

# *The Alphadelphian*

The newsletter of the Alfred University Women's Studies Program

## What is an Alphadelphian??!

You are probably wondering what in the world an Alphadelphian is; it certainly isn't a commonly heard word around campus.

Back in the late 1800s, however, the word Alphadelphian was quite common in Alfred, since it was the name of a literary society for women on campus. The group was founded by Abigail Allen in 1846 at Alfred Academy, which would later become Alfred University.

According to Susan Strong in her doctoral dissertation, "The Most Natural Way in the World: Coeducation at Nineteenth Century Alfred University," the society was one of the first women's literary societies in the country. It was "a crucial forum for debate, development of self-confi-

dence, and encouragement for women to take an active, public role in society." The Alphadelphian also "kept the issues of women's work and needs at the fore."

It seems only natural to name the newsletter after the Alphadelphian since the goals of the society articulate the goals of the newsletter: to increase communication between the Women's Studies program and the University community and to promote discussion of women's issues and topics.

Calling the newsletter the Alphadelphian also suggests a sense of history. This newsletter continues Abigail Allen's work of striving for women's equality. The



Above: Abigail Allen, the founder of the original Alphadelphian, a literary society for women.

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## Five Reasons to be Proud of AU's Herstory and History

By Megan Allen

This summer I borrowed a copy of Susan Strong's doctoral dissertation because it was suggested to me that it might make an interesting feature for this newsletter.

I was very surprised by what I read. More specifically, I was amazed at the great feeling of pride in Alfred University's roots that I had after reading it. The faculty, the students and the entire administration combined made AU into what must have been a progressive, supportive environment during the late 1800s.

Unfortunately I can't touch on everything I read, but as a way to highlight my favorite discoveries, I've put together a list of what I thought were five reasons to be proud of AU's herstory and history.

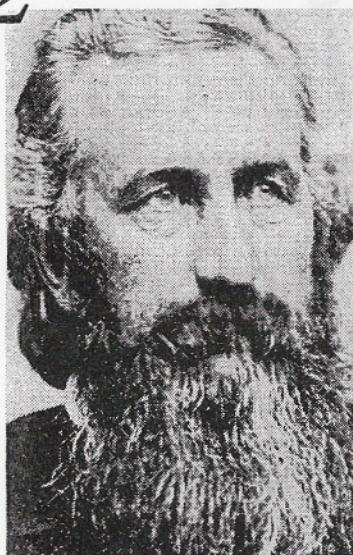
1. Co-education at AU was considered

"natural," although "experts" elsewhere were claiming it was unnecessary and even dangerous to women. Dr. Edward Clarke of Harvard University, for instance, published a book in 1873 called "Sex in Education," in which he claimed strenuous studying by women could cause them to become infertile.

2. Other colleges of the time were also co-educational, but few actually gave women equal opportunities, as did AU. For instance, at other colleges females attended classes with males, but were not allowed to publicly present their papers, as the males were expected to do. For women to speak in public during this time was highly unusual, but at AU it was strongly encouraged.

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Above: Jonathan Allen, AU's second president and a strong supporter of co-education at AU.

Abigail Allen explained this belief when she said: "Any culture to be noblest must not only have its inspiration in harmony with the great human and divine influences, but it must move on the high tide of human progress, keep abreast of the world's advance movements; in one word, be radical, radical to the core." To be radical meant to promote equal educational opportunities for women.

4. Abigail Allen was arrested in 1887 when she led a group of women to vote. That was a proud moment in AU's history.

5. The students of the Allens' time were also passionate and active in their support of egalitarianism. For example, when Wesleyan College male students forced their newly elected female Class Poet to resign because of her gender, AU students supported her. The Wesleyan males who forced her to resign were criticized in AU's student newspaper, and those who supported her were encouraged to "stand firm."

Those are just five of the reasons to be proud of Alfred University's roots. If you have the chance to read Strong's entire doctoral dissertation, I strongly encourage you to do so, since within its pages are many more reasons to be proud.

## Five Reasons, cont.

Also at other colleges the concept of separate spheres was still assumed, meaning that it was expected that after college the women would get married and work inside the home only. At AU women received an education so that they could work outside the home, often as teachers.

3. AU was largely egalitarian because of Jonathan and Abigail Allen. Both taught at AU, and Jonathan Allen was AU's second president.

