Author: Agathe Wiedemair
Title: Why A Women’s Center?

About the Author: I am currently a Senior at the College of Communications, majoring in Media Studies. I transferred to the UIUC in Spring 2007, from the University of Vienna in Austria. I am especially interested in the human aspects of communication, that is, what influences how people communicate, why do people communicate in a certain way, how does environment create conventions for communication, how can communication be mediated, and what effects does mediation cause, etc.

In my research I was especially concerned about how delicate issues such as Dating Abuse, Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence, etc. can be made aware of, hence, how can they be communicated in effective manner. Also, I was curious about how space shapes, destructs, facilitates communication and what that means for the Office of Women's Programs.

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, 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: In Chapters 3 and 5 of Howson’s book, The Body in Society, she
addresses the regulation and symbolic, as well as actual surveillance of the body by society in previous and modern times. Chapter 3 examines the civilization of the physical body in accordance to cultural changes in the nineteenth century, leading to the creation of a social body that became a symbol for class and status, opposing and interacting with the former. Initially, patterns of bodily conduct (no sexual practices in the public, table-manners, etc.) were attained in a conscious learning process, leading to the creation of the civilized body (Elias). Over generations this socialization developed to an increasingly unconscious process, partly due to self-control as a response to cultural expectations and norms. Shame and embarrassment as “appropriate responses to uncontrolled body functions,” (69) are a central element for self-discipline and bodily conduct. In Chapter 5 Howson’s focus lies on how societies, when moving from a sovereign to a modernized governance of state, establish and remain social dominance through means of symbolic power. Developments in medicine lead to the body’s increasing examination and surveillance, resulting in its objectification and classification. The state’s imposed control over determining norms and rules for bodies resulted in a newly sensed self-awareness. Especially women’s bodies (pregnant women) became objects to medicine and, in abstract terms, themselves.

By giving a historical and literary background on the changing perception of human bodies in social interaction, Howson allows to further question the means by which modern day individuals (in Western Societies) view, present and judge themselves. The understanding of self as a result of an interaction between the individual and its social surrounding is complex and constantly evolving as a
response to cultural, political, and religious changes. Viewing body image from a historical point of view allows us to better understand Howson’s discussion of the construction of self in Chapter 1. A view on the past not only explains, but also challenges the presentation and perception of the modern body. Body image and the notion of what is “normal” (i.e. Body Mass Index) and socially acceptable (i.e. certain clothing in various businesses) appears to be a reaction to time and space rather than only the individual’s choice. This, again, raises the question weather and to what point we see ourselves from the perspective of others, and how this perception influences our own awareness of self. More importantly so, it appears to bring up the question of who is in charge of ones body and to what extent it has become a social good that the individual has only limited power over. If the perception and presentation of the body is increasingly idealized, a larger gap might appear between the actual self (whatever that might be) and an abstract self, created by society.

Even though Howson explores the political and social changes that had impact on contemporary norms of how to behave in public, she appears to only negatively present self-awareness and self-discipline. Her argument partly excludes the positive aspects that have come about with new medical inventions. Life-expectancy, for instance, has increased dramatically when compared to the eighteen hundreds and continues to grow. Living conditions for sick people have become more bearable, and illnesses such as cancer are fought successfully more and more often. Perhaps medical examination does bring fragmentation and
objectification with it; however it can also alter the understanding of how
humans function biologically. In my eyes, institutions such as the media
(especially popular media and advertisements) appear as one of the larger
concern and contribution to the objectification and idealization of the body in
modern day society.

Response II: Response Paper 2, Gimlin

In Chapter two and four Debra Gimlin discusses Aerobics, as a physical
means of body alteration, and NAAFA as a comparatively
psychologically oriented approach of body work. The author's focus with
regards to Aerobics is to explore the participants' motives for attending
these classes as well as to show that this form of exercise is an “attempt
to negotiate identity with regard to cultural ideals of femininity” (72).
Thus, socially constructed images of beauty function as a notion that
can either be attained or resisted through aerobics. In Chapter four
Gimlin observes NAAFA, an association that hopes to help overweight
individuals embrace their body's appearance, as opposed to attempt
changing it. Even though the author points out the positive
developments that NAAFA brings to its members, she observes that
women view disconnecting their self from their physical bodies as a
destructive form of acceptance, still seeking to change their bodies by
dieting and other forms of weight loss. While Gimlin offers an insightful
study of these individuals' performances of body works, the chapters
appear to take the ideal body as a given and common goal, not exploring how this image is constructed.

