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**Title:** Why a Women's Center?

**About the Author:** I am a mother, a mate, a massage therapist, an inquisitor, a friend, and last but certainly not least, a student. I returned to school after several years to earn my Bachelors Degree in Kinesiology to broaden my knowledge of the human body. I have always been fascinated by the body and its unique, yet intricate design. My future plans include continuing my education by attending a graduate program which focuses on children. The ethnographic research that was done in this class will provide a unique and insightful set of tools to utilize in my future research.

**Keywords:** Women's Center, Office of Women's Programs (OWP), Women's services, resources, and counseling, Female body and identity, Gender inequity, Physical space, agency, and control

**Abstract:** Control of space, particularly at the University of Illinois, influences the movement of the human body and the resources the University provides for the student body. The current Office of Women's Programs provides a large variety of services to the UIUC student body. However, in order to address all components of women's needs as well as issues of gender inequity, a Women's Center is necessary on campus. This study attempts to determine the overall student body awareness of the services provided by the Office of Women's Programs and the limitations that affect the expansion of the OWP to a Women's Center. Three interviews with OWP personnel, an observation of the OWP setting, an observation of an OWP event, two campus surveys, and archival research were conducted to obtain the results. An analysis of the data yielded that a lack of physical space, personnel, programming, and resources exists at the OWP. The funding and promotional work for a Women's Center is deficient on

campus. The student body awareness of the OWP is minimal. One of thirty-three undergraduate students had knowledge of the OWP. The expansion of the OWP into a Women's Center is a powerful step towards offering the UIUC student body a confidential and controlled physical space in an environment where sex as a cultural marker is expanding. This study provides preliminary information on the status quo of the OWP and reasons for expansion, which will contribute to future research on similar topics.

**Response I:** The body is a complex structure that requires much thought regarding its role to ourselves, others and society. There are several authors that Howson refers to in order to give us the reader, a better more informed perspective into what we think the body is, and how it is used and further understood in society. She also draws from scholar sociologists and their work with key terms, views, and real case studies to help relate the reader to the work. In doing so we can successfully start to interpret, understand and come up with our own beliefs by associating specific experiences to accept or reject the notions of the author and sociologists. Can we correlate the information into our own lives to grasp a sociologists' view?

In order to do so we must first ask ourselves several questions. What do we perceive our body to be? What contributes to the perception of us? How does the environment affect our body? Can our bodies affect the environment and others around us? What stand point do we accept, a Cartesian view, or that of a phenomenologists approach? Is it possible to tie the beliefs together to conclusively debate the different roles of the body? In answering some of these questions, we can effectively begin to relate and probe deeper into the connection Howson makes to that of the body and society.

The text states that we in fact "are bodies, our sense of who we are is inseparable from our own body" (Howson 12). So who are we and how can we define ourselves? Some may perceive themselves by social standards such as money, where we live, or who we call our friends. Others may define themselves by their own personal accomplishments, goals that they have successfully completed, or triumphs that they may have overcome. Do our bodies reflect that of these definitions? Some would argue that indeed the clothes that we wear and the cars that we drive make us who we are. The latter peoples' bodies may show signs of such degrees. For example, a person who works sixty plus hours a week and also successfully raises several children may look exhausted. But if these same people portray the opposite will they be perceived differently by others and therefore change who they are? How much do other people's perceptions affect the body? Howson refers to a stigma in her book. This may imply "moral

connotations, since people may be reduced in the eyes of the beholders to a social or physical attribute” (Howson 23). If someone is judged by others they tend to feel hurt and ashamed which may lead to less interaction with others and more loneliness. Howson brings up research completed by Arlie Hochschild regarding sensations and emotions with people in the service industries among others. From personal experience I can certainly agree with Hochschild’s research and term “surface acting” (Howson 32). You can’t always say and look how you feel if a customer is a complete jerk. You must smile and grit and bare it in order to maintain virtual social identity. That is “normative expectations of who and what a person ought to be in a given social context or encounter” (Howson 20). In doing so, we aren’t changing who we are but we are momentarily putting on a facade in order to sustain our own composure and more importantly our job.

