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Enhancing the Climate for Women

Miryam Award winner a strong voice for women

The Miryam Award is given annually to a person or group at the University of Dayton that has enhanced the climate for women and their work on campus. This year's recipient has spent the better part of her career doing just that.

Amy Lopez is the Director of Kennedy Union and Conference Services. Through various committees, such as Association for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Professionals, and the Advisory Committee of Women's Issues, she has had many opportunities to enhance the climate for women, and has taken advantage of each one.

The winner of the Miryam Award is selected by a committee representing various groups on campus. The winner is someone who demonstrates the Marian



presence of service and leadership, and the steady offering of his or herself.

"One of the major things we look for is going above and beyond what the person's regular job description requires," said Selena Hilemon, chair of the committee, part of the Center for Social Concern.

Sr. Laura Leming was one of the individuals who

nominated Lopez for the award.

"Amy has consistently been involved in and taken leadership in any group I've seen that has worked on improving the climate for women," Leming said. "She was involved in efforts around women's spirituality in the 80s, co-chaired the ACWI group and has been a voice for women over the years."

"We felt that given Amy's nominations that she just kind of stood out there," Hilemon said. "She's just a really strong voice."

Lopez said her desire to improve the work environment for women

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gay? fine by me.

A thousand students and faculty filled the UD campus on April 20 sporting bright orange T-shirts which read, "gay? fine by me.", a non-verbal, yet powerful, way of lending support to the gay and lesbian community on campus.

This sea of support was a student-driven initiative, developed by some classmates in UDI 341, Sexual Diversity and Human Development. The idea for this campaign developed from the discussion of an article about the gay and lesbian community at the

University of Notre Dame. The student-run gay and lesbian organization there was banned from receiving a room on campus to hold their meetings. After word of this discrimination reached fellow students and faculty, a T-shirt awareness campaign was developed to show the campus' support for the students. On the T-shirt it read, "gay? fine by me.", and the students and faculty all wore the shirts on the same day. The campaign turned out to be a great success, with the Notre Dame

administration revoking their original stance on the issue. The gay and lesbian students had regained their right to have a meeting place on campus.

For students, the article sparked an interest among those in the gay and lesbian community on UD's campus. According to Margie Scheiman, a student in UDI 341, the class discovered that there

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Women's Center

LOCATION:
Alumni Hall, 2nd Floor

HOURS:
9 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Monday - Wednesday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday - Friday

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Women's Center

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What's Going On?

Golden Nuggets of Wisdom from some of UD's busiest women

The Association for Women Faculty, Administrators, and Professionals (AFW) hosts a brown bag series at the University of Dayton entitled "How Does She Manage." This is a series in which women faculty and staff are highlighted and asked to speak to other women on campus about how they juggle their professional and personal lives.

The series, which began in Fall 2005, holds a brown bag session about once a month. Among the women who have been profiled are Lisa Kloppenberg, Dean of the UD Law School; Deb Bickford, Director of LEAD; Lisa Davis, UD Chef;

Lisa Sandner, UD staff attorney; and Patsy Bernal-Olson, compliance and affirmative action officer.

"All of these women are successful on campus and in their personal lives; they all have children in addition to busy jobs here," said Teri Thompson, a coordinator for the series.

So far this year, sessions included discussions of balancing home life with kids, prioritizing activities within a woman's job, and the evolution of one woman's career and the decisions she made in light of wanting more time at home with her kids.



"The intention, as one audience member said after a session, is that women on campus may find a 'golden nugget of wisdom' from the speaker," said Judy Caruso, a coordinator for

the series.

One of those "golden nuggets" will come from the next speaker in the series, Yemi Mahoney. Along with an being assistant director for Kennedy Union, she balances being a single parent and working towards her doctorate.

"I try to remain focused on what I am doing," Mahoney said. "I am getting a PhD to

help secure a future for myself and my family. I believe in working hard and playing hard."

Mahoney says her family is unquestionably her biggest priority, with work coming in at a close second.

"I take my job seriously and try to do the best when I am there," Mahoney said. "In return, I hope to work for an environment that is family friendly, among other things. Luckily, KU is an awesome place to work in that respect."

• Danielle Meinhardt
Junior
Journalism

Don't forget...

Mother's Day is May 14, 2006

The first Mother's Day observance was a church service in 1908 requested by Anna Jarvis, of Philadelphia, to honor her deceased mother. Jarvis, at an early age, had heard her mother express hope that a day to commemorate all mothers would be established. In 1914, Congress passed legislation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

82.5 million

Estimated number of mothers of all ages in the United States.

