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University at Albany

Sheri Sarnoff

History Honors Thesis

University at Albany

On October 9 1970, the Albany Student Press, the University at Albany's student newspaper, featured an article entitled, "Day Care A Basic Issue," which discussed the Pierce Hall Day Care Center. The students using the center claimed that the University's Administration contradicted their original support for the on-campus daycare center. The students exclaimed, "issue after issue has been fabricated (Space, money etc) to stall the progress on the Center."¹ The article also featured a quote from a spokeswoman from the Women's Liberation Front arguing that, "the Administration has continually enjoyed putting forth the facade of working with women, when in reality it has worked in opposition to the program detailed in the original demands of the concerned women, parents, and their supporters."² Announcing that the Administration claimed that no funds could be appropriated, the spokeswoman went on to say, that the Administration refused to "recognize the basic issue of (this) entire struggle, the oppression of women in a male dominated society."³

One year later, the Albany Student Press released another article about daycare entitled, "Day Care Opening Delayed Due to Insufficient Funds." A group of parents who needed the on-campus daycare center, created a club called the University Parents for Day Care so that they could receive funding from the Student Association. The club's bylaws included that membership, "shall consist of all parents of children served by the facility and all those who pledge their services towards the continuance of this program both in the operation of the day

¹ "Day Care: A Basic Issue," Albany Student Press, Series 3, Student Newspaper Collection, 1916-2015. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Student Newspaper Collection), October 9th, 1970

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

care center and the administration of the sponsoring corporation.”⁴ All members had to pay \$5 per year and attend regular club meetings. The parents also willingly stated that they would give credit to students who needed community service in exchange for their help.⁵

Over a one-year period, the topic of an on-campus daycare center went from one of women’s politics to one of family needs. Their struggle to create and maintain on-campus daycare center helped lay the foundation for the investment of childcare at a University setting.

Historians often look at universities as case studies to show correlations between student protests and national unrest throughout the 1960’s. Historians like Helen Lefkowitz- Horowitz, often mention the Cold War’s impact on how the student protests of the 1960’s played out on college campuses. Horowitz argued that the Cold War, specifically “when the Russians launched Sputnik, talk of growth and excellence pervaded public debate and led to federal and state appropriations for higher education.”⁶ By the late 1960’s, historians noted that the students entering colleges and universities fought with the administrations, specifically, “against the notion that college was a factory in which the faculty turned out intelligent and efficient professional products for the society.”⁷ College campuses began to become a place where, “students allied with faculty...to wrest control of the educational process from the administrative bureaucracy.”⁸ Historians have also examined how student rebellions of the 1960’s, sparked by Civil Rights activists and the New Left’s democratic stance, allowed for a “rights consciousness movement,” that eventually gave way to the women’s movement on college campuses.

⁴ “Day Care Opening Delayed Due to Insufficient Funds,” Student Newspaper Collection, November 5th, 1971

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *"The 1960s and the Transformation of Campus Cultures."* (*History of Education Quarterly* 26, no. 1 1986), 11.

⁷ Ibid., 17

⁸ Ibid., 18

Historians have looked into the women's movement. Women across the nation began to fight for rights such as health care and the right to work outside of their homes. During the 1960's, liberal women across the nation began to demand universal free childcare. Prior to the 1960's, the federal government only granted funded childcare to those families that participated in World War II.⁹ When the war ended, and those fighting came home, the childcare grants ended. The idea of a nuclear family, where the man went to work, and the mother stayed home to take care of the children and the household became prevalent.

When the government began to suggest that women go to school due to threats of the Cold War, women began to demand publically funded childcare. These women, according to the government, needed to work to create a stable economy and their children needed to be raised in a society where they could become promising citizens. How could women go back to work or school if they had little to no help taking care of their children? To gain government support, Betty Friedan, author of the *Feminine Mystique*, co-founded the National Organization of Women (N.O.W.) N.O.W.'s statement in 1966, "called for a nationwide network of childcare centers."¹⁰ The federal government who wanted to push women to go to college before having children seemed uninterested about the women, specifically mothers, who wanted to go back to school. Historians have often neglected to discuss that maybe the government felt that college women in their eyes, could not physically work full time, take care of children, and go to school. Why should the government have to pay for their childcare if these women did not help the economy?

⁹ For more information about childcare during and after World War II please refer to; Dinner, Deborah. "*The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966–1974.*" (*Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 2010), 577–628.

