National Council Says Women’s Research Still Crucial

Think equal pay is no longer a critical issue for women in the U.S.? Think again.

According to the National Council for Research on Women (NCRW), women still earn only 77 cents to every dollar earned by men – and have done so for the past 20 years.

Pay inequity is but one issue on NCRW’s growing research agenda.

The Council is a network of more than 100 leading U.S. research, advocacy, and policy centers with a growing global reach. It harnesses the resources of its network to ensure fully informed debate, policies, and practices to build a more inclusive and equitable world for women and girls.

Two-thirds of NCRW’s member centers are university-based, including CROW at the University of Memphis, and centers at Stanford, Spelman, Michigan, and Harvard. Others are policy and advocacy centers such as Girls Inc, the National Women’s Law Center, Ms. Foundation, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, and the White House Project.

Founded 25 years ago through a major funding initiative by The Ford Foundation, the Council works collectively with its member centers to influence public policy.

Wanda Rushing New Director of Women’s Studies

Dr. Wanda Rushing has accepted the position of Director of Women’s Studies at the University of Memphis beginning Fall 2007.

An Associate Professor of Sociology, she has been a faculty member at the University of Memphis since 1998. Her interdisciplinary research interests focus primarily on globalization and inequality in the U.S. South.

The graduate program, begun in 2003, offers advanced interdisciplinary studies in the diverse historical and contemporary experiences of women of all races. Students elect a concentration in Inequality and Social Policy or in Cultural Studies.

Dr. Rushing plans to build on the teaching and research goals of the Women’s Studies program. “I’d like to begin working with our faculty affiliates to strengthen the academic curriculum, to provide additional..."
The Center for Research on Women celebrates its Silver Anniversary this year... that’s 25 years of research focused on issues of gender, race, class, and social inequality. To commemorate this milestone, and to raise awareness and support for research that improves women’s lives, we wanted to create something truly special.

That something became SnapShots, a group of photographs by 25 of Memphis’ most influential women. Each was asked to take a photo of a “woman at work” and the subject was of her own choosing. The exhibit, held last Saturday, was a remarkable reflection of the breadth and scope of work being done by women in Memphis every day. We are pleased to share a few of these remarkable photographs with our StandPoint readers in this issue.

Although women have made strides toward economic equality in the last twenty five years, economic self-sufficiency remains a critical concern. According to the National Network for Women’s Employment, women continue to earn less than men and are nearly twice as likely to be poor than men. Women have made gains in professional jobs traditionally dominated by men, but have made relatively little progress in blue collar occupations. As a result, many women remain segregated in the lowest-paying jobs in our country.

From a 1984 project by one of CROW’s founders, Elizabeth Higginbotham, entitled Work and Survival for Black Women, to the definitive study in 1999 on a living wage in Memphis (CROW Affiliate David Ciscel), to a current study of local job training programs for low-income women (CROW Affiliates Phyllis Betts and Jane Henrici with the Memphis Area Women’s Council), the Center has consistently invested in research concerning women, wages, and economic self-sufficiency.

In this issue of StandPoint we take the opportunity to reflect back on some of the work-related research published by CROW over the past 25 years. Excerpts from several studies, working papers, and other publications reflect the Center’s original and continued investment in research concerning women, wages, and economic self-sufficiency.

This issue will also introduce readers to the new Director of Women’s Studies at UofM, Dr. Wanda Rushing. Dr. Rushing is a professor of Sociology, long-time CROW affiliate, and active researcher. Her experience and expertise will be valuable assets to Women’s Studies, and we look forward to continuing our productive partnership with the faculty and students in the program.

And finally, a pledge: The majority of U.S. families rely on women’s wages to make ends meet. Because women’s economic security is critical to the economic well being of our community and our nation, CROW pledges a continued commitment to research that fuels the fight for economic justice for women.

Dr. Lynda Sagrestano, Director
Center for Research on Women
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New Academic Year Brings Exciting Research Agenda

CROW begins its 25th Fall semester with a busy roster of research initiatives in both active and developmental phases. A brief overview includes the following projects:

Sexual Harassment of Teens in Memphis Middle and High Schools

This joint project with the Memphis Area Women’s Council (MAWC) follows a pilot study conducted last spring by Girls for Change, a girls’ leadership project of CROW, MAWC, and the UofM Women’s Studies program, which indicated that harassment may be a significant problem in local schools.