While we live our lives subconsciously following all these unspoken rules and normality’s are we helping or hindering our bodies and the idea of what our ‘self’ represents to us and everyone else? I believe knowing they self and having confidence in yourself and beliefs essentially makes the body equally important as the mind and spirit.

**Response II:** Chapter one focuses on a hair salon in Long Island. Gimlin interviewed the owner, her staff and their clientele, as well as made observations. She concluded that women go to the salon to maintain an appearance that they have of themselves. Often times their priorities come before their hair. She claims that the woman she interviewed wanted to portray a certain image associated with their profession or age rather than what they wish they could do with their hair. The hairdressers play peculiar role in that they feel they are more knowledgeable about beauty and style but often times they don’t tell the clientele that the style is wrong for them or out of date for instance. She makes reference to the fact that the hairdressers are in a lower class and rely too much upon the return of the clientele and also that they form a bond with them making them pseudo friends. But ultimately she claims that, beauty is determined within social classes and cultural differences (48). In the third chapter she interviews a plastic surgeon and twenty of his clients. The women she interviewed ranged in procedures from face lifts, nose jobs, breasts to liposuction. She concludes in her work that these women don’t go through with the surgeries to please anyone but themselves but also adds that they are making their decision based on the ideas of ethnic beauty and a woman’s worth is judged by her beauty (106). She refers to

a “norm” that these women compare themselves to in order to become more appealing.

These readings are very similar to the many discussions we have held in class about the self image, body and how it is perceived. The women getting their hair done by a professional feel that it is a necessity in order to maintain a self image of what they feel is age appropriate and directly related to their class as working women. The women getting the surgery I feel, place a lot of importance on what they think is the norm how people perceive them to be. As we have previously discussed, what is normal? Moreover, how can you define beauty and what is beautiful? Another correlation to previous discussions lies in the spaces she choose to observe which were all female based therefore it personifies the judgment of women.

I am curious as to the idea of the right and wrong way to wear hair for men and women. Although she only observed and discussed women, I would like to discuss the concept that class plays a role into hair styles. I would also like to further discuss the idea of plastic surgery as a last result to the ends of some women’s constant need for perfection. Going under the knife seems to be a solution that repeats itself once it’s performed successfully. At what point is enough, enough?

**Proposal Pitch:** Here are some notes for my proposal. It's just an outline i plan to use during my power point presentation.

Slide 1:

Imagine if you will the coming months with spring and summer right around the corner. I know it’s difficult considering its cold as death outside, feels like Antarctica. But CU gets extremely hot and humid.

Slide 2:

Now consider the heat while walking, or riding your bike around campus. I for one have had classes from one end of the campus to another and have found myself pretty dehydrated. There have been times where I have come onto campus and forgotten to bring money, or have been sitting on the quad without a bottle of water.

Slide 3:

Now you may be asking yourself, “Where is she going with this?” “How does this relate to me?”

Slide 4:

Last semester I actually thought of the idea. And while brainstorming for this project I remembered the idea.

Slide 5:

Why doesn’t the campus have outdoor drinking fountains??

I thought that if it were actually nicer outside we could set up a table with cold cups of water and ask students and faculty if this were a drinking fountain would they utilize it. Considering it’s still pretty brutal out there we can just conduct

interviews in doors of course.

Slide 6:

The majority of them could be on the main quad while others strategically placed on campus.

Slide 7:

If we chose this idea we could possibly make change to the University.

Slide 8:

And this could be us, enjoying water on a hot afternoon.

Slide 9:

The proposal roughly would be the following:

- Interview Dr. Herman (UIUC's Chancellor)
- Interview Facilities and Services Advisory Committee
- Interview students and faculty
- Research cost and maintenance
- Possible locations

See where this research project takes us!!

