BEST initiative launched

By Mindy Pajak

In an ongoing effort to introduce more women into technology and the sciences at George Mason University, an initiative for women in business, engineering, science, and technology (BEST) studies is under way.

The initiative is a project of the university's Women's Advisory Board, established in 1995 to help GMU develop programs to improve women's educational and employment opportunities. Lucy Church of Fairfax, an alumna of the university and a trustee of the GMU Foundation, chairs the board.

The project will be financed through a $1 million endowment named for the late Dorothy and Hugh McDermid of Vienna, longtime supporters of educational opportunities for women.

Sally Merten, co-chair of the endowment fund-raising effort, said that Electronic Data Systems (EDS) recently pledged a challenge grant of $100,000 to kick off the campaign. Under the terms of the challenge, EDS will donate $20,000 a

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A note from the director
By Anita Taylor

It's nearly the end of fall semester and what a busy one it's been, as you will see by reviewing the stories in this issue of Matrix. In addition, I have an item of really good news to announce:

Women's Studies and the Women's Research and Resource Center now has a full-time program support technician, Cheryl Secrist-Alvarez. We are delighted to have received funding for the position and even more delighted that Cheryl has accepted the appointment. As many of you know, Cheryl had previously served as administrative assistant for the Women's Center, and we are happy to have her back on campus in this new capacity.

Other changes are happening at the Women's Center, as well. Associate Director Rose Pascarell is now working part time on assignment to the Office of University Life, so we will have two folks sharing the associate director role this year. In addition to Rose, who remains

Cheryl Secrist-Alvarez

Indispensable, Kristin Samuelian has received a part-time release from the English Department to help plan and organize the spring programming, which includes Women's History Month and the Women's Leadership Conference.

Spring planning is only partly complete, so you'll get more on that in the next issue. But I do want to ask that we all mark our calendars for 7:30 p.m. March 26. We are presenting Laura Mann, who teaches opera in GMU's Music Department, in the university's first-ever recital of music by women classical composers. Laura is not only a GMU faculty member, she also has performed widely in the United States and abroad. We are co-sponsoring this event with the Music Department and hope to have a big audience in Harris Theatre. Please plan to be with us.

Applications due for Herman award

Application forms for the Cynthia Wynn Herman scholarship are now available, according to Rosemary Jann, co-chair of the GMU Department of English.

The award is for a returning woman student, at least 25 years old, who is pursuing a bachelor of arts or a master of arts in English and who has an interest in women's studies. The 1998 award is expected to be about $900.

Ms. Herman was a returning student who earned her master of arts in literature from GMU in 1990. Her emphasis was in women's studies and feminist theory. After finishing her degree, she

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Women’s Web images explored
By Diane L. Borden

Gail Scott White is interested in connections. As an associate professor in the Visual Information Technologies program, she says she wants to bridge the gap between atoms and bits, between physical space and cyberspace.

But she also sees startling similarities between the ways women have been visually represented in the past and how they are currently being represented on the World Wide Web.

“Women are constructed as avatars on the Web,” she says. “They are stand-ins for male-idealized physical bodies. It’s kind of like Barbie goes 3-D.”

White says today’s popular culture, which views supermodels and unattainable bodies as the feminine ideal, has parallels in the 19th century. Today’s female cyborgs look a lot like images of Victorian women with what she calls “18-inch WASP waists.”

“There is a virtual [virtual reality] idol in Japan,” she says, “named DK96, or Kyoto Date, who has become so popular that she ‘lives’ in Japanese society. Guys prefer her to real girls. Why? Because they can control her on their computer screens.”

White, who came to GMU this fall from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., often translates her research into her own artistic work. She has exhibited widely, including at the Alternative Museum and A.I.R. in New York. She now works in and teaches 3-D modeling, video production, and advanced 2-D imaging. She received her M.F.A. from the Boston Museum School and Tufts University in 1983.

She currently is collaborating with GMU choreographer Susan Shields on projected visual imaging for dancers.