The investigators will survey 500 middle and high school-aged youth in Memphis about the frequency, types, and long-term impact of sexual harassment experienced by teenagers in Memphis middle and high schools. The project is supported in part by The Urban Child Institute and the University of Memphis Faculty Research Grant Program.

Memphis Safe Campus Project

In addition to participating in a Department of Justice funded consortium project to reduce and prevent violence against women on four Memphis college campuses, CROW is conducting an independent assessment of students’ experiences with crime and related safety issues on the UofM campus.

Infant Mortality in Memphis

In this project, CROW researchers will be evaluating a new program designed to improve maternal health and to reduce premature births and infant mortality. The program, entitled Community Voice, will be implemented in Memphis by the March of Dimes in response to Governor Bredesen’s Tennessee Infant Mortality Initiative. This multi-year project will be supported in part by the Tennessee Governor’s Office of Children’s Care Coordination.

Preconception Health

CROW is currently developing a project that would address pregnancy planning, timing, and preparation for healthy pregnancy among urban adolescent girls, with the goals of preventing unintended pregnancy and adverse birth outcomes.

Women’s Economic Self-Sufficiency and Workforce Development Efforts in Memphis

In this project CROW is working as a partner with the Memphis Area Women’s Council to assess current local workforce developments efforts for women and to create a long term plan to improve women’s economic self sufficiency in Memphis and Shelby County.

Strategic Plan to Reduce and Prevent Adolescent and Unintended Pregnancies in Shelby County

CROW has developed a proposal to use an Action-driven Community-based Transformation (ACT) protocol to 1) assess the scope and segmentation of adolescent sexual behavior in Shelby County; 2) conduct asset inventory and gap analyses with respect to local services related to adolescent reproductive health; 3) document the extent to which current programming adheres to best practices established at the national level, and 4) develop benchmarks, recommendations, and a strategic plan for use by the community.

Supporting Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

CROW’s Director is partnering with other UofM administrators to develop a program to systematically increase the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women faculty in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines at the University of Memphis.
From the Beginning

“Our research strengths are in the social sciences and we plan to build upon them. We will do this through focusing upon the social structure and its impact on women’s lives. Specifically, we plan to study women within the context of the political economy, to look at the social organization of work, and the relationship of work and personal life. These three themes infuse our research activities and plans for both target populations. Other issues of importance to our study of working class women in the South include: the intersection of race, class, and gender; the movement of rural people to urban settings; and the impact of institutions, such as legal, educational, and religious institutions on the relationship of work and personal life.”

By Bonnie Thornton Dill

Center News, Issue I, Director’s Column
published by the Center for Research on Women,
December 1982
Employment for Professional Black Women

“There is no group of Black Women, outside the elite of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida Wells-Barnett, and Mary Bethune, more subject to “exceptionalism” perspectives than Black professional women. They are assumed to have moved through the cracks of racism and sexism to prestigious employment. There are myths about the ease with which Black women achieve success. In the face of misperceptions and the continued growth of the Black middle class, there is a need for theoretical work which places their achievements within a broader context. Such a perspective would explicate how they are restrained by racial and sexual barriers. It would also highlight how oppression differentially affects poor, working class and middle class Black women and professional Black and White women.

Black people have fewer life choices than Whites in the same class position. This is especially true for Black females. Blocked access into many traditionally female occupations forced Black women to seek alternatives. The only significant mobility channel for those with the opportunity was higher education. Both in direct and indirect ways, racism spurred the growth of a small group of Black Professional women. As Black women completed their educational training, they found that both racism and sexism shaped the nature of professional employment for them. This paper uses historical research and sociological studies of the Black community to detail the segmentation of Black professional women.”

By Elizabeth Higginbotham
From Employment for Professional Black Women In The Twentieth Century, published by the Center for Research on Women, 1985

Dr. Dupont is shown here playing with children who attend Hope House daycare. Betty is the heart behind this incredible place. As the only daycare in the state of Tennessee for children infected or affected by HIV and AIDS, it plays a critical part in the strengthening and survival of young families impacted by these viruses. Betty is the smile and encouragement they receive each day. She is the source of so much hope.