Slide 10:

Some research questions include:

- Has the University ever considered public outdoor drinking fountains?
- How much would they cost to install?
- How much maintenance would they require?
- Would there be an increase in student fees or tuition?
- What procedures would we take to initiate a serious response from the University?
- Who ultimately makes the decision?

Slide 11:

- It would cost the University too much money to install and/or maintain the fountains.
- Students and faculty not interested

**Group Proposal/Plan:** **Why a Women's Center?**

**n: The Women's Programs:**

*The Office of Women's Programs (OWP) at the University of Illinois is responsible for improving the campus climate for women and developing and implementing programs that address women's issues and gender-related concerns. Working in collaboration with other UIUC units and community organizations, our office provides advocacy and support for women's concerns; initiates and sponsors educational and professional development programs for and about women; provides information, counsel, and advice to women seeking assistance; assists committees, departments, and offices seeking to enhance opportunities for women students, makes recommendations on policies of concern to women; increases sensitivity in the campus community to gender-based issues; and works to correct gender-based inequities.*

- <http://www.odos.uiuc.edu/women/about/history.asp>

**THE ISSUE**

The University of Illinois offers a wide variety of services to the women's student body through the Office of Women's Programs. Patricia Morey, Assistance Dean of Students and Director of the Women's Program, estimates the number of students that take the initiative to report Dating Abuse (one of the greater concerns the office focuses on) at less than ten percent. This low number of students seeking counseling brings up the broader question whether the UIUC student body is aware of the services that are offered to them by the program.

**THE PROBLEM**

As the Women's Programs is looking into opening a new center in order to do further outreach and promote awareness about these compelling issues, the question remains whether resources, staff and need exists for this expansion. By looking at the promotional work, the resources available, and the space provided, we want to discover how these aspects might lack in efficiency, how this influences the awareness students have about the existing office, and whether they see the need for a Women's Center.

**GOAL**

Perhaps by answering these questions, we can improve upon the original intentions and visions of the Office of Women's Programs. Through our research, we may provide a foundation for further insight

into women's needs on campus and the need for a facility to address women's issues.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

### **Micro-level:**

- What on-campus services do the Women's Programs offer? What do these services entail?
- How, and to what group of people, are these particular services targeted? Where does the Women's Programs distribute their brochures? Do they provide workshops/group counseling/individual counseling?
- Where does the Women's Programs receive their funding from? (UIUC, outside funding, etc.)
- Is their enough staff for the work demand? Is the office spacious enough and is it situated in a convenient /accessible location on campus?
- Are their demographic similarities between students who seek counseling? (gender, age, family background, etc.)
- What kind of promotional activities do these institutions engage in? (i.e. advertising, awareness campaigns, etc.)
- What are the incentives and motivations students report when they first seek counseling? Was the decision an individual choice?
- What are potential reasons why students refuse to seek counseling?
- Is the general UIUC student body aware of the existence of the Women's Programs?
- How does the UIUC student body feel about the Women's Programs? Do they feel like there is a need for such a program?
- Are their differences about the ideas/feelings about the Women's Programs between female and male students?
- Are there differences in awareness about the Women's Programs with regards to academic year? (Example: Does the time you have been a student affect knowledge/awareness?)

### **Macro-level:**

- Compared to the Office of Women's Programs, how could a potential Women's Center resolve problems (e.g. promotional work, financial resources, staff and space limitations) they are currently facing?
- To what extent is student safety, health and general wellbeing an issue the campus administration should be involved in, and to

what extent is it a private concern?

- How do campuses in other states deal with the issues at stake and what forms of awareness and promotion take place at these institutions?

## **RESEARCH**

### **Interviewing**

- With regards to qualitative research we would like to interview individuals that are working at the Office of Women's Programs.
- Further, we would like to design a short (quantitative) questionnaire for the UIUC student body, concerning awareness about the Office for Women's Programs and the need for it. The questionnaire will be handed out to a representative sample of students.
- If possible, we wish to do interviews/design a questionnaire (depending on approval of the office) with students that use the Office of Women's Programs in order to get a better understanding of their feeling about the space provided to them.