They believed that education was the key to change and that all students should be reformers. At the Women's Congress in 1873,

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Director: Karen L. Porter, Associate Professor of Sociology

Newsletter Editor: Megan Allen

## From the Director of the Women's Studies Program...

I'm delighted that we now have our own newsletter. Megan Allen, a senior women's studies minor, has done a remarkable job in designing, writing, researching and editing the first edition of the *Alphadelphian*. She deserves our praise.

We mark this occasion with special significance for having a newsletter allows us to keep a public record of women's studies activities at Alfred University for the first time. So, for the record, let me offer a brief account of our structure and history.

The Women's Studies Program was developed in '82-'83 by an ad hoc committee of women and men from various disciplines throughout the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The first Director was Gail Walker ('83-'87), Division of Psychology, who was followed by Susan Mayberry ('87-'91), Division of English, and Vicki Eaklor ('91-'94), Division of Human Studies.

In the caring and able hands of these Directors, the interdisciplinary character of the minor was strengthened through new courses and pedagogical strategies, and the numbers of students and faculty affiliated with the program grew. The program continues to attract the best students from all colleges in the University.

Our monthly roundtable series, organized by Sandra Singer, continues to offer our campus community thought-provoking and timely presentations. The student-run organization, Women's Issues Coalition, advised by Pamela Lakin and Fiona Tolhurst, collaborates with the Women's Studies Program on various events and causes. And, since the spring of 1996, the program sponsors the annual Riley Lectureship in Women's Studies, drawing capacity crowds to hear lectures by feminist scholars of national prominence.

All this, of course, is made more salient when we realize that Alfred's pioneer educators, such as Abigail and Jonathan Allen, staked their reputations on a commitment to women's rights, believing co-education was the "right thing to do." Their spirit resonates with our more recent history, when the organizers of this program, in like fashion, knew devising a minor was the "right thing to do." To them all, we owe a debt of gratitude. For their efforts have not only brought us to where we are today, but have forged a solid foundation on which to build, ensuring that women's studies at Alfred University has a secure place in the future.

-Karen Porter



# Faculty News

**Sylvia Bryant** gave birth to 6 pound 3 ounce Parker Henry on Sept. 16 at 5:52 a.m.

Sylvia, formerly a member of the Women's Studies faculty, is the Executive Director of the Allegany County United Way in Wellsville.

**Vicki Eaklor** recently won the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation's national essay contest, with her essay titled "Without Visibility There is No History."

Vicki is in her second year as co-chair of the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History, a national affiliate of the American Historical Association.

She has written several book reviews on lesbian/gay subjects and two encyclopedia entries. Currently she is also finishing an article for an undergraduate reader, titled "Where Have We Been, Where are We Going, and Who Gets to Say? A Postmodernist Look(s) at Recent Queer History."

Vicki will chair a panel titled "Whose History of Sexuality? Teaching (Against) Identity," at the AHA's January meeting in Seattle.

**Robyn Goodman** was busy over the summer promoting her research on U.S. news coverage of China during

and after the Cold War. On Aug. 2 she presented a research paper titled "Who's Setting the News Agenda on Sino-American Relations? Prestige Press Coverage from 1985 to 1993" at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's annual convention in Chicago.

Robyn also gave the Bergren Forum on Sept. 8, titled "Lapdog vs. Watchdog: Does Foreign Policy Coverage Bite? The China Factor," which focused on her research and her reporting and teaching experiences in China and the former Soviet Union from 1989-1991.

**Karen Porter** traveled to Toronto in August to present a paper (with William Hall) titled "Finding Justice: The Criminal Justice Response to Domestic Violence," at the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Another piece stemming from this project, "Researching Justice: Methodological Issues in Domestic Violence Research in a Rural County" (with William Hall), was presented at the annual meeting of the New York State Sociological Association, Oct. 3-4 in Rome. Women's Studies students De Anne Smith, Robin Arian and Jessica

Greeley assisted with the research.

**Pamela Schultz** conducts research on incarcerated male sex offenders at the Groveland Correctional Facility in Sonyea, NY. On Oct. 4 she presented a paper on the ethical issues involved in doing research with incarcerated child molesters at the New York State Sociological Association's 45th Annual Conference in Rome, NY.

In November Pamela will present two papers at the National Communication Association Conference in Chicago, one of which will focus on child sexual abuse.

