

SPECIAL ORIENTATION ISSUE

Getting involved

Campus, community organizations offer opportunities for students

A college experience encompasses far more than the academic challenges that await in the classroom.

For many graduates, the most enduring memories of university life stem from involvement in activities and organizations that complement what they learn in class.

Students entering Vanderbilt this fall face a wide array of choices for campus and community involvement. So, once you've unpacked and confirmed your class schedule, consider the options for overcoming apathy and broadening your horizons.

This list is aimed at those with an interest in women's issues and is by no means all-inclusive. If you don't

see anything here that interests you, keep looking — many other organizations exist that may better meet your needs and abilities.

CAMPUS GROUPS

- **Students for Women's Concerns** meets weekly to explore issues affecting women on campus. *See article on page 2 for details.*
- **Eating Disorders Group** provides support for students and others with eating disorders. *Contact the Women's Center at 322-4843 for information on the group's weekly meetings.*
- Many of Vanderbilt's graduate and professional schools have groups for women students, including the

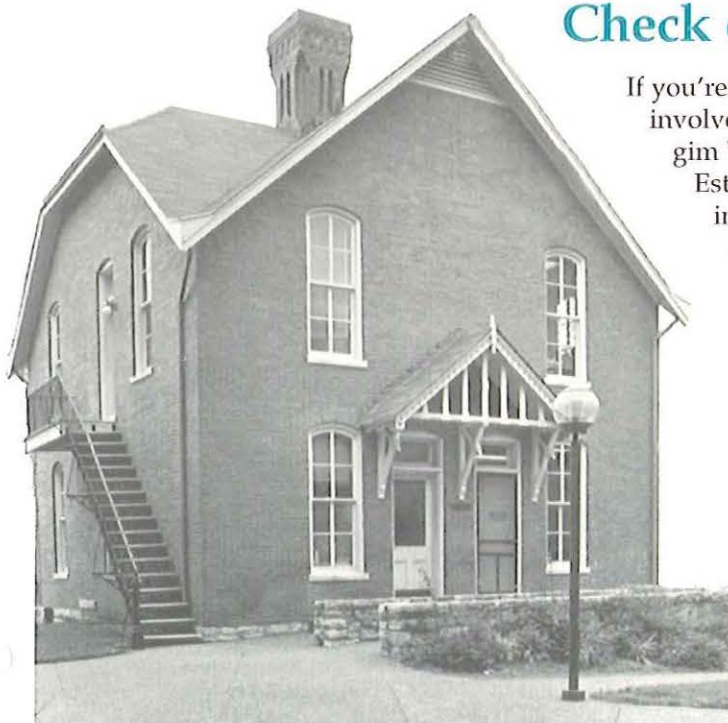
Women Law Students Association, Women's Business Association (Owen School), Vanderbilt Women in Religion (Divinity School), American Medical Women's Association, and the Society of Women Engineers. *For more information, contact Campus Student Services, 2-3963.*

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER WORK

The Office of Volunteer Activities suggests these community groups for student volunteers with an interest in women's issues:

- **The Rape and Sexual Abuse Center** counsels victims of sexual assault and their families. *Phone 259-9055.*

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Check out Women's Center offerings

If you're new to campus, or have a new-found interest in getting involved, consider the resources available at the Margaret Cunningham Women's Center.

Established in 1978 to provide information and programs of interest to women on campus, the center accomplishes this mission in a variety of ways. Lectures, workshops, art exhibits, and ongoing groups highlight the opportunities and challenges facing women today and promote campus discussion of gender-related issues. A library on the ground floor of our Victorian cottage houses the only collection at Vanderbilt devoted to women, feminism and related topics. Materials from the library are available for research, reference or general reading.

Programs sponsored by the Women's Center range from workshops on everyday topics like car repair to academic lectures by distinguished scholars. The center welcomes all women *and men* interested in its programs.

The Women's Center is housed in the Franklin building on West Side Row. See map inside for details.

