



### *CRWG's Fifteenth Anniversary Celebration!*

September 4, 2006 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the Center for Research on Women and Gender. The CRWG invites you to help celebrate our fifteenth anniversary with a reception on Thursday, October 12, 2006, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Illinois Room of Student Center East (750 S. Halsted). If you would like to attend, please R.S.V.P. by Monday, October 2 by calling 312-413-1924.

CRWG Director Emerita, Alice Dan, will preside as Mistress of Ceremonies. The event will feature a short talk entitled, “Navigating the Corridors of Washington and the Aisles of Wal-Mart” by special guest, Tracy Sefl, CRWG alumna and feminist activist.

Ms. Sefl is a political and communications consultant with The Glover Park Group in Washington, DC. Her experience includes directing communications and research for the national advocacy group Wal-Mart Watch, and serving as an advisor to the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee during the 2004 presidential campaign. Trained as a sociologist at Cornell College and UIC, Ms. Sefl is an author, media spokesperson, and featured speaker on Democratic politics and women’s issues.

We will also honor the 2006 Alice Dan Dissertation Award Winners, Sharon Palo and Elizabeth Collins.

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## CRWG's History

### Significant CRWG Milestones

- 1972 Circle Women's Liberation Union, a student and faculty women's group, formed at UIC
- 1986 Ann E. Smith, a University of Illinois Trustee, requested a hearing on the status of women at UIUC and UIC. Alice Dan (co-chair of the UIC Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women) and Berenice Carroll (Director of UIUC's Women's Studies) presented at the hearing. Dr. Carroll discussed her interest in starting a women's research center at UIUC, and committees were formed on both campuses to develop proposals.
- 1988 Faculty survey conducted in which 81 faculty members from across the university identified themselves as actively involved in women and/or gender, providing justification for a research center focused on women and gender to foster interdisciplinary studies and support that a center could provide.
- 1990 The Center for Research on Women and Gender received campus level approval.
- 1991 The Center for Research on Women and Gender was approved by the Board of Trustees.
- 1992 The CRWG opened its doors; Alice Dan was appointed director.
- 1998 The CRWG was designated a National Center of Excellence in Women's Health.
- 2002 Alice Dan, CRWG director, retired. Judith Gardiner was named interim director.
- 2003 The CRWG's Women In Science and Engineering (WISE) program established an office on the east side of campus, in the Science Learning Center. WISE also established a living/learning community known as the "WISE Wing" for WISE students living in the dorms.
- 2004 Stacie Geller appointed director of CRWG.

### CRWG's Four Founding Objectives

The Center for Research on Women and Gender promotes collaborative, multidisciplinary research related to women and gender, with an emphasis on work, health, and culture. By bringing together a cadre of outstanding scholars, the Center strives to address the multitude of gender-related issues facing society today. The Center focuses its work according to the following objectives:

- To stimulate and increase knowledge about women and about gender as an explanatory category of research;
- To study and evaluate the impact of policies related to women and gender;
- To improve dissemination and use of new scholarship on women and gender;
- To create alliances with outside organizations sharing interests in women and gender-related issues.

## 2006 Alice J. Dan Dissertation Award Winners Announced



### 2006 Alice Dan Dissertation Award Winners Announced

The Center for Research on Women and Gender announces its Fifth Annual Alice J. Dan Dissertation Research Award winners! The Dan Dissertation Research Award is a competitive award presented to UIC graduate students to encourage original and significant research about gender and/or women.

We would like to congratulate, the recipients of the 2006 award.

- **Elizabeth Collins, doctoral candidate in History.**

Ms. Collins' work, entitled "Red-Baiting Public Women: Gender, Loyalty, and Red Scare Politics" examines cases made against five public women between 1945 and 1955 in order to explore how red scare politics shaped this generation.

- **Sharon Palo, doctoral candidate in English Literature with a concentration in Gender and Women's Studies.**

Ms. Palo's dissertation is titled "Domestic Disturbances: The Story of the Public Woman in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction." Eighteenth-century domestic fiction is frequently associated with the emergence of a feminine ideal that previous critics have identified as "the domestic woman." In her dissertation, Ms. Palo questions the stability of this figure's dominance and traces the development of an alternative image of womanhood within eighteenth-century English culture and within the pages of the domestic novel.

Each recipient received \$1,500 toward the completion of her research and an opportunity to present her research findings to the CRWG advisory committee.

Honorable mentions were given to:

- Jennifer Gray-Stanley from the School of Public Health, Community Health Sciences Division, for her research entitled, "Stress Management Assessment for Staff Serving Clients with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities"
- Carrol Smith, a student in the College of Nursing whose research is on "Women Who Formerly Abused Their Female Intimate Partners"; and
- Jennifer Rupert from the Department of English, whose dissertation is entitled "Oscillating Wildly: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Convulsive Identity in Experimental Modernism."

Please join us in honoring the 2006 award winners at the Center's 15th Anniversary Celebration to be held on Thursday, October 12th.

## Community Partnership Spotlight: WISE Neighbor Partners

### UIC WISE Neighbors Updates

The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) Program is pleased to announce the summer 2006 WISE Neighbor grants funded by the Motorola Foundation.

