dr. Linda Grant led the committee effort to develop a women's studies graduate certificate, which was offered by fall 1991. The following year yielded two recipients, Trish Shewokis and Libby Tisdell.

At this juncture, the only outlet available to students interested in majoring in women's studies was the Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) Degree Program. It was not until fall 1991 that a student braved the process of program development and mountain of paperwork to pursue a major in women's studies with an emphasis on public policy. As a junior, Marci Smith's proposal for the degree was based on a NWSA report on women's studies that cited, "What we teach, and the way we teach it, encourages students to imagine alternatives to present systems of inequality and participate in political transformation."<sup>88</sup> In fall 1993, Smith completed a senior thesis entitled, "Gender, AIDS and the construction of 'Other': Representations of Women in Popular and Biomedical Discourse on AIDS," and graduated as the first women's studies major from UGA.<sup>89</sup> The same year, Joy Beasley was awarded the first women's studies minor. In June of 1993, the program saw the first male recipients of the women's studies undergraduate certificate as well.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 3, No. 3. Spring 1990.

<sup>87</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 5, No. 1. Fall 1991.

<sup>88</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 5, No. 1. Fall 1991.

<sup>89</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 7, No. 1. Fall 1993.

<sup>90</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 7, No. 1. Fall 1993.

1994 brought with it two significant advancements for the program. The annual women's studies student symposium was launched as an avenue for students to showcase and engage in feminist scholarship. Over two hundred students attended the second symposium in January of 1995.<sup>91</sup> In fall 1994, Dr. Laura Brown, clinical psychologist, presented on "The Gay/Lesbian Paradigm: New Directions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" at the first lecture in the Andrea Carson Coley Lecture Series. Andrea Coley was one of the "bright, lovely, political, radical" students in Pollard's first Gay and Lesbian studies course. Upon hearing word of Andrea's suicide, women's studies student Beth Kibble collected the funds to plant a Japanese maple at UGA's botanical gardens in Andrea's memory.<sup>92</sup> Andrea's parents traveled from Florida to attend the ensuing ceremony and pledged \$50,000 to establish an endowment for a lecture series on current research in gay and lesbian studies.<sup>93</sup> Women's Studies continues to host the annual lecture series.

"You'll find that it's different here" Tisdale responded to Juanita Johnson-Bailey, a graduate student, when she critiqued the majority of feminist literature and dialogue as white-centric. At Tisdale's prompting, Johnson-Bailey enrolled in a women's studies course taught by Dr. Tricia Lootens; "that class was so wonderful and so exciting that I just never looked back. From that moment on, from that first class, I knew that I would get my certificate and I knew that I had found my home."<sup>94</sup>

Johnson-Bailey joined UGA faculty as an Assistant Professor of Adult Education and Women's studies as her first book *Telling Black Women's Lives*, co-authored by UGA Child and Family Development and Women's Studies faculty member Dr. Patricia

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<sup>91</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 8, No. 2. Spring 1995.

<sup>92</sup> Interview. Anonymous Professor. 2008.

<sup>93</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 8, No. 1. Fall 1994.

<sup>94</sup> Interview. Juanita Johnson-Bailey. 2008.

Bell-Scott (co-founding editor of SAGE, a scholarly journal on black women), was under contract.<sup>95</sup> Johnson-Bailey later reflects on the year 1995, when Del Rey recruited her back to UGA to develop WS 211 Multicultural Perspectives on Women in the United States: “[UGA women’s studies administrators and faculty] also were uncomfortable with the critique and perception that women’s studies was white-woman centered because [the UGA women’s studies department] had never been that way and even though I think diversity was infused throughout the curriculum, they thought there should be courses that were dedicated to [multiculturalism].”<sup>96</sup> WS 201: Introduction to Women’s Studies and WS 211 were approved to satisfy the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences core social science requirement, a strategy that brought students to women’s studies from across campus and increased enrollment from 8 to 150 in a mere two years.<sup>97</sup> Because of the expected increase in enrollment, women’s studies proactively offered the first graduate assistantship to Ming-Yeh Lee, a doctoral student from Chiayi, Taiwan housed in Adult Education, who developed and taught the first WS 211 courses with Johnson-Bailey over a span of two years.<sup>98</sup> In the co-authored article *Women of Color in the Academy: Where’s Our Authority in the Classroom?*<sup>99</sup>, Johnson-Bailey and Lee analyze the experience of teaching WS 211 and feminist pedagogy. Included in the article are descriptions of the authors enduring a formal interview in Del Rey’s office when “a