2

Average number of children. Only about 10 percent of women today end their childbearing years with four or more children. That compares with 36 percent in 1976.

By the numbers

82%

Percentage of women aged 40 to 44 who are mothers. In 1976, 90 percent of women in that age group were mothers.

152 million

Number of Mother's Day cards expected to be given this year in the United States, making Mother's Day the third-largest card-sending occasion.

10 million

The number of single mothers living with children under 18 years old, up from 3 million in 1970.

55 percent

The percentage of mothers in the labor force with infant children in 2002, down from a record 59 percent in 1998.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

“Women’s and Gender Studies”: Program Name Change Moves Forward

Sheila Hassell Hughes
Director of Women’s Studies

On Friday, March 24, the Academic Affairs Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences voted unanimously to approve our proposal to change the name of the Women’s Studies Program to “Women’s and Gender Studies.” This shift in nomenclature is something the Women’s Studies Committee spent almost two years researching, contemplating, and discussing before ultimately deciding to pursue the change.

We began discussing a potential name change in spring 2004, but decided to postpone the question until after approval of the new major. In fall 2004 we sponsored an open discussion on the topic, also soliciting feedback from the University community. In summer 2005, after participating in a workshop on program naming at the National Women’s Studies Association, and with research assistance from Dr. Kathy Webb and her library staff, I distributed a packet with more than 20 articles on the subject. The Committee met last fall to discuss these readings and the attendant issues and made the decision to change the program’s name at that time. We drafted a proposal and distributed it for feedback to our affiliated faculty, to all majors and minors, and to all departments offering courses for our program, and the proposal received

overwhelming support.

Our rationale for the change is two-pronged. Primarily, the new name more accurately reflects the range of courses currently being offered by the program and the research being done across the disciplines by our affiliated faculty. In addition to our slate of women-centered offerings, courses such as Gender in Fiction, Human Sexuality, Sex Roles and Society, and the History of Sex, Race, and Science focus on both genders, but with the critical edge that Women’s Studies scholarship and pedagogy have established. A second reason for the change is that we hope to expand interest among both faculty and students in the current activities of the program and to encourage the development of new courses on the topics of gender, sexuality, and critical approaches to masculinity.

The 30-year-old field of women’s studies remains a vital and important focus for our program in terms of scholarship, pedagogy, and campus climate, but we recognize the need to engage newer, related fields of research and teaching that have resulted in important and extremely relevant new sub-disciplines. Attention to areas more properly defined as “gender studies” will permit greater integration with existing academic units, from the College of Arts and Sciences to the professional schools, and will help further strengthen and enliven what is already a vibrant and important program.

Mentoring Program: Continuing to Grow!

‘Actions speak louder than words’... This has been proven by the mentoring program’s progress over the past three years.

The Women’s Center launched the mentoring program in October, 2003 involving 24 participants. An initial training session gave the participants an opportunity to meet their assigned mentee or mentor, and helped them recognize and develop their goals about the mentoring relationship. The participants’ goals addressed various aspects of mentoring such as developing skills, balancing professional/family life, and gaining access to a greater network. The session also offered the participants an opportunity to meet new people and develop new relationships within the UD community. In addition to this initial training, there were two interim sessions held to assist participants in further developing their skills and analyzing how effective their relationships were. A celebratory dinner in May closed out the mentors’ and mentees’ “formal” commitments to each other, although some pairs continued to stay in contact. This same schedule was repeated in 2004-05, and now for the mentors and mentees in the current year’s program.

The mentoring program recognizes that each mentoring relationship should have its own style. To support this, participants are encouraged to meet at their mutual convenience and discuss their goals. I keep in touch with participants throughout the year,



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offering additional resources and responding to questions or concerns when they are expressed, but for the most part participants are left to work toward the goals they set in the initial training session.

We are quite pleased that surveys conducted with previous years’ participants have shown growth and positive changes for the mentees in the program. Mentors, too, have reported that they have grown personally and professionally as a result of serving as a mentor. We’ve also noted that a few past mentees have come forward to serve as mentors in the current year. As always, we thank all the mentors who volunteered their valuable time enhancing their mentee colleagues’ prospects for success – without them, this program could not exist.

While this year’s program is about to come to an end, we will continue to invite more people to participate in this dynamic, people-oriented program. Please check out our website or contact me, Sandhya Rajaram, at x95334 or rajarasa@notes.udayton.edu, and see how you could be part of it next year!

