

The Alphadelphian

The Newsletter of the Alfred University Women's Studies Program

Female Friendly AU

There is an explosion of first-year students this year at AU. With 275 women and 283 men, this class comes closest to having a balanced sex ratio in AU history.

About eight years ago, when female students made up only 43 percent of the undergraduates, AU made a conscious goal to build the enrollment of female students. In each subsequent year, the number of female undergraduates at AU increased, until last fall when the ratio of male to female first-year students was 56 to 44 percent.

Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Associate Provost Dr.

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Above: Alfred Women's Rugby Team, The Toughest Women in Alfred -- see page 7.

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"Best 100 Novels"

Forgets Female Writers

This century will be remembered as a time when women were represented in all careers, especially writing. From Kate Chopin to Toni Morrison, their novels will outlive us all.

However, Random House's Modern Library 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century includes only eight female authors.

According to Random House's web page, the 'list' was produced by Modern Library to get people talking about books. However, it clearly appears that they did not want people talking about just any books, considering that out of the 100 books on the list, Random

House has 59 of them in print.

To get people talking about 'their' printed books, Random House shipped promotional kits to almost 3,000 chain and independent book stores, according to Karen Angel from Publishers Weekly. The kits contained peel-off stickers, bookmarks, and counter displays all advertising the top 100 books.

The board members, nine American males and one British female, have not spoken up about their feelings on the controversy the list has produced.

The first female author

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Still Latina

"*Hay dios mio!* At any point now my roommate is going to walk through that door. I hope she is nice. I don't think she knows I am Latina. She won't be able to tell from my name. I hope she does not mind me playing my *Merengue* tapes." As I was unpacking my bags, I was forecasting my years in Alfred as a Latina.

Proud of my culture as I have always been, I couldn't help but to feel afraid of losing it. There are not many people to speak Spanish with, not many people who can feel the rhythm of the music and move their bodies as they dance to the *Merengue*

of *Los Hermanos Rosario*. And there is no place to go to have some delicious *arroz con pollo*.

It was very easy to notice what Alfred was lacking; however, the challenge was to move forward. I was not going to lose my culture; I was going to learn from others; and others were going to learn from me.

Dances were learned and dances were taught, recipes were learned and recipes were taught. I have not lost but have become more aware of my culture. The interest of other people to learn has developed an interest in me to find out more.

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From the Director of the Women's Studies Program

The Women's Studies Program has placed a number of minors "in the field" within the past several years. I encourage the faculty to consider these placements now more than ever. We must not only promote the development of a critical consciousness on women's issues, but also forge connections between campus and community in which concern for these issues finds political expression on a practical level. For many students, interning in a local agency or doing "fieldwork" is transformative in a political way. As students translate their internship or fieldwork experiences into political action, the outcomes are as basic as registering to vote. And voting. In the field, students work with "real life" cases such as pregnant teens, battered wives and impoverished single mothers and their children. Students observe the workings of an agency up close and get a taste of local politics in action. They learn that what becomes of a desperately needed program often lies in the hands of a remote decision-making body comprised of politicians who lack firsthand knowledge. If voters sympathetic to the women's rights agenda are now disillusioned and disappointed with politics since the Clinton/Lewinsky affair and do not stay active, the reform agenda for women's issues -- abortion rights, affirmative action, social security, welfare reform, child care, real campaign finance reform and laws against violence against women -- is in imminent peril. The task now and for the new millennium is to merge theory and practice in women's studies by encouraging experiential learning in a variety of practical settings where those who like to think about things going on in the world might be transformed into citizens actively engaged in changing it for the better.

-Karen Porter

"Best 100 Novels" Forgets Women Writers, continued

represented on the list is Virginia Woolf, at the astonishing number 15, coming after authors such as Joseph Heller.

The lack of diversity goes beyond the low representation of women. Most of the novels on the list are written by dead Caucasian males. Where is Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and other minority women authors?