In chapter two, Gimlin condemns the notion that Aerobics is a tool of male domination and a way of differentiating individuals who exercise and those who do not. By doing this, it appears that the author obscures gender, ethnicity, and class as powerful determiners in the dynamic of perceived body image. Gimlin points out that participants in the aerobics classes are lead by contemporary beauty ideals, yet partly disregards that these image are products of patriarchal, western, white society that regards capitalism as an quintessential, considering achievement and hard work as characteristics of individual choice rather than as outcomes of social and economical structures. Thus, class and gender are significant in creating the notions of beauty that these women seek. Further, the access to the respective facilities is limited by economical status, which is strongly influenced by ethnicity. The women described in the study have a specific educational standing that allows them to access these classes, as well as monetary means and time to invest into modeling their bodies. Hence, class as well as ethnicity, often interdependent categories, influences not only who establishes beauty norms but also who has the means to react to these benchmarks.

In a similar matter Gimlin does not give enough emphasis to the class, gender and ethnicity in her research about NAAFA. Although the author
depicts personal stories, she appears to delude these as individual tales, disconnecting them from socioeconomic reasons for obesity. It seems that she limits the chapter to recounting NAAFA's ideology not paying enough attention to how these ideologies affect the members negatively. The chapter appears different in tone and content as to Gimlin's lack of analysis in both a micro as well as macro perspective. It might have been crucial to explore the reasons why the members are battling with obesity and why they picked NAAFA as opposed to other means for coping with their body image. Similarly, the fact that members appear to sexually expose themselves to “FA's” needs closer consideration as a revealing aspect about social power distribution in contemporary western society. It is problematic that Gimlin's Conclusion is limited in both length and detail. Although she looks at her research from a macro research perspective, she again takes contemporary notions of beauty as given and universal not exploring how and by whom these ideals are created. A deeper insight would perhaps point to the importance of class, race, gender, and other components, as crucial in the creation of cultural norms.

Proposal Pitch:

"For approximately one out of four college students who date, dating violence is a reality involving physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Dating abuse occurs in all socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and religious groups. Abuse in relationships isn't only a straight problem. It exists in the gay and lesbian communities at approximately the same rate as in heterosexual relationships."[1]
Dating Abuse is an alarmingly far reaching, yet often invisible concern. It is defined as any form of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in a relationship.

**Forms of Dating Abuse[2]:**

- **Emotional:** “Insults, name-calling, yelling, threats, extreme jealousy, humiliating partner in public or in private, isolating a partner from friends or family, threatening to ‘out’ a gay/lesbian partner, making someone account for time, threats to harm self”.
- **Physical:** “Hitting, pinching, shoving, restraining, destroying property, choking, threats of harm.”
- **Sexual:** “Rape, sexual abuse, or any coercion or manipulation of a partner to engage in sexual conduct.”

**THE PROBLEM**

Several UIUC Institutions such as the Women’s Programs, the Campus Counseling Center, A Woman’s Place, etc. offer workshops, group meetings, as well as individual counseling for both prevention as well as emotional support. Nevertheless, the numbers of students who seek help are severely disproportionate to the numbers of the students that are actually affected. Patricia Morey, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Women’s Programs, estimates the number of students actually reporting the abuse at less than ten percent.

The purpose of the project will be to focus on the services made available for students that are or have been victims of dating abuse, in order to seek an answer to the problem described above, namely the low number in cases reported.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**Micro-level:**
• What on-campus services are offered to victims of dating abuse and what do these services entail?
• How, and to what group of people are these particular services targeted?
• 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?

Macro-level:

• What do the low numbers of students, reporting their problems tell us about the school’s awareness work with regards to safety issues?
• 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 issue at stake and what forms of awareness and promotion take place at these institutions?

Ideally, answering these questions will help to improve the efficiency of promotional work that is necessary for greater awareness and the victim’s actual decision to seek help for their problem. Considering the striking frequency of dating abuse, the qualitative improvement of available support to students must
be considered a compelling goal for the future of this campus.

