

## ACCEPTED VERSION

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**'Bending and morphing': the department of women's studies at the University of Adelaide continues past its twenty year anniversary**  
Outskirts: Feminisms Along the Edge, 2014; 31

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<http://hdl.handle.net/2440/90329>

Title: 'Bending and morphing': the department of women's studies at the University of Adelaide continues past its twenty year anniversary

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Source: *Outskirts: feminisms along the edge*. 31 (Nov. 2014):

## Introduction

On August 14, 2012, the University of Adelaide celebrated 20 years of Women's/Gender Studies on campus. This auspicious anniversary prompted pause for reflection on the considerable successes, but also ongoing challenges, of feminist teaching and practice. The history of Women's/Gender Studies at the University of Adelaide has been one marked by struggles to maintain administrative legitimacy and ideological integrity within the male dominated environment of the academy. Yet the department has remained resilient; providing those involved in the struggle with a sense of purpose and identity as academic feminists (Laslett and Brenner 2000, Simic 2010). This paper contributes to existing historiographies which chronicle institutionalised academic feminism within Australian and international contexts. It illuminates the ways in which teaching feminism not only constitutes a vital feature of the feminist political project more generally, but also reflects the difficulties encountered by the women's movement in an era of increased neo-liberalism.

The impetus to reflect on the history of Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide becomes even timelier in light of the recent organizational restructuring which has transformed higher education both locally and internationally. It is not uncommon for universities to target Women's Studies/Gender Studies as sites for major reform in times of financial crisis. In Europe, Abo Akademi University, the only Swedish speaking university in Finland, has sought to deflect recent government budget cuts away from the Social Sciences by nominating their Women's Studies department as the site of major financial overhauling, a move which risks further undermining an already beleaguered teaching and research program (n.a. 2012).

Other overseas universities have responded to the current neo-liberal economy by implementing managerial-style restructuring in an effort to make programs more 'market related' (Gouws 2012). During an examination of the impact of global neo-liberal capitalism on institutionalized feminism in South Africa, Gouws (2012) notes that political or ideological imperatives to Women's/Gender Studies often compete with pertinent economic concerns. Thus, academics committed to feminist activism and academic teaching are forced to compromise these priorities in order to comply with a market driven agenda.

Similarly, economic challenges have impacted on Australian universities commitment to Gender Studies. The Gender, Sexuality and Diversity Studies (GSDS) program at La Trobe University was beset by attempts to abolish the degree in 2012. Only after several intense months of campaigning, including an open letter from concerned members of the community addressed to La Trobe's Vice Chancellor, was the program able to be retained. Program coordinator Dr Carolyn D'Cruz, whose position was the first to go under the proposed cuts, reflected on this event by pointing to the 'perennial insecurity' of such an area of study:

the threat and disrespect often accorded to area studies such as GSDS is attached to a much more general and insidious contempt for the issues and political siding with the marginal, despite the lip service and anti-discrimination legislation that all

corporations (including universities) proudly flaunt as a part of their mission statements (D'Cruz 2012: 1).

The University of Queensland's 41 year-old Gender Studies major has recently been dismantled, a mere year after celebrating four decades of Women's and Gender Studies research (Edexpress 2013). Professor Carole Ferrier, who helped established Women's Studies at the University of Queensland remains unconvinced that the Arts Executive Dean's decision to discontinue the major is indicative of a 'mainstreaming' of feminism within the academy, but instead suggests the program's axing carries potentially damaging long term implications, including 'falling back into the dominant orthodoxies that seem to be gaining all around us' (Edexpress 2013).

The dominance of neo-liberal conservatism and the widespread impact of conservative policies on education in Australia (Connell, 2013; Harris and Baker, 2008) have contributed to difficulties at the local University of Adelaide level. While feminist campaigns for the inclusion of women in all areas of life and in all social institutions have been a hallmark of second wave feminism in Australia, women's participation has often been marred by disdain, tensions, and the need to compromise, and it was no different for the fledgling Women's Studies Department at the University of Adelaide in 1992. Twenty years on and the Department of Women's Studies is now the Discipline of Gender Studies & Social Analysis (GSSA). While this renaming potentially marks GSSA as another casualty of neo-liberal conservatism (Harris and Baker 2008), we regard it also as evidence of a commitment to maintaining "a social and political space for the idea of gender equality" (Evans 2011: 609) even if the University of Adelaide's practice of gender equity is woeful. The 20th anniversary celebrations, held exactly 20 years after its launch by Anne Summers AO, political adviser to then Prime Minister Paul Keating, coincided with the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor who was quick to note the gender inequity (QUT Equity Services 2011).