The goal of the WISE Neighbor grant is to assist local organizations in providing programs to encourage and support young women interested in pursuing a science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) degree at the university level. Proposals were judged on their ability to:

- 1) expand opportunities for girls to access mentoring opportunities in STEM,
- 2) overcome societal stereotypes about non-traditional careers for women, and
- 3) raise girls' confidence in science, technology, engineering, and/or math.

The following agencies received grants in summer 2006 to fulfill these goals:

- **Girls Scouts of Chicago's** Science Explorer program exposes 60 sixth grade girls attending underperforming Chicago Public Schools to science and math programming. Girls will participate in four sessions on science and math and attend a "Bunking with the Butterflies" overnight at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. In addition, they will participate in innovative, hands-on activities and discussions, and their achievements will be recognized by receiving the Math Wiz, Science Sleuth, Sky Search and Earth Connection badges.
- **Girls Scouts of Centriilio Council** will restore, protect, enhance and preserve the grounds surrounding the Centriilio Council's Service Center. The "Right As Rain" project is a land management program that addresses the challenges the council faces to preserve and protect the terrain surrounding the council's service center in Bloomington, IL. As a hands-on restoration and conservation project under the guidance of a landscape architect, the volunteers will plan and create a bank stabilization and rain garden to prevent future damage.
- **Chicago's Neighborhood Technology Resource Center (NTRC) Girls Empowerment Initiative** will encourage girls to pursue interests in technology, and encourage them to pursue further education at the college level by exposing them to a variety of career fields including technology, math and science related careers. The grant will be used to fund a field trip to the Adler Planetarium and a career night.
- **Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago (YWLCS)** will enhance the science curriculum to engage every student in an exciting real-life science investigation that will ignite her desire to excel in the areas of science, math and technology. The investigations will be based on The River Project, an NSF-funded interdisciplinary curriculum in which teams of 3-4 students use scientific procedures to investigate the physical, environmental, chemical, and biological aspects of a river according to their grade level and the type of science class they are taking at YWLCS.

The next grant deadline is OCTOBER 16, 2006. Please go to the WISE web site at [http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise/wise\\_neighbors.htm](http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise/wise_neighbors.htm) to complete the application. Questions about the WISE Neighbors grant program can be directed to Sarah Shirk at [sshirkl@uic.edu](mailto:sshirkl@uic.edu).

## WISE Neighbors Welcomes Global Girls to UIC Campus

The WISE ambassadors provided a campus tour on August 23, 2006 for the Global Girls, a youth development organization that works with girls 8 to 18 to develop communication, leadership and life skills. Thanks go to WISE Ambassadors Ruth Czarnecki, Kachet Bonds, Shiwani Sambarey, Kalpana Dokka, and Tanisha Ross for helping to make the day a success! Each ambassador spoke eloquently about her major and career aspirations during the luncheon panel and then helped to guide the tour of UIC's west campus, which included a botany identification game in the Dorothy Bradley Atkins Medicinal Plant Garden and a climb up the double helix stair case in the molecular biology research building.



WISE Ambassadors Tarnisha Ross (far left), Kachet Bonds (second from left) and Ruth Czarnecki (right side, back row) join the Global Girls for a mentor "meet and greet" luncheon as part of the WISE Neighbors outreach program.

Global Girls participate in the "Be a Botanist" identification game sponsored by the WISE Neighbors program. Girls learned about the risks and benefits of medicinal plants while discovering observation skills used by botanists. Each girl received a copy of *Cool Career for Girls as Environmentalists* to expose them to careers in fields such as botany and environmental science.



To schedule a campus tour focused on science, engineering, or technology for your organization, please contact Sarah Shirk, WISE Outreach Coordinator at [sshirkl@uic.edu](mailto:sshirkl@uic.edu).

# WISE Women in Science and Engineering

## What's UP With WISE?

### WISEST Initiative Awarded \$3.3 million from NSF

The Women in Science and Engineering System Transformation (WISEST) Initiative was selected for a National Science Foundation ADVANCE award. The 3.3 million dollars in funding will allow WISEST to accelerate its activities to increase the number, participation, and leadership status of women faculty--majority and minority--in the eleven science and engineering (STEM) departments at UIC. WISEST will continue to use a network of faculty facilitators from all STEM departments working with department heads and an executive committee of key administrators and social scientists to carry out five integrated and mutually reinforcing strategies: warm the climate and decrease the isolation of women STEM faculty; recruit minority women faculty through an unique mentored postdoctoral program; transform STEM departments to foster diversity and women's leadership; promote women's scholarship and teaching; and improve the ability to track and report on gender equity at UIC. Proposed WISEST outcomes for STEM women faculty include: increased numbers of majority and minority women faculty; improved retention rates; salary equity with men of similar accomplishments and productivity; increased percentage of leadership positions held by women faculty; improved job satisfaction; and increased national visibility for UIC scholars.

