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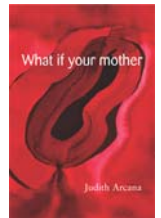
## Letter from the Director

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As we move into the “lazy days of summer” I want to congratulate all of us on another wonderful semester working to improve the lives of women and their families. I am particularly proud of the work we all do in the community. The “Beauty Salon Project” that provides education to salon owners, stylists and their clientele on breast and cervical cancer has reached many women in the African American communities this past year. Women love getting this information from a trusted source and have reported increased use of screening for breast and cervical cancer. The WISE neighbors outreach effort working to explore the world of science, technology, engineering, and math has reached out to hundreds of girls and young women in the Chicagoland area to encourage young women to enter “non-traditional” areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. This work and others helps to establish important relationships between the University and the communities we all serve.

This year the CRWG was instrumental in receiving a National Science Foundation award “Assuring STEM Credential Expansion through Nurturing Diversity.” The ASCEND program works to increase the retention of science, technology, mathematics and engineering students, especially underrepresented minority students and women.

And we were honored with a presentation by Judith Arcana, author and poet who read from *What If Your Mother*, her latest book of poetry on reproductive rights. She also talked about her participation in Jane, the illegal abortion collective prior to Roe v. Wade, as well as current activism within the reproductive rights movement.



Although our efforts continue to flourish, my letters often talk about the dire and very challenging times we all face in women’s health. Well, the challenges continue! Our worst fears have come true in terms of the composition of the Supreme Court, which clearly threatens reproductive freedoms for women. Federal funding for women’s health research and for social programs for women and children continues to decrease and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has still refused to make a decision to offer emergency contraception (Plan B) as “over the counter.” Even in the state of Illinois, pharmacists are refusing to honor prescriptions for emergency contraception due to their own personal or religious views. Legislation has been passed in Illinois to mandate pharmacies to dispense this contraception in a suitable and timely manner—yet still pharmacists refuse! The reproductive freedoms of women in this state and across the country continue to be in greater and greater jeopardy!!!!

So we have some successes—but the struggle continues. We must always strive to live with hope and to rededicate ourselves to doing what we all do best at CRWG: rectify health, education, and work inequities and promote social justice for women and their families.

In closing, we would like to thank Janise Hurtig, who worked with the CRWG for many years and served as co-editor of this newsletter. We wish her the best in her new position with the “Prairie Group” in UIC’s College of Education.

Looking to the future with good health and hope. See you all this Fall.

My Very Best,

Stacie Geller

Director

Center for Research on Women and Gender

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## Interdepartmental Graduate Women's Health Concentration Approved

In January 2006, the University of Illinois' Board of Trustees approved the new Interdepartmental Graduate Concentration in Women's Health. This new Concentration was developed to address the need for researchers, administrators, educators, and practitioners to obtain the skills and knowledge needed for professional work within the field of Women's Health across disciplines. The new Concentration will be offered to graduate level students beginning in Fall 2006. Students will be able to enroll in the Concentration this Spring.

Women's Health is a multidisciplinary field, and thus an academic program in Women's Health should reflect that multidisciplinary nature. Currently within the U.S., few Women's Health Concentrations are offered, and those that exist do not reflect the breadth of the field. The UIC Women's Health Concentration remedies that deficit. The new Concentration was established with the participation of faculty from the College of Nursing, the School of Public Health, and the Gender and Women's Studies Program – each of which are Sponsoring Units for the Concentration. Faculty from the departments of English, Anthropology, and History were also involved with developing the project proposal. The Concentration will be housed in the College of Nursing.

The project has been in the making for many years. During the past two years, with the facilitation of the Center for Research on Women and Gender (CRWG) and the UIC National Center of Excellence in Women's Health, a proposal for this Concentration was developed and approved. Mary Kleinman, a project coordinator at CRWG, chaired the Concentration Planning Committee.

The Interdepartmental Graduate Women's Health Concentration is a 4 course, 12 credit hour minimum Concentration, in which at least 6 credit hours are required to be outside of the student's home college, school or department. Interested students select a Concentration advisor, develop a plan of work, and submit a work proposal to the Director of the Concentration, Carrie Klima, a Clinical Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing. At this time, the Concentration is open to masters and doctoral students within the School of Public Health and the College of Nursing. Additional academic units will be added as Sponsors in the near future, enabling graduate students from those departments to participate in the Concentration.