This paper documents the significant achievement of Women's Studies' continued presence at the University of Adelaide. We argue that retaining gender studies in the University sector is crucial in the fight against sexism. Our contribution to the feminist archive involves a mapping of how the University of Adelaide department was formed and how it managed to adapt in order to survive despite increased 'managerialism' (Laslett and Brenner 2000:1233; Gouws 2012: 530), loss of funding, and waning institutional support; tendencies which have been reflected both in universities across Australia and elsewhere as discussed above (Gouws 2012; Simic 2010; Stacy 2000). We begin by tracing the establishment of Women's Studies at Salisbury College of Advanced Education (CAE), its relocation to the City Campus of South Australian College of Advanced Education (SACAE) in 1989 and its eventual introduction into the University of Adelaide in 1992.

### **Setting the Background--Adelaide: a Hive of Feminist Activity**

Feminism entered Western academies during the 1970s (Evans 2011). Many academics in American, British and Australian tertiary institutions began to respond to the absence of women in the curriculum by including women in courses--"adding the missing" (O'Barr, 1989: 5)--particularly within the Humanities and Social Sciences. By the early 1980s Women's Studies was being established as a formal academic field of inquiry connected internationally by a commitment to gender equity and an assumption that all knowledge is historically, socially and culturally constructed (O'Barr 1989; Evans, 2011).

Also important in Australian history is the abolition of student fees by the Whitlam Labor Government (1972-1975) which resulted in a significant widening of the student body. Although in 1989 the Hawke Labor Government reintroduced fees along with the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS--a government loan to cover the cost of tuition), the Whitlam reforms, which coincided with the commencement of the Women's Liberation Movement in Australia and the beginning of Women's Studies in Australian universities (Magarey and Sheridan 2002: 130), influenced the momentous influx of women into tertiary education. By 1986, five universities in Australia taught Women's Studies as a major, six offered postgraduate programs (ie. Masters), and all universities offered at least one semester long subject (Bulbeck 1991: 27). By 1993, Women's Studies was taught in most Australian higher education institutions (Magarey, Ryan et al. 1994: 294-295), with the biggest growth area in postgraduate research (Threadgold 2000: 44).

South Australia had offered an active and innovative environment for women working in the field of Women's Studies since the 1970 and 80s. This was not surprising given that South Australia, under Premier Don Dunstan (1970-1979), was the most progressive state in the nation in regard to women's rights. In fact, South Australia lead Australia in areas such as rape in marriage laws, gay and lesbian freedoms, women's initiatives in health, education and the law, and provided women, including migrant and Aboriginal women, professional advice on the Women's Information Switchboard (set up in 1978 by the first Women's Advisor to the Premier (see O'Loughlin 1988 for more details).

Women's Studies programs at Flinders University (see Sheridan and Dally 2006), as well as Salisbury and Magill--SACAE, produced hundreds of graduates whose feminist knowledge and skills effectively changed the political life of the state (Papadelos 2011: 487). There was a strong feminist community in Adelaide, as Anne Summers has documented in her book *Ducks on the Pond* (1999), that organised events through many forums including the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM), the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) and the Women's Information Switchboard (WIS). Activist Betty Fisher was involved with WIS and WEL and was an early graduate of Women's Studies at Flinders University (Fisher 1996). The Women's Studies Resource Centre was established in 1975 in Adelaide from grant funding acquired by Kay Iseman (later Schaffer) through the United Nation's International Women's Year grants, later celebrated annually as International Women's Day (8 March). In 1983 the Women's Studies Research Centre was established with Susan Magarey as Director and she remained in this role until its closure in 2000. Due to the scope of this paper the establishment or operation of the Centre are not outlined in detail (for more information about the Women's Studies Research Centre see Allen and Magarey 2012). It is important, however, to note the Centre's public seminar series and conference program, which included national and international speakers, were important antecedents to developing a vibrant intellectual environment, recognized nationally and internationally (Allen and Magarey 2012: 213-14). Perhaps most importantly is the establishment of the flagship journal in Women's Studies, *Australian Feminist Studies* launched in 1985 at the University of Adelaide and edited by Susan Magarey and Susan Sheridan. They remained editors till 2005 when the editorship was taken over by Mary Spongberg at Macquarie University (Allen and Magarey 2012: 217). In addition, in 1989 the Australian Women's Studies Association (AWSA) was launched at the University of Adelaide. AWGSA is a peak body for academic feminists in Australia ('G' was later added to acknowledge inclusion of Gender Studies). Chilla Bulbeck notes that,

[t]he inaugural Australian Women's Studies National Conference was held in Adelaide in July 1989, with 170 registrants, most from South Australia, although every state and territory as well as New Zealand was represented. Attendees came from equal opportunity units, women's information networks, other government departments, the Rural Women's Network, as well as the university, CAE and TAFE sector (Bulbeck 2006).