Efforts in sciences ‘encouraging’
By Mindy Pajak

Science departments within the College of Arts and Sciences are supportive of efforts to attract and retain women in technology and the sciences, according to Anita Taylor, director of Women’s Studies.

Over the last several months, Dr. Taylor has discussed their programs with science chairs in the college and has found some encouraging indicators.

“Both the CAS and SITE (School of Information Technology and Engineering) deans express strong support for efforts to increase enrollment of women in their science and technology programs,” Dr. Taylor said. “Perhaps more important is that the science department chairs, who will actually be involved in implementing programs, are also enthusiastic.”

Here is a sampling of some of the efforts:

In the Biology Department last year, 59 percent of the undergraduate students and 51 percent of the graduate students were women. Student groups within the department have developed various support programs, such as tutoring services and a combined student/community effort to fund two scholarships for eligible students.

The Geography and Earth Science Department’s geology club members participate in the Women’s Advisory Board and have initiated a mentoring relationship with a local business. In addition, there is a department-wide

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BEST initiative under way

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year over a five-year period for each $100,000 donated or pledged toward the $1 million goal.

“We’re very positive about the EDS grant and about the campaign,” Merten said. “There is a huge need for people to enter these fields, and we believe women are an untapped resource. We want to encourage women to study business, engineering, science and technology, and to stay in school to complete their degrees.”

The goal of the endowment is to support GMU’s efforts to attract and retain women in the sciences and technology. At least one-half of the funding will be used for scholarships. The remaining portion will be used to match funding required for recruitment, mentoring, and updating the curricula to enhance women’s success in nontraditional fields.

Another objective of the fund is to educate faculty in improving the climate in the classroom and at the university level to accommodate increasing numbers of women in the sciences.

Dorothy McDiarmid, a member of the Virginia General Assembly for 26 years, died in 1994. She had sponsored the legislation that founded George Mason College and eventually established GMU as an independent institution.

Honorary chair for the fund-raising campaign is Vivian E. Watts, a delegate to the Virginia General Assembly and former state secretary of transportation and public safety.

College efforts encouraging

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student-faculty meeting, which provides the opportunity for students to get to know faculty outside the classroom. The relaxed environment helps encourage students to explore the myriad professional possibilities open to them based on the knowledge and experience of their instructors. The number of women in the Geology Department has decreased over the past several years.

In Mathematical Sciences, 55 percent of the undergraduate students and 65 percent of the graduate students are women. Women hold numerous leadership positions throughout the student body in the department. The faculty have the reputation of being “friendly, accommodating, and never discriminatory,” according to exit interviews with graduates. Math faculty participate in outreach programs to local high schools and have been involved in developing math curricula and conducting a summer enrichment program for junior high and middle school students. The department participated in the annual AAUW spring science/math day held on campus.

The Physics Department boasts a higher-than-national average percentage of women faculty, but the number of women students enrolled in the department is fewer than in previous years. Efforts to recruit women students into the department include faculty participation in organizing a national conference of black physics students in 1996 and 1997, and participation in the annual AAUW spring science/math day.

The School of Information Technology and Engineering has an active student body with a notable number of women leaders in related student organizations. Although there are no active recruiting efforts, women students are successful in their coursework. Consequently, the rate of retention for women students is high.

The Graduate School of Education has a two-pronged approach to involving women in non-traditional careers. One program is the Center for Restructuring Education in Science and Technology (CREST). It is supported by federal, state, and university funding with the objective of instigating changes in K-12 science education. The second program, Horizons 2000, attempts to instill self-confidence in middle school-aged girls in their studies.
Fall activities calendar strong

The spring calendar for the Women's Studies Program is just beginning to shape up, said Kristin Flieger Samuelian, co-associate director.

She announced that the annual GMU Women's Leadership Conference is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 28, and the Women's History Month keynote lecture will be given by Margo Badran of the University of Chicago on Tuesday, March 3. She will be speaking on feminist movements in the Middle East.

The events are only two of many that are being planned, following a full lineup of activities in the fall. The death penalty, women in science, and hate crimes were among the topics addressed by speakers sponsored or co-sponsored by the Women's Studies Program during fall semester 1997.

