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**ACTIVISM AMONG FEMINIST ACADEMICS: PROFESSIONALIZED ACTIVISM
AND ACTIVIST PROFESSIONALS**

By

Jennifer Lynn Hart

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of**

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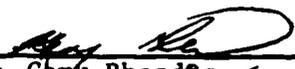
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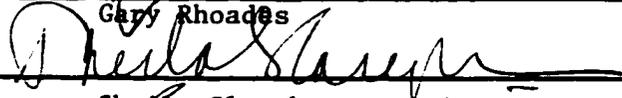
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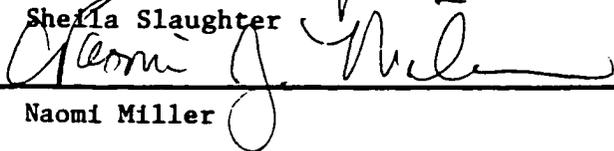
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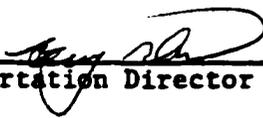
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ABSTRACT

While focusing on the professional lives of women faculty, little of the scholarship addresses how faculty women mobilize or how and with whom they create networks in order to work in academe. It is the extraordinary dimension of women who collectively act on and in academe and society in which I am interested. Through an exploratory comparative case study, I seek to understand the relationships and activism of faculty women in order to shed light on what women are doing to address issues of equity and discrimination and on how women succeed.

I will use semi-structured individual interviews and document and observational analyses from two Research I feminist faculty grassroots organizations to provide a deeper understanding of how particular feminist faculty organize in a climate that is entrenched in the patriarchy. From this study, I hope to show that feminism and activism can have a meaningful place in the academy. Moreover, I hope to provide examples of what academic feminism looks like. Finally, I hope that this study will make significant recommendations for those in higher education to assist in eroding the patriarchal systems embedded in academe.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It is an extraordinary woman who can see herself as an active participant in the [academic world that long belonged to men] when the hidden curricula of her lower and her higher educations have all along been bombarding her with messages to the contrary in the form of stereotypical images of women's societal roles and portrayals of the world of work and politics in which women are conspicuously absent (Martin, 1997, p. 12).

Much of the research about women faculty has centered around issues of equity, particularly in salary and promotion, and discrimination (Astin & Cress, 1999; Barbezat, 1988; Bellas, 1993, 1994, 1997; Benjamin, 1999; Park, 1994, 1996; Sandler, 1991; Toutkoushian, 1998). While focusing on the professional lives of women faculty, little of the scholarship addresses how faculty women mobilize or how and with whom they create networks in order to work in academe. It is the extraordinary dimension of women collectively acting on and in academe and society in which I am interested. I want to focus on women who are not just adapters and survivors, but are change agents. I seek to understand the relationships and activism of faculty women in order to shed light on how activist academic women define women's issues and what strategies they pursue in promoting social change.

Over the last three decades, the landscape of higher education has changed dramatically. Among these changes, women now make up more than 50 percent of the undergraduate student population. Just about 40 percent of all Ph.D. recipients are women, and the numbers of women faculty are increasing (<http://www.chronicle.com/weekly/almanac/2001/nation/0102401.htm>). Women's Studies programs and departments are now included among the academic programs at more than 700 colleges and universities (Thorne, 2000). Many campuses house women's

centers and other resources for women. There has also been an increase in the numbers of feminist organizations throughout the academy. These are all positive indications that the climate has changed, and in many cases, has improved for women in higher education.

For this study, I am interested in the organizations that are both feminist and activist. In part, I am interested in them because they helped bring about the changes described above. Moreover, the continued existence of these organizations suggests that while the climate may have improved for women in recent years, there are still concerns that need to be addressed and there are women who want to mobilize as a result.

McAdam (1988) purports that women more often use social movements to advance their agendas than men. The reason women are activists, he believes, is connected to the lack of access women have to "proper channels" of authority and power. Kolodny (1998) echoes this position by stating that women have less access to informal male networks, which underlie and support established structures of power. Therefore, making meaning from the social movement networks that women have created through their activism may help us better understand academic women. Since academic women, especially in the tenured and tenure-track ranks, are underrepresented, creating networks with other women is critical in order to decrease isolation and building a power base (Simeone, 1987; Theodore, 1986). It is from these organized efforts that many policies and practices that negatively and often differentially affect women have been eliminated on many campuses, for example, anti-nepotism policies, lack of day care, and absence of parental leave mechanisms for child birth (Simeone, 1987).

The case of academic women's networks and activism is complex, shaped by the life cycle of the Women's Movement and of academic women. I anticipate that as the Second Wave of feminist activists have merged with a younger group of feminists, and as faculty women's careers have advanced, activist strategies have changed. Astin and Leland (1991) and Glazer-Raymo (1999) define three generations of women change agents in academe: predecessors, who laid the ground work for the establishment of co-educational institutions and Women's Studies departments; instigators, who adopted a feminist agenda and implemented it in academe; and inheritors, who reaped benefits of the predecessors and instigators through the access and opportunities available to them in their careers. Given that these generations of women activists are now working together in higher education, I hope to explore how this has shaped their professional networks (both formal and informal) and their activist work.

Research Question

I explore the experiences of feminist activist academic women, self-identified by their involvement in campus grassroots organizations for women faculty, to gain a richer understanding of how these women define and pursue success and social change in an academy often considered hostile to women. Specifically, the research question I seek to answer is: *How do women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations construct their lives and their activist strategies and relate to the concerns of broader groups of women internal and external to academe?*

To clarify, a grassroots activist organization is one that, for the design of this study, is formed and maintained by women faculty to address concerns of and improve

the climate for faculty women. Such organizations are not created by boards of Trustees or Regents, university administrators, or parties outside the institution—they are initiated, constructed, and led by faculty women. I define activist strategies as the purposeful methods in which members of an organization engage in order to raise consciousness and foster change.

Theoretical Framework

A diverse conceptual frame supports my research question and inquiry. Three theoretical perspectives interweave to form the fabric of my literature review, design, and analysis. Because I am interested in women as subjects and believe that power within the academy is primarily patriarchal, I will explore this study from a feminist perspective. Moreover, for this study, faculty and faculty work are central; therefore, professionalization theory will also inform my research. Finally, the connection of activist faculty women to the Women's Movement, and the potential for organizational change, influenced by activism, calls for inclusion of the social movement literature.

Some consider feminism a singular social theory. However, feminists are not guided by one grand narrative. "Contemporary feminists are united in their opposition to women's oppression, but they differ not only in their views of how to combat that oppression, but even in their conception of what constitutes women's oppression in contemporary society" (Jaggar, 1983, p. 353). As such, looking at women and activism from a liberal and radical feminist perspective will differentially shape the propositions of academic women's activist strategies.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism, as its name suggests, finds its roots in liberalism. Individual autonomy and the right to self-determination are primary values, and the burden is on the individual to redress inequity (Black, 1989; Calas & Smircich, 1996; Jaggar, 1983; Whelehan, 1995). This dominant strand of feminism adapts the arguments of rational structural/functional theories that have traditionally omitted women to guide attempts to insure equal treatment in the labor force (Shelton & Agger, 1993). This is to say that liberal feminists believe that women should have equal access to a meritocracy and are reluctant to oppose the economic system that is in place (*i.e.*, capitalism), for when the system is void of discrimination, it appropriately rewards the most productive (Whelehan, 1995).

Liberal feminists are often referred to as equity feminists, as equal treatment in the workplace is the ultimate goal. Unlike some of the other strands of contemporary feminism, liberal feminism is primarily concerned with women's roles outside the home. Domestic labor, including child care, are still considered part of the woman's domain in liberal feminism; however, what occurs in the domestic sphere is not central to the concerns liberal feminists are trying to address (Whelehan, 1995).

Addressing concerns is a very deliberate process for liberal feminists. They tend to engage in activist strategies that are considered rational, like facilitating discussions with men and women about inequities in the public sphere, writing juried scholarly books and articles, sitting on committees, demonstrating to draw public attention to injustices, engaging in self-improvement and skill-building programs, and lobbying to address

unjust discrimination (Calas & Smircich, 1996; Shelton & Agger, 1993; Whelehan, 1995). They use the existing structure to highlight issues and argue for equality for individual women. Going outside the formal structure would undermine the meritocracy and be contrary to the guiding principles of liberalism.

Because liberal feminists work within existing structures and embrace meritocracy, an oft-valued tenet of higher education, liberal feminism has strong social and academic credibility. The patriarchy in the workplace is questioned (which can be threatening), but the activist strategies used are consistent with academic values, making it more “reasonable” to non-feminists. Also, because of its focus on the individual (*i.e.*, seeking to redress individual injustices rather than dismantling the system), changes are incremental and are justified by positivistic data (Calas & Smircich, 1996; Jaggar, 1983). Furthermore, liberal feminism’s pro-capitalist position (Shelton & Agger, 1993) can be seen as most appropriate for academe given the limited access of working and lower classes and people of color in academe. Thus, one would expect to find that the activist strategies and goals of liberal feminist women faculty would not differ greatly from liberal feminist strategies outside the academy.

Radical Feminism

While there are some activist strategies unique to radical feminism, like liberal feminism, it is really the goals of that perspective that make it unique and identifiable. Radical feminists differ from liberal feminists in that they seek cultural transformation, not just equity (Calas & Smircich, 1996; Whelehan, 1995). In addition, separatism, not assimilation is a hallmark of this paradigm (Black, 1989) and is what makes “radical”

feminism radical. However, radical feminism is difficult to define and trace back to a particular theoretical influence or influences because its epistemology is diverse, created from the voices and experiences of different women (Jaggar, 1983; Whelehan, 1995). Moreover, it is personal life that is the focus, rather than social structures. It is radical feminists who coined the phrase “the personal is political” that many strands now endorse (Whelehan, 1995).

Radical feminism portrays alternate worlds outside of patriarchy. Through grassroots mobilization, radical feminists create “womanspace,” separatist enclaves to raise awareness about the oppression of the patriarchy. This “consciousness raising” is a fundamental strategy for this strand of feminists; for, without understanding, one lives with false consciousness and cannot adequately question the dominant oppressive culture.

Jaggar (1983) states that radical feminists want evolutionary change. Through consciousness raising and developing a women’s culture through art, literature, and music, radical feminists seek to undermine, rather than overthrow, the patriarchy (Jaggar, 1983; Whelehan, 1995). In addition, oppression is focused on women as women, not as workers, directing change at institutions like marriage, sexuality, and love. These strategies and goals are rarely considered a part of the fabric of academe. Yet, radical feminism can influence academic activism.

For example, radical feminists may choose to raise awareness about the patriarchy through writing in non-scholarly publications or in journals that are not considered mainstream because of their woman-only focus. Gathering vitas to count such publications and asking academic women about this strategy are ways to measure the

degree to which they may use this strategy. In addition, observing separatist networks, designed as womanspaces, is another way to examine the influence of radical feminism on academic women. Given the radical feminist tradition, such networks will likely have a participatory decision-making system and a system of rotating leadership that maintains both interpersonal and political accountability (Calas & Smircich, 1996). Further, since the personal is political in this frame, radical feminists recognize that domestic work is productive work. This means that uncovering efforts to stop the tenure clock to care for children or creating family care policies may mark the influence of radical feminism. Therefore, it is critical to understand both the political agendas and activist strategies of academic women in order to articulate the impact of this particular feminist perspective.

Professionalization Theory

As the explanation of liberal and radical feminism suggests, the structure of the institution and the activities (and activism) of the faculty are critical to this study. As Abbott (1988) states, the idea of professionalization must concentrate on the forms and contents of professional life, of which institutional structure and individual and organizational activities are a part. Faculty are part of a profession and aspects of their role help to explain their place in the academy; thus, concepts from professionalization theory will inform my analysis and conclusions. The question of how academic women, in particular, construct their academic roles, including their involvement in collective action, is best answered by applying concepts from professionalization theory (Silva & Slaughter, 1980). Further, the gendered make-up of the faculty suggests that women at the highest academic ranks are still being excluded, and given the rise in the numbers of

adjunct, part-time, and non-tenure-track women, are segregated. This influences the nature of women's academic work differently than men (Witz, 1992). Considering this positioning within the profession, it is critical to examine not only the profession, but the patriarchy, as previously discussed.

Social Movement Theory

Further, since I am interested in how professionalized women seek to transform the institutional patriarchy through activism, the theoretical underpinnings of the social movement literature will also guide my interpretations and analysis. Specifically, a resource mobilization explanation, rather than collective behavior theory, will support my findings. Institutional structures and networks are important resources for the organizations under investigation, which is also central to resource mobilization theory. Whereas, a collective behavior analysis largely ignores any institutional context from which activist strategies emerge (Morris, 1981). To ignore a greater institutional context in this research would be impossible, as the activist organizations for this research primarily exist due to broader institutional and professional structures.

Margit Mayer's (1991) interpretation of resource mobilization theory best captures the perspective that is most meaningful for this study, since it includes nuances of professionalization. Moreover, since resource mobilization is a strand of social movement theory, and social movement theory studies collective action, to include a feminist perspective is not unreasonable. For, from my point of view, feminism and activism are interconnected. Mayer sees social movements as "organizational entrepreneurs that seek to mobilize and routinize resources, including support from elites;

this view emphasizes the professionalization of movement organizations” (Garner & Tenuto, 1997, p. 25). This perspective, as with most interpretations of resource mobilization theory, incorporates the influences of political, social, and cultural environments on the social movement organizations (Garner & Tenuto, 1997). To best understand how women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations relate to the concerns of broader groups of women, it is critical that my theoretical frame value context outside the units of analysis. As such, Mayer’s interpretation of resource mobilization theory will serve as an additional lens through which I will view my findings.

Working Hypotheses

Given the existing literature, I imagine that my analysis will show that the lives of feminist academic women are complex. Both their historical and social contexts influence their activist work and networks. More specifically, I anticipate following up on two themes that emerged in a related pilot study I conducted in the fall of 1999. In this study, the data supported two concepts—“prestige networks” (*i.e.*, creating ties with those who have positional power and decision making authority within an institution) and “professionalized activism” (*i.e.*, using traditionally accepted professional activities to advance an activist agenda). Both concepts fit nicely into a resource mobilization frame. For, as Mayer (1991) states, forming networks with institutional elites (those with institutional power) and advancing the professionalization of one’s organization is fundamental to this social movement perspective. Through my analysis, I will look at the data and reinforce the degree to which they may or may not reflect these concepts from

my pilot study and from resource mobilization interpretations, remaining open to the emergence of new concepts and themes.

In addition, I anticipate finding that the networks of these faculty activists, both formal and informal, serve different purposes, depending on the particular agenda. These faculty likely negotiate between two worlds--being a professional and being a feminist activist--and struggle to weave these worlds together. For feminists, the personal is political (and the personal is professional). Yet, in a professional environment where women often feel that their professional legitimacy is questioned and/or marginalized, seeking to professionalize while maintaining feminist and activist sensibilities may create significant challenges.

I also anticipate that I may find a close link between Women's Studies programs and feminist activist organizations, for it is possible that Women's Studies programs were an early outgrowth of these groups. However, it is also possible that the lines between feminist activists and Women's Studies programs may be blurring as more women join faculty ranks. Because of the increasing diversity of academic women, including women (albeit slowly) who "came of age" as Second Wave feminists and women who identify as post-Second Wave feminists, activist strategies are likely to differ. The questions then become: As academic work continues to professionalize, how does feminism and professionalization shape activism? Are different resources mobilized? Can feminism, professionalization, and resource mobilization complement on another? If so, how? Yet, despite the expected complexity embedded in these hypotheses and questions, I believe that gaining a better understanding of some of the nuances of networks and of the

activism of academic feminists can help others successfully navigate the institutional patriarchy.

Design

In order to address my research questions, I conducted an exploratory qualitative study. I used a comparative case study design to intensively investigate two feminist faculty organizations at two public Research I universities over the course of an academic semester.

For each case study, I conducted a cross-case analysis. This sort of analysis allowed me to group together perspectives from different data sources to shape the themes that will guide my research (Patton, 1990). By using a variety of field methods (document analysis, observation analysis, and interview analysis), I gathered comprehensive, in-depth information about each case.

I selected two feminist faculty organizations that serve as the foundation of my study. The first organization was the Organization for Faculty Women (OFW) at The University of the Desert (UD). I chose this organization, in part because I was a board member of the OFW at the time of investigation, and therefore, had easy access to all aspects of the organization. Because of my involvement in this organization, I was a participant observer throughout the collection and analysis of the data. For the second case, I selected the Women's Faculty Association (WFA) at the University of the Plains (UP). For comparative purposes, I selected another women's faculty organization at a flagship public Research I institution.

The two settings, the University of the Desert and the University of the Plains, had several similarities that make them ideal for comparative analysis. They were both public Research I, land grant, flagship universities. In addition, both institutions had a Women's Studies Department or Program and an active Commission on the Status of Women. Lastly, the numbers of instructional faculty at the two institutions were nearly identical. In 1999, there were 1485 faculty at the University of the Desert, of which 412 were women. For that same time period, the University of the Plains had 1487 instructional faculty members, among which 453 were women.

Limitations

This study is intended to provide a deeper understanding of how particular feminist faculty organize in a climate that is entrenched in the patriarchy. The nature of networks, including networks with academic programs like Women's Studies, and feminist activist strategies create a narrative about academic women that has not yet been told. While I hope this study will be meaningful, I know it will not be exhaustive. The stories of academic women at other types of institutions (*e.g.*, small liberal arts colleges, community colleges, private universities, women's colleges) are still missing from the discourse. Even the stories for academic women at large public research universities will only partially unfold. The voices of women who are not involved in activist feminist organizations and non-faculty women are not explored. Further, the experiences of faculty women of color will likely continue to be marginal, despite my attempts to include as many as possible in my samples. The design of this study also falls short in describing how the experiences of academic women involved in organizations like the

OFW and the WFA are different than those of academic men. While the case studies proposed will enhance the understanding of the success of some academic women and will meaningfully contribute to the literature, this research also recognizes that additional stories need to be told.

Since my study is exploratory, I hope it will serve as a springboard for continued research, including quantitative and/or mixed-methods. I also hope it will foster additional inquiry about success strategies for academic women, further enhance the understanding of academic feminism, and encourage women to be portrayed as the strong survivors they are.

In conclusion, from this study, I hope to place feminism and activism in the academy. Moreover, I hope to provide examples of what academic feminism looks like. Finally, I hope that this study will make significant recommendations for those in higher education to assist in dismantling the patriarchal systems embedded in academe.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In my review of the literature, I will examine the existing literature about the work climate for women faculty in order to provide a context for the rise of feminist faculty organizations. While I do not intend to focus on woman as victim, it is important to understand the nature of higher education for academic women, including academic feminism, before one can appreciate the collective action some women initiate in order to be successful in the academy. In addition, my review of the literature will focus on the mechanisms women faculty have pursued to transform higher education. Specifically, I will explore the scholarship on the networks women faculty create and on the activist strategies in which they engage. Through this review, it will become clear how the study described in the previous chapter, and developed in those that follow, will contribute to the literature about collective action and activism among feminist faculty.

Climate for Academic Women

Academic Reward Structure

“Substantial disparities in salary, rank, and tenure between male and female faculty persist despite the increasing proportion of women in the academic profession” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 60). The numbers of women in higher education, including those holding faculty positions are growing. However, women are most heavily clustered at one end of the academic pipeline (*e.g.*, as students, as non-tenure-track or untenured faculty) and in less prestigious institutions (Benjamin, 1999; Breneman & Youn, 1988; Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster, 1998; Hensel, 1991; Park, 1994, 1996; Simeone, 1987; Stephan & Kassis, 1997). Since 1982, women have been the majority at all higher

education degree levels, except professional and doctoral degrees; but, even at those levels, women are approaching 50% (Snyder, Hoffman, & Geddes, 1998). Further, women do comprise the majority of doctoral recipients in several fields, specifically anthropology, education, health, psychology, and sociology (Glazer-Raymo, 2000). With these numbers, it becomes increasingly difficult to argue that the disparate numbers of academic women to men is due to a lack of women in the pipeline or candidate pool.

Despite the increasing numbers of women in academe, the numbers of women full-time faculty increased just 10.6% in the 20-year period between 1975 and 1995 (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; 2000). Further, according to the 1998-99 American Association of University Professors faculty survey, women faculty are clustered in the lower ranks: instructors (50.4%), lecturer (54.2%), and assistant professor (43.6%). Of those at the higher ranks, 31.8% of associate professors and only 17.8% of full professors are women (Bell, 1999; Glazer-Raymo, 2000). Moreover, only one-third of untenured women are on the tenure-track, evidence of the increased popularity of hiring faculty off the tenure-track and in part-time positions. In fact, just over one half of all new full-time faculty hires were not in tenure-track appointments (Glazer-Raymo, 2000). Thus, overall, the increase in the proportion of female part-time and non-tenure-track faculty is greater than the female proportion of full-time and tenure-track positions (Benjamin, 1999). While this demonstrates that the face of academic work may be changing, the power structure is not. More women are being filtered into ranks that hold less professional power, bolstering the patriarchy and hierarchy, which, despite the critical mass of women, can make collective action a risky endeavor.

Among all new faculty hires, whether on or off the tenure-track, women slightly outnumber men at liberal arts colleges and community colleges. However, at the more elite doctoral-granting universities, women are only one-third of the newly hired faculty (Finkelstein, *et al.*, 1998). While the numbers of women holding faculty positions are growing, women are more often found in less competitive institutions (Benjamin, 1999; Breneman & Youn, 1988; Finkelstein, *et al.*, 1998; Hensel, 1991; Park, 1994, 1996; Simeone, 1987; Stephan & Kassis, 1997). From a disciplinary perspective, women have been hired in substantial numbers in education, health sciences, humanities, and the law (Finkelstein, *et al.*, 1998), which is not surprising given that women now comprise over half of the Ph.D. recipients in most of these fields. However, women continue to occupy fewer faculty positions in fields like engineering and mathematics (Finkelstein, *et al.*, 1998), which are fields that are more highly paid and have more access to resources (Volk & Slaughter, in press).

Not only do fewer women fill the highest ranks within academe, but there is a sex gap in pay. Annual data continue to show that academic women are paid less than their male counterparts at both the departmental and institutional level (Barbezat, 1988; Bellas, 1993, 1994, 1997a, 1997b, 1999; Bellas & Reskin, 1994; Benjamin, 1999; Ferber & Loeb, 1997; Hensel, 1991). It is the academic reward structure that determines resources, like the salary situation described above. Thus, this tool of the bureaucracy dictates resources and rewards, and despite some improvement over time, the machine continues to operate in a gendered fashion.

One example of this is the high value placed upon research, and more specifically the production of juried publications, in awarding salary increases, tenure, and promotion. In a study by Fairweather (1996), he found that faculty, regardless of discipline or institutional type, who spend more time on research and publish more are paid at a higher salary than those who focus on teaching. Moreover, when looking solely at teaching and salary, his findings showed that salary was proportional to the quantity of students taught, questioning the institutional value of quality instruction (Fairweather, 1996). A greater emphasis on research contributes to an institutional culture that values male elements over female (Carlson, 1994), as men tend to spend less time focused on teaching and service than women (Astin & Cress, 1999; Dickens & Sagaria, 1997; Hensel, 1991; Park, 1996; Riger, Stokes, Raja, & Sullivan, 1997; Twale & Shannon, 1996).

In a recent study, Bellas and Toutkoushian (1999), analyzed a data set of full-time faculty (lecturer/instructor, assistant, associate, full professor) at two- and four-year institutions. The results are not disaggregated by institution type, discipline, or rank--where there are significant differences according to gender. However, their data do show that women spent 7.2% more time teaching than men. In addition, women spent 6.3% less time engaged in research than their male counterparts. The reasons for these differences are unclear. In addition, the data fail to describe class size, number of courses, and whether courses (and course preparations) are new. Such information would give readers a clearer sense of the type and intensity of work that is required, and more than likely would further escalate the gender gap. Nonetheless, the findings, based on a

large national sample, do suggest that women are spending more time doing scholarly work that is less rewarded by the academy.

As is the nature of many organizations, each player (in this case, woman) has a specific role, a role not to be altered. For example, a woman is expected by many male colleagues and by the culture of the institution itself, to focus on work that is seen as “metaphoric parenting” (Ferber & Loeb, 1997). To perform such mothering activities, women are channeled into teaching, advising, and committee work. She is often assigned to teach large core classes, to advise more students, and to serve as a representative to more committees by the administration (Bellas, 1999; Park, 1994, 1996; Riger, *et al.*, 1997; Twale & Shannon, 1996). Since teaching and service are seen as requiring more care taking capabilities, and women are “naturally” able to perform these roles, female faculty dedicate significant time toward these less valued and less rewarded roles (Simeone, 1987). Further complicating this situation, both tenured and non-tenured women are at risk if they fail to conform to these gendered roles since tenure, promotion, and salary increases require review by department heads and colleagues who may penalize women faculty for not meeting their prescribed roles (Bellas, 1999; Ferber & Loeb, 1997).

The energy directed toward teaching and service does not mean that research is not important to women. However, research by or about women is often undervalued by male faculty and the academic reward structure (Dickens & Sagaria, 1997; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Hensel, 1991; Sandler & Hall, 1986; Simeone, 1987). Such undervaluing has implications for tenure, promotion, and salary—some women are being penalized for

their work because of its gendered nature. The expectations of colleagues and the institution, coupled with the current academic reward system, often leaves women faculty in a double-bind (Carlson, 1994; Park, 1996; Sandler, 1993). In other words, if women meet their sex role expectations by emphasizing teaching and service, they are less likely to be promoted or see a salary increase. Likewise, if women diverge from the sex role expectations by emphasizing research, they are penalized for acting contrary to their sex role expectations and the expectations of the bureaucracy.

The double-bind described for female faculty as they perform research, teaching, and service is wrought with mixed messages. All faculty must publish, but women feel that they are penalized if teaching and service is compromised in order to focus on research. Additionally, if they focus less on research, tenure, rank, and promotion may be jeopardized. Certainly, not all female academics experience the negative consequences attached to fulfilling or not fulfilling their prescribed gender roles. Yet, many do. Often, women faculty feel they need to publish, teach, *and* serve more than their male counterparts just to be considered equal to them. To compete for a higher salary, tenure, or promotion, the standards appear much higher for women than for men.

