

May 4, 1973

Dear Jean,

As women growing up in this society, many of us have come to the realization that we have had very little, if anything, to say about what we wanted our lives to be. Some of us have been more fortunate than others in this respect, and we are learning how to make ourselves heard. It is, however, a male-dominated world, and there are many avenues closed to us all.

Because our lives have been so decided by others, we have become very cautious in seeing that we don't continue that process of "deciding for others," of telling people what they need or want without consulting them. To set up a far-reaching, expansive women's center is a high and wonderful goal; but it will only attain this goal if many, different women support it. Women must not again be told that someone else knows what their needs are.

If you continue to assume that you are able to access the needs of other women, you are ignoring the work of many women in this community over the past several years and in the present who are fighting for themselves and other women. You will also be continuing the process of making decisions for women and not allowing them to do so for themselves. The fact that you are women only means that you share some of their oppressions. You are all professional women expanding a very small age bracket, making you a very small minority making decisions for the majority.

You have worked long and hard on this project and may have become understandably possessive of it. Your actions, however, are going to affect the lives of many women in the years to come. Do you feel, considering this, that you can continue along this same path? Does not the women's center belong to all women, and not a few who have been fortunate enough to come up with the idea and the knowledge, experience and power to work on it?

According to the proposal, the funding is to come from the university. We remind you that this university is controlled by men, who would in turn end up in control of the women's center. There are other avenues of funding which can be explored.

We believe the women's center must be by and for women, not just a small number of women; but as far-reaching as possible. Otherwise it will fail. Because we feel this is your

goal also, we ask you to reexamine your methods. We must not continue to separate ourselves, but reach out to as many of our sisters as possible.

We are sending this letter to each member of the women's center committee in hopes that you will look into this matter in privacy before you do so collectively, both are necessary. May we hear from you in the near future to discuss our center?

In sisterhood and struggle,

Women from Ames and Des Moines
involved in the following organi-
zations:

N.O.W.

Welfare Rights Organization

Lesbian Alliance

Women's Coalition

Women's Political Caucus

Ames Free Daycare Center

and the communities at large.

Two women you can contact:

Karen Moore 233-1468

Susan Asnin 233-1475