Sister Helen Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking, which was later made into a full-length feature film, spoke about the death penalty to a large audience on campus on Oct. 30.

Earlier, on Oct. 20, the Women's Studies program co-sponsored a lecture by Sharon Bertsch McGrayne, a free-lance writer and author of Nobel Prize Women in Science: Their Lives, Struggles and Momentous Discoveries. The event helped introduce the Dorothy and Hugh McDiarmid endowment to aid women students and faculty in the fields of business, engineering, science, and technology (see BEST story on page 1).

On Oct. 8, Claudia Brenner, author of

Claudia Brenner speaks at GMU.

Eight Bullets: One Woman's Story of Surviving Anti-Gay Violence, delivered an emotionally riveting account of the 1988 shooting attack that left her wounded and her lover dead. Ms. Brenner spoke about the murder, which happened on the Appalachian Trail in Pennsylvania, and about her own recovery, both physical and emotional, from the attack.

The Women's Studies Program also sponsored Take Back the Night activities on Oct. 7: a brown-bag lunch on breast-cancer awareness on Oct. 29; Kate Bornstein's one-woman show, "Cut and Paste," on Nov. 3; and another brown-bag lunch on Nov. 5, co-sponsored with the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and featuring Esther Kluwer, a former GMU student, who spoke on conflict over child-rearing.

Scholarship applications due Feb. 2

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taught in the English Department as an adjunct faculty member and served for several years as the assistant to the director of the Writing Center. She died of a heart attack in the summer of 1995, and the scholarship was established by her family and friends the following year.

To be eligible, a student must demonstrate both academic excellence and need, must have completed at least one semester of course work at GMU, and must currently be enrolled in courses.

Application forms for the scholarship are available in the English Department in Room A487 of Robinson Hall and are due by February 2, 1998. Applicants must submit a paper from a recent GMU English or Women's Studies course, plus a brief educational autobiography.
Doing it...

News about the accomplishments of GMU women faculty and staff

Honors, awards

Jane Turner Censeler. History, has won the A. Elizabeth Taylor Prize for the best article in Southern women’s history. The article, “A Changing World of Work: North Carolina Elite Women 1865-1895,” appeared in North Carolina Historical Review, published in January 1996. The article explores the kinds of employment undertaken by women during and after the antebellum period. The prize, awarded annually by the Southern Association for Women Historians, is reserved for the best article on any topic in Southern women’s history published in either a journal or an anthology during the preceding year.


Anita Taylor. Communication, has been named a recipient of the Robert J. Kipler Memorial Award from the National Communication Association. The award, presented in November at the annual NCA conference in Chicago, is awarded annually in recognition of the recipient’s dedication to excellence, professional commitment, concern for others, acceptance of diversity, vision, and forthrightness.

Research, creative activity

Ann C. Baker has co-authored two journal articles, which were published this year: “In Conversation: Transforming Experience into Learning” in Simulation & Gaming (with Patricia J. Jensen and David A. Kolb) and “Cultural Analysis, ‘Good Conversation’ and the Creation of a Multicultural Learning Organization” in Management Learning: The Journal for Managerial and Organizational Learning (with Cecilia M. McMillen and Judith White).


Margaret F. Brinig has authored two journal articles, which were published this year: “Property Distribution Physics: The Talisman of Time and Middle Class Law” in Family Law Quarterly and “Welfare Magnets: The Race for the Top” in Supreme Court Economic Review. She also has presented papers at the University of Toronto Law and Economics Workshop; the Canadian Law and Economics Association annual meeting; the Public Choice Center at GMU: the Alliance Defense Fund Litigation Academy in Cancun, Mexico; the Institute for American Values Conference on Covenant Marriage; the Georgetown University Law and Economics Workshop; and a University of Virginia Law School Faculty Workshop.

Rose Cherubin presented a paper, “Legein, Noein, and To Eon in Parmenides,” in October at the annual conference of the Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy in Binghamton, New York. The paper was part of a panel on pre-Socrates at the conference, whose theme was “Global and Multicultural Dimensions of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy.”