Another circumstance many women face that has a direct impact on salary and other resources has to do with their disciplinary choices. Jacobs (1995) found that earnings in female-dominated fields declined in the early 1980s, while earnings in male-dominated fields increased, showing the relationship between disciplinary choice, gender participation, and salary. Specifically, fields that employ 30 percent or more women are deemed “feminized” (Bellas, 1993), resulting in lower salaries for both genders, but

differentially affecting academic women since they are more heavily clustered in those disciplines, like English, anthropology, and psychology (Bellas, 1994, 1997a; Bellas & Reskin, 1994; Finkelstein, *et al*, 1998; Glazer-Raymo, 2000). While men and women in feminized fields both suffer, interestingly, the women's salaries are slightly lower than those of men at the same rank within the discipline (Bellas, 1994). And, because more women are concentrated in these lower paying disciplines, women, as a whole, suffer greater consequences.

Simeone (1987) suggests that women have been encouraged to enter certain fields and discouraged from others because some fields are viewed as women's work. Such socialization surely contributes to an individual selecting one discipline over another, but comparable worth scholars ask whether it should contribute to women earning lower salaries when faculty work requires comparable abilities throughout the disciplines (England, 1992). Moreover, feminized fields tend to attract fewer resources, in part because they are positioned further from the market, (*e.g.*, internal and external research funding, computers, graduate student support), which translates into less support for the more highly rewarded activity of research (Volk & Slaughter, *in press*; Winsten-Bartlett, *in press*), again creating inequities that disproportionately benefit men. In a climate that is becoming more and more reliant on academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), this bias places many women, and all those in feminized fields, at a disadvantage.

Leadership

Like the more influential senior faculty ranks, the landscape for academic leadership is predominantly male (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Simeone, 1987; Theodore, 1986;

Twale & Shannon, 1996). At all levels of academic leadership, the numbers of women are considerably below what the pipeline warrants (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). In addition, when women do fill top leadership positions, it is more often at less prestigious institutions like private, religious, or community colleges. Presidents, Trustees, chief academic officers, and deans are disproportionately male and, due to the organizational hierarchy, are responsible for dictating the rules and expectations of the institution (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Such power is difficult to relinquish or even share, making it next to impossible to welcome women as more than mere tokens. While women do find more leadership opportunities in middle management, these positions lack real decision-making authority and tend to be subordinate, not supervisory roles (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Further, even when decisions and leadership positions are more informal, women remain at a disadvantage. Women are less likely to be consulted in financial matters (Sandler & Hall, 1986; Twale & Shannon, 1996), less often elected or appointed to the Faculty Senate or institutional policy committees, and more often considered for temporary or interim appointments and committees rather than permanent positions (Simeone, 1987; Twale & Shannon, 1996).

Family Care Issues

Family care issues are often considered a reason why women faculty leave academe or why they have decreased productivity. Yet, the literature shows that it may not be quite as powerful a factor as one might think (Astin & Cress, 1999; Benjamin, 1999; Park, 1996; Riger, *et al.*, 1997). In a recent survey of 6000 faculty members, a considerable number more men than women listed raising a family as an important

personal goal (Astin & Cress, 1999). Additionally, nearly half of the women who remain in academe are either single or childless (Astin & Cress, 1999). Yet for those who have family care responsibilities, child rearing and eldercare can result in time away from higher education or can contribute to choosing a more “family friendly” career. Moreover, family care issues do have a negative effect on salary, promotion, and tenure, more often for women than men (Coiner & George, 1998; Hensel, 1991; McElrath, 1992; Riger, *et al.*, 1997; Tolbert, 1986). However, the reasons for this are complex; for women, having children may be seen as evidence of a lack of professional commitment. While for men, an assumption exists that he will not be the primary caregiver if he has children and as such, his productivity will not be compromised. Despite some evidence to the contrary, institutions expect family care to be a women’s issue. Perhaps the gendered assumption (and implicit message of the value of life outside of work) vis `a vis family care contributes to the fact that only 36% of all institutions provide accommodating scheduling to address family needs (Raabe, 1997).

Gendered Networks

Another factor that may contribute to the disparities between female and male faculty is networking. The networks in which female faculty find themselves may limit the choices to which they are privy, placing them at a disadvantage. Women academics tend to develop networks comprised of other women (Carlson, 1994; Collins, 1998; Hensel, 1991). In a male-dominated environment of faculty work, such networks can limit access to information and connections that can improve a female’s position within the academy, further contributing to the disparities between men and women.

In addition, a benefit that often results from networks is the establishment of material resources and cultural capital. Cultural capital is a concept that has been adapted from Bourdieu's (1977) work, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. It refers to the varied set of skills, knowledge, tastes, and lifestyles individuals acquire from socialization (England, 1992; Lareau, 1987; Valadez, 1996). Knowing how to secure the "right" credentials, to interact with the "right" people, and to navigate the system within academe are examples of valuable cultural capital that can improve one's access to rewards (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Kirkland, 1997). Knowledge, in this case, is clearly power; and, it appears that women may not have ready access to this power. Since significantly more men occupy higher level positions within academe, material and cultural capital can be difficult for many women to acquire if they are excluded from male networks. As a result, salary, tenure, and promotion may be negatively affected. However, not all networks, as described later in this chapter, are detrimental to the academic climate for women. Nonetheless, the reality is that women, while an increasing presence in academe, are predominantly clustered in less influential areas. Salary gaps between women and men faculty continue to be documented. Institutional value placed on research, garnering resources, and other market-like behaviors tend to differentially benefit men and those in non-feminized disciplines. And, gendered expectations can dictate institutional policies and practices, including both formal and informal networking opportunities. While these factors reinforce the patriarchy, they also create a powerful agenda to be addressed by those willing to move beyond the status quo toward collective action focused on improving the climate for academic women.

Academic Feminism

Glazer-Raymo (1999), in *Shattering the Myths: Women in Academe*, captures the history of academic feminism from 1890 through the 1990s. To start, she highlighted three studies that examined feminist faculty from 1890 through the 1960s. These examples portrayed feminist academics, in their day to day activities, as primarily concerned about the representation of women within the faculty and institutional leadership; other issues of equity and patriarchy in the academy received little consideration. The scholarly work of these academics emphasized the personal rather than the professional, which shifted in later decades to focus more significantly on the professional lives of women.

In the late 1960s, complementing the Civil Rights and Women's Rights Movements outside the academy, Glazer-Raymo (1999) documents a shift in priorities among feminist academics. These women were now actively demanding equity in promotion, hiring, salary, benefits, and representation on decision-making committees. This shift in the focus of academic feminists has continued throughout the following decades, as issues of equity remain unresolved.

After the early 1960s, the scholarship of academic feminists not only shifted in content, but as many would argue, it has become more theoretically diverse and sophisticated, including feminist ideologies of radicalism, Marxism, liberalism, socialism, and postmodernism (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Hawkesworth, 2000; Johnson,

1997; Kennedy-Taylor, 1992; Whelehan, 1995).¹ Many feminist scholars found disciplinary homes in Women's Studies programs and departments, while others positioned themselves as feminists throughout the curriculum. Unlike their feminist predecessors, many academic feminists of the late 1960s through the 1990s focused their attention on their professions. While they were gravely concerned about inequity and discrimination based upon gender, they felt that traditional career success, marked by achievements in research, teaching, and service, was necessary in order to be taken seriously and to facilitate incremental institutional change (Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Laslett & Brenner, 2000; Stacey, 2000). Further contributing to a more professionalized and less radical academic feminist culture are the newest doctoral recipients. These women are the first generation who never experienced life before the Second Wave of feminism and may take the cultural and economic gains of women for granted (Laslett & Brenner, 2000). Despite this, feminism in the academy is still very much alive, although it has been mutually shaped by the cultural, economic, political, and professional changes inside and outside the academy over the last 25 years (Glazer-Raymo, 1999).

Central to the changing nature of academic feminism are Women's Studies programs and departments. Not only has the research from and about Women's Studies changed, but some would argue that the discipline that was once led by community activists is now led by national scholars (Krajewski, 1999). In fact, as Women's Studies programs at the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse

¹ Although, it should be noted that these emerging feminist discourses are also criticized for being inaccessible to and not practical for those outside the academy.

worked to establish institutional credibility, conscious decisions were made by program leaders to distance the programs from the Women's Movement and activism (Krajewski, 1999). As some programs have acquired tenure lines, departmental status, and/or graduate programs, they have been able to return to their activist roots without compromising scholarly integrity. However, 56% of Women's Studies programs still have no faculty lines and struggle to create scholarship and curriculum that the institution values and rewards, placing activism on the margins (R. Kanhai, personal communication, October 21, 2000). For many, those in Women's Studies are then perceived as the thinkers, and activists, who do not seem to be as integral as they once were to Women's Studies, are the doers—and in the professional academy, it is the thinkers who are legitimized and rewarded.

The thinking-doing dichotomy is not the sole challenge faced by Women's Studies. Friction also exists between the humanities faculty and the more empirically-based social science faculty vis à vis the nature of feminist theory and what is "cutting edge" scholarship (Thorne, 2000). Competition, rather than collaboration or expansion of a theoretical paradigm, has become a part of Women's Studies, just as it is a part of the academic culture as a whole.

Further, Women's Studies, like all other disciplines, is embedded in an environment of conservatism and dwindling resources. To survive in such a climate, some institutions are abandoning Women's Studies to create a seemingly more palatable "Gender Studies" program or department, leaving a question as to where feminism fits in this new field (Hubbard, 2000). In addition, Women's Studies must look for outside

financial support, moving the discipline closer to the market. This necessary shift can further marginalize activist, community-based, and non-empirical work, often considered to be at the core of Women's Studies.

Overall, the status of Women's Studies and its future are topics of rich and on-going discussion. *The National Women's Studies Association Journal* dedicated several essays to this topic in its Summer, 2000 issue (Yee, 2000). The University of Arizona hosted a national conference in October, 2000, entitled *The Future of Women's Studies: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*, providing additional evidence that there are unanswered questions about the nature of Women's Studies in higher education. In many ways, Women's Studies has begun to operate like other departments in order to schedule classes; graduate students; and hire and promote faculty (Yee, 2000). At the same time, these programs and departments try to keep academic feminism alive by maintaining their feminist history, expanding feminist scholarship, finding a place for activism, and wrestling with unanswered questions about the direction of this academic enterprise.

The changes in academic feminism to which Glazer-Raymo (1999) and others allude are not only due to the advances women have made, but are also confounded by the conservative climate that emerged during the 1980s and has continued throughout the 1990s. Susan Faludi (1991) defines this milieu, particularly during the 1980s, as a period of backlash against women and feminism. The source of the backlash is multifaceted, coming from the New Right, legal setbacks during the Reagan administration, resistance from corporate America, and sexualized and unrealistic images of women presented by the media and Hollywood (Faludi, 1991).

The backlash against feminism has led scholars (*e.g.*, Christina Hoff Sommers, Daphne Patai, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Camille Paglia), many of whom consider themselves “legitimate” feminists (Sommers, 1994, p. 17), to critique what Christina Hoff Sommers (1994) deems “gender feminism”. Gender feminists believe that institutions, like the academy, perpetuate the patriarchy, and that gender oppression is structural and hurts all women (Sommers, 1994). Further, gender feminism has become the guiding feminist voice in the academy due to the ability to secure funding, to hold influential positions on tenure committees, and to have access to the institutional bureaucracy (Sommers, 1994). The gender feminist voice is considered fundamentalist and rigid, disallowing questioning or disagreement with its orthodoxy (Patai & Koertge, 1994; Roiphe, 1993; Sommers, 1994). In addition, this voice often presents feeling and exaggeration as fact in scholarly work (Hausman & Steiger, 2001; Roiphe, 1993; Sommers, 1994). It also creates a rhetoric of victimhood where women are delicate and constantly offended by dirty jokes, innuendoes, and verbal pressure for sex (Roiphe, 1993), which seems to contradict the persona of a gender feminist who is at war against her male oppressor. Feminism, according to those opposed to gender feminists, is solely about equity, demanding women the same rights as men. It does not include the possibility of gender segregation, dismantling a structure, nor oppression based upon class and gender. It is feminism in the liberal, not radical nor left, tradition (Kennedy-Taylor, 1992; Sommers, 1994).

While Sommers considers herself a legitimate feminist and denounces gender feminism, academic feminists who do not embrace Sommers’ and others’ critiques

consider this group to be antifeminists (Ferguson, Katrack, & Miner, 1996; Stacey, 2000), making it difficult to simply describe the face of academic feminism. In fact, individuals who self-identify as feminists disagree not only on whether a backlash exists,² but on the very definition of feminism itself. Thus, in the end, to capture the essence of academic feminism in one word, only “complex” best describes it.

With complexity as the descriptor of academic feminism, it follows that collective action among feminist faculty women may be difficult to succinctly capture. Coupled with a professional academic climate that encourages national and international success rather than local notoriety and a continuing drive for scholarly integrity and legitimacy, organizing a grassroots group of feminist faculty focused on institutional change can be challenging. Yet, this research intends to contribute to the existing scholarship on academic women’s networks and strategies to shed light on the collective action among feminist faculty, especially in a time of complexity.

Academic Women’s Networks

Creating powerful networks can be a significant tool to provide support and improve the climate within academe, which is a driving focus of this study. In fact, Carlson (1994), Dickens and Sagaria (1997), Hensel (1991), Simeone (1987), and Twale and Shannon (1996) emphasize the value of networks among women, particularly feminist women, in academe. Thus, given the potential value of networks, women who have managed to access powerful and supportive ties may be able to better navigate or change the system, which, in turn, may lead to personal and professional rewards.

² Sommers (1994) claims that the backlash is a conspiracy theory created by gender feminists.

Simeone (1987) argues that women academics need networks in order to decrease a sense of isolation and to build a power base within an institution. These networks can be important mechanisms to help overcome isolated incidents of and systemic gender discrimination (Carli, 1992). As the literature about the academic climate suggests, advancement depends not only on hard work and achievement, but on having advocates, direction, and encouragement—all potential benefits of network ties (Carli, 1992). These benefits may also result from activism, sometimes, but not always, emerging from network relationships.

Several scholars who advocate the creating of networks among academic women see such connections as mechanisms for emotional and psychological support (Astin & Leland, 1991; Caplan, 1994; Childers, Rackin, Secor, & Tracy, 1981; Dickens & Sagaria, 1997; Garner, 1996; Simeone, 1987; Theodore, 1986). In an academic climate where women may feel isolated and even “crazy” (Garner, 1996, p. 207), developing a sisterhood with other women colleagues can ease these potentially toxic feelings. While the value of creating networks for the purpose of emotional support should not be underestimated, some researchers also describe other benefits to establishing networks among academic women. Often, these groups are informal and ad hoc, and bridge the personal and professional lives of those in the network, leaving time to discuss how to navigate institutional policies and procedures and to share personal feelings seemingly unrelated to the academic endeavor (Garner, 1996; Simeone, 1987). In other cases, the networks are purposely created to support scholarly work through collaborative writing projects, feminist theory discussions, and opportunities to share and critique research

(Dickens & Sagaria, 1997; Simeone, 1987). However, in these more professionally focused networks, the personal often becomes a relevant and meaningful part of these relationships as well.

Although not all women's academic networks are feminist in nature, many are. Ferree and Martin (1995) state that efforts of grassroots feminists are often unacknowledged and unrecognized. In fact, they claim that the numbers of women who participate in feminist organizations is higher today than in the height of consciousness raising groups (Ferree & Martin, 1995). Astin and Leland (1991), Caplan (1994), Childers, *et al.* (1981), Garner (1996), Simeone (1987), and Theodore (1986) all discuss the creation of and benefits from academic feminist networks that are designed to facilitate collective action.

Garner (1996) and Simeone (1987) describe how feminist networks foster political clout that is often difficult for just one woman to establish in the academy. The strength and savvy of the collective makes it more difficult for institutions to dismiss or ignore efforts on behalf of the network. These alliances can also work to confront and dismantle antifeminist policies and sentiments and rally support of curricular and other scholarly changes that embrace feminist perspectives (Garner, 1996). Astin and Leland (1991) characterize the women involved in such networks as instigators. For, it is the instigators who have used collective action to bring about institutional change, while predecessors often worked toward change in isolation and inheritors create feminist networks primarily for emotional support (Astin & Leland, 1991). However, for Astin and Leland (1991), instigators, predecessors, and inheritors are all considered leaders.

Temporal (and historical) situations and individual versus collective efforts categorize the processes certain women leaders use to facilitate institutional transformation (Astin & Leland, 1991).

Although Theodore (1986) sees the inheritors' vision of feminist networks included in her own research, she also shares evidence of networks designed for activist purposes. She describes feminist networks that are created to keep the administration on alert through strategies like letter writing and being a physical presence on campus (Theodore, 1986). However, Theodore (1986) finds that these feminist groups often vanish after a short period of time. Since success and change is slow, academic feminist networks often find the work frustrating and unrewarding. Coupled with the reality that the academic women involved have limited energy and resources to counter powerful administrators, these networks quickly disappear from the academic landscape. As a result, academic women tend to look toward national disciplinary networks to generate friendships and professional support (Theodore, 1986).

Childers, *et al.* (1981) stress the value of and encourage networks among academic women at the campus level. In fact, they are among very few scholars who acknowledge and recognize a specific campus-based feminist network that has succeeded. Most other scholars refer to individual women who have belonged to such networks or discuss networks in the abstract (Astin & Leland, 1991; Caplan, 1994; Garner, 1996; Simeone, 1987; Theodore, 1986). Childers, *et al.* (1981) argue that infiltration into the male networks by women is not sufficient, as it is difficult to enter those networks in equal numbers and on equal terms with men. Rather, women's

networks, like the Women for Equal Opportunity at the University of Pennsylvania (WEOUP), should work to intersect with the formal (and most often predominantly male) networks already in place at the institution. They encourage the creation of a feminist network that is not ideologically exclusive, embracing a variety of perspectives on how equality on campus can be achieved. Moreover, the network should be collaborative and should find ways for divergent feminist perspectives to come together. WEOUP should serve as a model of how a network should be structured, as Childers, *et al.* (1981) believe that certain roles must be filled in order to be effective. Each campus-based feminist network should include: a theorist; a data analyst; a writer; a public speaker; a savvy surveyor of group dynamics; someone who is knowledgeable about institutional power players; and a front woman who has a certain degree of invulnerability, like a tenured faculty member. This sort of network is formal and intentionally configured to best improve the climate for academic women, recognizing the positions and skills that are traditionally necessary to be successful in the academy. By suggesting that an invulnerable woman lead the network, Childers, *et al.* (1981) also implies that such networks are not without risk. It is the collectivity and support of networks, as other researchers have suggested, including the leadership of those who already have some institutional legitimacy, that can temper the accusations of individual women being singled out as troublemakers by the institutional hierarchy and can lead to successful activist networks.

Caplan (1994) echoes Childers, *et al.*'s (1981) position on the value of feminist networks to resolve campus climate issues. In her survival guide, *Lifting a Ton of*

Feathers: A Woman's Guide to Surviving the Academic World, she states that isolation from other women in the academy is tantamount to failure (Caplan, 1994). Although her “strength in numbers” argument is critical, Caplan (1994) essentializes women by stressing the need for women to create forums to discuss their problems “by virtue of the fact that they are women” (p. 87). At the same time, she describes how networks can provide information about unwritten rules and procedures, allow for opportunities to share feelings, and provide options for addressing unfair treatment that are faculty issues, not exclusive to women. In creating feminist networks, some scholars caution women (Baca Zinn, Cannon, Higginbotham & Dill, 1986; Caplan, 1994; Miles, 2000). Far too often, feminist networks are not welcoming to women who are not white, able-bodied, heterosexual, and of one particular age group. To marginalize other women under the guise of fighting for equity threatens potential allies and is hypocritical. Moreover, such exclusionary practices limit the complexity and the interdependence of systems of oppression, which, in turn, underestimate the barriers that must be confronted to facilitate change (Baca Zinn, *et al.*, 1986). Yet, Baca Zinn, *et al.* (1986), Caplan (1994), and Miles (2000) are among few researchers who discuss feminist networks that raise this issue. By shedding light on the challenges that some women who are not in the majority may face, Caplan (1994) and Miles (2000) seek to undermine the perspective that feminism is a white Women's Movement—something important to consider in the academy, which is already an elite environment.

Activist Strategies

In exploring the literature about academic women's networks, and particularly those dedicated to activism and institutional change, some strategies have already been highlighted. In fact, the very creation of a feminist network is one strategy intended to leverage academic women in the institution. However, this next section examines in greater depth other strategies that activists pursue in their efforts to improve the climate for academic women.

Researchers note that to improve the climate for academic women, institutional leaders must become change agents (Etzkowitz, Kemelgor, & Uzzi, 2000; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Valian, 1998). Or, in the case of Astin and Leland's (1991) study, change agents (*i.e.*, instigators) become leaders. In either case, scholars place the responsibility, not only on women academic activists, but on institutional power brokers, to address discrimination. Etzkowitz, *et al.* (2000) stress that it is the top-down role of department heads and deans, not the grassroots efforts of women faculty, who must provide mentoring, actively recruit women academics, and include diversity as a departmental or college goal. Further, deans and heads must be evaluated and held accountable for these efforts by upper-level administrators (Etzkowitz, *et al.*, 2000). It should also be a strategy of leaders to challenge gendered stereotypes and to create institutional policies that enhance the climate for women (Valian, 1998).

The strategies that are recommended for leaders by Etzkowitz, *et al.* (2000) and Valian (1998) should be part of the fabric of the university or college. Moreover, they are tactics that are easily implemented in the current institutional structure. However,

Glazer-Raymo (1999) recommends a more radical set of strategies in an effort to transform academe into a more welcoming environment for women. Earlier in this chapter, the climate for academic women was described. Rather than accepting the climate as one where women are clustered at the lower ranks and in less elite institutions, where women teach more and research less, and where women are more often single and childless than male colleagues, Glazer-Raymo (1999) calls for institutional leaders to determine what makes the existing structure more compatible with the lives of men and to be prepared to change the structure to embrace women as well. Her clarion call means that business as usual can no longer be a strategy. New models of academe must replace the competitive and hierarchical ones that force women to the margins (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Although Etzkowitz, *et al.* (2000) and Valian (1998) describe strategies for change that work within the existing system and Glazer-Raymo (1999) suggests that it is the system that needs to change, all these scholars place the responsibility for implementing strategies to improve the climate on institutional leaders. It is not the responsibility of those currently in the margins to create this paradigm shift.

Although some institutional leaders may be willing to pursue strategies to benefit academic women, not all leaders are so altruistic nor are they able to see past their own privilege. As such, the strategies of academic women, both individually, and as this study emphasizes, collectively, are instrumental in trying to create an equitable academic climate.

Many researchers have focused on strategies that individual academic women have pursued to create a more equitable campus community (Astin & Leland, 1991;

Caplan, 1994; Garner, 1996; Valian, 1990; Theodore, 1986). Often these strategies are embedded in liberal feminist efforts to better the situation for one woman or a small group of women within the existing institutional structure. For example, Garner (1996), Valian (1998), and Glazer-Raymo (1999, 2000) advocate that women consider serving on committees that shape policy for women, assuming administrative positions, or becoming members of a college or university Board of Trustees.

Theodore (1986), in her study of 470 academic women protesters, shares multiple stories of women who used institutional grievance procedures or filed complaints with government agencies, including seeking legal action in the courts. She also shared the experiences of women who have resigned from their own academic or administrative position or refused to be considered for a promotion because they disagreed with an institutional decision or policy (Theodore, 1986). However, Theodore's (1986) study finds that these predominantly isolated efforts of academic women in the 1970s and 1980s experienced little success. Instead, "campus troublemakers," as she calls them, were faced with sexism in the grievance and legal systems; red tape; inaction; lies; lack of financial, psychological, and social support, including reluctant unions; and often faced retaliation from colleagues and administrators (Theodore, 1986).

Although scholars describe strategies to foster institutional change that center on the efforts of an individual academic woman rather than on collective action (Astin & Leland, 1991; Caplan, 1994; Garner, 1996; Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2000), many of the tactics described or suggested can be pursued either by an individual, by an individual who is a member of a network, or collectively. Ultimately, to improve the institutional

climate for the next generation of women, academic women must anticipate, confront, and address expectations that limit the advancement of women (Glazer-Raymo, 2000). To do so, activists should prod search committees to increase the diversity of the applicant pool, work with women outside the institution who can put pressure on the university or college, host and publicize events like speakers and conferences, request that the President make a public statement that gender discrimination will not be tolerated, and support administrators who are sympathetic to feminist scholarship and inquiry (Astin & Leland, 1991; Caplan, 1994; Garner, 1996; Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2000). Other scholars whose work reflects the experiences of faculty activists focus on the power of the collective to transform the academic climate (Baldwin, Blattner, Johnson, Peder, & Shepard, 2000; Childers, *et al.*, 1981; DeSole & Butler, 1994; Glazer-Raymo, 1999; Hyer, 1983; O'Leary & Lie, 1990; Shepard, 2000; Smallwood, 2001; Swogger, 2000; Taylor, 1998; Theodore, 1986). Theodore (1986) learned from the stories of individual protestors, most of whom characterized their activism as a negative experience, that it is only through collective strength can any movement achieve its goals and can the activist experience be positive. Based upon her data, she believes that collective action among faculty women can be effective. She also identifies strategies that activists can use, including arranging meetings with administrators, writing letters, collecting funds for defense purposes, sponsoring rallies and lectures, and creating petitions and demonstrations (Theodore, 1986).

O'Leary and Lie (1990) reference Theodore's (1986) study as they categorize the activist strategies of academic women. They indicate that evidence from Theodore's

(1986) work helps to shape personal strategies. Further, recommendations from Theodore's (1986) findings characterize institutional strategies (O'Leary & Lie, 1990). Institutional strategies are considered the most effective to bring about policy change that benefit large groups of individuals, accomplished through well-presented, data-driven arguments. Collective action, particularly within Women's Studies programs, has shown to be successful at using data to initiate institutional change (O'Leary & Lie, 1990). The third strategy, political or governmental, is seen least often, especially among academics in the United States. However, this strategy has been successful in other countries, most notably Norway. Pressure on the government from feminist academics in Norway has led to the creation of the Secretariat for Women and Research (O'Leary & Lie, 1990), an example that could be pursued in other countries.

Likely categorized as institutional strategies using O'Leary and Lie's (1990) schema, several scholars have used case studies to describe models of collective action that academic women are encouraged to replicate to transform the institutional culture to one that is more welcoming to women (Baldwin, *et al.*, 2000; Childers, *et al.*, 1991; DeSole & Butler, 1994; Hyer, 1983). In her research on the implementation of affirmative action policies in the early 1980s, Hyer (1983) found that faculty women's groups were instrumental in the establishment of such policies, as well as in the creation of other changes for university women. Respondents at CKSU, Denby, and Newton described strategies that their campus women's faculty groups used to foster change. Although one group, and interestingly the least effective of the three, was connected to a union, all three used similar tactics. The groups met with administrators; encouraged the

appointment of senior women to administrative posts; wrote position papers, letters, and resolutions; and educated junior faculty about professional issues, like tenure and negotiating the institutional bureaucracy (Hyer, 1983). In the end, the groups tried to raise awareness and affect change, not only around affirmative action, but on salary, childcare, maternity leave, spousal hires, mentoring, and the creation of Women's Studies programs (Hyer, 1983).

