

Women at UWM: Decades of Activism, Fragile Gains

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[We wrote a chapter on women at UWM for *Telling Our Stories: A History of Diversity at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*, edited by Chia Youheh Vang and David J. Pate, published in 2022. The stories we heard and uncovered inspired us to write this longer and more detailed version of that history.]

Women were about a third of the students and faculty at UWM when it began as an institution in 1956. By 1978 they were more than half of both undergraduates and graduates, and by 1999, they were almost half of those receiving PhDs. By contrast, the number of women faculty fell during UWM's early years from about a third to about a fifth, and then climbed slowly, reaching the 1956 level again only in 2001. Over its entire history as an institution, UWM has had one woman chancellor, two women provosts, and eleven women who served as academic deans in its now fifteen schools and colleges, including six in the College of Nursing. Increasing the number, visibility, and chances for success of women faculty and administrators has been only one of many aims of women on campus over the decades. Beginning in the 1970s, women students, staff, and faculty have worked on a group of core issues that have remained strikingly similar: safety and security; sexual harassment and assault; childcare and family leave; increased research and teaching about women, gender, and sexuality; equity in pay, tenure, and promotion; readily available data for accountability; and campus climate on diversity issues. They have formed organizations that connected with community groups and invented services later adopted by the campus, including an after-dark ride service, more extensive health care, support for international students, special services for older students, a faculty mentoring program, and orientation for new faculty and staff.

1885-1955: Prehistory

UWM began as an institution in 1956, as a result of the merger of the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee Extension Center and the Wisconsin State College of Milwaukee, which itself had been founded in 1885 as the Wisconsin State Normal School. "Normal schools" were institutions established across North America in the nineteenth century to train teachers, who were expected to inculcate certain behavioral norms in their pupils, as well as teach them subject material. Teaching school was becoming a woman's occupation in the nineteenth century, and the vast majority of students at most normal schools were women, most from families of modest means. All fifteen students who formed the first class at Wisconsin State Normal were women, as were two of the five faculty. A small share of the rapidly expanding number of students in the school's first several decades were men, but never more than about 10 percent. The Normal School provided teachers and school administrators to the expanding school systems of Milwaukee and the surrounding area.

Despite its name, Wisconsin State Normal did not remain solely a teachers' training institution for long, but quickly added curriculum in agriculture, journalism, pre-law, pre-medicine, and other subjects, and absorbed the Milwaukee School of Art and the Milwaukee School of Music. It moved from its original downtown location to the new Kenwood campus in 1909, where the students included the teen-aged Golda Mabovitch, who later as Golda Meir (1898-1978) became the Prime Minister of Israel. This broadening of the curriculum meant more students and faculty were men, a positive development to many, but one not universally welcomed. In the 1920s, the State Normal School regents decided to refocus primarily on teacher education, and the school became one of the top teacher training programs in the country. As a signal of this change, the name was changed to Wisconsin State Teachers' College-Milwaukee. Enrollment remained relatively small and predominantly women (in 1936, there were about 1200 students, 70 percent of them women), though the trend toward ever more faculty men continued. Women faculty and staff founded the Women's League and faculty wives founded their own group in the 1920s; both groups had social occasions, carried out service projects, and offered scholarships.



Women biology students in 1910

The push for a larger and broader state university in Milwaukee also continued. The University of Wisconsin at Madison began a small evening-only extension program in downtown Milwaukee in 1892, staffed by Madison faculty and graduates. This gradually expanded to include day courses as well, both credit and non-credit, and by the 1930s, some graduate courses. After 1923 women were admitted as students; although the students were predominantly men, women were also attracted by the flexible class hours, very low fees, and possibility of attending part-time. Women students organized dances, a school paper, and service projects; in the latter they were joined by the University Women's Association, a group organized in the 1920s for faculty women and the wives of faculty men that set up scholarships and carried out other projects.

Most of the faculty were men, but journalism and foreign languages were taught primarily by women, and women numbered among the prominent faculty. Elisabeth Holmes (1900-1976), the chair of the English Department, was in charge of all college-level correspondence courses in English offered by the U.S. Army during World War II; she trained eighteen women to grade papers, correct exams, and write morale-building letters to the soldiers enrolled. Holmes later joined the UWM faculty as a specialist in Victorian literature, and at the same time was a member and ultimately the president of the Milwaukee School Board and sat on the Education Committee of the State Federation of Labor. Ruth I. Walker (1900-1962), the chair of Botany from 1930 to 1956, was recognized internationally for her research in cytology and embryo development, and the only woman at the Extension Center who was promoted to full professor while teaching there. (Ultimately seven women who had taught at the Extension became full professors at UWM.) Eunice Bonow Bardell (1915-2007) founded the new Pharmacy Department in 1952 at the request of the Board of Regents, moved as head of the department to UWM when it opened, and remained in that position until her retirement, at which point the Pharmacy Department disappeared. Dorothy J. Ernst (1916-2005) was the entire History Department during World War II and the immediate post-war years. After moving to UWM, where she was the only woman alongside nearly thirty men, she taught British and American history and published articles on nineteenth-century business and entrepreneurial history. Nancy Lurie (1924-2017), a world-renowned specialist in Native American history and culture, began her long and distinguished career at the Extension as a lecturer while working on her PhD from Northwestern. Lurie left Milwaukee for positions at Harvard, Colorado, and Michigan before returning to UWM in 1963, eventually becoming chair of the Anthropology Department until she became the curator and section head of Anthropology at the Milwaukee Public Museum, a position she held for twenty years.

The need for expanded access to higher education became more acute when the G.I. Bill (1944) and its successors began to offer education benefits to veterans. As UWM's first Provost J. Martin Klotsche noted in his 1972 history of UWM, "large numbers of former service men were coming to the colleges," a rare—and no doubt unwitting—explicit highlighting of the gender-specific nature of G.I. Bill benefits. Nearly 3000 veterans had enrolled at the two-year program of the Extension Center by 1947. The English Department jumped from nine to 35 members, most of them women; seven women taught zoology and thirteen chemistry.

In 1951, the State Legislature allowed all state colleges to offer a range of programs, and Wisconsin State Teachers' College changed its name to simply Wisconsin State College.

Courses and programs were added, drawing in more students. By the time UWM was founded in 1956, the full-time student population was about 4500, with another 2000 or so attending part-time or in evening programs. Of those 4500, about 1600 were women, a little over one-third. More than 1000 were veterans of both World War II and the Korean War, most of whom were men, and most of whom were receiving government financial assistance through Public Law 550, known as the “Korean G.I. Bill.”

The Wisconsin State Normal School’s Kenwood campus was adjacent to several other educational institutions, including Milwaukee-Downer College, founded in 1895 through the merger of two existing women’s colleges. Milwaukee-Downer offered degrees in the humanities and liberal arts, teaching, the new field of “home economics,” and occupational therapy, in which it was a pioneer; it also ran a high school for girls, the Milwaukee-Downer seminary. Its first president, Ellen Clara Sabin (1850-1949) had been a teacher, school principal, and the superintendent of the Portland Public Schools before returning to Wisconsin to head Downer College. She was a strong advocate for women’s education, and all Downer’s students and most of its faculty were women.

Faculty included Katherine Greacen Nelson (1913-1982), one of the first women in the United States to receive a PhD in geology. She joined the faculty in 1934 and also served as the curator of the Thomas A. Greene Memorial Museum, a mineral and fossil museum. Nelson was the first woman president of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters (1952). With the founding of UWM in 1956, she became the first faculty member and chair of UWM’s Department of Geology and Geophysical Sciences. She also brokered the purchase of the Greene collection for UWM, established a public education program at the museum, and advocated measures to highlight Wisconsin’s glacial landscape, what would ultimately become the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

In 1951, Milwaukee-Downer hired its first man as president, John B. Johnson, who hired increasing numbers of men and part-time faculty. Enrollment went down steadily, from a peak of about 450 students in the mid-1940s to 176 in 1962, when the college’s trustees decided the school was no longer financially viable. Milwaukee-Downer merged with Lawrence University in Appleton, and in the early 1960s UWM purchased the buildings of Milwaukee-Downer Seminary and College, dramatically expanding its physical footprint. In the 1970s, Downer College alumnae successfully carried out a major lobbying and funding campaign to save the brick and stone buildings, which were renovated and updated instead of being torn down.

Thus from 1909 through the 1940s, there were two institutions with strong programs of advanced education for women on Milwaukee’s east side. Several campus buildings at UWM are named for women who attended, led, or made major gifts to each of these. Golda Meir Library and Enderis Hall are named for women who attended Milwaukee Normal, Enderis for Dorothy Enderis, who long served as the head of the Recreation Department of the Milwaukee Public Schools. Three Downer College buildings retain the names of women, Sabin Hall for its first president, Vogel for Louise Pfister Vogel and Chapman for Alice G. Chapman, prominent benefactors. (No campus buildings are named for women involved with the Extension Center.)

But the immediate post-World War II era saw intense efforts by governments, corporations, and the media to push Americans back to “normal” gender roles after the disruptions to them caused by the war. The percentage of women earning bachelor’s degrees plummeted from the 40 percent it had been in the 1920s and 1930s to 24 percent in 1950. UWM’s legacy as teacher-training institution meant it had a slightly higher percentage of women students and faculty (both around 35 percent) than the national average when it began, but both declined in UWM’s early years. It would be decades until women represented half of the students, and the percentage of women faculty only reached 35 percent again in 2001.

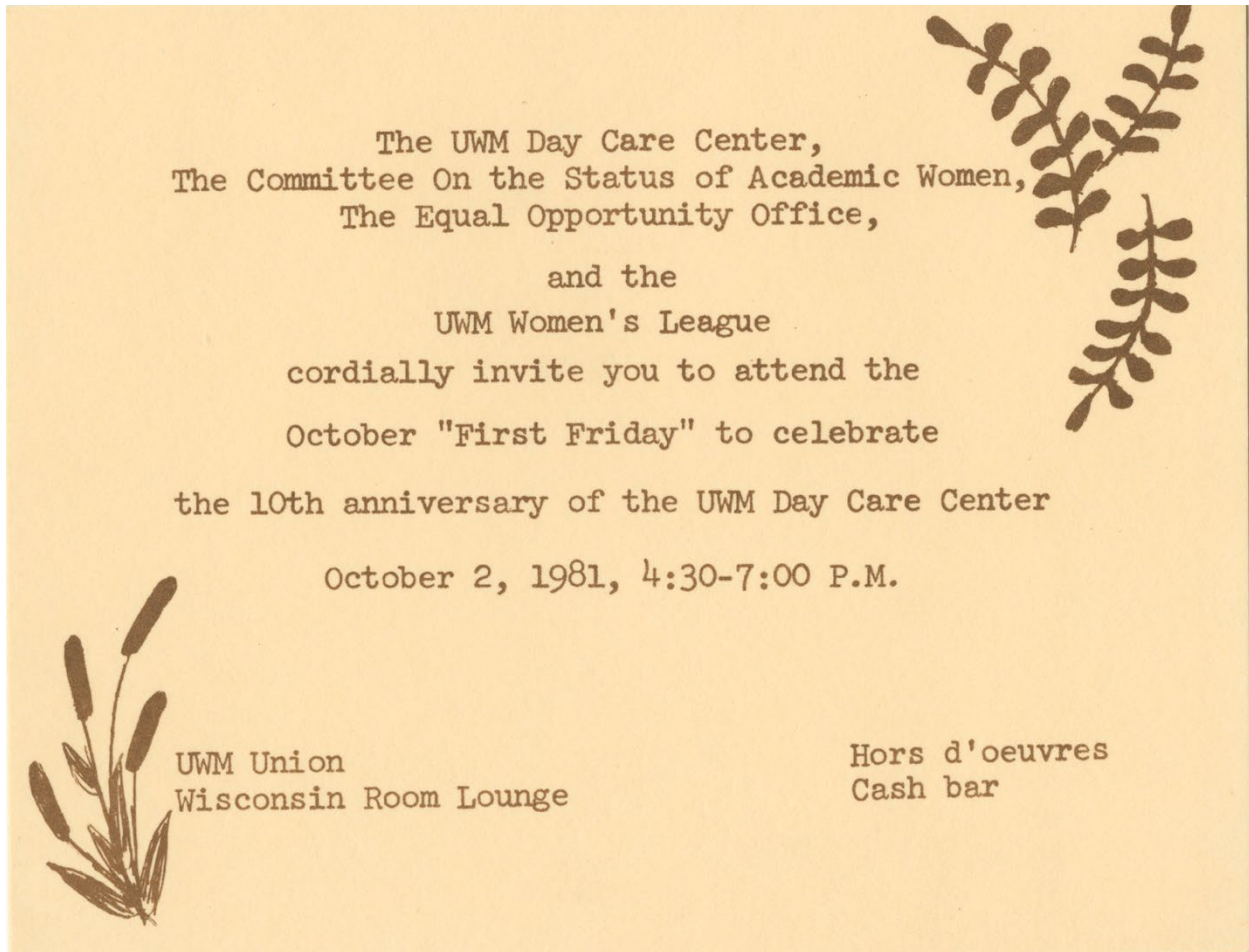
1956-1970: A Very Male Campus

The fifteen years from 1956 to 1971 were years of expansion for UWM. The student body increased to more than 22,000 full-time students, and the number of faculty (including lecturers and specialists) to more than 1300. Separate schools or colleges of Education, Business Administration, Letters and Science, and Engineering were established in 1956, followed by Fine Arts (1961), Social Welfare (1963), Nursing (1965), Library and Information Science (1966), and Architecture and Urban Planning (1968). Other than Nursing, however, none of the deans or directors of the schools and colleges in this era were women, nor were any women in high positions in campus administration. The only senior woman administrator was Charlotte Wollaeger, the Dean of Women from 1936 to 1960.