### **South Australian Colleges of Advanced Education (SACAE) in Relation to Women's Studies**

The CAE sector hosted the early Women's Studies Subjects in South Australia. This sector was regarded as "the third largest tertiary institution in the country, which comprises of some 10,000 students" and taught women dominated vocational courses such as teacher education and nursing (n.a. Unpublished Results b: 1).

Due to the strength of Women's Studies at the SACAE, lecturers involved in the programs formed a Women's Studies Institute to consolidate ideas and progress research interests (n.a. Unpublished Results b: 5). The Women's Studies Institute initiative was indicative of the strength of Women's Studies in South Australia at the time, but proved difficult to sustain. As early as 1985, there were joint initiatives between the SACAE and the University of Adelaide, in particular with the latter's Research Centre for Women's Studies because the Research Centre had been set up primarily to conduct research, it did not have an extensive undergraduate teaching component. The SACAE and the Research Centre collaborated to co-sponsor speakers and held a "joint membership of Women's History Task Force" (n.a. Unpublished Results b: 10). By 1985, there were ten academics involved with teaching Women's Studies across the SACAE, two senior lecturers and eight lecturers (Senior lecturers were Maureen Dyer and Kay Iseman (later Schaffer), and lecturers were Margaret Allen, Ann Aungles, Myra Williams (later Betschild), Jackie Cook, Jean Duruz, Suzanne Franzway, Karobi Mukherjee and Susan Sheridan).

### **Women's Studies at Salisbury SACAE**

The largest concentration of enrolments in Women's Studies was at Salisbury campus SACAE. Here the programs were located within the Faculty of Education and Community Development (n.a. Unpublished Results b: 5). Women's Studies had begun as a Graduate Diploma in Teaching, one of five strands in an umbrella program introduced in 1978. It was the first Women's Studies program at post-graduate level in Australia and was devised by a team of six lecturers from diverse fields (Ann Aungles, sociology; Karobi Mukherjee, sociology; Margaret Allen, history; Myra Williams (later Betschild), parks and wildlife/recreation; Jackie Cook, English; Kay Iseman (later Schaffer) English). Karobi Mukherjee had introduced a Women in Society course (a one-semester subject offered in the early 1970s) and later Ethnic Women: An Australian Study offered internally and externally. Kay Schaffer was enrolled in PhD studies in Literature and Cultural Studies at the University of Pittsburgh and was appointed to Salisbury in 1975. She was specifically recruited to develop and teach a Core Critical Theory course in second, third and fourth year. The course included continental philosophy, phenomenology, Foucault, Lacan and, later, French feminism and deconstruction. Schaffer also introduced a Women in Literature course in 1976. The team received a modest grant to host a 'Changing Women in Society' conference directed to the (largely working class) women of the northern Adelaide region (Schaffer 2006). In keeping with her background in parks and wildlife/recreation, Myra Betschild taught a

semester unit on Women and Health as part of the three-year teaching unit on Health. She stated that "this [unit] crossed over very nicely to our Women's Studies award, also several other units were specifically developed by us around our particular interest/expertise, we really worked as a team" (Betschild 2006).

Decision-making committees within the then SACAE largely supported Women's Studies because, ironically, it was expected to fail to attract students. Thus, the staff involved in the development of the other four strands gave lip service to Women's Studies, and in response got the support of the feminist lecturers for their programs. In fact, Women's Studies was the only strand of the five to succeed. It drew large numbers of professional women from diverse fields like nursing, education, law, librarianship, the government and public service sectors. In 1979, the Graduate Diploma in Women's Studies was developed (GDipWS), and in 1983 an Associate Diploma in Women's Studies was introduced for students who did not meet traditional entry requirements needed for the GDipWS, such as matriculation or the mature age entry scheme. Instead, students could enrol in the Associate Diploma after a one year bridging course undertaken at TAFE (Allen and Magarey 2012: 221).