**Jenifer Taylor's** article, "Warming a Chilly Classroom," appeared in the Feb. 1997 issue of the American Society of Engineering Educators' Prism magazine. The article focused on gender differences in the engineering classroom.

**Linda Underhill** recently learned that her book of essays, "The Unequal Hours: Moments of Being in the Natural World," has been accepted for publication by the University of Georgia Press. The essays examine the significance of the natural world close to home.

## From the Editor

Welcome to the first issue of the *Alphadelphian*.

I am creating the *Alphadelphian* with Karen Porter's guidance, as my senior honors thesis. I am very thankful for her assistance, for through our weekly meetings and various other mini-conferences, she has given me invaluable information and advice for the newsletter.

The idea was actually suggested to me by my advisor, Sharon Hoover, and I am very thankful she thought of it. So far the newsletter has been a lot of work, but at the same

time it has been very rewarding, especially to see the newsletter developing from just an idea to an actual, physical newsletter.

Also I would like to thank Cara Stein, a senior communication studies and computer science major, who has also helped me immeasurably by answering all of my tedious computer and Quark Express questions.

Unfortunately I am only going to be here for one more semester, however, so at that point someone else (or several people) will be needed to take over production of the newsletter. This could be a Women's Studies minor or

a communication studies major interested in getting public relations or journalism experience. A student does not necessarily need to be either of the above, however; just an interest in being involved is enough. If you are interested, please contact Karen Porter or myself, at the phone number or the email address listed on page 2.

Please share the newsletter with your friends and let us know what you think (contact Karen Porter or me for more copies if necessary). And above all, I hope you enjoy reading this first issue of the *Alphadelphian*.

-Megan Allen

## Alphadelphian, cont.

obstacles women face today may be different than they were in the 1800s, but they still exist nonetheless. The idea of the *Alphadelphian* still has a place in the Alfred University community.

The name, the *Alphadelphian*, honors Abigail Allen, and in a small way recognizes the important work she began.

-Megan Allen



# Are You a Feminist?

To gather responses to this question, email was sent to a nonrandom sample of 55 staff and faculty members from across the University. Also an email request was sent to the honors distribution list, to get responses from students of many different majors and years. Of the 36 responses, 23 people said they were feminists, 6 said they were not feminists, and 7 were unclear or said they weren't sure if they were feminists.

## Yes

"I am a feminist because I support working towards equal rights for women and combating discrimination and prejudice based on gender. I consider it a subsection of supporting human rights and equality for everyone." -Megan Park, senior history major

"In the macrocosmic realm, because I am an advocate for women's rights. In the microscopic realm, because I have or have had a grandmother, a mother, a sister, a daughter, an aunt, and a best friend." -Susan Mayberry, professor of English

"I strive to be fair, egalitarian, and sensitive with all I share space with, without regard to race, gender, sexual preference, species, trophic level in the food chain, etc." -Diane Cox, associate professor of sculpture

"Yes, of course I am! To me that is like asking me if I am pro-female ... I have no negative association with the term feminist." -Pat Codispoti, head coach of women's soccer, softball and assistant professor of physical education.

"Yes, assuming a 'feminist' is one who is sensitive to the abilities and ambitions of women." -President Edward G. Coll Jr.

"I am a feminist because I have a mother who understood her own exclusion from the richness of life and has had her potential walled up in the home she had to make.

I am a feminist because I have a

daughter who will not have doors closed to her but instead will open her own brilliant way. I am a feminist because I have a father and brothers who miss half the vision of humanity.

I am a feminist because I have a son who needs to grow to hear and experience ideas from all people, not just half of the human race. I am a feminist because it is right and inspiring and a fine way to live life and respond to the world around me. I am a feminist because I am a woman. I am a feminist because it is the closest I can come to truth."

-Becky Prophet, professor of theatre

**"Am I a feminist? Of course. A feminist works toward equal rights for all people. How could a person choose to be anything else?"**  
-Gail Walker, professor of psychology

"I think feminism is mostly about the rights of women to choose their own destinies—to be in charge of their own fates, and have the same opportunities to pursue these things." -Robyn Flesher, Secretary, Conferences and Special Events

"To me a feminist is someone who supports women and thinks they should have the same rights and privileges as men, no more, no less.