For more information, contact Mary Kleinman at [kleinman@uic.edu](mailto:kleinman@uic.edu) or Kathy Lesinski at the College of Nursing at [lesinski@uic.edu](mailto:lesinski@uic.edu). Information about the Concentration will be available online soon on each Sponsoring Unit's website.

## UIC Faculty Work Climate Survey Update

In the fall of 2003, under the aegis of the WISEST Executive Committee, the UIC Faculty Work Climate Survey was developed to capture all Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) and Engineering faculty members' perceptions of their workplace: what they like, what they dislike, what is important to their daily life, what enhances or impedes productivity. Recognizing the existing strengths and limitations of the workplace environment (climate) will help the campus develop a cohesive plan to benefit all faculty members rather than a piecemeal approach benefiting only a few.

The UIC Faculty Work Climate survey is a ten-page questionnaire that addressed issues such as overall satisfaction with UIC, the hiring process, professional activities, interactions with colleagues, work climate within departments, the tenure process, UIC programs and resources, balance of professional and personal life, and diversity issues. The survey was sent out to a total of 521 tenured and tenure track faculty in the College of Engineering and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The overall response rate was 67% (351 surveys).

The primary outcomes of concern in this survey were satisfaction with current position, satisfaction with career progression, and faculty members' consideration to leave UIC. The overall response rate was 67%, of which 26% of the respondents were women and 74% were men. Both colleges have significantly more men than women faculty. Women comprise 14% of the respondents from STEM fields (includes Engineering and Natural Sciences) and 38% of the respondents from non-STEM fields (includes Humanities and Social Sciences). Eighty five percent of the men were married or partnered, as compared to 66% of women faculty. Of these partnered women faculty, 100% reported having a spouse/partner who worked full time as compared to 53% of the partnered men faculty who reported having a spouse/partner who worked full time. Women faculty were twice as likely as men faculty to be childless.

Overall, faculty were more satisfied than dissatisfied (two-thirds vs. one-third) with their current positions at UIC. Faculty in the non-STEM disciplines were more satisfied with the way their careers progressed than the faculty in the STEM disciplines. Additionally, the higher the rank of the faculty, the more satisfied they were with the way their careers progressed.

The only factor associated with dissatisfaction with current position for women was working in a negative departmental climate. However, for men, in addition to a negative working climate, working with fewer resources, not having tenure, and caring for dependent children were associated with less satisfaction with their current position.

When examining negative affects on career progression, both men and women again identified a negative departmental climate and having fewer resources as important. Women also reported being less satisfied with their career progression if they were not well published and grant funded. Men, on the other hand, were less satisfied with their career progression if they had few like-minded colleagues and worked in a climate they perceived as positive for women.

Faculty who most seriously considered leaving UIC were not tenured, were from the non-STEM disciplines, and were not married or living with a partner. They had also not successfully renegotiated their current position, had fewer resources, and indicated they worked in a more negative departmental climate. Also, contrary to what one might expect, if faculty had more departmental support for family obligations, they were more likely to consider leaving.

Of these predictors, working in a negative departmental climate and being from a non-STEM field were the two factors that cut across gender lines. A limitation of this analysis is that the survey included few women, potentially limiting our ability to detect gender differences. In the future, qualitative methodologies such as one-on-one interviews or focus groups could be employed to further examine gender issues.

Across our analyses, working in a negative departmental climate was the single most important factor associated with satisfaction with current position, career progression and consideration for leaving UIC. Lack of resources was the second most important factor predicting dissatisfaction and consideration to leave. This suggests that some of the pathways to attracting and retaining faculty are to create a productive and positive environment, one in which teaching loads are reasonable, resources are available, and high-quality research is consistently generated. Efforts are underway to address the program and policy implications of the survey findings.

The final report will be released by the end of April. Please check the CRWG/WISE websites over the next several months for the report.

