

Yale Undergraduate Women's Caucus and Grievance Committee

The Yale Undergraduate Women's Caucus began as an organization of six women in September 1974. Since that time our membership has grown to include nearly two hundred members of the Yale community. As the Caucus has grown in size we have retained a primarily horizontal organization where members work co-operatively toward common goals. We are committed to educational, cultural, and political actions around issues of importance to women at Yale.

As an educational organization the Caucus is primarily concerned with bringing women's issues and problems to the attention of the Yale community. Our activities include: panel discussions ("Does Feminism Address the Needs of Women?," Fall, 1977; "Women and Politics," Spring, 1978); consciousness-raising groups; self-help groups and Women's Studies discussion tables.

As a cultural organization, we provide opportunities for women to be together in an enjoyable, relaxed atmosphere. These events include art shows, poetry readings, films, and open houses. The Caucus shares a "Women's Space" with five women's organizations on campus which is a center for our cultural and educational activities.

As a political organization the Caucus works within Yale on issues of concern to women. A summary of our political efforts includes: admissions; Affirmative Action; gynecology; security; women's athletics; and women's studies. Our political purpose is clear: to promote the position of women at Yale, thus eliminating institutional and attitudinal sexism.

The Grievance Committee was formed in March, 1977 to make the Yale community aware of the problem of sexual harassment of women students by male faculty members. No university committee or grievance procedure exists to address this problem. Our primary goal is to have the university establish an official grievance procedure specifically for sexual harassment. Toward this end we are lobbying within the university for a grievance procedure and supporting the present class action suit in Federal District Court in New Haven.

Our work currently centers around increasing financial, political, and moral support for the lawsuit. Campus organizing has focused on three areas; 1. disseminating information about the suit by sponsoring discussion sessions in the residential colleges and distributing fact sheets, 2. generating broad support for the establishment of a grievance procedure by conducting a college-wide petition drive, organizing a faculty support committee and soliciting support from campus organizations, and 3. encouraging the formation of and participating on the Yale College Dean's Advisory Committee on Grievance Procedures. Members of the Grievance Committee have written articles and editorials for university and community newspapers on the specifics of the suit as well as the larger issue of sexual harassment in education. In addition to our work on the Yale campus we have appeared on radio and television talk shows and have spoken to groups in the community and at other colleges. Our fund-raising efforts include selling tee-shirts, inviting individuals to give benefit performances or speeches, and asking foundations as well as individuals for contributions. During the past year Dick Gregory, Robin Morgan and Marge Piercy are among those who have given benefit speeches or poetry readings for Alexander v. Yale.