RESOURCES

Interviewing

With regards to qualitative research I would like to interview individuals that are working at particular service sites such as, the Counseling Center, the Office of Women’s Programs (Pat Morey), the Emergency Dean, the Office for Student Conflict Resolution and Student Discipline, and the University Safe Place.

Further, I wish to design a short questionnaire for students that report to the Office of Women’s Programs as well as the Counseling Center in order to learn what their individual incentives to seek help were, and how they heard about the services made available on campus. This research method needs cooperation with an institution and will thus only be applied if feasible.

Data Collection

For the quantitative part of the project I wish to look for data about the number of reported instances of dating abuse and the estimated number of unreported cases. Resources for this data are the above mentioned institutions, the library catalogue, and the UIUC archives. I hope to also find material about historical developments in safety issues for women on campus. (i.e. When where the first services, targeted towards women, established? What was the reason for their establishment? Etc.)


[2] Women’s Program. UIUC Office of the Dean of Students. URL:
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 Program 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 lack in efficiency, how this may influence the awareness students might have about the existing office, and finally whether they agree with the need for a new 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 backbone for further insight into women's needs on campus, and the need for a facility to address women's issues.

HYPOTHESIS

The awareness of the Office of Women's Program is lacking among the student body due to limitations in funding and thus promotional work. These shortcomings are likely to affect the expansion of the Program and the creation of a Women's Center.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Micro-level:**

- What on-campus services are offered by the Office of Women's
Programs and what do these services entail?

- How, and to what group of people are these particular services targeted? What kind of promotional activities does this institution engage in? (i.e. advertising, awareness campaigns, etc.)

- Where does the Women's Programs receive their funding from? (UIUC, outside funding, etc.)

- Is there enough staff for the work demand? Is there limitations or troubles with regards to space? Is it situated in a convenient /accessible location on campus?

- Is the general UIUC student body aware of the existence of the Office of Women's Programs?

- How does the UIUC student body feel about the Office of Women's Programs? Do they feel like there is a need for an expansion (creation of a Women's Center)

  → Are there differences in awareness about the Women's Programs with regards to academic year or gender? (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 affect the university and its student body?

- 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 influential are Women's Programs at other Universities in affecting the work at the Office of Women's Programs and the
progress towards the creation of a Women's Center.

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.)

1 Note: Related to that question we would like to touch on the following questions: 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?

**Data I: Interview Guideline Questions – DATA 1**

- How was the Office of Women’s Programs created?
  
  → What where the primary motives/incentives?

  → What services where offered by the Program and how/why did those change over time?

- How did the Office for Women’s Programs find space on campus, did you have a choice to locate in the respective building (610 E. John Street) and what where the criteria for the choice of this particular location?

  → Where did the Office for Women's Programs reside before that?

- Where does the Office for Women's Programs receive their funding from?

- In what kind of promotional work does the Office for Women's Programs engage?

  → To what group of people, are these particular services targeted?

  → Where does the Office for Women's Programs distribute their informational material, what sort of awareness campaigns do they provide?

  → How did these campaigns change over the years? Which have been most successful?
→ Who funds these campaigns?

- Is their enough and well-trained staff (counselors) to accommodate the students with appropriate counseling?

→ If not, in which areas would the Office for Women's Programs like to expand their services? And how would you go about these changes?

- When first seeking counseling, what are the common steps that an individual has to take? What are some behaviors you have observed that are common among the students that seek help?

→ Is the counseling anonymous?

→ Are their bureaucratic/formal issues involved?

→ Is their cases where Campus administration gets involved or cases need to be reported?

- What are the incentives and motivations students report when they first seek counseling?

→ Of what nature was their choice? Individual? Consulted with a friend/family, etc?

- What are potential reasons why students refuse to seek counseling?

→ Have their been studies on the UIUC campus that try to answer these questions?

- What atmosphere does the Office of Women's Programs hope to offer their students?
→ What steps does the office take to create this atmosphere?

• I remember that in our last meeting you mentioned that there was a study done in 2004 on how many students who have been victims to sexual crime seek counseling? Could you explain how this study was designed and what the outcomes showed?

→ Have there been any other studies similar to this one?

• I understand that the Office of Women's Programs has been looking into relocating their office and establishing a Women's Center.

→ What were the incentives for this choice?