The issues important to the WEOUP were similar to those described in Hyer's (1983) study, although the network was not solely comprised of faculty, as those were in Hyer's research (Childers, *et al.*, 1981). Faculty, staff, and students worked together to accomplish an extensive list of projects. Broad strategies include many already articulated by other scholars, like conducting research, persuading and negotiating, and pressure putting on administrators (Childers, *et al.*, 1981). The WEOUP used tactics that lead to productivity and even compared its strategies to those used in industry. However, there was one notable exception—staging demonstrations. The demonstrations the WEOUP staged mirrored its feminist groundings, as they were nonviolent and were never conducted at the expense of other minority groups (Childers, *et al.*, 1981).

To remind academic women that the full participation has not been realized and work still needs to be done, DeSole and Butler (1994) present a model of a multidimensional network at the State University of New York, Albany. To frame the need for such a network, they state that they believe that academic women have become co-opted by partial success. This is to say that academic women who have fought for change and have witnessed some minor improvements interpret these small tokens as

achieving equity (DeSole & Butler, 1994). Like WEOUP, the network at Albany is open to faculty, staff, and students. However, at one time, there was an organization that was taken over by faculty, the Caucus for Women's Rights. This network of women faculty disbanded after about six years because its charge was too large and members too few. In its place, the university drew 14 groups together whose energies are focused on promoting opportunities and furthering common interests of women at Albany. The interlocking network is loosely managed by the university, unlike some of the other groups previously described, which are more grassroots in origin. However, the strategies of the "Albany Model" are strikingly similar to those grassroots networks. This model network hosts an annual reception for new women faculty and professionals, conducts and analyzes surveys on the climate for women at Albany, publicizes findings in reports and in public forums, and meets with administrators to share results and encourage remedies for documented inequities (DeSole & Butler, 1994).

More recently, the Vice President for Student Affairs formed a collective of faculty, administrators, professional and clerical staff, and students at Southeast Missouri State University (SMSU) to address climate issues for women at the university (Baldwin, *et al.*, 2000). It is unclear as to whether the network was established as an administrative mandate from her position or as a grassroots effort in spite of her position. However, the network at SMSU is differentiated from the others discussed in this chapter in that it is a chapter of the American Council on Education/National Network (ACE/NN). This affiliation makes the organization unique in that it is linked to and supported by a broader national network housed in the ACE Office on Women in Higher Education. Yet, like all

other networks studied thus far, the strategies to promote the professional and personal development of women are similar. The network has created mentoring programs, provided advocacy for women's issues, sponsored Women's History Month programming, published a newsletter and website, and implemented studies on gender. This ACE/NN group also conducted town-gown events (Baldwin, *et al.*, 2000), emphasizing the need to create liaisons within the local community, which is a strategy that is not often mentioned in the scholarship on academic activist networks.

In 1994, Dr. Nancy Hopkins, a molecular biologist at MIT, finally realized the extent to which she faced discrimination after 20 years at the institute. A popular course she founded was dropped from the curriculum at the same time her male co-instructor was developing a text and CD-ROM based upon the class (Koerner, 1999). This incident led Hopkins to write a letter about the situation and the degree to which the culture at MIT advantaged men over women. Several female colleagues demanded that their signatures be added to Hopkins' letter and this act of solidarity sparked the formation of the Committee on Women Faculty in the School of Science (<http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html>). The committee conducted extensive quantitative and qualitative research about the working conditions of the women faculty in the school. The findings, a response from the dean of the School of Science, and subsequent remarks by the institute's President made national headlines (<http://web.mit.edu/fnl/women/women.html>; Edut, 1999; Goldberg, 1999; Hopkins, 1999; Koerner; Miller & Wilson, 1999).

The findings showed that women faculty, especially tenured women faculty, feel excluded and marginalized in their academic departments. Further, the data showed disparities that favor male academics in salary, office and laboratory space, awards, resources, committee assignments, named chairs, teaching obligations, and institutional responses to outside job offers to retain faculty (<http://web.mit.edu/fnl.women/women.html>). While individual women raised the issue of the pattern of discrimination in the past, the comments were often ignored or dismissed. However, this was not the case after the collective action that resulted in this comprehensive study. The consistent message from the data was undeniable, prompting the President to state: "I have always believed that contemporary gender discrimination within universities is part reality and part perception. True, but I now understand that reality is by far the greater part of the balance" (Goldberg, 1999, p. A16).

With the support of the dean and President, the network of women made several recommendations: 1) to improve the status of, and ensure the equity for, senior women faculty; 2) to improve the professional lives of junior women faculty; and 3) to increase the number of women faculty (<http://web.mit.edu/fnl.women/women.html>). Already, MIT has witnessed some change. The School of Science agreed to immediately increase the number of tenured women faculty by 40 percent. This is a small step for the school—for it will take 40 years before 40 percent of the faculty in the school are female (Koerner, 1999), but it is a step in the right direction that has been initiated by collective action. In addition to this change at MIT, other institutions, including The University of Arizona, the University of Michigan, and the University of California-Los Angeles, have

been inspired to investigate the gender inequalities on their own campuses (Lafleur, 1999). Moreover, on at least one campus (the University of Arizona), the investigation was initiated by a grassroots collective effort.

Perhaps the most visible activism among faculty in the immediate past has been pursued by part-time and adjunct faculty. Part-time and adjunct faculty are often poorly treated, poorly paid, and lack benefits. They are even referred to as the “migrant workers of the information economy” in the documentary film *Degrees of Shame* (<http://chronicle.com/daily/2001/10/2001103006n.htm>). Further, women comprise this group of faculty more than any other (e.g., assistant, associate, or full professors), making the plight of part-time faculty a gendered issue. While there has been little documentation of academic women’s groups addressing the concerns or trying to improve the conditions of part-time faculty, these faculty themselves (women and men) have engaged in collective action (<http://chronicle.com/daily/2001/10/2001103006n.htm>; <http://www.awpwriter.org/swoggerl.htm>). Some part-time faculty have unionized, while others, especially in right-to-work states have formed activist networks to improve their work life conditions (<http://www.awpwriter.org/swoggerl.htm>). In either case, these faculty activists (again, not all women, as is the focus of the study in which this literature review is embedded) have picketed, generated media coverage, and pressured other institutional unions to support them (<http://www.awpwriter.org/swoggerl.htm>). Other examples of activist strategies were visible during Campus Equity Week in 2001, sponsored by the American Association of University Professors. Part-time faculty activists constructed a life-sized elephant handing out peanuts with a sign reading, “Will

work for peanuts,” and presented guerilla theater skits depicting the situation of adjuncts (<http://chronicle.com/daily/2001/10/2001103006n.htm>). The strategies used by the part-time faculty groups are more radical than those described by other researcher interested in collective action among academics. The literature does not attempt to explain why the strategies are more radical; however, several explanations should be considered.

- (1) In some cases, there was union support, protecting the part-time faculty activists.
- (2) While confronting a gendered issue, women and men participated together in the activist strategies of the part-time faculty.
- (3) Part-time faculty may not be as entrenched in the professionalism of faculty work and may be willing to consider other strategies that are not a part of the “traditional” mode of academic operation.
- (4) The issues of part-time faculty are fairly focused, while women’s issues, or even women’s faculty issues, are broad-based and more difficult to contain in one demonstration or protest.
- (5) The collective action of part-time faculty is a grassroots effort, without any formal administrative ties.

Of the models described by researchers, only the WEOUP, the Women’s Faculty Caucus at Denby, the Women’s Forum at Newton, and the part-time faculty movement were truly grassroots networks that did not have to answer to the institutional hierarchy (Childers, *et al.*, 1981; Hyer, 1983). However, in the literature reviewed, it was only the WEOUP that included nonviolent demonstrations as a strategy, save the recent part-time faculty movement. Further, scholars who study feminist networks outside of academe

warn that “the master’s tools” will never create genuine change (Lourde, 1983, p. 99; Faver, 1994). This suggests that the more radical strategies must also be pursued, for those that are part of the daily work of, in this case, academe (*e.g.*, conducting research, attending committee meetings, meeting with administrators, providing educational seminars) will never be enough (Ropers-Huilman, 2000). In addition, to be successful, feminist networks must create coalitions outside of the institution, as they did at SMSU, to best leverage the network’s power base (Nelson & Johnson, 1991). However, by examining the scholarship on activism among women academics, the sorts of networks that seem to be in abundance are those that are perceived as less radical and are embedded in the institutional structure, like most of those previously described and like commissions on the status of women (CSW).

In her book, *Shattering the Myths: Women in Academe*, Glazer-Raymo (1999) explores the role of CSWs in higher education. The purpose of these networks is to implement change for women (faculty, staff, and students). In addition, they are conceptualized within a liberal feminist framework, seeking to modify, but ultimately maintain, the academic structure (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). The circumstances surrounding the establishment of CSWs varied by institution. Some were appointed by state governing boards; institutional leaders, like the President or Provost, or the Faculty Senate. Others started as grassroots organizations, but were adopted by the institution. Ultimately, all CSWs operated within certain boundaries where their activities could be monitored by the institution (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). As a result, risk-taking and radical strategies are not a part of the activist efforts of CSWs (Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2000).

Instead, the commissions tend to generate statistics on the status of women, implement diversity mandates, and recommend mechanisms to remove particular barriers for women. Like the other collectives described in this chapter, the concerns of CSWs focus on creating salary equity, strengthening support for work-family initiatives, and recruiting and promoting women (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Glazer-Raymo (1999) documents a decline in the influence of women's commissions in the 1990s due to the perception that there is no longer an equity problem thanks to affirmative action policies; backlash against women and feminists in a time of diminished resources; decline of activism; institutionalization of Women's Studies as the source of feminist scholarly production; and difficulties of women of color. Given the proposed reasons for the decline of CSWs, it is not surprising that there is little recent scholarship on collective action among academic women. In fact, the ACE/NN at SMSU and the commissions are the only actual organizations for academic women documented after 1995 (Baldwin, *et al.*, 2000; Glazer-Raymo, 1999). In addition, the model networks at Denby and Newton were the only networks focused solely on the issues of women faculty, although other scholars recommend the establishment of activist networks for women faculty (Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2000; O'Leary & Lie, 1990; Ropers-Huilman, 2000; Theodore, 1986). The other model networks included faculty, staff, and students.

Although there appears to be a decline in collective activism among women faculty, there remains a need to transform and improve the climate for the growing numbers of women within academe. Becky Ropers-Huilman (2000) believes, like others (*e.g.*, O'Leary & Lie (1990) and Theodore (1986)) that a critical mass is what is needed.

Organizations like CSWs and other institutionally-sanctioned networks may be outdated or disappearing, opening the way for networks with different origins and strategies.³ Those strategies related to liberal feminism are important, but may not be enough (Ropers-Huilman, 2000). Academic women need to adopt some “outsider” strategies, like those used by the part-time faculty activists, to balance them against their existing “insider” (*i.e.*, liberal feminist) strategies (Spaller-Roth & Schreiber, 1995). The tensions between the strategies are real. Networks must maintain resources, credibility, and organizational unity, while empowering women, raising consciousness, and not compromising feminist ideals (Spaller-Roth & Schreiber, 1995). Existing literature provides too few examples on how women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations accomplish this or even attempt to manage these trade-offs. Thus, it is the intent of the remainder of this study to complement the broad literatures explored in this chapter with rich examples and analyses of how women faculty involved in collective action construct their lives and their activist strategies and relate to the concerns of broader groups of women internal and external to academe.

³ Or, perhaps more of these organizations already exist, but they remain on the margins and are excluded from the scholarship on activism among feminist academics.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

In order to begin my analysis, I conducted an exploratory qualitative pilot study in the spring semester of 2000. This pilot study was conducted at the University of the Desert and was intended to begin my formal in depth exploration of a grassroots feminist faculty organization, the Organization for Faculty Women (OFW), in which I had been involved since September, 1998. For the pilot, I analyzed one document, two observations, and one interview. The themes that emerged helped shape my research questions, and improve my coding techniques.

Document Analysis

By the time of my pilot work, I had read many of the organization's newsletters, which came out approximately six times each academic year. In my pilot, I formally analyzed one issue of the OFW newsletter. Patterns and themes emerged that better shaped my understanding of the nature of this organization. This formal analysis helped structure impressions and ideas that had been percolating in my mind for some time, as a result of my ongoing involvement in the OFW. The central networks with which the OFW aligns speaks to the strategies the women use to advance particular issues and the organization's overall agenda. Establishing and nurturing "prestige networks" that allow access to resources like money, power, and legitimacy are central to the operation of the organization. The women who lead the organization are enmeshed in the academic culture, and while they are concerned with dismantling the patriarchy, they make alliances and mobilize within that very structure. In fact, for some of the women, their

professional ties are so strong and the patriarchy so solid, that it may be difficult to perceive alternative methods of activism to transform the academy. The activism of social movements characterized by picket lines, sit-ins, walk-outs, and marches is not the activism of the OFW. Additionally, such strategies seem somewhat out of place for professional women addressing issues that seek incremental individual changes rather than system-wide transformations. Instead, the strategies that the OFW uses can be categorized as “professionalized activism.” Calling for research, meeting with the President, completing mock exit interviews, and providing feedback shape the professionalized activism for this organization.

Observation Analysis

At the time of the pilot, I had already attended and participated in at least 20 board meetings, meeting with administrators, subcommittee meetings, and programs of the organization. This involvement provided me with an extensive background to the organization that prepared me for in-depth discovery. For the pilot, I selected one board meeting of the OFW and a meeting with the board and the university President to observe and analyze. It is evident that prestige networks and professionalized activism are salient for this organization. Just as I found through my analysis of the OFW newsletter, the board seeks to advance its agenda by aligning itself with institutions, individuals, and groups that have power, resources, and legitimacy in and outside of the academy. Moreover, creating these prestige networks is only one strategy the organization uses to initiate change. Activities that are embedded in the daily professional lives of faculty and administrators are central to the efforts of the OFW. Conducting and sharing research,

using the institutional chain of command, and letter and memo writing are among some of the strategies implemented by these women faculty.

The board commends the administration, especially the university President, for being responsive to the OFW agenda. Their gratitude is expressed publicly and even in more private venues, like board meetings. The President and his cabinet are often praised for their support. Based upon these reactions and my involvement with the OFW board at that time for over a year, it seemed to me that the board was satisfied when the central administration agreed that there are gender equity issues among faculty. When administrators quote information from the OFW newsletter or take notes when an issue is being presented, as the university President did during this portion of my study, the board felt a sense of accomplishment. In fact, consciousness may be raised for some through the board's efforts, but it is a small number of individuals who are influenced—not a fundamental change in the campus climate. Additionally, this minimal consciousness raising rarely translates into the policy changes (or actions) sought by the board; and even if a policy change occurs, it tends not to fray the fundamental fabric of a patriarchal system like the academy.

Interview Analysis

Finally, in my pilot study, I conducted an interview with a former OFW board President. This interview painted a more complete picture of the organization. Feminist activist work at both the organizational and individual level can include prestige networks and professionalized activism. Yet for my respondent, these concepts may be necessary but not sufficient to express her political, professional, and personal success. Like her

politics, her public and private lives are enmeshed and complicated, a reality of which I must be aware throughout my entire study.

As a result of this initial triangulation of data, I was able to gain a richer understanding of the lives of academic women activists. New concepts were emerging. I was beginning to refine a set of issues with which I had been directly and intensely involved for some time and to pose new questions for my formal study of an organization.

Dissertation Design

The findings from my pilot study served as a springboard to develop my research questions and to extend and deepen the propositions and understandings that emerged from it. I am particularly interested in exploring the concepts of prestige networks and professionalized activism in more detail. Of course, in searching for meaning, I must be open to expanding or refining these themes, and to creating new themes. To do so, I used a comparative case study design to intensively investigate two feminist faculty organizations at two public Research I universities over the course of one academic semester.

For each case study, I conducted a cross-case analysis. This sort of analysis allowed me to group together perspectives from different data sources to shape the themes that guided my research (Patton, 1990). By using a variety of field methods (document analysis, observation analysis, and interview analysis), I gathered comprehensive, in-depth information about each case.

As previously mentioned, I selected two feminist faculty organizations that serve as the foundation of my study. The first is the Organization for Faculty Women (OFW) at The University of the Desert. I chose this organization, in part, because I am a board member of the OFW, and therefore, have easy access to all aspects of the organization. Because of my involvement in this organization, I have been a participant observer prior to, throughout, and after the collection and analysis of the data.

While being a participant observer did improve access and trust within the organization, I also needed to be mindful of the fact that the choices I make as a participant may impact the data I gather. For example, I discovered a copy of the organization's bylaws and shared them at an OFW board meeting. It is unlikely that a discussion about the organization's bylaws would have occurred had I not been gathering data for my study. Thus, the organization's agenda unexpectedly shifted due to my role as observer. Further, due to my dual roles, I recognize that I have a loyalty to the organization and to some of its members and leaders that could bias my analysis. As such, the functions of my advisor and my peer research group were especially critical. Throughout the data gathering and analysis, I was able to debrief with them about potential biases. Since they were not participants in the organization, they could address issues of quality and rigor that were harder for me to see.

For the second case, I selected the Women's Faculty Association (WFA) at the University of the Plains. For comparative purposes, I wanted to find another women's faculty organization at a flagship public Research I institution. Initially, I used the World Wide Web as a tool to find my second case. The OFW has a web site that is easily

accessed from the University of the Desert's main home page. I hoped to search other Research I University sites to find a comparable case. However, I was unable to find such an organization after looking at several university sites, such the State University of New York at Buffalo; the University of California-Los Angeles, the University of Massachusetts; University of California, Berkeley; the University of Wisconsin; and the University of Michigan. My conversations with several faculty at other institutions indicated that such organizations did exist on many campuses, primarily to encourage the creation of Women's Studies programs. However, in many cases, after the programs were established, the organizations disbanded.

I then posted a message on a national Women's Studies listserve and on a national women's subcommittee list for the Modern Languages Association asking readers for any information they might have about grassroots feminist organizations for faculty. I received several responses, although most were about organizations at non-Research I institutions, like Denison University, Allegheny College, and New Jersey City University. Since I had not yet found a comparable case, I decided to contact directors of Women's Studies programs at other Research I universities to see if they had information about feminist faculty organizations on their campuses. I assumed that because Women's Studies programs have roots in activism and the Women's Movement, Women's Studies directors may be aware of activist groups on their campuses. I planned to use e-mail to initiate contact and used university web sites to gather information about the Women's Studies directors.

While looking at the web site for the University of the Plains, I followed a link to its campus Commission on the Status of Women. The members of the commission were listed and among them was a faculty member representing the Women's Faculty Association (WFA). I e-mailed her and she informed me that the WFA was, indeed, a grassroots feminist faculty organization that has been active since about 1990. She gave me the name and e-mail address of one of the WFA's founding and still active members and suggested that I contact her for more information about the organization. I did so and she agreed to give me entrée to the WFA.

The two settings, the University of the Desert and the University of the Plains, have several similarities that make them ideal for comparative analysis. They are both public Research I, land grant, flagship universities. In addition, both institutions have a Women's Studies program or department and an active commission on the status of women, which I felt was important in my inquiry due to potentially overlapping goals and strategies among all of these groups. Lastly, the numbers of instructional faculty at the two institutions were nearly identical. In 1999, there were 1485 faculty at the University of the Desert, of whom 412 were women. For that same time period, the University of the Plains had 1487 instructional faculty members, among whom 453 were women.⁴

⁴ As of August, 2001, this was the most recent comparable data available.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Document Analysis

The OFW, as evidenced by its formal web site, is a more public and institutionally recognized organization than the WFA. As a result, the types of documents available for analysis differ greatly between these groups. On the one hand, the OFW has archived its bylaws, newsletters, financial records, and other documents, providing a rich written history of the organization. These documents are catalogued and accessible in the university library. On the other hand, the WFA chose not to keep membership records, had no newsletter or bylaws, and communicated orally through meetings with no recorded minutes or through electronic mail (e-mail). Initially, I had assumed that each organization would have similar records to analyze. However, I quickly learned, after making contact with the WFA, that I would need to approach document analysis differently for each case.

For the OFW, while I read through all of the documents catalogued in the university library and additional documents collected in my role as participant in the OFW, I concentrated on two sets of documents. First, I carefully read and analyzed the organization's constitution and bylaws. Since this is a public document and introduces the organization to the university community, I felt it would shed light on how the organization presents itself to the university, including how it articulates its purpose and mechanisms to advance its goals, and the nature of the networks the organization deems significant through content embedded in the document.

Second, I analyzed a cross-section of newsletters of the OFW. The newsletters are less public documents than the web sites, as access is partially restricted through distribution efforts; and therefore, they may enhance the data in different and unexpected ways. I selected newsletters from four academic years. To do so, I narrowed my list to include newsletters from academic years that had a complete set of issues. There were eight years where some or all newsletter issues were missing.⁵ With that list, I then selected newsletters from the academic years 1983-84, 1987-88, 1991-92, and 1999-2000 as data sources for my inquiry. By selecting this cross-section of newsletters, I accessed documents generated by the organization since it was first printed in 1983, including two volumes from the 1980s and two volumes from the 1990s.⁶ This sampling allowed me to compare and contrast the nature of networks, activist agendas, including the issues that were most salient for the organization, and strategies of the OFW over time.

For the WFA, much of the recorded history is through documents written by the local or national press. While data recorded from sources external to the organization provides evidence for the nature of the organization, including its networks, issues, and strategies, such data are not created by the WFA (*i.e.*, they are generated by a third party) and, therefore, did not serve as comparable data to those of the OFW. Fortunately, two of my interview respondents from the WFA compiled several e-mails, meeting agendas, petitions, and letters from 1993 to 2001 and shared them with me. I analyzed all 18 of those documents to which I had access.

⁵ Interview respondents indicated that there was at least one year in the mid-1990s where no newsletters were published since the board was unable to successfully recruit a newsletter editor. Moreover, each year the number of issues varied from zero to eight, with an average of six issues per volume. The number of pages per issue also varied from one to more than 20.

In order to address my research question, I focused on words and phrases that identified individuals, institutions, and other organizations within each university and external to each university that were highlighted in all of the documents. With whom relationships were sought and forged is important in understanding how the organization tries to place itself within a larger context, and ultimately, how the organization tries to initiate change. I also paid attention to the kinds of issues the organization considers salient. The themes that emerged, the language that surrounded an issue (*e.g.*, “this is an important issue”), the tone of the language (*e.g.*, Is it rhetorical? Professional?), and the frequency it was mentioned shed light on the significance of one issue over another. To further guide my analysis, I used a protocol with prompts that were based upon my pilot study and my research questions (see Appendix A).

Observation Analysis

At the time of the study, the board of the OFW met for one hour each month to discuss an agenda created by the board President. Other than organization-sponsored events (panel discussion, luncheons, presentations, *etc.*), there was no formal meeting that included the entire organization’s membership. Therefore, the board meetings provided the primary focus and direction for the organization and were the best source of data to better understand the nature of the OFW. The OFW also met twice each academic semester with the university President and Provost and once with the state Board of Trustees.

⁶ I did not analyze newsletters from the most recent academic year because only two issues were published.

Over the course of the spring 2001 semester, I observed six board meetings; one meeting with the board and the university President and Provost; one meeting with the board and the university President; and a luncheon open to the OFW membership, invited university administrators, and the state Board of Trustees. I also attended three other board meetings, a task force meeting with three other board members to refine the organization's bylaws, and two educational programs the OFW sponsored for the membership. However, I chose not to include these in my analysis due to the fact that patterns and themes were consistently recurring in the data I had already collected. The meetings with university officials were included in this study due to my assumption, based upon my experiences as a participant in the OFW and my pilot research, that the meetings were strategic and served as catalysts to advance the organization's agenda and highlight the salient issues. Since I analyzed meetings over time (from January through May), I was also able to discover trends and trace the nature of relationships as they developed.

The WFA membership tries to meet once or twice each semester, and more often should a critical issue for the organization arise. In addition, the WFA meets with university officials on an ad hoc basis. Because of an inconsistent and ad hoc meeting schedule, it was difficult to schedule a visit to the UP at a time when there would be a guaranteed opportunity to observe activities of the association. In addition, I was only on-site to gather data for a period of two weeks. Thus, I was unable to analyze the organization through observations over the course of a semester in the same way I did at the UD. However, I purposely scheduled my visit to the UP in the middle of the

semester, so if there was a chance to observe a meeting of the group or with members of the group and university officials, I would be able to observe situations where some rapport was already established. Thus, the meetings would not have to focus on introductions, trust building, and other cursory communication. I was fortunate that during my visit to the UP, a resolution created by the WFA was proposed at an academic senate meeting. As such, I observed this meeting, and more specifically, the participation and involvement of members of the WFA at this meeting. This observation gave me a glimpse into the nature of the organization, one of its current issues, and how it tried to advance its agenda. If the patterns from this observation mirror the data collected from other sources (*i.e.*, documents and interviews), the power of the fortuitous observation will be reinforced.

As I discussed, I observed several meetings over the course of an academic semester. For the OFW, some meetings only included board members of the organization, while others included parties external to the organization. My observation for the WFA included members of that group and external constituents. By analyzing different types of meetings, I was able to better understand how activist strategies were both articulated and implemented, especially for the OFW, as I observed a total of nine meetings.

Moreover, for each meeting, I coded all agenda items (both formal and informal), how much time was spent on each topic, who spoke and for how long. To gather insight on networks, I focused, as I did in the document analysis, on the names of individuals, groups, and institutions that were discussed in the meetings. Further, I paid particular

attention to the verbal and nonverbal cues and the perceived emphases meeting participants placed on topics in order to describe what issues and types of strategies were salient.

Additionally, the individuals present at each meeting created a network that was categorized. I coded each participant according to their role as internal to the organization or external to the organization, and internal to the university or external to the university. I also coded the individual participant based upon her or his position within the organization or institution of which she or he was a part. The positional power of those with whom a relationship is forged shed light on the purpose of a particular network. To facilitate the analysis, I used a protocol to frame these and other coding categories (see Appendix A).

Interview Analysis

To provide more in-depth data related to my research questions, I conducted 18 interviews at the UD and 9 interviews at the UP. The hour-long, semi-structured interviews were conducted in person, with the exception of three interviews at the UP which were conducted via telephone, and were selected using a combination of methods. While I was on campus at the UP, two of my respondents were out of town. Therefore, I conducted these interviews over the telephone upon my return home. A third respondent was no longer working at the UP, but due to her role in the early years for the WFA, I was interested in learning about her perspectives. This interview was also conducted via telephone.