### **Library/Archives**

- We wish to get a better understanding about how women's issues have evolved over time and how the campus responded to the issues/wishes expressed by women. We plan on looking at the role feminist publications played in bringing about change in women's needs, as well as their possible role in eventually bringing about the Office for Women's Programs. Also, we want to look at the history of the office itself and changes that have been done throughout its existence. (e.g. When was it established? Why? etc.)

### **Observation**

- Along with interviews and research, observation at the Office for Women's Programs can provide vital information on the space itself, how the space is utilized, bodily interaction, and other experiences that can help us achieve our goal of providing for women's needs on the UIUC campus.

**Data I:** Research on the Office of Women's Programs was easily accessible with a wide array of detailed information. There were many avenues that could have been analyzed because of the extensive, consistent, and accurate archives that have

been filed. Ultimately, the decision to focus on the evolution of the office seemed appropriate for our own specific research. The central idea of the evolution, their specific goals, and also problems they faced ties into and plays an important role in our project.

Originally, the idea was formulated among a group of University of Illinois individuals advocating support for the Equal Rights Amendment. Their concerns lead them to initiate meetings which in turn lead them to be recognized as a campus group called, the University Woman's Caucus. On February 25, 1971 they were officially recognized by the University as said group. The document is a formal letter to the members of the group. The letter consists of several parts that include: news items, history, purpose, organization, officers, and goals. The documents are first hand written then typed on a type writer by the chairwoman or secretary. (I make mention because this later becomes a problem they seem to face).

The first page is the news items with a list of five things. First, they inform the reader that they have been officially recognized as a campus group. Second, a nomination has been made for an associate professor to be on the Faculty Advisory Committee therefore, any member with rank of instructor or higher, should vote. Third, the dues for the group are laid out. Anyone with an annual income over \$6,000 pays five dollars and members making less than \$6,000 a year will pay two. The fourth item is about the attached document that entails their organization and goals. Finally, the fifth item pertains to removing the anti-

nepotism rules from the University Statutes and practices. This meaning the hiring of family members, spouses in particular. They request written information about women who have been affected by these rules.

The following page begins with the history of the Caucus. During that time the Senate was debating the Equal Rights Amendments. Initially, they wanted to rally in efforts to back the Equal Rights Amendment, contact Senators regarding their support for the Amendment, as well as pursue the permanence of the organization and their goals.

Their main purpose specifically was the status of women at the University of Illinois. They intended to give support, conduct research, resolve issues, and to be hands on with instituting policies. Next the organization is discussed. Research and action committees are the main focus, who and when the committee will meet, officers elected, and policy guidelines to be created. The 1970-71 Executive Committee Officers are listed and they are made up of the Committee Heads and a Chairwoman.

Finally, eight goals are listed in paragraph form. In short, they are concerned with the anti-nepotism policy as stated previously. They are interested in resolving issues with salary for the Administration (most likely all women at that time). To establish permanent committees in order to deal with individual discrimination problems as well as affirmative actions cases. To stop the sexualizing of non-academic jobs and enforce appropriate pay that coincides with experience and

skill. They wanted to remove symbols on campus that depict women as unequal. They were concerned with expanding work and proper placement, educational opportunities and child care. Lastly, they wanted to get involved with the political and legal affairs in order to improve rights for women at a state and national level.

As you can imagine, being a woman while the Equal Rights Amendment was being debated was quite an extraordinary feat. Although, the Office of Women's Programs don't necessarily have the same specific goals many are similar and still prevalent today. The actual Office for Women's Recourses and Services was established in August 1975, which leads to the next document and their objectives.