After falling for several years after 1956, the percentage of women in the student body began to climb, reaching 43 percent in 1970, but the share of women faculty fell to about 20 percent and stayed there. Some women who had taught at the Extension remained, particularly in English, but most did not. Most women faculty were instructors, lecturers, and what were termed “specialists,” generally counselors and advisers, or teachers or other professionals who supervised students’ practical training. (Many of these positions would later be re-classified as academic staff rather than as faculty.) A detailed counting of faculty by gender in 1970 found just 11 percent of full professors were women, 15 percent of associate professors, and 20 percent of assistant professors. None of the faculty in the Schools of Engineering or Architecture were women; nor were there any women faculty in Math, Physics, Mass Communication, Math, and several other departments. Even in the School of Education, two-thirds of the faculty were men. In this, UWM was not distinctive, and the numbers reflect the sharp gender dichotomy in graduate education. During the 1950s, less than 10 percent of the doctoral degrees conferred nationwide went to women, and in 1970 this had only climbed to 13 percent.

One early women’s organization on campus was the Women’s League, which grew out of the earlier Women’s League at the Wisconsin State College. Organized the same year as UWM and continuing into the 1980s, the Women’s League brought together women faculty and staff and the wives of faculty and staff men. It offered scholarships to students and organized luncheons and groups for women with different interests. It also created events and services that were picked up later by the university, their origins as women’s projects forgotten. These included First Fridays, the once-a-month cocktail hour for faculty and staff from across campus; a dinner honoring retirees; an orientation for new faculty; and a supply room for international students. During the week before fall classes began, they also provided lunches for international students, in one year serving 500 meals. By the time the League disbanded in June 1987,

attributing its decline in membership to women's greater participation in the workforce and increasingly diverse roles and priorities, there were a number of women's groups on campus.



First Friday invitation, 1981

In general, however, women played an ancillary role. Even student protests that began in the late 1960s in response to the Vietnam War and racial inequality were dominated by men. At UWM, minority students held demonstrations in 1969 and 1970, seeking expanded admission of Black, Latino, and Native American students, as well as changes in the curriculum. Women were part of these demonstrations, but the spokespeople were men. A large anti-war protest on Kenwood Avenue in May 1970 calling for the campus to close in response to the invasion of Cambodia and the killings at Kent State involved many women students, staff, and faculty, and the first campus feminist group, Women's Liberation, issued a position paper on the issues and urged women to be on the picket lines. Press accounts focused on the men involved, however.

The one exception to this very male story was nursing. In 1956, there were three collegiate schools of nursing in Wisconsin – UW-Madison, Marquette University and Alverno College. A statewide plan for nursing education suggested that UW-Madison could expand its output of nurses by using the new UW-Milwaukee campus. Five years later, one instructor was

hired, and then more, and by 1963 roughly 200 RN and pre-service students were enrolled at the UW-Milwaukee Division of the UW-Madison School of Nursing.



Nurses at graduation, 1969. Photo courtesy Alan Magayne-Roshak

Dr. Helen L. Bunge, dean at UW-Madison School of Nursing, was strongly supportive of an independent school of nursing in Milwaukee, a sharp contrast to most UW-Madison administrators, who were suspicious of or openly hostile to UWM's expansion. She wrote the proposal, gathered supporters, and recruited an old friend, Frances H. Cunningham (-1970), who

had been the associate dean of nursing at Case Western Reserve University and held offices in the National League for Nursing and the American Nurses Association, to provide the necessary leadership. Cunningham came in October 1964 to serve as the first and only director of the UW-Madison Division of Nursing at UW-Milwaukee, and she became a key figure in facilitating the reorganization and transition from a Division of Nursing to a School of Nursing. Cunningham Hall, built in 1973 to house the School of Nursing, is named after her, as is a scholarship for nursing students who have demonstrated service to their community and/or school.

The UW Board of Regents officially created the School of Nursing in December 1965, admitting first-year and sophomore students in September 1966 and graduating its first class in 1969. (The 73 Milwaukee graduates between 1964 and 1968 were considered UW-Madison graduates.) Dr. Inez G. Hinsvark (1918-1995) became the first dean of the school in 1967, having previously served as dean of nursing at South Dakota State University; Cunningham was appointed associate dean. Under Hinsvark's leadership, the School of Nursing established a strong baccalaureate program accredited in 1969, recruited a well-qualified faculty that included nationally known scholars, initiated a masters' program in Community Health Nursing in 1971, and implemented a closed-circuit television network between the school and 13 off campus sites that provided nursing instructional materials to clinical settings. To facilitate this arrangement, Cunningham Hall housed a television studio later used by the entire campus; it also contained a historical gallery designed to highlight the rich heritage of nursing. The vast majority of faculty in the School of Nursing were women, as were its students. The steady rise in the number of women students at UWM from the 1960s was in part due to the excellent reputation of the School of Nursing, which became the College of Nursing in 2003, and is now the largest nursing program in Wisconsin.

1971-1985: Federal Pressure and Feminist Activism

The 1970 count of UWM faculty by gender mentioned above was not done because someone simply thought this was a good idea. It was conducted in response to a lawsuit filed the year before by the Women's Action Equity League (WEAL), a women's group that focused on equal opportunities for women in education, economics, and employment. In 1968, President Johnson had extended an earlier Executive Order banning discrimination in federal contracts by race, color, religion, or national origin to include sex, and it did not exempt educational institutions that received federal money. He also ordered what became known as "affirmative action," practices to increase the representation of particular groups. WEAL filed a class action suit against every college and university in the U.S., asking first for statistics about gender disparities in hiring, pay, and tenure, which could serve as a basis for enforcement of the Executive Order. Both WEAL and the National Organization for Women (NOW) also worked for the passage of Title IX, the 1972 federal civil rights law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in any educational program that receives federal money. They filed complaints against academic institutions at the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) for violations of what was now federal law rather than simply an Executive Order. The Equal Employment Opportunities Office (EEOO) made investigative visits.

Universities began to appoint affirmative action officers and advisors specifically on the status of women. Lenore W. Harmon (1937-), director of the UWM Counseling Center who

later joined the Department of Education Psychology, was named advisor to the chancellor on the status of women in 1971 to 1972. She declined to continue in the position the following year, commenting that she had no substantive duties and seemed to be in the post just to make the administration look good.

Student Activism

Pressure for change in academic institutions across the country came not only from the federal government, but also from feminist students, staff, and faculty. At UWM, through the 1960s, women's student organizations, including the Associated Women Students and several sororities, had primarily been social groups, although they did push for a loosening of restrictions on women who lived in the dormitories. Beginning in the early 1970s, women students formed several action groups. The first of these was Women's Liberation, which along with encouraging support for the anti-war movement also made a series of demands of the university: community-controlled childcare centers for students, faculty, and workers; courses dealing with the history, psychology, and sociology of women; birth control information and pills from the health center; recruitment of women into male-dominated graduate schools; equal pay and maternity leave to women faculty members and women workers. These issues would form the core of women's activism on campus for the next several decades, and some into the twenty-first century.

WOMEN'S WEEK

SEPT. 23-28

UWM UNION

Sunday Sept. 23

Best of the New York Festival of Women's Films. Continuous showings, noon to midnight. Fireside Lounge, \$1.

Monday Sept. 24 - Worldly Women

WORKSHOPS

Sex Stereotypes in Education, 9 a.m. U260
Alternatives to Education, 11 a.m. U240
Women in Professions, 1 p.m. U260
The Working Woman, 2 p.m. U240
Women in Other Countries, 3 p.m. U280
Black Women, 4 p.m. Wisconsin Room Lounge

FILMS

Shown in Wisconsin Room East
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 50¢
The Black Woman
Who Wants Freedom?
Women on the March

"The Girls", by Swedish director Mai Zetterling, shown at 5, 7, & 9 p.m. Wisconsin Room East, \$1.

Tuesday Sept. 25 - Creative Women

Art & Craft display, 9 a.m. - midnight
Wisconsin Room East

WORKSHOPS

Women in Literature, 9 a.m. U250
Women Artists, 11 a.m. U280
Writer's Workshop, 12:30- 2:30 U280
"Calm Down Mother", play by Megan Terry, performed by local actresses. 2 p.m. Fireside Lounge, 5 p.m. Wisconsin Room West.
Poetry reading, local women, 6 p.m. Wisconsin Room West.

FILMS

Shown in Wisconsin Room East, \$1, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
The Girls
Dorothea Lange: Under the Trees
Gwendolyn Brooks

Tuesday, continued

MYRNA LAMB, feminist playwright, 8 p.m. Wisconsin Room West, \$2.

Wednesday Sept. 26 - Healthy Women

WORKSHOPS

Rape, 9 a.m. Wisconsin Room Lounge
Birth Control, 11 a.m. U280
Self Defense, 3 p.m. U250
Interaction/Intensive Rap
WOMEN ONLY. Pre-registration required. Call 961-0105.

FILMS

Shown in Wisconsin Room East. Free. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Biography of Margaret Sanger
On Sex

TI-GRACE ATKINSON, radical feminist activist, and BILL BAIRD, birth control advocate, 7:30 p.m., Wisconsin Room. \$2.

Thursday Sept. 27 - Family Women

WORKSHOPS

Alternatives to Nuclear Family 9 a.m. U240
Changing Roles and Adaptation, 10 a.m. U250
Women Alone, 11 a.m. U240
Women's Sexuality, 12 noon, Wisconsin Room Lounge
Child Raising, 1 p.m. U260
Lesbian Love, 2 p.m. Wisconsin Room Lounge

FILMS

Shown in Wisconsin Room East 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. 50¢
Courtship and Marriage
What is a Woman
The Unlonely Woman
The Black Woman

DR. PHYLLIS CHESLER, author of "Women and Madness", 7:30 p.m. Wisconsin Room, \$2.

Friday Sept. 28 - Political Women

WORKSHOPS

Socialism and Women, 9:30 U260 and 2:30 U280
Marriage and Law, 10 a.m. U250
Employment, 11:30 U250
Law and the Women's Movement, 12:30 p.m. U250
Political Women in Wisconsin, including Eunice Edgar, 4 p.m. Wisconsin Room Lounge

FILMS

Shown in Wisconsin Room East 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. \$1
What is the Shape of Tomorrow
Jojolo



Women's Week flyer, 1973. Courtesy Alan Magayne-Roshak

Students opened the Campus Women's (Information) Center in 1972, a staffed room in the Student Union that provided information, referrals, and a resource lending library. Renamed the Feminist Center in 1974, it expanded to organize speakers, concerts, and workshops on campus. The Center sponsored talks by Flo (Florynce) Kennedy, Gloria Steinem, Andrea Dworkin, and other prominent national and local feminist writers and activists. For several years, the group ran consciousness-raising sessions and self-defense training; in the spring 1975 semester, it also ran courses in auto mechanics and woodworking. Members lobbied state and federal legislators on women's issues, on several occasions travelling to Madison to attend hearings. The Center arranged transportation to Houston for the International Women's Conference (1977) and busses to Washington DC for the March for the Equal Rights Amendment (1978) and the first National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights (1979).