## Featured Community Partner: Chinese American Service League

The Chinese American Service League (CASL) founded in 1978 is a not-for-profit organization located in Chicago's Chinatown neighborhood. It is the largest and most comprehensive social service agency in the Midwest dedicated to serving the needs of Chinese Americans. The agency has over 200 multilingual and multicultural professional and support staff working towards serving newly-arrived immigrants who may lack formal education, possess few transferable job skills, and know little of the world around them. CASL's nearly \$7 million budget supports programs in child education and development, employment services, counseling and social service, health, elderly services, and more—reaching more than 15,000 clients annually who live primarily in the Chinatown, Armour Square, and Bridgeport areas of Chicago. Additional clients from across Chicago, neighboring suburban communities, and adjacent Midwestern states also benefit from CASL's services.

The UIC Center of Excellence in Women's Health (CoE) has an on-going partnership with the CASL, made possible through a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). For the past three years, the CoE has partnered with CASL on the "Building Better Bones" project, serving almost 600 women by providing osteoporosis education, screening and counseling.

The osteoporosis screening events held throughout the year for women ages 35 and older who are committed to learning about osteoporosis and bone health. Each session starts with an educational presentation conducted by Dr. Karla Nacion, Director of the CoE Clinical Core and Clinical Associate Professor in the College of Nursing and translated by Ms. Wingsum Tam, Health coordinator at CASL. Educational materials are also provided, in both Chinese and English. Following the presentation, each woman is screened using a portable ultrasound machine, which gives a good estimate of bone density within a couple of minutes. Following the screening, each woman receives individual counseling from Dr. Nacion based on her results. Those who are either tending towards osteoporosis or who are already osteoporotic are asked to visit their doctor for further screening, and treatment, if necessary.

Screening participants have offered positive feedback about the collaboration. One of the women who participated in the March screening session said, "This service is very informative. I have learned more about the kind of food to eat that increases bone strength and also about how to take my medication". Another woman commented, "It is very convenient to come to CASL and I am happy that there is translation for me". CASL's Community Health Program focuses its services and outreach specifically on the needs of the Chinese American population. It addresses the needs of the community by helping low-income families gain access to health care services, enabling Chinese families' access health information through the operation of the Bilingual Resource Library and by promoting wellness among the Chinese immigrants through workshops, community outreach and counseling sessions such as this. The CoE is proud to provide these services and plans to expand the collaboration with CASL by providing menopause education to the women served by CASL.



CRWG Graduate Assistant Mydhili Moorthie (seated at right) provides an osteoporosis screening at the Chinese American Service League.

## What's Up with WISE?

### Note from the Director, Claudia Morrissey:

I will be stepping down as WISE Director to focus on directing WISEST activities and on building the international women's health research portfolio at CRWG. Veronica Arreola, who ably served as WISE Program Coordinator, will become visiting WISE Director. I look forward to continuing to further the goals of the WISE program in my new capacity.

### Pre-University Initiatives

The spring semester has been busy with the launch of the U.S. Department of Education's Women's Educational Equity Act funded program, GEM-SET Mentoring for Success.

GEM-SET Mentoring for Success, a program funded by the US Department of Education's Women's Educational Equity Act was launched in the Spring semester. This program offers UIC students paid tutoring opportunities in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Our first partnership is with the Young Women's Leadership Charter School. We anticipate adding 1-2 additional CPS schools to this program. If you know of UIC students with strong math skills seeking part-time employment, please send them to the WISE office at [GEM-SET@uic.edu](mailto:GEM-SET@uic.edu) or 312-413-1636.

The GEM-SET Mentoring for Success program does not rely on just the math tutoring. All students are invited to participate in our on-going WISE Neighbors field trips, supported by the Motorola and Caterpillar Foundations. The field trips allow students to connect at educational venues such as the Museum of Science and Industry. Future events will take place at the UIC Pavilion as a Chicago Sky WNBA game, a Chicago White Sox game and the International Museum of Surgical Science. To reserve your tickets, go to our web-site: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise>.

