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Date: May 27, 1971

To: Faculty Grievance Committee (Dr. Malik)

From: Joyce Nower

About: Supplement to Initial Notice of Grievance



I would like to make clear the reasons for my grievance by specific reference to the philosophy of confrontation which has dominated the Board of the Women's Studies Program this past year, my own philosophy for facilitating the liberation of women, and the specific sequence of events which has led to my grievance.



I would also like to make clear the fact that I wish to be rehired by the Women's Studies Program in my original capacity as lecturer in the literature courses; and that, furthermore, my students this semester and last semester have given me extremely high evaluations in the areas of teaching competency and knowledge of subject matter. I would also repeat the fact that my grading policy has fallen within the guidelines set by the Faculty Senate.



From the inception of the Women's Studies Program, I supported and worked with the group of women students who meticulously and persistently developed the Program, presented it before the various college committees, and finally saw it instituted as a legitimate program on the San Diego State College campus. There was no doubt in our minds as to the importance of this effort to both the Women's Movement and to the world of knowledge. Each course was academically sound. Each course was also a vehicle for creating an awareness of Woman that had never before, to our knowledge, taken on this particular form. But we were also keenly aware of the limitations of such a program, based as it is on a college



Blaine  
Wilson  
M...

San Diego State College  
San Diego, California 92115

Date: May 21, 1971  
To: Faculty Development  
From: Joyce Foster

Subject: Appointment as Interim Director of the Center for Women's Studies

I would like to make clear the reasons for my resignation by specific reference to the philosophy of the Board of Trustees which was adopted in 1967. I would like to make clear the reasons for my resignation by specific reference to the philosophy of the Board of Trustees which was adopted in 1967. I would like to make clear the reasons for my resignation by specific reference to the philosophy of the Board of Trustees which was adopted in 1967.

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campus, apart from the community, apart from the daily lives of large groups of women who live on the edge of survival. With these thoughts in mind, and with the additional understanding of the potential limitations on Program autonomy within an institution, we, nonetheless, situated as we were on a college campus, developed the Academic Component or Women's Studies Program first. (I will discuss the over-all concept of the Center for Women, now called the Center for Women's Studies and Services later on.) At no time did we make public statements about our being "co-opted" because we understood from the beginning the realities of working within an institution, and to talk about "co-optation" would have been mere political rhetoric. We did not create such a program, work hard for it, and then proceed to jeopardize its very existence by "bad mouthing" it in speeches and in professional journals around the country. However, in the New University Conference Papers #3, Roberta Sapper and Barbara Kessel, both instructors <sup>and Board members</sup> in the Women's Studies and Program, and NUC organizers, have co-authored an article, written while the Program was in its infancy at the beginning of the <sup>fall</sup> ~~spring~~ semester, in which they state that the Women's Studies Program at SDSU was in danger of "corporate control of the curricula," due to the fact ~~that~~ of San Diego State College <sup>seed</sup> funding. This was not the case then, nor is it the case now. I openly disagreed with this point of view. And for this political non-conformity, I have not been rehired by the WSP.

Now, let me discuss further the legitimate difference of opinion I have with certain influential members of the WS Board concerning the philosophy of confrontational politics. To have



a philosophy, as they do, of confrontational politics is to build a self-destruct mechanism into every program or service that might meet the needs of some people. In my view, confrontation is an historical political technique, not a philosophy or a fundamental principle to be used indiscriminately, particularly when what is at stake is a program or service, such as a women's studies program. It is for this legitimate difference of opinion, for this "political non-conformity," that I have ~~been~~<sup>not</sup> been rehired by the Board of the Women's Studies Program.

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To state it another way, I do not agree with the politics of confrontation enunciated in the NUC explanation of "What Is an Organizer," handed out by Women's Union on December 5, 1970. and given to them by one of the NUC organizers on the WS Board, Barbara Kessel or Roberta Salper. Let me quote one paragraph:

The NUC organizer at a community college creates (my underlining) conflicts between school authorities and faculty or students; between boards of education and communities; between corporate criminals and victims. For he knows that only in a conflict situation do issues become clear, does liberal rhetoric lie exposed, and does the mobilization of a powerful movement become clear.