### **The Graduate Diploma in Women's Studies**

As required by accreditation processes, the Graduate Diploma was developed with the aid of extensive community consultations and approved by diverse professional bodies (mostly educators and feminist bodies, Education Department, Hospitals, Law, Parks and Wildlife). The Diploma, which required students to take eight subjects (four core and four electives), had strong support from the Humanities Division head, Andrew Chalmers, who helped to usher it through administrative hurdles within the institution (Schaffer 2006). However, despite widespread support from the community and professions, senior administration faltered when the course got to the final stage in its development towards accreditation. The Deputy Principal, Dale C. Paul, called a meeting of the team and demanded that it include a male lecturer from psychology (to avoid the charge that it was biased against men). Paul wanted to include a course in sex role psychology as a core unit (for 'balance') and give the psychology lecturer veto power over team decisions. The feminist lecturers present were shocked at this last minute attempt to sabotage the program (Schaffer 2006). Confronted by the implication of this condition regarding veto power, Kay Schaffer asked for clarification of his position:

[w]as Dale C. Paul suggesting that one male academic, with no academic expertise in the area 'equal' to six female academics all of whom had expertise, and in addition be able to use his position to effectively trump them at will? 'Yes', came the reply (Schaffer 2006).

At that point, Schaffer announced her resignation from the team, rose from her chair and left the office, slamming the door with considerable force (Schaffer 2006). On her dramatic departure, Dale C. Paul shuffled in his chair, and backed down. Margaret Allen calls it 'the day Kay slammed the door' in a manner reminiscent of Ibsen's Dora at the end of 'A Doll's House' (written in 1879 by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen). Administrators at Salisbury SACAE treated the women academics in the Women's Studies programs as 'dolls' (Schaffer 2006). It became apparent that their presence at the SACAE was tolerated if they did not challenge hierarchical structures or make any demands. Like Torvald Helmer, Dora's husband, patronising and condescending treatment was part of the mechanism that kept women academics from challenging the status quo. Objections to course content, which

might have been interpreted as misogynist, were masked with a concern for maintaining (the questionable pursuit for) unbiased knowledge. At the end of Ibsen's play Dora is aware of Helmer's motives, which she previously thought to be selfless, and embarks on a quest to find herself. The women staff considered that at a time when it appeared the course would be approved and women academics would administer and control its content, it was clearly highly problematic for senior administration to introduce a man into the team who would have the right of veto (Schaffer 2006).

Despite its uncertain beginning, the course passed through all relevant committees and registered about twelve students in its first year. In the subsequent years the course grew to about 90 full time students and graduated hundreds of professional women who already had degrees in nursing, education, the arts, science, and so on (Schaffer 2006). It became one of the largest postgraduate courses at the college.

In 1989, John Dawkins, the federal Labor Minister for Education, oversaw the merger of universities and CAEs, which began in 1989 and continued until 1992 in South Australia. The Dawkins legislative reforms put an end to the binary system that had relegated CAEs to secondary status as vocational institutions. Because of considerable negotiation and some anxiety from the University sector, the restructuring took several years to implement and caused much confusion, but it also opened the door for many academics in the college system by giving them the status and credibility required to access research funds. As Curthoys noted,

[a]lthough there have always been college academics who did research, under the binary system of the 1970s and 1980s the colleges had teaching loads and an organizational culture that frequently inhibited research, and rarely encouraged it. There was no research funding (Curthoys 1991: 387).

After 1991, it became possible for more feminists and cultural theorists from the SACAE sector to be involved in theory and research.

### **Move from Salisbury to City Campus**

Prior to its incorporation into the University of Adelaide, Women's Studies moved from Salisbury to the City Campus of SACAE in 1989. This move to the City facilitated the teaching of night classes, as Salisbury was considered remote and difficult to access, but it turned out to be significant for incorporation into the University of Adelaide. The Affirmative Action policy that had been adopted by the SACAE council in 1982, which in turn led the College to commit to participate in the Federal Government's Affirmative Action for Women Pilot Program in 1984, sustained the Women's Studies program in a competitive environment (n.a. Unpublished Results c). To her credit, the Deputy Principal SACAE, Denise Bradley, at that time was intent on supporting Indigenous programs, but unfortunately she saw Women's Studies as (a less deserving) rival for limited resources and federal support through special grant schemes (Schaffer 1996).

### **From the Margins to the Centre: Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide**

Welcome to our newly formed department! We need to congratulate ourselves in bringing it into being through all the shoals and reefs, and being in the position of having a Women's Studies Department with 5 E.F.T academic staff and, 5 [sic, .5]

clerical staff in the department and of course 2-3 students on P.G. scholarships (Allen 1992a).

In her first memo to staff as Head of the newly formed Women's Studies Department (above) Margaret Allen sounds elated and excited as she welcomes her colleagues and puts forward a long list of things to be done during 1992. This list included developing an Honours program to begin the following year, and working out how to operate efficiently while the department was split across two buildings located on either side of the campus. Between this first memo sent in February and the first Departmental Meeting held on 11th March 1992, teaching had already begun, with the offerings having been made in the University Calendar the previous year (University of Adelaide 1992).

Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide began in 1992 as a new department located in the Faculty of Arts. Women's studies subjects were taught at the university prior to this date. Susan Magarey taught some undergraduate courses in Anthropology, Education, English, and History, and including

a special Honours option for them all, titled 'A History of Feminist Thought in the English-Speaking West 1780-1980'; for one year, a special Honours option for Anthropology on 'Sexualities', focussed on Michel Foucault's three-volume History of Sexualities; also for one year, a term in a second/third-year course offered in the History Department on 'Social and Political Ideas Since the Seventeenth Century' (Allen and Magarey 2012: 217).

Other feminist academics at the university, including Carol Johnson and Carol Bacchi, also taught individual Women's Studies subjects. Before the arrival of the Women's Studies Department and its undergraduate offerings in 1992, the University was already offering joint supervision (with Flinders University) at postgraduate levels through the Women's Studies Research Centre (University of Adelaide 1992: 296). By 1989 the University had earmarked Women's Studies as a new area it could incorporate with benefits to both teaching and research as well as equity and diversity goals (n.a. Unpublished Results c). Despite this promising endorsement of the new Department, the Women's Studies Research Centre, established independently in 1983, was required to accommodate the new department by sharing space, budget and resources. In other words, rather than supporting both the Department and the Centre, the latter was forced to give up some of its hard won facilities to the former. While it might have seemed like a logical progression to co-locate the new Women's Studies Department with the Research Centre there were considerable challenges for both. Susan Magarey, already employed by the University of Adelaide as Director of the Research Centre for Women's Studies, was also expected to teach in the department on a half time basis after having been primarily a research only academic (n.a. Unpublished Results c.: 2). Although Magarey was included in the staff of the new Department, the Research Centre would continue to maintain its autonomy, including its budget, administration and Management Committee.

Women's Studies had been identified by the University as a potential site for innovative research which enabled it to apply for a number of funding opportunities while competing with other departments in the University (n.a. Unpublished Results c). However, the Research Centre was having its own difficulties with the bureaucracy and adjusting to its more constrained circumstances (Magarey 1986). Moreover, there were insufficient funds for the new Department to fully incorporate the previous SACAE program, which had included ten



staff. Instead, the new Department comprised the equivalent of five and a half academic staff (full time staff were Margaret Allen, Kay Schaffer, and Myra Betschild and by August 1992 Margie Ripper; fractional staff were Chris Beasley, Susanah Schech, and Susan Magarey, plus a half time secretary Jill Gallagher (n.a. Unpublished Results c: 2)). This severe reduction in staff numbers affected the kind of program offered and teaching loads impacted on publication output, which compromised the previously sound research record of the SACAE team (n.a. Unpublished Results c: 4).

According to Schaffer the situation in terms of resources and staff workload was abysmal for a number of years following the amalgamation of the Department of Women's Studies into University of Adelaide and it may well have been that many in the University hoped that Women's Studies would fail, or fade away (Schaffer 2006). However, the Department had considerable community and professional support which assisted in its continuation (Schaffer 2006). Even though Women's Studies at Flinders University was considered more community activist in its orientation, Women's Studies at the University of Adelaide maintained sound relations with grassroots feminist groups and designed the program as a student centered, professional course, with dedicated interdisciplinary feminist core subjects, and (initially) a non-graded pass structure (Schaffer 2006). An early casualty of the move to the University of Adelaide was the loss of the Associate Diploma, as the University could not support alternative entry (Allen and Magarey 2012: 222).

The new department, according to the University Calendar (1992: 79), had three focal areas of research and teaching: 'Women's Health and Leisure'; 'Australian Cultural Studies'; and 'Australian Studies--History and Literature'. In the first year there were two first year level courses offered: Introduction to Gender Studies 1, which by its title signalled the direction for the future name of the Department; and Women's Health Issues 1, knowledge and control of women's bodies by women being a key aspect of the Women's Liberation Movement. Women's Health Issues 1 was advertised as exploring both the physical and social aspects of women's health, and women's health and leisure had been identified as a research area of strength in the Department, at the time only five per cent of health research focused on women (n.a. Unpublished Results a). As an introductory course, Introduction to Gender Studies was designed to cover the topics of gender inequality, sexuality, the category of 'woman' and the place of men in society as well as research methods; Rosemary Tong's (1989) *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* was assigned as the text book. Associations with former SACAE staff now at the University of South Australia proved useful, for instance, Don Gobbett in Geography at the Magill Campus came to give guest lectures for several years "about men and masculinity studies" for which he provided students with a comprehensive reading list (Allen 1992b). An extensive evaluation of Introduction to Gender Studies was requested of students in 1993, in which students were asked what they thought of individual lectures and about the usefulness and accessibility of the readings. Sadly, the outcome of the survey has not survived.