[I hate it] when people say 'I'm not a

feminist because those feminists are all a bunch of crazy lesbian men-haters!' Why do these people insist on stereotyping all feminists because of the actions of a few women?" -Stephanie Webster, freshman English major

"Most definitely! I am a feminist who loves men, who thinks that equality is stupid (men and women are inherently different ... we should seek to complement each other and appreciate our VALID differences), who shaves my legs, and who loves being a woman." -Jessi Gottlieb, senior liberal arts major

"I am a feminist because I believe women are not given the same rights, privileges, and opportunities as men, even in the United States.

I believe that while we humans have drives and instincts that we inherited from our nonhuman primate ancestors, we also have the ability, and thus the responsibility, to consider the consequences of our actions and behave morally. For men to interact with women without considering women's rights, privileges and opportunities to be equal to their own is immoral." -James Blauth, assistant professor of biology

"I believe that being a woman is a perfectly good thing, that we can be strong, capable, weak, cowardly, intelligent, silly, childish and mature, i.e., we're human." -Wyndi Anderson, senior psychology major

"I try to treat men and women equally, and I expect them to do the same. This is especially important to me, as I am a woman struggling to survive in the men's world of physics and math. Maybe I'm a kind of 'separate but equal' person: the genders are equal but not equivalent." -Andria Schwartz, junior physics major

"I didn't use to say that I was a feminist, because I thought that meant I was privileging women. My stance was that men are bound and confined by the prescripts for their gender, too, and that we all



# Why or Why Not?

deserve respect and freedom ...

However, I now proudly say that I am a feminist. It is not an exclusionary term, and I believe in all its precepts. I wish it didn't have such a bad rep, but I refuse to be victim to that bad press by denying that I'm a feminist." -Laura Kaplan, senior track II major

"If you are using the traditional definition of feminism, that women should have equal rights and opportunities, then I certainly consider myself a feminist. I also believe that we continue to have deficits. In fact that is why I believe that legislation like Title IX remains important." -Jerry Brody, dean of students and vice president for Student Affairs

"Am I a feminist? AM I A FEMINIST?! Of course. I'm proud to call myself a feminist, because I see the word as meaning one who represents fairness and equality and dignity for EVERYONE." -Vicki Eaklor, professor of history

"If a feminist is one who advocates political, social and economic equality of men and women, then, yes, I am a feminist.

I feel my best role as a feminist is being a role model as a female Ph.D. and as a female Museum Director. For example, I do not attend meetings specified for women museum directors, but I do attend the (almost all male) museum directors meetings to which I am invited. I do the best I can regardless of my gender, but proud of my gender, nonetheless." -Margaret Carney, director, International Museum of Ceramic Art at Alfred

"I believe that women should have equal rights to do whatever a man does. I can best display this through athletics. Women should have the same amount of opportunities as men do when it comes to scholarships, contests, equipment, programs and so on. However, I don't feel that the men should lose things just so that women can become equal in opportunities. Don't take away, ADD." -Gary Aldrich, head men's and women's cross country/track and field coach

"I see feminism as the recognition of women as a part of our world, equally powerful and beautiful as men ... in all areas of thought, perspective and place ... unique and equal at the same time." -Susan Caligaris, assistant professor of dance

## No

"No, 'cause I'm for equality." -Jay Weisberger, freshman communication studies major

**"No, I am not a feminist. I feel no need to defend or stand up for other members of my gender. Every man or woman for him or herself."**

**-Anonymous**

"I do not believe in being a feminist. You do what you want to do, and don't take any 's-t' from anyone. You can be feminine and powerful, and people will only oppress you if YOU LET THEM." -Rachel Kulp, junior business administration major

"I am not a feminist (and yes you can have male feminists) because I believe that the common term, feminist, includes being active in demonstrations or organizations for equal rights." -Jamie Rigoni, junior computer science major

"I am NOT a feminist. I believe that as a woman, I should be treated and respected equally to men in society and the

workplace, but I do not agree with the politicizing that the feminist movement has given to the issue. I do not believe in affirmative action. I also do not believe that the feminist movement has done much to help me personally. In fact, it may have done more harm than good." -Connie Beckman, director of computer services

## Not sure?

"Only when I'm menstruating." -Corey Fecteau, freshman art major

"I am a biologist so, for me, there is no patriarchy and no feminism, only evolution. Over evolutionary time, the role of the two sexes will continue to evolve. As intelligence and technology become the dominant driving forces in human evolution, gender will play no significant role in human behavior.