### Pre-University Initiatives

The GEM-SET Mentoring for Success program welcomes a new partner, Lakeview High School. We will begin tutor training for the fall semester and set off to mentor and support Lakeview High and Young Women's Leadership Charter School (YWLCS) students in math. Due to the success of our tutoring and large interest from tutors and schools, WISE now has a tutor corps. WISE tutors spent the month of July at YWLCS tutoring incoming 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls on math. WISE logged a total of 25 hours with five tutors in three weeks!

The tutor corps is a subset of our WISE Ambassador volunteer program. We are looking for UIC WISE undergraduate and graduate students to volunteer on a regular basis or just a one time deal to assist in our outreach programs. WISE brings girls in grades 5-12 to campus, we visit their science clubs, and we host outings at Chicago museums. By being a WISE Ambassador, you are being a mentor and role model to these young women. If you are interested in this opportunity or you are a faculty member who would like to host an outing, please contact [GEM-SET@uic.edu](mailto:GEM-SET@uic.edu).

### On Campus Student Activities

Summer 2006 marked the official launch of the UIC Assuring STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Credential Expansion through Nurturing Diversity (ASCEND) program. Thirty-three first-year students from diverse backgrounds participated in a five-week program that worked to build their math skills, introduce them to laboratory skills, and begin creating a supportive community. ASCEND Scholars will move into a 10-week seminar series for the fall and spring semesters where they will continue to discover what it takes to be a successful STEM student, explore career options, and solidify their new friendships.

WISE is planning a variety of activities this semester, including a lunch trip to the Chicago Chocolate Company Café and a talk by visiting Computer Science professor, Judy Goldsmith, who will discuss artificial intelligence and science fiction. Please visit our events webpage [http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise/current\\_events.htm](http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise/current_events.htm) for more details.

WISE is also continuing our biweekly knitting group, Knitworking, open to all UIC students, staff, and faculty. We meet Tuesdays at noon and Fridays at 11 a.m. at the WISE office. Please feel free to bring your lunch. If you do not know how to knit, please bring one pair of knitting needles (size 8-10) and your enthusiasm. WISE has people who can help you start and finish that winter scarf before the first blizzard hits!

If you are interested in on campus activities, either as a speaker or attendee, please contact us at [wiseuic@uic.edu](mailto:wiseuic@uic.edu).

## Faculty Support

We continue to increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty in the STEM departments. In July, a WISEST-lead report to assess the need for infant care on campus was discussed. The bottom line is that infant care is needed on campus and Bright Horizons put together a nice plan for building one or two child care facilities on the UIC campus. Implementing this plan will take time to raise the funds, create a quality curriculum, and build the facility, so keep your fingers crossed that commitment to the plan will remain high. If you wish to view the report, please contact the WISE office.

WISEST welcomes distinguished Professor Joan C. Williams, a prize-winning author and expert on work/family issues to campus on October 19, 2006. The time and location for the WISEST panel will be announced on our webpage <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise/wisest.htm> soon. Williams will return to campus on the 20<sup>th</sup> for the "Who Cares?: Dilemmas of Work and Family in the 21st Century," conference at UIC. The event will focus on contemporary career demands and their impact on women and families. This event is sponsored by the Council on Contemporary Families, a national non-profit, non-partisan association of leading family researchers and mental health and social work practitioners. CRWG, WISE, and WISEST are co-sponsors of this exciting event.

## Get Involved

Check out our web page at <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise>. To become involved, contact [wiseuic@uic.edu](mailto:wiseuic@uic.edu). We are looking forward to another amazing year.

## WISE Student Internships

The WISE program has a strong tradition for pushing our students to take every opportunity to work in labs or obtain an internship. Over the past summer, two of our students, Karima Russell and Tanushree Varshney, did just that. Here is a summary of their experiences:

**Karima Russell: Ph.D. student in Mechanical Engineering and 2005-2006 WISE Graduate Assistant.**  
Internship location: NASA Glenn Research Center in Ohio.



Karima Russell at the 2006 WISE End of the Year Celebration

I was a recipient of the NASA Graduate Student Research Program (GSRP) Fellowship and spent 9 weeks this summer doing research at the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio. I worked with the combustion research branch and spent most of the summer learning how to use NASA's in-house computer code known as the National Combustion Code

(NCC).

My graduate research focuses on determining methods to improve flame stabilization in rearward-facing step combustors, which are used in ramjet engines for fighter jets or missiles (propulsion devices). Research on flame stabilization is important for improving combustor efficiency. I am redesigning a combustor in the hopes of achieving a more stable flame in the combustor, and testing my design using (1) a commercial software, (2) NASA's NCC, and (3) a code that I am currently developing. Learning how to set up some basic cases in NCC helped me in setting up cases for my combustor design. These results will later be used for comparison with experimental data and results from my 2-Dimensional (2D) code.

I also briefly studied a new method developed at NASA called the Partially Resolved Numerical

Simulation (PRNS) method, which is a concept that I plan to use for my thesis work. One of my goals for this school year is to write a computer code to model 2D turbulence occurring inside of the combustor. I am interested in implementing PRNS into my 2D code because this method will allow me to solve for the unresolved scales of turbulence.