They have fourteen goals established and typed out. The top of the document states that there is one full-time professional staff member and half secretarial staff. This document is more precise and specific in its design for students rather than staff. Their first objective is to improve services provided by Campus Affairs units to women students. They wanted to resolve issues and help with the needs of woman. They broke down categories of women to better assist with their needs (i.e. minority, married, divorced, single parent, etc.) To better work with Campus Affairs liaisons. To identify important people and departments that has programs or activities regarding women's concerns. To conduct symposiums, develop programs, provide information and support to women and increase funding. They wanted to establish awards for women. Provide advising, problem solving and assistance. Stay locally and nationally aware of women's

affairs. Develop a newsletter regarding said issues for students and faculty. Also establish a library and recourse materials of special interest to women. Locate outside funding. They wanted to keep lines of communication open with other departments. Lastly, gain information about other institutions and their pursuit of meeting women's needs in order to possibly incorporate them into the University of Illinois.

The central theme has always been about women. Seeing just how the ideas are formulated and grow from each document (throughout the years) is interesting and enlightening. Many of the ideas and goals are similar and just as crucial as they were thirty years ago. There seems to be a systematic problem that arises both historically and presently which is the need for adequate space, resources, and staff.

In February 1976, a letter was written in regards to the problem of time. This document was interesting because it stated that the Office for Women's Resources and Services (newly established) was having issues with inadequate staff and time. It seems they shared their secretarial staff with Veterans Affairs. The document goes into specific detail about what exactly is not being accomplished for the Office for Women's Resources and Services. There are six immediate things and then ten things for the coming months. At the end of the document the writer states that she has already set up an appointment with the person whom the letter is addressed and being sent to, to further discuss the

issues.

This certainly ties directly into the current issues that the Office of Woman's Program's are facing. I was unable to locate anything in regards to the follow up of this last document. I did however ask for a box with yearly summary reports in hopes that they could reveal more into the evolution and growth of this program. Unfortunately, the box was missing. I hope that it can be recovered for further research.

**Data II:** For my second data collection I conducted a survey to get some analytical data to either support or deny our hypothesis which states that among the students on campus there is an insufficient awareness of the Office of Woman's Programs. To achieve this I tried to collect data from a representative sample of the University. Unfortunately, time is a sensitive issue therefore I had to utilize my time and space accordingly. The first group of students I approached was my fellow classmates; fortunately they ranged in academic level from freshmen to seniors. The second sample was taken from graduate students. There were 30 participants total. 19 undergrads and 11 graduate students. I asked and received consent from all the individuals and analyzed the data accordingly.

Attached I have computed the quantitative data. I will discuss some of my questions and peoples' responses as well. First and foremost I was concerned about the people's awareness of the Office of Woman's Programs. I simply asked if they knew about the program and what services they provide. Astonishingly, not one undergrad was aware of the program. I found this interesting considering

all the recent publicity that has surrounded it in the last couple months. Personal opinions aside, though the undergrads weren't aware of the OWP's, most did however support the expansion of a Woman's Center. One undergrad male was opposed to the idea stating, "I was unaware of the Office of Woman's Programs, so it would be better to use the resources they already have." The undergrads that were in support for it also gave some feedback regarding other services they could provide for woman. A few mentioned the idea of career counseling. Others thought a fitness center would be useful. Other ideas were self help or body image services/groups, intramurals, social events, lectures and discussions, and last but not least academic and social support.

Of the 11 graduate students, 4 were aware of the OWP's and 2 were knowledgeable about the services they provided. The 2 male graduate students heard about the program through friends. One of the females, "read about it in a pamphlet we got as freshman in the dorms." The other learned about it through a community health class. The support for the expansion was felt by most grad students as well. They suggested, "more info for scholarships/fellowships, workshops for women in careers/workforce." Others suggested professional development and daycare. One male stated, "men's programs similar to those offered by the woman's center." The one trend I did notice was the fact that even though these people were aware of the office they didn't know where it was located.