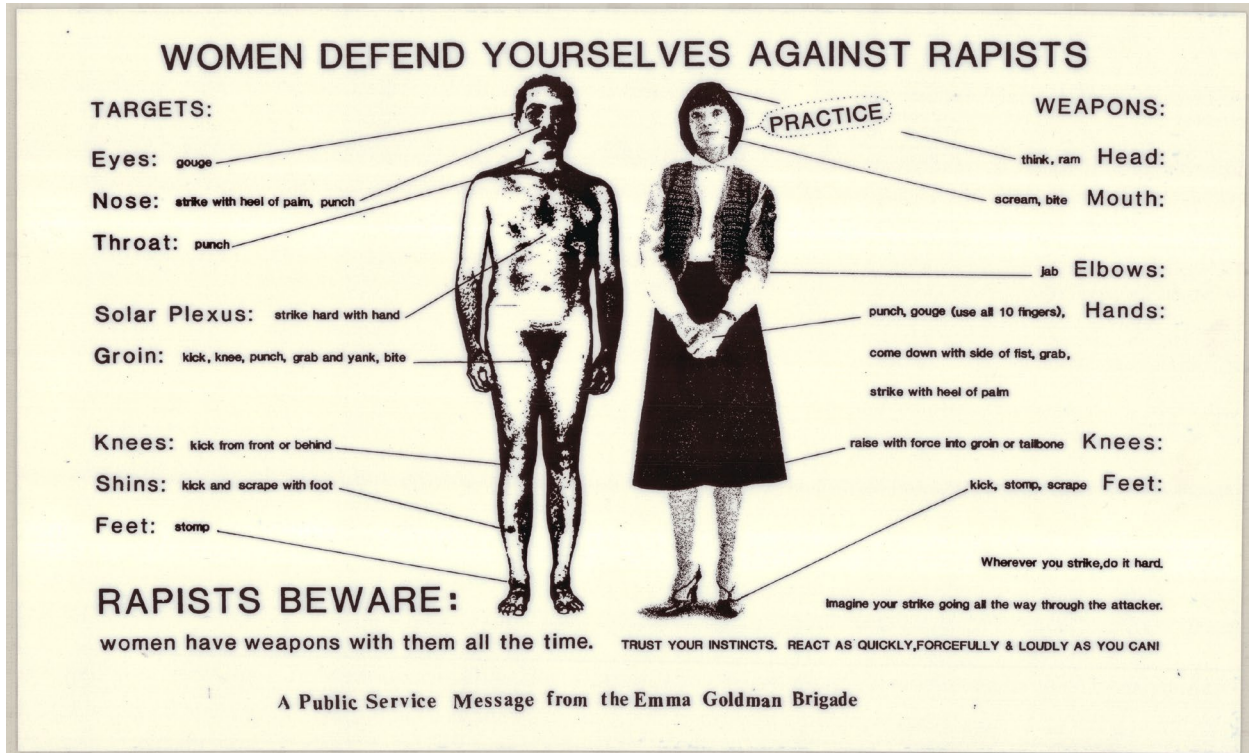
Locally, the Feminist Center supported the Sexual Assault Treatment Center with publicity and buttons with its phone-number. It also provided speakers on women's issues to local high schools and colleges, and students appeared on radio and television programs. The Center arranged transportation to Chicago for an ERA rally and march. Money was raised through donations and bake sales, by making and selling buttons carrying feminist slogans, names of student organizations, and upcoming events, and selling other products, such as Take Back the Night t-shirts. With the Pro-Choice Abortion Coalition, it established a feminist scholarship fund for undergraduate women in 1981 to encourage the study of feminist theory and ideas in Women's Studies classes, in one year awarding three \$100 scholarships. One Feminist Center flyer explains that "the most important service the Feminist Center provides is women's space. It is a place for women to talk, work, study, relax, laugh and cry; it is a place to be with other women and to share the ideas, strength and support of the feminist community." In an annual justification to the SA for funding, the Center noted that it was especially necessary, because "As a commuter campus in an urban setting, alienation is often a problem." The group maintained a phone line because of the volume of information and referrals it provided, including mental and physical health referrals and crisis calls. Members of the community frequently contacted the Feminist Center for information on current feminist issues, and the Ready Reference service at public libraries referred callers to the Center.



“Mr. Man Contest” winner John Lindquist, a Viet Nam War veteran, receiving his roses, 1973. Photo courtesy Alan Magayne-Roshak

To highlight the objectification of women, the Center sponsored a “Mr. Man” contest in 1973, complete with evening wear and swimsuits; the winner’s prizes included twenty-five dollars, a half barrel of beer, and a bunch of red roses. There were also two fictitious guerilla groups comprised of Feminist Center members. One, the Emma Goldman Brigade, performed in the Union in 1979 as the “rolling pin drill team” to suggest women use rolling pins as a form of self-defense. Perhaps tongue-in-cheek, the message was clear: women need to defend themselves

against violence and sexual assault. Together with the other group, the Women's Strike Force, the Emma Goldman Brigade plastered hundreds of fliers across campus that illustrated men's physical vulnerabilities and ways for women to exploit them.



Emma Goldman Brigade flyer, 1979. Courtesy Jamakaya.

In 1975, the Feminist Center sent a letter to UWM faculty about using the generic “man,” “he,” “mankind,” and similar sexist language, suggesting instead “person” and “they.” The letter commented: “Language is important. Through their use of language teachers convey and stimulate images in the minds of their students. It is inexcusable that these images continue to be of males only. This is unfair to the women who are thus made to feel negated, non-existent, and history-less; it is also nonproductive for the men since it reinforces for them the myth that they and they alone are, or have been the effective forces in society.” Faculty responses included several that circled the one usage error and scolded the students for everything from the cleanliness of their typewriter ribbon to their presumption. Several pointed out “man” is embedded in “woman,” and queried “how far will this go?”

The Feminist Center worked with the Women's Caucus of the Student Association to improve services at the Health Center. The two groups played an important role in convincing Psychological Services to add a woman psychologist to the Center's staff and pursued complaints about its gynecological services. They attempted to change UWM policies to enable students to obtain contraceptives there at a lower cost than at off-campus pharmacies. Surveying over 1100 UWM students about their contraceptive practices, they found that the majority of

those using and not using birth control favored and would use contraceptive services at the Health Center. They also gathered information on birth control programs at the other UW system campuses for comparison. Due in large part to the efforts of SA Vice-President Angela LaMaster, the SA Senate passed a resolution in July 1976 requesting additional medical personnel at the Center to handle demand and the distribution of contraceptives to students at as low a cost as possible. The administration remained opposed, however, citing a previous agreement that required prescriptions to be filled elsewhere; that agreement remained in force. (Fortunately, this situation has changed; students currently can obtain prescriptions for contraceptives at Norris Health Center and have them filled on-site.)

Other feminist student groups formed as well. The Feminist Center shared an office in the Union with the Pro-Choice Abortion Coalition, established in 1976 to defend women's right to an abortion guaranteed by the 1973 Supreme Court ruling in *Roe V. Wade*. It provided information and referrals to students, sponsored discussion series and benefits for local groups, and carried out lobbying and demonstrations in support of a woman's right to choose. Like the Feminist Center, its representatives spoke at local schools about reproductive rights, including at Marquette University High School in 1977/78. According to Amy Rabideau Silvers, Director of the Feminist Center and treasurer of the Coalition (1978), the two shared more than space; many students had similar values and were members of both groups, and they staffed information tables together in the Union's common area. She recalls that women would approach their table, quietly telling their stories or come later to the office. The Coalition gave women an opportunity to relate their reproductive experiences without judgment. Silvers emphasized that the Coalition was a pro-choice, not a pro-abortion, organization and supported whatever decisions women made.

There was also a Women's Support Group for older women students, two different groups called Feminists for Life (one pro-choice and one that opposed abortion), and a Women Writers' Coalition. Students organized specialized groups for women in specific fields and professions, including Women in Architecture and Women in Communication. The Wisconsin State Convention of the National Lesbian Feminist Organization was held on campus in 1978, an event opposed by several Republican legislators, but defended by Chancellor Baum. In 1980, students organized Campus Campaign for the E.R.A. to work for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment through letter writing, outreach, and speaking to classes.

The Women's Transit Service began operating in January 1977 to address the concerns of women students over incidents of harassment and sexual assault on campus and in the surrounding neighborhood. A student at the time, feminist historian Jamakaya recalls that the campus had little or no lighting in many areas, with large sections in darkness. Downer Woods was also much larger than at present, and women students were rightly afraid to walk at night on campus or to their homes nearby. The ride service was promoted and organized by student Renee Rendahl, Assistant to the President of the Student Association, who modeled it after a women's transit program already operating at UW-Madison. Ernest Spaight, Assistant Chancellor for Student Services and Special Programs, facilitated the administrative approvals. Women volunteered as Transit Service drivers and used their own vehicles to ferry women students and staff from the lobby of the Student Union; women could call ahead to be picked up from other campus locations. Riders were driven to their parked cars or to homes or other destinations in the

area bounded by Capitol Drive, Third Street, Brady Street and Lake Michigan. The volunteer drivers were screened for safety and good driving records and wore official UWM IDs stamped “Women’s Transit Driver” in red ink. It was a popular service and received funding from the SA and some university vehicles for drivers to use. Rendahl remembered it as “my proudest accomplishment.”

In 1978, the Women’s Caucus formed within the Student Association, developed by Students for Positive Change (SPC), a group that successfully ran against an all-white, mostly male Zephyr slate in the 1978/79 Student Association elections. SPC was committed to greater diversity in student government and across campus, and its slate reflected that goal. Its candidates included Black men and women, white women, and Latinx students. According to SPC member Lori Vance, some were Viet Nam War veterans, who voiced the needs of older students. Vance became the first director of the Women's Caucus within the SA. It was intended to bridge two existing women's organizations: Women's Studies, which was an academic program, and the Feminist Center, which emphasized more radical political action. The Caucus served as a conduit between the SA and women students, a communication vehicle for women’s issues on campus, and a body to aid and promote existing women-oriented programs on campus. Moreover, the Caucus was to have resources to develop, coordinate, advocate, and provide services and programs, as well as to take actions directed at improving the position and status of women.

The first main event of the Women’s Caucus, an “Affirmative Action Day Rally” on March 29, 1979, included speakers discussing affirmative action with a focus on women, information booths in the Concourse staffed by campus and local groups, and entertainment. The event ended with an evening talk by Bella Abzug, who discussed the ERA and her recent removal by President Carter from the National Advisory Committee on Women.



U.S. Representative Bella Abzug and Women's Caucus student at Affirmative Action Day, 1979. Photo courtesy Women's & Gender Studies.

The Women's Caucus paid close attention to a broad range of issues on campus. When Acting Chancellor Leon Schur established a Campus and Community Task Force on Security in September 1979, a representative from the Caucus, Sandra Wald, who was also Co-Director of Women's Transit Services, was a member. That semester, the Women's Caucus initiated a "Whistle Stop" program to encourage women to carry whistles for use in case of attack. Loud, low-cost whistles were available for sale. The program continued until December 1980 when, according to the Milwaukee County Neighborhood Security Aide Program, budget cuts passed by the County Board of Supervisors made it impossible for them to continue the program. Using 1977-78 affirmative action data for UWM as well as national data about the number of women with PhDs in various fields, the Caucus's first two directors (Lori Vance and Maureen Erwin) wrote letters to chairs, deans, and division heads about open positions, informing them that there were women qualified for specific open position(s) in their units. The letters asked recipients to include women in their applicant pools and to seriously consider hiring women for these jobs. A representative from the Women's Caucus sat on the UWM Resource Committee of the Regents Task Force on the Status of Women, charged with investigating Affirmation Action and Equal Opportunity compliance at UWM. As part of that effort, the Caucus conducted a sexual harassment survey of graduate students in fall 1979.

In 1980 Caucus director Sue Kelly continued the group's protest of the decision made by the UW-Extension Leadership Institute for Allied Health Administrators to meet at the Playboy Resort and Country Club in Lake Geneva, pointing out that 80 percent of the attendees were women, who were put in the position of choosing between their careers and personal values. A

long-standing protest against selling *Playboy* and other adult magazines at the campus bookstore ended with a compromise when the bookstore agreed to put wooden covers in front of the magazines. With help from the UWM Legal Clinic, the Caucus produced a brochure on marital property and child custody law in Wisconsin, which provided essential background on existing law and the debates in the state legislature in 1982 over a marital property reform bill.