I would further speculate that in the near future humans will merge physically with their technology to evolve a new species as different from Homo Sapiens as we are from chimpanzees.

But of course we live in the now and right now gender is not a factor in my thinking when I consider the abilities and potential of any person. Am I a feminist?" -Alan Goldstein, professor and chair of biology

"I have not been active, either for or against the feminist movement. However, I do believe that men and women should be granted the same rights." -Bill Dillon, director of physical plant

"Am I a feminist? I don't know. Do I want all individuals to be treated fairly? Yes. Do I think all individuals are treated fairly? No. Is there a white male culture that dominates our life? Yes. Is this white male culture 'bad'? Yes and no. Should this culture be changed? Yes. Will it change? Not in our lifetime. Will the world ever make sense? Not until women rebel against pantyhose and high heels and men ride side saddle." -Frank Duserick, professor of business and administration



# 6 Unearthing AU's Roots

One could say that Susan Strong was skeptical of Alfred's history.

Her curiosity as to whether or not Alfred University is actually the second oldest coeducational institution in the United States led her to research the topic for her doctoral dissertation in 1989, Strong said.

"I had seen it repeated and repeated... and wondered if it were true," she explained.

In addition, she said she wanted to find out what the environment at AU was like in the beginning for women—was it conservative or liberal?

Strong's search took her to the archives in Herrick Library, where she researched materials from the late 1800s, the period during which AU was founded. She read "everything," joked Strong, including letters, diaries, literary society minutes and programs.

The research took her approximately six years, she explained, with another three or four years spent writing the 510-page dissertation.

At the conclusion of her research, Strong found that common knowledge is true; AU is arguably the second old-

est coeducation institution in the United States. More notably, however, she also discovered that AU's early environment was "genuinely [unusual]," in that it was a very liberal envi-

**"Abigail and Jonathan were feminists—not just nice to women—there were feminist beliefs in place."**

**-Susan Strong**

ronment for women, she said.

Most surprising to her were the attitudes of Abigail Allen, a professor at AU, and her husband Jonathan Allen, a professor and the second president of AU, she said.

"Abigail and Jonathan Allen were

feminists—not just nice to women—there were feminist beliefs in place," she explained.

This was "very unusual" since most educators were very conservative on women's issues at that time, she also said.

Strong said we should all take pride in AU's history, and remember our history. "Our history has shaped our identity; it connects us to the people who came before us, and those who will come after," she explained.

Strong said she is currently trying to publicize AU's history through her Bergren Forums held this semester and last semester. Another idea to make people aware of the history would be a video that could be used by the Alumni Office or Admissions, suggested Strong.

"Alfred has lost the knowledge of its history [before] and it could happen again," Strong said.

Currently Strong has started checking up on another piece of common knowledge in Alfred—was AU actually named after King Alfred?

**-Megan Allen**

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## *Fall Semester Women's Studies Roundtables*

12:20 to 1:10 p.m. in the Knight Club, Powell Campus Center

**Sept. 5:** "Vixens, Clowns, Pushy Broads, Perky Blondes and Housewives: Media Portrayal of Women in the Dawning of the New Millennium," presented by Robyn Goodman. Robyn discussed how women are portrayed by the mass media and concluded that media portrayals of women still have a long way to go before they accurately and fairly present women.

**Oct. 3:** "Josiah Allen's Wife: A Loud and Disrespectful 19th Century Woman's Voice," presented by Carol Burdick and Becky Prophet. Marietta Holley wrote a series of very popular novels with a rural N.Y. state farm wife as the heroine in the late 1800s. C.B. and Becky read excerpts to show the tone and flavor of the feminist writing.

**Nov. 7:** "Doctor Doria Shafic in Her Two Books, "Women and Religious Rights" and "The New Woman," presented by Zakia Robana. Zakia discussed Dr. Shafic, an activist who worked for women's political power in Egypt.

**Dec. 5:** "The Lure of Buddha and Blavatsky: Women's Search for an Egalitarian Spirituality in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany," presented by Sandra Singer. Sandra will examine several alternative religions and spiritual movements which seemed to offer equality for women in late 19th century Germany. She will also look at the representation of those religions and spiritual movements in popular fiction and a number of journals.