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<sup>95</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 8, No. 1. Fall 1994.

<sup>96</sup> Interview. Juanita Johnson-Bailey. 2008.

<sup>97</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 8, No. 1. Fall 1994. and *Feminist Teacher*. ‘Women of Color in the Academy: Where’s Our Authority in the Classroom?’ by Juanita Johnson-Bailey and Ming-Yeh Lee.

<sup>98</sup> *WSProgress*. Volume 8, No. 2. Spring 1995. and Interview with Juanita Johnson-Bailey

<sup>99</sup> *Feminist Teacher*. ‘Women of Color in the Academy: Where’s Our Authority in the Classroom?’ by Juanita Johnson-Bailey and Ming-Yeh Lee

young white male student wanted to see our vitas and ask us a few questions before he would agree to be taught by us,” evaluations with comments, evidently deemed completely appropriate by the students, indicating their discomfort with the instructors ‘failure’ to embody typical stereotypes of Asian and African-American women.

In spring of 1996, UGA’s women’s studies program and the Southeastern Women’s Studies Associations, SEWSA, shared their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries. Appropriately, the SEWSA annual conference, held at the Georgia Center from April 18-20, hosted the theme “Women’s Studies in the Twenty-first Century: Reexamining Race, Class and Gender.”<sup>100</sup>

After such an impressive period of transformation, the tenth New Women Faculty Reception incorporated the Women’s Studies Faculty Award in September 2000. The award was bestowed upon Georgia state representative Louise McBee, who appointed the first women’s studies steering committee, and former social work professor Myrtle Reul, the first affirmative action officer on campus. Also that month, the Graduate Women’s Consortium held its first meeting as “a safe space for graduate women to come and talk about issues as women and as students.”<sup>101</sup>

“A small, close-knit group of administrators that worked hard to build the women’s studies program at the University all are leaving – creating a rare, 100 percent turnover in the department’s administration this year” read the October 2, 2000 *Red and Black*. After twelve years as director, Del Rey indicated that she and Kleiner were ready to leave with

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<sup>100</sup> *WSP* *Progress*. Volume 9, No. 2. Spring 1996.

<sup>101</sup> *The Red and Black*. ‘Women’s Studies honors new, former faculty.’ September 8, 2000.

the approval of the women's studies major. With seven students enrolled in the major, Del Rey asserted, "It's time for a new wave in women's studies."<sup>102</sup>

#### Fourth Tide (2001- Present)

The exciting efforts and successes of the advocates in the fourth, or present, tide are the results of extremely intelligent, creative, and determined predecessors. As a testament to women's studies success, Dr. Patricia Miller, author of *Toward a feminist developmental psychology* and former Executive Committee member of the Women's Studies Program and the Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research at the University of Florida, was hired as the first full time Director of Women's Studies in 2001. Her intentions to expand women's studies research among students and faculty were announced in the Red and Black article entitled, "Miller has new goals for women's studies."