There was considerable interaction among feminist student groups, including program co-sponsorships, shared space, collaboration on mutual issues (International Women's Day, abortion rights and women's reproductive health, sexual violence), and overlapping roles. Some students, such as Amy Rabideau Silvers, held positions in two organizations. Susan Hapka directed both the Feminist Center and the Pro-Choice Abortion Coalition in 1982. Rabideau-Silvers noted that the titles were often filled to satisfy SA procedures, with many decisions made collectively by the whole group. Both the Caucus and Feminist Center helped sponsor Gloria Steinem's talk, "Women of the 80's: The Second Wave," in March 1984 to celebrate Women's History Month and the 10th anniversary of Women's Studies. Together they took part in annual Take Back the Night events, beginning in October 1979, organized by the Women's Coalition, a feminist community organization, one of many instances of cooperation among feminists on and off campus. Because the Feminist Center was a member organization of the Coalition, whose office was close to campus, the two groups often collaborated and supported each other's actions and goals. The Center also co-sponsored a benefit for the Bread and Roses Women's Health Center (1983) and served as a drop-off location for Sojourner Truth House. Similarly, the Caucus planned an Assault Prevention program (September 1982), inviting campus and Milwaukee police, and a local feminist group WAR (Women Against Rape) to staff information booths, and a Milwaukee dojo, Kempo-Goju Karate, to provide a self-defense demonstration for women. There was also cooperation between student groups and Women's Studies, including co-sponsored events and financial support. For example, the Center paid for flyers for the Women's Studies conference, "Women's Studies: Its Impact on Society, Technology & the Arts" in October 1981.

Students remember their feminist activism as formative and transformative. All those interviewed established relationships with other feminist women that have continued into the present. Rabideau-Silvers considers feminist student activism a foundational, life-changing experience for many women students, including herself. For her, groups like the Feminist Center provided women with a safe place where they learned how to support other women; there they developed a feminist lens that they took with them after graduation and that continued to inform their lives. Vance recalls that the SPC and Women's Caucus showed her that it was possible to "do things" and make meaningful change. These were exciting times, Jamakaya emphasizes, with deep commitments to feminist and social justice causes. Their activism also brought them into contact with national movements and figures. Those interviewed spoke enthusiastically about being able to meet prominent feminists whether introducing them as speakers, such as Bella Abzug (Vance) and Andrea Dworkin (Jamakaya) or interviewing them, as with Flo Kennedy (Rabideau-Silvers).

Faculty and Staff

Activism included faculty and staff along with students. Faculty and academic staff women formed the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Academic Women (CSAW) in 1971, a grass-roots group initially coordinated by Associate Professor Janet Dunleavy from English and Assistant Professor Hiasura Rubenstein from the School of Social Welfare, which at several points had over one hundred members. Early coordinators and sub-committee chairs included Mary Conway (Nursing), Cecilia Ridgway (Sociology), Marilyn Moon (Economics), Elinor Partridge (English), Carole Shammas (History), Jane Crisler (Graduate Dean's Office), and Ethel Sloane (Biology). The designation "ad hoc" was dropped in 1975 because the Committee saw the extent of work before them to improve the status of women on campus. It established subcommittees on daycare and Women's Studies, which included students and which formed the nucleus of that program. CSAW quickly established a significant presence in campus matters. The University Committee sought advice from CSAW for candidates it should recommend to the Chancellor for the Title IX Task Force Institutional Self-Evaluation, and half of its membership belonged to CSAW (Lenore Harmon, Cecelia Ridgeway, Jane Crisler, Bud (Walter) Weare). Not only did senior faculty women in the Committee mentor junior women, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, CSAW was also asked to address cases in which women were denied tenure and independently expressed the Committee's views directly to deans and departments.



Members of the Committee on the Status of Academic Women 1977: Front row, l-r: Janet Dunleavy, Jane Crisler, Lenore Harmon, Carole Shammas Back row, l-r: Mary Conway, Cecilia Ridgeway, Marilyn Moon, Ethel Sloane, Marian Swoboda, Rachel Skalitzky. Photo courtesy Women's & Gender Studies.

CSAW encouraged its members to run for university committees and prepared slates of candidates who supported women's issues. It introduced a successful resolution in the Faculty Senate that Chancellor Baum correct the imbalance on the Chancellor's Search and Screen Committee to include more women and minority faculty and that future administration search and screen committees comply with affirmative action requirements. CSAW presented its recommendations to the Title IX Task Force in May 1976, among them the perennial need for

UWM's administration to compile and make available hiring, salary, and promotion data for all ranks by gender and race and by school or division. Members joined with women from other campuses in what was the new University of Wisconsin System to form the Wisconsin Coordinating Council for Women in Higher Education (WCCWHE), which made proposals about establishing offices of women, grievance procedures, women's studies programs, communications networks, campus childcare, and other issues.

CSAW sponsored two day-long conferences designed to introduce UWM to adult women contemplating going or returning to college. "Women Together: Exploring Our Future" in November 1978, addressed life and career planning, skills assessment, and going back to school. Over 175 people registered. "Women Together: Bridges—Not Walls" in April 1980 dealt with similar themes and attracted over 225 attendees. It held events for campus women as well, including a workshop explaining types of appointments, review procedures, EO recruitment policies and updates for classified and academic staff and faculty. Although it opened its membership to classified staff (1980) and graduate students (1981), most members were academic staff and faculty.

In spring 1984, CSAW renamed itself AWE, the Association of Women in Education, to reflect its efforts to attract more women from across UWM to join (some staff did not see themselves as "academic women"). Participation by classified staff women and graduate students did increase after the change, and the organization funded a graduate scholarship for ten years. As past AWE Presidents Kim Romenesko (1991/92) and Pat Kissinger (1993/94) recall, AWE meetings were the one place where women across campus and job status could gather, network, and meet each other. For faculty member Kristie Hamilton, AWE created a strong, collective feeling that "as women, we're all in it together" which worked against job status hierarchies. Where else could you meet powerful women in all positions across campus? Hamilton noted that when she moved into administrative roles, she already knew many of the women she needed to work with through AWE. In October 1995, members came from eight schools and colleges and a broad range of units, including the Library, Graduate School, HR, Parking and Transit, Enrollment Services, Norris, AOC, Child Care Center, and L & S administration.

Childcare and Athletics

Childcare was an important issue for students, faculty, and staff. The first day care program at UWM was organized by SHREW (Sisters Hellbent on Relevant Educational Welfare), a community feminist coalition that sought to create free daycare programs in communities throughout Milwaukee and to train childcare workers. It was a free summer program in Vogel Hall staffed and funded by volunteers, but it could not sustain itself financially without university support, which was not forthcoming. However, the demand for childcare at UWM continued to grow. Students for Childcare pushed for, planned, and then opened a small childcare center in Vogel Hall in 1971, staffed by paid and volunteer students and available only to students. One of the students there when the center started was Pamela Boulton, who remembered that someone from the Dean of Students office would have to come to Vogel Hall and unlock and lock the doors, because the workers were all students, at that point not trusted with keys to buildings. Boulton would go on to lead the Child Care Center (now Children's

Learning Center) for over forty years. For many years the Center has held a celebration on October 4 to commemorate the opening.

In 1974, the daycare program moved to rooms in what had been the campus elementary lab school in a building named after Ethel Wright Kunkle, a long-time member of the Education Psychology Department who specialized in early childhood education. (The Kunkle Building was demolished in 2014 when the Kenwood Interdisciplinary Research Complex was built; the Child Care Center was moved to the Northwest Quadrant. The space where the Kunkle Building stood is now the Lubar Entrepreneurship Center, named after Milwaukee businessman and philanthropist Sheldon B. Lubar, and there is no indication that the space once carried a woman's name.) Programming was expanded, although a parents' group, Day Care Advocates, still did much of the cleaning and raised money for supplies. Until her retirement, Dean of Students Carmen Witt remained a steadfast supporter of the Child Care Center and Boulton.

Over the years, the Child Care Center grew from about 30 children in two rooms (1-3 years; 3-5 years) to over 200 children as early as six weeks of age. It began pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and after school programs, and expanded availability to faculty, staff, and alumni association members (often graduating parents whose children were at the Center). When Boulton retired in 2011, the initial budget of just under \$30,000 had grown to \$3.2 million.

The Child Care Center was not popular among many School of Education faculty, who dismissively referred to it as "that damn student daycare." Early childhood education then focused on public school curriculum, teachers, and administrators, whereas childcare facilities operated outside the public school system. Recognizing the need to create better education for daycare providers, who frequently began as assistant teachers and moved into head teacher and director roles, Boulton designed a curriculum in the School of Education for childcare providers that included credit courses in program development, leadership, and childcare administration. In 1999-2000, the state body licensing childcare facilities began to require the administrator credentials, because of the positive differences it saw in providers with that training. The Child Care Center was recognized nationally for its innovative and excellent programming, and it was the first provider in Milwaukee to be accredited by the National Association for Education of Young Children. Unfortunately, the School of Education has eliminated the early childcare leadership courses and will have no undergraduates enrolled (the last cohort finished in 2021). UW-Whitewater presently houses these courses, which Boulton continues to teach.

Prohibition of sex-based discrimination under Title IX included athletics, and women's teams were supposed to receive equal support. That did not happen, but women athletes and coaches gradually received greater recognition. The first woman—Nancy Ehrke, for swimming and diving—was selected to the UWM Athletics Hall of Fame in 1984, twelve years after this honor was established, and the first woman coach—M.A. Kelling, who coached women's basketball from 1978-1995—inducted in 2000. The women's basketball team were league regular season champions and league tournament champions in 2000-2001 and 2005-2006.



Women's basketball, 1978. Photo courtesy Alan Magayne-Roshak

Women's Studies

One of the primary goals of women's groups on campus was the creation of a program in Women's Studies, an academic discipline that developed in U.S. colleges and universities in the late 1960s as a result of the feminist movement. Prof. Harmon, other women faculty, and several students attended a conference on women's studies in 1971 at Alverno College, long a leader in women's education. This group polled faculty about courses they were teaching with women's studies content, and distributed the resulting mimeographed list, some 40 courses, to interested students; as of Fall 1972 the list of courses appeared in the schedule of classes. Most of these courses were taught by faculty, but some by graduate students or visiting professors, from a range of departments in Letters and Science, as well as Education, Fine Arts, and Nursing. Within CSAW, a faculty-student Women's Studies subcommittee was formed, co-chaired by Edith Bjorkland (1941-2006; Head of Acquisitions, UWM Library) and Angela Peckenpaugh (1942-1997; Assistant Professor of English). They collected information, urged curricular development, held open meetings, and assessed student interest. The sub-committee drafted a proposal for a Women's Studies program and presented it to Chancellor J. Martin Klotsche in the spring of 1972. Nothing happened.

Students also pushed for more courses on women, and a few realized they could major in women's studies through the existing Committee Interdisciplinary Major. Peggy Silvestrini, a junior, commented to the *Milwaukee Journal*, "I wouldn't have come back to school if it hadn't been for women's studies...I'm in the process of educating myself and then others." (Silvestrini was later one of the co-owners of Beans and Barley, Milwaukee's best-known natural foods restaurant.) She and Margaret Anderson designed their own majors, and, along with Angela Peckenpaugh, published "Amazon," a feminist zine with illustrations, announcements, poems, and other writing, initially using the mimeograph machine in the English Department. Barbara Larsen, a graduate student in urban affairs, commented, "My particular area of interest is state and local planning, but part of my being a professional is my being a woman. And I can't do a competent job unless I know myself. It's hard to divorce women's studies from the rest of my professional life." Students reported difficulties finding sponsors for independent studies on women, however, "because most professors at the university are men and they have a hostile viewpoint." (*Milwaukee Journal*, September 14, 1972) One faculty man commented, "women's studies is a fad that will be gone in five years."

Faculty, staff, and students found allies within the administration in William L. Walters, a professor of physics who was the vice-chancellor, and Leila Fraser, assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Affirmative Action. (When Werner Baum became chancellor in 1973, he moved Affirmative Action to the chancellor's office, with Helen Batchelor as its first director.) Walters incorporated an Office of Women's Studies into the 1973-1975 biennial budget, and the Office was formally established in February 1974, housed in Division of Academic Affairs of the Vice Chancellor. This action made UWM the first unit in the University of Wisconsin System to have an Office of Women's Studies; UW-Madison came the following year.

Walters appointed Lenore Harmon as the first coordinator, a half-time position. She resigned soon after to return to full-time teaching and research. Rachel Skalitzky (1936-2014), then an assistant professor in the Department of Comparative Literature, was appointed to

succeed her and remained coordinator until 1983. Under both Harmon and Skalitzky, Women's Studies decided that its primary focus was to encourage Women's Studies teaching and research within established departments through cross-listing courses and promoting student and faculty research, and also to sponsor programs for the campus and community that highlighted women and women's issues. Students could major through the interdisciplinary major, or, after 1978, complete an 18-credit hour interdisciplinary certificate, which became the largest certificate program at UWM. As the funding provided through the Vice-Chancellor's office included no instructional funds or faculty lines, all courses remained department-based and funded. Despite this limitation, by 1977 30 to 35 courses with 100 percent Women's Studies content were offered each year in several schools, enrolling about 1200 students, in addition to large numbers of related courses. Regularly taught courses included "Nursing: A Feminist Perspective," developed by Laurie Glass and Phyllis Kritek, "The Black Woman in American Literature," developed by Deborah Gilbert, and "Women and the Right to Privacy," developed by Beverly Cook.