Although five courses were planned at second year level, according to the University Calendar, only four were offered in 1992 (University of Adelaide 1992: 83). Courses such as *Australian Feminism in Context: 1880-1914* and *Gender Divisions in Some Western Societies Since 1700*--provided a historical context for the second wave feminist movement, while *Power Relations in Australian Society and Women and the Media* explored more contemporary issues. The latter course again signalled future directions with Media courses (*Popular Media and Society*, *Media Images and Representation*, *Media and Social Change*) continuing to be popular with students twenty years later. Kay Schaffer and Kathie Muir were

innovative in offering media courses before the University of Adelaide had a Media Studies discipline or degree--subsequently, these courses were incorporated into this degree.

Providing continuity between past and present, because it was the only core unit (of four) which came from the original SACAE Graduate Diploma in teaching at Salisbury SACAE, Feminist Thought was offered at third year level. This core 'Feminist Theory' course continued to be offered at least until 1998.

Initially a student-centred approach, which catered for mature aged female students with childcare responsibilities, was characteristic of all courses offered by the Women's Studies Department. For example, most Women's Studies courses offered one-hour lectures and two-hour tutorials or seminars, and it was some time before all of the Women's Studies courses conformed to the two-hour lecture approach prevalent at the University. Even as Women's Studies conformed, however, it continued to have a radical edge, as it offered those two hours concurrently so that students did not have to travel into the university twice a week to complete the lecture component of the course. Moreover, students who signed up early could also be allocated to a tutorial immediately after the lecture slot enabling them to complete the course contact requirements in one period of three hours, a format that continues today.

Distance education is an area which distinguished Women's Studies back in the 1990s. It was one of only three Departments making provision for external students (Labour Studies and Education being the others). The University is catching up, albeit twenty years on, and is now offering external courses delivered online aided by the improvement in technology. According to early Departmental minutes the transition from the SACAE was far from seamless for external courses, which included problems with the distribution of materials to students--A Study Guide and Course Reader (Allen 1992a); now available electronically.

### **When Women's Studies Became Gender Studies**

This department has had to grapple with the amalgamation in 1991-2, the Review of 1994 and now another upheaval in 1996. We are feeling totally punch-drunk! When are we going to be left to get on with what we do so very well ie teach, encourage women students, to develop our international links and to research and publish? (Allen 1996).

With more changes on the horizon, this time threatening the autonomy, size and name of the Department of Women's Studies, Margaret Allen sounds frustrated and despairing as she writes to the then Vice Chancellor, Mary O'Kane. The Department had already fended off a threat for the name to be changed to Gender Studies (Magarey and Ripper 1995), and it had survived a Faculty Review in 1994, which showed that Women's Studies outperformed eight of the eleven departments in its Faculty on all measures, including research grants, publications, and PhD supervisions (Schaffer 2006). Although, once again, many expected Women's Studies to disappear, it survived. All the same, there was a new proposal that the Departments of Anthropology and Women's Studies amalgamate at the end of 1996 in order to reduce the overall costs associated with both. This local change had been initiated because of yet more Federal Government changes to the University sector in 1996, this time in relation to an increase in the upfront fees imposed on postgraduate students to take effect in 1997. The Government loan, or HECS, would no longer apply to the Graduate Diploma in Women's Studies. The Graduate Diploma, which accounted for 25% of student load, became untenable due to prohibitive fees (Labour Studies faced the same dilemma). Future students

from the Technical and Further Education (TAFE) sector as well as from the community could now only enrol in Women's Studies as undergraduates or postgraduates (Masters, PhD) accessed through traditional paths (Allen and Magarey 2012: 227).

Even as Women's Studies staff met with Anthropology to discuss the proposed amalgamation and drafted principles for the merger, the changes were vigorously opposed by staff and students (Gray 1996). For example, Wendy Bastalich and Shannon Dowling, the postgraduate student representatives, protested that the suggested amalgamation was not a "politically neutral outcome" of Federal Government policy. While PhD students acknowledged the changes were situated within the wider context of Federal Government funding cuts, they argued that Women's Studies was being "hit disproportionately because we are not like other departments, we offer course work degrees which enable women to change career paths, strengthen their existing qualifications, and enter higher degree research" (Bastalich and Dowling 1996). This was prophetic, as it turns out, given the sizable increase in the number of casual and contract staff now being employed by the university, as well as the lack of gender equity in the university's hierarchy (Beasley et al 2011: 12). PhD students were also protesting the 'two class society' that would emerge. Women's Studies staff and post-graduate students predicted that women staff would be disadvantaged with the reduction of full time permanent staff and the mooted increase of casual and contract staff who would be employed to do the bulk of teaching, particularly since the majority of casual and contract staff are women (Bastalich and Dowling 1996).

