



The Women's Network

4th UVic Women's Conference
February 18, 1998

UVIC WOMEN FLEX THEIR MUSCLES

By Susan Danard
Times Colonist staff

How to swing through the jungle without slipping off the vine was a topic explored by the UVic Women's Conference Wednesday.

More than 250 women attended the conference, which focused on the accomplishments and concerns of female students, staff and faculty at the university.

Stress management, successful entrepreneurship, and negotiating personal space were among the workshops offered to fit the conference's theme, "It's a Jungle Out There?"

High among UVic women's concerns "is balancing work and family. It's huge." Linda Sproule-Jones, UVic director of equity issues, said in an interview.

The issue is becoming increasingly important as more women take on demanding careers in addition to work at home.

"This shows how far we've come, that these are our stressors," Sproule-Jones said.

"What we are trying to do is to give (women on campus) a good feeling, to show them that

they are appreciated," said Kathy Harris, one of the conference's volunteer organizers.

Only 205 of 643 regular faculty at UVic are women. But this is an improvement since the beginning of the decade and a higher percentage than that of many other Canadian universities, Sproule-Jones said.

UVic departments are working on equity action plans to improve the recruitment and retention of women, aboriginal people and other special groups.

The conference's keynote speaker was Nancy Turner, an ethnobotanist and UVic professor of environmental studies who has worked with First Nations elders for nearly 30 years documenting traditional botanical knowledge.

In her address, One Woman's Wilderness is Another Woman's Garden, Turner said while Europeans saw B.C. as "a savage wilderness that had to be tamed," native people had derived a living from the land for millennia.

These differing attitudes "are still a big problem."

Eight UVic women who have made outstanding contributions to the university were recognized: Cecilia Benoit, Janice Currier, Sandra Franca Guarascio, Lucille MacKay, Margo Matwychuk, Mary Jane McLachlan, Frances Ricks and Sharon Anne Warren.

If you would like more information about the conference please contact one of the co-moderators: Judy at 721-7419 e-mail jpayne@uvic.ca, Theresa at 721-8370 e-mail tsabouri@uvic.ca, or Kathy at 721-6163 e-mail kharris@uvvm.uvic.ca.