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**WOMEN AT THE CENTER:  
HISTORY OF WOMEN'S STUDIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE**

**TAPE LOG**

Dr. Jennifer Naccarelli is Assistant Professor and Associate Chair of the University of Delaware Women and Gender Studies Department. She has been at UD full time since 2011.

Name of person(s) interviewed: Jennifer Naccarelli

Other people present: No one else present

Interviewer: Marie Laberge

Date of interview: May 16, 2013

Location of interview: In office at Women and Gender Studies building, 34 West Delaware Ave., Newark, DE

Special conditions (noise, interruptions, etc.): Interview interrupted at one point by someone at the door.

General description of contents: Discussion about educational background and research topics. Arrival at UD and work with the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services program. Importance of the DVPS and possible expansion into other areas. Discussion of recent changes including move to Departmental status and name change. Politics around name change. Discussion about changes in the field and in our curriculum; graduate program, students concerns. Issues that still need to be addressed.

Recording Format and disc number: Video

Total Running Time: 35:48 min

Page 1 of 3

**TOPIC SUMMARY**

Counter No.    Contents

00:00    Background information: grew up in Wilmington, then Kennett Square, PA. 12 years of Catholic school education, attended Dickinson College, majored in Religion and Women's Studies. Always had a feminist identity. Attended a Methodist seminary, interested in transforming religious institutions.

1:39    Research in Master's degree in Theological Studies on feminist theology; Developed strong interest in women's monastic history and studied the sexual practices of nuns in early Modern Europe. Developed tools as religious historian, began to focus on individuals with strong religious identity who advocate for political change. Dissertation on Catholics involved in the American suffrage movement. Challenge previous historiography related to religious history and women's history about the suffrage movement.

**TAPE LOG CONTINUED**

Page 2 of 3

Counter No.                      Contents

3:15     Arrival at University of Delaware discussed. Wrote dissertation here, looked into different Religious and Women's Studies departments in the area. The person previously teaching UD Women and Religion class was no longer available, hired as adjunct to teach the class as well as Introduction to Feminist Theory. Wanted to connect research to lives of real women, so when position came up to coordinate the new Domestic Violence Prevention and Services program, applied in March 2011. September 2012 came on as full- time professor.

5:20     Discussion of the goals of the Domestic Violence Prevention and Services program. Discussion of the history and goals developed with the Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence, related to training advocates who work with domestic violence survivors. To ensure the feminist roots of advocacy would be maintained. Verizon Foundation involvement.

7:30     Discussion of how the Verizon Foundation resources provide students with summer practicum, and the placements of students in variety of programs across the state. Entering third summer, with over 6,000 hours of services with internships and practicum, and students have consistent training. Exchange between students sharing knowledge and return to program, helps address the current concerns in the field in our curriculum.

9:30     Discussion about connections between feminism and advocacy work, connecting theory and practice.

10:23    Very popular with students to be able to make connection between learning in class room and social change. See it growing but need to find ways to secure funding. May go into different directions, using model to create parallel program in sexual assault advocacy. Using model connecting field experiences with class room learning, now that we have the map in place.

12:22    Discussion about transition to departmental status: Makes visible our contributions to the University, provides foundation for envisioning other work in the future and possibly more lines in the department. Formalizes our procedures and practices. (interruption, someone at the door)

14:25    Discussion about the change in the name from Women's Studies to Women and Gender Studies. Was only involved with discussion peripherally. Has mixed feelings. It reflects changes in field and what students are attracted to, as well as what we have been doing anyway. Discomfort around concern that the work of representing women in traditional disciplines has not been completed, and is concerned that it might imply the original agenda of including women in curriculum has been completed. Need to be able to include both paths in interlocking way.

17:01    Discussion about how field of Women's Studies has changed over her career. Comments on debates in graduate school about what we should focus on. The work has not been accomplished yet. Field has evolved since then. Discussion on its impact on curriculum. Do a good job of pursuing both paths.

19:44    Discussion of curriculum changes over the last few years, expanding in context of violence against women both in home department as well as collaboration with other departments faculty. Exciting to have the collaboration between departments and students are excited by this. Discussion about theory classes and importance for our majors and why they are important. Need to be connected to real life experiences.

**TAPE LOG CONTINUED**

Page 3 of 3

Counter No.                      Contents

22:00 Discussion about graduate program – have certificate approved, but need to grow in faculty lines before we can really launch it. Do a great job of servicing large number undergraduates with small faculty, need more faculty to serve graduate students.

22:43 Discussion about what brings students to Women’s Studies. Two paths: an amazing experience with a faculty member and the mentoring they receive, and then discover their niche. Other path, experience of being victimized, or being afraid or feeling secondary. Example from class project and discussion about what is important to the students. Comparison with her own experiences focusing on reproductive rights, versus current students concern about violence against women.

25:22 Discussion about the many things students get from their women’s studies degree; different skills, as well as critical thinking skills and understanding of interlocking oppression.

26:51 Discussion about WOMS contributions to UD campus. Dedicated faculty on every committee on campus, diverse programming, conscience on campus, interested in social justice and mobilizing support, bring national attention to campus to train advocates in domestic violence.

28:15 Response to those who say WOMS is not a serious discipline. They are incorrect. If they look at scholarships, they would not say that. 40 years, growing in new directions, not going anywhere.

29:17 Why are we able to become a department while other programs shutting down? Serve a tremendous number of students, courses and faculty are popular, we make money. Have support of administration who want us to grow.

30:43 What still needs to be addressed – increase faculty and add to the security of non tenure track faculty and recognizing all faculty. Discussion of building.

31:35 Discussion about how we function administratively – need to build on current strengths; serving students and helping faculty needs; tough with one administrator so need more staff to be more efficient.

32:44 Other things we need to look at to make it another 40 years. Continue on paths we are already on. The more we connect educational experiences with diverse career paths for students the more secure we will be. Students want to work in ways that are transformative and we need to think about how to offer them that.

34:00 Anything else? “It’s a great place to be. I live in a feminist dreamland.” Comparison with colleagues in other colleges and how lucky she is here. Feel very lucky to have worked with Jessica Schiffman and be able to learn from her. Learn from everyone here.

35:48 End of Interview