The chairperson, Christopher Cerf, however, admitted he had not even read all the so-called 'Best' 100 Novels of the 20th Century. I am sure, however, that he read the number one best book

of the 20th century, *Ulysses*, by James Joyce. This choice only seems natural since Christopher Cerf's father, Bennett Cerf, the founder of Random House, funded the trial to lift the ban on *Ulysses* in the United States. This, in turn, opened the gates for Random House to print America's first edition of *Ulysses*.

Kevin Dettmar, associate professor of English at Clemson University, points out that, "... there is nothing new about lists like these ... and nothing new about fighting over them."

It is important to continue fighting over lists like these.

-Christa Nyman

Female Friendly AU, continued

Susan Strong, who led the efforts for a yearly increase, hired an outside company to find out why accepted women students did not choose AU. Strong concluded that financial aid was the main factor in the decrease in female students.

Studies have shown that "nationally, women are more sensitive to financial aid packages. Women appear to be more concerned with the financial burden they put on their family." AU financial aid packages for 1998-99 took this into consideration.

Although pleased that "this year we regained all that ground back again," Strong is still bothered by

the lack of female students majoring in business and engineering. "After the Women's Movement, which has been going on for over thirty years, enrollment is more split along traditional lines than my hopes," she said.

Strong believes that AU will not catch up to national statistics, in which women are the majority of college undergraduates. "Until we have some social changes, our programs will dictate our ratios," she said.

Strong calls for a change "in the expectations parents, society and schools set for female students. A lack of social support keeps many women away from the sciences."

-Cariann Colman

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Women's Issues Coalition News

The Women's Issues Coalition, affectionately known as "W.I.C." provides information about women's issues and initiates dialogue concerning them. Everyone is encouraged to voice issues they are passionate about. W.I.C. plays an active role in the Alfred community through education and awareness-raising.

These are some of the W.I.C. events planned for 1998-1999:

- showing "Still Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women." Nov. 15, Nevins Theatre.

- planning to bring the National AIDS Memorial Quilt to Alfred University, along with a speaker. Tentatively scheduled for Dec 6.

- presenting on the topic, "Cartooning Women," for the Women's Studies Roundtable series. Panel members will discuss the portrayal of female characters in animation. Dec. 4, 12:20pm, Knight Club.

- having potlucks . . . W.I.C. members, Women's Studies students, and Women's Studies faculty get together about once a month to eat delicious food and talk about upcoming events.

- starting a "Women Writers Book of the Month Club." Members will read one book a month that deals with women's issues and feminism, and then discuss each book at a



Above: Members of W.I.C. make "W.I.C. or Treat" Halloween stickers.

potluck.

- selling bumper stickers.
- planning a trip next semester to New York City, possibly to see an art opening, an off-Broadway show, or something else pertinent to women's issues.

W.I.C. is in the preliminary planning stages for the first annual Women's Issues Conference next spring. It will be composed of workshops and presentation by AU faculty and outside speakers.

The conference will be open to the entire campus, and perhaps to women's issues groups from other universities.

Look for W.I.C. posters advertising our upcoming events. New members and ideas are welcome, so come see what W.I.C. is all

about. Meetings are on Tuesdays at 5:15 in the Multicultural Suite of the Powell Campus Center.

-Amy Garbark

Still Latina, continued

Everything I had learned from my mother and once took for granted, I am now grateful for.

Latin American societies are *machista*, or mostly male dominated. As a product of that society, I pride myself in deviating from the perceived role of Latinas as mother and housewife. Yes, I know how to cook, but I have also held several leadership positions in Alfred University.

I have had two great role models. The first is my mother who has done a great job at raising three children on her own. I decided to come to Alfred University because it was far from home and from "mami." I did not know that I would be missing her so much.

The second is my half-sister, Isabelle, who is twenty-six years old and has been living on her own for ten years. These women's perseverance, optimism and need for success in spite of setbacks has given me strength.

Their stories have provided the motivation to respectfully tell people to go to hell whenever they said that I could not do this or that because I am Latina or a woman.