One of the most popular courses was Ethel Sloane's "Biology of Women," which she taught in a huge classroom to hundreds of students over the years. (She had originally wanted to title this course "Women and Their Bodies," but this was vetoed by her department as too controversial.) The winner of the Amoco Distinguished Teaching Award and the UWM Alumni Teaching Award, Sloane (1930-2000) had been a student at UWM in the 1950s and a member of the faculty since 1960. Her course would become the basis of her textbook *Biology of Women*, first published in 1980 and still in print forty years later in a sixth edition, revised by Theresa M Hornstein and Jeri Lynn Schwerin. Widely praised for combining biological depth for medical professionals with readability for non-major students, the book featured women from Milwaukee's Bread and Roses Women's Health Center in many of its photographs of women confronting reproductive and health issues. Professor Sloane was a powerful voice advocating for women in the sciences, securing major NSF grants for a Women in Science Career Conference at UWM in 1977 and serving as the UW-System interinstitutional visiting science professor in 1993. She led two sessions at the First International Conference on Women's Health in Beijing in 1993 and was the only non-physician invited to that conference. Sloane guided the merger of botany, microbiology, and zoology into the newly created department of biological sciences and served as its first chair. She later was an associate dean of the College of Letters & Science.



Ethel Sloane with her famous textbook, *Biology of Women*, 1980

Limited funding for Women's Studies meant it was not possible to contemplate becoming a separate department, as some programs were beginning to do, including the Women's Studies program at UW-Madison. Two proposals to establish a System-wide Women's Studies Research Center at UWM were submitted during the 1970s; one was approved by the Regents, but never funded, and the other rejected at the campus level. In 1984, the Office of Women's Studies moved from the vice-chancellor's office to the Graduate School, and the following year, at the urging of the Women's Studies Coordinator Margo Anderson (who had succeeded Rachel Skalitsky in 1983), changed its name to the Center for Women's Studies. This move was designed to facilitate increased research activity in Women's Studies, but, in contrast to other research centers in the Graduate School, no funds were allocated specifically to support research, nor was the Women's Studies budget increased. No money was allocated for course buyouts, so offerings largely remained at the whim of departments, although in 1985 Women's Studies received its own curricular code and the team-taught interdisciplinary introduction to women's studies was then offered under this designation.

Positive developments for Women's Studies included the continued growth in library holdings, thanks to the efforts of Edith (Edi) Bjorkland, and the establishment of a Women's Studies Resource Center in Bolton Hall, with books, periodicals, newsletters, and nonprint media. UWM also assumed a prominent role in the establishment of state-wide, regional, and national organizations in women's studies. It hosted the very first meeting of the Coordinating Council of the brand-new National Women's Studies Association in May 1977, and in 1981 hosted a state-wide conference on the impact of women's studies, with funding from the

Wisconsin Humanities Committee. In the mid-1970s, the Women's Studies programs at UW campuses around the state organized themselves into a network, which later became the Women's Studies Consortium, the only state-wide Women's Studies network in the country at the time. It sponsored conferences, directories, and the exchange of information, and in 1977 established the system-wide Women's Studies Librarian, an office that developed a vigorous publication program on published and archival resources, and whose staff worked with faculty and students on all campuses.

As part of its community outreach, the Office of Women's Studies published an annual guide to Milwaukee Area Women's Organizations in 1978, which began as a slim twelve-page pamphlet with 66 organizations and eventually grew to include several hundred. The Office sponsored day-long conferences at local malls designed to provide women over thirty with information about returning to school, and, along with other UWM departments, offered evening courses at shopping centers and libraries that would appeal to non-traditional students. In 1982, Women's Studies received a highly competitive NEH grant through the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College to present a series of public programs in both English and Spanish at libraries and community centers on "Milwaukee Women Working for Change." In this, and in many other public events, it worked with local women's groups, including the Bread and Roses Women's Health Center, Sojourner Truth House, the Women's Coalition, Wisconsin Women in the Arts, the Task Force on Battered Women, and the North Shore-Milwaukee Branch of the American Association of University Women, which created a scholarship specifically for Women's Studies students.

Under Skalitsky, Women's Studies also participated in a pilot project with UW-Green Bay, the "Urban Corridor Consortium Women's Studies Project I: Special Collection of Wisconsin Women Artists," which taught students how to conduct interviews with Wisconsin women artists; the oral history interviews are archived at UWM. Skalitsky's commitment to improve the experiences of women students on campus and attract adult women to pursue their educations at UWM produced, in addition to outreach conferences, a report to Chancellor Frank Horton in October 1980 documenting 11 institutional barriers women students confronted at UWM. As Coordinator, she wrote a DIN proposal the same year, "Recruitment and Retention of Adult Women," which was UWM's submission to the Regents; it was mishandled at System level, however, and never funded. In recognition of her enormous contributions to the program and to UWM, Women's Studies created the Rachel Skalitsky Award in 1995, given annually to an undergraduate student for promising research in women's and gender issues.

Women Faculty and Administrators

The School of Nursing remained a leader in the UW System and beyond. In 1973, UWM began to appoint as Distinguished Professors senior faculty with international reputations who had made a significant impact on their fields. The third person so named was Helen Creighton from the School of Nursing, a nurse attorney with expertise in the legal aspects of nursing. (Never again would women represent one-third of UWM's Distinguished Professors. For all of them, see below.) In 1983, the second woman named as Distinguished Professor was also from Nursing: Harriet H. Werley (1914-2002), a pioneer in nursing informatics and strong advocate for nursing research. Werley had been a leader with the Army Nurse Corps and was part of a

team at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research that developed plans for handling mass atomic casualties; she also developed their independent nursing research program. Werley was a founding editor of *Research in Nursing and Health* and in 1991 devised the Nursing Minimum Data Set (NMDS), a classification system that allows standardized collection and comparisons of essential data. The College of Nursing's Center for Nursing Research and Evaluation is named in her honor.

Norma Lang, a specialist in quality assurance, outcome measures, and public policy, was appointed as dean in 1980 and moved quickly to begin planning a PhD program in Nursing, an idea with strong support from health professionals and community leaders. The UW System and UW-Madison initially opposed this, as Madison did not have PhD in Nursing, but a proposal for one was hurriedly put together, as a joint degree with Psychology, and the Regents approved both proposals in 1984. (In 2003 the College of Nursing again led the way in advanced training, establishing the first asynchronous online nursing PhD in the world.) Lang remained as dean until 1991, when she became the dean of University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. She returned to UWM in 2005 as a University of Wisconsin Regents Distinguished Professor and retired in December 2013.



Ferne Caulker with dance students, 2015

Prominent women faculty were not only in Nursing. Ferne Yangyeitie Caulker (1947-) founded the Ko-Thi dance company in Milwaukee in 1969, one of the first African dance companies in the country, with performances grounded in Caulker's research into historically-based African dance traditions and her choreography. She began teaching at UWM in 1971, primarily in the Department of Theatre and Dance, where she stayed until her retirement in 2016, cementing UWM's reputation as a leader in teaching and performing African dance. Thousands of children and adults have learned African drumming and dance through Ko-Thi, tens of thousands around the world have watched its performances, and hundreds of students have majored in dance under Caulker's guidance. In 2010, Caulker created a unique track for UWM dance majors, Performance and Choreography of the African Diaspora, the first of its kind in the U.S. Professor Caulker was also an activist in the long fight for racial equality, social justice, and fair housing in Milwaukee. In a 2020 interview with *Milwaukee Magazine*, she commented, "After running this company for 50 years, I have lived through this process...My history is Milwaukee's history."

Title IX had prohibited sex-based discrimination, and throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, campuses were required to report about their compliance with its provisions, as well as affirmative action, and other laws and executive orders. In the academic year 1975-1976, a campus task force chaired by Rachel Skalitsky carried out a self-evaluation assessing UWM's compliance, through questionnaires, data analyses, open hearings, and special meetings. Their report found essentially no change in the percentage of tenured women since 1970 (11 percent of full professors and 14 percent of associate professors), and a slight rise in assistant professors to 26 percent. This contrasted with the share of the women among the students, which in 1978 reached 50 percent among both undergraduate and graduate students. (In achieving this parity, UWM was slightly ahead of the curve; nationally, women students reached parity with men as undergraduates in 1980 and as graduate students in 1985.)

Other campuses in the UW System had similar numbers, so in 1980 the UW-Board of Regents established a system-wide Task Force on the Status of Women to review the effectiveness of policies on equal opportunity and affirmative action. Cecelia Ridgeway from the Sociology Department was the campus representative and chaired the local Resource Committee for the task force. It held open hearings for employees and students, and together with Women's Studies, surveyed students to determine whether the UWM curriculum was generally non-sexist. The major findings of the task force were quite bleak: women were still clustered in lower status and low-paying positions; sexual harassment and campus security were serious issues; policies regarding equal opportunity had not had much impact. Their final report from 1982 found the percentage of women full professors at UWM had actually declined from 1971, to 9 percent, while associate professors had increased slightly to 18 percent. Assistant professors had gone up significantly, however, to 43 percent, a number that was much larger than that of the UW-System as a whole (28 percent). Roughly 25 percent of the total faculty were women, a number confirmed by an independent survey conducted by the Office of Women's Studies. At every rank and among academic staff, women's salaries were less than men's by about 7-12 percent. Among academic and classified staff, the only category in which women dominated was "clerical." Executive, administrative, managerial, professional, technical, skilled crafts, and service maintenance positions were all primarily men. In 1986, Governor Earl's Comparable Worth Task

Force found the pay gap between men and women among academic staff in the UW-System to be particularly large, the result, as one dean put it, of well-educated women being “captive talent in the area.”

A few women were recruited as upper administrators at UWM during this period, including Doralyn Hickey as Director of the Library School in 1974 (she stayed three years) and Carmen Witt as Dean of Students in 1979, who remained in this position until 1996. Norma Rees (1930-2013), an expert on language acquisition and language disorders in children who was previously the dean of the graduate college at CUNY, was named Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in 1983. She served as interim chancellor when Chancellor Frank Horton left in 1985, but was not considered for chancellor because, as the 1992 history of UWM written by Professor Frank Cassell puts it: “Memories of the charismatic Horton caused many faculty to make unflattering and often unfair comparisons. She should have received serious consideration, but the timing was not right.” (p. 120) Rees left UWM shortly afterward to become vice-chancellor with the Massachusetts Board of Regents of Higher Education, and later became the president of what is now CSU-East Bay, its first woman president.

The Regents’ Task Force and the subsequent Advisory Council on the Status of Women made recommendations about all kinds of issues: recruiting more women students and staff to programs in which they were underrepresented; developing support services for women, especially returning adult women; improving health services; improving record-keeping about the hiring, pay, and promotion of women; improving pay equity for faculty and staff; expanding Women’s Studies; developing professional development opportunities; appointing more women as administrators at all levels. Exactly how these goals were to be monitored and implemented was not specified, however, but left to the campuses.

1986-2002: Backlash, Discrimination, and Renewed Activism

The mid-eighties saw a period of backlash and retrenchment. On the national scene, the Reagan administration reduced funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and gutted civil rights protections, including those of Title IX, allowing educational institutions to continue discriminatory practices in programs that did not directly receive federal funding. The 1984 Civil Rights Restoration Act, which sought to restore those protections, was blocked in Congress for four years, although it eventually passed in 1988, over Reagan’s veto, the first Presidential veto of a civil rights act for more than a century. The Supreme Court allowed state restrictions on abortion to stand, and the anti-abortion movement began a campaign to close clinics, which included harassment of patients and workers, arson, and fire-bombings. When in 1984 the Reagan administration asked Congress not to reauthorize the 1974 Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA), the Wisconsin Women’s Council and the Wisconsin Women’s Network, including members from UWM, worked for changes to state statutes that would prohibit discrimination on account of sex, race, religion, disability, or national origin. On the state level, Tommy Thompson began his long period as governor in 1987, cutting welfare spending dramatically and creating the nation’s first parental school-choice program, which allowed public money to go to private schools.