First, I used theoretical, purposive sampling to select my initial set of respondents at the UD. The first sample included all 15 of the active members of the board of the OFW, excluding myself.⁷ All of the executive board officers (President, past President, vice President, secretary, and membership/treasurer) agreed to participate in my study, as did six other board current board members. The remaining four board members either never responded to my two requests for interviews or were unavailable due to time constraints. In addition, I interviewed the chair of the Women's Studies Department at the UD. The purpose of this interview was to further investigate the nature of the relationship of Women's Studies to the OFW.

Next, I used snowball sampling to select additional respondents. I asked each respondent for names of other individuals who may be helpful to my study. Based upon that and the content of my document analyses and observation analyses, I identified other individuals to interview who appeared to be significant to my research. In the end, I chose to interview four former OFW Presidents and two other former executive board officers, one of whom also founded the organization. The following is a comprehensive list of my respondents from the UD:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Wanda Solidad	President
Olivia Nelson	Past President
Nora Islip	Vice President
Margie Cather	Secretary
Kari Morgan	Membership/Treasurer
Cynthia Court	Action Committee Chair
Da-Ming Quo	Minority Women Committee Chair
Maura Nemece	Academic Professionals Committee Chair

⁷ There is one member who is included in the official list of OFW board members who never attended a meeting and was, therefore, also excluded from the purposive sample.

Uma Himinez	Liaison, Commission on the Status of Women
Deborah Young	Liaison, Women in Academic Medicine
Becky Yeager	Liaison, American Association of University Women
Marcia Lawrence	Chair, Women's Studies Department
Claudia Macintosh	OFW Founder
Flora Salvador	President, 1985-86
Lisa Bartholomew	President, 1988-89
Sallie Edgar	President, 1990-91
Kyra Unger	President, 1994-95
Robin Neigh	Vice President, 1989-90

Since the WFA did not have a board, a formal slate of officers, nor a membership list, identifying respondents was more difficult. However, I used the same techniques to select my respondents at the UP as I did for the UD. My contact, who was one of two founding members of the WFA, was part of my purposive sample. The other founding member was no longer at the UP and although I tried three times via e-mail and telephone to contact her, I was unable to do so. I also asked the two current facilitators, or co-chairs, of the WFA to participate in my study and both agreed immediately. Finally, just as with the UD, I included the director of the Women's Studies Program at the UP in my theoretical sample.

From this sample, I used snowball sampling techniques to gather additional respondents. To do so, I asked those from my purposive sample to recommend other individuals with whom to speak, and then, I asked each additional respondent for her recommendations as well. Each respondent mentioned many of the same names, and most shared that there is a group of women who have been actively involved in the WFA from its inauguration who I should interview. I also learned that, while all women faculty are invited to attend the ad hoc meetings through an e-mail list provided annually

by the Provost's office, about 20 women attend each meeting. The meetings consist of a core group of women and a more peripheral group whose participation varies based upon time commitments and the saliency of the agenda. I invited each person whose name emerged from my snowball sampling process, and in the end, I was never able to reach one potential respondent who was no longer a faculty member at the UP and one other declined to participate because she felt her involvement in the organization was too minimal to be of assistance to me. In total, I spoke to nine women. Eight, including the director of Women's Studies, were involved in the WFA at the time of the data collection. One woman was no longer at the UP, but was involved in the early years of the association. Of the eight, six were core WFA members and two self-identified as more peripheral.

The respondents from the UP were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Beth Newman	Founding member
Catherine Eller	Co-Chair
Nicole Carsen	Co-Chair
Karen Smith	Director, Women's Studies Program
Natalie Ingram	Member
Nancy Nichols	Member
Margaret Green	Member
Irene North	Member
Fran Cousins	Former Member

I constructed a list of open-ended questions that guided each interview (see Appendix A). The questions were based upon my research question and on themes that emerged in pilot study. However, the questions only served as a loose structure for my interviews; for my approach to collecting this data was to conduct an informal conversational interview (Patton, 1990). I began with broad questions in order to

establish rapport and my subsequent questions emerged according to the direction my respondents led me.

Each interview was recorded with the permission of the respondent and transcribed verbatim, including the three interviews conducted over a speaker telephone. After transcribing, I coded the text looking for connections to previously identified themes and to my research questions. Words and phrases that described relationships and the purpose of them, the role of Women's Studies in academic feminist organizations, and feminist activist strategies will be areas of particular interest. In addition, I was aware of my personal bias while coding so that I carefully examined the transcripts to uncover what was not being said and why.

After all of the data were collected and coded, I looked for themes and patterns that emerged in each data source and among all three data sources for each case. Those most powerful patterns and themes served as the framework for my findings that follow in the next chapter. In addition, I worked closely with my dissertation advisor and a peer research group throughout the research process to help me refine my protocols, address issues of bias, and reinforce the salient findings from this study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Just as feminism is complex, the activism that emerges from feminist faculty organizations is complex as well. There appears to be no one mold to describe academic feminism and activism. Strategies range from collegial to confrontational, from leveraging the university administration to leveraging a wider public. The Organization for Faculty Women (OFW) at the University of the Desert (UD) and the Women's Faculty Association (WFA) at the University of the Plains (UP) provide examples of the nature of activism among feminist women faculty. The voices of women involved in these organizations, as evidenced in interviews and organizational documents, convey the essence of these organizations. Observations of some of the activities of the OFW and WFA shed further light on how academic feminism and activism are operationalized.

By triangulating the findings from the analysis of in-depth interviews with women involved in the OFW and the WFA, organizational documents, and observations of meetings, this chapter presents several themes that describe the complexities of two different campus-based grassroots organizations for women faculty. The themes are organized so that the reader can compare and contrast particular nuances of each organization. First, the structure and purpose, or organization, of the OFW and the WFA are explored. Based upon the data, the OFW has been labeled a professional organization of feminists, while the WFA is labeled a feminist organization of professionals. Second, the personal networks of the groups' members and the networks of the groups themselves is discussed. Networking strategies conceptualized as prestige networks and as leveraging the public help to articulate how the OFW and the WFA intentionally forge

and use relationships. Third, additional strategies of the organizations are examined. Patterns from the OFW data show that professionalized activism is the primary mechanism used to advance the agenda for the group. For the WFA, the strategies used characterize the women of that organization as activist professionals. Last, some of the issues that are central to the agendas of each organization are uncovered. Despite the differences between these two groups that are illuminated in this chapter, the issues of each organization overlap more than might be anticipated. Thus, this chapter presents two paths by which feminist faculty groups organize and strategize to address similar sets of issues.

Organization at the University of the Desert

Professional Organization of Feminists

Purpose

When I spoke to the women involved with the OFW about the purpose and description of the organization, their responses expressed a wide array of perspectives about the organization. Among the breadth of responses, seven women indicated that advocacy for women faculty to the administration was the purpose of the OFW and three shared that the organization was also there to support women faculty. With regard to the administration, members of the OFW felt that their work was not only to be a spokesperson for women faculty to the administration, but to work in concert with the administration to resolve concerns. The idea of working with the administration places the OFW in a position to influence institutional decision-making beyond the conservative ideals of some scholarly perspectives of shared governance that allows for faculty to

advise only in curricular and other “academic” matters. In fact, the joint participation in decision-making toward which members of the OFW strive is the kind of shared, rather than segmented, authority that McConnell and Mortimer (1971) prefer. Further, this type of governance assumes mutual trust, cooperation, and negotiation that is also often linked to organizations of feminists, so it is not surprising that the OFW sought this type of relationship with the administration.

“Our activities are much more formal and they have changed in that they are now in partnership with the administration. Whereas before, we were this independent group of volunteering that operated in our own sphere, which is a worthy sphere.” (Wanda Solidad, OFW)

“I think the purpose of the OFW is to advance women’s issues on campus, to make them more visible, to get them heard, to identify what are the most important and pressing issues facing women on campus, and to try to carry those issues forward to the administration and to get them acted on.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

“I wouldn’t call it a militant, I wouldn’t even call it a strongly activist group. It is an activist group who has strong feelings who want to approach and deal with problems in a professional way. It is a group that is trying to bring some of those issues to light and to have a forum and a platform for presenting it to the administration to see if some of the problems can be solved and if the environment on this campus for women can be improved.” (Deborah Young, OFW)

Dealing with problems in a professional way and working with the administration to advance the issues of women faculty are the foci of the OFW. Assuming the responsibility of shared governance, either narrowly in academic matters, or more broadly, reinforces the professionalized expectation that faculty will have a voice in institutional decisions, but by way of providing advice through established mechanisms of consultation. Confrontation and protest are often evident in social movements, including the Women’s Movement, are gentler or non-existent strategies for this

organization. To be seen as professionals first, and feminist activists second, is critical. In fact, the bylaws of the organization, which were written in the early 1980s state that the purpose of the OFW is to “address itself to the interests and concerns of professional faculty women at the UD.” Never is it to get in the way of the administrative workings at the UD; rather, it is the purpose of the OFW to help the administrators do their work with the goal of improving the climate for women faculty at the same time.

Membership

A review of the documents of the Commission on the Status of University Women (CSUW), the precursor to OFW that included faculty, staff, and students (not to be confused with the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which was mandated by the Board of Trustees in the early 1980s), suggests that it was initially reluctant to buy into and accept the prevailing institutional culture. In the early years of the CSUW, the organization proposed the creation of a Women’s Studies program, which developed into one of the first such programs in the country. The group participated in community women’s marches, Equal Rights Amendment rallies, and encouraged membership in the National Organization of Women (NOW). These activities are not surprising, as it formed in 1972, simultaneously with the rise of Second Wave Feminism. The CSUW was first referred to as “the group” by its members. There was speculation, according to a recorded history created by a CSUW member and later OFW President, that the organization disbanded, in part, due to limited membership linked to the fear of junior women to belong to a “women’s group”. This is to say that the CSUW had a reputation, at least among its members and potential members, that it was a feminist organization

and belonging to it could compromise one's reputation in the university, threatening tenure and promotion.

Some of the types of activities of the CSUW remained fairly similar to the activities of the OFW that followed. For example, the CSUW documents gathering information about numbers of women by department and rank and making gender-related policy recommendations—all efforts complementing the administrative workings of the UD. Further, while the organization was initially more clandestine, the CSUW indicated during a meeting, as evidenced in minutes, that because some women were unwilling to join “women's groups,” they needed to break down the organization's secretive and radical stereotypes to demonstrate that it was an “active and professional organization.” These minutes are the first documented evidence that for the CSUW, it was more important to be considered professional than to be deemed feminist. Indeed, there was some sense that the two were mutually exclusive. The organization's vision shifted from more radical feminist activism to emphasizing professionalization and legitimacy, setting a precedent for much of the activism of the OFW that followed.

In 1979, the CSUW disbanded due to lack of membership and concerns that its focus was too broad, drawing on issues of women students, staff, and faculty. While a broad constituency should have led to a large membership, that did not happen. Some women were afraid, even after the CSUW professionalized, to be affiliated with a feminist group. Still others felt that their particular issues would not be adequately addressed because the CSUW agenda was too broad, trying to resolve issues for students, staff, and faculty. For example, if the organization was putting its efforts into affirmative

action procedures for student admissions, that would detract from the potential work to diversify the faculty. Because of the vacancy created by the dissolution of the CSUW, a few years later, in 1981, a group of women faculty, led by Claudia MacIntosh, decided to form a new feminist organization.

“People wanted to form a group that would be more of an activist group and could focus more on faculty issues, and also more of a mentoring and advocacy group for the members.” (Robin Neigh, OFW)

“[Women faculty] were upset about salaries [in the early 1980s]. I always wanted there to be a political organization [to address this and other issues] because [as head of Women’s Studies], I didn’t want to do explicit politics from Women’s Studies. Finally, I got a group together and we went to the Union Club. We said we need to start an organization.” (Claudia MacIntosh, OFW)

This marked the beginning of the OFW. While focusing specifically on faculty issues led to the creation of an organization with a clearer mission than its CSUW predecessor, it stressed the centrality of the faculty profession. The organization also sought to intentionally include feminists, and to provide a political outlet for those feminists in Women’s Studies. The director of Women’s Studies at that time spearheaded the formation of the OFW, so that there could be a place for activism outside of the academic discipline of Women’s Studies. By doing so, the marginalized discipline of Women’s Studies could gain legitimacy by distancing itself from activism and focus on enhancing feminist scholarship, teaching, and grant writing.

The group that initiated the OFW wanted to form a feminist organization for faculty and purposely excluded most staff and students, other than academic professionals—particularly those professionals who engage in “faculty work” but do not have a faculty title, like researchers and librarians—and graduate students. Including

academic professionals and graduate students in the work of the OFW was secondary, at best, to the role of faculty, as evidenced by the lack of data about these groups or their issues in interviews, observations, or newsletters. Both groups were invited to become members and some academic professionals served in leadership positions, but there was very little evidence to indicate that graduate students and academic professionals had anything but a marginal or supporting role in the OFW.

As mentioned, academic professionals, as a group, seemed like an afterthought in most of the newsletters, even though there were officers from the library throughout the early years of the organization. The fact that leadership of the organization included academic professionals, but that group was practically invisible due to the focus on tenure-track faculty, demonstrates just how the organization prioritized its constituents, and who ultimately had more professional power. There were rare exceptions in the data when academic professionals did have a presence, specifically in the newsletters from 1988-89, 1993-94, and 1998-99. However, even in these newsletter issues, faculty remained the focal point.

Likewise, graduate students were relatively invisible in the organization. However in 1998, the OFW decided to reach out to graduate students by having a subcommittee for graduate students for the first time. The outreach to graduate students was due to a push by the OFW President that year who felt the organization needed to reach out to that population. Because the President and, subsequently, the board of the OFW, wanted to encourage the inclusion of graduate students, there was an OFW program focused on graduate student issues in 1998 and 1999. During those same years,

two of the OFW subcommittees sought to include graduate student issues in their agendas. Specifically, as described in the newsletters from that time, one subcommittee met with the graduate college to recommend changes to a continued enrollment policy for graduate students and the other subcommittee recommended that Ph.D. students of color become a resource to help the university “grow its own” faculty. However, this was the only time these issues were mentioned in newsletters. Unlike on-going faculty concerns, like policies for sick children, the OFW did not continue to follow up on these graduate student concerns.

Leadership

In the early years of the OFW, Claudia MacIntosh’s vision of a grassroots organization came to fruition. Although there was an executive board that met, the general membership participated in meetings for the organization. While the meetings may not have had the entire membership present, the entire membership was invited. If there were executive meetings, those appeared secondary, according to the emphasis in the newsletters on the larger, general membership meetings. The primary work of the organization centered around luncheons where the entire membership was invited. That meant, for example, in 1986-87, 180 dues-paying members would be invited and often 60-100 women would attend.

The more inclusive pattern in the early years differs considerably from the more recent efforts of the organization. In recent years, the primary work has been done by the board, not by the general membership.

“In a way, the OFW is the board. Mostly, the rest of the people who belong to OFW are the audience. The only people who are the activists are the board. I

don't even think the membership knows what is going on." (Claudia MacIntosh, OFW)

While there now are events that include the membership, with the exception of the annual Board of Trustees luncheon, most events have about 30 participants. Although there are more women faculty, academic professionals, and graduate students now than in the 1980s, there are only about 100-120 dues paying members. The OFW has not changed its recruiting strategies, so the decline in participation may be due to many other factors. One possible reason for the decreased membership may be a decreasing interest or need among women to be involved in feminist activities, including a perception that the Women's Movement is over. Another reason may be an increasing work load among potential members that does not provide ample time to engage in volunteer work that is not rewarded in promotion and tenure processes. Still a third reason may be that the potential members have more loyalty to their professional identities and individual disciplines than to an identity of activism oriented toward changing the UD.

A current board member of the organization reflected that membership numbers were not necessarily critical.

"I don't think [the administration] has a sense of who the membership is really, and in some ways, even though there is paid membership, in a lot of ways, it is all women faculty in whatever rank or position who are part of it. I think it is perceived that way by the central administration and by the university at large. So when they talk about the Organization for Faculty Women, they talk about all those women. So in a sense, it is bigger than it really is, when you think of paid membership." (Uma Himenez, OFW)

In a number of ways, this statement captures the essence of the organization. First, it recognizes that perception, especially among the administration, is a very important

strategy. Second, it reinforces that it is the board that is doing the activist work; no longer is the paid membership the heart of the organization.

The OFW has an executive board of leaders designated in traditional positions—president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer/membership. In addition, there is a larger board that includes the executive board, liaisons with other campus organizations, and chairs of the various subcommittees. Specifically, liaisons to the CSW, Women in Academic Medicine, and the American Association of University Women serve as OFW board members, as do the chairs of the minority women, action, graduate and professional student, and family care issues subcommittees. While there are general dues-paying members, as previously mentioned, it is this larger board that conducts the on-going business of the organization.

“In some ways, it is the board, because the board kind of acts for the membership and identifies issues. Ideally the membership is involved in subcommittees. That happens more or less. The family care issues that happens more and some of the other issues, that happens historically less.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

“The link between the membership and the board isn’t well defined. I think right now you have the 8 people making the decisions for the membership.” (Kari Morgan, OFW)

“It was always the executive board. There were attempts at committee structures and some committees were more successful than others, but it was definitely the executive board.” (Sallie Edgar, OFW)

Although there are opportunities for the general membership to become involved in the organization, primarily through serving on subcommittees, it happens only sporadically. The board and the OFW President have positional power that could be used to reach out to other members, as it had in the early years of the organization. Such an effort would require a structural change in the modus operandi of the OFW. The time and energy

involved could reintroduce the organization to its grassroots beginnings. However, it would take an initial significant expenditure of time and energy among the volunteers on the board. Moreover, it would require a redistribution of power, which is often difficult to surrender. In addition, most of the board did not see the current leadership structure and power-base as problematic (or problematic enough about which to do anything), leaving little reason to pursue a change. The dues-paying members and the potential members have not raised any concern about the current structure and leadership of the OFW, implying that they are either happy with the status quo, complacent, or don't believe the OFW has any real power.

Because of the minimal role of the general membership, the OFW's agenda is shaped by the will of the board, not by the will of the membership. Certainly, board members may talk to general members about issues of concern and those issues may become a part of the agenda, but it is the board, and in many cases, the President of the board, who establishes the organization's agenda.

"I think the chair has a lot of weight, but they listen to other input too. I think the agenda is determined this way." (Da-Ming Quo, OFW)

"The President [of the board] would decide if there were bigger overarching issues that needed to be dealt with the [university] President and the Provost...I would say that is one way in which the agenda gets set. I would say another area is by members raising issues—like junior people needing information about how to get through the tenure process or whatever." (Robin Neigh, OFW)

"The President [of the OFW] has a very strong role in [determining the agenda]." (Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

This described method is top-down and hierarchical, resembling the professional institutional bureaucracy rather than a more feminist collegial structure.

However, three of the current board members with whom I spoke were unsure of how the agenda is determined and by whom. When asked how the agenda was determined, they responded:

“You got me on that one.” (Nora Islip, OFW)

“I have no idea.” (Margie Cather, OFW)

“I don’t know. I guess maybe we will find out.” (Deborah Young, OFW)

Others expressed that they were uncomfortable with the way the agenda was established by indicating that they see an ideal way to set the agenda, but it is different than the how the OFW operationalizes it.

“Theoretically, it is determined by the will of the membership. In actuality, it is in a core group of highly involved people who have stuck with the organization year in and year out and to some extent have taken a proprietary interest in it.” (Wanda Solidar, OFW)

“In the best of possible worlds, the agenda would be determined by the board. Bringing things together at meetings where we would have time to discuss them, which we haven’t this year really. Bringing up issues and saying, ‘what do you think about this?’ Saying ‘these are the issues we see.’ Then having the board vote on basically what should be the agenda. If we have trouble with certain issues, or doubt about it, sending it to the larger membership saying, ‘we’ve identified these as possible agenda issues for OFW to advocate or act on.’...Ideally, you would get the whole membership buying in.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

The fact that some board members don’t know how the agenda is determined and others are somewhat unhappy with the mechanism to set the agenda is important. The board has the power to change the situation, but is either unwilling or unable to do so, or perhaps, the members of the board do not recognize the power that they have. In the end, the agenda that the OFW board (or its President) creates is not inclusive, consensual, or

grounded in grassroots activism. Instead, data show that for the OFW, power, legitimacy, and traditional patriarchal systems frame the agenda setting of the organization.

An observation during a board meeting with the university President suggested that, at least, the OFW President recognized her power. Moreover, the incident exemplified the seductiveness of positional power, and the unwillingness to relinquish it. Wanda Solidad, the OFW President, expressed to the university President that the board had unanimously expressed *her* concern about an aspect of the UD sexual harassment policy. However, the board had not made a unanimous, nor formal decision about this. Similarly, she indicated *her* concerns about a proposed interdisciplinary program in child development as an OFW concern. The issue was not resolved by the board and the board's preliminary position about this matter was unclear. Her personal concern about the interdisciplinary program reinforced Wanda's search for traditional power, prestige, and legitimacy in the eyes of the university President. Not only was her concern used for personal gain, it also supported professional prestige, as she stated that the program lacked academic integrity because of the two individuals spearheading the initiative. It was being created by someone without a Ph.D. and another person who was "only an adjunct." While there is a growing number of part-time and adjunct faculty, many of whom are women, Wanda expressed that if the academic program was to be successful, it needed to be guided by someone with academic expertise and tenured standing and in that field. Wanda inserted the traditional elitism of the faculty profession and her own pursuit for legitimacy in the eyes of the university President instead of helping to distribute power to a feminized and marginalized group of faculty.

Perhaps equally significant, the rest of the board was complicit in the above activity. None of the other board members challenged Wanda's statements during the meeting, for it would have undermined an OFW strategy to appear as a united front in public. In subsequent meetings of the board, three members expressed that they disagreed with Wanda about her position concerning the academic program, but no concerns were raised about the fact that Wanda acted in the name of the OFW to the President of the UD. However, it should be noted that individual board members may have had private conversations with Wanda about her presentation of these issues to the President. It may be that, even with a few dissenting voices after the fact, the desire to be professional or to be politically effective with the President took precedence over providing a dissenting opinion or advocating for women and feminism.

Feminism

Six of the women with whom I spoke at UD were former board members of the OFW, but were no longer actively involved with the organization. All of these women self-identified as feminists. Interestingly, it was among the current board membership where feminist self-identity was more vague. It should be noted that while someone may not identify with feminism, a bystander may evaluate that person's actions and motivations as feminist. However, it is not insignificant that some of the women in this study feel uncomfortable with or unclear about the label of feminism.

Among the women involved in OFW who discussed feminism (since the Director of Women's Studies is not formally involved in the organization, her discussion of

feminism was not included in this part of the analysis), one woman stood out, stating that she did not consider herself to be a feminist.

“I don’t see myself as a feminist, where I think a lot of the other people there are, or they have really strong women’s issues.” (Kari Morgan, OFW)

However, as our conversation continued, she did reconsider her position about feminism.

“I agree that there is a real problem in the way women are treated on this campus. I don’t know, maybe I am [a feminist].” (Kari Morgan, OFW)

Another woman was clearly unsure of her relationship to feminism. When asked whether she considered herself a feminist, she responded: “If I could figure out a definition, maybe. I don’t know, because I just don’t know what that really means.” (Uma Himinez, OFW) In addition, at the University of the Desert, there was one woman who only felt comfortable using her own definition of feminism in order to identify herself as feminist. When asked whether she considered herself a feminist, she said: “Yes, with [my] definition.” (Deborah Young, OFW) For an organization that once purposefully included and spoke as feminists, its identity and priorities have apparently shifted.

Further emphasizing the professional rather than the feminist, the first newsletter in 2000-2001 introduced the 16 members of the OFW board. In the introductions of board members, connections to status and prestige dominate. Most read like an abbreviated curriculum vitae. The majority of references about the issues of women faculty that are to be the core of the association appear at the end of lengthy paragraph that lists professional credentials, back-grounding the work of the OFW, and fore-grounding the women’s qualifications in traditional academic terms. The language of the academic profession resonates throughout each biography. Only three mentioned roles

other than professional work (e.g., wife, parent, community volunteer). For feminists who believe the personal and professional are intrinsically linked, this was not emphasized in the introductions. Further, only one woman used the word *feminist* in her biography; and like most references, this was used to describe her scholarly work.

The interviews tell only a slightly different story with regard to incorporating gender and feminism into their scholarship. While the six former and founding members with whom I spoke use a strong feminist frame in their scholarly work, only four of the 12 current members indicated that they purposefully incorporate feminism or gender in their scholarship. This diffusion of membership has opened the board to include a diversity of academic voices, but it has also created some challenges for the organization.

“It used to be like that was where the OFW faculty came from Women’s Studies. Now it’s like they come from different places. But we find often we are talking different languages. Some of the people who didn’t come from Women’s Studies have different understandings, and are not in some ways as advanced in their perception of what feminist activism is. You are bringing along people who are less aware of the issues in that way and kind of have to learn how to speak about them.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

This means that to maintain its feminist grounding, the current OFW has to do consciousness raising work for its members, including its board members, which may take time away from advancing other agenda items. Or, the organization may forgo this education, potentially shifting the OFW further away from its feminist roots. Either way, growth and expansion for the OFW has been both a blessing and a curse, and has moved the organization to one that is professional, first, and feminist, second.

Organization at the University of the Plains

Feminist Organization of Professionals

Purpose

In 1988, Beth Newman met a colleague for lunch. During that meeting, they decided that the women faculty at UP needed a mechanism to get their voices heard on campus. While there was a Commission on the Status of Women, faculty were only a subset of the membership and vision of that organization. In addition, the CSW was a university committee. Beth and her colleague wanted a grassroots organization that had an independent voice and was not responsible to the UP administration. Like Claudia MacIntosh's meeting at the UD, Beth's meeting ignited a spark—a spark that became the Women's Faculty Association.

The WFA differs from the OFW in its organization. Rather than being a professional organization of feminists, it is more aptly described as a feminist organization of professionals. As with the OFW, feminism and academic work are both important parts of the organizations. However, for the WFA, it is feminism that shapes the organization; it is not a professional organization run by feminists. Moreover, unlike the OFW, in which the members are more passive or cooperative vis à vis the administration, the members of the WFA see their roles as much more active and confrontational. The centrality of feminist activism is evidenced as the members of the WFA described the purpose of the organization. For example, some described the purpose of the WFA as a mechanism to keep the administration in check regarding women's issues on campus.