→ How could a Women's Center better meet the needs that the UIUC female student body faces?

→ What are the potential obstacles the Office if Women's Programs might encounter?

→ How do other University Campuses deal with creating a space for women?

Interview Transcript-- Data collection 1

Interviewer: Agathe Wiedemair (A)

Interviewee: Patricia Morey, Director of the Office of Women's Programs (P)
A: I was going to start off with asking you how the Office of Women's Programs was created and what the primary incentives and motives were for the creation?

P: The office was established in 1971 and at that time women were very much in the minority on campus. So, the office was an attempt to provide equal and equitable opportunities for women to participate fully in campus life, including academically, socially, culturally, so on and so forth.

A: Back then, what services exactly did the Office offer and how did they change over time?

P: The services were actually similar in terms of advocacy on behalf of women who came forward with concerns or issues. Awareness programming and cultural programming, so events that would focus on making the campus aware of certain issues, or would celebrate women's culture, and then scholarships. We have kept those three primary components, yet some of the issues have changed over time.

A: That would be...?

P: Well, as an example, women and athletics. In 1971 Title IX had not been passed yet. It was actually passed the next year. And Title IX of course is the Equity in Education Act, where women were all of a sudden kind of provided with a mechanism in order to have equal participation in terms of sports. And even today there isn't equity in sports on most campuses, certainly on this campus, tho we're getting there we are getting closer to it. But at that time a lot of advocacy of behalf of women's sports clubs, women's varsity athletes, who where trying to get equal facilities, equal scholarships, equal number of games a season, so on and so forth, that is just one example.

A: How did the Office for Women's Programs find their space on campus? Did you have they choice to locate it here, was it located in another space?
P: We have never had a choice, the office has always been under the Dean of Students. So basically it's that office that would, if you will, locate space for us. We've been in this building for a number of years, I am not sure exactly how many, but probably as long as this building has existed, on different levels of this building.

A: So you are bound to the Dean of Students?

P: Yes, that's correct.

A: Where does the office of Women's Programs receive their funding?

P: Right now, probably the majority of our funding comes from two sources, one is that some of the funding comes through the counseling center, and the counseling center is funded by student fees. And the rest of it, most of our funding, comes through the state budget, Illinois state budget.

A: And in what kind of promotional work does the Office of Women’s Programs engage in? To what groups of people? Is it targeted to a particular group of people? Where is informational material distributed?

P: We try to reach as much of the diversity of women on campus as is possible. Our programs per se are targeted towards women but we're also very interested in engaging men to work on issues of equality and sexism and so on and so forth, as well. So, we do try to engage men in a lot of our programs but mainly we target women’s groups, you know, women's residence halls, women's RSOs, women in the variety of different academic units on campus, sororities, you know, whatever.

A: Do you have any routine courses, or informational material that gets distributed in certain places, like residence halls, etc.?

P: I would say there are kind of some routine things that we participate in,
including RA training in the residence halls, and there is an RA resource fair that we participate in, there is the Sex Out Loud as an example, Sexual Health Fair, we participate in educating the sorority women through Panhellenic and new member services, we participate with women of color, La Casa, Asian American Cultural Center, African American Cultural Center, we participate in the Graduate Student Resource Fair in August, the Taste of Nevada, which is the cultural centers..., Quad Day, all those kinds of things.

A: How would you say these awareness campaigns changed over the years? Have there been some that have been more successful, standing out? Does it depend on funding?

P: It very much depends on funding. There was a period of three years where we had a rent from the federal government that were used to do a lot of really excellent campaigns around violence against women. And those were very successful. We did bus cards, we did billboards, table tents in the Union, table tents in the residence halls, but that was a very specific grant. Mainly, we do focus our awareness campaigns around dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, discrimination acts of intolerance, issue like that.

A: When were those three years?

P: Oh, let me think. That would have been, probably, I wanna say, 1999, 2000, 2001.

A: So quite a while ago.

P: Quite a while ago. Then we had a shift in administration in the national government with the Republican administration taking over and a lot of fund dried up after that.

A: That makes sense. I did not think of that. Would you say that this office has
Enough well-trained staff and counselors, in order to accommodate the students with appropriate counseling?