In conclusion, I feel that our initial question about awareness of the Office of

Woman's Programs is a substantial and justified issue that they are facing. The data suggests that awareness is very low among our campus. It also suggests that students are in support of an expansion. I think that my data could have had better results had I explained what the office currently offers to women. I received many no answer (n/a) responses as well as people stating their lack of knowledge about the program. Therefore, they were unsure about what other services the OWP could provide if the expansion takes place. Below (attached) are two tables and a histogram that will further explain my data.

**Group Analysis:** **Why A Women's Center?**

Spaces control the movement of the human body, defining the numbers of individuals they fit and the behavior they tolerate. Resources whether monetary or intellectual build space in both a physical and atmospheric sense. The power of resources in the creation of space limits possibilities some might seek, while providing others with adequate capacity for mobility. "I wonder if I were comfortable," I ask myself while sitting in the Office of Women's Programs waiting for my opportunity to speak to the two advocates this office employs, Director Patricia Morey, and Program Coordinator Ross Wantland. The entrance displays no signs, just a receptionist expecting the visitor with a friendly yet inquiring welcome. The room is bright and bare, a maze of desks of the hodge-podge services the floor offers, some of them are related to the respective research topic, and others are not. The fact of having to report oneself controls

accessibility, disrupts anonymity and determines a notion of loss in self-agency regarding the visitors further movement. “States and agencies of the state exert considerable control over the movement of populations in time and space and encourage individuals to discipline themselves in compliance with state objectives” (Howson 11). Similar to Howson's observation, the third floor of the Turner Student Building posts an example for institutionalized forms of student counseling, reflecting the limitations these places experience due to the lack of appropriate funding.

The Office of Women's Programs provides a large variety of services to the UIUC student body. Rachel, an Intern at the office describes it as “everything falling under the umbrella of addressing gender inequity on campus.” The corresponding website suggests that these services entail crisis prevention, information, and referral, supportive counseling, individual advocacy, and support groups on issues such as Dating Abuse, Rape, Stalking, Sexual Harassment, Domestic Violence and Gender Discrimination. Indicated on the website yet not explicit is that, as Patricia Morey points out, students reporting their cases are most likely referred to the Counseling Center due to lack in staff and physical accommodation. Along with the two full-time staff members, the office employs a secretary, around eighty undergraduate peer educators, and three graduate assistants that each work a ten-hour week. Student fees and funding from the Illinois state budget are considered the two main sources for keeping the office alive, the latter being the bigger part. Both quality in service and the extent of outreach into the student

community, so Patricia Morey, rely on the limitations that are set by the availability of money, or rather, the lack there of. The space provided to the Women's Program's appears to fail in advocating the offices presence experienced by the campus community. According to Ross Wantland, sheer presence if not enough. Counseling requires effective communication and communication relies on trust, says Wantland. "They have to see our faces." Strangely, it appears that the program's capacity, although starkly limited in some aspects, is not exhausted to its full extent. External factors limit the portrayal of the employees' *actual social identity* (Howson 20) creating their incongruent *virtual social identity* experienced by the student body, or even worse, no image at all. Wantland determines that faces are needed as opposed to other forms of representation; he calls into account that there is a need for the two identities to coincide. The student's information about the office creates expectations that must be met in a potential encounter. A look at the offices establishment and the development over the past decades reveals that the services offered today closely resemble the initial ideas that effectuated its creation.

The University's archives reveal a surprisingly extensive amount of information about the Office of Women's Programs. The idea for the respective program was formulated among a group of University of Illinois individuals advocating support for the Equal Rights Amendment. Their concerns lead them to initiate meetings, which then resulted into their recognition as a campus group called, the University Woman's Caucus. On February 25, 1971 the group was officially

