Annual Report of the Academic Women's Caucus, 2007-2008

Index

Wine and Cheese

Small Group Lunches

End of Term Social Events

Forum of Work Family Issues

Workshop on Setting Limits

Conference to Celebrate International Women's Day

Issues on Work and Family

Sessional Women

Change the Name of the Caucus

Buddies

Publish Without Pain

New Website

Events

The annual **Wine and Cheese** event, held at the end of September, was a major success, with over 80 academic women attending. They enjoyed chatting and networking with each other, as well as celebrating the promotions of their colleagues.

This year the Caucus sponsored six **small group lunches**, as a way of bringing together different constituencies of the Caucus, and as a way for the Chair to discover the concerns of Caucus members, and what they wanted to see the Caucus doing for them. Most of the lunches were held in the fall. Three lunches were for junior faculty (one specifically for junior faculty in Science and Engineering), two were for sessional instructors, and one was for all women in Science and Engineering (held in the spring). These lunches were very successful. Most of them were fully subscribed (maximum of 10 participants). Women enjoyed meeting colleagues from other parts of campus and learned from each other.

The Caucus held an **end of term social event** at the University Club, which also had a relatively large turn out, and allowed women to network and relax with the end of term.

In January the Caucus organized a **forum on work-family issues**. We had four speakers from UVic, who all provided valuable insights into this major issue. The large turn out for the event reflects the interest in this issue. While the speakers generally spoke about combining children and academic work, a number of the participants discussed issues with eldercare, demonstrating that this is another area of concern to many academic women.

In February Lil Blume, a facilitator from Toronto, gave an excellent **workshop on setting limits** -- providing coping strategies for dealing with the competing demands of the academic workplace. This workshop was co-sponsored by the Diversity Advisor to the Provost and by EQHR. The interest in this issue was reflected in the fact that the workshop (maximum enrolment of 30) filled up within a day and a half. The feedback from the workshop was extremely positive.

In March the AWC held a one day **conference to celebrate International Women's Day**, titled, "Recognizing Differences/Building Community". The conference was open to female doctoral students as well as Caucus members. The conference included four sessions: Using Popular Theatre for Social Change, Academic Women in Leadership, Addressing Issues of Concern to Sessional Instructors and Academic Women's Experiences and Visions Across the Generations.

The conference was enjoyed by all attendees. The Caucus was very grateful to all who presented at the event, and all who co-sponsored it, including: The Dean of Graduate Studies, The Office of the Provost, The Dean of Human and Social Development, The Department of English, The Department of Women's Studies, The Graduate History Students Union, The Office of the Provost, The Office of the University Secretary, CUPE 4163, The UVic Faculty Association and The University Librarian.

Other Activities

As Caucus Chair I was involved in the New Faculty Orientation, providing information to new faculty and setting up part of a booth at the information fair (in co-operation with the Diversity Advisor). The Caucus has also been involved over the year in working on **issues of work and family** as they affect academic women, and has conducted some research on this question, particularly related to childcare. We have talked with the Faculty Association about issues relating to work and family, and how they affect academic women (as well as men). At the lunches for **sessional women**, it was made clear to me that many sessional women do not feel fully part of the Caucus. As a result, we decided to **change the name of the Caucus**, in an effort to be more fully inclusive of all our members.

As Chair I have published four issues of *Purple Prose* over the past year. I have also been active on the Employment Equity Committee of the UHRC and the Provost's Equity and Diversity Committee, as well as in working with the steering committee of the Caucus, and meeting with individual academic women who seek advice. I linked up **buddies** for last fall, as part of the Caucus's ongoing mentorship program for new faculty. I also set up **"Publish without Pain"**

groups for interested academic women, where they meet with other women, to help them meet their publishing goals.

Over the summer I have also been working with Stewart Arneil at the Humanities Media and Computing Centre in setting up a **new website** for the Caucus, as the existing website was very out of date, both in terms of content and form. I hope to "launch" the new website at the Wine and Cheese reception in the fall.