P: No, we really don't. We refer most students who need counseling to the Counseling Center. But there are some really specific types of supportive counseling that we do and its not equably funded. Pretty much it's myself, we only have two professional staff, that's myself and the person that coordinates our sexual assault education programs and then we have a full-time secretary. We have a lot of very part-time undergraduate workers, who are peer educators and we have three ten hour week graduate assistants. We could really use a full-time person to do the kind of supportive counseling that you are talking about.

A: If you had the chance, if you had the funding, in which areas specifically feel the need to expand your services? Is it just counseling? Is it counseling in specific areas?

P: I would say counseling and advocacy. That really what we are able to provide is good but it could be so much more comprehensive.

A: So, if a student comes in and first seeks counseling, is there some common steps that the office goes about. Have you personally observed any behaviors that are common among students who seek counseling? Is it anonymous?

P: It's absolutely confidential, it's absolutely private. Anonymous is probably too strong of a word, because certainly students have to make someone aware of who they are when they come in, but I would say in general, students present around some kind of interpersonal violence. As I said before, sexual assault, dating abuse, sexual harassment, stalking, peer harassment. And so what I would usually do is...first of all, obviously validate what they are going through and really listen and if you will bear witness to what their experiences has been, and really try to validate that. Then, I would try to make them aware of what their options were. What's available in terms of reporting it, in terms of long term counseling, medical services if needed, court intervention, all of those kinds of things. And then I would try to follow along with them, whatever options they decided to take, I would accompany them, help them through that process, maybe advocate on their behalf for their instructors, if they need to be absent from class, something like that. If they need to go to court, give them a
ride, accompany them, stay with them, so they have a familiar and supportive face. And then I would follow up, make sure they're doing ok, meet with them several times throughout the semester. And we also do a support group, so make that available to them as well.

A: But formally, how is the University involved in it. Does the student have to identify themselves. Do they have to fill out some forms?

P: None of that is necessary. The only kind of formal thing that I am mandated to do is what is called the Cleary Report, and that is mandatory for all universities, that we have to report our crime statistics. But I don't have to give any names or any details, just that someone presented who has been sexually assaulted, or physically assaulted, or whatever.

A: So there is, even if it's on an anonymous basis, there is a need to report it?

P: That's correct. Any crime

A: What are usually the incentives or motivations that students report when they first come in?

P: I would say the biggest motivation is that they are having difficulties functioning, getting through the day. And either on their own they have sought out services, or a friend, or an advisor, or a resident hall advisor has said, “Why don't you go see someone at the Office of Women's Programs.”

A: And going off of that, what do you personally believe that the potential reasons are that students do not seek counseling.

P: I think the biggest reason that they don't is, one, they think they can handle it themselves, and two, they are afraid that by taking a step, others will find out
what happened. So I thin there is the big concern for their privacy, especially when it comes to parents, or friends, that they are concerned they're gonna have to do something that is going to involve theirs finding out. Those are the two thing that I think are most pressing on people.

_A: In general, what atmosphere does to Office of Women’s Programs hope to offer their students when they come in here? Is the space set up in a particular way?_

_P: Unfortunately, no. The space is not set up the way that we would really like it to be. I think as you know, you have to present yourself at a reception desk, there is very likely to be others around, so all of these thing can be difficult. I think that once someone is in my office they know it's very private, but I think that can be hard, you know. On the other hand, the fact that we are in a building where there is lots of other units, in that way I think it provides some sense of safety, that people could be coming to this building for just about anything._

_A: Yeah. The Office of International Student Affairs is upstairs, so I am familiar with this building._

_P: So you are an international student?_

_A: Yes._

_P: I did not realize that_

_A: You didn't?_

_P: No. I knew you had a little bit of an accent, but I did not realize you were._
A: Yes, I am from Austria, Vienna.

P: Ok

A: Far away.

P: Yeah!

A: Luckily I am going home on Thursday.

P: Oh good. Good for you.

A: I remember that in our last meeting, or I think that it was two meetings ago,¹ you mentioned that there was a study done in, I believe you said 2004, on how students that have actually bee victims do not report the crime. Could you explain how the study was designed and what the outcomes showed?

P: Yeah, that was specifically around the issue of dating abuse. So, students who identified that they have been in a dating relationship², while an undergraduate student on this campus. And what we found was that only five percent of those students reported the incident to authorities which would be the police, or our student judicial office. Any of those places. And the way the study was done was a random sample of the students, I probably have that study somewhere, and it was very representative in terms of race, gender, year in college, all of those things.
A: How many students did it include?