recognized by the University. Their main purpose was the status of women at the University of Illinois, and their intentions were focused on giving support, conducting research, resolving issues, and being hands on with instituting policies. Morey says that the purpose of the office today has not much changed from then, awareness programming, “events that would focus on making the campus aware of certain issues” and cultural programming, events that “celebrate women's culture” are, in addition to scholarships, still the two biggest components of the program; nevertheless “some of the issues have changed over time,” Morey says. The program's goals in the seventies dealt with an anti-nepotism policy, resolving concerns with salary for the Administration, and establishing permanent committees in order to deal with individual discrimination problems as well as affirmative actions cases in order to stop the sexualizing of non-academic jobs and enforce appropriate pay that coincides with experience and skill. Their intent on a larger scale was to get involved with the political and legal affairs in order to improve rights for women at a state and national level. The actual Office for Women's Recourses and Services was established in August 1975, with their goals being centered more on students rather than staff. The office created categories such as “minority”, “married”, “divorce”, and “single parent,” that were meant to improve resources, assisting women with their needs. The program's rich history heightens the respected need for a cultural center dedicated to women and is surprising in a sense as the development appears almost stagnant. Is the Women's Programs developing too slowly with regards to its importance, or does the past reveal something about the lacking need for such a

facility?

“One of the biggest obstacles I’ve seen so far is that folks think sexism is dead,” says Ross Wantland when being asked about what challenges the office faces in its attempts to create a Women's Center. The absence of adequate funding, resulting in a lack of student body awareness conceptualizes symptoms like these. A student conducted study shows that awareness about the existence of an office is low to almost absent. Out of thirty-three undergraduate students asked, only one individual reports having heard of the program. The research outcomes for graduate students resemble a comparably higher awareness. While sex does not appear to be a significant indicator for knowledge about the office, age and academic year seem to be important variables. The years spent on campus likely increased the potential for being targeted by promotional material or word of mouth. Is it the student’s responsibility to seek out support or is it the University’s responsibility to offer and promote programs and services related to women’s needs on campus? Who has agency in such a situation and what lines may be crossed when perusing an individual's privacy? Must the public, in this case the University administration, take charge? According to Howson, agency, “addresses the body's role in responding to and creating social worlds by giving meaning to the intended and unintended actions of others” (15). If the student body and the University construct agency in correspondence to the opposites' actions, then the safety of the student must be secured through a dominating agency on side of the Administration body.

Theoretically this appears to be a pressing point when considering an improvement in funding for the Office of Women's Programs to increase awareness. Only if awareness exists the individual is given the freedom to respond to these actions. Wantland occupies this solid perspective regarding the agency over the student body as the university's obligation. "I think that if folks are getting the messages that they shouldn't get help. [...] Just saying 'We're here. I had my door open for an hour' that's not enough. That's not access. Accessibility is really going to folks' communities and making connections." The employees' enthused attitudes appear hindered to transform into a larger idea by both limitations in resources and the fragility of the issues at stake. The message communicated by the program has to balance its imposing tone and the respect for the individual to decide over their own body. It has to take into account that an individual has already experienced a violation of their private sphere, and thus must avoid a double victimization by reinforcing the individual's notion as being powerless. According to Howson, in contemporary (popular) culture, the female body is a "troubled body," often perceived as a spectacle or fantasy (56). The female body experiences an awareness of being watched and hence sees itself as an object, which "shapes how women move through the physical environment" (Howson 59). If spatial arrangements can hinder the level of objectification and the notion of surveillance, the distinction between the physically assaulted and non-assaulted body becomes less visible, normalizing the victimized status of the former. Through normalization, cultural taboos might diminish and the experienced stress of reporting an issue of sexual violence could

be lowered.

Rachel points out that a clearer visibility of the Office of Women's Programs might solve issues of lack in general awareness and number of students reporting their cases. "It's really difficult for somebody who is a victim of sexual assault to report in the first place and, I think that one way expanded services could benefit students and possibly help people to report more is, [...] if the Office of Women's Programs, if *we* had a Women's Center that would be a lot more visible." Yet, what are the consequences for the individual if he/she allows the University to become the agent of his/her body? By taking agency, the administration body exerts considerable control over the movement of those requiring the Women's Programs' services through controlling both space and funding on campus. Hence the University must simultaneously respect the individual's privacy while offering space, information and support. If the University oversteps its role as an agent, the notion of control and the lack of the student to choose over their actions are in jeopardy. However, by not establishing a Women's Center on campus, the University is discouraging individuals to discipline themselves in agreement with its objectives. Until a Women's Center is established on campus, student health, safety, and general well-being cannot improve.

