

## Women's Center Director Changing Hands

As we complete a time of transition, I think of some of the usual things about leaving a position: the people who helped and those who did not, the accomplishments and set-backs, friendships made and enriched. I also think about the fact that directing a women's center was a very special part of my life. It was a time to work on issues, problems and programs about which I care most deeply and which I knew would be a challenge.

More than once, I have been asked, how can you leave something that captures your heart? Isn't this where you really should be? In many ways, those are questions with obvious answers. In others, those questions deny the process of life, and particularly a feminist life in which growth and personal challenge must be balanced with attention to others. When I began my work in the Women's Center, I also began looking for people who might want the position in the future, women who would take the risks and do the work. We now see the benefits of this perspective: strong, competent graduate assistants and work study students, a group of loyal and productive volunteers, and day care and administrative staff who will make my absence a positive and creative thing.

Leaving under these circumstances is no loss, only a change in the most positive sense and for that, I am extremely grateful.

There are many many people who directly and consistently contributed to my growth and to the growth of our centers. At the risk of inevitable and unintended omissions, these are some of them: Gail Shankweiler, Rhode Todd, Bill Morehouse, Jean Dowdall, Claavonne Stratton, Stacey Schlaus, Diane Casagrande, Courtney Milburn, Elwood Lahn, Rosetta Donner, Joyce Smith, Karen Sippla Grassel, Helen Reid, Elizabeth Logan, Pat Lea, Diana DeVestern, members of the Women's Coalition, Rodger Summers, Nick Bonnelly, Gerri Ballam, Frank Helms, Pat Donahue, Liz Giangiulio, Jane Swan, Vivian Nix-Early, Joan Hasselquist, Mel Josephs, Sue Lubking, members of the Quad staff, Dan Sharkey, Sandy DiAntonio, Lalita Williams, Eleanor Butts, Mary Keets, and literally dozens of other individuals and groups on and off campus.

I am leaving the direction of the Women's Center, which includes the Children's Center, to Robin Garrett at the advice of the Search Committee and administration. Robin is one of the people who emerged several years

ago as a potential director and one whose participation and commitment grew naturally into this move. We are blessed on this campus with a strong feminist community which sees to the continuity of leadership. Robin Garrett is yet another example of this strength. She will continue the work all of us value and will need, as did I, the commitment of the community to grow and flourish. Knowing that commitment is in place, I leave with the expectation of new and good things to come.

Part of the joy of this transition involves joining one of the finest departments on this campus as a full-time member. I will continue my doctoral work at Temple University and teach as a member of our Department of Speech Communication and Theatre. In making this change, I wish to thank the members of Speech Communication and Theatre for their continued interest and support which is an example of collegiality at its very best. That I will miss the Women's Center and Children's Center is an understatement: my heart will always be here as well as in the larger community. But, I know of no better condition under which to leave: with Robin Garrett and Gail Shankweiler firmly established.

Mary McCullough

(In September we began planning this edition of the Women's Center Review. I had a wonderful idea that the cover article would focus on the change in the position of Center Director with pieces from the outgoing and incoming directors. This truly was a wonderful idea, especially the part about Mary writing something. Now it is November and I have to write something, too. Somehow the idea seems less wonderful. I will do my best).

R.C.

I feel greatly privileged and very excited to be moving into the position as Women's Center Director at W.C.U. Also a little scared. Women here at West Chester have certain commonalities as do all women. They inherit a common past, they experience similar socialization and culture. They share a unique biology. The Women's Center has the privilege, the opportunity, the burden, the responsibility to respond to the special concerns that women share.

Defining those concerns is a quest in itself, to paraphrase the words of one very wise woman I know. W.C.U. can be very proud that we have a Women's Center and that we are addressing women's concerns. Not all the state universities have one. However, like many excellent programs on our campus our budget and staffing limit what we can do. This is reflective of the limitations that exist state-wide for support of higher education and of women's concerns.) They are diverse and vary with time and within subgroups of women, such as older women students, younger women students, minority women, women staff members and women faculty members.

As I attempt to plan the direction and scope of Women's Center activities (I say "attempt" because oftentimes we must respond to unpredictable processes and events), my first commitment is to maintaining the programming for the non-traditional woman student which has been so

effectively established, such as the Day Care Center, provision of referrals, resources and a place where the older woman student can find understanding and support with the difficulties she encounters. With these programs well established, we now have the opportunity to reach out to the traditional age students at W.C.U. exploring and identifying their concerns as women and offering to them the experiences and ideas of women who have gone before them.

The classroom climate project will focus at least in part on the experience of younger women students. It is my hope that as Director I can help the Women's Center continue its important work providing a space safe for women where they can bring their joys and burdens, be it news of academic successes or complaints of sexual harassment and where they can draw energy, encouragement, and appreciation for the continuation of their life quests.

Robin Garrett