While at NASA, I got a chance to tour the Icing Research Tunnel (see photo) and the Aero-Acoustic Propulsion Laboratory (also known as the "Dome of Silence"). I also had a very supportive team at NASA and hope to visit again next summer.



Photo Courtesy of NASA

**Tanushree Varshney: MS student in Computer Science and 2006-2007 Vice-President of Financial Affairs for WISE Chicago. Internship location: Motorola Inc. in Illinois.**

Motorola is a leader in broadband, embedded systems and wireless networks. I worked for Access Solutions Lab belonging to Global Software Group, one of the Research and Development divisions of Motorola.

#### *Technical abilities used and learned:*

My task during the internship was to develop an internal website for my group, Access Solutions. This website serves as a central repository for storing and sharing documents among team members. It has various features such as upload/download documents, version control, sending notifications to related parties when certain documents are added or updated, assigning permissions to different people for different content, etc.

The first thing I did was to investigate and evaluate possible solutions. I mainly focused on two technologies, Motorola Compass and Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services 2.0. I did some research as to which would better fulfill the requirements of the group, and decided to use Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services 2.0. I setup a web server, Windows Server 2003 for hosting the website and configured SharePoint Services to run on the server. After I learned how to use SharePoint Services and prepared an initial design of the website, I customized it according to Motorola standards, obtained feedback and made changes accordingly, and tested it from administrator and user roles. Finally, I did some documentation to support the usability, scalability and

maintainability of the website.

My internship gave me exposure to a work culture and environment in a big company. I learned how to work in a team and interact with team members. Until now, I had worked only with engineers. This internship gave me an opportunity to work with both engineers and managers, and an understanding of how their tasks go hand-in-hand. Interestingly, for the first time I got to actually see how much effort is needed to bring a product to the market. I had studied the product development life cycle, but got to see and understand that making a successful product is much more. First you have an idea, and then, based on that idea, you do some research and develop a prototype. You present a proof-of-concept to senior managers to get your product approved. Once and if it gets approved, the development cycle occurs which must finish within set deadlines. Also, good marketing strategies play an extremely important role.

I also got a chance to interact with fellow interns in the lab, and discuss the projects they are working on and thus came to know about new technologies and products.





## CoE Updates

*Congratulations to the College of Medicine (COM) Faculty Academic Advancement Committee (FAAC), which has just received the 2006 Women in Medicine Leadership Development Award!*

*FAAC was nominated by COM Dean, Joseph Flaherty to receive the award, which recognizes individual and organizational contributions to advancing women leaders in academic medicine. Since the first award in 1993, these prestigious awards have recognized 15 individuals and 6 medical school based women in medicine programs. The award presentation will be made during the AAMC annual meeting in October.*

*FAAC was also selected to present a poster at the Dean's Poster Session. Congratulations to everyone who has been integral to FAAC efforts over the last 3 1/2 years!*

### An In-Depth Look at Faculty Academic Advancement Committee

UIC's College of Medicine (COM) Faculty Academic Advancement Committee (FAAC) grew out of the CoE conference, "Beyond Parity: Transforming Academic Medicine through Women's Leadership," held in 2002.

The long-term goals of FAAC are (1) to create an institution whose faculty, department leaders, and deans reflect the gender and ethnic profile of the College's student body, and to enable excellence in research, teaching, and patient care while promoting work/life balance so that the COM becomes a desired destination for talented and diverse faculty; and (2) to transform COM operations and culture rather than fortify survival skills or remediate perceived weaknesses of women and minorities. In short, FAAC aims to "fix the system, not the women."

Since its founding in January of 2003, FAAC has undertaken several activities to achieve its goals, including Leadership Seminars, a Self-study, a Department Transformation Initiative, policy review and recommendations; and on-campus advocacy.

#### *Leadership Seminars*

The Leadership Seminar series is intended to build an informed constituency for gender equity and diversity. Seminars feature nationally-known speakers who have presented on the dividends of a diverse faculty, the benefits of life-friendly policies and supports, policy options for increasing the flexibility of tenure-track positions, strategies for recruiting and retaining women and minority faculty, and research findings on gender schemas and evaluation bias. Over the last 3 years, FAAC has sponsored 9 Leadership Seminars, workshops, and networking events.

#### *College of Medicine Self-study*

The College of Medicine Self-study was undertaken to provide an evidence-base for action. The perception,

particularly among women faculty, was that very little progress had been made in recruiting, retaining, and promoting women at the COM over the last decade. The Self-study was conceptualized to rollout in four phases with yearly updates:

- Phase I focuses on the status of women faculty in the COM at the UIC campus. (Completed)
- Phase II focuses on underrepresented minority faculty at the UIC COM. (In process)
- Phase III examines the status of women faculty at the regional campuses (Peoria, Rockford, and Urbana). (In process)
- Phase IV examines salary equity including an analysis of start-up packages, lab space, protected research time, clinical, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. (Planned for '06-'07)

The main conclusions from phase I and II confirm that there have been nominal increases in the percent of women in tenured/tenure-track and leadership positions at UIC over the past 8 years. Although UIC's COM is no better or worse than other US colleges of medicine, given UIC's commitment to excellence and equity and the diversity of our student body, "average" is not acceptable. If faculty composition mirrored the demographics of the fall 2005 medical school class, 45% would be women, and 23% African American and Hispanic.