Photo by Gerald Holly

Getting involved

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- **YWCA Shelter and Domestic Violence Program** provides emergency shelter for battered women and their children and leads community education efforts. *Phone 297-8756.*
- **Project to End Abuse Through Counseling and Education (PEACE)** needs volunteers to provide assistance and support for victims of domestic violence and to assist with court advocacy. *Phone 255-0711.*
- **Girl Scout Council of Cumberland Valley** has a variety of volunteer opportunities for students, including several outreach programs that serve girls unable to participate in a troop. Also needed are assistant troop leaders and chaperones for special trips. *For information, contact volunteer coordinator Beth Alexander at 383-0490.*

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

- **Nashville Women's Political Caucus** is a non-partisan group that promotes increased participation by women in the political process. *Phone 664-3382.*
- **National Organization for Women**, the largest feminist organization in the country, has a Nashville chapter that works to support the group's goals of economic equality, abortion rights, lesbian rights, and electing feminist candidates to public office. The local chapter holds its monthly meetings at the Nashville Peace and Justice Center on 18th Avenue South, near campus. *Phone 269-7141.* ■



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Succeeding as an independent

by Kristin Lazure (A&S '99)

Getting involved with campus and community activities can be especially important to "independents" at Vanderbilt, where almost half the women students are affiliated with sororities.

In speaking with several students last semester, I found that many independents enjoyed being able to develop interests and friendships outside the Greek system.

But as noted by Tanya Tschesnok, who headed Students for Women's Concerns last year and graduated in May, "it takes more effort and initiative to get involved in other things on campus" for those who don't join a sorority.

Students on the Vanderbilt campus do make distinctions between sorority women and independent women. Typically, this is the first question asked of a student. How-

ever, no one I spoke to felt their social life was hindered by their "independence."

"Since only officers live in the [sorority] houses at Vanderbilt, [being independent] is not really a big deal," said Gillian Hayes, a rising junior independent. "I'm friends with both independents and sorority girls. I live with both independents and sorority girls."

Several independent students said they preferred to escape the stereotypes sometimes imposed on sorority members. "I don't want to be involved in an organization where people assume I am a particular type of person," one freshman said. "I want to make my friends through natural interaction."

Showing that the Greek system is just one aspect of student life, Tschesnok said, "I'm just 'independent' of a sorority."

Students for Women's Concerns plans active year of events, projects

by Bronwen Blass

SWC President '97-'98

Students for Women's Concerns (SWC) is experiencing a resurgence of vitality and involvement at Vanderbilt. Thanks to the dedication of a fantastic group of officers and members, SWC had a very successful '96-'97 year. This included participation in activities such as the Walk to End Domestic Violence, volunteering for NOW, NARAL and the YWCA, and helping to sponsor two speakers.

SWC aims to raise awareness about issues that affect women both on campus and in larger local, state, and national arenas. We also work to create a community at Vanderbilt which fosters growth and confidence among women and opens channels of discussion among all members of the community.

The group meets weekly at the Women's Center and features discussion of an issue pertinent to women

every other week. During the '97-'98 year, we will be inviting professors to aid in facilitating these discussions as well as working to extend these open forums to women of racial minority groups to discuss gender and race issues and how they interact.

SWC is also involved in projects like our "Future Focus: Women in the Workplace" series. These informal seminars featuring female professionals from the community are part of an ongoing effort to help Vanderbilt women explore all avenues and reach their full career potential. New programs such as a self-defense seminar and a "Room in the Inn" project for homeless women are also planned.

The upcoming academic year promises to be a very exciting and fulfilling one for SWC. All members of the Vanderbilt and Nashville communities are welcome to join in any of our activities. For more information, call 421-8184 in the fall.

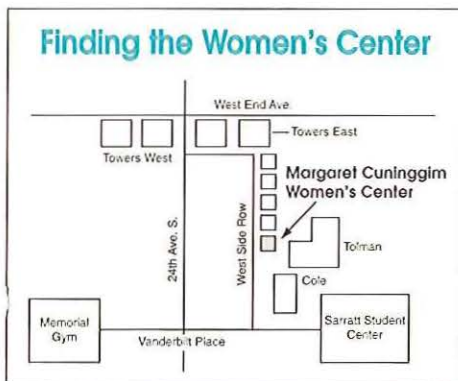
Support group for dissertation writers plans first meeting

The Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center sponsors a Dissertation Writers Group for women. The group provides problem-solving, troubleshooting, and moral support for women who are writing doctoral dissertations. New students are admitted only at the beginning of each semester. Darlene Panvini, Assistant Director of the Center for Teaching, facilitates the group.

An organizational meeting will be held Monday, Sept. 1 from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Women's Center, 316 West Side Row. Students should bring a typed abstract of their dissertation with their name, department, school, address, phone number(s), and e-mail address. Students who are unable to attend the organizational meeting should call 322-4843 and send their abstract to Darlene in care of the Women's Center, Box 1513-B.

Student job opportunity

The Women's Center is seeking a student reporter to write for *Women's VU*, which is published monthly during the school year. Writing experience and interest in women's issues preferred. This position has a flexible schedule and requires no more than 10 hours per week. To apply, please call the editor, Lynn Green, at 343-4367 and leave a message with your name, school year, phone number, and a time when you can be reached.