• Sandhya Rajaram
Mentoring Program
Coordinator

Women's Center Profiles

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Connecting to UD sometimes makes life easier

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"I don't believe in working hard unless I'm working smart."

Valerie Quinn, an administrative assistant at the University of Dayton Research Institute at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, stays involved in activities at UD to increase her networking, thus making her life a little easier.

Now a co-chair on the publicity committee for Professional Office Personnel (POP), Quinn

became involved in the organization in the fall of 2000, and can often be found as the emcee at many POP events.

"Since I'm not physically [on UD's campus] but once or twice a month, this is a way to get involved and get to know people," Quinn said.

She stressed the importance of networking in order to be able to call and ask for help when it is needed. Increasing contacts can make the flow of work much more efficient.

"That makes all the difference in the business world," Quinn said. "You can't do everything

alone. If you know who to go to that can make your life a lot easier."

For Quinn, POP has evolved from an employment-based organization to developing strong friendships. Although originally joining POP for the networking and ease of finding assistance when it is needed, the members have grown to provide a support network to each other during difficult times.

The social side of the organization has developed into a monthly Ladies' Night, in which different members of

the group meet at a member's house and talk about anything and everything.

"It's all about the friends and the food and the fun," Quinn said. "I look forward to it."

• Tricia Parman
Women's Center
Communications

Committee strives for feminist voices to be heard

In March 2005, a group of students came together to promote the wellness of women and women's empowerment.

As a result, Women's Week was formed. A group of 10 executive committee members have been working diligently to increase women's activities on campus, providing opportunities for women to be heard.

"Women's Week is working to increase the voice of all women in the UD community, to empower women to act with confidence and passion, and to work to help other women gain the same type of insight," said



senior committee member Caitlin Finn.

The group strives for a mixture of women coming together on campus in friendship and spirit to be aware of what women's issues are and what women are dealing with.

"Women's Week is an incredible example of students uniting with their peers, faculty, and administration in the purest of ways," senior committee member Nick Bays said. "It is the exact embodiment of UD's message

of, 'Learn, Lead, Serve.'"

The passion and drive of all the committee members to promote women's issue got

Women's Week off the ground and made it a success.

"There was no lack of motivation within the committee because it was completely voluntary toward a cause we're all passionate about," senior committee member Ashlee Valentine said.

Emily Nohner, a junior on the exec. committee, became involved in the group after realizing the importance of women being connected on campus.

"A professor of mine had said

'Where is the feminist voice on this campus?'" Nohner said. She said that it is important that women on campus develop camaraderie.

"There is a need for women's representation on campus," Bays said. "Feminism isn't a philosophy, it is human reality."

According to Valentine, the group is hoping Women's Week will continue in years to come.

"This was an amazing experience that I hope and pray gets taken on by present and future underclass students of UD."

• Tricia Parman
Women's Center
Communications

Women's roles may not be as expected

This semester I am teaching Psychology of Women which gives me the opportunity to review recent research as well as discuss women's issues with a group of bright and interesting women (and a few brave men). We have covered many topics including why most women don't describe themselves as feminists even if they adhere to the beliefs of feminism, the research that indicates that men may actually talk more than women despite the pervasive belief otherwise, and the notion that males and females display different types of aggression. All of these are interesting to me but the topic closest to my heart is that of how daily tasks are divided by sex.

In class, we had a recent discussion regarding household chores in "traditional" homes (mom, dad and children). Of course, that configuration is no longer the norm in our culture but it remains the goal for most of my students. They were very clear about not planning to fall into the trap of women doing more simply because they are women. Nonetheless, research indicates that this continues to happen, generation after generation, despite differing expectations.

The reality is that many women (married or not, straight or not, mothers or not) end up doing the lion's share of caretaking, whether that is laundry and/or cooking, taking care of aging parents, or committee work in schools and churches. I am not saying that men don't cook— plenty do (though not so much in my house). I am also not saying that men aren't caring and generous, because most are. What I am saying is that women have the gift and at times the curse of being caretakers; we learn it from a very young age (how we learn it is another interesting topic). I don't think most of us want to give that up. The trick is to figure out how to care for others without losing ourselves, how to know when to step up to bat and when to stay home and read a magazine, how to gently discourage the males in our life from assuming that we will take care of things. Mostly though, it is probably about not buying that assumption ourselves. I don't know about you, but that remains an ongoing challenge for me. If you are interested in sharing your successes or struggles in this area, email me at

erin.shiner@notes.udayton.edu and perhaps we can turn the responses into an article.