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At no point in this two-page pamphlet are we told why we are to organize, what our humanistic goals are, if any, and the possibility that confrontation can often cloud over vital issues. Nor is there any suggestion of the fact that people's needs might well be met by some program and that to "blow up" that program for the sake of "radicalizing" a few people ~~is~~ is sheer cynicism. This two-page leaflet also by-passes completely the entire area of meeting human needs by creating alternatives sometimes within, sometimes outside of existing institutions.



But it is for this "political non-conformity" that I, as a vocal member of the Board, aware of political trends and philosophies, have not been rehired by the Board of the WSP, dominated as it has been by the politics of confrontation.

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Another point of contention has been my continued support of the Center for Women's Studies and Services, earlier called the Center for Women and then the Center for Women's Studies. The Center was the over-all ~~concept~~ framework within which the Ad Hoc Committee for Women's Studies was working. I have supported it from the beginning because it embodies the philosophy of meeting the needs of women, both on campus and in the community, by creating facilitating services ~~such~~ as, for example, a Women's Studies Program, a Publications Component, <sup>o</sup> Day Care Centers, a Downtown Storefront Component, etc. ~~and~~ **I** presented these services as interlocking and varied, a model miniature society, as it were, which would be participated in on all levels by women and which would provide the much-needed project-orientated outreach into the community, which an Academic program alone could not provide, and which created a stable, non-transient paid personnel for whom the Center would mean a full-time commitment, not a semester by semester interest. All of these factors and more have fostered my continuing support of CWSS.

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Furthermore, I most emphatically believe that diversity of persons ~~and~~ commitment in a growing Women's Movement is a sign of health. But



Jackie Wertz, Chairwoman of the Women's Studies Program does not share my enthusiasm for diversity. At a WS Board meeting (and this meeting was taped), she stated that the reason Joyce Nower is not being rehired is because the Women's Studies Board has a certain political perspective and by supporting CWSS, she is working against that political perspective.

The question arises at this point: what is one joining when one becomes a member of the Board of the Women's Studies Program? If one is in fact joining a political party with a single political perspective, then do the several hundred women who enter the classes each semester know that they are being represented on the Board by a single political perspective? The women in my one o'clock WS class did not know this until Jackie Wertz made a statement similar to the one above before the entire class several weeks ago.

Now, what is the specific sequence of events which has led to my grievance, as stated in my May 17 memo to Dr. Malik and the Faculty Grievance Committee. What follows is the list of misrepresentations and inaccuracies which have led me to take this step.

1. The corrected Minutes of March 4 read: "Judy reported that in addition to all present faculty being rehired all the applications had been looked at and that we were trying to bring in more than one woman."
2. On March 8, Monday, I attended an AS Finance Board meeting to support the disbursement of AS funds which had been allocated the previous year to the seven-component Center for Women (now CWSS). My personal support of CWSS was objectionable to the influential members of the Board, which had disaffiliated from CWSS and were no longer interested in implementing the original complete program, and now seemed only interested in confrontational politics.
3. On Thursday, March 11, the Ad Hoc Personnel Committee of the Women's Studies Board met before faculty requests were due to be turned in (Monday, March 15) and before the Thursday night Board meeting, and decided to change



the March 4 decision by not rehiring me.