### On Campus Student Activities

The spring semester is building on the momentum from the fall semester. February was quite busy with a scholarship workshop with the staff of the UIC Office of Special Scholarships and a public speaking seminar for graduate students given by Alan Carlson, President of the Northrop Grumman Toastmaster Club. Both events were well attended and much appreciated by the students. March's events were both co-sponsored and co-planned with the UIC Gender and Women's Studies Department. First, a panel of three women faculty at various stages of their careers titled "Building a STEM Career" was moderated by Talia Fernos, a Ph.D. candidate in mathematics. Panel members Dr. Mary Ashley (Professor, Biological Sciences), Dr. Brooke Shipley (Associate Professor, Math, Statistics and Computer Science), and Dr. Sue McCormick (Assistant Professor, Bioengineering) discussed their career paths, how they made different choices, as well as commented on what it means to be a woman in a science-related field. Closing out the month was a discussion and a reading from the essay by Susan King "Only Girl Architect- Lonely" from the recently published book Chicago Architecture: Histories, Revisions, Alternatives.

WISE Chic (ago), the student organization, is working with Sarah Shirk to present a chemistry demonstration in May at Senn High School. In the residence halls, Amy Levant, Associate Dean of the Graduate College joined the WISE Wing for dinner and discussed strategies on considering and applying for graduate school.

We will end our year with our fourth annual End of the Year celebration. We have another amazing guest of honor: Dr. Sandra E. Burke. Dr. Burke is the Director of Cardiovascular Systems Research at Abbott Labs, and was recently inducted into the Women in Technology International Hall of Fame. Festivities will take place Tuesday, April 25, 2006 in the Cardinal Room at UIC Student Center East. Thanks to Northrop Grumman and Caterpillar for underwriting the End of the Year Celebration.

*Continued on page 7...*

## What's Up with WISE?

*On Campus Student Activities...continued from page 6*

Summer 2006 will mark the official launch of the UIC Assuring STEM Credential Expansion through Nurturing Diversity (ASCEND) program. ASCEND is a \$2 million dollar NSF-funded program to increase the first and second-year retention rate of STEM students, especially underrepresented minority students and women. It provides a summer bridging program and protected first-year experience that includes required academic advising, taking math and chemistry with the same cohort, and weekly seminars that will focus on what it means to be a student in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

### Off Campus Tour

WISE facilitated a tour of the Caterpillar plant in Aurora, IL on March 3, 2006. The tour gave UIC students and opportunity to observe the Caterpillar Corporations operations first hand. Caterpillar is the world's leading manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, diesel and natural gas engines, and industrial gas turbines. Thank you Caterpillar for opening your doors to UIC students.



UIC students tour the Caterpillar plant in Aurora, IL

### Faculty Support

We continue to increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty in the STEM departments. In April, Dr. Mary Ann Mason, Dean of the Graduate Division at UC Berkeley, discussed her work on work/family balance in academia. In a review of data tracking PhD recipients from 1973-1999, Mason et al. found that among tenured women, 50% of those in the sciences and 62% of those in the humanities and social sciences are childless. Tenured women are more likely than tenured men to be single as well. By contrast, only 30% of tenured men in the sciences and 39% of those in the humanities and social sciences do not have children in the household.<sup>1</sup>

WISEST will also begin to offer skill building workshops targeted to UIC post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. The first workshop, "Creating Mentoring Networks for Post-Doc Women in STEM Disciplines" featured Dr. Barbara Risman (Head, Sociology), Dr. Clara Awe (Director, Urban Health Program), and Dr. Rebecca Gordon (Director, Office of Women's Affairs). Please contact WISEST GA Sarah Hendrica Bickerton at [sbickel@uic.edu](mailto:sbickel@uic.edu) or 312.996.0121 for more information about WISEST.

### Get Involved

Check out our new web page at <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/wise>. To become involved, contact [wiseuic@uic.edu](mailto:wiseuic@uic.edu). We are poised for great accomplishments, thanks in large part to your support and efforts over the last four years. Happy Birthday, WISE!