-Elisaida Pueriet

Fall Semester Women's Studies Roundtables

Sept. 4: In "A Far Out Year for Women's Suffrage, Australia 1893," Martha (Matt) Muller explained Australia's and New Zealand's suffrage history, and conveyed the pride Australians and New Zealanders have for their historical female figures.

Oct. 2: In "Women and the 1998 Elections," Gary Ostrower analyzed the relationship of women to elections, in contemporary and historical terms, from the fight for suffrage to the current voting gender gap. Ostrower surmised that the "Lewinsky Effect" may decrease the turnout of liberal voters, jeopardizing Roe vs. Wade and other rights secured by the women's movement in the last decades.

Nov. 6: In "Postfeminism, Media Coverage of Women and Teens and a Loss of Sanity," Robyn Goodman discussed the latest findings of her on-going research regarding the media coverage of women and minorities.

Dec. 4: In "Cartooning Women," members of the Women's Issues Coalition will discuss the physical distortions and character flaws of female cartoon characters, and show how these affect the development of girls' perception of themselves and other females.

Is AU Female Friendly?

To gather responses to this question, an informal survey was given to a nonrandom sample of students, faculty and staff members. Of the 52 responses, an overwhelming 45 people said that they believed AU was female friendly (27 females, 18 males), and only 7 said that they believed AU was not female friendly (5 females, 2 males). The following are sample responses.

YES

"AU certainly leaves an ear open to the female voice and is willing enough to change whenever needed, so yes, the university as an institution is female friendly." - Steve Farrenkopf, senior English major

"Women are going to take over the world, and we are starting with Alfred!" -Chandra Leister, junior communications major

"Ever since my first few days at Alfred I've been impressed with the acceptance of diversity here. I feel that women are treated fairly and equally here at Alfred." -Greg Hilgert, senior psychology major

"Yes, AU seems to be in general female friendly, but like any other place there is that minority that isn't, possibly creating an illusion of unfriendliness for some females." - Gregory J. Smith, junior geology major

"Yes, primarily because of our strong women faculty and female student population. Both make AU a comfortable setting for females." -Michael Christakis, senior political science and history major

"Yes. Ironically, a female engineer's biggest enemy is hostile female engineers." -Alissa Dodds, senior

"Yes, there seem to be as many female students, professors, staff as there are men. We have Women's Studies Roundtables, course offerings, W.I.C. and other such opportunities. I've never felt any sort of prejudice, except from specific individuals." -Jasmine Lellock, junior English major

"I believe I have never come across discrimination as a woman in engineering. Even if I had, I wouldn't think of sexism as a possible reason. I expect to be treated equal to men and don't even consider it could be any other way."

-Michelle Korwin,
senior glass
engineering science
major

"Yes -- we do encourage women through the Roundtable, and positions within the university (Sue Smith, Sue Strong). Alfred encourages a friendly environment to men, women and all regardless to gender." -Willis Earl, dining services manager of cash operations

"They must be, just look at all the flowers they plant around the campus!" -Jenelle Silvers, freshman undecided major

"I feel that AU is a friendly and open place for women. There are numerous opportunities for women to join professional societies on campus, such as the Society of Women Engineers." -Mario Bochiechio, junior ceramic engineering major

"Yes, I think AU is female friendly because of my own personal experience of being hired into my current administrative position. I believe AU is very sensitive to this issue as I look at the number of other administrative positions held by women on campus; for example, Vice Present for Business and Finance, Associate Vice President for Business and Finance, Associate Provost, Director of Personnel, Controller, Assistant Controller, Director of Admissions, and many others too numerous to name." - Pat Schwartz, Director of Safety/Security and Telecommunications

"I have almost never felt an unfriendliness related to my gender, in 30 years." -Jennifer Taylor, associate professor of ceramic engineering and materials science

"I believe AU tries to be because faculty and students have strived to make it so . . . for example, the Women's Studies Roundtable, and a Women's Studies minor. I've never felt any limitations here simply because I'm female." - Sabrina Harrison, senior communications major

"I hope so. I'd say that I try." - Jordan Armellin, freshman undeclared major

"Yes, I believe Alfred is female friendly. I have received lots of support in a male-dominated major." -Laura Randall, freshman computer science and English major

Why Or Why Not?

