



Women's Voice

Illinois State University

Volume 6, Issue 6, February 2001

From the Director:

Enhancing Women's Capabilities in Central Illinois

We live in the richest country in the world and in a part of the United States that is fairly prosperous. And yet, we know that social and gender inequalities abound in the U. S., in Illinois, and in McLean County. These inequalities may be determined by quantitative measures such as income levels, or by more qualitative indicators. The concept of "capabilities" is one that captures the non-quantitative elements needed for an acceptable quality of life. On Friday the 1st of June 2001, the Women's Studies Program at Illinois State University, in conjunction with the School of Social Work, will hold a one-day conference on "Enhancing Women's Capabilities in Central Illinois."

"Capabilities" is a concept developed by the economist Amartya Sen and the philosopher Martha Nussbaum and used in international development circles to refer to the acquisition of health, education, income and the ability to participate in civic life in order to enlarge the range of choices and realize full citizenship. Low-income and disadvantaged women are often without the means to realize their full human potential and to enjoy their civil, political, and social rights as citizens. They often lack the capacity to take part in community or national affairs. What are the means necessary to empower low-income women? At a basic level, these include the ability to lead a long and healthy life, including a life free of violence; the attainment of education, skills, and knowledge; the ability to earn and control income and plan for the future. Other more specific means could include health insurance, affordable housing, subsidized and quality childcare, secure work, access to credits and loans, public transportation. In turn, these means create the capacity for

women's active citizenship: awareness of community and national affairs, and various forms of civic participation – or what some call the acquisition of "social capital".

Action is needed at the community and governmental levels to promote women's well-being and to enhance their capabilities. Such action has been the subject of a number of international conferences on women, such as the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), and the Beijing Plus Five Special Session (New York, June 2000). In 1995, some 189 governments, including the government of the United States, signed onto the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (New York: United Nations, 1996), a broad agenda for promoting and protecting the rights and advancement of women. Particularly relevant are the descriptions of poverty, education and training, health, violence against women, and the economy – and the means needed to overcome these.

Women's organizations in the United States have tailored the Beijing Platform for Action toward the specific situation of women, including low-income women, in this country. They have produced a document entitled *Women's Equality: an Unfinished Agenda: Women's Organizations Assess U.S. Government Actions on Implementing the Beijing Platform, 1995-2000* (New York: WEDO, 2000). Their assessment and policy recommendations are consistent with the capabilities framework outlined above. In the State of Illinois, the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Illinois has organized working groups on topics vital to the well-being of women: balancing work and family; education and training; employment and pay equity; girls' opportunities; violence reduction; welfare to work; women in business and entrepreneurship; and women's health issues. Their work is described in the *Annual Report 1999*.

The objective of our conference in June is to bring together academics from ISU, community activists, representatives of community-based organizations, government agencies, social service providers, and local businesses, as well (Continued on Page 2)

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Visit our website at: <http://www.cas.ilstu.edu/womenstudies>

ANNOUNCEMENTS/FEATURES

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as low-income women themselves, to discuss the ways and means of enhancing women's capabilities in Central Illinois. Professor Martha Nussbaum will be the keynote speaker and will discuss her concept of women's capabilities. There will be panel discussions on how government, the private sector, and charitable organizations can contribute to women's capabilities; roundtable discussions on specific topics; and a final plenary discussion.

The plenary discussions and workshops will provide opportunities to exchange information, build bridges, form alliances, identify gaps and needs, and advance policy recommendations to state and local government. It is hoped that the conference will be the beginning of a longer-term community outreach program that includes an informative web site, occasional seminars and workshops, and joint action on behalf of low-income women. ?

Report on *The Vagina Monologues*

By avada douglas

Note: Last fall, avada douglas, a Women's Studies minor, began planning a production of "The Vagina Monologues," an Obie-winning play by Eve Ensler. Staged in connection with the VDay College Initiative, the production not only played to full houses but received attention in *The Vidette*, *The Pantagraph*, and coverage on WMBD Channel 31 news as well. The Women's Studies Program was one of a number of sponsors for the performances. Here is avada's report.