Progress continued for women's studies affiliates, but attention was turned to research once Dr. Miller spearheaded efforts to institutionalize and professionalize Women's Studies at UGA. The successful efforts of women's studies faculty and staff to develop exemplary teaching practices, create a strong curriculum, and establish a major enabled Dr. Miller to direct efforts toward strengthening women's studies research and scholarship. She is quoted in the Atlanta Journal Constitution, "Feminist scholarship is thriving in universities.....This definitely is one of the main intellectual movements in recent years."<sup>103</sup> Consequently, Dr. Miller emphasized interdisciplinary research in gender and women's studies across campus, sponsored a workshop on securing research grants, hired faculty with research expertise, and launched a web-based directory of the

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<sup>102</sup> *Red and Black*. 'Women's studies faces administration turnover.' October 2, 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Correspondence. Patricia Miller. 2008.

gender-related research interests of UGA faculty. The first students to graduate directly from the women's studies program included Margaret Mitchell, Kathryn Rhodes, Lotus Seeley, Suzanne Scoggins, and Lindsay Brown in May 2002. In September 2003, the Women's Studies program officially gained status as the Institute for Women's Studies.

In addition to growing research opportunities, Dr. Miller strengthened ties with affiliates across campus and recruited an Advisory Board. A 5-year strategic plan was developed to drive efforts in research, teaching, service, and activism. She also built upon a uniquely strong aspect of UGA's women's studies program, its multicultural focus, by working with a Women's Studies graduate student to develop a 'web-based teaching resource with multicultural materials for instructors in Women's Studies and across campus.' Women's Studies outgrew its facilities, the Benson building, so Dr. Miller initiated efforts to relocate to a more central location, an endeavor that was recently managed by moving the Institute to a temporary home while the search for a longer term building continues. In 2005, Dr. Doris Kadish, UGA professor of French and Women's Studies since 1996 and author of *Politicizing Gender*, assumed the role of Interim Director until 2006.

Today, the Institute of Women's Studies continues to establish itself as a prominent area of study and outlet for activism in the south. Following Kadish's tenure, Dr. Chris Cuomo, author of *Feminism and Ecological Communities: An Ethic of Flourishing* and *The Philosopher Queen: Feminist Essays on War, Love, & Knowledge*, accepted the position of Director in 2006 and continued until 2009. Standing on the success of incorporating research into UGA's Women's Studies community, Cuomo implemented strategy to elevate the Institute of Women's Studies to 'the space for

feminist research in the state of Georgia.’ To that end, she hired two additional faculty members, secured a Franklin Fellow position, and launched the Women and Girls in Georgia Conference. Women’s Studies’ profile continues to increase on campus as staff strategically enhances publicity for major events such as Women’s History Month and the Coley lecture and pro-active women’s studies faculty, staff, and students spearhead campaigns for a Women’s Center, enforcement of the sexual harassment policy, and access to childcare.<sup>104</sup> In 2009, the cumulative efforts to move women’s studies out of Benson and into respectable offices was realized, pathing the way for the Institutes future success and evolution.

## **Conclusion**

This research project began with the question of how the field of women’s studies originated and developed within the walls of Georgia’s flagship university. The student researchers’ motivation to uncover the details of the founder’s experience came from individual investments in the field of study and a shared vision that the ideals of feminist perspective will continue to shape and influence our larger society. As students of the UGA Institute of Women’s Studies in the first decade of the twenty-first century, we observed the challenges of women’s studies core faculty and affiliates, including the ignorant stereotypes adopted by some students outside the field and the difficulties faculty faced in securing adequate classrooms and office space, and realized our fleeting opportunity to access and personally interview a number of actors responsible for the presence and quality of the program.

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<sup>104</sup> Correspondence. Molly Moreland, PR Coordinator for the Institute of Women’s Studies. 2008.

The arrival of women's studies was directly linked to national politics that demanded equal rights for women. The initially controversial field continues to evolve with an activist arm and focus on social transformation. In Athens, women's studies materialized and grew with the support, input, and dedication of proponents throughout the community at large. Like the women's rights movement, the women's studies movement did not take hold overnight, but succeeded after great effort and considerable struggle. Over the four tides, University of Georgia women's studies scholars became the women's studies activists whose thoughtful actions created what became the UGA Institute of Women's Studies. Like the women's rights movement, the women's studies movement in Athens, Georgia continues to evolve to meet the needs of its community.