At UWM, many student groups addressing women's issues that had been founded in the 1970s became inactive, and those that did not were sometimes defunded. For example, co-presidents Rachel Budoule and Helen Hurpka of the Feminist Center made a budget request of \$6000 to the Student Association for 1984-85, similar to what they had been receiving; they were granted \$805, not enough to allow them to keep the office open for the twenty hours per week required by the Union Policy Board. The Pro-Choice Abortion Coalition also lost SA support, and in January 1985, the SA notified the Women's Caucus that it would not pay for subscriptions to any publications, which had been an important part of its resource library. In 1986, the Student Association excluded the Women's Caucus from its 1986-87 budget. It also defunded Women's Transit, claiming that there was low ridership and poor management. Students, staff, and faculty immediately formed Friends of Women's Transit in protest of this decision, and the ride service continued. Ironically, just a few years earlier in 1985, the Milwaukee Common Council had awarded Women's Transit a citation, recognizing the need for and quality of the service it provided.

The number of women faculty inched up slowly in the 1980s, particularly at the associate level. A 1989 UW System Office of Equal Opportunity Report found that women made up 10.2 percent of full professors, 26.3 percent of associates, 43.1 percent of assistants, and 55.6 percent of instructors (25.8 percent overall). UW-Madison's were lower at every rank except instructors and were 17.8 percent overall. UWM's numbers were also higher than those of the UW-System as a whole: 11.6 percent of full professors, 22.4 percent of associates, 36.1 percent of assistants, 49.8 percent of instructors (22.4 percent overall). Yet women faculty at UWM remained concentrated in certain schools and colleges. There were no tenured women in the School of Business Administration, only one each in the School of Library Science and College of Engineering and Applied Science, and just two in the School of Architecture and Urban Planning. This was despite healthy enrollment by women students in many of these programs. For example, in 1989, 43 percent of the students in the School of Business were women, including 40 percent of the master's students and 35 percent of the PhD students.

Discrimination and Harassment

Complaints of both gender and racial bias in tenure considerations were filed in several cases in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the highest profile case that of Ceil Pillsbury in the accounting program of the School of Business. Pillsbury and three men came up for tenure in 1989. Her record of research and publication was no less strong than theirs, but the men were granted tenure and Pillsbury was turned down, despite recently being honored as "faculty member of the year" by the Business School. A grievance committee ruled in her favor, noting that standards had been "arbitrarily applied," and that there had been "uneven mentoring" of junior men and women faculty. The Business School refused to reconsider her case, and she sued, charging the Business School's Executive Committee with discrimination in its decision. Pillsbury also reported inappropriate remarks made about her pregnancy and physical features and those of other junior women and graduate students, which created a pervasive atmosphere of sexism.

The case was taken up by both local and national media—including a segment on Ed Bradley's CBS show *Street Stories*—as the allegations of harassment and bad behavior were too

juicy to remain simply a campus matter. The most infamous was the sweater: attempting to portray Pillsbury as flirtatious, her male colleagues reported that she had worn a “sexy” sweater to a Christmas party that had stockings dangling from the breasts. The sweater turned out to be a chunky-yarn, high-necked Christmas sweater with a row of stockings across a fireplace. (This story was still circulating on economics job discussion lists in the 2000s.)



Ceil Pillsbury teaching in the Business School, 1996. Photo courtesy Bill Herrick

The Pillsbury case, along with several other lawsuits and complaints involving sexual discrimination and harassment or violations of equal opportunity policies for women and minority faculty, led to several investigations of UWM in the early 1990s. The Joint Legislative Audit Bureau, the state agency responsible for assuring that financial transactions and management decisions are effective and comply with state law, found in its 1992 report that although UWM had adopted policies promoting equal opportunities and prohibiting discrimination and harassment, “it has not implemented an effective process to respond to complaints alleging violations of its policies. Furthermore, it has not assessed adequately its hiring patterns and success in diversifying its workforce.” It cited in particular a lack of adequate record keeping and oversight, with complaints that were handled very slowly or bounced from one office or committee to another. In terms of diversity, it noted that UWM had been successful in hiring women and minority faculty, but not in keeping them, with voluntary and involuntary terminations of women more than twice that of men, and minority faculty more than twice that of non-minority faculty. High attrition rates for both women and minorities could be found throughout the UW-System, and the Department of Justice also conducted an audit in 1992-93, investigating sex discrimination and harassment in the entire system.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s OFCCP began a broad investigation of UWM in 1991, examining documents and conducting an onsite investigation. Its findings echoed those of the Legislative Audit Bureau regarding a lack of monitoring and proper reporting of hiring, retention, and compensation; erratic accountability and frequent turnover in the campus affirmative action office; lack of coherent policies on parental leave and other issues; and a general lack of action on issues facing women, minorities, and veterans. Although their numbers had slowly moved upward, only in the School of Nursing were women faculty hired in numbers that matched the available hiring pool, and there was enormous turnover, with no collection of data about the reasons for this fact. Along with the School of Business, the School of Fine Arts and the Department of English and Comparative Literature came under special scrutiny as “target areas,” as there had been charges of sexual discrimination and harassment and of demanding sexual favors, not only in tenure cases, but also more generally against faculty and staff by students and others. The OFCCP’s scathing Notice of Violations, issued October 28, 1992, found that UWM had “failed to take immediate and appropriate action” thus “creating or tolerating a hostile working environment.” It found a “pattern and practice of discrimination” against women faculty “based upon a glass ceiling created by differential treatment and a hostile environment resulting from sexual harassment.” It ordered that Ceil Pillsbury be reinstated and granted tenure, and that other women in the three target areas who had left since 1989 or were currently employed be “offered full prospective or make-whole remedies.”



Cartoon of the Pillsbury case from the UWM Post, 1993

Some of the remedies for individuals were carried out, but in Pillsbury’s case the UW-Regents refused to act. Ultimately Katharine Lyall, the president of the UW-System, reached a settlement with Pillsbury, after appointing an independent committee to assess her tenure case,

which gave her back pay and damages. Pillsbury returned to the Business School for a short time as a tenured faculty member and then left the university. UWM reorganized its affirmative action office, began keeping the required records, and implemented other measures designed to bring it back into compliance with federal law. In the hopes of restoring some credibility and procedural consistency to the campus affirmative action office, Eleanor Miller, the Chair of the Sociology Department who had long been an activist on women's issues, agreed to become the Assistant Chancellor for Affirmative Action and Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Equal Opportunity.

Efforts at Change by Faculty and Staff

The Labor Department's findings were not news to most women faculty and staff. The UWM Committee on the Working Environment for Faculty Women reported in 1992 that "neither men nor women see the campus climate as supportive. A much larger proportion of women reported harassment, intimidation, and gender-related inappropriate treatment." Shortly after Ceil Pillsbury was denied tenure, women faculty across campus responded by forming Women Faculty Caucus, an ad hoc group that sought to provide better support for junior women, pressure the Wisconsin legislature to change laws regarding discriminatory decisions by academic departments, and work for other changes. Somewhat later, a group of women faculty and administrators formed a chapter of Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership (WWHEL), to increase both the number and effectiveness of women in leadership positions.

At the UW-System level, the administrators of Women's Studies, Multicultural Studies, and Ethnic Studies together created the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award in 1994 to honor women of color from around the state for their leadership. UWM's first awardee was Diane Pollard (1944-2015) from Educational Psychology, for her work on race and gender in education. Since then 25 other women have received this award for a wide variety of contributions, including Kimberly Blaeser, for her poetry and founding of the Milwaukee Native American Literary Cooperative; Estrella Sotomayor, for her innovative teaching in Spanish, including the creation of special courses for health professionals; Chia Youyee Vang, for her scholarship on the Hmong diaspora and creation of the interdisciplinary Hmong Diaspora Studies program; and Vice-Chancellor (and multiple-degree alumna) Joan Prince, for her leadership on campus projects and community engagement. (For a complete list, see below.)

AWE's monthly programs in the 1990s addressed topics of interest to women across the university. These included women's health (body image, stress management, self-defense, domestic violence, grieving), campus diversity (UWM's LGBT Caucus, The Women's Center, African American and Hispanic women at UWM), faculty research (Ethel Sloane's trip to China) and political events (university, local, and national); one annual monthly meeting was a discussion with the Chancellor. Other programs indicate that the administration's response to concerns about pay equity and affirmative action, among other recurring issues, were still seen as inadequate. In February 1992, Professors Ceil Pillsbury and Erika Sanders discussed Pillsbury's tenure case and discrimination in higher education more generally and at UWM, and in 1996 AWE arranged a round table on UWM Budget and Personnel. The organization disbanded later that year, however, for which past AWE members suggested several reasons: burn-out among some long-term members, increased workloads that reduced the ability of many women to

continue uncompensated, unrecognized service, and administrative interest in increasing divisions among faculty, academic, and university staff.

In 1992, the Center for Women's Studies applied for and received a grant from the Labor Department for a workshop, "Breaking the Glass Ceiling in Higher Education," focused on ways UWM could change to overcome barriers to advancement for women and minorities. Nearly 100 faculty, academic staff, and administrators participated, far more than had been expected, along with two members of the Labor Department's OFCCP, a representative of the Wisconsin Women's Council, and Marian Swoboda, the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs for the UW-System. Strategies were proposed, including diversity training for upper-level administrators; establishing a career ladder for academic staff positions; developing a mentoring program for junior faculty women; spelling out promotion requirements for both faculty and staff; formulating a coherent maternity/parental leave policy and better childcare services; and requiring supervisors and administrators to be held accountable for taking affirmative action and equal employment opportunity mandates seriously. Enthusiasm was high, and two subsequent workshops addressed issues specific to minority women and to academic staff, the latter sponsored by AWE. Findings from UWM were sent to the Labor Department and became part of its general study on the glass ceiling in higher education.

As a result of these workshops and the Notice of Violations, Chancellor John Schroeder appointed a UWM Task Force on Gender Equity, chaired by Merry Wiesner-Hanks (History), Director of Women's Studies from 1992 to 1996 and 2001 to 2005. The task force issued its own set of recommendations, building on those of the glass ceiling workshop. The items for immediate action included: establish an internship program in administrative positions, with particular emphasis on women and minority faculty and staff; regularly report publicly statistics on women and minority faculty and staff; end denial of promotions for academic staff solely on the grounds of lack of funds; make information of childcare options available to faculty, staff, and students; complete a pay equity study for faculty and academic staff; commend Ellie Miller and her staff and ensure sure the affirmative action office did not again fall under an "acting" director; develop, hold, and monitor training in diversity and discriminatory conduct. The Task Force also wanted several spin-off committees appointed, with more long-range goals: mentoring, childcare, safety, campus climate on diversity issues, and childbirth and parental leave. The Chancellor's Office replied that all of these were being done or would be in the near future. Some eventually were, some were not, and some were for a brief period before being forgotten again.

The most immediate result of the workshop and task force was the creation of a mentoring program for junior faculty women, initially funded by UW-System, and coordinated by Nadya Fouad, as associate professor (and later Distinguished Professor) in Educational Psychology, whose research expertise included career development. The pilot program was open to all women assistant professors who had been hired in the previous three years and any other woman assistant professor who was the only woman in her department. Mentors were volunteers from the tenured faculty—both women and men—from outside the mentee's department who were trained through several workshops and paired with a mentee. Mentors met regularly with their mentees to provide a supportive environment and to help junior faculty develop career management skills, research competencies, institutional political and administrative skills, and

teaching proficiencies. Mentor/mentee pairs initially also met regularly with Prof. Fouad, and as a group, for brainstorming and workshops. The mentoring program advisory board recommended that the program “should have an extremely high visibility as a tangible activity in response to concerns voiced by women faculty, and to the high expenditure of time commitment asked of participants.” This was true at first, and most of the eligible women participated as mentees, some later becoming mentors when they successfully gained tenure. The program was quickly expanded to junior faculty men who wished to take part, and then to associate professors seeking guidance on promotion to full professor. By 1998, over 200 people were involved in mentor/mentee pairs. Junior men in some schools and colleges also reported being told by older colleagues not to participate, however, as this was a sign of “weakness” that might be held against them in tenure decisions. The mentoring program stayed strong in the early 2000s, according to Paula M. Rhyner, the program’s second coordinator, but the shrinking size of the faculty and the small number of new faculty hires have reduced the number of participants to roughly fifty (that is, twenty-five pairs), as current director John Reisel estimated.

The 1990s saw the first high-level women administrators outside of Nursing. Kate Davy arrived in 1994 as the Dean of the School of Fine Arts (later renamed the Peck School of the Arts), and implemented strong measures to promote diversity, including rewarding departments and individuals for positive actions, which led some faculty to resign and others to praise her. In 1998, Nancy Zimpher became UWM’s first woman chancellor. She brought an enormous amount of energy and created a strong UWM presence in the community through an array of programs and initiatives under the umbrella heading of the Milwaukee Idea. Programs connecting the campus with the community focused in particular on education, the economy, and the environment, and sought to enhance multiculturalism and nurture collaborations. Student enrollment grew to nearly 26,000 by the end of Zimpher’s years as chancellor in 2003, including more than 4000 graduate students. Women were 55 percent of the undergraduates and more than 60 percent of the graduate students.