"The Vagina Monologues" was a complete success in every way! Nine other ISU students helped make this dream of mine come true. Along with myself the cast consisted of Bridget Meis, Valerie Uihlein, Erica Paron, Anne Semlak, Sara Jessee, Amy Disabato, Mona Seghatoleslami, Kristy DeWall and Carolina Bustamante. The first performance, Feb. 13th, was to a sold out crowd of 160 folks with almost 100 folks being turned away. The second night was almost sold out with maybe 30 seats left out of 300, while the final show filled the Prairie Room with almost 500 folks (there were only 435 chairs set up). The Neville House/Countering Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center will be very happy folks as they each get a part of the almost \$5,500 raised over the three nights. I heard nothing but amazement coming from those who attended with many folks seeing the show more than once. I am just as amazed as the audience, as I had never imagined that we could accomplish so much. I thank everyone and everybody who helped along the way - and also those who helped me keep my focus in why we were doing this production. VDay College Initiative is not something that I foresee ending any time in the near future - it will be around until the violence stops - the goal is by 2005! So, I thought I would get started on next years event...peace and many thanks.

International Women's Day Breakfast

The fifth annual International Women's Day Breakfast will take place on March 10. The keynote speaker this year is Nikiesha Virgil, a multi-talented ISU Fulbright scholar from the island of Trinidad and Tobago. She will share her experiences as a social worker in the child welfare system in her own country.

The event starts at 9 a.m. at the Eastland Suites' Conference Center, 1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington. Cost for the breakfast is \$12. Please send a check to AAUW, 1407 East Washington, Bloomington, IL 61701 or purchase tickets at the Garlic Press. The American Association of University Women, Bloomington-Normal Branch, and Soroptomist International of Bloomington-Normal cosponsor the event.

An equal opportunity/affirmative action university encouraging diversity.

Sixth Annual WOMEN'S STUDIES SYMPOSIUM

FRIDAY, MARCH 23, 2001
9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

UNIVERSITY GALLERIES
CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT 1:00 P.M.

Pre-registration required for free lunch. You may register by returning the form on Page 4, or e-mail to Rozel White at rwhite@ilstu.edu.

Contact Women's Studies for further information by telephone (309-438-2947)

Dr. Ertürk to be Symposium Keynote Speaker



Dr. Yakin Ertürk, Ph.D.

Dr. Yakin Ertürk will be the Keynote Speaker at the Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium. A national of Turkey, Dr. Ertürk was appointed Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women in the Department for Economical and Social Affairs (DAW/DESA), on 1 March 1999.

Since 1986, Dr. Ertürk has been on the faculty of the Department of Sociology and the Women and Gender Programme at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

From mid October 1997 to the end of February 1999, she served as Director of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

In addition to publishing numerous articles and conference proceedings, Dr. Ertürk has prepared technical reports for various United Nations bodies. She has also received a number of grants and awards.

Dr. Ertürk holds a Ph.D. in Development and Rural Sociology from Cornell University, Ithaca, and has Masters and Bachelor Degrees in Sociology from Hacettepe University, Ankara.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS ABOUT WOMEN'S STUDIES FACULTY

Faculty News

Maria Canabal, Family and Consumer Sciences, is the 2001 recipient of the Strand Diversity Achievement Award. Canabal is the seventh recipient of the award, which was established and endowed by President Emeritus David Strand to honor a faculty or staff member whose efforts result in heightened sensitivity to diversity on campus.

Mohamad Tavakoli, History, received an Outstanding University Teacher Award at the Founder's Day Convocation on February 15.

Jamal Nassar, Political Science, **Andre Kapanga**, Foreign Languages, and **Maria Canabal**, Family and Consumer Sciences, were among the international faculty members who participated in a panel discussion on March 22, 2001. The topic was "Illinois State University as a Global Campus."

YWCA Women and Diversity Program

The YWCA Women and Diversity Program is sponsoring a five-week series called *My America: Conversations About Diversity in Our Community*. While looking at all kinds of diversity in Bloomington-Normal, women are able to share their heritage, learn about themselves and others, talk about their differences and similarities, and create new relationships.

The next two sessions begin March 29 on Thursdays and April 3 on Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information or to sign up for the series, contact the YWCA Women and Diversity Coordinator Veronica Howard or Stephanie Montgomery at 309-662-0461.

Women's Action Council

Women's Studies has been a member of the Women's Action Council of Amnesty International since November 1999. Newsletters and updates from Amnesty International are sent periodically to the Women's Studies office and made available for use. Please contact Women's Studies for more information on this resource as well as others available in the Women's Studies Library.

Margaret Wakeley Scholarships

The Women's Division of McLean County Chamber of Commerce has established two scholarships of \$2500 each in honor of Margaret Wakeley, the first President of the organization. The awards are intended to honor women who are permanent residents of McLean County planning professional careers.