Elizabeth M. Dupont
Photo by Mary Trotz
President, Junior League of Memphis

Ms. Laretha Harris Randolph
Philanthropist

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1985
“Studies have shown how many historical epochs which were traditionally viewed by historians as moments of fundamental progressive social change, such as Renaissance, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution often resulted in a reduction of women’s work outside of the home and increased restrictions on women’s social roles, power and privileges. Such findings have not merely added to our historical understanding, but have shaken the conceptual foundations of historical thought, particularly in regard to various theories of social change and development.

Since the abolition of slavery and its replacement by the sharecropping system is viewed both as major progressive transformation in the social relations characterizing southern agricultural production and as a transformation which also witnessed a reduction in rural Black women’s work outside of the home, this study provides an intriguing historical case by which to examine these theses.”

By Susan Archer Mann

From Southern Women: The Intersection of Race, Class and Gender, Working Paper 3

“Social Change and Sexual Inequality: The Impact of the Transition from Slavery to Sharecropping on Black Women”, published by the Center for Research on Women, 1986
Female Slave Participation in the Urban Market Economy

“My research indicates that slave owners and employers continued to select workers on the basis of gender, rather than ability for reasons that are entirely clear. Only in rare cases did the profit motive outweigh gender conventions, and even then sex differences were not entirely discarded. The unequal treatment of African-American male and female slaves is demonstrated by the conspicuous absence of Female workers in various state industries during the Revolutionary War. At a time when labor demands were great and hundreds of slave workers, skilled and unskilled, young and old, were being purchased, hired and impressed into the workshops, only a handful of women could be found on the rolls. These few bondwomen generally performed domestic chores such as cooking and washing for the male slave workers and military officers. The two slave women who worked at the public foundry, for example, were specifically hired to ‘answer the purpose for which women are wanted...to cook and wash for the tradesmen...’.”

By Midori Takagi

Nicole’s son and mine have played basketball together since they were 8 years old (they are now both in high school.) Her son spent a lot of time in my care when we traveled for the team and I fell in love with him, his mother and family.

Nicole has had a very difficult life. She was put in the foster-care system at age 7 and had her first of three children at 15. Nicole struggles with reading and therefore she struggles with employment.

I admire how hard she tries, her courage and determination.

Nicole Howell
Photo by Gayle S. Rose
Philanthropist
Principal Owner, CEO, EVS Corporation
“Understanding the nuances in the ways that Black and White women—especially in the same structural locations and/or workplaces—perceive and respond to race and gender inequality is a critical project for social change. This research seeks to contribute to that project by directly assessing these basic questions about the nature of Black and White professional and managerial women’s experiences with discrimination in the workplace. First, we assess the extent to which Black and White women professionals and managers perceive discriminatory treatment in key dimensions of their work including the reward structures of rank, pay, and promotions as well as everyday interactions where they confront controlling images of women. Second, we identify similarities and differences in the ways that Black and White women professionals and managers perceive both race and gender discrimination. And finally, we examine the ways that different racial experiences with gender inequality shape future career plans.”

By Lynn Weber and Elizabeth Higginbotham

From Perceptions of Workplace Discrimination Among Black and White Professional-Managerial Women, published by the Center for Research on Women, 1995

Gertrude Purdue

It is my pleasure to present Gertrude Purdue. At the age of 14 she determined that her life would be dedicated to the service of God, and she never veered from that path. For 43 years she was a full time enlisted officer of the Salvation Army followed by 34 years of volunteer work during her “retirement.” Gertrude’s tireless enthusiasm for staying involved in multiple ways to share the love of God is a tremendous inspiration; she is 98 years young.
A Living Wage for Memphis

“The Living Wage is a concept that allows us to measure the level of income required for a family to live independent of monthly public assistance, food stamps, childcare subsidies, and rent subsidies. A Living Wage can be calculated for any region or metropolitan area and, although the answer is dependent on the type and size of family, it yields a specific dollar figure for each family configuration.

In Memphis, a Living Wage for an adult with one or two children (a common family configuration for a woman coming off of welfare) is between $22,306 and $27,225 per year. If she can find full-time employment (40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year), self-sufficiency requires an hourly wage of $11.15 if she has one child, $13.61 if she has two children.