NO

"I wouldn't say that AU is female unfriendly, but I wouldn't call it especially friendly either, considering that there are no real programs or educational courses dealing with women's issues and problems." - Kelly Falco, sophomore elementary education major

"I think more professors treat the males on campus with more respect. It's not an equal world for male and females."

-Maria Ielati, junior education major

"No work environment is totally immune to gender-based discrimination. From my observations during a year and a half at Alfred, however, I would have to say that we do much better than many other academic work places. Nevertheless, here on the second floor of

Seidlin I have noticed one form of female unfriendliness that occurs on a regular basis. This does not take the typical form of sexism where those in power exploit or belittle women students or employees. Rather, I have noticed that students treat their female professors differently than they treat their male professors. Many students feel much more entitled to challenge the grades given to them by female professors than male professors. I have almost never had a student come to me to complain that a grade is unfair or try to convince me that I'm being unreasonable. My female colleagues, using almost identical grading standards, receive such challenges on a regular basis. Clearly, some undergraduates mistakenly view their female professors as weak, as people who can be pressured and bullied. Students should, of course, feel comfortable discussing a questionable grade with any professor. When, however, a student targets a female professor as a potential softy who will change a

grade because of coercion rather than merit, that student is being, well, unfriendly." -Allen Grove, assistant professor of English

"I don't see many females in leadership roles, but that may just be because they don't have the interest. I've noticed that the only women on the executive board of Student Senate this year are the secretary and the copier (Poly Pro)." -Rachael Downey, freshman political science major

"No, I think that the university strives to have a fully accepting and appreciative community but each year a quarter of our students graduate and a quarter of our students are freshmen. We will always have a population of uneducated students and therefore ignorance. At Alfred we will always strive to be female friendly, but it is in the nature of a college to always contain people who need to be educated." -Dan Napolitano, Director of Student Activities

CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE

"All the ideology in the world will not a female-friendly environment make -- unless women inhabit those environs. When I joined the faculty at AU seventeen years ago, I was the fifth woman, at that time, on the Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty. As we speak, there are more than a few talented women on that faculty as well as a goodly number of talented women in influential administrative posts. Not as key posts as I would like, but key none-the-less. We're movin' -- maybe not shakin', but we're movin'." -Susan Mayberry, professor of English

"Compared to jobs I have had in non-academic settings, Alfred is much more friendly to women. There are still problems. 'Womens' jobs are paid less than 'mens' jobs and using other colleagues for salary comparison doesn't help since the phenomenon is universal in our society."

-Sharon Genaux, library assistant

"Yes, I think Alfred is, in general, female friendly. For the most part

both sexes seem to be considered on an equal playing field, though at times certain campus members seem somewhat adverse to any awareness-raising." -Karolyn Reddy, junior English major

"I feel it's an equal opportunity place, but I feel that there aren't enough women putting forth the effort in the engineering fields." - Jason Killian, junior electrical engineering major

"Yes, this atmosphere could be more gay friendly, and more friendly in general, but my experiences of other environments would place Alfred very high by comparison." -Bill Dibrell, professor of philosophy

Faculty News

In May, **Cecilia Beach** presented a paper titled "Braving the Law: Feminism and Anarchism in Madeleine Pelletier's Theatre," at the Women in French Conference in England.

In July and August, she conducted research in Paris, Amsterdam, and London on social protest theatre by French women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Carol Burdick's book *Woman Alone: A Farmhouse Journal*, (1989), recently was published as a paperback by Paul Eriksson.

In October, Burdick presented a paper titled "Are Women at Home in Nature?" in Cortland.

Luanne Clarke performed a recital "Relatively Speaking: The Family in Song," at Chautauqua Institution in August with fortepianist, Elizabeth Etter. She featured works by Louise Reichardt, Fanny Mendelssohn, and Clara Schumann, unrecognized female composers of the 19th century.