“I would say [the purpose of the organization] is to keep an eye on the administration and try and prod them to making this a more female friendly, even minority friendly environment.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

“I really think that is the purpose, to be a watchdog on everything that has to do with women and be willing to take a stand.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“[We are a group of women who] don’t let administrators get away with things. If we weren’t there, I can’t imagine what would happen.” (Nancy Nichols, WFA)

“Keeping an eye on,” “being a watchdog,” and not letting the “administration get away with things” describe an organization that is much more confrontational than congenial. Others recognized the need to monitor the administration, but they also shared that the organization must remain distinct and separate from the administration in order to be effective.

“[The purpose of the WFA] is to have another voice on campus for women faculty that is not beholden to any administrative unit. I think that is the political position of the Association.” (Karen Smith, WFA)

[The purpose is] to speak for women in ways that the Commission on the Status of Women can’t, because it has to answer to the President. That is sort of the underlying premise.” (Nicole Carsen, WFA)

Both the WFA and the OFW describe themselves in relation to their respective university administrations. However, complementing its more confrontational activism, the WFA has a more separatist stance within the UP, which is markedly different than the OFW, who sees itself in partnership with the administration. The WFA’s separatism is reminiscent of radical feminism, while the OFW chooses to engage in a more liberal feminist tactic by believing, on some level, that the existing administrative structure can be trusted and can work.

Membership

In some ways, the WFA is more exclusive than the OFW. Only tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty comprise the membership, while the OFW includes academic professionals and graduate students. At the same time, by only including faculty, the WFA does not struggle with competing issues and constituencies that the OFW must consider.

“It is a loose coalition of women faculty who have specific agendas that address the general status of women on campus and that target women faculty in particular.” (Irene North, WFA)

“[T]he Association is good because there is no list of individual names. No one knows if you are there or not. There is never attendance. Sometimes we do take attendance just to gather e-mail addresses and stuff. But no one really knows if anyone was there.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

“We don’t want too much formalization, as we might become an adoptee of the administration—I really like to think of us an orphan.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

The Association does not have dues or even a formal list of members. Unless a member self-identifies as affiliated with the WFA, she is anonymous. This strategy is particularly important for untenured women who may face condemnation among colleagues for being connected to a feminist organization.

The lack of structured membership is in stark contrast to the OFW. Remaining intentionally unstructured creates a distinction from, and competes with, the traditional, professionalized, university hierarchy. By contrast, in the case of the OFW, its structure replicates, and complements, the administrative structure.

A further difference between the professional OFW and the feminist WFA is the way in which the memberships are involved. For every meeting, the WFA sends out an

electronic message to all women faculty at the UP, inviting them to attend the upcoming meeting and to get involved in the WFA. Over time, those that have responded to these invitations has expanded. However, there is a core group of individuals who have consistently participated in the WFA.

[It is important to have] “a group of women who respond to immediate issues that no one else will respond to, that don’t forget things that haven’t been changed that people have brought up over the last many years, who have an institutional memory among all of us and don’t let administrators get away with things.”
(Nancy Nichols, WFA)

“[The WFA] is a loose coalition of women faculty who have specific agendas that address the general status of women on campus and that target women faculty in particular. [Over time], new people have come on, particularly around particular issues.” (Irene North, WFA)

The core group is critical in sustaining the Association, but it relies on the additional support of more peripheral members to advance its agenda. Those members whose involvement tends to wax and wane tend to be issue-driven. They choose to become participate based upon individual passions for an agenda item, and they see their commitment as finite (*i.e.*, until the issue is resolved). This differs from the membership role in the OFW. Although the intent of the subcommittee structure in the OFW is to engage the general membership in particular issues, the commitment to a subcommittee appears to be year-long, one which few general members agree to participate. Further, because of the dues-paying expectation of membership in the OFW, there is may be a sense among members that they are paying for the board to do the activist work for them. Such a sentiment does not exist in the WFA. While women faculty can choose to let the core group address issues for all women faculty, there is no mechanism, financial or otherwise, to support the WFA, other than by becoming involved.

Leadership

Identifying leaders in the WFA is a simple, straightforward process. Seven of the nine women interviewed at the UP discussed the leadership of the organization and indicated that it was not a matter of certain faculty trying to garner power by becoming a leader. Rather, someone had to emerge as a chair or co-chair and individuals who were willing found themselves in that role for one or two years.

“Basically, anyone who is willing to do it can do it, as long as they are not trying to undermine [the organization].” (Beth Newman, WFA)

“Just by being willing and say you will do it. I think some of us have a sense of obligation that it is my turn. Others have done their turn, so I will take a turn, and maybe I’ll have to take another turn in the future.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“...it is mainly who is willing to do it.” (Karen Smith, WFA)

Further, it is not just the chair or co-chairs who are considered leaders. Anyone involved in the organization who is interested in mobilizing around an issue can, and often does, become a leader. The diffusion of leadership is non-hierarchical and feminist. The following voices capture the open, participatory perspective on leadership within the WFA. When asked how someone becomes a leader in the group, women shared:

“Just by default, by speaking up, by coming to meetings.” (Nicole Carsen, WFA)

“And also by active participation in the meetings, I think you naturally take an important role.” (Margaret Green, WFA)

“Show up to the meetings.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

Although the core group of women (about eight to ten women faculty) provide leadership in terms of providing a historical perspective of the organization and by doggedly continuing to be involved in nearly every issue of the WFA, it is personal, not

positional, power that places these women in leadership roles. It is because of the respect for personal power within the organization that others outside the core group can and often do assume leadership roles. Leadership is dynamic and open within the WFA, which affords anyone who wants to participate to present agenda items and to organize activist strategies.

The agenda for the WFA is established in a non-hierarchical fashion that complements its leadership structure. According to those currently involved in the group, women throughout campus bring issues to meetings, and those issues establish the content of the WFA's activist agenda.

“Whoever wants to put work into it, that is what the agenda will become. If you are willing to pick up the ball and carry it, it will happen.” (Irene North, WFA)

“[The agenda is determined] either by someone raising an issue, or just by thinking about the issues that are out there and bringing it to the agenda.” (Nicole Carsen, WFA)

“[The agenda is determined] by whoever attends the meetings and by whoever raises an issue and follows through on it.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

In true grassroots fashion, any woman faculty member at the UP can raise an issue that may become part of the WFA's agenda. Ultimately, if there is support for the issue, members of the Association will mobilize and act. For the OFW, it is up to the President and the board to create and carry out the agenda—a strategy that is much more top-down than the web-like tactics of the WFA.

The WFA tries to focus the agenda on issues that will improve the situation for a large number of women rather than to address the individual concerns of a woman. This strategy allows the organization to try to make broad, systemic changes instead of

looking for a loophole or helping an individual negotiate and perpetuate the perceived patriarchy.

“There have been people who have brought their very individualized agendas to the Women Faculty Association. I think the Association has been very good at providing support and also leading those people back into other mechanisms for dealing with that and not getting sidetracked... It is not because we don’t value, understand, and sympathize with those experiences...But it is the understanding that it is about the WFA moving forward everybody as best you can, trying to lift everybody.” (Irene North, WFA)

This aspect of the organization is another that highlights its feminist priorities. Rather than fighting for the merits of an individual case, systemic change is what is sought. The WFA again places radical feminist principles over those of liberal feminism, which would seek to advance an individual cause within the existing administrative structure.⁸

Feminism

At the University of the Plains, all the faculty with whom I spoke considered their organization and themselves feminist. However, like more of the women involved in the OFW, two women were more hesitant embrace the label of feminism outright. They agreed that they were feminists, but only by their own definition of feminism.

**“I’ll say what feminism is to me. I know this doesn’t coincide with the others.”
(Fran Cousins, WFA)**

“Let me put it in how act within what I call my feminism.” (Margaret Green, WFA)

Interestingly, neither of these women is among the core group involved in WFA. Fran left the UP in 1992 and was only involved in WFA peripherally. Margaret periodically participates when the organization is working on an issue that is salient to her. However,

those in the core group considered themselves feminist without qualifying the word feminism.

At UP, all of the women who were involved in the WFA are feminists, while at UD, the women who were initially involved identified as feminists, but at present, the most involved members (*i.e.*, the board) do not necessarily identify with the feminist movement. Perhaps this is due to the fact that those first involved with the OFW in the early and mid-1980s were Second Wave feminists, and as time elapsed, the organization became more professionalized and younger faculty became involved, who did not identify with the Second Wave of feminism, while the core members and nature of the WFA have changed very little since 1988, maintaining a consistent feminist framework.

Given these findings, one may ask whether an organization is truly a feminist organization if its members are not all feminists. While the answer seems to beg a simple “yes” or “no,” simplicity will not suffice. Feminism is a complex social theory, comprised of multiple strands, and it exists in a political, cultural, and social context. The voices of the women in this study and the descriptions of their organizations demonstrate the rich, complicated dimensions of feminism, for women, as well as for men and institutions.

Being a member of an organization dedicated to improving the climate for women on campus, like WFA and OFW, does not preclude membership of non-feminists or those unsure of their relationship to the feminist movement. Further, the political, cultural, and social climate vis à vis feminism, specifically the conservative backlash of recent years,

⁸ It should be noted that there is no evidence in the data from the OFW that it focuses on the merits of

shapes a context where some activists are uncertain about embracing or unwilling to accept a feminist label. It is clear that this climate, and those women involved in WFA and OFW, mutually shape the strategies and agenda of grassroots activism in these cases.

Despite the complexity of feminism, it is the role of feminism for these organizations and their members that is significant. Feminism is the guiding force for the professionals within the WFA. For the OFW, being seen as professionals first is paramount; feminism has an important place, but it is historical and secondary (and for some, perhaps even tertiary). Moreover, it is the positioning of feminism that makes each organization, and the strategies that are used to advance its particular agenda, unique.

Networks

Among the strategies in which I was most interested was whether the OFW and the WFA established networks to help them advance their agendas. The personal and informal networks that the members of the organizations created help to illuminate the place of activism and feminism in the individual lives of the members of the OFW and the WFA, which, in turn, further shaped the nature of the organizations of which they are a part. In addition, because of the centrality of gender for campus commissions on the status of women and Women's Studies departments or programs, I was particularly interested in gaining an understanding of any relationships that may exist with the OFW and the WFA and these campus organizations. Lastly, I am interested in the other types of relationships that these organizations establish and how these networks fit within the activist agendas of the OFW and the WFA.

individual cases. Like the WFA, it is interested in improving the climate of all women.

Personal and Informal Networks

In the newsletters throughout the 1980s, the OFW made an effort to inform its members about women's groups in the community and nationally and ways to become involved. References were made to the NOW, *The Clarion* (a regional feminist newspaper), a regional institute for research on women and the National Association for Women in Education. The newsletters provided information about how to join or become involved in other organizations. Also, as evidenced in newsletters, there were intentional networks created by designating a board member to serve as a liaison to an outside organization, including a liaison to the Director of Affirmative Action in 1988-1989 and a liaison to the other institutions in the state higher education system. Those sorts of connections, which other than encouraging women to apply to attend the Bryn Mawr summer institute, were designed to educate women about the higher education administration, disappeared throughout most of the 1990s. In the late 1990s into 2000-2001, there was a resurgence of attempts to create linkages with other groups, but primarily with other campus organizations. In recent years, there have been members whose role it is to be a liaison to the CSW, to Women in Academic Medicine, to a university research project focusing on the climate for faculty women, to the national American Association of University Women, and to Women in Science.

While the intent may be to appear to be collaborative and to work together so as not to duplicate efforts, the fact that the leadership within OFW is less feminist than the initiators envisioned, this broadening also serves to "water down" the organization and distance it from its feminist roots—or at least its more radical feminist roots. In addition,

creating these linkages makes it appear to the administration that women are working together and, in turn, making the administrators' jobs easier because they only have one group with whom to contend. Granted, collaboration is a feminist strategy, but it should not be at the expense of other feminist goals, and in the case of the current OFW, that seems to be happening. How can an organization be inclusive and collaborative and maintain its feminist underpinnings? There is no evidence that members of the OFW are even asking this question, which may be part of the reason why the organization continues to become more of a professional organization of some feminists and less a feminist organization of professionals.

Again, reinforcing the focus on academic work, for the women currently involved in the OFW, their involvement in other activist or women's organizations is much more centered on their profession than in their local community. Six of the ten who responded to questions about being involved in other organizations mentioned groups related to women in science, in academic medicine, and in the humanities, as well as collectives of women faculty of color. Only one woman mentioned involvement in a community organization; and unlike local commissions on the status of women or rape crisis centers, this organization was also related to the respondent's discipline.

Past members of the OFW with whom I spoke shared stories of feminist reading and writing groups and consciousness raising groups that were instrumental in shaping their ideas of feminism. In fact, many of them still participate in reading and writing groups with other feminist women. But, like their contemporaries currently involved in the OFW, there appeared to be an intellectual and academic rationale for participating in

these groups. This is not to suggest that the groups were entirely professional, for with any sort of feminist agenda, the personal and professional are intertwined, but the link to their professional work is clear. Moreover, all of the women who were former or founding leaders in the OFW expressed that they were no longer active members of the OFW and they also indicated that they were significantly less involved in other women's and activist organizations than they once had been.

"I just have no time." (Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

"...the library has changed and we are so busy here that I don't have time." (Sallie Edgar, OFW)

"I would say that I have become financially more politically supportive of women's and feminist organizations. So financially, I am far more active now that I am able to be. But as far as being a body at events, I am not." (Kyra Unger, OFW)

One current board member of the OFW described how activism is hard work and that at times, one must step back, both because of burn out and because new people must become involved. She aptly detailed this phenomenon using a running metaphor.

"I think often women activists have been in a marathon mindset where you are trying to go on and on and on. They burn out and hit the wall, like the 20-mile wall, and they have to stop, they can't carry on forever. If you can bring in different generations of women faculty and women activists, you can pass the baton and you should. You have to be there to take it on from each other." (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

This metaphor explains why the founding mothers of the OFW have stepped back from activism and their involvement in the OFW. They "hit the wall," and decided it was time to pass the baton. However, I do not think they expected their team members to have such a different approach to feminism and activism, including the informal and personal networks of which they are a part.

For the younger teammates (faculty) and current board members, it is the demands of their careers, the changing nature of the academy (*i.e.*, one that has become more nationally and internationally focused and one where research and securing external funding has become invaluable) that shapes these faculty members' experiences. Thus, it is not surprising that younger feminist faculty are not as involved with activism within and outside the institution as the previous generation of faculty. They don't make the time for activism in the same way their predecessors did, and they are further removed from the Women's Movement, where involvement was a visible priority. While I assumed that faculty involved in organizations like the OFW would be involved in community-based and informal groups dedicated to women, I found that the informal and formal networks with which these women most identified were, first and foremost, professional. In fact, for most at UD, the OFW is the only gender-related group with which they connect.

Given the nuances of the WFA already discussed, it is not surprising that the personal and informal networks of those affiliated with the WFA were more extensive than those of the members of the OFW. Overall, six of the nine women involved in the WFA indicated that they were involved in other women's or activist organizations. Two women discussed their involvement in other organizations on campus, while the other women described their work with community and national organizations, like the city or county commissions on the status of women, NOW, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, the Sierra Club, and a local rape crisis center. Connections with professionally-related organizations were also important. Two women also identified their involvement

in organizations related to their profession, Committee W of the local chapter of the American Association of University Professors and the Association for Women Geoscientists.

Overall, more of the women involved with the WFA created feminist and activist networks beyond their professional roles than did the women currently involved in the OFW. However, other than some of the founding mothers in the OFW, both groups did not mention significant involvement in more informal women's groups, like book clubs or eating groups. For the UD, I think the lack of involvement in more informal groups is due to the fact that many of the board members identify as liberal feminists or question their feminist grounding, and, consequently, the personal and political are not as closely intertwined for them. Perhaps for the women at the UP, their involvement in community feminist work and in the WFA sufficiently connects the personal, political, and professional.

Further, the centrality of activist work nationally and professionally at the UD and the centrality of activist work locally at the UP is a noticeable contrast between these organizations. Although both institutions are Research I, flagship universities, the UD has a reputation as more prestigious than the UP. This may help to explain the propensity of women faculty activists at the UD to be involved in service work related to their profession (*i.e.*, service work that can enhance their own national reputations) rather than work that enhances relationships within their local communities.

Commissions on the Status of Women

Many campuses have established commissions on the status of women, and the University of the Desert and the University of the Plains are no exceptions. Broadly, commissions began as mechanisms to ensure that institutions were making a genuine effort to design and implement affirmative action plans directed at women. Currently in practice, they seek to evaluate existing policies related to women and to improve the overall position of women on campus (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). Some campus commissions are grassroots organizations, but unlike groups like the OFW and the WFA, they focus their energy on issues related to all women on campus, not just faculty. As such, the organizations central to this study should not be mistaken for commissions on the status of women. However, other CSWs, like those at the UD and the UP, are formal organizations mandated by Presidents or boards of Trustees. Despite the differing natures of CSWs and grassroots feminist faculty organizations, there are overlapping agendas in the on-going work of improving the conditions and positions of women on campus. Thus, it is important to explore potential relationships between the CSWs and the OFW and WFA.

In 2000, the OFW created a formal relationship between itself and the University of the Desert's CSW.⁹ There is a designated liaison with CSW who serves on the OFW board. Her role is to participate fully in both organizations and to share information between the two groups so that the organizations can support one another and not duplicate efforts. However, the degree to which that design is put into practice is unclear.

In fact, the current liaison expressed concerns about executing her role most effectively since both organizations often meet at the same time. Although the simultaneous meetings do not appear to be a deliberate obstacle, it is problematic. Moreover, despite recent efforts to collaborate, the OFW does have a history for strategic purposes of wanting to be distinct from the CSW.

“There was this effort to keep OFW, the Commission, and Women’s Studies as disparate entities so the university would have to talk to all three and the agendas could be diversified as a part of it.” (Kyra Unger, OFW)

This tactic, envisioned in the early years of the organization, was meant to force the administration to hear the concerns of women more often, and by more groups.

However, this intentional effort does not seem to be the reason why the relationship between the OFW and the CSW is not stronger. Rather, the failure to bridge these two groups is more likely related to the fact that six of 11 of the current board members expressed that they were not clear about what the CSW is or does. When asked what the difference between the OFW and the CSW was, respondents shared:

“I don’t know. I’m trying to figure it out. I assume that the people involved in CSW are different than those in OFW, but I don’t really know much.” (Maura Nemec, OFW)

“I have no idea. I don’t know enough about CSW to answer the question. Except that you are invited to join CSW.” (Nora Islip, OFW)

“I don’t really know enough about what the Commission actually does to answer that question.” (Cynthia Court, OFW)

“I haven’t figured out what they are. I don’t really know. Last year, they put out a call on our list for membership. I applied to be on it, and they said ‘no thanks.’

⁹ There had been a liaison with CSW in the mid-1980s, but the position lapsed and was reintroduced in 2000.

I said, 'fine.' I see things they put out, but I don't have a clear view of what they do or what they are supposed to do." (Margie Cather, OFW)

"I don't know. I was invited to the reception next week, but I can't go because there is faculty recruiting that day. So I still don't know." (Deborah Young, OFW)

"I am embarrassed at how little I know about CSW." (Becky Yeager, OFW)

It is alarming that more than half of those who spoke about the CSW didn't know what it was, especially since there is an OFW board member who is a liaison to the CSW.

Although it can be easy to get caught up in one's own discipline and responsibilities, especially in a university like the UD that has become more focused on research and grant acquisition in the last 20 years, the women who volunteer to participate in the OFW have a perceived commitment to women faculty. Since improving the status of women faculty is part of the CSW mission, it seems reasonable to expect the board members in the OFW to at least know the purpose of an allied campus group. Unlike many of the current board members, all of the past members of the OFW accurately described the CSW and were aware of the role OFW had in supporting the establishment of the CSW at the University of the Desert. Contrary to the UP, where the CSW sparked the birth of the WFA, one of the early agenda items of the OFW was to help establish a commission at the UD. Yet, this midwife work of the OFW has not resulted in on-going support and understanding of the Commission, despite recent efforts to create formal ties between the two organizations. It appears that this fledgling relationship has gotten lost among the competing agendas and priorities of the OFW—or perhaps it was never meant to be a

priority. Rather, the relationship was forged to create the appearance of collaboration and cooperation, although no one alluded to such a tactic.¹⁰

Contrary to the OFW, which initiated the relationship, albeit somewhat unsuccessfully, at the UP, it was the CSW that invited the WFA to establish a linkage between the two campus groups. The WFA recently was asked to have a formal connection to the CSW by having one of the WFA's members serve as an ex officio member of the Commission. However, this connection, while formalized, is still relatively weak. The weak tie is not due to any lack of awareness of the CSW by the WFA members, for eight of nine respondents accurately described the nature of the CSW. Instead, the tenuous nature of the relationship is likely due to divergent attitudes and strategies among the two organizations. For example, respondents cited situations when the two groups were working on the same issues of gender equity; yet each used different and sometimes adversarial approaches to advance their agenda.

“Another one of the reasons we exist is because there have been times when we had to go in and say, ‘here is what the Commission is saying and now here is the rest of the story.’ Either because of political constraints or because of visual constraints, they just don’t see the issues in the same way. They don’t address the kinds of issues that the Women’s Faculty Association has wanted brought forward. We have at times gone forward with a separate report to the Trustees, which has really pissed off some people. And that is ok. But it is to let the administration know that not all the women who are out in the field are happy. We are disgruntled.” (Irene North, WFA)

“[The WFA and the CSW] actually work in opposition as far as I can tell. CSW will come out with reports, without informing the Association, and will construct reports without asking for our input. We try to get an Association member on the Commission, but I’m not sure how successful that is.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

¹⁰ Interestingly, at the time of this study, the OFW Past-President and the current CSW Chair were collaborating to conduct a comprehensive study of the university climate for faculty women and faculty of color. However, this collaborative effort was not reinforced in the data from this research, maintaining the perceived disconnect between the OFW and CSW.

Moreover, the CSW is viewed as an arm of the administration by the members of the WFA, which explains the more adversarial stance between the two organizations due to the lack of trust for the administrative hierarchy at the UP. The members of the WFA often feel like they have to know what the CSW is doing and what position it is taking on a certain issue so that the WFA can correct or supplement the work of the CSW.

The members of the WFA hesitate to embrace a strong affiliation with the CSW because the CSW must answer to the university's President and as such, the CSW has considerable restraints vis à vis the sorts of strategies that can be used. Furthermore, the CSW's mission encompasses more than just the status of faculty, which results in a diluted agenda from the vantage point of the WFA.

"I do think that the Commission is hampered by being a creature of the President [of the university], no matter who the President is. The President has certain political considerations over his, it has never been a her so I will say his, name. I know the Commission has been told outright that 'No you can't write that letter' or 'You can't release that letter if you write it.' You must check with the President's office before sending anything out." (Catherine Eller, WFA)

"[The members of CSW were] concerned that they were a President's Commission and they didn't think it was their role to take an adversarial stance. They would be jeopardized if they did.... It was how [the WFA] all saw what the role of the Commission was." (Fran Cousins, WFA)

"[The Commission is] there as [an] apologist for the administration. It is there to cover their butts. It is there to make UP and the administration look good and not to effect real change." (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

"[The WFA] is focused on faculty and [the CSW] is focused on faculty women, students, and staff. I think that the difference is that they are more unwieldy. Whoever is at the helm. There has been a manipulation of that committee at times by the President and the President's apprentice who have put particular women in charge at particular times, so they can absorb highly divisive or critical approaches...On the other hand, they are the official mouthpiece. They do have the official connection to the Trustees, in the sense that they are the ones invited

to participating and gathering information that then goes to the Trustees for the annual gender report, when that is actually done.” (Irene North, WFA)

In fact, the WFA was established in response to the limitations of the campus’ CSW.

“The internal problem is that the Commission is made up of faculty, students, and staff. Since it is so broad, there was never a venue for seriously getting at women faculty issues. That is when we decided we needed to form our own ad hoc group that would be the Women’s Faculty Association. That way we could address our own issues and we weren’t set up by the university administration, so we could say whatever we wanted to say.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

Thus, while the groups have some mutual goals, the WFA maintains a purposeful distinction from the UP’s CSW. Blurring those boundaries could undermine the WFA’s strategies and institutional position as a gadfly and watchdog.

Interestingly, both the OFW and the WFA have a very loose and marginally formal connection with their campus CSW. However, the reasons for the nature of the relationship differ dramatically, although both could be traced back to the role of feminism for each organization. For the professional organization of feminists, the OFW, those members who are less connected to feminism are many of the same members who are unaware of a potential ally in the CSW. For the feminist organization of professionals, the WFA, the members are aware of the CSW, but it is considered somewhat of an adversary, like all other aspects of the administrative patriarchy at the UP.

Women’s Studies

My interest in the relationships between the WFA and the OFW and the Women’s Studies programs on their respective campuses is rooted in the assumption that these grassroots faculty organizations, like Women’s Studies, embrace feminist frames.

Further, the emergence of Women's Studies programs is historically tied to activism within the Women's Movement. Given that I have defined OFW and the WFA as activist organizations and that the members of these organizations also define them as such, I suspected feminist activism might even strengthen the link between these groups and Women's Studies. However, unlike designated linkages with commissions, according to those with whom I spoke, there are no formal connections to Women's Studies. Yet, both the OFW and the WFA do recognize informal influences of Women's Studies on their organizations.

The influences of Women's Studies within the OFW were more evident during the early years of the organization. Both current and past board members shared that they felt the connection had become less evident as the organization has matured.

"I think at one time there was a much stronger connection between Women's Studies and OFW, mainly because the women who were active on OFW, and this is just a recollection or sense that I have had of changes. But it seems as though women who were involved in Women's Studies had a stronger presence at one time in OFW than they do now." (Nora Islip, OFW)

"I think still some Women's Studies people are pretty involved, but not as much as they used to be." (Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

Yet, the current director of Women's Studies at the UD felt that there still *is* a necessary link between Women's Studies and the OFW. This link is less defined by who is involved in the organizations and more by the underlying and complementary purposes of the two organizations.

"I do [think there is a connection between Women's Studies and the OFW] because I think when I see the job of the head of Women's Studies, one aspect of that job is to counter misogyny on campus. I feel very grateful that there is another organization doing this because I have curriculum issues to worry about, the health of feminist scholarship, research grants, all that, so Women's Studies

isn't the sole responsible person for countering misogyny on campus makes me very happy. I think some of the elder statespeople in Women's Studies, like Lisa Bartholomew and Claudia Macintosh and Leslie Lawrence have all done their time as activists in the Organization for Faculty Women. It is clear that they knew that in order to counter misogyny on campus it couldn't be Women's Studies alone." (Marcia Lawrence, Women's Studies, UD)

It is clear from the interviews with women at the UD, the connection between the OFW and Women's Studies has changed. Some of the women expressed concern about the limited role junior faculty, particularly in Women's Studies, are taking in the OFW.