In Memphis, a Living Wage for a family with two working adults and one or two children is between $27,390 and $31,220 per year. If one adult works 40 hours per week and the other works 30 hours per week (50 weeks per year), then self-sufficiency requires an hourly wage of $7.83 for each worker in a family with one child and $8.92 for each worker in a family with two children.”

by David Ciscel
From What is A Living Wage for Memphis?, published by the Center for Research on Women, 1999
Latina Workers in Memphis

“Not surprisingly, the gender segregation that prevails throughout the U.S labor force is found among Latino workers as well. Only 1 of the 227 construction workers reported is female and only 2 women are found among the 90 Latino transportation and communication workers. But women account for 74% of the Latinos employed in finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) and 44% of those in the retail, restaurants, and hotels sector—the two sectors in which firms are most likely to hire Latinos. The number of women in these two sectors is especially striking when the extremely high male/female ratio of Shelby County’s adult Hispanic population is taken into account.

News on the wage front is mixed for Latinas. While they are largely excluded from the transportation and communication sector, which has the highest average hourly wage, they are concentrated in the sector (FIRE) with the third highest wage rate (medical and professional services being the second highest). Women employed in the retail, restaurants, and hotels sector, however, receive among the lowest hourly wages. Women comprise 179 of the 882 Latino hourly workers reported, suggesting that Latinas are about half as likely to work in any of these industries as men.”

by Marcela Mendoza and Barbara Ellen Smith, graduate students Ying-Ying Yu, Gerise Guy, and Peter B. Walls, along with a team from The Work Place, Inc. From Memphis’s New Latino Workforce, published by the Center for Research on Women, 2002

Maria Elena Balderas
Photo by Rosalva King
President, Visa, Inc.

As a pharmacy technician, Maria follows the instructions of doctors and pharmacists in making sure prescriptions are filled properly. She is bilingual and often serves as an interpreter. I have observed her progress as an immigrant becoming a Naturalized U.S. Citizen. She is a working mother who has achieved and made great strides in the pharmacy department at Kroger. She is helpful in working with Hispanics so they understand what their medications are for and how to use them properly.
Job Training for Low-Income Women in the U.S.

“While it is true that an education or skill training might help women more than men find employment, women nevertheless continue to earn less than men with the same preparation at the same work; tend to be channeled by both training programs and the labor market into lower paying jobs than are men; and because of gendered expectations with regard to parenting and other care-giving require a wider set of services than do men before program completion, much less employment, is possible. Studies that concentrate on results for women of racial and ethnic minorities additionally suggest that a need for K-12 education improvements could supercede adult training as a priority.”

By Jane Henrici

From Training Them to Take it: Research on Job Training for Low-Income Women in the U.S., published by the Center for Research on Women, Spring 2004 StandPoint

Dr. Tejwani, an OB-GYN, is checking out a baby she delivered the previous day at St. Francis Hospital. Indu is one of the first physicians of Indian heritage in Memphis. I have stood on her shoulders and it is because of her struggles that barriers were taken down and I now have a voice that is heard. I have always admired her courage and compassion in the face of challenge and controversy. As much as I admire her role as a very successful obstetrician in Memphis who has delivered about 5000 babies and counting, I admire her more for the dozens of “random acts of kindness” she commits every day.

Indu Tejwani

Photo by Shaila Karkera

President, Indian Community Fund for Greater Memphis
Don’t forget CROW in your list of annual charitable contributions…

Our researchers are working on issues of vital importance to women and girls in Memphis, the U.S. South, and the nation, including:

- Teen pregnancy and sexual risk-taking
- Low wage jobs
- Unfair labor practices
- Sexual harassment in the schools
- Gender and race related disparities in health care & health research
- Immigration
- Violence Against Women

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Thanks to our Contributors & Advertisers
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A special thanks to our SnapShots sponsors


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The Center for Research on Women Salutes its Directors

Dr. Bonnie Thornton Dill (1982 - 1988)  
Dr. Lynn Weber (1988 - 1994)  
Dr. Elizabeth Higginbotham (1994 - 1998)  
Dr. Barbara Ellen Smith (1998 - 2005)  
Dr. Lynda Sagrestano (2006 - present)
thinking, debate and policy.