• Erin Walsh Shiner
 Counseling Center

Ask the Doc

Mary Buchwalder, M.D.

Is there such a thing as a healthy tan?

As warm weather approaches, most of us are anxious to spend time outdoors. I absolutely love the warmth of the sun on my face, and riding my bike. But do you know the risks of sun exposure? While folks in our society love the look of a tan, sun exposure (as well as indoor tanning) increases the risks of several types of skin cancer. Unfortunately, the most dangerous type, called melanoma, is occurring more and more in people in their teens and twenties. In 1980, the lifetime chance of melanoma was one in 250. Currently, one in 75 people will get this disease. But it's not a death sentence, either. Early melanomas are almost 100% curable.

What should you look for? Any mole that itches, bleeds, or changes in size, shape, or color should be examined and probably removed by a physician. Moles that are asymmetrical, have irregular borders, uneven color or black,



red, or blue pigments, or are larger than a pencil eraser also should be checked by a physician.

Prevention is even better: stay out of the sun from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., always wear sunscreen with SPF of 15 or more, and wear a broad brimmed hat and long-sleeved shirt and long pants to minimize sun exposure.

These precautions will also reduce your risk of other, less deadly skin cancers like basal cell and squamous cell cancers. Tanning also is responsible for chronic sun damage including wrinkles, leathery skin texture, and mottling or "age spots" (really "sun" spots). Actually, there's no such thing as a healthy tan; a tan is just a "precancerous glow." So, enjoy the spring and summer days, just be sensible, too!

Dr. B

"Ask the Doc" is a service of the University of Dayton Health Center. If you have any questions that would be of general interest, please send them to: askthedoc@notes.udayton.edu This e-mail is NOT checked daily. Do NOT send personal or emergency questions; please come to the health center or dial 911 for emergencies! This service is not intended to replace a visit with a physician.

Voices Raised

Claiming the Labia:

Fighting oppression, one pornographic image at a time

Stretched canvas; paint, glue, matte medium, wax, varnish, and charcoal are not usual tools for fighting oppression. Yet these are the tools University of Dayton student, Rachel Dennis, used to do just that.

Dennis has created 80 panels of artwork titled "Claiming the Labia." In these pieces she makes a statement against the latest form of surgery, labiaplasty. Labiaplasty is a plastic surgical procedure reshaping the labia. It is commonly done for aesthetic purposes but its use has also been argued for health purposes.

With the bombardment of society's image of the "ideal woman," Dennis decided to use the media's images of the vagina to "reclaim this sacred part of the female body."

She used pornographic images in magazines to recreate individual labia and vaginas on the panels of stretched canvas, breaking down the standards posed by the pornographic images. When creating these images she says she makes the statement "Oh no! You can't have this...you have taken my breasts, my thighs even, but you can't have my vagina. No man, no magazine, no form of media can strip me of my most sacred and private area."

Each painting is unique and represents the individuality of each woman's body.

According to Dennis, labiaplasty has arisen from the patriarchal system where men place these standards upon women who then inflict it on themselves. While most heterosexual women see very few vaginas to compare to their own, many men have seen numerous images of vaginas from sexual experiences and pornographic images.

Dennis' artwork reflects the relevance and power the vaginal standard ideal holds today.

"One night I was sitting with some of my friends and one of the girls brought up that a guy had made a comment about the appearance of her vagina during an interaction. Needless to say my friends and I got to talking about guys and how the hell could a guy comment on the vagina," Dennis said. "Media has given almost every inch of the female body an ideal look and now the vagina has become part of it. But how?"

It was with this question that Dennis got busy, and "Claiming the Labia" came into existence.

The pieces have yet to be finished— she is still creating more. "Well they are never done. I keep making them...funny thing is when you ask guys for porn [to make the artwork] word gets around. I keep getting 'donations' and I keep having to destroy them the best way I know how," said Dennis.

The artwork is on display in the Women's Center from mid-March to April 21 and a panel discussion was held on April 11. Dennis, Philosophy Department Assistant

"You have taken my breasts, my thighs even, but you can't have my vagina. No man, no magazine, no form of media can strip me of my most sacred and private area."

-Rachel Dennis

Professor, Rebecca Whisnant; Counseling Center Psychologist, Rebecca Cook; and Visual Arts Department Assistant Professor Judith Huacuja spoke on the panel.