"I don't know that the younger people really identify [with the OFW]. It is just us old folks who identify." (Claudia Macintosh, OFW)

"There is something wrong when the leaders in women's issues are off in other areas or not on campus working for the things that are important to women. This is something that the early years of the feminist movement that we had an obligation for the betterment of our sisters. So in some ways, I do think it is appropriate and it should be something women do feel." (Sallie Edgar, OFW)

"I would say [Women's Studies] junior faculty are not very active in OFW. They are more politically active in social justice areas, immigration rights areas, lesbian and gay areas. I would say within Women's Studies, you would find the membership somewhat divided." (Kyra Unger, OFW)

As previously mentioned in the discussion about the membership of the OFW, the organization has become more disciplinarily diverse over time. The current board includes women from Asian studies, biochemistry, biology, education, English, law, medicine, and Spanish literature. In the early years of the OFW, many members had an academic affiliation with Women's Studies. This is no longer the case, especially among the board members. In addition, there is a new generation of faculty within the OFW and Women's Studies. Many of the junior faculty know only of the Second Wave of feminism through history, not through lived experiences, contributing to a different perspective of and emphasis on activism in their lives and in the OFW. This has created

a division within the organization. Respondents who identify with the Second Wave of feminism mourn the changes in both the OFW and Women's Studies; however, the newer members only know the organization and Women's Studies as it is currently constructed. While the director of Women's Studies sees the philosophical and theoretical connection between the OFW and Women's Studies, the current OFW has very few concrete connections to Women's Studies. The connections that do exist between the OFW and Women's Studies are primarily historical and abstract, and there is little evidence that the members of the OFW want to change that relationship.

Like the OFW, the faculty interviewed in the WFA consistently stated that there was no formal connection between the Association and Women's Studies. Nevertheless, the current director of Women's Studies at the UP is actively involved in the WFA, as are many other faculty affiliated with the Women's Studies program, which is no longer the case at the UD.

"There are people who are in Women's Studies who are in the Association."
(Beth Newman, WFA)

"[There is a connection] only [in] that faculty from Women's Studies are involved. And [Women's Studies] often add a voice to efforts that the Association is spurring." (Karen Smith, WFA)

"I think a lot of women who are on the WFA are in Women's Studies as well. That is probably where that network originally formed. I'm not real positive about that, but it is my impression that they are." (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

"A lot of people who are active in the WFA are active in Women's Studies, but there is no formal connection." (Nancy Nichols, WFA)

In some cases, the work of the Association and of the faculty within it has been a mutually beneficial experience for the WFA and Women's Studies and in advancing feminism on campus.

"It is likely that the person who is director of Women's Studies will be interested in the WFA and has already been involved. She can tell us what is going on, what she knows about. We kind of all say what is going on from our perspective, the information we have." (Catherine Eller, WFA)

"I have tried to raise that in people's awareness—not a connection, but to help make Women's Studies more part of the things we say. It has always been on the Association that I raised that to say now let's make a statement about supporting Women's Studies." (Nicole Carsen, WFA)

"Some women who started out with the Women's Faculty Association, who were not involved in Women's Studies at all, have expanded their definition of who they are and what the academy is. They have moved forward in that discussion and have become involved in Women's Studies since then. I think it is a neat profit, since we are not allowed to hire any Women's Studies faculty." (Irene Smith, WFA)

Moreover, of the eight core members currently involved in the WFA, six incorporate gender and feminism in their scholarship. This fact further demonstrates the strength of the informal ties between the Association and Women's Studies.

Although described as informal, the relationship between the WFA and Women's Studies at the UP is much less ephemeral than at the UD. Many faculty involved in the WFA have strong academic ties to Women's Studies and feminist scholarship. Further, the director of the Women's Studies program is personally and actively involved in the WFA and reciprocally, the WFA recognizes opportunities to act on behalf of Women's Studies. Having only affiliated faculty and a limited budget, the Women's Studies program relies on the kindness and activism of others to maintain the academic integrity

and health of feminist scholarship at the UD, and the WFA, including the younger generations of faculty, willingly support those efforts.

It is interesting that the OFW and WFA and Women's Studies have matured in parallel fashion on each campus. As the OFW matured and has become more professional, so has Women's Studies at the UD. Women's Studies has shifted from a program to a department, from housing only a director to housing many faculty, and from serving only undergraduates to serving graduate students as well. At the UP, the younger WFA and the Women's Studies program have remained closer to their grassroots origins. It may be that these faculty organizations and the Women's Studies department and program on their respective campuses mutually shape the organizational lifecycles. Moreover, the academic feminist umbrella under which all of these groups fall, coupled with the external climate that has responded to academic feminism, help to explain the similar paths that each feminist group has taken on their particular campus.

Prestige Networks

To further explain the diminished priority of fostering strong ties between the OFW and the CSW and Women's Studies, I point to the emphasis on creating and maintaining prestige networks. This concept, emerging from my pilot study, describes an organizational strategy that is used for the purpose of enhancing the legitimacy of an organization by establishing relationships, or networks, with individuals or groups who are considered elite, prestigious, and influential. A strong connection with the CSW or Women's Studies, while possibly helpful in advancing the OFW's activist agenda, is not

particularly prestigious. In the end, the creation of prestige networks is fundamental to meeting the goals of the OFW.

From the beginning, the name—the Organization *for* Faculty Women, as Olivia Nelson shared in a conversation in 1998, was designed not to exclude men. It was a conscious decision to use *for* and not *of* to embrace the potential membership of women and men, but in practice, men are not actively recruited. So, the name can be seen as a strategy to appear less radical and more congenial to the administration and to men. The moniker was intended to soften the perceptions of the organization as one that was exclusive and anti-male, creating a foundation for solid prestige networks with administrators, most of whom are men, and male faculty.

The meetings and events of the OFW support the centrality of creating and maintaining prestige networks. The original schedule of meetings and events for the spring 2000 academic semester included four board meetings. Two of the four preceded a meeting with the university President or President and Provost. A third board meeting preceded a program titled “How the University Works,” where four upper level administrators talked about governance, university budgeting, securing research money, and promotion and tenure—all issues that are tied to the traditional mechanisms of power and prestige in academe. Not only did the events that followed these board meetings promote prestige networking, but the meetings themselves served to complement that strategy. The focus of the preceding board meetings was to choreograph the meeting or program that followed, so that the OFW board would look united, professional, and legitimate in the eyes of the President, Provost, and other upper level administrators.

Given that the board only had one scheduled meeting that was not linked to another meeting or event, dedicating an entire meeting to determine who will present information and what information will be shared with the administration demonstrated the value placed upon these prestige networks. In addition, the annual luncheon with the Board of Trustees is intended to allow the organization and the Board of Trustees to get to know one another—another prestige network further augmented by the invitation to the President, Vice-Presidents, and Deans of the 15 colleges of the UD.

For the women in the OFW, developing prestige networks is more akin to a top-down effort than to promoting grassroots activism, which was initially the intended design of the group.

“There is a great deal of concern about not offending people in leadership and this used to be an outsider type of group where there was more of an adversarial relationship perceived between members of the group and leadership.” (Wanda Solidar, OFW)

“I think our main strategy is working with the central administration to help them put pressure on the deans and other people.” (Uma Himinez, OFW)

In fact, every woman with whom I spoke indicated that meeting with the university’s President and Provost is a core strategy, and for many, the most important strategy of the OFW.

“For the OFW, the most effective thing I have seen is having the President and Provost meet with us twice a year.” (Da-Ming Quo, OFW)

“The main strategy that it uses... Well, it depends. If it is a big institutional problem then it’s bringing the institution’s attention to that by working through the President or the Provost or whatever that level happens to be.” (Robin Neigh, OFW)

“What I know about [in terms of strategies] are meetings, the luncheon with the Board of Trustees, and this year I think that was very good in trying to draw in deans and some other administrative people.” (Deborah Young, OFW)

“We also know [the OFW] is being effective...if the administration regards it as effective, and wants to communicate with the organization.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

“How do you define success? Being listened to by the power structure at this university. Not just, ‘I’ve got to listen to every group on this campus. Here is one other.’ To be listened to and to have a feeling that there is a two-way communication. To me that is one measure of success and I think that has happened.” (Margie Cather, OFW)

Meeting with the administrative leadership at the UD is critical to the OFW. It was not until 1998 that the OFW had regular access to the President of the university, but the OFW has consistently sought the audience of the Provost and Trustees. With these meetings, there is a sense that being invited in and listened to somehow accomplishes the organization’s goals. While not articulated, perhaps being included and heard by the administration is a not only a strategy, but a goal of the organization.

As part of enhancing prestige networks, the women involved in the OFW make a concerted effort to be liked by and to be helpful in the eyes of the administration.

“One strategy is to package issues in ways that the administration can be responsive to them. I think the group we have now is pretty good at seeing how are they going to understand this and how are they going to present it so they can see what we are saying and then what it is that we need to happen. The OFW strategizes how they go to the central administration.” (Uma Himinez, OFW)

“You always, with any administrator, whether it is your department head or your President, if you bring a problem, you always bring a possible solution. ‘We are helping you do your job better.’ Then you are seen as an enabler, not as an opponent.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

“One of the things I have watched being modeled through everyone who has been involved with OFW since I have been there, is that if you bring forth a problem, bring forth a solution as well. I think that is quite effective. Just identifying the

problem is easy to do, but actually coming up with creative workable solutions, that is harder.” (Becky Yeager, OFW)

Being helpful means, in part, doing the work of the administrators by providing solutions to problems and allowing the administrators to take credit for any changes that do occur. The assumption is that the administrators need to act and the OFW needs to inform. If the board were less focused on prestige networks and more focused on grassroots activism, the organization would look very different. Rather, it would be mobilizing its members and others in the university community to act, not just the central administration.

The idea of assisting the administration is further reinforced in the content of the OFW newsletters.

“With cooperation from the university administration, the OFW completed a comprehensive salary study.” (OFW Newsletter, August 27, 1987)

“I believe that if we use the partnership [with the UD President] we have developed over the past year to remedy pay inequities where they exist, the other problems can also be resolved.” (OFW Newsletter, October 15, 1993)

“[Our executive board has] been meeting regularly with the President, Provost, and Vice-President for Research...in order to assist in shaping institutional agendas and priorities for change.” (OFW Newsletter, February, 2000)

As the excerpts from newsletters show, there has been a history in the OFW of trying to be helpful toward the administration. Not only have there been attempts at working with the administration to include issues of women faculty among institutional priorities, but sometimes the organization served the administration by executing salary studies and drafting letters and memos for the university President to “rubber stamp” with his signature. In fact, throughout the 1980s, it was the OFW that continually urged the

administration to institute a mechanism to redress individual salary inequities. This process also resulted in the university setting aside \$250,000 for salary adjustments from which many women received pay increases during that decade. However, while the process did help many faculty, the salary adjustment mechanism is no longer in place. Yet, there are other changes that started with recommendations from the OFW that are now part of the institutional fabric. The UD has a policy that allows individuals to stop the tenure clock twice for childbirth or adoption. There is also an alternative duties policy for childbirth, adoption, or foster care. In addition, the OFW proposed a pilot research development grant that the Provost has adopted. For this effort, the Provost set aside \$100,000 to award to successful applicants who show an undue burden of teaching and/or service to support their scholarship. Thus, given the nature of the prestige networks that have been created, the administration is benefiting from this relationship. Members of the OFW have helped the administration look favorable in the eyes of some faculty on campus through the adoption of women-friendly policies and programs. However, while there have been some concrete changes in the past, it is uncertain the degree to which the OFW is now benefiting.

This tactic of "polite protest" is reinforced by the administration and may be the reason why it is perpetuated and other more confrontational approaches are avoided.

"So finally, [the OFW President] wrote a letter to the [local paper]. When we came to the next meeting, boy was the Provost mad. All five-foot-six of him stood up and said, 'now you have done it, you have gone outside the tent.' He cut us off and it was serious. We had gone from being team players to being seen differently. It was just a couple of weeks ago, I said, vis à vis Women's Studies, 'We need to talk to the Board of Trustees about distance education and the barriers and the hoops.' Someone said, 'Ooh, [the President and Provost] hate it when you speak to someone; they want to be the spokesperson to the Trustees.'

So to actually talk to the Trustees is pretty risky. The few times when OFW did try to take on a issue, we were told we weren't team players." (Kyra Unger, OFW)

"How does [the UD President] say it? The women leaders at the UD are tempered but insistent. That is the way to do it, tempered but insistent. You don't let up. You don't let up the pressure, but you also don't let up the encouragement and the belief that they can do it if they are helped. If someone believes in you, you are likely to achieve far more." (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

From these examples, it is the administrators who appear to have the upper hand.

By being a team player, the OFW board is doing what the administration wants. Should it veer from the genteel course that includes appropriately using the chain of command, the board believes it risks being ostracized. The prestige network will dissolve and the OFW cannot advance its agenda according to its desired set of strategies.

To complicate these relationships further, the OFW often places itself in a position of inferiority vis à vis the central administration by showing overwhelming gratitude to administrators who are essentially doing their jobs. In a recent newsletter, the OFW President expressed this sort of sentiment by stating, "[The UD President] has shown commitment to women faculty by his willingness to meet with the OFW executive board." (OFW Newsletter, September, 1999) Further support for this positioning was seen during meetings with the university President and Provost. At the beginning of every meeting with these administrators, the President of the OFW takes several minutes to thank them for meeting with the board, and if appropriate, for following up on an initiative presented at a previous meeting. In addition, every letter sent out on behalf of the organization to an administrator (except for a series of letters and memos from 1988-

1993) is formulaic, starting out with an expression of gratitude for her or his work. Even in newsletters, the kowtowing is evident.

“We felt honored to have served with such a group [i.e., the Provost’s Salary Equity Committee] and as a part of such a process.” (OFW Newsletter, May 4, 1984)

In 1988, the OFW reported hosting a reception to honor the departing affirmative action officer. Similarly, in 1999 and 2001, plaques were presented to the interim Provost, President, Provost, and assistant Vice-President in the college of medicine to acknowledge their support for equity issues that were of concern to the OFW. These public displays of gratitude and honor were meant to strengthen the prestige networks and to create an environment where it is more difficult for the administrators to say “no” to the suggestions of the OFW. However, in practice, these tactics may also serve to reinforce the power structure of the UD.

Only three women interviewed as part of the OFW expressed concern about developing prestige networks with the university administration. Two are former members and indicated that this strategy could result in the OFW being co-opted by the President. “Playing nice” could lead to complacency by the organization and misplaced trust that the administration will follow the OFW’s agenda.

“Having access [to the university’s President] is very valuable. Being able to present women’s issues is valuable. But access is also very seductive. You have to ask yourself if you are being co-opted.” (Claudia Macintosh, OFW)

“When some Women’s Studies faculty signed a letter of protest, [the UD President] was not good about that. He was patronizing. ‘Oh, you should have come to me first. You have been so hurtful to me.’ I’m sorry that kind of emotional manipulation is not going to fool anybody. Except apparently [some of those in the OFW].” (Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

While the third woman felt that the organization's past President was currently being manipulated by the UD's President, she still felt that developing prestige networks was the best possible strategy for the OFW.

“There is some grumbling that the board is too involved with the President and doing what the President wants, not what [the general membership] wants... And they think Olivia, in particular, is in the President's back pocket.” (Maura Nemec, OFW)

Ironically, an OFW past President shares a paper in a newsletter to the OFW membership that captures the struggle between working in a university without being co-opted.

“Yet there is also a danger for all women who enter positions of power and prestige in a hierarchically-structured institution that still functions, by and large, as a system primarily controlled by, and biased toward the interests of white males of privileged classes: the danger inherent in becoming a part of any institutional system—that is (since its well-being demonstrably affects ours, both professionally and personally), absorbing its perspectives more and more as our own, and hence gradually coming to reinforce, rather than to transform, its value systems and structures of thought.” (OFW Newsletter, February 26, 1988)

While this OFW past President recognizes the seduction and potential for co-option, she doesn't provide any ideas to avoid this. It is feminist theory without action. Given this relative lack of concern about being co-opted and manipulated by the very prestige networks the OFW works to maintain and mechanisms to avoid these situations, it is unlikely that the OFW will evaluate the risks, and ultimately the effectiveness, of this strategy. Creating prestige networks and maintaining them through expressions of recognition and gratitude bolsters the institutional hierarchy. In addition, the administrative structure rewards this strategy by continuing to meet with the OFW board and by publicly reinforcing their activism of kindness. This sort of attention is what the OFW desired; yet, it could also be the very thing that keeps the organization “in its place”

and limits its activities within a range that is acceptable to the established power structure.

Leveraging the Public

The members of the WFA also understand the purpose of creating prestige networks. However, this strategy has not resulted in the sorts of changes the WFA seeks. When their goals are not met through prestige networking, the members of the WFA do not continue to foster and enhance those networks. Rather, they look to other means to advance their agenda. The WFA tries to leverage the public by using the media, the state legislature, and national organizations in order to help them put pressure on the university.

“[The WFA] always [tries] to go through channels...but it never works, so we have to go elsewhere.” (Nancy Nichols, WFA).

“We write formal letters to the administration, to the pertinent people in the administration, to the local newspapers.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

“For most of the things that come up, we’ve talked to administrators about them. There have been a number of issues in specific colleges, where we go to the dean, and then we would go to the Provost who is over the dean, and if that didn’t work, we would go to the President, and if that didn’t work, then we’d keep going.” (Nancy Nichols, WFA)

“We know we have to go outside and piss everybody off. Go to the papers. Go to national organizations.” (Irene North, WFA)

It is the sense that their voices are silenced or ignored by the administration that prompts the WFA to look to leverage the public in order to put additional pressure on the university. Nonetheless, it is significant to note that the group does use the chain of command and the university structure initially to try to advance their agenda—but it is not limited to those tactics.

Unlike the OFW, the WFA is very guarded toward the UP administration. While most of the members of the OFW believe that the administration will “do the right thing” in the end, the members of the WFA do not trust the institutional hierarchy. This lack of trust is evidenced by a recent (2000) resolution written by the WFA to the Board of Trustees, demanding the resignation of the system-wide President due to his lack of initiative and response toward gender issues. This adversarial stance toward the administration often sparks controversy, makes good copy, and ultimately attracts the attention of the public. In fact, the activism of the WFA has been mentioned throughout the media, from the campus and local community newspapers to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *48 Hours*, and *Sports Illustrated*. The WFA welcomes the press, for it raises the public’s and the university’s consciousness.

Although gratitude and other genteel tactics are central to maintaining the prestige networks of the OFW, the WFA shies away from bolstering those relationships. Partnering with the administration is not what the WFA has come to expect, and thus is not what it desires. Instead, the WFA counts on challenging the institutional hierarchy by establishing external public networks. Indeed, such network involvement is a measure of success in the eyes of the WFA, which seeks to draw public attention and support. Half of the women who are currently involved in the WFA felt the group was successful if it raised issues that generated administrative hostility, and ultimately, reluctant action.

“I think it is even successful when it doggedly brings up issues, when it chips away at the Board of Trustees and the upper administration.” (Karen Smith, WFA)

“[The WFA is successful] when the university, with egg on its face, recants or retracts.” (Natalie Ingram, WFA)

“So our success is directly correlated with the President’s blood pressure. All other things being equal—his medication levels being equal.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

“On other specific issues, I think it is successful—this is a hard thing to say but—when administrators really get angry about something. Then we know we have had an effect. Even though we know they don’t want to do it, or are feeling uncomfortable or some sort of pressure.” (Nancy Nichols, WFA)

“The President has had Trustees in his office, backed up into a corner pointing at them, and telling them to get certain members of the Association under control who are friends of Trustees. He has referred to us as quote ‘the so-called, self-appointed, women’s faculty association.’” (Beth Newman, WFA)

These sorts of administrative responses are in sharp contrast to those sought by the OFW. For the most part, the OFW assumes the best motives by the current administration and avoids conflict, while the WFA is suspicious of the administration and creates conflict. These differences highlight the very different ways activist organizations construct their networks.

At the UP, the women involved in the WFA often concentrate on strategies that put pressure on the university from outside the campus. Going to the local newspapers and testifying in front of the state legislature are not unusual tactics used by the group. In fact, every woman with whom I spoke mentioned going to the media to expose unfair campus situations as a critical strategy for the WFA.

“It was a small media market [compared to Chicago, where I am now] and things that happened at the university were a big deal...Anything that has a whiff of controversy is a big deal. Anything at the university is a big deal, so it is pretty easy to get the word out and to find out who will release this information. We did campaign in the newspaper...” (Fran Cousins, WFA)

“[Our main strategies are] publicity and being willing to go outside the university to speak to the media, [and] to speak to the state legislature.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“Nicole and Catherine and Beth are really good at mobilizing press. A few years ago, I can’t even think of what the issues were, I went over and was interviewed with Nicole and some others about a particular issue we were talking to the administration about. So, getting the attention of the press, figuring out who we need to go to [is a strategy].” (Karen Smith, WFA)

The women in the WFA recognize the value of forging relationships with individuals and groups outside the organization who can assist them in their activist work, as evidenced by their affinity toward working with the local press, as well as with external groups nationally.

“As you can see, we don’t just talk to ourselves. That is what makes [the administration] so mad, that we talk to the broader community. It is the fact that we know the editorial board. And it is the fact that we know [state] senators. It is the fact that we don’t just remain cloistered like a lot of academicians that makes them so mad.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

“I think Irene and Beth and Nicole—I don’t know how they do it—they know a lot of other people on other campuses and they seem to be able to draw or make comparisons, and know strategies that other campuses have used.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“I mean networking. One of the ways we have been able to address [the fact that our insurance doesn’t cover] birth control is by hooking up with a Women’s Legal Defense Fund in Washington before the EEOC ruling came down. We were beginning to find people who were willing to join in a class action suit. I think that is important.” (Karen Smith, WFA)

The members of the WFA see power outside the system and work to develop relationships with those who wield influence vis à vis the university, like local journalists, state legislators, and national organizations. Further emphasizing the value the WFA places on these networks, two WFA members suggested that I interview to

journalists and legislators about their relationships with the WFA and provided me with names and contact information of these individuals.

During a Faculty Senate meeting in March, 2001, the types of networking described by the WFA members were exemplified. First, by using the senate meeting, the WFA worked through the traditional academic governance structure. However, as their descriptions suggest, the Association also spoke to the local media immediately following the meeting to reinforce their position.

Only senators are able to raise a motion to be considered during a Faculty Senate meeting. The members of the WFA asked a male senator to raise a motion on behalf of the organization, urging the UP system to include insurance coverage for contraceptive drugs and devices and to extend all university benefits to domestic partners of employees. The motion was raised, and members of the Association, including Beth Newman, were then able to discuss the motion with the senate. The motion was debated among the 38 senators and other guests and then was brought to a vote. The resolution passed by a majority vote of 35 in favor and three against the resolution. Raising motions through the academic senate is part of the institutional governance process. For the WFA, it can also be a mechanism to put pressure on the university and system-wide President.

Not only did the WFA leverage the Faculty Senate to support its agenda, but directly following the meeting, a reporter from an area newspaper approached Beth Newman to purposely get more information and clarification about the resolution. From the nature of the conversation, it was clear that the reporter had an on-going relationship with the WFA and with Beth, and Beth enthusiastically talked to the reporter. A story

about the resolution appeared in the area newspapers the following morning, and one month after the academic senate meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to immediately provide insurance coverage for contraception to all system-wide employees. However, the issue of domestic partner benefits remains unresolved.

Like the OFW, the WFA used the professionalized systems in place internal to the institution (*e.g.*, working with the Faculty Senate) to advance its agenda. However, the WFA's networking strategies go beyond the internal to include the external as well. This combination of leveraging prestige networks and the public is central to this organization. For, by using the internal networks, the WFA demonstrates efforts to seek professional credibility and acceptance by others in the university system, but their activism is externally reinforced by incorporating networks with the local media and other constituencies outside the UP.

The WFA has been very successful in leveraging the public. For them, it may have started as a strategy of last resort, but it now appears to be their first tactic. While the members of the WFA state that they initially try to use the institutional hierarchy and system to raise their issues, over time, they have become mistrustful of the administration.

By contrast, the OFW appears very reluctant to leverage the public. The members work hard to please the administration and to establish prestige networks within the institution. In the past, they have been scolded by the administration for seeking external support from sources like the press or state legislators. Because of its reliance on the existing system, the price was too high for the OFW not to abandon public-leveraging

strategies. Although each organization has tried to engage both strategies (*i.e.*, creating prestige networks and leveraging the public), each has found itself at the extreme ends of a networking continuum. Generally, the WFA doesn't believe cooperation with the administration is possible, so they immediately leverage the public. This strategy does not allow for the possibility of shared goals or collaboration with the administration, always pitting the administrative leaders as "bad." The OFW generally believes the administration is "good" and that position lessens the need to leverage anyone other than the internal prestige networks. However, this strategy may lead to co-option and empty promises by the administration. Thus, both organization's relationship strategies demonstrate a dualism, and each position carries potential risks or opportunities vis à vis the institutional hierarchy that seem to be overlooked.

Strategies

It is important to reiterate that the four broad patterns (*i.e.*, organization, networks, strategies, and issues) are interrelated. To suggest that the manner in which the OFW or WFA constructs their organizations is not strategic would be erroneous. Likewise, creating network, whether they are personal or informal, prestige networks, or for the purpose of leveraging the public, is strategic. However, this section focuses on other strategies not yet discussed. In some cases, the strategies directly emerge from the manner in which the group has organized or formed networks. Sometimes, the strategies set the stage for the organization or networking that follows. Still in other cases, it is difficult to separate where the strategy ends and the organization and networking begins.

In the end, this section sheds light on additional strategies that further shape the OFW and the WFA, which allow these groups to address the issues that comprise their agendas.

Professionalized Activism

The concept of professionalized activism permeates nearly every aspect of the strategies, in which the OFW engages, including, as previously discussed, creating prestige networks. Unlike strategies that are often recognized as part of social movement activism (*e.g.*, picketing, sit-ins, walk-outs), professionalized activism focuses on tactics that mirror the professional work in academe in order to advance the OFW agenda. From the beginning of the OFW in 1982, many professionalized activist strategies were documented in newsletters, such as: letter writing to the President; meeting with the Provost; asking the Provost, President, and Trustees to attend meetings; and forming committees. Meeting with administrators and making them aware of issues, as well as reminding them of past efforts (like recommendations that, to date, remain unmet from a UD study completed in 1988) seemed to be key strategies to foster change.