“We need research to give us a realistic, in-depth look at how women and their families are actually managing in this society,” says Linda Basch, President of NCRW. “Without data and hard facts, it is impossible to measure the status of women and girls and know in which areas they are still struggling.”

While some progress has been made in the last 25 years, NCRW says that in 2007:

Women are still massively underrepresented in the sciences. Despite substantial gains in the number of women pursuing graduate degrees in the sciences, women currently earn only 23.6% of all PhDs in math & computer science, 26.7% in the physical sciences, and only 18.3% in engineering.

There are too few female tenured professors. Despite the fact that women have been at least half of all college undergraduates since 1978, women represent only 31% of all tenured faculty nationwide, only 9% of private doctoral granting universities boast women presidents, and 16% of public doctoral granting universities have women presidents.

Women are underrepresented in corporate leadership. Women have made up more than 40% of the workforce since 1977, and are currently almost 50%, yet only 10 women are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

Too few women lawyers make partner. Women have been 40% of all law school students since 1995, and 50% since 2001, but are only 17.9% of partners in law firms nationwide. Only 1.48% of partners in law firms are minority women.

Men still dominate the airwaves. Women make up only 14% of the national “experts” on Sunday morning political talk shows, and only 13% of guests featured during the first segment were women. Of the female guests, only 14% were asked to appear for a repeat visit. 56% of all episodes featured zero female guests.

Women are poorer. Women constitute about 70% of the world’s absolute poor – those living on less than a dollar a day. Although women make up 50% of the world’s population, women own less than 2% of all land and receive less than 5% of all support services. In the United States in 2005, there were 21 million women living below the poverty level.

Women are plagued with HIV/AIDS. Today, women around the world account for nearly half (48%) of the 40 million people living with HIV, and women in sub-Saharan Africa account for 59%. Young people account for half of all new HIV infections worldwide. By the end of 2006, 39.5 million people worldwide were living with HIV; 17.7 million of these people were women. In 2005, women accounted for 26% of the estimated 37,163 diagnoses of HIV/AIDS for adults and adolescents in the US. From the time the epidemic began in 1981 to 2005, women accounted for 181,802 diagnoses, which is 19% of the total diagnoses in the US. In 2003, HIV infection was the leading cause of death for black women ages 25-34. The rate of AIDS diagnosis for black women is 23 times the rate for white women and 4 times the rate for Hispanic women.

Women are trafficked. Of the 800,000 to nearly 4 million people trafficked internationally every year, 80% are female, and 50% of those females are children. Of the 17,500 people trafficked into the US each year, it is estimated that 80% are female, and 50% of those females are children.

Says Basch, “Today, our work is as vital as ever as we challenge the myths and misinformation about the lives of women and girls.” In these efforts, CROW is proud to continue its long relationship as a member center of the National Council.
Let me start by taking you back just a few years to the 2000 Status of Women report for Memphis and Shelby County.

It was abysmal. Data that was localized by the Center for Research on Women showed that women here were not achieving equity in education, in health care, in wages and income, in political participation – in anything.

In fact the data showed that the situation was dire for thousands of women, many of whom are alone and responsible for housing, feeding and rearing children.

Why were these numbers so bleak? Why hadn’t the child care efforts and the job training programs and the welfare reforms and the many job readiness/resume writing workshops and career clothes closets turned this around?

It became clear that a primary reason that circumstances were still so dire is that basic policies and procedures, laws and protocols, that were unfriendly to women, inequitable in fact, were still in place or were still being created!

So – what should be done? The Memphis Area Women’s Council was created to answer that question. And it was created by leadership at the Center for Research on Women.

Working with Ruby Bright, executive director of the Women’s Foundation for a Greater Memphis, and other veteran activists, CROW leaders convened conversations and discussions that drew from 30 to 100 people over the next two years.

The vision was that CROW would continue to be a generator of pertinent research into women’s issues. The Women’s Foundation would continue its philanthropy and grant making to support women’s leadership and economic self-sufficiency. And the Council would link research with local activists and advocates, mobilize women from across the community to take action and change local policies and procedures that perpetuate inequity.