The appointment of Professor Penny Boumelha as Head of what was then called the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences put an end to discussions about the amalgamation of Women's Studies with Anthropology. As she reviewed the proposed restructure, she concluded it would be more appropriate for Women's Studies to be amalgamated with Labour Studies since both Departments were interdisciplinary and undertook "critical analysis of society from complementary perspectives involving a range of methodologies" (Boumelha 1996). Women's Studies and Labour Studies had other things in common too, for example, both having a commitment to equity and external students as well as innovative teaching and learning practices. Moreover, the high profile former Premier Don Dunstan AC was Adjunct Professor of Labour Studies and an advocate of Gender Studies.

One significant positive that emerged from the merger was the appointment of a Chair of Women's Studies within the newly formed Department (Boumelha 1996). The appointment was not without challenges; the position agreed on early in 1995 was frozen later that year. It was only after protest, lead by the then Head of Department Kay Schaffer and at least 250 letters of support from prominent people in the community, that it was reopened (Allen and Magarey 2012: 226). Chilla Bulbeck was appointed in 1996 and held the Chair until her retirement in 2009.

In 1996, Jyanni Steffensen and Barbara Pocock were the first Ph.D. graduates of the new department, now titled Department of Social Inquiry. Jyanni Steffensen went on to win an ARC postdoctoral position which she undertook in the Department, and Barbara Pocock is currently Director of the Centre for Work and Life at the University of South Australia. By 1998 the Department enrollments were sound and that year there was a particularly large intake of doctoral students, the largest the department had ever had, including current University of Adelaide staff Dr Ros Prosser (English and Creative Writing), Assoc/Prof Megan Warin and Dr Pam Papadelos (Gender Studies and Social Analysis). There was a strong relationship between staff and postgraduate students, the latter outnumbering the

former. Student and staff offices were integrated on level 3 of the Tower Building (10 Pulteney Street, situated across the road from the main campus). A shared tea-room along with a supportive and well attended postgraduate seminar program fostered a close-knit, stimulating intellectual environment (Ripper 2012).

While Introduction to Gender Studies, which has been a mainstay course since 1992, was still offered, new courses were developed to reflect the amalgamation with Labour Studies. For instance, Gender, Work and Society, which was in keeping with some of the earlier sociological and work oriented courses taught by Ann Aungles and Chris Beasley in the SACAE, and continues to attract students in 2012. Women's Health Issues had become Gender, 'The Body' & Health and was offered at upper levels only, and continues to be offered, albeit with a minor name change as Gender, Bodies and Health. Other offerings in 1998 reflect the widespread interest in Post Colonial Studies (Feminism in a Post Colonial World, Power & Difference: Post-Colonial Perspectives) and the expertise of Barbara Baird, now Associate Professor at Flinders University, is reflected in Perspectives on Sexuality. Although Baird moved to take up the post of Women's Studies Coordinator at the University of Tasmania in 1999, Perspectives on Sexuality did not entirely disappear from the program, as it reappeared amongst the 2003 offerings. From 2000 Feminist Thought had disappeared from the program to be replaced briefly by Modern & Post-Modern Feminisms which introduced students to Derrida and Foucault. In regard to feminist theory courses, in 2012, Introduction to Gender Studies is the core topic for undergraduate students and Contemporary Theories in Gender Studies (reworked by Papadelos to replace Critique and Construct) is the core topic for honours students (honours is run jointly between the University of Adelaide and Flinders University).

In 2000, social sciences courses (Social Sciences in Australia) were added to the program for the first time. Social sciences courses had been in the pipeline since 1996 when Chilla Bulbeck suggested to Margaret Allen via email that she and Deane Fergie (located in the Anthropology Department) develop a social sciences course as a first year subject. Not only would such a course benefit students, it would allow for the tenuous lecturer position held by Barbara Baird to be made more permanent if it proved to be popular among students (Bulbeck 1996). Bulbeck's textbook *Social Sciences in Australia* (1997) was important in structuring the Bachelor of Social Sciences degree. More recently, Susan Oakley, now head of GSSA, has developed this degree further, and its success is reflected in the high number of students it attracts (for more information see Allen and Magarey 2012).