Kimberly Kay Eby was part of a panel presentation in May on “Feminist Activism and Community Research: Lessons Learned in Dual Roles,” at the Sixth Biennial Conference on Community Research and Action: Healthy Communities/Healthy People in Columbia, South Carolina.


Michelle L. LeBaron presented a workshop, “Getting Engaged: Using Our Whole Selves in Mediation,” this fall at the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution conference. The workshop focused on metaphors, stories, and nonverbal ways of helping people move through difficult conflict.

Cynthia M. Lont received a GMU College of Arts and Sciences faculty grant of $775 last summer to create a World Wide Web site about women in the media. In April she presented a paper, “Use of Gender Stereotypes in Advertising: A Focus on Women,” and served as a respondent for a gender studies poster session at the Southern States...
Mattusch honored for book on bronzes

By Diane L. Borden

Art historian Carol Mattusch’s knowledge of technology has helped her formulate some new theories about some very old art. And, in another week or so, she will receive one of the top awards in her field for her scholarship.

Dr. Mattusch uses a device originally designed for medical diagnosis to discover heretofore hidden facts about ancient Greek and Roman sculpture. The endoscope, a miniaturized camera that can examine the inside of a hollow organ of the body, also can be used to examine the insides of ancient bronzes.

As a result of her research, the Archaeological Institute of America has named Dr. Mattusch the ninth recipient of the James R. Wiseman Award for her book, Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary. The book was published by Cornell University Press in 1996.

"I am delighted," Dr. Mattusch said of the honor. "It has made me think about how I got to this point and has reminded me of an eminent professor I had as an undergraduate, who said incredulously in response to a question I asked her: 'YOU want to go to graduate school?'

Spotlight on scholarship

Dr. Mattusch said she completed work on the book in 1994, after conducting the research "for a very long time." She has traveled extensively in Europe, particularly Italy, and in Greece for her work, which examines the idea of originality in ancient bronze sculpture. She uses the endoscope to look at ancient technical features and to discover modern restorations inside bronzes.

Essentially, she theorizes that the style of the bronzes does not necessarily indicate when they were produced and that the Classical sculptures often were the result of collaboration between the sculptor and the founder, i.e., between the artist and the person who actually did the technical casting of the bronze.

Carol Mattusch

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Communication Association conference in Savannah, Georgia.

Barbara Melosh presented a paper, "Wanted: A Little Girl to Raise as Our Own," in June at Cheiron, an interdisciplinary conference on the history of psychology.


Kristin F. Samuelan presented a paper, "Making a Middle Class: Romancing Property Law in Jane Eyre," last spring at the Nineteenth Century Studies Association conference in Davidson, North Carolina. She also presented a paper, "Responding to 'the Law': Austen, Emma Thompson, and Postfeminist Intervention," in November at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference in Atlanta.

Promotions, tenure

Susanne A. Denham, Psychology, has been promoted from associate professor to professor.

Sheila Sollott, Art History, has been promoted from associate professor to professor.

Janet F. Hale, Nursing and Health Science, has been promoted from associate professor to associate professor without term.

Elyse B. Lehman, Psychology, has been promoted from associate professor to professor.

Janette Muir, Communication, has been promoted from assistant professor to associate professor.

June P. Tangney, Psychology, has been promoted from associate professor to professor.

Rosemarie Zagari, History, has been promoted from associate professor to professor.
Spring 1998 courses

WMST 200 Introduction to Women's Studies (3)
Prereq: Completion of 30 hours
TR: Noon-1:15 p.m. T-119.
Anita Taylor

WMST 300-001 Current Issues (Psychology of Women) (3)
Prereq: WMST 200 or permission of instructor.
Crosslisted: PSYC 362-001
TR: 9 a.m.-10:15 a.m. R-A205.
Carol Ehrwins

WMST 300-002 Current Issues (Dickinson) (3)
Prereq: WMST 200 or permission of instructor.
Crosslisted: ENGL 478-001
TR: 1:30 p.m.-2:45 p.m. R-A248.
Zofia Burr