“It’s hard to move toward institutional change, rather than create another social program or service,” said Dr. Barbara Ellen Smith, CROW director from 1996 to 2005.

“Changing institutional practices, leveraging collective power to change practice – that is what the Memphis Area Women’s Council is created to do.”

Smith became the first MAWC board president and CROW provided office space and support for the new organization, a relationship that continues today. Dr. Phyllis Betts, longtime CROWN affiliate and CROW associate director since 2002, was a founding board member and serves today as board secretary. Dr. Lynda Sagrestano, CROW director, joined the MAWC board in February.

As envisioned by the founders, CROW research has informed and inspired much of MAWC’s action agenda to date:

- The local Living Wage project, which CROW initiated with a 1999 study by CROW affiliate Dr. David Ciscel, became MAWC’s first economic action project. MAWC joined the steering committee for the Living Wage Campaign which succeeded in setting a living wage for Memphis and Shelby County government employees.
- Dr. Betts’ previous work on violence against women informed early work on MAWC’s Domestic Violence Court Watch project and its observation tool used by volunteers.
- Data on the status of women and barriers to economic stability fueled creation of MAWC’s Workforce Action Collaborative, funded by the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis and chaired by Dr. Betts.

Memphis Area Women’s Council
Fueling action programs for women and girls – CROW’s community legacy

MAWC is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to local policy change in women’s health and health care, economic self-sufficiency and educational equity and reform.

MAWC is a 501(c) 3 organization

Donations to MAWC are tax-deductible as allowed by law and memberships are welcome.

For action updates and other information see MAWC’s website, www.memphiswomen.org.

Memphis Area Women’s Council
c/o Center for Research on Women
337 Clement Hall,
Univ. of Memphis
Memphis, TN 38152
678-2642

Deborah Clubb
Executive Director
Memphis Area Women’s Council

University of Memphis
Center for Research on Women
Selected publications available from

**Center for Research on Women**

*Across Races & Nations: Building New Communities in the U.S. South*, 2007 (370 pages), English and Spanish, $25.00 + shipping & handling


*“This Work Had A’ End:” The Transition from Live-In to Day Work*, Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. 1985 (53 pages), $6.


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**CROW Scholar Receives International Award**

Dr. Sharon Horne, CROW affiliate and associate professor in Counseling Psychology, was recently awarded The Denmark-Reuder Award for Excellence in the International Psychology of Women by The Division of International Psychology of the American Psychological Association. This award is presented annually to a psychologist who has conducted outstanding research focused upon the psychology of women internationally and whose work has had a significant impact at an international level.

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**CROW Scholar Receives International Award**

Dr. Sharon Horne

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**Women’s Studies, page 1, cont’d**

opportunities for graduate research, and to increase visibility in regional and national conferences,” says Dr. Rushing. “We want to encourage more undergraduate students to obtain a minor in Women’s Studies in addition to recruiting additional graduate students to pursue the Master of Arts degree.”

For more information on the Women’s Studies program contact Dr. Rushing at 901.678.3349.

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**Council, page 14, cont’d**

- CROW’s work in the 1990s on challenges facing adolescent girls inspired *Girls for Change*, a leadership empowerment series for ages 13-17 co-sponsored by MAWC, CROW and the UofM Women’s Studies program. With new funding from The Urban Child Institute, CROW and MAWC will survey 500 local students to gauge school safety around issues of sexual harassment and to equip girls with data for their own action project to make schools safe.

On this 25th anniversary of CROW, MAWC stands ready and eager for ever more successful linkage of research with activism.
Researchers at CROW examine problems of social inequality as they relate to gender, race, class and sexual orientation.

Based in the College of Arts & Sciences, this nationally recognized Center collaborates with scholars in psychology, history, sociology, anthropology, economics, health sciences, public administration, communications, the arts and other fields. CROW researchers also partner with government agencies and non-profits to address specific community needs and concerns.

CROW’s brand of action-oriented, community-based research strengthens the public’s understanding of women’s experiences in Memphis and contributes to local, regional and national policy discussions.

The University of Memphis, a Tennessee Board of Regents institution, is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University. It is committed to education of a non-racially identifiable student body.