“What we have done in past generations is to have the subcommittee chairs, if they are working on a certain issue, bring that forward in the meeting with the President.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

“We have set up our panels to bring people together who have interests in different issues. I think that the meetings with the President and the Provost are another way that we do that. Those would be our primary ways. To the extent that our subcommittees have meetings and in addition contact individuals on campus with things we are concerned with, that is kind of how we operate.” (Nora Islip, OFW)

“Education, exposure, communication, some of the travel grants and opportunities to help women further their education and their careers [are our main strategies].” (Deborah Young, OFW)

Creating subcommittees, scheduling meetings, presenting educational seminars, and providing funds for research all reinforce professional academic work. These strategies enhance the legitimacy of the organization in the eyes of academe, and by engaging in them, the organization also appears less radical and more friendly to non-feminists. For the OFW, professionalized activism is currently the sole strategy. This is to say, that for the OFW, if a particular strategy doesn't result in change, the group finds another professionalized way to reinforce its position. As the following quote suggests, instead of looking for a more confrontational strategy, the OFW puts forward different people or waits out the administrators and tries to use a professionalized strategy with a different, and perhaps more willing, administrator.

“[If something doesn't work,] I think you do try in a different way. As somebody who has been fighting for change for many years, I think you try again in a different way. I think different people step forward to try. A lot of it has to do with waiting out administrators. I think that you wait for another day. Come back and maybe it is other people. You keep on trying it from a different angle.”
(Claudia Macintosh, OFW)

Patience, perseverance, and pragmatism are necessary. Using these tactics, change will likely be slow and incremental, if it comes at all.

Other strategies served to reinforce the OFW's professionalized activism. For example, newsletters report that in the early years of the organization programs were held annually for women to share their scholarship with one another. While the annual research program was discontinued after about five years, scholarship still had a place in programs (e.g., Dr. Leslie Lawrence presented a paper on gender and retrenchment to the membership in the mid-1990s). By creating an opportunity for faculty to hone their presentation and research skills and speaking to gender-relevant research, the OFW

supported women faculty, and at the same time, an academic activity that is consistent with the university's reward structure.

Another way in which the OFW helped faculty in their professional roles was through travel grants. Newsletters documented the application process for faculty and graduate students. This process, not unlike other small academic grant processes, required the submission of a curriculum vitae, a research proposal, evidence as to how the work will benefit the OFW, and a follow-up report about the completed research. Based upon the criteria, it appears that those who will receive grants to travel to a conference or to conduct research are judged by standards similar to academic peer review processes, further evidence of a professionalized activity. While I am referring to these sorts of activities as professionalized activism, many of the strategies are not activist in the traditional sense of the word. The intended goal for many of these efforts is to provide professional opportunities and support for women faculty, not necessarily to transform the institution.

Seeking legitimacy is a critical part of professionalized activism. One way that the OFW demonstrates its legitimacy is through the programs it presents. The group asks credentialed experts to facilitate programs, activities, and events, as well as to conduct university-wide research studies. For example, newsletters in 1983 and 2000 provide detailed descriptions of academic degrees and professional experiences for an artist who was hired to design a new logo for the OFW and for women who agreed to serve as panelists for a "Women and the Law" program. In 1988, the OFW, with financial support from the Provost, hired a consultant with a national scholarly reputation for her

work on gender and climate to do a study for the UD, again substantiating the import the organization placed on legitimacy and reputation and academic research. However, there was a period from 1997-1999, when programs seemed less academic and more focused on women's shared experiences. Expertise for those presenting the programs during this time came from lived experience, like having a family, not from an academic discipline.

Recent meetings of the OFW also showed the desire to reinforce professional legitimacy. In a board meeting in February, 2000, the President of the board reaffirmed her position about a proposed interdisciplinary program in early childhood development, asserting that, "as faculty, I can't support this; it is educational malpractice." (Wanda Solidad, OFW) The educational malpractice to which she was referring was that the program, as previously described, was proposed by an administrator with a master's degree and an adjunct faculty member—not tenure-track faculty with Ph.D.s. This was further emphasized during a meeting with the board in April when she suggested that the board vote on whether a Ph.D. must be the leader of a Ph.D. program. This attitude establishes the place that credentialing and the academic reward structure should have for the women in the OFW—traditional and professionalized.

In another meeting with the board, the UD President, and the UD Provost, Wanda presented preliminary results from a research study about faculty salaries in the College of Medicine. Wanda went into great depth about the study's methodology, including the variables and statistical tests used. Although this particular study was not completed by the OFW, the presentation from the OFW to the administration showed the value of

collecting data and using statistical rigor, again using a fundamental aspect of professional academic work to advance the organization's agenda.

In addition to the aforementioned period in the late 1990s where the personal and professional overlapped, there was some emphasis in the early years of the OFW on more radical types of efforts. Numbers of receptions that the organization hosted indicate that informal networks and social support were a part of the OFW, as documented in newsletters from the early and mid-1980s. Also, many of the receptions, even some where the President, Provost, or Trustees were present, were held at homes of women faculty, showing a bridge between personal and political that becomes less evident in the more recent years of the OFW. On one noted occasion, there was a performance from women's literature and music that was the focus of one of the receptions in 1986, an experience often connected to radical feminism. Also, speakers focusing on menstruation and menopause (although presented by scholars) showed an interest in the personal issues of women. This bridging of the personal, professional, and political was evident in the early 1990s as well. Receptions and luncheons included women's music, art, and literature, as well as the continuation of programs on body, health, and the provision of childcare at receptions (specifically documented in the newsletters for 1993-94).

Respondents supported the strategies from the early years of the OFW that were evidenced in documents with lived experiences of more radical activism.

“We went to the organizing meetings and you would get 100 pissed off women faculty per meeting. It was pretty powerful stuff. And we knew that there were administrative representatives there, [so we would confront the administration].”
(Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

“It was at a time when the University of Minnesota lost a [salary sex discrimination] case and there was an underlying, very genteel threat of our suing if we didn’t have salaries looked at. It was done in a very feminine way but it was also saying that we had strength and we could do that.” (Sallie Edgar, OFW)

“I can remember meeting at the house of one of the state legislators who was married to a faculty member on campus, and going to that house, meeting with that state legislator—this is in the very very early years and it was very surreptitious. But it was a way to see how we politically could get state legislative support.” (Sallie Edgar, OFW)

The strategies described above diverge from the professionalized activism that characterizes most of the recent tactics of the organization. However, they are important aspects of the OFW history and indicate that while one strategy, professionalized activism, may be dominant, the nature of activism, even for this organization, is not strictly defined by one category.

The newsletters, in and of themselves, also demonstrate the complexity of strategies. Newsletters were written to educate and to raise the consciousness of the membership.

“We have used our newsletter to disseminate that we are a group who is interested in [women faculty] issues.” (Nora Islip, OFW)

“The newsletters are the way to keep the membership really in touch. Historically, we even sent out newsletters to those who weren’t dues paying members to keep people still a part of the loop.” (Olivia Nelson, OFW)

The newsletters were an important way to keep the membership connected and informed of the issues that were salient to women faculty. The newsletters often provided information about the status of women and encouraged the membership to act. However, the newsletters continually reprinted articles from national sources, professional newsletters, and scholarly books and journals as a way to raise awareness (e.g., OFW

Newsletters from January, 1982, September, 1999, and February, 2000). This reliance on scholarly evidence to inform the membership of climate issues mixes the radical feminist strategy of consciousness raising with professionalized activism. This is further evidenced in the newsletters from 1999-2000. In these issues, there was considerable mention of professionalized activist strategies used at other elite institutions to make the climate better for women faculty (*e.g.*, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Michigan), as well as efforts to create national networks to raise consciousness and to get ideas. Attending academic conferences, joining e-mail lists for professional associations, reaching out to the American Association of University Professors Committee W were among the strategies encouraged. By informing the OFW of strategies used by prestigious institutions and professional associations, the newsletters, and hence the OFW, encouraged isomorphic behavior of other professionalized activist tactics.

In sum, professionalized activism, an umbrella term that includes creating and maintaining prestige networks, is the primary strategy of the OFW. There have been circumstances when the organization has utilized techniques that bridge the personal, political, and professional, like consciousness raising in the newsletters and providing programs about work life issues. Yet, these tactics did little to call the professional legitimacy of the women involved in the OFW into question. In fact, even in some of those more radical situations, there was some underlying efforts toward professionalized activism, like providing supporting scholarly evidence about campus climate issues in the newsletters and asking administrators with professional experience in work life to share

their perspectives. In the early years of the OFW, there were threats of a class action suit, and large rallies of women gathering around salary equity concerns. However, these activities fell into the shadows against a background of more professionalized activism that began to dominate, and now dominates, the work of the OFW.

Activist Professionals

The WFA also uses professionalized activist strategies, but unlike the OFW, they also pursue other strategies to a greater extent. As previously examined, this difference is evident in the decision to leverage the public rather than to focus on creating prestige networks. Leveraging the public is more reminiscent of strategies traditionally linked to social movements, and as other strategies of the WFA are described, one can again see that the connection to activism precedes the connection to professionalism. This is not to say that professionalism and professionalized activism don't have a significant place in the work of the WFA. Rather, the WFA, a feminist organization of professionals not a professional organization of feminists, prioritizes the types of strategies differently than the OFW, conceptualizing their members as activists who are also professionals, foregrounding the former identity.

The WFA's range of professionalized activities is considerable. It uses the university system and tools used by academics and administrators to draw attention to the WFA's causes.

“We have used a number of strategies. We have put people on committees. In order to do that, we have had to get on the committees that make those appointments.” (Irene North, WFA)

**“[We have worked at] gathering the data, getting the comparative data, and using our peer institutions [to show] where we stand and where we are deficient.”
(Karen Smith, WFA)**

Central to the professional work within academe is conducting research, writing memos, following the bureaucratic rules, and serving on committees. The WFA uses all these techniques to shed light on their concerns and to potentially change the status quo. The members of the WFA also create networks within the university and use their status as respected academics to foster these connections, emphasizing the association between creating prestige networks and professionalized activism.

“We have done our time. Some of us at a level we wish we really didn’t have to do. We have used the internal procedures of the university...we have enough people who hold, not just tenure, but respect on the campus, that we can work in from a variety of directions and get an ear. It doesn’t mean we are going to get the change we want, but we are going to get an ear.” (Irene North, WFA)

“For one thing, the faculty [on the WFA] have gained more authority. Over the last 5 or 8 years, the women leading the Association have become full professors. They have won all the [research and teaching] awards that I have mentioned to you.” (Karen Smith, WFA)

The organization, like the OFW, recognizes that those who have the power to make decisions are influenced by the tools of the academy. Many of the members have earned their academic status by being respected professionals, and they have learned how to use their status to benefit the WFA. Professional prestige has provided some legitimacy to the Association, which has included getting an audience to listen to its concerns.

In a May 3, 2000, letter to the Board of Trustees and system-wide President, the WFA shared concerns it had about the data sources that were used annually to report the numbers of women faculty and faculty of color to the state legislature. To emphasize the revered place of rigorous research, the letter stated:

“In a research laboratory, such data manipulation would be immediately suspect and indeed would not be condoned by any reputable scientist, and should not be used in this case either.”

The WFA used the professional language of the academy to encourage change. In a subsequent report to the state legislative committee on gender equity, the WFA again reinforced the need to conduct rigorous research. The report explained the shortcomings of one particular data source and suggested using another, more comprehensive source. It also critiqued the manner in which the data was compared to peer institutions. The content of the letter to the Trustees and the report to the legislature demonstrate how professional activism (*i.e.*, conducting research) is used by the WFA to advance its agenda.

Drafting resolutions and using the academic senate to provide support and a voice for the resolutions is another way that the WFA uses the professionalized activism. The WFA works from within the system, using “proper channels”, to educate the community about issues that are important to women faculty. They also write letters, including a letter to the university football coach, expressing their concerns about how a student-athlete was disciplined. In addition, the WFA has encouraged women faculty, as evidenced in the agenda and minutes from a June, 1993, meeting, to volunteer for a task force to create a more inclusive curriculum and to identify other women as potential honorary degree recipients. All of these methods work within the university system to create change and to advance the WFA’s agenda.

While the WFA may engage in several professionalized strategies, the members put more emphasis on other tactics, connected to, but outside of the university. The

documents support this, as they include more press releases, petitions to the Board of Trustees, resolutions to the legislature, calls to attend legislative hearings and trustee meetings, and descriptions of university-wide forums to discuss gender equity rather than data-driven memos and invitations to meet with university administrators. In two different electronic mail messages to the members of the WFA, home and office phone numbers of legislators and Trustees were listed and members were encouraged to call them to voice their concerns about recent propositions in front of these groups. The WFA does not intend to sit on the sidelines, the documents, interviews, and observation of the academic senate meeting show that it wants to be involved and have a voice. In a March, 2000, message to the members of the WFA, the co-chairs asked them to attend an upcoming state legislature meeting. The co-chairs said of the legislature, "they need to know we're watching them, just as the university needs to know the legislature is watching." The WFA's vision and strategies go outside the campus-proper, because for the WFA, professionalized activism is not enough.

For the WFA, professionalized activism is a tactic to use so that other strategies can be implemented. By strategically working within the system and gaining professional prestige, the WFA has gained some legitimacy, despite the animosity perceived between the administration and the organization. Because the WFA has used the chain of command and includes well-respected researchers and teachers in its membership, it is difficult for the university to completely dismiss the issues of the WFA. In some ways, professionalized activism has allowed the WFA to be more radical. They

have a professional foundation upon which more radical strategies can be used. This differs from the OFW, where professionalized activism is the primary strategy.

Issues

Although the nature of the organizations and the strategies differ between the OFW and the WFA, there are many similarities in the issues that are salient for these groups. In addition, some of the issues have remained relatively consistent over the years for both the OFW and the WFA. Certainly, there have been agenda items that were temporal, like responses to budget cuts and newly adopted policies. However, for the most part, even those issues were variations on overarching themes. Equity in salary, lack of representation of women among faculty and administrators, hostile climate issues, and inadequate benefits for all women are the recurring and unresolved broad issues for both organizations.

Table 4.1: Number of OFW Newsletters Discussing Salient Issues

	1982/83 (6 issues)	1987/88 (7 issues)	1991/92 (7 issues)	1999/2000 (3 issues)	TOTAL (23 issues)
Salary	6	2	4	2	14
Representation	2	5	6	3	16
Climate	0	5	3	1	9
Benefits	0	0	3	3	6

In all 23 issues of the OFW newsletters that were analyzed for this investigation, at least one of the four broad issues was mentioned in detail. Fourteen issues addressed concerns of the OFW membership about salary inequity between women and men, including evidence in at least two issues in each academic year under analysis. Topics related to concerns about gender equity in the numbers of faculty and administrators (*e.g.*, recruitment, promotion, resignation, administrative preparedness) appeared in 16 issues.

The OFW raised awareness about sexual harassment and subtle discrimination over the years as well. Concerns about working in a hostile campus climate and ways to address this were highlighted in nine issues. In addition, the OFW demonstrated efforts to improve benefits, including the recommendation of a temporary alternative duty policy for adoption or childbirth, the provision of care of sick children, the stoppage of the tenure clock for childbirth, and the conceptualization of a childcare center with an academic program to support it. While concentrated in the 1990s, discussion of benefits-related topics appeared in six issues of the newsletter. Overall, the frequency and the space dedicated to salary, representation, hostile climate conditions, and benefits in a sample of the OFW newsletters show that these issues, above all others, are truly central to the agenda of the organization, and have been throughout the history of the OFW.

The relevance of the four broad issues to the OFW was echoed by the President of the OFW board, Wanda Solidad.

“[The issues that have been most salient for the organization include] family issues, including family leave and childcare. [It] has been a continuing theme for a number of years, since the late 1980s up to the present moment. Faculty hiring and promotion, representation at the level of leadership has been a perennial issue. Salary has been an issue that has gone back and forth and back and forth. There has been waves of previous studies on these issues, which all have very similar conclusions. So we have been back and forth on that for many years. Another issue that has been a perennial issue, and it is kind of an informal issue, is authoritarian leadership oppressing individuals. This has been continually a problem. People have come to OFW to try to play a mediating or problem solving role in it. It is not normally been a role for these types of organizations.”
(Wanda Solidad, OFW)

Although other respondents discussed at least one of these issues, Wanda was able to best capture the on-going nature of the organization’s concerns about benefits, representation, salaries, and hostile climate issues in her interview.

Even when one takes a snapshot of the work of the OFW by observing the meetings of the organization in the spring of 2000, the same four issues shape the discussions and meeting agendas. In every meeting, whether just of the OFW board or with the Board of Trustees or Provost and/or President, members raised concerns about salary inequities, low numbers of women in tenured and administrative positions, discrimination, or inadequate benefits. In many cases, members discussed more than one of these issues. Even in a meeting of the board that was planned to exclusively review the OFW bylaws, 30 minutes of the two-hour meeting were spent arguing about the status of childcare on campus. Thus, even while other organizational matters were to take precedence, the members of the OFW still maintained their commitment to one of the historically central issues of the organization.

Similarly, issues related to salary, numbers of women in faculty and administrative posts, hostile climate for women, and benefits were recurring in the documents of the WFA. Although the documents are more varied than the newsletters of the OFW, each one, whether a call to meet, a resolution for the legislature, a memo to a campus administrator, or a letter to the editor, evidenced at least one of the four umbrella issues. In the 18 documents, with dates ranging from 1993 to 2001, salary inequities were mentioned twice. The lack of representation of women in faculty and administrative positions was discussed eight times. Hostile climate issues were highlighted six times. Benefit-related issues focusing on family leave, health care, and

childcare were raised nine times.¹¹ In one particular document, an e-mail invitation to a Vice-President to attend an upcoming WFA meeting, the importance of three of the issues was stressed. The WFA co-chair who drafted the message described the Association's primary issues.

“Currently, we have several issues of concern, which include health care benefits (inequities between women and men; inequities between the UP and peer institutions; these would include lack of coverage for birth control pills, exclusion of certain treatments for ovarian and breast cancer; lack of domestic partner benefits); equity reporting by the central administration to the legislature; climate for (including retention of) women faculty; lack of on-campus child care; lack of endowed chairs or professorships for women; scarcity of female senior administrators; retention of senior women faculty.” (WFA e-mail message, October 20, 2000)

Although there were multiple issues listed, all of them fit under the rubric of benefits, climate, and representation. Salary is not mentioned in this description, and based upon the comprehensive evaluation of the issues in the documents of the WFA, it should not be too surprising, as it was the least mentioned of the four broad issues.

Just as Wanda Solidad crystallized the central issues for the OFW, Irene North voiced a synthesis of the meaningful issues of the WFA over time.

“Most recently, the issues have been focused around benefits, particularly birth control and domestic partner benefits. I think that has reflected a long history of the WFA being concerned about the economic conditions of women here. In particular, faculty are lagging behind other campuses, not only in representation, but also in economics. Everybody's benefits here are lower than they are on other campuses in the region. Everyone's salaries are lower than they are in the region. There are also other issues of faculty pay inequities between disciplines. I think there has been this long march about faculty salaries, faculty benefits, that will probably continue to be a major focus of the Association. Domestic partner benefits, the Women's Faculty Association has been very vocal about that. I think the Faculty Senate has been very vocal about that. I think it will probably

¹¹ The totals are larger than 18 (the number of documents analyzed) because some documents focused on more than one issue.

continue to be an arena of focus until those benefits are extended. The other area that the WFA has worked on has been issues of violence against women, sexual assault, [and] sexual harassment. But those have been a second tier of issues in the last 5 years or so. The focus has been more on the economic status.” (Irene North, WFA)

Catherine Eller reinforced the same issues, save, once again, salary.

“There are certain on-going big issues—benefits, the climate, and gender/racial minority recruitment and retention.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

Irene and Catherine used a broad brush to paint a picture of the agenda that the other women affiliated with the WFA described as well. For example, Nicole Carsen expressed concern about salary equity and the obstacles the WFA faced to conduct a comprehensive salary study with only volunteers. Natalie Ingram described a clandestine data-gathering effort to better track the numbers of women in tenured positions. Nancy Nichols shared efforts the WFA made to address the poor handling of a gender harassment case on campus. Beth Nelson shared a recent effort, affectionately called the “pill bill” by the WFA, to prompt the Trustees to include insurance coverage for birth control, which was also reinforced in the analysis of the observation of the earlier discussed academic senate meeting at the UP. While each woman shares her own perspective of the issues in the WFA, collectively, the big picture painted by Irene and Catherine mark the significance of the four main issues that comprised the WFA’s agenda throughout its history.

The OFW and the WFA, while organizationally and strategically different, have agendas that are remarkably similar. The specific incident of subtle discrimination or health benefit may vary, but overall, these women faculty seek to improve the climate for women in the areas of salary, representation, climate, and benefits. Even with some

institutional changes, the overall issues are ongoing and very broad in scope. For example, at the UD, salary adjustments were made during the late 1980s to eliminate some gender-related inequities. However, compression, budget shortfalls, and other policy decisions have created other inequities so that salary remains an issue on the OFW's agenda. At the UP, a recent decision was made by the Board of Trustees to include contraception in health care coverage. While that success, with the impetus from the WFA, should not be underestimated, there are still other benefits issues that remain central to the Association, like domestic partner benefits. Thus, the changing socio-political, cultural, and economic landscape in which higher education is embedded influences the dynamic nuances of the consistently salient issues for these grassroots organizations over time.

As shown by the members of the OFW and the WFA, a discussion of success is difficult, for the definitions of success vary. However, whatever definition one chooses, the members of the OFW and the WFA do consider their organizations as successful.

"I have to say that I have had a lot bigger salary for several years because of the OFW. And then you build from that to the degree that there were any raises in the late 80s and early 90s, which is not much. But a lot of women got concrete things. They got money." (Lisa Bartholomew, OFW)

"The organization is successful when projects that it has advocated for have come to fruition. The childcare center, and the sick childcare program and some of the things that came out of that. The times that there have been reviews of gender inequity and salaries and something has been done about that." (Robin Neigh, OFW)

"Other measures of success are what has the group gotten done or what has the group got the campus to look at... While I have been involved, I have seen things happen. Everything from the wording of the policy from the graduate college to travel grants that have helped people, to the career development fund. All of those things have been very positive concrete measures." (Becky Yeager, OFW)

Most of the members of the OFW identified meaningful and measurable efforts as indicators of success. Given the propensity toward professionalized activism, this is not surprising. For assessment within the academic community is predominantly based upon quantifiable, tangible changes. Although, some members did see success as measured by less tangible outcomes.

“Another way is just bringing attention to issues that people care about. Maybe also being helpful. In the early days, they used to run these tenure workshops. Large crowds used to come. You knew you were being really effective because you were being helpful in that way.” (Claudia Macintosh, OFW)

“I would say, for the most part, [success] is a vaguer, feel-good, somewhat solidarity atmosphere that [the OFW] gives, rather than specific achievements.” (Kyra Unger, OFW)

“[To define success, you have to ask:] Has the organization successfully advocated for women? Is the climate better? Is whatever it is the OFW wanted better?” (Uma Himinez, OFW)

Being helpful, feeling good about what one does, and making the climate better are all difficult to measure, but are meaningful ways to demonstrate effectiveness.

Just as some of the members of the OFW expressed, for the WFA, success is both concrete and somewhat elusive. Although the members can identify tangible measures of success, it is the less quantifiable and productivity-based ways (*e.g.*, creating new policies) that are more meaningful for the organization to consider itself successful. In fact, only two members of the WFA tied success to productivity, whereas 12 women in the OFW did the same.

“I know enough not to define success by “we’ve passed these three legislative whatever’s.” I think the fact that we still exist is a sign of success. There are some of us who will persist and keep being watchdogs and keep paying attention and keep speaking out.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“One measure which is successful is just having a place where women can go and realize that they are not alone and that they are not the crazy ones. Other people experience the same things they do. It provides support. So I think it is really successful in that respect.” (Nancy Nichols, WFA)

“Whenever the newspaper puts us on the front page with an issue. That is pretty much a success, making people aware...Even without an actual change in one of the policies, if it is in the press and influencing public opinion, we are educating.” (Margaret Green, WFA)

As mentioned, concrete outcomes are important to the members of the WFA, and members shared some of the ways they have been influential in such efforts. Yet, the group rarely gets credit for its work. Further, in some circumstances, new obstacles are created by the university to divert any potential achievements to improve the climate for women. As such, it is not surprising that the WFA more readily points to qualitative measures of success.

“There are a number of smaller things—I think this is better and this is better and this is better. I think we had a part in that. I think that could define success, but I think it is more that we’re still there and still paying attention. I don’t think, even if domestic partner benefits and birth control coverage were passed tomorrow, we could disband as an association. There is going to be things to be attended to.” (Catherine Eller, WFA)

“Maybe we feel better that we have at least made our feelings known and said what we feel needs to be said...We certainly don’t get any credit for things that get changed. If it gets changed, it is because something more official raised it as an issue.” (Nicole Carsen, WFA)

“And then when [policies] do change, [the administration] doesn’t enforce them anyway. Look at the [one about increasing the percentage of women faculty to the midpoint of our peers], which was passed by the legislature for God’s sake. That we viewed as a huge success, but I don’t know that it has changed anything.” (Beth Newman, WFA)

It is not the positive recognition that drives the WFA. As indicated by many of the members, providing a voice for women faculty and raising issues central to their work

life are what motivates the group to continue. The group rarely gets credit, but seeking credit is not important to this feminist organization of professionals. Rather, to witness a qualitative difference in the climate and to have a commitment to social justice for women on campus is enough to sustain the movement. Whether the measure of success is tangible or intangible, both the WFA and the OFW have seen some degree of success, but neither organization sees their work as complete.

The issues that define the agenda of the OFW and the WFA are broad, which facilitates the categorization of more detailed issues that emerge over time. Yet, the overarching issues are not so diffuse that the organizations cease to meet the needs of certain women faculty. At both the UD and the UP, women faculty remain committed to actively improving the climate for women on their respective campuses. The members of neither organization had to grapple with disbanding, unlike the precursor to the OFW, which dissolved partially due to an unwieldy agenda. Moreover, the appropriately broad agendas of the OFW and the WFA have not been completed. Because the issues are not fully resolved, and may not be for a very long time due to the breadth of their issues and the dynamic nature of the academy, the organizations have positioned themselves to have an on-going agenda. Unlike other feminist organizations that have disappeared because they met their goals, the OFW and the WFA still find elements of the patriarchy throughout the academy that need to be addressed. Whatever the reason or combination of reasons that have supported the consistent maintenance of the agendas of the OFW and the WFA, they have allowed these collectives to endure and to continue to organize and strategize.

Conclusion

The analyses of documents, observations of meetings, and voices of the women affiliated with the OFW tell a story of a professional organization of feminists. Being seen as professional first and feminist second shapes the strategies the OFW uses. By creating and sustaining prestige networks, the members of the OFW forge relationships with those traditionally seen as powerful in the academic system. The members see this strategy as giving the organization legitimacy, which, in turn, helps them advance their agenda. Complementing its position as a professional organization of feminists are the other strategies the members use. Professionalized activism captures the development of prestige networks and also includes a variety of other tactics that replicate the professional work at the UD.