M Fall Calendar of Events

Highlights of upcoming programs sponsored by the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center

SEPTEMBER 4

Artist's Reception for Ann Tiley. Join us at the Women's Center from 5 to 6 p.m. to see and hear the work of Ann Tiley, an artist and musician whose exhibit of Nashville scenes will be on display through October. Tiley will play acoustical music during the reception.

SEPTEMBER 16

ABCs of Car Maintenance. Pat Claybaker, co-owner of The Workshop, returns for one of her popular sessions on how to be a wise consumer of car maintenance. Light refreshments begin at 5:30 p.m., and the workshop runs from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in Sarratt Student Center, room 205.

SEPTEMBER 23

Women on the Web will be the focus of discussion at the Creative Life Planning Group, which meets every Tuesday to share information on a variety of topics. The meeting will be led by Sam Myers Sims, a graduate student in Materials Science and Engineering. New members are welcome.

OCTOBER 8

Career Connections for Senior Women. A mentoring program co-sponsored by the Women's Center and the Career Center offers valuable first-hand career information for senior women. The program matches Vanderbilt students with Nashville businesswomen, providing each student the opportunity to develop a relationship with a professional in her area of career interest. Any student who wants to participate must attend one of two informational sessions: 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. at the Women's Center or 5 p.m. in Alumni Hall, room 203.

OCTOBER 14

Diversity in Daughter and Mother Relationships. Explore one of the strongest and most complex relationships in life as mothers and daughters from different cultures tell their stories. Pizza and drinks will be served during the program from 5 to 7 p.m. in the Black Cultural Center.

OCTOBER 21

Save the Males. Don't miss the fascinating insights offered by sociologist Michael Kimmel, who returns to Vanderbilt this fall to discuss hazing at VMI and The Citadel. While on campus, Kimmel will also give a slide presentation, "The History of Masculinity," based on his prize-winning book *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*.

NOVEMBER 6

Moving Beyond Gender: Race, Class and Scientific Knowledge is the topic of the 1997 Margaret Cuninggim Lecture by Patricia Hill Collins, Professor of Sociology and African American Studies at the University of Cincinnati and a prominent voice of black feminist thought.

NOVEMBER 11

Women World Leaders. Author Laura Liswood recounts her interviews with 15 female political leaders from around the world.

Watch future issues of Women's VU for details on these programs.

■ Feminism on campus

The other day I was hanging up posters for Students for Women's Concerns when I saw a guy from one of my classes. He asked me what I was doing and what SWC did. When I told him how we are active in things like bringing speakers to campus, walking against domestic violence, supporting the YWCA, and providing a forum for discussion, he was visibly relieved and said, "Good, so you're not some crazy feminist group terrorizing the campus." I couldn't help wonder why the term feminist had such a negative connotation for him, but I had to admit his view is not rare.

To be labeled a feminist these days is not usually a compliment. Few college-aged women, at least at Vanderbilt, seem willing to take on the label.

—Bronwen Blass (A&S '00)
March '97 Women's VU

■ A broader perspective

During the [National College Women Student Leaders] conference, I realized that feminism means many different things. In my first year at Vanderbilt, I had heard very little about feminism. The attitude of Vanderbilt women seemed to be, "I am not a feminist, but I believe in equal rights." This conference opened my eyes to a broader perspective.

Any strong female student leader can be a feminist. Feminists include lesbians and the straightest of straights. Some are as hip as a flower child, while others like to wear dresses and makeup and roll their hair. We also span every age group, each generation experiencing its own version of the struggle and responding in different ways.

—Laura DeVilbiss (A&S '99)
January '97 Women's VU

■ New attitudes on equality

[Sociologist Michael] Kimmel attributes recent changes in opinion about feminism largely to the fact that more men's girlfriends, wives, mothers, sisters and teachers are feminists. However, he sees the need for a second dimension of change that has not yet occurred — in male-female relationships.

"Women and men would have better relationships if we change our views [about the sexes] and learn caring and respectful ways to talk about gender issues," Kimmel said. He believes that men can change and that the majority of women believe men can change. In our conversation he was so intense and enthusiastic he made me believe that gender equality is not only possible, but imminent.

—Kristin Lazure (A&S '99)
March '97 Women's VU

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Women's VU is published monthly, September to June, and sent free on request to any campus address. Stay informed about issues, programs, news and events of special interest to women at Vanderbilt by bringing or mailing this form to the Margaret Cuninggim Women's Center, 316 West Side Row.

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