4. That evening, after having by chance discovered in the late afternoon that I was not be rehired, I received at the Board meeting a sheet of paper with the names of the rehired and new faculty. My name, of course, was not on the list.
5. The reasons that I was not rehired, as reported in the Minutes from that March 11th meeting, were as follows: "Reasons that Joyce is not suggested to be rehired by the Personnel Comm.: 1. Elsie Adams has been hired by the Comp. Lit. dept. and Nick Nichols said that they would let Elsie teach a "women in lit." course in Women's Studies (not from WSP allocations). 2. We need one new faculty who could teach comparative cultures and with Elsie as a gift we could afford another new person to teach the course.... The Curriculum Comm. was just informed by Harry Ruja that if the two new courses (Comp. Cult. and Economic Systems) aren't offered by next fall they'll be dropped. ~~Finding this out, the Personnel Comm. was notified. They are~~

As a result of making a few phone calls and asking a few questions, I discovered that none of the above reasons were valid. Courses that were not instituted by next fall would not be "dropped," and the Comp. Lit program was not giving the WSP any free personnel, etc. In other words, these were technical reasons - none of them valid under close scrutiny - given to cover up the real reason for my not being rehired, given publically on at least two occasions by the Chairwoman of the WSP, Jackie Wertz, to the effect that I was not being rehired because of my political nonconformity.

6. ~~Other~~ <sup>Another</sup> point of interest: The question was raised by my students as to what other criteria was to be used for rehiring, since those above did not hold water. Also, they wanted to know, what influence did the students in the classes have in the rehiring or hiring of personnel. The upshot was that a full two weeks after I was not rehired by the WS Board, that Board came up with a Personnel Committee Criteria for Hiring and Rehiring sheet. (around March 24)
7. A footnote to the above: As of today, May , I have not received a letter from the WS Board stating that I am not to be rehired by the Program.

There is one more point I should mention. And that is that I have specific information of faculty using the classroom as a political form in which to discredit me. And I also know of students who were taken aside by Barbara Kessel and were most unethically and unprofessionally propagandized against me.

In summary let me say that my dismissal from the WS Program was for my political non-conformity: I do not agree with ~~the~~ the philosophy of confrontational politics, nor



do I agree with ~~the self-destruct~~ what logically follows from it:  
 the self-destruct mechanism which is built into services created  
 to fulfill needs. I think it is cynical politics. I do not agree  
 that the Board of the WSP should have a single political perspec-  
 tive, but rather a varied one, one that is truly representative of  
 the students. ~~if the class~~ <sup>also</sup> I strongly disagree with public  
 "bad mouthing" of a program which, ~~particularly~~ <sup>particularly</sup> in its infancy, needs  
 all the support it can get. ~~I feel~~ <sup>Finally,</sup> I think that the technical  
 reasons given for not rehiring me ~~are~~ were and are a smokescreen  
 to cover up the fact of political non-conformity.

<sup>trust</sup>  
 I ~~know~~ that these facts which I am prepared to support with doc-  
 uments and witnesses will be sufficient for the Faculty Grievance  
 Committee to render a just decision.

Respectfully yours,

Joyce Nower

I think it is a "hot-house" brand  
 of politics, which does not take into  
 account the real needs of people.  
 And furthermore, ~~it is~~ <sup>I think it is</sup> ~~because of~~  
 this a cynical politics.



As a result of making a few phone calls and asking a few questions, I discovered that none of the above reasons ~~held any water~~ were valid. Courses that were not instituted would not have to be dropped, the English Department was not giving the WSP any "free" personnel, etc. In other words, these were technical reasons - none of them valid under close scrutiny - given to cover up the real reason of political non-conformity, given in public on at least two separate occasions by Jackie Wertz, the Chairwoman of the WSP.

- 6. One additional point of interest: The WSP Personnel Criteria Sheet for Hiring and Rehiring was not prepared in final form until after March 24, a full two weeks after ~~my not being~~ the occasion of my not being rehired.

The question was raised by my students as to what other criteria was to be used for rehiring. It was not until a full two weeks after I was not rehired that the WSP came up with a Personnel Comm. Criteria for Hiring and Rehiring sheet. ~~(after March 24)~~

There is one other point I should mention. And that is that I have specific information of faculty using the classroom as a political forum to discredit me. And I also know of ~~one~~ students who were taken aside by Barbara Kessel and were most unethically and unprofessionally propagandized against me.

I know these facts which I am prepared to support with evidence will be sufficient for the Faculty Grievance Committee to render a just decision.