The evidence from the WFA constructs a feminist organization of professionals. The professional position of the women involved, including the use of some professionalized activist strategies, are a part of this organization as well. However, the members of the WFA place feminism, which, by their definition, includes activism, at the forefront. This means that the WFA engages in different strategies than its UD counterpart. Leveraging the public and other activist tactics of professionals are predominant in advancing the agenda of the WFA.

The historical, social, cultural, and political context shape two different grassroots women's faculty organizations. Yet, despite the differences in structure and strategy, the core issues remain surprisingly the same for the OFW and the WFA. Thus, the findings explored in this chapter show two unique ways to advance one agenda. It should be

noted that both organizations are human, and thus, flawed, but do represent examples of how successful feminist professional women have sought to chip away at the patriarchy embedded in their institutions.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

Through exploring the collective action of women in two different grassroots feminist organizations, I have shared the experiences of successful academic women who want to make it easier for other academic women to succeed. The stories that emerge from their own voices, organizational documents, and activities define two different ways to approach institutional change. In order to find deeper meaning in this study's findings, it is important to return to the research questions that guided this research. Although the research questions and the working hypotheses were addressed in chapter four, a more synthesized analysis will help create a better understanding of the nature of feminist activism among academic women. Before doing so, it is important to state that the findings within this study are limited only to the women I interviewed in the Organization for Faculty Women (OFW) at the University of the Desert (UD) and the Women's Faculty Association (WFA) at the University of the Plains (UP). However, organization, networks, strategies, and issues of these grassroots collectives can serve as mechanisms to better understand similar networks and to provide direction and inspiration for the creation of new networks on other campuses.

Research Question

At the beginning of this study, the question I sought to answer was: *How do women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations construct their lives and their activist strategies and relate to the concerns of broader groups of women internal and external to academe?* To best demonstrate how my findings address this question, I have divided the question into three parts.

First, how do women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organization construct their lives? To most completely answer this portion of my research question, I have taken a feminist approach that merges the personal and professional, recognizing that these organizations (the OFW and the WFA) are part of the lives of the academic women who I studied. As such, the nature of the organizations is a fundamental part of the way in which their lives are constructed.

For the women at the University of the Desert, the organization of which they are a part is a professional organization of feminists. They see the OFW as a grassroots collective that, first and foremost, addresses issues central to faculty women in a professional way. These academic women seek to work with the administration to resolve problems. In fact, the OFW, and the women who are involved in it, act in many ways as an extension of the university administration. The leadership very much mirrors the hierarchy of the administration, with a President who constructs the agenda. Further, while there is a board and a general membership body, the membership has little involvement in the day-to-day work of the OFW.

The place of feminism in the organization has shifted over time. The foremothers of the OFW purposely selected organizational leaders who were feminist. Now, the place of feminism is secondary. Some women involved in the OFW do identify as feminist, but the organization has evolved to include women who are uncertain about labeling themselves feminist. Through the OFW, the academics involved appear to want to have their legacy be tied to professional efforts, not to feminism.

At the University of the Plains, the women in the WFA have constructed an organization that places feminism first. The WFA is a feminist organization of professionals. By creating an organization distinct from the UP's Commission on the Status of Women, which is a part of the administrative structure of the university, the women in the WFA purposely designed an organization that was separate from the administration. They see the WFA as a mechanism to keep the administration in check when it comes to addressing gender issues on campus. The organization is loosely structured, lacking a board, but does have co-chairs to call meetings. Every woman involved, either as a core member or more peripherally, feels she can contribute to the agenda and participates in activities to advance the WFA's agenda. Power is shared within the organization, complementing the feminist nature of the WFA. Further, individual members self-identify as feminist and see that theoretical relationship as important to the work of the WFA.

Thus, the evidence from this research shows that women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations construct their lives in multiple ways. Both organizations make meaning of the professional and feminist identity of academic women, but the degree to which one takes precedence over the other differs. Neither construction is better than the other. Rather, the research shows that the lives of academic women are complex and that there are multiple ways to make meaning of and to organize the personal and professional.

Second, how do women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations construct their activist strategies?¹² For this portion of the research question, I will not fully explore the informal and personal networks of which these women are a part. Rather, I will describe the creation of intentional non-gendered networks that are critical to advancing the agendas of the OFW and the WFA. I will also expand upon other strategies that the women in each organization used.

As a fundamental strategy, the women in the OFW create prestige networks. This concept is defined as creating ties with those who have positional power and decision making authority within an institution. The academic women at the UD strive to create relationships with the President, Provost, and to a lesser extent, the Board of Trustees. They do not actively seek out relationships with other community leaders who are not clearly linked to the university hierarchy, even when their agendas are not realized. Instead, they would rather wait out an administrator or construct other ways to make inroads with the institutional powerbrokers. They believe that they must create trusting working relationships with those at the top of the institutional hierarchy if change is to occur. The relationships must be seen as congenial and helpful, not confrontational, in order to maintain the networks and, ultimately, advance the agenda of the OFW. Making suggestions, not making waves, is necessary to preserve the prestige networks.

The activist women in the WFA seek out different sorts of non-gendered relationships in their work. However, the nature of the non-gendered networks for the women in both the OFW and the WFA rests in the way that the university administration

¹² While networking is one of the strategies that the women studied used, the third part of my research

and hierarchy reacts to each organization. The women in the WFA provide an example of what individuals in an organization can do when prestige networks are not fully accessible. Rather than relying on prestige networking, the women in the WFA leverage the public. They utilize community and political relationships in order to press the issues that are most salient to them. Since the women in the WFA believe that the UP administration sees them as troublemakers, they have forged networks with the local media and state legislature. These connections have provided forums for the women to make the public and the university aware of the issues that are significant to academic women. Further, while the women in the WFA have a campus platform for their agenda, leveraging these public groups creates another mechanism to put pressure on the university. Pressure then comes from the grassroots level and from the public constituency.

The women in the OFW engage primarily in what I have called professionalized activism. Professionalized activism uses traditionally accepted professional activities to advance an activist agenda. The academic tenets of teaching, research, and service are perpetuated through the work of the OFW. As a result, the organization, while intended to be grassroots and feminist, also fits neatly into the institutional structure. The teaching aspects are demonstrated through information sharing in newsletters; consciousness raising; and hosting professional development panels and seminars, designed to assist academic women in navigating the professional bureaucracy. The research-focused activism is evidenced through data collecting, creating empirical reports about the status

of university women, and contracting with scholarly experts and consultants to conduct climate studies and make recommendations. The organization itself, while participating in it doesn't "count" toward promotion and tenure, is serving the university. Moreover, the women in the organization consider one of their most important activities to be meeting with university administrators. The subcommittee structure also supports the service component of the OFW's professionalized activist strategies.

The professionalized strategies of teaching, research, and service are also an important part of the activism in which the women in the WFA engage. Because these professionalized strategies are integrated into their work, I have dubbed these women activist professionals. Their strategies differ enough from those of the OFW that professionalized activism is an incomplete categorization. This is to say that the women academics in the WFA engage in professionalized activism, but their strategies go beyond that to include others. Moreover, the concepts used to identify each organization's primary strategies are intended to be linguistically similar, as the women in both organizations validate their work as professionals while still being activists. However, the women in the WFA are more akin to feminist activists of the Second Wave because of their self-identified feminist beliefs and their strategies that include creating resolutions, petitions, and press releases; and attending and speaking out at campus and state legislative meetings. Although the distinction is subtle, I see these women as prioritizing their activism slightly before their profession; whereas, the women in the OFW prioritize their profession slightly before their activism.

Third, how do women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organization relate to the concerns of broader groups of women internal and external to academe? To respond to this part of my research question, it is important to look at the gendered networks that are formally and informally created by the organizations and by the individual women who make up each organization. In addition, the issues that are most salient for each organization shed light on the extent to which the concerns of the women in the OFW and the WFA are meaningful to a narrow or a more broad constituency of women internal and/or external to academe.

The UD and the UP each have a commission on the status of women (CSW). While it would seem to make sense that there would be a formal alliance with the CSW on each campus, the nature of the relationships to the CSWs is in some cases tenuous, and limited at best. The CSW at the University of the Desert started as an idea that emerged from the OFW and was adopted and mandated by the Board of Trustees. From its beginning, there was some overlapping membership with the OFW and the CSW. However, over time, the organizations became more disparate. Recently, there has been an effort to build alliances between the organizations, although that relationship is more symbolic than real, as is the case with all the organizations (*e.g.*, Women in Science, Women in Academic Medicine) with which the OFW has liaisons. While there is a woman on the board of the OFW who is also the liaison to the CSW, rarely was she able to make the CSW meetings nor was there time set aside in the OFW board meetings to report on CSW activities. Further complicating the alliance is the fact that most of the women on the board of the OFW do not know what CSW is or its purpose.

It was the alliance with the CSW at the UP that allowed me to find my second case. The CSW at the UP has recently included the co-chairs of the WFA as ex officio members. However, the women in the WFA see their work as distinctly different from the work of the CSW. The CSW has a broader constituency—students, administrators, and faculty—and are constrained by the administration to whom the members of the CSW must answer. In fact, the WFA formed, in part, because of the very limits that bound the CSW. While the WFA doesn't intentionally work against the CSW, at times, the WFA has made public statements clarifying or expanding upon the data and recommendations of that organization.

The networking relationships with Women's Studies and the OFW and WFA differ from those with the CSWs. In neither case is there any formal connection between the grassroots activist organizations and Women's Studies. However, there are influences and informal relationships between these groups of academic women. In the early years of the OFW, many of the Women's Studies faculty affiliates were active members and board members of the OFW. While some affiliates are still involved in the OFW, most of the board members have no ties to Women's Studies. In addition, while Women's Studies is a department at the UD, none of the board members at the time of this research were departmental faculty in Women's Studies. Despite that, the Director of Women's Studies sees an important tie between the two groups on campus. She believes that the activism of the women in the OFW fights misogyny on campus, which is part, she believes, of the mission of Women's Studies as well. Because of the OFW, she

is able to focus on the day-to-day curricular and academic issues of Women's Studies, knowing that the OFW is working toward larger gender-related goals.

Many of the core women involved in the WFA are affiliated with the Women's Studies program at the UP. In fact, the Director of the Women's Studies program is counted among the most active in the WFA. In WFA meetings, the Director and affiliates occasionally raise issues that have emerged in Women's Studies and the WFA works simultaneously to address concerns. There seems to be more awareness between the WFA and Women's Studies about each group than at the UD. However, given the aforementioned sentiments of the Director of Women's Studies at the UD, both institutions benefit from the informal relationship between the grassroots activist organization and Women's Studies. While the benefits seem more concrete and practical at UP, the philosophical and theoretical gains perceived by Women's Studies at the UP are just as significant—although it is unclear whether the women in the OFW see those shared goals in the same way that the women in the WFA do.

Prior to gathering and analyzing my data, I expected to find that the women involved in the OFW and the WFA were also actively involved in gender-related personal and informal networks, including some unrelated to their professional work. Surprisingly, few women in the OFW were involved in networks outside the UD. Those that were, for the most part, were engaged in networks that were professional, like writing groups. The faculty at the UD have national and international ties, and the women faculty in the OFW did have gendered ties to professional organizations, but very few had ties to the local community. Missing was active involvement in women's

shelters, Planned Parenthood, city-wide commissions on women, feminist presses or bookstores, and lesbian outreach efforts. Past OFW members commented that they no longer had time to be involved, including involvement in OFW itself, except to give money. The multiple demands on faculty's lives, coupled with the changing nature of academic work (*e.g.*, academic capitalism, more professionalized faculty, seeking national and international reputations) may help to explain the lack of personal and informal gendered networks at the UD. However, women in the WFA described a different lived experience with regard to such networks. These women were involved in the shelters and other community-based resources for women. While they did not say that these networks led to joint activism between the WFA and these community agencies, these women were involved and created lasting networks with women outside the UP. They, like their counterparts at the UD, did not talk about non-academic reading groups or other informal women's activities, but they were engaged in community activism outside the ivory tower. Perhaps the feminist identity of the women in the WFA explains this subtle difference, for although the UP is not as prestigious as the UD, both are Research I institutions, and are most likely influenced by the changing academy.

While it is hard to know what is at the heart of the difference in the role of personal and informal networks for women in the OFW and WFA, this research shows that academic women do construct their networks in more than one way. Moreover, the networks they create serve different purposes for the women in each organization. Creating prestige networks and leveraging the public serve to advance each organization's agenda. Establishing personal and informal gendered networks for the

women in the OFW serve primarily to assist them in becoming better researchers, better teachers, and more nationally and internationally involved in their discipline—all professionally-focused purposes. In the case of networks with CSW or other campus-based women's groups, the networks are symbolic and serve to send a message to institutional administrators that the OFW is dedicated to collaboration. For the women in the WFA, personal and informal gendered networks provide opportunities for professional growth, but they also establish connections separate from academic work and support women external to academe. The informal networks with Women's Studies and other groups on campus like the Gay and Lesbian Alliance, allow for creating shared agendas and bolstering activist strategies by joining together to address related issues. However, despite these relationships, whether active or symbolic, the women in neither organization are working to create real coalitions with women on campus who are the most disenfranchised. Among the least powerful women on campus are graduate students, non-tenure-track faculty, and faculty of color. These groups are occasionally mentioned by the OFW (the OFW even has a graduate student representative and a chair for a subcommittee on minority women's concerns) and the WFA, but the issues that are central to both organizations do not specifically address these populations of women. Further, there is no evidence of active outreach to networks that include these less powerful women. Rather, the issues and networks seek to improve the situation for those women who do have some power, those on the tenure-track. This is not to suggest that the issues of inequity and discrimination are not legitimate for academic women on the tenure-track. Instead, for groups that have a goal to improve the climate for all academic

women, the issues and constituencies of the OFW and the WFA may need to be purposefully and actively expanded.

Creating agendas and defining the salient issues for each organization is another way in which the academic women I studied relate to broader concerns of women. Like their gendered networks, their issues are primarily limited to the situations at each individual institution. While policy decisions and changes that may emerge from activism related to these issues may affect other universities in the state, for the most part, the women in the OFW and the WFA are concerned about themselves and as suggested before, the tenure-track faculty women in their particular university.

For both the women in both organizations, the broad issues about which they are concerned are similar. The issues fall into four categories: salary, representation of women in senior faculty and leadership positions, climate for women, and benefits. The categories are broad enough that there are many facets to each, allowing for new issues within each category to surface. For example, women in the OFW worked to allow for the stoppage of the tenure clock for childbirth or adoption. Although this benefit-related issue has been addressed, now the women in the OFW are concerned about the lack of adequate provision for childcare. Similarly, the women in the WFA fought to secure insurance coverage for contraceptive devices, but are still working to ensure domestic partner benefits.

While the categories of issues are broad for both organizations, they are also bounded by liberal feminism and resource mobilization. With salary, representation, climate, and benefits, the women in the OFW and the WFA are focusing on taking care of

the faculty who are already in the system by improving access to the traditional merits of the system. For example, women in neither organization push for salary changes based upon comparable worth. They are more interested in identifying the sex gap in pay between faculty in English than the salary gap between a faculty member in English and in engineering. These academic women are not trying to transform the system into something radically different or looking to transform the community beyond academe.

The issues of the women in the OFW and the WFA are important issues, not only for the organizations, but for higher education in general. The review of the literature reinforces the four broad categories of issues of the women at the UD and UP as those that contribute to inequities and discrimination for women in academe. However, there are other issues and other women who are excluded from the important work of the activist women in this study. The issues salient to the large groups of women graduate students and non-tenure-track faculty and faculty of color are not only marginalized in academe, but are marginal in the very groups that can work to improve the situation for these women. While in the OFW, minority women's concerns and graduate and professional students' concerns are among the subcommittees, the reality is that both subcommittees lack membership and are basically nonfunctioning. Moreover, the women in the OFW, including the subcommittee chairs, are not doing any outreach to construct other ways to get faculty of color and graduate students involved. Further, because of the ways in which the issues are constructed, successful change relies on a meritocratic model—creating salary equity within a discipline, increasing the number of women full professors and deans, establishing policies and meaningful consequences for

gender harassment, providing a childcare facility on campus—not on creating a new definition for success.

Implications

This research leads to several implications, not only for organizations like the OFW and the WFA, but for the institutions that have such organizations. First, campus-based grassroots feminist faculty organizations are faced with multiple influences that ultimately shape the way academic feminism is defined for these groups. The ways that women involved in such organizations define and embrace feminism, coupled with how they see themselves influenced by their profession, shape the sorts of strategies and agendas that they use.

Second, for activists like those in this study, access to administrative leadership can dictate the sorts of networks that the organization seeks. For an administration that is trusted and welcoming, creating prestige networks is significant. However, for an administration that is adversarial, leveraging the public is helpful in advancing the organization's agenda. Yet, given the strategies used by the OFW and the WFA, the organizations appear to have an incomplete understanding of some of the ways an institution works. For example, prestige networking excludes middle managers, especially department heads and deans, who could be influential in creating change, and leveraging the public excludes them as well. For organizations like those studied, that are grassroots in nature, there seems to be a dualism and disconnect in working for change. The grassroots activists are at one end of the hierarchy and the upper-level administrators are at the other end. Those in the middle are ignored as possible allies in working toward

improving the climate for academic women. With increasing numbers of middle managers (many of whom are women), this omission has significant implications.

Third, organizations like the OFW and the WFA include mostly tenure-track women. Those women who have tenure are more able to take risks and to “rock the institutional boat.” They are in a much better position to address the issues of those who are students (particularly those aspiring to be faculty, so as not to dilute the faculty focus of the organization); faculty of color; faculty with disabilities; gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered faculty; and/or not on the tenure-track. Further, given the large numbers of women in these more marginal groups, campus-based grassroots feminist faculty organizations can exponentially increase their power base by welcoming these women and simultaneously create a critical mass and safe space for all women.

Fourth, institutions benefit from these sorts of organizations. This is not to suggest that administrative leaders should seek out members and establish an organization, for the grassroots nature would be eliminated. The effectiveness of such organizations would be undermined, as is often the case with campus commissions on the status of women. Upper-level administrators may view these organizations as annoyances or problems. However, the successful women in these organizations have institutional loyalty. They are committed to improving the climate on their own campus, not only for themselves but for the successful women who follow them. In a time when faculty have become increasingly more nationally and internationally focused, this is particularly meaningful.

Moreover, the changes which have occurred due to the activism from campus-based grassroots feminist faculty organizations, whether through a formal policy change or through an increased sense of support for one woman, are tremendous benefits for any institution. A change that leads to greater access and equity should be embraced by any institution, and that change is often sparked by the activist agenda and strategies of organizations like the OFW and the WFA.

Recommendations for Future Research

The data and findings from this study provide an analysis of how women faculty in campus-based grassroots feminist organizations construct their lives and their activist strategies and relate to the concerns of broader groups of women internal and external to academe. Moreover, they reinforce the understanding of multiple strands of feminism that weave together to create a complex view of academic feminism. The academic women in this study seek to create a delicate balance between the influences of feminism, activism, and professionalism. They demonstrate that such a task is not easy and, in a changing academic profession, is on-going.

The findings and contributions to the literature about feminist faculty that have emerged from my study are important, but not exhaustive. In fact, based upon my research, I hope additional studies will explore activism among feminist academics, including a mixed methods study that includes a quantitative network analysis of all of the networks (personal and informal, gendered, prestige, and public) academic women create.

My study demonstrated the shared influences of professionalization and feminism on the activism of women academics. A similar study that explores the how academic women create their strategies and agendas in feminist organizations within a professional disciplinary association would demonstrate how, or if, professionalization and feminism contribute to the activism in a national or international setting.

Since there are implications for activist strategies based upon the access feminist faculty organizations have to upper-level administrators, it would be interesting to pursue a study that explores the perceptions of the organizations by those with whom prestige networks were formed (or not formed, as is the case at the UP), like the President, Provost, Board of Trustees. In addition, for organizations like the WFA, it would be interesting to explore the relationship of the organization and its leveraged public, from the perspective of the press and state legislators.

My research touches on success and effectiveness, particularly how each organization defines success. However, additional research should be conducted to determine how successful these types of organizations are.

Success and effectiveness are shaped, in part, by the strategies used by activist collectives. My study shares the strategies used by women academics at Research I institutions. Further research should be pursued to examine whether the issues and strategies differ for organizations in different types of institutions, including those that employ more women (*e.g.*, community colleges, liberal arts colleges). In addition, studies should be undertaken that consider how organizational lifecycles shape the nature of feminist faculty organizations.

The present study looked at grassroots activism in non-union environments. Research involving observations of grassroots activism in union environments would provide a richer sense of the types of strategies, networks, and resources that are utilized among feminist academics.

Finally, future research should address the following questions. Does activism differ for academic men? If so, how? What do activist agendas and strategies look like for faculty of color and other underrepresented groups?

Given the recommendations for future research, it is clear that the present study served its initial purpose as an exploration. Many questions about the nature of activism among feminist academics remain unanswered. However, this study has presented the rich experiences of academic women in two different grassroots feminist faculty organizations that have shed light on how they construct their agendas and strategies and relate to women internal and external to academe. This study can also serve as a springboard for future research that can provide more insights into activism among feminist academics.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, women in the Organization for Faculty Women at the University of the Desert and in the Women's Faculty Organization at the University of the Plains have integrated feminism and professionalism to construct activist strategies. The experiences of these women tell stories of success as individuals and as collectives. While their strategies may have limitations and there are other ways to pursue change, including structural, systemic change, these women and these organizations are

successful and make a difference for other women and for the institutions of which they are a part. Perhaps these women haven't started a revolution, but that doesn't diminish their success nor does it mean that change has not occurred. Rather, the women in the OFW and the WFA show that grassroots activism is alive in the academy. Moreover, they challenge us to expand our preconceived notions of academic feminism and activism to include a broader range of strategies that have resulted in institutional change.

APPENDIX A: PROTOCOLS

Interview Questions

Professional life and life with OFW/WFA

- Tell me about your academic career.
- How did you get involved with OFW/WFA? Is there a typical pattern in which people become involved?
- How long have you been involved?
- Describe your role in OFW/WFA.
- How would you describe OFW/WFA now and in the past?

PROBE: Has the organization become more focused internally or externally? Has the organization become more/less radical? Are the same people involved?

- How do others find out about OFW/WFA?
- How does one become a leader in OFW/WFA?
- How often do you meet or communicate with other OFW/WFA members?

PROBE: By what means do you communicate?

PROBE: Are communications between individual members or among the entire membership?

Personal Networks

- How do you construct your personal networks?
- How do you construct your professional networks?
- How do you balance them?
- Are you involved in other activist organizations?
- Are you involved in other women's organizations/groups (either formal or informal)?
- How has your involvement in women's or activist organizations changed over your career?

PROBE: If you have been at other institutions, how does this institution compare in terms of activist/women's organizations and involvement?

Organizational Networks

- Tell me about connections between OFW/WFA and other activist organizations?
- How does CSW differ from OFW/WFA?

PROBE: Do you work with CSW? If so, how?

PROBE: Do the same individuals become involved in CSW as in OFW? Why or why not?

- Is there a connection between Women's Studies and OFW/WFA? Should there be?
- What about between the organization and any other disciplines or academic units?

PROBE: To what extent does OFW/WFA improve the climate for Women's Studies? How?

- Does OFW/WFA have a formal role in faculty governance?
- Are there subcommittees? If so, what are they? What are their purposes?
- Have other organizations and/or projects spun off or developed from OFW/WFA?

Feminism

- How would you define yourself in terms of your role as a scholar?
- How would you define yourself in terms of your politics?
- How do you define feminism?
- Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?

Goals

- How does your activism fit within your professional goals?
- How do you establish legitimacy for yourself? For your work?
- What is the purpose of OFW/WFA?
- How is the agenda for the organization determined?
- Who determines it?
- How do you know if the organization is successful?

Strategies

- In what particular strategies do you engage to advance your activist agenda?
- What strategies does the organization use to advance its goals?

Thank you and is there anyone else with whom you would suggest I talk?

OFW Specific Questions

- How long as the organization met with the Board of Regents?
- Why is the luncheon organized in the way that it is—regents disbursed throughout the room/general membership present and involved?
- When was this structure initiated?
- How does the structure of the Regents meeting meet OFW's goals?

Document Protocol

Type _____ **Date of Document** _____

Headings or significant issues (how much space/issue?):

Who is the intended audience?

Internal people/organizations mentioned:

External people/organizations mentioned:

Evidence of focus on women as individuals:

Evidence of focus on women as collective:

What evidence exists for raising consciousness?

What evidence exists for calling others to action?

What strategies for change are mentioned? Is change directed at institution or society?

Language of separatism:

Language of prestige networks:

Language of professionalized activism:

Other notes:

Observation Protocol**Meeting Type** _____**Date** _____

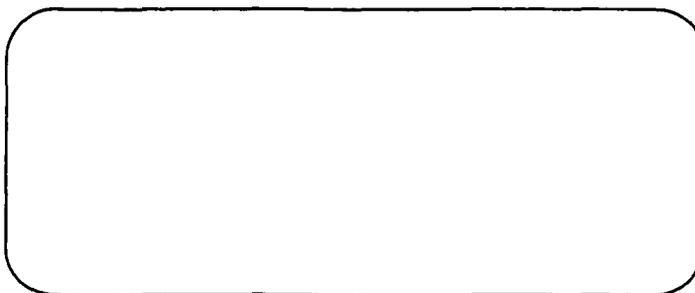
✓ indicates speaking

(i) indicates initiating conversation

(x) indicates time speaking

(r) indicates responding to query

(ji) indicates initiating conversation because of role

**How dressed?****Agenda items (length of topic):****Description of choreography for upcoming meetings:**

Does it happen as choreographed?

Examples of direct or circuitous language: (remember to define "direct" and "circuitous")

Pay attention to grammar and/or tone.

Who dominates? (remember to operationalize “dominates”)

Description of relationship among OFW/WFA members (i.e., is it hierarchical, based on roles, disciplines, expertise, etc.):

Description of relationship among OFW/WFA and administrators/Trustees:

How do people address one another?

Interruptions? By whom?

Evidence of language of prestige networks:

Evidence of language of professionalized activism:

Where is the meeting?

Other notes:

Observation Protocol Trustee Supplement

Meeting Type _____

Date _____

Which Trustees are present?

How were the Trustees invited?

With whom do the Trustees sit?

Formal comments from the Trustees:

Who from OFW membership attends?
Get RSVP list.

How are the Trustees addressed?

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