Self-study data reveal that over the past 8 years at the COM:

- The percent of faculty who are women has increased from 26.9 to 29.6
- The percent of tenured faculty who are women has increased from 18.1 to 19.1
- The percent of tenured associate professors who are women has decreased from 23.7 to 19.7

- The percent of tenured full professors who are women has increased from 13.9 to 18.8 There has been no change in the number of Departments headed by women (1/24 for 4%)
- Of women faculty, only 26.9% are tenured compared to 47.8% of men faculty
- 10 UIC Departments are above the national average for percent of female faculty; 9 are below

The Self-study data were presented to the 24 department heads by COM Dean Joseph Flaherty and FAAC leaders in fall 2005. An ambitious plan to increase diversity in the COM was announced with responsibilities outlined for the Dean, FAAC, and the department heads. The Dean committed to on-going support for FAAC activities and in January 2006, created a new Assistant Dean for Faculty Advancement (ADFA) position to spearhead transformation efforts. FAAC committed to continuing its initiatives and completing phases II, III and IV of data collection. Department heads were charged with undertaking department-level activities.

### *Department Transformation*

Based on the results of the Self-study, department heads were to: (1) commit to the diversity goals set forth by the Dean; (2) appoint a faculty member as “Facilitator” to coordinate departmental diversity efforts; (3) authorize department meetings to discuss department-specific data and why progress has or has not been made; (4) develop a department-specific Action Plan with measurable objectives; and, (5) submit the Action Plan to Dean Flaherty and report twice-yearly on progress.

Twenty-three FAAC Department Facilitators have been appointed by their department heads. The Facilitators meet regularly, and within their departments are responsible for serving as the liaison between FAAC and the department, working with their head and colleagues on an Action Plan, publicizing FAAC events to colleagues, and assisting with on-going data collection.

Facilitators also participated in two “brain-storming” sessions on potential department-level and college-wide activities to foster gender equity and diversity. Preliminary Action Plan recommendations include: instituting a more robust partner accommodation policy; establishing inclusive day-care options; ensuring that existing life-friendly policies are known and applied uniformly; increasing the flexibility of tenure track careers; revaluing scholarship to reward more than publications and clinical productivity; improving orientation for new faculty and department heads; broadening current mentoring options; and increasing resources, including salary, benefits, and administrative support and ensuring equitable distribution. FAAC is

working with campus leaders, COM administration, department heads, Facilitators, and faculty to address these recommendations.

### *Policy Review and Recommendations*

Accountability and ownership are essential to drive system change. FAAC has reviewed and recommended several policies in the college, and supported campus-wide policies, to increase and institutionalize accountability and assign value to faculty diversity efforts. Recently, the Dean has made progress towards improving gender equity and diversity an annual reporting requirement and an evaluation criterion for department heads, as the Provost has done for Deans. In addition, Promotion and Tenure papers now include a section asking what the submitter has done to increase gender equity and diversity at UIC.

Policies and programs that foster life/livelihood balance benefit all faculty, but are essential for women who continue to bear primary responsibility for child and family caretaking. FAAC has endorsed several efforts, including a Pro-rated Tenure Clock policy for part-time faculty which was introduced and then tabled without discussion by the UIC Faculty Senate in 2002. The policy was revived subsequent to its endorsement by FAAC and the COM Dean. It has passed two subcommittees and will be debated and brought up for a vote this fall. FAAC also supported a campus-wide survey to assess demand for expanding UIC childcare services to include infant and toddler care. Survey results revealed a substantial demand for these services from faculty and staff. FAAC will press for campus-wide dissemination of the results and for thorough research on implementation options.

### *On-campus Advocacy*

Many policies that effect COM faculty can only be addressed at the university level necessitating broad-based coalition building. FAAC is collaborating with units and programs focused on increasing gender and ethnic diversity—especially UIC’s Women in Science and Engineering System Transformation (WISEST) project—in order to create a campus-wide environment receptive to institutional change. FAAC and WISEST have co-sponsored several events and WISEST Facilitators are currently training COM Search Committees members. FAAC also advocates for women seeking leadership positions. The COM Dean recently appointed the first woman Vice Dean, announced a new woman Senior Associate Dean, and created two new Assistant Dean positions, selecting women to lead both. A woman was just named as a Division Head in Pediatrics. The Dean and FAAC co-Chairs are in accord on the need to increase the number of departments headed by women over the next several years.



## UIC CoE Launches U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Education Program

The UIC CoE announces a new program for parents and caregivers of young adolescent girls, thanks to a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health. *BodyWorks*, developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health, focuses on helping girls ages 9 to 13 and their families create healthier lifestyles.

A large share of adolescent girls have poor eating habits and do not get the recommended daily amount of physical activity. In developing the *BodyWorks* program, the Office on Women's Health (OWH) found that many girls skip breakfast, have non-nutritious lunches and don't eat dinner with their families. Girls spend about three hours a day watching television, playing video games, using the computer, and talking on the telephone, without parental limitations.

