

Dr. Lena McQuade
Sabbatical Report, Spring 2017

I would like to thank Sonoma State University for awarding me a sabbatical in the Spring of 2017 to pursue my research into histories of community health care. In particular, my research focused on how communities envisioned and worked to provide free health care to those who have been marginalized and/or excluded from mainstream health care by the intersections of racism, sexism, and economic inequity. With the support of this award, I was able to conduct two research projects: 1) “‘Birth Control Was Just A Part Of It’: The Santa Fe, New Mexico Maternal Health Center (1937-1996) and 2) “‘For People, Not Profit:’ The History of the Berkeley Free Clinic (1996-Present).” What follows is an overview of my sabbatical activities:

Affiliated Scholar with the Beatrice Bain Research Group, University of California, Berkeley

While on sabbatical, I joined the University of California at Berkeley Beatrice Bain Research Group (BBRG) Affiliated Scholars Program in the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies. Through this position, I met in a weekly working-group with national and international gender studies scholars. This position also granted me access to the vast archival collections housed through UCB. I conducted extensive archival research into the papers of noted birth control advocate Margaret Sanger and into the papers of the Berkeley Free Clinic. Culminating my work with the BBRG, I presented my research “Beyond Just Birth Control: Rethinking the Origins of Planned Parenthood” at UCB. This opportunity was an enriching scholarly experience and also very productive for networking with other WGS scholars. Most notable was my ability to discuss and receive feedback on our plans for the re-articulation of the SSU WGS major and our creation of an “Intro to WGS” course.

Article Under Consideration: “‘Birth Control Was Just A Part Of It: The Santa Fe Maternal Health Center, 1937-1996.”

A major project during my sabbatical was writing an article on the history of the first free birth control clinic in Santa Fe, New Mexico. My article, “‘Birth Control Was Just A Part Of It: The Santa Fe Maternal Health Center, 1937-1996,” is under consideration with the *Journal of Women’s History*. This article centers the effects of New Mexico’s high infant mortality rate on the development of the clinic—namely in the clinic’s expansion of services beyond contraception into an array of general medical care and social services. This research is grounded in theories of reproductive justice that center not only how women have sought to prevent pregnancy but also how women endeavor to be parents and care for their families. I argue that infant mortality, stemming from lack of medical access and civic infrastructure to safeguard health, was a key example of “reproductive oppression” faced by the women of Santa Fe. To address this health disparity, the founders of this birth control clinic consistently expanded the clinic’s mission beyond simply providing contraceptives to include a whole range of reproductive and general medical care. Most birth control clinics established by Margaret Sanger in the 1930’s merged into Planned Parenthood clinics when that organization was founded in 1942. However, the Santa Fe clinic, which always had a much broader vision for reproductive health care, remained an independent birth control clinic into the 1970s.

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Reflecting on the Santa Fe Maternal Health Center illuminates not only this local clinic's specific history but also the early history of Planned Parenthood and the distinctions drawn between contraceptive provision, women's reproductive health care, and general health services.

Ongoing Research Project: "For People, Not Profit: The History of the Berkeley Free Clinic (1996-Present)"

During my sabbatical, I began the first phase of data collection into the history of the Berkeley Free Clinic. This clinic emerged in 1969 out of community efforts to address "street people" and "transient, counter culture youth" as well as protesters who were injured in confrontations with the police during the "People's Park" riots/rebellion. From its origins, the Berkeley Free Clinic challenged the hierarchal structure of traditional medicine through its political mission envisioning health care as a social movement and a human right. My initial research into this organization included participant observation as I volunteered with the Peer Counseling Collective, Fall 2016-Spring 2017. In addition, I conducted a literature review of community health organizing during the 1960s-1980s and archival research at the Berkeley Graduate Theological Union and at the Bancroft Library. Based on these sources, I am drafting an article "For People, Not Profit: The History of the Berkeley Free Clinic (1996-Present)," which I hope to complete in Summer 2018.

Faculty Mentor: 2017 School of Social Sciences Undergraduate Research Initiative

This summer, I had the pleasure of working with an undergraduate student through a grant provided by the School of Social Science Undergraduate Research Initiative. Together we have been searching the digitized archival collections of the Berkeley Free Clinic and related organizations and sources. This has been a great opportunity to mentor an undergraduate student in archival research methodology.

In sum, my Spring 2017 sabbatical has been fruitful in advancing my scholarship, networking with other WGS programs, and learning new ways to mentor and teach undergraduate students feminist-informed historical methodologies. I am grateful for this opportunity to "dive-deep" into my research and I look forward to bringing this knowledge and experience into my teaching and service work at SSU.