A Timeline of WOMEN’S STUDIES AND THE WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER AT CLU

This brief history of Women’s Studies and Women’s Programs at CLU was compiled as part of California Lutheran University’s 50th anniversary celebration.

‘74 | WOMEN’S STUDIES AND WOMEN’S RESOURCE CENTER
began under Pam Kaufman, a professor in the English Department. Janice Bowman Swanson, also an English faculty member, took over the leadership of the program and expanded services by founding the Women’s Resource Center (WRC), a drop-in location where students could discuss current issues, receive support, study, or just relax. But the WRC was more than a drop-in center. It hosted weekly Brown Bag lunches on women’s issues and became the focal point of Creative Options: A Day for Women. Both Creative Options and the Brown Bag lunches were effective in community outreach. At this time, both Women’s Studies and the WRC were under the supervision of the Office of Academic Affairs. During the late 1990s, the WRC adopted the name Second Wind.

‘79 | Administration of the Women’s Center was moved from the Office of Academic Affairs to the Office of Student Affairs.

‘80 | CREATIVE OPTIONS, an annual daylong program for women, was begun by Carol Keochekian ‘81. Co-sponsored by the WRC and the Thousand Oaks chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) with the participation of many community organizations, Creative Options was directed by the Coordinator/Director of the WRC and featured lectures and workshops for women in all walks of life. Three hundred seventy-five women attended the first year, and by 1994, the event attracted 1,000 women who could choose from 75 workshops and three major sessions led by qualified professionals. Keynote speakers included then Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, Marian Wright Edelman and Betty Friedan. Originally, the conference served only those who attended, but later, proceeds from the event generated scholarships for reentering women students. Creative Options continued for 25 years, ending in 2004.

‘84 | FESTIVAL OF WOMEN AND THE ARTS, a celebration of women’s achievements in poetry, music and visual arts, began and continued through 1997. (It may have been started earlier by Jan Bowman, but we lack verification).

‘88 | WOMEN’S STUDIES MINOR (interdisciplinary): A formal proposal to make Women’s Studies an 18-unit minor was drafted by nine women faculty members and approved by the faculty. Courses offered have included Introduction to Women’s Studies, Women in Business, Women Writers, Portrayals of Women in German Literature, Psychology of Women and Men, Marriage and the Family, Biblical Perspectives and Feminist Theology, Women in Hispanic Literature, Women and Religion, U.S. Social History: Women and Community, and Gender Issues in Christian Theology. The first coordinators were Janice Bowman (English) and Hoda Mahmoudi (Sociology). In 2004, the name of the Women Studies minor was changed to Gender and Women’s Studies.
A WOMEN’S STUDIES STEERING COMMITTEE consisting of those faculty members teaching courses for the minor, other interested faculty, and the Director of the Women’s Resource Center met regularly at the WRC to plan events, oversee the budget, discuss issues, and in general to oversee both the center and the program for women’s studies minors.

’96 The title Coordinator or Director of Women’s Programs was changed to Director of Re-entry and Women’s Programs.

’98 A WOMEN’S PROGRAM ASSESSMENT document, prepared in May as part of an effort to determine the future of the program and center, reviewed all of the services and programs generated through the WRC. A recommendation at this time to move the WRC back to Academic Affairs from Student Affairs was rejected.

’04 CLOSING OF THE WOMEN’S CENTER AND THE ENDING OF CREATIVE OPTIONS: After efforts failed to change the name to Center For Gender Equity with the hope of involving students more deeply in coordinating events and projects, developing leadership roles on campus and in taking a more active role in campus/community relations, the WRC was officially closed in spring 2004. Accepting the recommendation of the University Budget Committee, the Cabinet agreed to cease funding the WRC and to redirect those funds toward supporting other programs, services and institutional assets that serve CLU students. The last Creative Options event was held in spring 2004 on its 25th anniversary.

TRANSITIONS: Following the closing of the Women’s Center, efforts were made to broaden the scope of the program and to have a center approved under a new name. Several programs evolved, but an actual center was not approved until 2007.

’07 The Center for Equality and Justice (CEJ) was established under the Office of Academic Affair with key leadership provided by faculty involved in both Ethnic Studies and Gender and Women’s Studies.

COORDINATORS/DIRECTORS

’75-'79 Janice Bowman Swanson
’79-'82 Carol Keochekian
’83-'84 Kitty Dill, who then became the Public Information Officer for the City of Oxnard
’85-'98 Kathryn Swanson, who continued to volunteer with the center until 2001
’98-'99 Angela Constable
’99-'04 Kateri Alexander
’04-'06 Nandra Perry (English)
’06-'08 Adina Nack (Sociology)
’08-'10 Akiko Yasuike (Sociology)

LOCATIONS FOR THE WOMEN’S CENTER (1974-2004): Following is a list of the locations, which served drop-in students, small group meetings, brown bag lunches and steering committee meetings. Some dates are approximate.

’74-'77 The Barn on the north campus
’77-'79 The upper level of the cafeteria (To reach the center, students had to go through the Career Planning Center)
’79-'80 The Health Center in Regents Court
’80-'94 E Building – first in E12 and later to expanded quarters
’94-'96 Regents Court #17
’97-'03 Kramer Court #8 (Regents Court was demolished to make way for Soiland Humanities Center)
’03-'04 E Building until closing in spring 2004
’04-'06 Small office in E Building (Gender and Women’s Studies Program)
’07-'10 Seminar room and reception area in E Building, Room 8
’10-present Office and Conference room in Swenson Center, Room 109