Most of the original 1992 staff members have now retired. Myra Betschild retired in 1996, Professor Emerita Susan Magarey in 2002, Professor Kay Schaffer in 2006 (now Adjunct in GSSA), Associate Professor Margie Ripper in 2010, and Professor Emerita Margaret Allen in 2011 (now Adjunct in GSSA). Professor Chilla Bulbeck retired in 2009 (now Adjunct Professor Emerita in GSSA). However, Professor Chris Beasley continues to be employed at the University of Adelaide in the Politics discipline. Through her co-directorship of the Fay Gale Centre for Research on Gender--the successor in many ways to the earlier Research Centre for Women's Studies--there continues to be historical links between a 'disciplinary'/departmental location (Gender Studies and Social Analysis, School of Social Sciences) and an interdisciplinary research centre on gender. With Dr Kathie Muir's retirement in 2013, the current tenured teaching staff of GSSA are Associate Professor Susan Oakley (head), Associate Professor Megan Warin, and Dr Anna Szorenyi, and on contract are Dr Dee Michell and Dr Pam Papadelos.

## Conclusion

Twenty years after the beginnings of the Women's Liberation Movement in Australia, the Department of Women's Studies arrived at the prestigious University of Adelaide. Although buffeted about by changes at the Federal Government level, and local disparagement of anything to do with feminism, the Department has survived for twenty years, albeit not in name. As Margie Ripper says:

Women's Studies has survived despite the way it has been treated and despite the broader structural issues that have shaped priorities in higher education. It has survived by bending and morphing into forms that have been required of it. Its survival is testament to the talent of its staff and students the fact that it has and continues to struggle to survive highlights the operation of gendered power in universities--as in all social institutions--and demonstrates the need for a robust analysis of this power (Ripper 2012).

Currently, women outnumber men as undergraduate students in universities, "although they still remain under-represented in higher degree research programs and in some non-traditional areas such as engineering and information technology" (Bradley et al 2008). "Women are still underrepresented in senior academic positions" in Australian Universities (Kjeldal et al 2005: 431), even though Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation was enacted in Australia in 1987. For instance, in 1995, the faculty of Arts at the University of Adelaide employed one professor and two associate professors, which was one of the worst records in the country (Allen and Magarey 2012: 226). The university still has one of the poorest results for employment of senior academic women of all Australian Universities, with 23% at associate professor level and 16.5% at professor level (Qut Equity Services 2011). As in other institutions around the world, the incorporation and survival of Women's/Gender Studies has validated the areas of both research and teaching (Gouws 2012: 528), but seem not to have transformed the institution in important ways. At this point in time, the University of Adelaide cannot, as is happening elsewhere, use "the insights and contributions of feminists to show how progressive the university really is" (Gouws 2012: 537).

The need for and benefit of Women's/Gender Studies has not disappeared. Recent graduates and current students from the Gender Studies program at the University of Adelaide are taking lead roles in new initiatives to address feminist issues. For instance, Gemma Beale, Catherine Story and Connie Musolino are instrumental in the formation and development of the South Australian Feminist Collective (2012), which describes itself as "an inclusive feminist organisation that aims to fight sexism and discrimination" (<http://http://safeministcollective.org/>). Beale was also active in organising the 2013 Reclaim the Night march in Adelaide and has initiated an on-line archive of stories and experiences of rape and sexual assault, called "... and you say that rape culture doesn't exist?" (<http://http://rapecultureexists.tumblr.com/>). In an interview with Lip Magazine, Beale stated that the archive provided "a space for women to see the bigger picture and maybe even get angry about it" (Flux 2013). The enthusiasm of--and need for--young feminists to challenge sexist behaviour in public and private life has thus not been diminished by neo-liberal constraints on the academy or by the so called 'backlash' against feminism. While these are welcome signs of activism, it is also true to say that the feminist movement which enabled academic feminism is now "far less activist, confident or popular" (Stacy 2000: 1197). In order to speak back to the blatant sexism evident in the issues addressed by the Feminist Collective, Women's/Gender Studies continues to play an important role because it provides:

A recognition of the social and the symbolic implications of gender accompanied by a persistent engagement with the issues of the world outside the academy. This dual parentage of theory and practice continues to give Women's Studies its vitality and its resonance (Evans 2011: 609).

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### **Source Citation** (MLA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Papadelos, Pam, Dee Michell, and Penelope Eate. "'Bending and morphing': the department of women's studies at the University of Adelaide continues past its twenty year anniversary." *Outskirts: feminisms along the edge* 31 (2014). *Academic OneFile*. Web. 31 Mar. 2015.

URL