• Leslie Cebula
 Senior
 Electronic Media



One of the panels displayed in the Women's Center. Rachel Dennis has created more than 80 panels of artwork.

Lopez fights for equality and awareness

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began as soon as she started working at UD in August 1988.

"There's a consciousness raising experience that happens as you learn more about people's experiences and how women's experiences can be different from men's experiences," Lopez said.

Because there were so few women staff and faculty at the time, they were underrepresented and often pulled in different directions, which often had an impact on different areas of their career. Since then, the university has made improvements in this area, although in other places the university remains stagnant, according to Lopez.

"We shouldn't be affecting women negatively in order to get representation in different areas," Lopez said.

Lopez has also been passionate about fighting

"I've called sexual assault one of the blind tragedies on campus. It's an invisible kind of situation and so people like to think it's not a problem."

-Amy Lopez

against sexual assault and sexual harassment on campus.

"I've called sexual assault one of the blind tragedies on campus," Lopez said. "If a quarter of our women on campus were walking around with their arm in a sling, we would know there was a problem, but it's an invisible kind of situation and so people like to think it's not a problem."

To counter this problem, Lopez worked to create mandatory sexual harassment prevention training for the campus to increase awareness of the problem.

"Through this awareness comes different actions, and the desire to try and help in any way I can," Lopez said.

• Tricia Parman
Women's Center
Communications

Students support gay community

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had been recent bias-related incidents in the UD student community targeted at gay and lesbian students, and those suspected of being homosexual. They also found that little to nothing had been done in response to the incidents, perhaps because they did not affect a majority of students on campus. With the Notre Dame article fresh in their minds, they began organizing a T-Shirt awareness Campaign to show support for UD's gay and lesbian community.



funding of the event.

The events began with the Student Allies' groups' observance on April 19 of the 10th Annual National Day of Silence (www.dayofsilence.org). The Day of Silence is when people of all sexual orientations take a vow of silence to recognize and protest the silence

that gays and lesbians face each day. Then on April 20, 1000 people adorned the campus in their orange t-shirts to show their support of their non-heterosexual friends, family members and classmates.

Positive feedback was received from people on campus, and the hope is to make this an annual event.

"The campaign," Scheiman said, "was not meant to infringe on the comfort level of people on campus. We wanted to

support this community of people at UD, and show that these few days were for them."

• Betsy Simon
Senior
English

Keep your fears to yourself, but share your courage with others.

-Robert Louis Stevenson



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Women's Center Newsletter

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Student voices are always encouraged in the Women's Center Newsletter, and we try to convey those as best we can. Five students in Dr. Kathleen Watters' WST 150 course conducted a research study on music and the effects it has on body image in a patriarchal society. Below is a summary of their findings.

Music can be a source of empowerment or degradation for women

Music typically reflects our culture; therefore, what is music currently saying about how the patriarchal culture views the body image of women? Music production has a big influence on body image and can cause women to make drastic changes by using plastic surgery and make bad health decisions which can lead to eating disorders.

After research from three different genres of music (country, pop, and rap), we have found that music videos do have a positive and negative impact on how our cultures view the female body image. First,

we looked at the music industry in the 1980s and compared our findings to the music lyrics and music videos that are currently popular. The present day music has turned out to be much more explicit in both lyrics and in the suggestive way that women are presented in videos. The music from the past has been much more subtle in terms of speaking about the sexuality of women and the ways in which they are portrayed in videos.

One particular genre of music, country, can oftentimes be empowering to women by not having debasing lyrics and videos.

On the other hand, some genres of music, such as rap,

can be very degrading to women by its sexually explicit lyrics and videos that do nothing more than treat women as objects. Rap music contains the most explicit lyrics in terms of referring to women's sexuality.

As women, we are discouraged by the lyrics that continue to degrade women and empower the system of patriarchy. We find it offensive when some women continually listen to degrading music, and do nothing to change it or simply don't care one way or the other. We also find degrading lyrics offensive to all women who have ever fought for the equality and self empowerment of women

throughout history, and think it is unfair to the future generations of women, for the women of today to sit back and let such lyrics discount everything we have worked so hard to achieve. We as a society should be taking steps forward, not backward. Let's not take music so lightly, when it has such a powerful influence on our culture; it's not just a "good beat," it can be a source of empowerment or degradation.

*Latisha Oden-Denson
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