Clarke continues to conduct research on the music of female composers, focusing on French musicians from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In September, **Felicia Cruz** presented a paper "Love to Leave or Leave to Love: The House on Mango Street" by Sandra

Cisneros" for the Gender Games in the Windy City: Chicago's Latina Writers panel at the Latin American Studies Association 1998 Convention.

Vicki Eaklor's article "Learning from History: A Queer Problem," appeared in the July 1998 issue of the *Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity*.

In June, she attended the National Women's Studies Association meeting, participating on the "Coming Out in the Classroom" panel.

In November, Eaklor attended the "Creating Change" conference on the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Eaklor is the Chair of the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History for American Historical Association.

Robyn Goodman's article "Congressional vs. Presidential Access to the Press and its Impact on Coverage of the China Most Favored Nation Controversy," appeared in the *Newspaper Research Journal*. The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle published her article on President Clinton's approach to U.S. - China relations.

Goodman attended the annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) conference and moderated a research panel focused on journalism ethics. Goodman serves as

AEJMC's International Division's Women's Status Officer.

Gary Ostrower recently published *The United Nations and The United States*, a general survey of U.S. - U.N. relations since 1940, including coverage of the Beijing Women's Conference of 1995.

Karen Porter's current research analyzes the reports filed by county law enforcement officers after responding to a domestic violence incident. This work continues Porter's involvement with the ACCORD Corporation's Consortium on Domestic Violence, a multi-disciplinary task force of community leaders dedicated to improving the local response to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence.

Pamela Schultz spent the summer finishing a book chapter focusing on Megan's Law being published this fall in "Balancing Privacy, Secrecy, and Disclosure," edited by Sandra Petronio.

On October 31, Schultz took her Communications Persuasion class to the National Women's Rights Park in Seneca Falls as an extension of the class' discussion of social movements focused on the Women's Rights Movement.

News from the Minors

Class of 1999:

Cariann Colman is the editor of the *Alphadelphian* and a member of the Women's Issues Coalition.

Colman interned this summer as an English composition tutor and resident assistant at the Storrs branch of University of Connecticut's Upward Bound Program for inner-city high school students.

Marie Lowell is currently interning at the ACCORD Corporation in Belmont and Wellsville, working with physically and mentally handicapped women who have been in, or who are currently in, situations of domestic violence.

Last Semester, **Tirsa Nieves** studied abroad in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Cuba where she had the opportunity to meet with women from a Hueter indigenous reservation, Campesina women (country workers), Guatemalan refugee women, Sandinista women who played key roles during the Nicaraguan revolution in their overthrow of the Sanadista dictatorship, and the leader of one of the Santa Clara communities in Cuba for the Organizacion de Mujeres Cubanas.

Class of 2000:

Courtney Fleming interned at the West Irondequoit Public Library this summer.

Heather Kool spent the summer as a Girl Scout Camp unit leader teaching girls responsibility and independence.

Currently, Kool is interning at DisneyLand, in Florida, for the semester.

This summer **Nomi Manon** interned at Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, a progressive gay organization, planning for OutWrite, a gay writing conference.

Manon is currently creating web-page news reports on the international homosexual community for the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation at <http://www.lbbs.org/queerwatch.html>.

Class of 2001:

Rebecca Morton worked this summer sewing at an alterations shop and traveled cross-country from California to Tennessee, staying at national parks along the way.

Alumni Updates

Megan Allen is working at the Hornell Tribune as a Staff Reporter.

Melissa Cianciulli is attending George Washington University for her masters in Public Policy, concentrating on Women's Studies.

Cheryl Hurst joined the National Community Civilian Corps and is working in Charleston, South Carolina, performing intensive community rebuilding and supplying disaster relief to the victims of the recent hurricane.

Jeannette Oliver met Hillary Clinton and Betty Friedan this summer at Celebrate '98, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Sentiments. She was working as part of the Summer Student Conservation Association at Seneca Falls Women's Rights National Historic Park.