Source:

<sup>1</sup>Mason, M.A. & M. Goulden (2004). *Do Babies Matter (Part II)? Closing the Baby Gap*

Retrieved from *Academe*, November/December 2004

Web site: <http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04nd/04ndmaso.htm>

**WISE** Support  
For  
Success

Leading the WISE way to better Science and Engineering

## Center of Excellence in Women's Health

### Beauty Salon Project Continues

The *Initiative for Neighborhood Salons to Provide Inspiration and Resources to Empower*, or **INSPIRE**, is a health education program with the goal of building awareness and empowering African American women to take charge of their health. Developed through a collaboration among the CoE, UIC's Neighborhoods Initiative Division of Community Health, and five beauty salons on the south and west sides of Chicago, **INSPIRE** has created a welcoming and familiar setting for the dissemination of vital women's health information.

**INSPIRE** is based on a lay health educator model in which training and resources for salon owners and stylists are provided by the CoE and its partners, and the information and support are then passed onto beauty salon clients. **INSPIRE** targets identified community health needs with an emphasis on prevention and healthy lifestyles and behavior, but is driven by the needs and interests of salon clients and by the commitment and ideas of their stylists.

Last year, the initiative focused on breast and cervical cancer. This year, **INSPIRE** has expanded its focus to include prevention of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

**INSPIRE** has received funding for the past two years from the Johnson & Johnson Foundation. The CoE is actively working to expand the initiative to reach more salons and a greater number of women. For more information about **INSPIRE**, contact Kris Zimmermann at 312.413.4251 or email at [kzimme3@uic.edu](mailto:kzimme3@uic.edu).



### Heart Truth: The Education Website for Health Professionals

The UIC National Center of Excellence in Women's Health (CoE) has been part of a national collaborative project to develop educational materials to increase physicians' and other health professionals' awareness about cardiovascular disease in women and its prevention. This project is supported and coordinated by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health. The UIC CoE is responsible for developing a website for health professionals and conducting focus groups about this website.

The Heart Truth Professional Education website includes access to information and many resources for clinical practice and for the education and training of other health professionals. Clinical resources include fact sheets, tools and clinical guidelines about coronary heart disease in women, Palm and PocketPC downloads, patient education materials, and links to related organizations. Opportunities for free CME and CEU for physicians and nurses will be available beginning later this Spring. There are many resources available for clinical education, including PowerPoint lecture slides, problem based learning cases for medical and nursing students, a standardized patient case, and additional educational resource materials. These materials are available for download by educators, and may be used without written permission.

To visit the site, go to:

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/hearttruth/>



Women  
& Heart  
Disease

## Center of Excellence in Women's Health

### CoE begins Interdisciplinary Mentoring Project for Junior Faculty

In February of 2005, the UIC CoE began a year long mentoring project for junior faculty interested in women's health research. The project, titled "Interdisciplinary Women's Health Research Mentoring/Training Pilot Project" or (IWHR), has formed a group of eleven junior level faculty and scholars who are involved in women's health research in areas ranging from basic science to clinical and epidemiological work. In March and April, each scholar was matched with two or more senior researchers in a mentoring relationship. This mentoring relationship will provide individual research career support and career development evaluation.

Plans for the year include holding monthly seminars to enable the scholars to meet and critique one another's work. Additionally special seminars will be planned on topics related to research funding, writing research results and other areas of interest to the scholars. The IWHR project is supported by the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the College of Medicine and by the College of Nursing. For more information, please contact Laura Studee at 312.996.0570 or e-mail at [lstude1@uic.edu](mailto:lstude1@uic.edu).

### CoE Hosting Annual Health Fair to Observe National Women's Health Week

On Monday, May 15, 2006, the CoE will be holding its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Women's Check-Up Day Health Fair at the UIC School of Public Health, 1603 W. Taylor St., in the Activities Room. The event will be held from 10 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

National Women's Check-Up Day, an annual observance held each year on the Monday after Mother's Day, is part of National Women's Health Week, a nationwide effort coordinated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to encourage women to visit health care professionals to receive regular, preventive check-ups and screenings.

The event will feature free health screenings such as bone density, blood glucose, and body mass index, as well as a variety of resources for women. Several organizations will be represented to offer information about all aspects of women's health and wellness. The health fair is free and open to the public

For more information about National Women's Health Week activities, contact Mydhili Moorthie at 312.413.4255 or e-mail at [mmoort2@uic.edu](mailto:mmoort2@uic.edu).



May 15, 2006  
National Women's Check-Up Day

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