Chancellor Nancy Zimpher with activist and author Angela Davis and civil rights activist and former Wisconsin Secretary of State Vel Phillips, 1999. Photo courtesy Women's & Gender Studies.

Women made up about 35 percent of the faculty, although turnover among women and minority faculty remained high. Because of this, Chancellor Zimpher commissioned a task force in 2000 to examine the climate for women, chaired by Nadya Fouad, which gathered data from over 1200 employees, including faculty, academic staff, and classified staff. They found many of the same problems identified twenty-five years earlier: exclusion from decision-making, discrimination and harassment, unresponsiveness to complaints, lack of accountability, a chilly climate. Zimpher appointed Sona Andrews as the Associate Vice-Chancellor for Climate, and she tried to implement some recommendations made by the task force. One of these was the establishment of a permanent Equity Council, later the campus Ombuds Council, a group, initially led by Fouad and Jeffrey Merrick, which provided impartial and confidential conflict resolution services to UWM employees who were aggrieved or concerned about an issue.

The Women's Center and Women's Studies

The early 90s also saw a renewal of student activism for women's issues and new student groups, including the Association for Women in Social Welfare, a campus chapter of NOW, Social Action for Gender Equality, United People Advocating Child-care Change, Single Parents Group, and Sisters in Struggle, a support group for African American women that sought to improve race relations. The Pro-Choice Coalition brought student groups and community

organizations together to develop a unified plan of action on the abortion issue. It held an on-campus conference on reproductive rights, lobbied at the state and national level, and organized clinic defenses that walked patients through lines of screaming anti-abortion protesters and helped keep clinics in Milwaukee open.

The Student Association, and particularly its Women's Issues Director Roxanne Patton, pushed for the opening of a Women's Center that would be larger and have a broader mandate than the Feminist Center, which had lost its funding in the mid-1980s. This idea had wide support across campus. Carmen Witt, the long-time Dean of Students (1979-1996) and the first woman in the UW-System in that position, was enthusiastic. Lisa Meyer, the 1992-93 SA President, appointed an advisory board, which drew up plans, wrote a mission statement, and began the search for a director. The Women's Resource Center opened in November 1993, under the leadership of Cathy Seasholes, with a meeting room, lounge area, and resource library. It quickly started a program of speakers, targeted discussion groups, readings, performances, and events to fulfill its mission of encouraging campus awareness of women's issues, celebrating women's creativity, and providing support and advocacy. As the Feminist Center had earlier, it provided referrals on legal, medical, and other issues and connected with community and campus groups. During its first five years, the WRC saw over 13,000 walk-in visitors (18 percent of them men), sponsored over 200 programs, and provided employment to nearly 50 students. By ten years on, it had sponsored over 450 programs and outreach activities, reaching over 60,000 people. To meet the demand for services, the WRC added more individuals to the leadership team and expanded the number of student employees and interns, providing more opportunities for involvement and personal growth.



Opening of the Women's Resource Center 1993: l-r: Chancellor John Schroeder, Dean of Students Carmen Witt, SGA President Laurie Marks, Women's Resource Center Director Cathy Seasholes, SGA Women's Issues Director Roxanne Patton, Director of Women's Studies Merry Wiesner-Hanks. Photo courtesy Alan Magayne-Roshak

Women's Studies continued to grow as an academic program. By 1990, it offered more than 50 classes a year to over 2000 students and gained some funding from the vice-chancellor to support Women's Studies courses and cross-listings, including an introductory and capstone course. With funding from the Ford Foundation, it organized a Women of Color Across the Curriculum project, working with faculty in several departments on the best ways to integrate materials about and by women of color into their core courses, and it later did the same with material on women and gender from an international or cross-cultural perspective. A survey of Women's Studies graduates taken in 1987 found that 86 percent said their training had helped them on their jobs and that 67 percent had pursued education beyond the BA. In 1995, Women's Studies itself began to offer education beyond the BA, creating an interdisciplinary graduate certificate.

Because Women's Studies had become a center in the Graduate School, more emphasis was placed on research under directors Margo Anderson (1983-1989) and Jan Yoder (1989-1992). Many faculty affiliates received course buyouts through the Graduate School's Research Incentive Program to fund their research on women and gender, as well as major grants from national funding agencies; they were assisted in their applications by Kim Romenesko, the long-

time administrative program specialist in Women's Studies. For example, Diane Pollard from Education Psychology and Cheryl Ajitotutu from Anthropology received a major grant from the Joyce Foundation, and Carole Shammass in History received a major grant from the National Science Foundation, although she left the next year to take a position at UC-Riverside, and the grant went with her. In 1987, the UW Board of Regents called for campuses to propose programs as "Centers of Excellence," areas of unique strength that were supposed to be the foci for future development. After a long selection process, UWM ended up with eight of these, plus the Women's Studies Program as part of the UW System Women's Studies Consortium, which was designated an interinstitutional Center of Excellence. The Consortium received a major NSF grant to fund a visiting professor program for women in science in which Ethel Sloane was the first participant, developed a system-wide audiovisual collection, and created a number of community outreach programs, including women and science days for girls and classes for inmates at the Taycheedah Correctional Institution.

Two English graduate students, Cheryl Kader and Tomas Piontek, organized the first national graduate student conference on lesbian and gay studies, "Flaunting It." Held April 18-20, 1991, it featured two prominent keynote speakers (Joan Nestle and Thomas Yuengling) and papers by graduate students from across the country. The organizers applied to the Cream City Foundation for a grant to hold the conference, with backing from Women's Studies, which managed the grant and other funds and helped with conference logistics. According to Cheryl Kader, the conference provided the impetus for the creation of UWM's undergraduate LGBT Studies Certificate Program.

Flaunting It

Thursday, April 18
 Registration 5:00 - 7:00 pm
 Keynote address: 7:30 pm
 Thomas Yingling, English Department, Syracuse University
 "Gay Studies: Commodity & Desire"

Friday, April 19
 Panels 9:00 am - 5:30 pm
 Keynote address: 7:30 pm
 Joan Nestle, co-founder, Lesbian Herstory Archives, New York
 "Lesbian Courage pre-1970"

Saturday, April 20
 Panels 9:00 am - 5:30 pm
 Plenary Meeting 6:00 - 7:00 pm
 "Dr. Queen's Drag Academy" 8:00 pm
 (a combination variety show and academic panel)
 Reception/Dance

Registration:
 Advance registration is requested by April 1.
 Mail registration and \$10 payment to:
 Cheryl Kader or Thomas Piontek
 Department of English & Comparative Literature
 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
 P.O. Box 413
 Milwaukee, WI 53201
 Make check or money order payable to:
 University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee/LGSC
 Please indicate if you want housing and/or child care.
 For those not registered for the conference, there will be a \$5 admission
 charge for each of the evening events.
 Inquiries: (414) 229-5918

Topics:

- Film
- Literature
- Performance
- Community Organizing
- Sexuality & Pedagogy
- Race, Gender and Sexuality
- Autobiography
- Photography
- Spirituality
- Representations of the Body
- Legal Issues
- Identity Politics
- Gay & Lesbian Reading Practices

first national graduate student conference on lesbian and gay studies

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

April 18 - 20, 1991

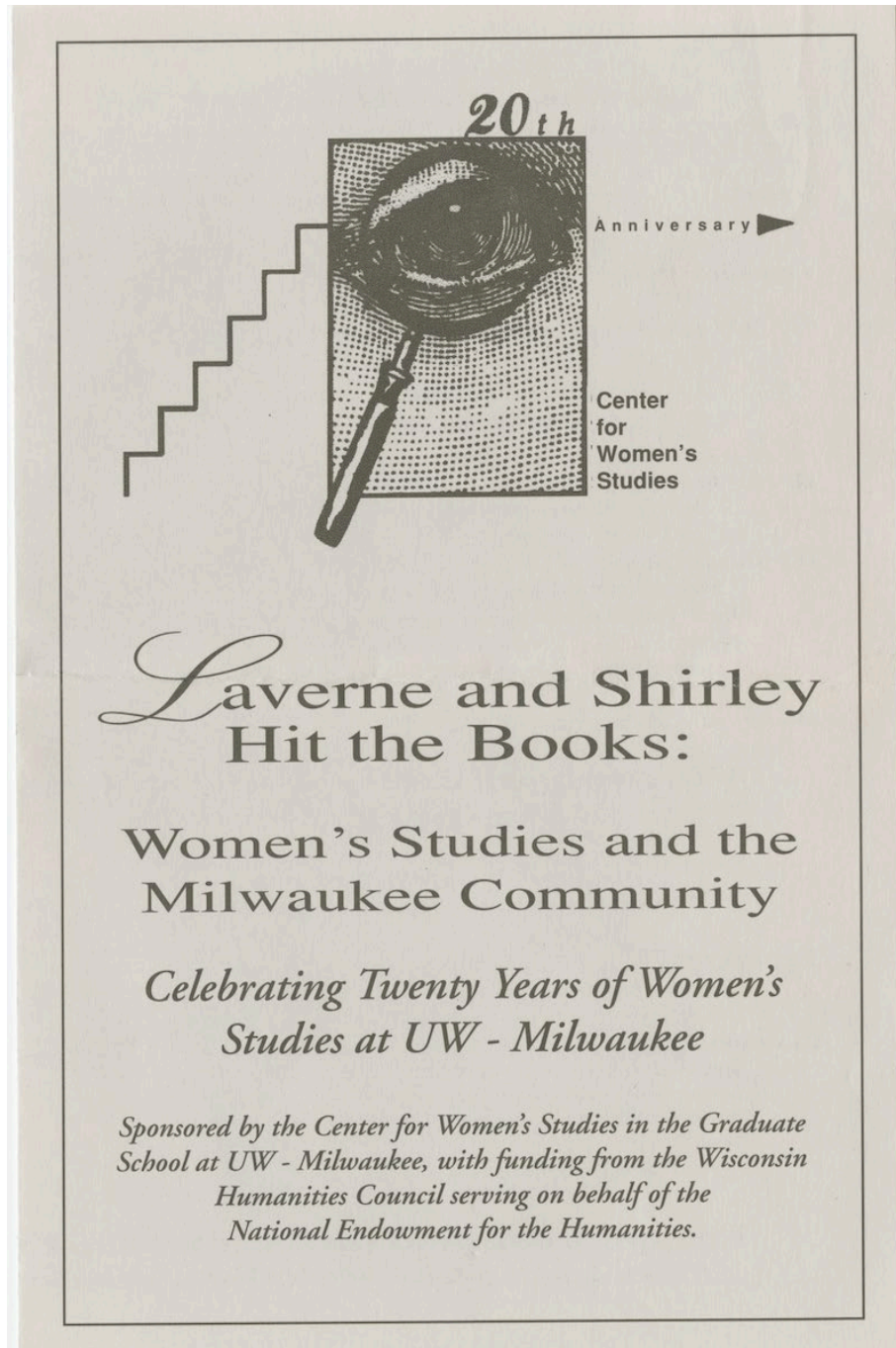
This conference is partially funded by a grant from The Cream City Foundation, Inc., Milwaukee. Sponsored by the Center for Women's Studies, the Center for Twentieth Century Studies, the Honor's Program, the Office of Student Life, and the Departments of English & Comparative Literature, Sociology, Philosophy and German, with support from the Departments of Afro-American Studies and History, the Women's Studies Consortium and the Gay & Lesbian Community at UWM.

Be sure to attend Gay & Lesbian Awareness Week, April 15-18, sponsored by The Gay & Lesbian Community at UWM.
 Information: (414) 276-6468 or (414) 229-6555

“Flaunting It” conference flyer. Courtesy Women’s & Gender Studies

In 1994, Women’s Studies celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a multi-part program sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Council, “Laverne and Shirley Hit the Books: Women’s

Studies and the Milwaukee Community,” which focused on women in education, the labor movement, and community activism. It produced coffee mugs and t-shirts with images and logos created by students, including “the fad continues,” a send-up of the faculty comment from the 1970s that Women’s Studies was a “fad” that would be “gone in five years.”



“Laverne and Shirley Hit the Books” program cover. Courtesy Women’s & Gender Studies

As part of the celebration, Women’s Studies also began an annual student work contest for papers and projects by undergraduates and graduates, which was expanded the following year to include an essay contest for Milwaukee Public School students, “Wisconsin Women Making History,” in which they wrote essays about women’s contributions to their communities. All these contests have continued, and the reception honoring the winners has brought together UWM students and the families of MPS winners, many of whom have never been on a college campus before. MPS students have sometimes written about famous Wisconsin women, but also teachers and family members; some have read their essays aloud—with their subjects in the audience--and their stories of creativity and persistence have moved the audience to tears.