WMST 300-003 Current Issues (Women and Violence) (3)
Prereq: WMST 200 or permission of instructor.
Crosslisted: THR 490-003
T: Noon-2:40 p.m. PAB-A101.
Lynne Raybuck

WMST 300-004 Current Issues (Women and Law) (3)
Prereq: WMST 200 or permission of instructor.
Crosslisted: SOCI 475-001; SOCI 575-001; GOVT 490-002
T: 4:30 p.m.-7:10 p.m. JC-337.
Lenore Weitzman

WMST 300-005 Current Issues (Cultural Constructions of Sexualities) (3)
Prereq: WMST 200 or permission of instructor.
Crosslisted: ENGL 338-001
W: 4:30 p.m.-7:10 p.m. R-B103.
NOTE: Second meeting pattern is for film screening.
M: 4:30 p.m.-7:10 p.m. JC-THR.
Cindy Fuchs

WMST 330 Feminist Theory Across the Disciplines (3)
Crosslisted: PHIL 338-001
MW: 3 p.m.-4:15 p.m. ENT-274.
Debra Bergoffen

WMST 400 Internship (3)
Prereq: Completion of 60 hours and WMST 200. Individualized Section Form required. Meet in the Women's Center (JC-240k)

‘Silicon ceiling’ WIT topic

Congresswoman Connie Morella, R-Md., will speak on “Women Breaking the Silicon Ceiling,” at the monthly meeting of Women in Technology.

The meeting will begin with an hour of networking at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 18, at the McLean Hilton, 7920 Jonas Branch Drive, in McLean. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Rep. Morella, re-elected in 1996 to a sixth term, represents Maryland’s Eighth District. She has served on the House Science Committee and chairs the committee’s technology subcommittee.

Cost of attending the event is $25 pre-paid for WIT members ($30 at the door) and $35 pre-paid for non-members ($40 at the door). Cost for government employees, first- and second-year professionals, and students is $10 pre-paid ($15 at the door).

Directions to the hotel are available by calling 703-947-5000. Information about Women in Technology is available by calling Amy Dooley, executive director, at 703-267-3565; through e-mail at adooley@walcoif.com; or through the group’s Web site at www.womenintechnology.com.

Mattusch to receive book award

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A review in the American Journal of Archaeology praised Dr. Mattusch’s book, saying it tackles some “venerable controversies” within the field and is “a careful, erudite, richly informative treatment of Greek and Roman bronzes that forces a reevaluation of the very nature of the genre.”

Dr. Mattusch received her Ph.D. in art history from the University of North Carolina in 1975 and came to George Mason University in the fall of 1977. “It was an exciting and challenging time to be here,” she said. “Faculty at older institutions generally don’t have the same opportunity as we did then to create new programs from the ground up.”

Last April, she was chosen to deliver the first Celebrating Scholarship lecture, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences. Her topic was “The Future Looks at the Past: Modern Technology and Ancient Industry.”

The Wiseman award, given every year for the best archaeological book published in the previous year, is named after a former president of the archaeological institute. The award will be presented during the Institute’s annual convention in Chicago this month.

for inspiration and as role models; international discussion list on equity in education; and links to more than 150 relevant education sites.

www.edc.org/WomensEquity
The Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) has a new Web site and is seeking user feedback and interaction. The WEEA Resource Center is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical resources and classroom materials for educators who want to develop gender-fair education for all students.

Some of the Web site’s features are a large library of gender-equity facts and quotations; updated information on Title IX on its 25th anniversary; 52 “women of the week” in traditional and nontraditional professions chosen

Websightings
World Wide Web sites of interest to feminists

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EMILY’s List has released the most recent results of the Women’s Monitor, a national poll of women voters. The current poll, the first of the 1998 election cycle, suggests an ever-widening gap between men and women voters, even bigger than the one reported in the 1996 elections. Poll results are available at: www.emilyslist.org/monitor/november97/1197_report.htm
Also new at the Web site are profiles of new candidates endorsed by EMILY’s List for the 1998 elections; and job and internship opportunities at the organization.