Women students are eligible to apply if:

- ?? you are a permanent resident of McLean County
- ?? you will be a senior in 2001-2002
- ?? you are enrolled in Illinois State University or Illinois Wesleyan University
- ?? your GPA is 3.0 or above on a 4.0 scale
- ?? you are a woman preparing for a professional career

Applications may be obtained in the Financial Aid Office or the Women's Studies Office. The application deadline is March 23.

Scholarships, Conferences, and Internships

Additional information on all conferences, scholarships, and internships is available in the Women's Studies office, along with application information.

Penny Severns Illinois Women in Government Conference Scholarship

Illinois Women in Government (IWIG) encourages college students interested in local, state, and federal government to apply for paid attendance to the conference held at the State Capital in Springfield on April 18-20, 2001. The purpose of this conference is to encourage more women to seek elective and appointive office at all levels of government, to educate women about governmental issues and the political process, to promote participation in public affairs, and to provide a forum for women's issues. For additional information, contact the Chairperson Debbie Cimarossa by email at dcimarossa@cwlp.com. The deadline for applications is March 9, 2001.

Margaret Sanger Papers Project

The Margaret Sanger Papers Project, a documentary editing project located in the History Department at New York University, announces the availability of summer internships for 2001. The project is currently offering internships to work on its book edition of Sanger's papers, its electronic edition of Sanger's speeches and articles, or indexing its comprehensive microfilm edition. Interns will be exposed to all facets of the Sanger Papers Project's work and will undertake analysis on historical documents and conduct directed research in libraries, archives, and the Sanger Project's own holdings.

The project is unable to offer paid internships, but interested students can inquire about receiving credit at their universities. A complete description of the internships, including application and housing information, is available at the web site: www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/intern.html. The deadline for summer applications is March 15.

Feminist Majority Foundation Opportunities

For further information on the following three opportunities, email the Feminist Majority Foundation Campus Program Coordinator Shonali Shome at shonali@feminist.org.

Feminist Leadership Institute

The Feminist Majority Foundation is looking for student leaders dedicated to women's rights to apply for a leadership conference in Washington, DC, June 21-26. The institute is a four-day feminist leadership training for undergraduate students committed to starting and/or leading nationally affiliated Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances on their campuses. The application packet is due May 1, 2001.

Feminist Majority Internships

The Feminist Majority Foundation has opportunities for college students aspiring to gain leadership skills and to promote women's rights to become full time interns in the Washington, DC and Los Angeles offices for the upcoming summer and fall semesters.

Feminist Majority Field Representatives

The Feminist Majority Foundation is also seeking graduating seniors and recent college graduates with organizing experience to work on and innovative campus leadership program. Field representatives will travel throughout the country working with students and faculty on campuses to launch a pro-choice campaign called *Choices*.

Women's Voice
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Lobby Day 2001

The Bloomington-Normal Advocacy Council for Human Rights will be participating in Equality Illinois' Lobby Day 2001 on March 28 at the Statehouse in Springfield. This annual event provides an opportunity for people around the state to converge in mass in Springfield to encourage their legislators to support the HB 101, the bill that would add sexual orientation to the state's human rights act. The day also includes a brief update on the bill and an orientation for tips on lobbying legislators. For more information, contact the Advocacy Council by phone at 309-830-2521 or e-mail achr@mailcity.com.

New Book Published

Love in a Global Village, by Jessi Gearson and Lauren Smith, has just been published by the University of Iowa Press. Smith is the Director of the Women's Studies Program at Eastern Illinois University. The book is a collection of essays celebrating intercultural families in the Midwest. One of the interview essays features Saad El-Zanati of the Illinois State University Math Department and his wife Julie El-Zanati, a recent M.S. in Biology at ISU.

Gearson and Smith's first book was Swaying: Essays on Intercultural Love (Iowa, 1995) and their latest project is a series of essays on the children of intercultural families for which they received an IAC grant. Both authors bring their own experiences to bear on the topic: Gearson's Indian-American family includes two children while Smith and her Birkinabey husband have one daughter.

Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

Friday, March 23, 2001

**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED
FOR FREE LUNCH, PLEASE
RETURN NO LATER THAN**

March 20, 2000

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zipcode _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Plan to eat lunch: ___ Yes ___ No

Please detach and mail, e-mail or Fax to:

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