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UD Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Women's Studies Program

University of Dayton

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DAYTON, Ohio — Students at the University of Dayton began getting credit for studying women 20 years ago.

"Women’s studies classes were offered before 1978 but that was when the minor became official," says Linda Majka, director of the women’s studies program.

Interest in the program has grown steadily during the last 20 years, according to Majka. She estimates the ratio between women and men is about 10 to 1 among the approximately 40 students pursuing the minor. The program includes classes such as history of American women, images of women in literature and psychology of women.

“There have been a lot of changes in society in the last 20 years, but we still need to make sure there is an equal education for everyone,” she says. As the workplace becomes less divided by gender, Majka says its important to “validate women’s aspirations and interests” and “reinforce the mentoring process.”

Majka says women’s studies programs are especially important at colleges like UD that were founded as men’s institutions. “It was only 60 years ago that UD began admitting women,” she says. “It’s been an adjustment, but currently women are paying over half the bills.”

In honor of the 20th anniversary, the program is sponsoring several events.

• Former president of Smith College, Mary Maples Dunn, will speak about women’s education and women’s rights at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1, in the Kennedy Union Ballroom. Dunn is the author of several books on William Penn and has also done research on women members of the Quaker and Congregational religions during colonial times. Dunn is the foundation director at Radcliffe College’s Schlesinger Library.

• Judith Radell, a music professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, will offer a piano recital of music by women composers at 8 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 9, in the Sears Recital Hall of the Jesse Philips Humanities Building. Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel’s Sonata in G Minor and Clara Schumann’s Scherzo in C Minor are two of the featured pieces.

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For more information, call Linda Majka at (937) 229-4285.