Overall, girls expressed a desire to have their parents be stronger role models for fitness. They wanted their parents to set boundaries for unhealthy eating habits and sedentary activities, and to engage the entire family in increasing physical activity.

The *BodyWorks* program, therefore, focuses on parents as role models and provides them with the tools and support they need to create healthy lifestyles for their children. Parents who enroll in the *BodyWorks* program will receive a *BodyWorks* toolkit and will attend regular group meetings to help maintain behavior change. The toolkit serves as a guide to creating an overall health lifestyle. It includes a video on healthy shopping and cooking strategies, a recipe book, food and fitness journals, a weekly meal planner refrigerator magnet and more.

*BodyWorks* at UIC begins on September 11, 2006, and dissemination to community groups will begin in January, 2007. If you are interested in learning more about *BodyWorks*, or if you know of a community group that might be interested, please contact: Sarah Shirk at [sshirk1@uic.edu](mailto:sshirk1@uic.edu) or 312-413-1636 or Kris Zimmermann at [kzimme3@uic.edu](mailto:kzimme3@uic.edu) or 312-413-4251.

### CoE Co-Hosts Child Marriage Brownbag

On July 18, the CoE was honored to co-host a presentation by Mahdere Paulos, Executive Director of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, and organization that has led efforts to reduce the incidence of child marriage in Ethiopia.

Child marriage is a practice that affects girls throughout the developing world with consequences to girls' health, their educational and economic opportunities, and their ability to enjoy childhood. While many countries have laws setting the minimum legal age for marriage at 18 years, traditional customs and failure to enforce these laws allows the practice to continue, sometimes for girls as young as 10 years old. Throughout the world, over 51 million girls age 15 to 19 are married. Rates are highest in West, East and Central Africa, and South Asia, where 30% or more girls ages 15 to 19 are already married.

Negative health effects are just one consequence of early marriage. Notably, sexual activity and child-bearing at a young age leads to high maternal and infant mortality and complications during childbirth such as obstetric labor or obstetric fistula, because of girls' underdeveloped bodies, lack of power, lack of knowledge, and lack of access to health care services. Women are also at risk for contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases because their partners are often older and more sexually experienced, and young women lack the power to refuse sex or ask their partner to use a condom.

In her talk, Ms. Paulos spoke about the efforts of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association to enforce marriage laws in Ethiopia, as well to educate the public in order to change cultural norms surrounding early marriage. Ms. Paulos was on a tour of several U.S. cities through a visit sponsored by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), a Washington D.C. based organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of women in poverty, advancing equality and human rights, and contributing to broader economic and social well-being through research, capacity building and advocacy.

For more information about child marriage, please visit the ICRW website at <http://www.icrw.org/>.

<sup>1</sup>Mathur, S., Greene, M. & Malhotra, A. (2003). *Too Young to Wed: The Lives, Rights, and Health of Young Married Girls*. Washington, D.C.: International Center for Research on Women. [http://www.icrw.org/docs/tooyoungtowed\\_1003.pdf](http://www.icrw.org/docs/tooyoungtowed_1003.pdf)

## HPV Vaccine: A Cancer Triumph

More than 15 years ago, a relationship between human papillomavirus (HPV) infection and cervical cancer was recognized. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the US, and is the leading cause of cervical cancer in women. There are more than 20 million men and women currently infected with HPV, and there are 6.2 million new infections each year. HPV is most common in young women and men who are in their late teens and early 20s. By age 50, at least 80 percent of women will have acquired HPV infection.

Despite effective screening methods for cervical cancer (Pap smears), many women are not screened regularly. More than 50% of women with cervical cancer have not had a recent Pap test. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 9,710 women in the US will be diagnosed with invasive cervical cancer in 2006 alone. About 3,700 of these women, constituting more than 1/3 of all diagnosed patients, will die from the disease. In 2006, the Illinois Department of Public Health's Illinois State Cancer Registry projects 640 new cases of invasive cervical cancer for women living in Illinois, of those, 190 will die.

On June 8, 2006, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved an HPV vaccine (manufactured by Merck & Co., Inc.) for females age 9 to 26 that prevents cervical cancer caused by HPV types 16 and 18. On June 29, 2006, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Center for Immunizations and Respiratory Diseases' (NCIRD) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended the HPV vaccine routinely for girls and young women (see below). The vaccine is considered highly effective in preventing infections that are the cause of most cervical cancers as well as genital warts. Another HPV vaccine is being developed by GlaxoSmithKline that would protect against the two types of HPV (16 and 18) that cause most cervical cancers; however it has not yet been licensed.

### CDC – ACIP recommendations for HPV vaccinations:

- Three doses of the HPV vaccine routinely for girls aged 11-12 (or, beginning at 9 years old, at the discretion of a health care provider.)
- The vaccine is also recommended for girls and women age 13 to 26 years old.

The vaccine should be administered before onset of sexual activity (i.e., before women are exposed to the viruses), but females who are sexually active should still be vaccinated for the protection that the vaccine will offer against HPV types they have not acquired.