P: I believe it was about thirteen-hundred students. So it was a very good, large sample.

A: And have there been any other studies similar to this one?

P: Not here at the U of I. That is the most recent one we've had.

A: As I have said, our group has heard that the Office of Women's Programs is looking into relocating their office. And I wanted to know what the incentives for this choice were?

P: Probably the major reason is space. And it is some of the things we have already talked about. The ability to provide a more safe, confidential space for students to come in. The ability to be accessible, after 5:00 pm. In the evening, and over the weekend the building closes, it is open from 8 am till 5 pm, Monday through Friday. We have no space to hold large programs. Our support group can't be held here because it is in the evening. So, we don't have the kind of space that's conducive to really providing the kinds of services and programs and events that we would like to hold. Whenever we need space, which is weekly at the least, we have to find space elsewhere. Sometimes that means paying for it, sometimes not. Sometimes it means being bumped. Our support group last semester was meeting at the Gender and Women's Studies house and they were interviewing for a new director, so our support group got bumped. And that is not the kind of thing that you want to happen, you know. A support group needs to feel like it's in a safe consistent space.

A: I understand, I would assume that you are loosing trust from students if that happens.
P: Yes, absolutely. Yeah, after that happened nobody came back to group the rest of the semester. I mean fortunately it was close to the end of the semester, but it was still a really difficult thing to have to face.

A: And at this point, what are the greatest obstacles that the Office of Women’s Programs is facing in creating a Women’s Center.

P: The two biggest obstacles, is that any area in central campus is pretty much already occupied. And then the other is the cost. That it would either mean a new building, or renovating a current facility. So, the cost is going to be considerable. And we are really talking about ways to generate those funds, but it will take some effort and work to do that.

A: Do you believe it will happen in the next, say, three years?

P: I do, I believe it will happen in the next two to three years.

A: So you see positive responses?

P: Absolutely.

A: Just one last question, how do other university campuses, especially big ten campuses, deal with creating a space for women?

P: For most of the other big ten universities, they have a Women's Center, and have had one for a lot of years. So, it hasn't been as big of an issue on other campuses. I think on this campus..honestly I don't know why we haven't had one in all of these years. So, I hope that it's gonna be accomplished. I have been reading a lot about how other campuses have accomplished it and hope that we are moving towards that. I think we have a lot of people in the administration who really want to see this happen and a lot of students who
have generated their support. One of the things we are doing is a petition drive and we have over twelve-hundred signatures so far. We just started that maybe two or three weeks ago. So, we really feel good about that.

A: Yeah, the DI was reporting about that. I have actually read an article about why we need a Women’s Center, and I remember reading a quote from you, saying that the biggest issue for you right now is to create greater awareness.

P: Right, right, because one of the ways we are gonna raise funds is through a time-limited student referendum. I mean that’s the plans. We are also wanting to generate funds from our alum, we have already had lots of inquiries from alum who were saying “How do I get involved in this, how do I donate to this?” So I think we’ll be able to raise the money, but it will probably take a year or two.

A: Alright, that's it from me. Is there anything else you would like to say?

P: Not that I can think of. But on your way out I can give you a little bit of information about the Women's Center and what we are trying to accomplish.

A: I would love you, thank you.

P: You are welcome.

1Note: I have talked to Patricia Morey earlier this semester about the project.

2Note: This is unclear. I will get in touch with the Interviewee to clarify the issue.

Data II: Please answer the following questions, providing a short (one to two sentence) response, or the according answer.
I have read and understand the above consent statement.

PLEASE CHECK BOX.

Gender

- Female
- Male

Academic Standing

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student

Major

- ______________________
- Undecided

Where do you live?

- Dorms
- On-campus apartment/house
- Off-campus apartment/house
- Other: ______________________

1) Have you ever heard of the Office of Women’s Programs?

- Yes
No (Please continue with question 4)

2) Where have you heard about the Office of Women’s Programs?

- Event
- Brochure/Flyer
- Friend/Peer
- Academic Advisor

Other:

3) According to what you have heard about the Office of Women’s Programs, what services do they provide? Please list all that you can recall.