2018 Milwaukee Public Schools Essay Contest winners and their mothers, all Rohingya Muslim immigrants, with their teacher Erin Sivek, from the International Newcomer Center, part of the Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language (MACL). Photo courtesy Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

Susan Burgess (Political Science) took over from Merry Wiesner-Hanks as director in 1996 and began to plan an independent permanent major and an undergraduate internship program. At that point UWM had more students enrolled in its undergraduate Women’s Studies certificate than did any of the Big Ten schools—about 80 students. New interdisciplinary core courses were developed, including first-year, honors, and capstone seminars, courses in theory and methods, and global feminisms. New topics courses included third-wave feminism, gender, race, and the law, and the very first course on transgender issues offered at UWM. Increased fundraising allowed for the creation of the Women’s Studies Educational Opportunity Scholarship for Low-Income Students, directed to students whose academic careers were

threatened by changes in state welfare rules, eventually expanding into two scholarships. In 1998, the Florence L. Healy Scholarship in Women's Studies was established by Healy family members with strong ties to UWM and a commitment to supporting promising students with limited resources. Women's Studies offered regular presentations of faculty and student research, films, and workshops and co-sponsored major speakers and events, including Angela Davis in 1999, Gloria Steinem in 2000, and the musical documentary about women's peace activism, *Most Dangerous Women*, performed before standing room only audiences in 2002 and 2003. Ellie Miller briefly served as director in 2000-2001 before becoming the Associate Dean for Social Sciences, and Merry Wiesner-Hanks returned as director, serving until 2005. These quick turnovers in director were possible because other members of the Women's Studies staff provided stability, particularly Kathy Miller-Dillon, who served as the administrative program specialist (essentially the assistant director) from 1999 to 2019, and Maria Medina-Smith (Carrizales), who was the program assistant for the same period.

The early 2000s were a brief time of enhanced institutional support for Women's Studies. For several years funding was provided for a faculty fellows program, akin to that in other centers on campus, providing a course load reduction, office space, and a small research stipend to faculty pursuing research in the area of gender and women's studies; it was intended in part to provide time to apply for extramural funding. In 2001 the Center for Women's Studies moved institutionally from the Graduate School to the College of Letters and Science, a move designed to help facilitate expanded programmatic initiatives. This included faculty recruitments, and in 2002 Women's Studies received its first joint appointment, when Christine Ewig, a specialist on gender issues in Latin American public policy, joined the UWM faculty in a joint appointment with Political Science. (Ewig left in 2005 to take a position at UW-Madison.)

2003-2022: Expansion and Contraction

The years since 2003 have been ones of expansion and then contraction at UWM. Enrollment grew to an all-time high of more than 30,000 students in 2010, with ten new PhD programs created and an increased emphasis on externally funded research. Women faculty and staff were essential parts of the growth in research, receiving major grants and awards from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Education, and other funding agencies and foundations. Anne Basting, for example, received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for her work bringing meaning and purpose into the lives of older adults using storytelling, poetry, and performance. There was a building boom, with new and renovated buildings opened for programs and students in different parts of Milwaukee, including the purchase of Columbia St. Mary's Hospital, which became the Northwest Quadrant (NWQ). The library was renovated, and Ewa Barczyk was named Library Director in 2006, the first woman to hold this position.

Some of the issues that had long been of concern to women on campus were overlooked or set aside during this boom period, however. The campus Ombuds Council lapsed. The responsibilities of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Climate and Diversity were reassigned and the position eliminated. The inefficient roll-out of UWM's climate survey, part of a UW-system mandate, produced data so poor as to be largely unusable (the exception was data from LGBT

respondents). Early versions of Chancellor Carlos Santiago's Campus Master Plan outlined UWM's future research and construction agenda; it called for the demolition of the Child Care Center to make way for a new science building, without providing for the Center's relocation. Intense pressure from parents, allies, and employees eventually compelled the administration to find suitable space for the Child Care Center, and it was eventually relocated in the NWQ.

Contraction began in 2011, when the election of Scott Walker as governor and a legislature increasingly hostile to public education brought major budget cuts, the disbanding of public unions (including that for teaching assistants at UWM), and threats to the tenure system. Salaries stagnated and take-home pay shrank because of increases in employee-paid health care costs, and faculty and staff retired or left. The number of faculty declined from 866 in 2011 to 732 in 2020, with the share of these that were women stable at about 40 percent; the number of academic staff declined as well, of which about 60 percent were women. The number of students dropped significantly, further decreasing the budget.

This pattern of expansion and then contraction has been experienced by most academic units, including Women's Studies. In the early 2000s, Women's Studies devoted much of its attention to growing its academic offerings, such as its courses and degrees, and consolidating its visibility on and off-campus. It hosted the National Women's Studies Association annual conference in 2004, which brought hundreds of scholars to Milwaukee. With Gwynne Kennedy (English) as director, it created new undergraduate courses, including Queer Theory, the first at UWM and a requirement for the LGBT Studies certificate. The first master's students in WGS enrolled in 2010, and two dual degree programs (MA/MLIS, MA/MSW) followed soon after. Women's Studies also pursued changes in UWM's policies and procedures to enable interdisciplinary academic programs to serve as tenure homes, by creating a "department-like body" (DLB) category already in place at Madison. DLB status became officially available at UWM in 2010, and Women's Studies became a DLB in January 2013. As a result, it was able to hire a full-time assistant professor of WGS, Xin Huang, who received tenure and promotion in fall 2019. Reflecting changes in the field, Women's Studies became Women's & Gender Studies in 2014, with Andrea Westlund as its first chair.

Women's Studies has continued to co-sponsor numerous events with student organizations, centers, and departments. Thanks to the generosity of William F. Vilas Research Professor of English and the Humanities Kumkum Sangari, it has offered an annual Feminist Lecture Series since 2008, and in recent years, a second Vilas Feminist Lecture as well. In 2014, WGS celebrated its fortieth anniversary with an undergraduate poster exhibition and a lecture by Women's Studies alumna Astrid Henry, the Louise R. Noun Professor of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies at Grinnell College. In 2015, WGS moved to its present location in Curtin Hall, finally having sufficient space to operate.

At a campus-wide diversity and climate event in 2011, Women's Studies Assistant Director Kathy Miller-Dillon and Director Gwynne Kennedy (2006-2013 and chair 2018-2019) returned to the 2000 Task Force on the Climate for Women Report to review UWM's efforts over the decade. Few of its recommendations had been fully implemented or survived. Although the Ombuds Council was reinvigorated 2014 as part of "Best Place to Work," with Nadya Fouad again in charge, BP2W also entailed the dissolution of the Provost's Diversity Leadership

Council, of which WGS was a member. Later the responsibilities of the Associate Vice-Chancellor for Climate and Diversity were transferred to another office, and the position was abolished. This absence was keenly felt when, after the 2011 event, over thirty women faculty and staff created their own ad hoc “women’s issues working group” to address the status of women report, thus repeating what women had done in founding CSAW forty years earlier. The group received no visible recognition and support from campus administration, however, and because of workload issues could not sustain itself. In 2010, Kate Kramer, Stacey Oliker, and Amanda Seligman, members of the Provost’s Task Force on Family Leave, conducted a long, comprehensive study to which over 1100 employees responded, and they prepared a report on UWM’s policy and practice (revised 2011). It recommended changes at multiple levels, from UW-System through individual departments; some of these were implemented eventually, and some were not.



Women’s Resource Center staff, 2011. Photo courtesy Cathy Seasholes.

Over the last twenty years, the Women’s Resource Center has sponsored workshops, conferences, service projects, art exhibits, concerts, donation drives, and other events and services, often in collaboration with campus and community partners. Since 2018, it has sponsored the Black Feminist Symposium, which brings together students, faculty, and community members to share their research, experiences, and creative work to foster a much-needed space for black-identified women to feel connected to other women. Recognizing the need to support student parents, the WRC works closely with the Life Impact Program to do

what it can to assist them (student parent support groups, family movie nights), or in the words of WRC Assistant Director, Justice Johnson, a Life Impact alum, what the WRC can do to help the program, it will do.

Since 2016, PASA (Panthers Against Sexual Assault) has been the most active student feminist group, educating about sexual assault, particularly on campus, advocating for survivors, and presenting information about resources. With the WRC, it has organized Take Back the Night Rallies and takes a major role in Sexual Assault Awareness Month every March, a campus-wide initiative, including Denim Day, a day of action and awareness in which people are encouraged to wear denim to combat victim blaming.



Nataley Neuman, winner of the 2018 Casey O'Brien Outstanding Activist Award, with Casey O'Brien. Photo courtesy Merry Wiesner-Hanks.

Conclusion

In 2022 it is now half a century since women students, faculty, and staff formed the first groups advocating for a wide range of issues of concern for women on campus. In some areas there has been decided progress. Well over half of the students enrolled in bachelors and PhD programs are women, and nearly two-thirds of those enrolled in masters' programs; among some ethnic groups the proportion of women students is even higher. Women faculty form twice as large a share of the faculty (40 percent) than they did in 1971 (20 percent). There is a solid Women's & Gender Studies program offering a BA and an MA, a Women's Resource Center providing

services for students, a childcare center, and a faculty mentoring program. All of these things exist because of thousands of hours of meetings, organizing, direct actions, proposal drafting, lobbying, participation on campus committees, mentoring and networking, and educating others, carried out by many hundreds of women-identified individuals over the decades.

Yet many of these gains are fragile, as are all gains for women, as legislation and court rulings in 2022 have made abundantly clear. There is still no administration standing committee charged with overseeing women’s issues on campus and no regular public reporting of statistics on hiring, tenure, and retention of women or minorities. Women’s & Gender Studies remains severely under-resourced, with a bare minimum budget for expenses and insufficient GTAs and faculty lines to grow its graduate program despite the demand. The Women’s Resource Center remains hostage to Student Association politics, which have ranged from hostile to supportive. And as has been widely reported, COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on women, including students, faculty, and staff at UWM, causing some to leave their jobs or drop out of school, and creating trauma and stress. It will be important moving forward to recognize this impact and to put extra effort toward creating the equitable and welcoming campus envisioned and struggled for over the decades by so many women.

We are very grateful to the following, who agreed to be interviewed for the chapter and inspired us to write this longer version: Pamela Boulton, Krista Grensavitch, Kristie Hamilton, Jamakaya, Connie Jo, Justice Johnson, Cheryl Kader, Pat Kissinger, Kathy Miller-Dillon, Amy Rabideau Silvers, Kim Romenesko, Erika Sander, Peggy Silvestri, and Lori Vance. And for further help with research, thanks to: Margo Anderson, Shane Dunlap, Nadya Fouad, Laurie Glass, Ann Hanlon, Sally Lundeen, Alan Magayne-Roshak, Cathy Seasholes, Caterina Sukup, Rona Wolfe, and the entire staff of the UWM Archives.

Women Distinguished Professors

Helen Creighton	Nursing	1978
Harriet H. Werley	Nursing	1983
Jane Gallop	English	1992
Joan Moore	Sociology	1994
Patricia Mellencamp	Art History	1997
Merry Wiesner-Hanks	History	2007
Margaret Atherton	Philosophy	2007
Nadya Fouad	Educational Psychology	2009
Carolyn Aita	Chemistry	2011
Margo Anderson	History	2013
Fatemah (Mariam) Zahedi	Business	2016
Christine Kovach	Nursing	2017
Kathleen Dolan	Political Science	2017
Trudy Turner	Anthropology	2018
Karyn Frick	Psychology	2021

UW-System Outstanding Women of Color from UWM

Diane S. Pollard	1995
Twyla McGhee	1996
Diane Armour	1997
Sandra Million Underwood	1998
Karma S. Rogers	
Liliana Amporo	
April L. Holland	1999
Pauli Taylorboyd	2000
Cheryl S. Ajirotutu	2001
Judith Rozie-Battle	2002
Gwat-Yong Lie	
Joyce F. Kirk	2003
Pamela Clark	2004/2005
Alice Jackson	2006
Portia Cobb	2007
Linda Huang	2008
Kathy Berry	2009
Christine Lowery	2010
M. Estrella Sotomayor	2011
Kimberly Blaeser	2012
Angela Lang	
Sharon Adams	2013
Chia Youvee Vang	2014
Michele Lopez-Rios	2015
Brenda Cárdenas	2018
Joan Prince	2019
Doris Johnson-Browne	2021