In August 2004, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich signed legislation to create a Cervical Cancer Elimination Task Force (CCETF). The new law was sponsored by Sen. Debbie DeFrancesco Halvorson of Crete and Rep. Sara Feigenholtz of Chicago. A

12-member task force appointed by the State Public Health Director, Dr. Eric E. Whitaker has been charged with eliminating cervical cancer in Illinois and is committed to studying the prevalence of cervical cancer, raising public awareness of the causes, and developing a statewide education, prevention and control plan.

Dr. Stacie Geller, Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Director of the Center for Research on Women and Gender and the National Center of Excellence in Women's Health, at UIC, is chair of the task force, which includes physicians, health professionals and community-based advocacy groups. Members of the General Assembly and representatives from state agencies serve as ex-officio members.

The CCETF endorses the ACIP's recommendations for the HPV vaccine. The task force believes that mandating the vaccination for all (female) school children in Illinois is premature at this time. Instead, the Task Force believes the best prevention against this disease is an **informed public**. The focus now is to better educate the public about the facts of cervical cancer, the importance of Pap tests, the HPV vaccine, lifestyle choices young women can make to reduce their chances of developing cervical cancer and treatments currently available.

The task force also wants to ensure that there is full and equal access to the vaccine. Currently, each dose is \$120 for a total cost of \$360. Private insurance will likely cover the costs as will Medicaid (although it is yet to be formally approved). However, there is a large group of uninsured and underinsured women in Illinois who will not have access to this vaccine. Task force members will continue to work with Federal and State officials on the issue of access so the vaccine is available and affordable for anyone who can benefit from it.

While the impact of an effective HPV vaccine on cervical cancer rates may not be realized for decades (since cervical cancer takes many years to develop), the impact of this vaccine on cervical cancer precursors (abnormal Pap test results) and genital warts may be realized sooner. Pap tests will continue to be an important weapon in our arsenal against cervical cancer - even if 100% vaccination coverage is achieved, the current HPV vaccine will not provide protection for approximately 30% of cervical cancers caused by viruses not in the current vaccine. Therefore, the task force will seek supplemental funding to be able to pursue an educational campaign to raise awareness about cervical cancer and its detection, prevention, and treatment. **Annual Pap tests are still imperative to prevent cervical cancer, but this vaccine brings us closer to our goal of eliminating this deadly disease.**

For additional information, please go to the Illinois Department of Public Health's website and view the Cervical Cancer Elimination Task Force's 2006 Annual Report. <http://www.idph.state.il.us>

## VIEWPOINTS

### Plan B Approval: A Partial Victory

by Stacie Geller

Plan B emergency contraception was approved in 1999 as a prescription product for all women of childbearing potential. The manufacturer sought non-prescription status (over-the-counter) in 2003. What are the facts on Plan B?

- Plan B prevents unintended pregnancy.
- Plan B does not cause abortion; in fact its only connection to abortion is that it can prevent the need for one.
- Plan B is very safe.
- Plan B needs to be taken within hours of sexual intercourse to be most effective.

After nearly three years of delays, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its approval to make Plan B emergency contraception available to women age 18 and older without a prescription. Women will have to show identification proving they are at least 18 years old. This will allow many women to get timely access to this back-up birth control, which is more effective the sooner it is used. The FDA decision is both a political victory and an advance for women's health. The approval at this time is a tribute to the efforts of reproductive rights and women's health advocates as well as the scientific community and policy makers who have fought to improve women's access to comprehensive health care.

However, the triumph is only a partial victory because young women less than 18 years of age still do not have easy access to emergency contraception. For these women, the drug will still require a prescription. Requiring women under age 18 to obtain a prescription merely delays access and makes the treatment less effective, and there is no medical or scientific evidence to support this decision. On the contrary, Plan B is safe and effective for over-the-counter use for women of all ages. There is also no evidence that access to Plan B encourages sexual activity in adolescents. It appears as if the age restriction is a political concession on the part of the FDA to conservative activists who have been fighting to keep barriers to contraceptive access in place.

Unfortunately, this compromise will impose real economic, physical and emotional costs on young women who will be denied timely access to Plan B. This decision should not be made on politics but rather on medical and scientific evidence which clearly states that Plan B is a safe and effective back-up birth control method. We must insist that FDA and all health agencies base decisions on medical evidence and that they further strengthen their commitment to science-based policies and ensure timely access to Plan B for all women who may need it.

## CRWG Alumni

In this issue of *Building Research Connections*, we introduce a new section in which we feature a former CRWG graduate assistant.

### 'Stranger in a Strange Land'

Sarah Hendrica Bickerton

With apologies to Heinlein for an excessively overused allusion with the title of this piece, I still am going to make a claim at its use, at least a tenuous one that serves its purpose for this article. Being from New Zealand, I've often thought of this classic piece of literature by Robert Heinlein, despite the 1961 book's flaws, as I have experienced my life here in the U.S. Like the book's lead character, Valentine Michael Smith, I too am simultaneously insider and outsider, included and excluded, as a white person in this country, making my foreigner's tale one that isn't predictable, as with Smith.

