Jane Hibbard Idema
Women’s Studies Center

Jane Hibbard Idema

The JHIWSC was named in honor of Jane Hibbard Idema (below left) for her work with the Encore for Women Program at Aquinas, which was designed to meet the needs of women returning to school. Jane’s early interest in helping women improve the condition of their lives led to her involvement with a small group of women at Aquinas who together established the Women’s Studies Center in 1986. To acknowledge her work with the Encore Program as well as her dedication to improving women’s lives, the Center was renamed the Jane Hibbard Idema Women’s Studies Center (JHIWSC) in November, 2000.

The JHIWSC is supported through the Mary Caroline “Twink” Frey (below right) and James E. McKay Endowment Fund at Aquinas College.
Who We Are
Our Mission

The Jane Hibbard Idema Women’s Studies Center serves as a community resource for women’s and gender issues, promotes awareness through its programming and curriculum, and empowers students and community members to become advocates for gender equality and social justice.

The Jane Hibbard Idema Women’s Studies Center is a terrific resource, not only to the students and faculty of Aquinas College, but also to the greater Grand Rapids Community. Through their lecture series, the community is informed and educated about important women’s issues, and their students and staff help support the work of local women’s organizations with their campus fundraising activities and volunteer efforts.

Sharon Caldwell-Newton
Executive Director
Women’s Resource Center

What We Do

The JHIWSC supports its mission through both its programming activities and its academic curriculum. The Women Make a Difference Lecture Series brings in experts such as conservationist Jane Goodall, Senator Debbie Stabenow, author Ann Crittenden, White House Project Director Marie Wilson, and environmental biologist Sandra Steingraber. These speakers, along with many others, increase awareness on campus and in the community about important issues that impact the lives of both women and men.

The JHIWSC also sponsors lectures, films, a student conference, a student organization, and various events such as the Equality Bake Sale, the “What if Santa Were a Woman?” celebration, and International Women’s Day. These programs offer varying perspectives on gender issues. For more information on the Center’s services and events, visit: www.aquinas.edu/womenscenter.

The Jane Hibbard Idema Women’s Studies Center has provided me with valuable information about the issues particular to women and the resources and know-how necessary to initiate positive change. What I have learned has impacted me so profoundly that I would find it hard to turn my back on such issues now.

Gail Gromaski
Aquinas College Student
Why Women’s Studies?

The Women’s Studies Program

- Is an interdisciplinary academic curriculum that exposes students to women’s historical and contemporary roles, their accomplishments, and their experiences in our society and across cultures.
- Introduces students to valuable, often neglected information about women in many spheres of life (e.g. family, workplace, science, religion, politics, arts, and education).
- Raises questions about gender, race, nationality, class and sexual identity, and explores how these conditions shape human experience.
- Helps us understand the complexity of women’s and men’s lives.
- Challenges stereotypes and encourages students to think critically about themselves and the world in which they live so they can become advocates for social change.

Women’s Studies Minor (21 credits total)

Required Courses (6 credits)
WS 100 Introduction to Women’s Studies (3)
WS/HY 309 Women in American History (3)

Elective Courses (15 credits)
WS/CL 101 Intro to Community Leadership (3)
WS/PH 160 Philosophy and Women (3)
WS 200 Special Topics in Women’s Studies (1-3)
WS 207 Arab Women
WS/PH/PS 250 Legal Issues for Women (3)
WS/EH 255 Women Writers (3)
WS/TY 265 Women and Ministry (3)
WS 267 Women and Spirituality (3)
WS/SY 305 Sociology of Gender (3)
WS/CN 311 Gender Communication (3)
WS/SY 311 Sociology of Women (3)
WS/SY 312 Social Stratification (3)
WS/SY 313 Race and Ethnicity (3)
WS 397 Field Experience
WS 398 Independent Readings
WS 399 Independent Project

Career Opportunities

The Women’s Studies Program prepares students for leadership in a variety of career areas, particularly political advocacy, health and human services, social work, education, human rights, government, journalism, advertising, broadcasting, public relations, community organizing, law, management, business, and non-profit services.

Women’s Studies empowers students, regardless of their career choices, to become catalysts for change and voices for equality and social justice on campus, in our society, and around the globe.

The Jane Hibbard Idema Women’s Studies Center creates a venue for Grand Rapids to hear experts in areas of national interest with a focus as to how those issues pertain to women. Ann Crittenden, Marie Wilson, and Sandra Steingraber have built awareness and generated discussion in the areas of job parity, women in politics, and the impact of the environment on our health. I’m looking forward to future speakers.

Kyle Irwin
Community Volunteer
JHIWSC Director
Susan Haworth-Hoeppner, Ph.D.

Steering Committee
Margaret Cheff, Chair
Kathy Fore
Mary Caroline “Twink” Frey
Susan Haworth-Hoeppner
Marjorie Kindel
Sheila Knopke
Gerry Mears
Susan J. Smith

Faculty
Rebecca Coogan, Ph.D., English
Michael Cushion, Ph.D., Sociology
Jennifer Dawson, Ph.D., English
Michelle DeRose, Ph.D., English
Katharina Gross, Ph.D., Modern Languages
Susan Haworth-Hoeppner, Ph.D., Sociology
Michaeline Kelly, Ph.D., Philosophy
Renee Stahle, Ph.D., Communication
Deborah Wickering, Ph.D., In-the-College

Affiliated Faculty & Staff
Penny Avery, Ph.D., Communication
Veronica Beitner, Health Center
Kathy Burgis, Ph.D., Mathematics
Nanette Clatterbuck, M.Ed., In-the-College
Judi Creamer, Conferencing
Gladysin Huerta-Stark, M.A.T., Modern Languages
Shellie Jeffries, M.L., Information Literacy Librarian
Elizabeth Jensen, Ph.D., Chemistry
Mary Navarre, Ed.D., Education
Mary Orlicki, Ph.D., Modern Languages
Miriam Pederson, M.F.A., English
Kim Quigg, B.S., Health Center
Jennifer Reynolds, M.A.T., Development
Sharon Smith, M.S.W., Career & Counseling
Pamela Waterbury, M.F.A., English

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Aquinas College, an inclusive educational community rooted in the Catholic Dominican tradition, provides a liberal arts education with a global perspective, emphasizes career preparation focused on leadership and service to others, and fosters a commitment to lifelong learning dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the common good.