Profs Plan Power for Women

By Nancy Tappon

They felt discouraged, angry and helpless. They shared common problems and common adversaries. They were also determined to work together, to formulate strategies for the future, and to more effectively meet the needs of those they serve.

They were all women.

Some 65 educators, administrators, and directors of women's studies programs, women's centers, research institutes, libraries, and feminist publications gathered at the Barnard College Conference on Special Programs for Women in Higher Education, held from March 14-16.

The conference was held at Columbia University's Arden House Conference Center in Harriman, New York. It was led by a committee of Barnard faculty and administrators, and was funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Ann Beufl, Coordinator of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, sounded what was perhaps the pervading theme of the conference.

"Women students think that all their battles have been fought for them, that society has changed enough for feminism to be accepted. We feel that we have struggled for ten years, and yet we see few tangible victories for the women's movement," she said.

"If we are to work for social change and 'women-centered education,' then we must learn to coordinate our efforts," said Elizabeth Kennedy, Professor of American Studies and Women's Studies at SUNY-Buffalo.

Keynote speaker Florence Howe, editor of the Women's Studies Newsletter and Professor of Humanities at SUNY/College at Old Westbury, reiterated the need for more coordination and communication.

"We must establish our own networks for the dissemination of information, so that we do not compete unfairly for scarce resources, and we don't waste our energies constantly reinventing the wheel," she said.

"We must also teach women how best to obtain and use power, so that they might bring about change in policy-making bodies that affect higher education."

Professor Howe also stressed the need to reteach "the basic ideas of feminism that we learned in the early days of the women's movement."

"We have to go back to teaching basic feminist thought and consciousness raising. If we don't, we are dooming the present generation of students to repeat the errors we first made," she said.

Resolutions were passed overwhelmingly by the conference "recommending action and reaffirming principles." These include:

- A call for more research on specific changes that have occurred as a result of women's actions and about the impact of women's programs in higher education.

- A call for greater coordination, exchange of information, and sharing of concerns.

- A statement of support for the rights of lesbians, and a call for all programs to "examine the issue of homophobia, and how it divides women from each other."

Housing Registry Wants You

Barnard Space Ltd., the new off-campus housing registry for commuters, is now taking requests.

Barnard Space Ltd. has been started to meet the housing needs of commuters. Listings of available apartments, rooms with other Barnard women, and "live-in" situations (e.g., free room in exchange for shopping or baby sitting) will be available.

On April 20, Barnard Space Ltd. will be meeting with community leaders at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine to explain this new program. Clergymen and officials will talk with neighbors about the new service. Anyone with a room on the upper West Side can call the Office of Residential Life at Barnard and leave information concerning room, cost, and required services.

According to Georgie Gatch, Director of Residential Life, "we started working on this late in January, and already the interest it has generated has been phenomenal."

Commuters can fill out housing request forms to specify individual needs.

"There is no guarantee of housing. We are providing a service and will try to meet the needs of the commuters. However, other options should still be considered," said Ellen Doherty, a senior who works in the program.

"This is just the beginning of a service. We hope to help, but we are not perfect," said Gatch.

Apartments will be available beginning in May. For further information call Ellen Doherty, Office of Residential Life, x3095.

—Judy Fried