The Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor

These were the last two semesters that activist Sunera Thobani was the Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor (RWWP). Sunera will be at the University until July. As her assistant, the research I conducted focused on literature searches and obtaining materials on the topics of Women and the World Trade Organization and Global Trafficking in Women.

During the latter part of the 99-3 semester and through the 00-1 semester, a search for a new Ruth Wynn Woodward Professor was conducted, requiring the distribution of job postings to contacts throughout British Columbia and to colleges and Universities across Canada. In March, three candidates, Dionne Brand, Marta Gloria Torres and Barbara Heron were interviewed. Dionne Brand was selected as the New Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Professor in Women’s Studies, beginning in the 00-3 semester.

The Ruth Wynn Woodward Liaison Committee

The Ruth Wynn Woodward Liaison Committee (RWWLC) is composed of approximately 40 groups, and functions as a link between the women’s community and the Women’s Studies Department at SFU. In the Lower Mainland groups can send representatives to monthly meetings that take place the first Monday of each month and are scheduled from 7:00 PM until approximately 9:00 PM. Of the 40 groups/members who receive information (minutes and other information relevant to the RWWLC), approximately 20 groups/members (those in the Lower Mainland) are invited each month by notice and by telephone reminder to attend the Liaison Committee meetings.

The 99-3 and 00-2 semesters were problematic for the Committee, both in terms of scheduling of and attendance at meetings. A number of meetings needed to be cancelled, and attendance was extremely low. As the staff member, I attended one meeting on November 1, 1999, compiling and distributing minutes to the Committee (see RWWLC files). I distributed several announcements (job posting and announcement of shortlisted individuals’ interview times) pertaining to the selection of the new RWWP, and I also maintained the RWWP/RWWLC database, keeping in regular contact with local members.

Recommendation: Given my experience as the staff liaison to the RWWLC these past two semesters, I would recommend that the structure and staffing of the RWWLC be examined. While I feel strongly that staff support for the RWWP is essential, and should be separate beyond the duties of WS Support Staff, I feel that a review would identify areas where changes could be made such that the RWWLC, and the RWWP assistant’s time could be put to more constructive use, rather than chasing down and persuading committee members to attend meetings. This issue had been discussed at the November RWWLC Meeting, but was tabled for
discussion at a later time. With a new RWWP for the 00-3 semester, this review should be made a priority.

Diverse Women for Diversity

Co-sponsored with the Washington State-based Edmonds Institute, the RWWP co-sponsored an event in November that was held in opposition to the World Trade Organization (WTO) meetings held the week of November 30, 1999. Sunera Thobani travelled to Seattle to participate in the anti-WTO demonstrations and to participate as a speaker at the Diverse Women event. As the RWWP assistant, I compiled an extensive list of Lower Mainland media contacts for the Edmonds Institute, including alternative (non-mainstream) media. I also researched and compiled a reading package which was forwarded to the Edmonds Institute for duplication and distributed at the Diverse Women event.

Canada in Denial Conference

The RWWP co-sponsored a one-day anti-racism conference entitled Canada In Denial: Socially Admissible Forms of Racism, which was held on March 22, 2000. In September, a letter of recommendation was drafted in support of Burnaby Multicultural Society (BMS) receiving funding from Multiculturalism BC to hold the conference. The SFU Women’s Studies Department later was asked to donate funds to the conference and the RWWP assistant’s time, along with photocopying and Sunera Thobani’s participation as a conference speaker was donated, totalling the contribution of $400.

I worked with Mr. Eugene Kaellis, of BMS to plan the conference, including compiling reading packages, co-ordinating and recruiting volunteers for the conference day, as well as working with Marilyn Dumont of the SFU First Nations Student Centre to facilitate First Nation’ involvement at the conference. I also collated reading packages in preparation for the conference and hosted/facilitated several planning meetings with Eugene, Marilyn and myself in the 00-1 semester.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the conference due to illness, but physical access issues also would have also prevented my participation (since I use a wheelchair). Our scheduled ‘Emcee’ for the day also was unable to attend at the last minute, however Eugene Kaellis’ wife was able to fill in. On the day of the conference, approximately 80 people attended the conference, and feedback was generally very positive. For a detailed report on the day’s happenings, please see the RWWP files. Sunera is following up on a few last financial details.
A financial report has not been submitted at the time of writing this report. Therefore, a financial component to the Canada In Denial conference should be added at some point in the near future.

**Recommendation:** I would recommend that future conferences planned in co-sponsorship be planned in strict accordance to SFU's policy of only holding University sponsored (or co-sponsored) events in accessible locations for people of all abilities.

**Jeannette Armstrong**

An event featuring Jeannette Armstrong, and several other local speakers was co-sponsored by the RWWP and DARE on February 24th at the Harbour Centre campus. Room booking and audio equipment were booked for the event on the RWWP account.

**Logo Design Contest**

During the 00-1 semester, a Logo Design contest was held to solicit submissions for a new Department logo. The prize was $1000. I designed small posters/flyers that were mailed out to 300 agencies, fine Arts departments, community organizations, women's centres and individuals. The original deadline for submission was April 15, 2000.

As submissions came into the department, letters of acknowledgement were sent to contest entrants individually. At the Department meeting following the April 15 deadline, it was decided to extend the contest. Letters detailing the contest extension have been sent to the original contest entrants. A decision will be made in the future.

**The RWWP Biennial Retreat and Articulation Meeting**

As part of the RWWP assistant's job, I worked with Billie Korstrom (the departmental assistant) to organize, publicize and plan the RWWP Articulation and Retreat, to be held this weekend at the Bowen Lodge on Bowen Island. The Articulation meeting and Retreat were publicized in several advance mailouts which began late in the 99-3 semester and culminated in creating a database of participants (approximately 17) and producing information packages for the Articulation/Retreat. I was unable to attend the Articulation/Retreat due to prior commitments, as were many other past participants. Thus the low number of participants for this year's event.

**Women's Studies Department Activities**
As the RWWP assistant, I also undertook a number of tasks in the Women’s Studies Department. These included:

- Archiving past files for the Departmental Assistant, transferring them from binders to yearly file-folders.

- Word-processing several Department documents (e.g. WS history/RWWP description, department letters to Sessional Instructors and applicants)

- Some research, as well as collecting and disseminating quotes for the new Women’s Studies Department brochure.

- Typing up a brief outline of 'hints for the new RWWP assistant', to ensure a smooth transition for the new RWWP assistant.

**Recommendation:** I would recommend an updated and specific job description be created for the RWWP Assistant position. This would define some parameters for the job, and enable the RWWP Assistant to perform her job with greater focus.
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Cassey M. Porter
04/27/00