# News from the Minors

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## Class of '98:

✓ **Megan Allen** is co-coordinator of the Women's Issues Coalition and editor of the *Alphadelphian*.

Megan interned this summer at *Blue Jean* magazine in Rochester. *Blue Jean* is a feminist magazine for teen girls which has no advertising, no fashion spreads and no make-up tips.

Also Megan worked at Arby's this summer, as a shift manager.

✓ **Melissa Cianciulli** is currently working on an independent study for her Women's Studies minor, an analysis of first ladies.

This summer Melissa interned part-time with a lawyer who works in family law in West Haven, Conn. There she assisted the lawyer with many duties, including writing briefs and case studies.

Melissa also worked part-time over the summer teaching children's swimming lessons.

Melissa participated in the "Washington Semester Program" last spring. Through the program she interned for Senator Christopher Dodd and took classes at American University in Washington, D.C.

✓ **Jessica Greeley** presented her paper, "Battered Women, Shattered Lives: Domestic Violence Intervention Strategies in a Rural County," Oct. 4 at the New York State Sociological Association's 45th Annual Conference held at Mohawk Valley Community

College in Rome.

Jessica traveled a lot over the summer. She went to Ireland for six weeks, touring with a friend and staying with family members. Then she came back to the United States, and worked at a daycamp in the Bronx for over a month.

At the end of the summer Jessica traveled back overseas, spending three weeks as a nanny in Italy.

✓ **Cheryl Hurst** presented a paper based on her summer experiences at the Juvenile Detention Facility in Rockville, Md. at the Oct. 4 New York State Sociological Association's Annual Conference in Rome. At the detention facility Cheryl was a teacher's assistant, teaching juveniles English and health information.

Last May Cheryl was one of 80 women from across the United States chosen to attend "Women As Leaders," an intensive two-week academic seminar in Washington, D.C. There Cheryl attended panel discussions on women in all spheres of society, including women in the media, in government and in the health fields.

✓ **De Anne Smith** is co-coordinator of the Women's Issues Coalition.

This summer De Anne did research with Robin Arian, a Women's Studies minor who graduated last year, at ACCORD in Belmont. De Anne was a research assistant for Karen Porter and William Hall's project on the criminal justice response to domestic violence.

Also De Anne, who lived on campus at the Honors House for the summer, worked at Herrick Library and for Larry Greil, professor of sociology and health policy. According to De Anne, she was Greil's "data slave."

## Class of '99:

✓ **Cariann Colman** is finishing up her course work for her minor this semester, and thinking of an independent study project, possibly having to do with women's literature.

Cariann worked full-time as a secretary at a school district on Long Island this summer.

✓ **Tirsa Nieves** worked at the Christian Summer Learning Program in N.Y. City this summer. There she tutored 5 - 10 year olds in reading, writing, spelling and math. Tirsa also took a biology course at Lehman College in N.Y. City.

## Class of 2000:

✓ **Courtney Fleming** interned this summer at the Pauline Evans Public Library in Irondequoit. Courtney's internship was connected to her future career goal of being a librarian.

## Class of 2001:

✓ **Heather Kool** lived at home in Arkport this summer. There she spent a lot of time doing creative sewing projects, including making a bag out of men's ties.

*Meghan Mercier*

## Women's Studies Course Offerings Spring '98

WST 105 001	Women In Society	4	Eaklor V	3:20-5:10 MW
WST 206 001	Poetry Workshop	2	Burdick C	4:20-5:10 MW
WST 348 001	Soc of Families	4	Porter K	10:20-11:10 MTWF
WST 361 001	American Women:	4	Ostrower G	8:00-9:15 MW
	History and Herstory			9:20-10:10 Th
WST 450 1-15	Independent Study			HTBA



Martha Vicinus (front center), Eliza M. Mosher Distinguished University Professor of English, Women's Studies and History and chair of English at the University of Michigan, was the speaker for the annual Russell Lecture sponsored by the Division of Human Studies on Oct. 8. Her talk was titled "Understanding Dress Codes: Women Who Dressed As Men, 1660-1960." On the morning of Oct. 9 Vicinus further discussed her research at a brunch for Women's Studies faculty and students. Some of those attending were, from left, Robyn Goodman, Lorraine Crowe, Vicki Eaklor, Karen Porter, Gail Walker and Irene Belyakov.



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