4) Have you ever attended an event/class/speech that offered information about issues such as dating abuse, sexual assault, rape, and other forms of violence?

Yes. If you remember, please specify the name and purpose of the event/class/speech:

- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
No (Please continue with question 6)

5) Why did you chose to attend this event/class/speech

Friend/peer recommended it

Mandatory

Other: ___________________________________________________________

6) What counseling services, offered by the UIUC, have you personally heard of?

_________________________________________________________

7) Have you ever consulted counseling?

Yes

No

8) Where was that information provided to you?

Event

Brochure/Flyer

Friend/Peer

Academic Advisor

Other: ___________________________________________________________

8) The University of Illinois Office of Women’s Programs plans to create a Women’s Center to provide not only counseling services but also a safe place to their female students to socialize and gather. Do you see a necessity for such a facility on this campus? Why, or why not?
Data Collection II

For the second part of my data collection I decided to conduct a survey composed of short answer and multiple choice questions. The target group for my study was a Rhetoric class, RHET 105. My sample consisted of fifteen college students, thirteen of who were freshman, and two sophomore. The reason why I chose to conduct my research in this class was to capture ideas from the younger student community and provide a contrast to Patricia's sample that consists of mostly graduate as well as randomly chosen students. I am aware that the selectivity of the sample might be limited in its representative nature with regards to age and academic standing, yet at the same time it allows me to focus on one specific group of students. This might be especially advantageous when comparing my data with Patricia's research. While the sample did not vary greatly regarding year, the student's majors showed a wide range of different colleges. The amount of female versus male students seemed less balanced, with five female and ten male students. My hope in conducting this survey is to answer several of the questions that my group expressed in our research proposal. I wanted to inquire whether students, in my case the school's younger community, is actually aware of the Office of Women's Programs. In a
further step, regardless of whether the individual is familiar with the Office of Women's Programs, my question is directed to find out what students know in general about counseling services offered on this campus, and how information about these places has been provided to them. As my last intent I wish to disclose the student's opinion about a potential Women's Center and whether there is a felt need for such a facility. As mentioned above, the representativeness of the sample might be limited with regards to quantity, yet can still be seen as a valuable source of information, especially when combined with other research.

In order to analyze my quantitative material (multiple choice), I will first chart the results on a table in order to get a better oversight of what correlations we might draw from the survey results. In a further attempt I will look at the short answer questions and identify some correlation and similar answers that have been given by the students.

*Results from the second data collection:*
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Students, n=15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Dorms</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>On-campus</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Standing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Sophomore</td>
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</table>
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 hodgepodge services the floor offers, some of them are related to the respective research topic, 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 letter 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 where focused on giving support, conducting research, resolving issues, and be 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 paste 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 larges 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 inclusively by recognizing the complex identities of university students. It creates an opportunity to builds a platform for a debate among the men, women, and transgender communities, heightening the recognition of sex as a cultural marker.

EUI Links:  http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3597  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3741  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1811  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1794  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1833  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/1819  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3616  
http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3594

Reflect:  
• Increase the sample size for the survey  
• Do more qualitative interviews with Women's Center advocates  
• Talk to students who use facilities such as the Office of Women's Programs  
• Collaborate with the Office of Women's Programs to make research broader and more effective in terms of representation  
• Attend more meeting sponsored by the Office of Women's Programs.

Recommendations:  With regards to improving the services available at the Office of Women's Programs in order to eventually expand the respective facility I recommend the UIUC to take two initial steps:

1) Provide a different (larger) space. The Office of Women's Programs is strongly affected by their current size. The place, while easily accessible concerning campus location, appears too small and poorly arranged on the inside. The office is part of a larger office building (Turner Student Building), signs are missing, anonymity lacks, and conference/event spaces are limited. This strongly affects the facilities' quality of work as they can not provide efficient space for student support in form of awareness events, group counseling, etc.

2) Increase the funding made available for promotion and advocacy. Unfortunately, issues such as Dating Abuse, Sexual Harassment,
Domestic Violence, Rape, Stalking, and other forms of violence are still taboo issues on the University Campus. With increased awareness comes knowledge and increase in communication, which might in turn enlarge the number of cases reported to the office. Additionally, it will educate people about the shortcomings of our, and every, campus environment, which might foster the creation of advocacy groups, peer education groups, and other forms of activism.