

Sister to-Sister Program

began as a dialogue between SWS/ABS in August 2002 as way to begin conversation about building relationships across race/ethnic lines for women within academy. In August 2003, Sister-to-Sister had its first meeting on the campus of Spelman's College in Atlanta to where over eighty women attended. In January 2004, during the SWS Winter Meetings we met to engage in a discussion how race and ethnicity shape the experiences of junior and senior women faculty in the academy and explore long term goals of the task force. Since this meeting Sister-to-Sister has been an integral part of the SWS, as we continue to add programming workshops. In January 2006, Sister-to-Sister became one of SWS' s Standing Committees.

We have invited senior and junior scholars to discuss their experiences within the academy focusing on issues of: race ethnicity, and sexuality. Topics that have are open to discussion at our Winter and Summer meetings are:

- Class and Sexuality
- White privilege and Working alliances among women of color
- Grad students
- Junior women & Senior women
- Tenure & Professional development

Women of Color Dissertation Scholarship

Sociologists for Women in Society, has worked hard to build a coalition of women scholars who share concerns about the status of women both domestically and internationally. In keeping with that mission, SWS established a Women of Color Scholarship at its annual meeting in February 2007. The primary purposes of the scholarship are:

- 1) To offer support to female scholars who are from underrepresented groups and are studying concerns that women of color face domestically and/or internationally.
- 2) To increase the participation of students of color in SWS.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Student must be a woman from a racial/ethnic group facing racial discrimination in the United States.
- 2) Dissertation must be sociologically relevant scholarship that addresses the concerns of Women of Color, domestically and/or internationally.
- 3) Student must be in the early stages of writing a dissertation.
- 4) Student must be "All But Dissertation" (ABD) by the time the term of the award begins. (Must be certified by the student's advisor or Graduate Director)
- 5) Applicant must demonstrate a financial need for the award.
- 6) Domestic and international students are eligible to apply.

Funding

The winner will receive a \$15,000 scholarship, a plaque and SWS membership for one year. In addition the recipient will receive free registration for both the summer and winter meetings, along with an additional \$500 grant to enable attendance at the winter meeting.

GROWING PAINS

In this new feature, Network News and the Sister-to-Sister Taskforce offer an opportunity for members to raise issues of language, behavior, expectations, etc that they experience as in some way is discordant to them. We plan not to identify the authors of these personal observations, since we want our members to focus on the general issue being raised rather than the characteristics of the individual. Old and new members, women of all colors, ages and sexualities are invited to bring up the specific things they found painful, not to place blame, but for all of us to grow from the sharing. Send your brief observations to the Sister-to-Sister Taskforce c/o mferree@ssc.wisc.edu for them to be edited anonymously by this group and presented here.

Our first contributor notes that her “ears hurt” when we sat at the “How to Think Like an Organizer Workshop” and the term “give” power was utilized time and time again. Many of us used the notion of “giving power” during the workshop, in the handout, in the formal presentation, and at the roundtable discussions. She notes that as feminist scholars, we have all struggled to change the manner in which language is used to establish hierarchies, grant power and privilege to some, and to negate the agency of others. When examined from the bottom of these hierarchies, the language of “giving” power denies how those with privilege fail to acknowledge the power and agency of those who are struggling to exert it. Her argument is that we may acknowledge the power of others, and be aware of the power we exercise over others, but we cannot “give” someone power! So why do we talk as if power were a gift that we could give?

Was she the only one to make this observation? Probably not! As we take note of instances in which we wince because “our ears hurt,” we can acknowledge that being a feminist does not provide any of us with “perfect pitch” and that we will do a better job at building harmony in SWS if we can participate in trying to avoid causing pain to anyone’s ears. Sensitivities differ, of course, based on class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, work experiences, family circumstances and age and physical abilities – to name just a few dimensions. Rather than deciding whose ears we need to avoid hurting, we encourage anyone with painful moments to participate by sharing comments that will help us as an organization to learn from the diversity that SWS offers and allow our diversity to grow more comfortable for all!

Sister-to-Sister Co-Chairs

Marlese Durr & Patricia Warren