The expansion of the Office of Women's Programs into a Women's Center is a compelling step towards offering the student body a confidential and controlled physical space. The present space, provided to the office has previously encountered problems with adequate accommodation. Morey says that it is not

unusual that programs are postponed, relocated, or even canceled due to having to rely on booked facilities. Wantland explains that instances like these hurt the notion of trust and reliability, teaching students that the body is the responsibility of the individual rather than the institution, and that space for the body is not of high priority. Providing the body with a space will enhance the importance of the self. The notion that the body is viewed as a viable part of the larger student community influences the definition of the self, experienced by the individual. The self is created as a response to how “we imagine others judge our appearance” and through the corresponding “self-feeling’ produced by our imagination of these judgments” (Howson, 16). If we regard appearance not only as a physical attribute but also an idea of status and self-worth, the University must accommodate, rather than undercut these perceptions. A Women's Center plays an important role in offering a space for the construction of self, confidence, and safety. The incentives of such a place in campus culture are innumerable. A Women's Center epitomizes the University's attempted initiative for inclusivity by recognizing the complex identities of university students. It creates an opportunity to build a platform for a debate among the men, women, and transgender communities, heightening the recognition of sex as a cultural marker.

### **Future Plans**

- Population sample too small. Require a greater sample size
- Become a participant and establish relationships; not just an

unobtrusive observer (*In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes* handout)

- Attend more events and meetings of the student organization and OWP
- Obtain personal accounts from students who utilize OWP services
- Go to Women's Centers on other university campuses
- Analyze Feminist social/historical context and how it effected the development of the OWP
- Change: Answer such questions as how should funding be obtained? How should the OWP promote its cause? How does one increase awareness on campus?
- Make sure to emphasize the limitations in data/assumptions collected in research
- Center research along the lines of the overall progression and evolution of the OWP

**EUI Links:** <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1833>

The link above is research conducted at ISU regarding parents returning to school and how the University provides assistance. This is related to our research

because an expansion of the Office of Women's Programs into a Women's Center may potentially offer aid to families dealing with the same circumstances, particularly women. If such an expansion should take place, there would be more resources and space for new mothers returning to college. A Women's Center would most likely be the first place a new mother would seek counseling and ideally others services such as, a place to pump and store milk, daycare, or group counseling with other mothers.

<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3590>

The second link is research that deals with the importance cultural centers and whether they are exclusionary as well as how they address the concerns of students entering college. The same notions of how the concerns of women are applied to our research. In our research we conducted interviews with Director of the Office of Women's Programs as well two staff members to better understand their point of view, concerns, and issues regarding the expansion and how they are addressing them.

**Reflect:** Conducting and essentially archiving our research is an exceptional way to encourage undergraduates and graduate students methods and techniques that can be further used. I found this experience to be very interesting and collaborating with fellow students made the project run smooth with less stress. I found Moodle easy to navigate and a useful tool in presenting and sharing data. I wish we could have gotten better data to analyze and conducted a deeper research into the issue. Personally, the most trouble I encountered was my own personal time constraints.

Overall I am very satisfied with our analysis and hope to see other researchers expanding on or dealing with other topics regarding the Office of Women's Programs.

**Recommendations:** Essentially, the University must meet the demands for an expansion of a Women's Center. One of the key points our data concluded was the lack of awareness of the Office of Women's Programs (OWP) and the services they provide. Funding must be delegated appropriately in order to promote and better spread the word. If a center existed the allocated space for women would be recognized by more people and the recourses provided would be used undoubtedly.