As a white woman of Anglo and Germanic descent, my expectations of living in the U.S. were that of effective similarity to living in New Zealand, with small differences. And as any foreigner living anywhere will tell you, nothing could have been further from the truth. Differences in terms of individualism, social-consciousness, commercialism, religiosity, race, insularity, etc constantly operate below the surface and creep up on you and disturb you in ways you wouldn't have thought. Not to mention the culturally specific references that become a part of everyday interaction that I am not privy to - experiences all immigrants come up against.

However, unlike most foreigners in this country, my skin colour and appearance do not mark me as such. The racial nature of U.S. culture allows me to blend into not just the U.S. population, but into its privileged group. Walking down the street in the U.S., I am not challenged for being here. There have been times when I have walked beside American friends of colour, and it is there the rather subtle acceptance in others that I am the American, and my friend is not, despite her Naperville, or Schaumburg, or Skokie roots.

And even when I speak, I am marked as foreigner. The surprised facial expressions around me, even from those who knew but forgot for a moment, make me realise how privileged I am here, when even my most marked status in this country loses its markedness, trumped by my skin colour. I have become American by imposed appropriation, and disturbances to such are/will be studiously ignored and/or forgotten. Of course, this results in a dissonance in me that, even should I go home now, I will never truly lose. I have lost my home.

It is in this context that I arrived at CRWG, and in

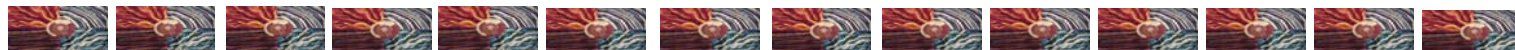
particular, WISE and WISEST. Despite the wonderful, and relief-giving, enormous ethnic and cultural diversity at UIC, the upper-echelons are almost always white, a place where my presence in such is virtually unquestioned. Entering CRWG, I was immediately struck by the inclusion of the non-white - something one yearns for, even in many women's and feminist organisations and initiatives. But it is not just the presence, mind you, but the wanted and deliberate presence. The wonderful mixture of accents and background made me feel at home in a way very little else has in this country.

The commitment to international efforts as integral to our own domestic strategies and theorising came forward time and time again at CRWG. From the ever-present performance of ethnicity through food, to the discussion of foreign projects that could inform our own, to the overt presence of accents and skin colours not otherwise found, I felt at home there, as a non-American amongst other non-Americans.

Of course, I am white, so living in the U.S. means as such, I have privilege. While the dissonance of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion is always present, it pales in comparison to the exclusion of those that do not fit the mold of Americana that I do. But the space of CRWG where diversity of experience was default, where assumptions of cultural knowledge were minimised, where I felt included, was a rare and enjoyed gem. An actual decoupling of ethnicity from race.

Despite all the wonderful, necessary and highly interesting projects that are being fought for and worked on at CRWG, the everyday project of inclusion as simply part of one's workday, is possibly one of the most important. Now that I have moved on, and am doing other work, I do miss that quite considerably. Is it perfect? Of course not. But, similarly of course, neither am I in my efforts to minimise the exclusion of others; far from it in fact. So, I try to bring in that inclusion I experienced at CRWG.

But keep at it CRWG, for it is probably one of your greatest strengths, and resources. If the personal truly is to be the political, in our feminist consciousnesses, then it is the everyday actions that will slowly rewrite things for the better, something *not* present in Valentine Michael Smith's world.



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The CRWG bids farewell to the following graduate research assistants, we wish you all the best!

Sarah Bickerton (Sociology), WISEST Initiative  
Deirdre Guthrie (Anthropology), CoE Research Core  
Karima Russell (Mechanical Engineering), WISE Program  
Xue Wu, (Public Health), WISEWOMAN Evaluation

We would like to welcome back Tarini Bedi, CoE Research Core Research Assistant and PhD candidate in Anthropology. We would also like to welcome three new graduate assistants. Angela Walker, a graduate student in the College of Nursing, will be working with the WISEST Initiative. Tanisha Ross, a graduate student in Urban Planning and Policy, will be working with the WISE program. Fei Shi, a graduate student in Biostatistics will be working with the WISEWOMAN program.

## CRWG Board Members

Sue Carter	Stacie Geller	Alicia Matthews	Hayat Onyuksel	Barbara Risman
Nancy Cohen	Emily Godfrey	Beverly McElmurry	Nadine Peacock	Sharon Talleen
Alice J. Dan	Joan Kennelly	Claudia Morrissey	Gayatri Reddy	Maria Varelas
Mary Lynn Dietsche	Sharon Mastracci	Patricia O'Brien	Stephanie Riger	Sylvia Vatuk

### Advisory Board Changes:

We would like to welcome Barbara Risman, Head of the Sociology Department, who has recently joined our Faculty Advisory Board. We would also like to congratulate two of our Faculty Advisory Board members who have recently retired. Mary Lynn Dietsche worked at the CRWG from 1993 until 2004, when she took a position as Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Research. Peg Strobel, professor and former director of the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum was on the founding committee of the CRWG.

Thank you, Mary Lynn and Peg for your support and enthusiasm for CRWG efforts and initiatives!