DeAnne Smith recently was published in *The Atlantic Monthly*.

The Toughest Women in Alfred

There is speculation in Alfred about the abilities of the women's rugby team, and wonderment at its appeal. The women's rugby team is proud of its sport's equality.

Captain Kara Emmert was attracted to the sport because it "has the same exact rules as the men." Emmert, a junior, remembers wanting to play football in high school and being told that she could not since she was female. The rugby team is fulfilling her wish to play a full-contact sport.

Junior and first season player Christine Zuba was also attracted to the physical aggression of rugby. There are no bystanders. Zuba said that once on the field, "you have to play, you have no choice, you'll be mowed over."

Sally Prue, also a junior, was attracted to this "higher risk sport," because "it was different." Contrary to many other women's sports teams at most universities, such as field hockey and lacrosse, women's rugby players do not wear skirts.

There are no gender specific restrictions placed on the team's rules and regulations, nor on their uniforms. Alfred's rugby team does not wear protective sports pads. The only protection in this full-contact sport is mouth guards.

The sport is not an official AU varsity team. It is a club sport, including students from Alfred University and Alfred State College. The women's and men's teams are without the funding of a varsity sport. Furthermore, they have no coach.

The seasoned team players run the practices and set up games with other universities, such as Syracuse University and SUNY Oswego, where rugby is a varsity sport. If the team does not pull together, the self-run practices would be a disaster. If seasoned players do not return each year, there is no one to instruct the new players.

The skills these women learn on the field change their views about themselves and how they fit into society.

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Spring 1999 - Women's Studies Course Offerings

WST 105 001 Women In Society, S. Bryant, 4 credits
This interdisciplinary course is the foundation of Women's Studies. It examines the relationship of women worldwide to institutions and developments in the social, political, and economic spheres. Topics include biological issues, women and work, women as family members, media portrayal of women, and the origins and development of modern feminism.

WST 206 001 Poetry Workshop, C. Burdick, 2 credits
A beginning writing course in poetry with emphasis on originality and freshness of language. Required work includes extensive reading of contemporary poets, writing with an eye to understanding basic poetic forms, peer reviews, and preparing a final portfolio of revised poems.

WST 300 001 Figures: The Brontes, A. Grove, 2 credits
This course will take an in-depth look at the writings of the Bronte sisters. Readings will include a major novel by each Anne, Emily, and Charlotte, as well as a selection of letters and poetry. We will supplement these readings with a study of recent literary scholarship. This course will focus on issues such as gothicism, the imagination, and female authorship.

WST 300 002 Figures: Willa Cather, S. Hoover, 2 credits
In the last 20 years, the reputation of Willa Cather (1873-1947) has grown steadily, judging by the articles and books published about her. We will examine short stories and novels seeking to define the reasons for the growing

attention given to her work. We will ask such questions as to whom does it speak? What does it say? How does it say it?

WST 300 003 Figures: Faulkner and Morrison, S. Mayberry, 4 credits

When asked how she dealt with racial stereotypes in the classics of American literature, Toni Morrison states that, because she loved those books, she skipped over those parts. Except for William Faulkner, whom she describes as the "only writer who took black people seriously. Which is not to say he was, or was not, a bigot." This course will examine some of Faulkner's works and analyze the way he does or does not influence some of Morrison's novels.

WST 346 001 Sociology of Sex and Gender, K. Porter, 4 credits

This course examines the concepts of sex and gender as they are defined in sociological literature, focusing on how social contexts (i.e., education, employment, family, sexuality and reproduction, etc.) construct gender which, in turn, shapes future opportunities for individuals in society. Prerequisite: SOC 110 or AN 200.

WST 350 001 Women and Aging, P. Maiden, 2 credits

This course will encourage students to think about women and aging as a whole, to understand the psychological and physiological processes of aging women in relation to society and politics. Topics may include but are not limited to: women's health, women and retirement, women's voices from different cultures, women and activism, women and the law.