¹⁰Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*. New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2000. (79)

College women, following those in the women's movement, began to fight against inequalities on their campuses. Historian Ruth Rosenberg examined the idea that women growing up in the 1950's, "sensed the bitterness and disappointment of so many adult women."¹¹ Eventually, "these daughters came of age eagerly mapping escapes from what they regarded as the claustrophobic constraints of the fifties."¹² Many women, during the 1960's began to use educational institutions as a way to escape these gender constraints. As a result, more women began entering the university setting. Women began to form clubs, get involved in politics, create classes dedicated to women's studies and even demanded better healthcare facilities. Women on college campuses not only fought to gain classes that studied women and women's history but also for better health care. Discussion on the struggle women's groups faced to get daycare on college campuses is limited. University administrators, "seemed completely oblivious to the special needs [of] older students," and "campus child care was essentially nonexistent."¹³ Specifically, the untold story of the fight that groups went through with their university's administration to create and maintain an on-campus daycare center.

Liberal feminists also worked to fight against discrimination based on sex, saw childcare as a "basic social dilemma which society must solve."¹⁴ These liberal women argued that their government needed to intervene to help the family. Members of the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) argued that "families have chained women to their reproductive function by implying that...the woman who bears a child should be solely responsible for its raising."¹⁵

Studies done in the 1940's and 1950's argued that women who went to work, created a hostile

¹¹ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*. (New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2000,) 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, 3

¹³ Mendelsohn, Pam *Happier by Degrees: A College Reentry Guide for Women*. (Penn State University: Ten Speed Press, 1986).

¹⁴ Dinner, Deborah. "The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966–1974." (*Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 2010), 588

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 589

environment in which they created unstable relationships with their children. These unstable relationships, they argued put the children at risk for juvenile activity.¹⁶ Liberal feminists argued the opposite, and claimed that “a true partnership between the sexes demands a different concept of marriage, an equitable sharing of the responsibilities of home and children and of the economic burden of their support.”¹⁷

At the same time, the federal government and families looked into creating a program called Head Start. The program, which became a part of President Johnson’s War on Poverty worked to create a “preschool program to help prepare children for elementary school.”¹⁸ The program allowed poor families to send their children to preschool so they could acquire skills that would benefit them later on in their academic career. There are records of how families, especially those in need of educational services for their children while they went to work, responded to the Head Start program. There are also records of how the families fought for (or in some cases against) the program.¹⁹ Although these records exist, little is known about the families who advocated for childcare on college campuses.

Prior to 1969, the University at Albany lacked daycare services for students, faculty, or staff members. The University’s Administration and SA finally recognized the need for an on-campus daycare center due to the activism of the Women’s Liberation Front in 1969. The Women’s Liberation Front (WLF) worked hard to create an on-campus daycare center because it believed that the center served as a necessity for women and families who needed an education. Families who joined in the struggle for an on-campus daycare agreed that the University at

¹⁶ Sonya Michael, *Children’s Interests/ Mothers Rights*, (Massachusetts: Yale University, 1999), 155-156.

¹⁷ Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*. New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2000, 79

¹⁸ Styfco, Sally J., and Edward Zigler. *The Hidden History of Head Start*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

¹⁹ See *The Hidden History of Head Start* for more information.

Albany neglected equal educational and work opportunities for men and women. Both groups worked with University officials to establish a sound and financially stable relationship and eventually the University, although hesitant and unsure of how the school could effectively institute daycare services, reluctantly created the center. By 1971, the coalition of feminist and family activists successfully were running a cooperative daycare center open to student-parents, faculty, staff and non-University parents. Once the University allocated funds and space, the Women's Liberation Front shifted focus to women's healthcare issues on campus. The parents who assumed control over the management of the Pierce Hall Day Care continually worked to justify the University's financial commitment to center and the place of childcare in a University community. This change in the makeup of the coalition signaled the transition of the struggle from a political fight to a contest over the value of daycare in a University setting. Although their gains were small, this coalition of women's rights and parent activists successfully demonstrated the need for childcare at the University, laying the foundation for the University at Albany administrators eventual commitment to maintaining an on-campus daycare center for the University community.

PART I: We Want A Day Care and We Want it Now!

During the mid 1960's University students, on every part of the political spectrum, mimicked the outside world, and participated in a fight for their rights. Most prominent on campuses included protests on racial discrimination, free speech, and opposition to the Vietnam War. Students participated in groups like the Student Democratic Society and Free Speech Movement (at Berkley), to demand that student's voices be heard on university campuses and

across the nation.²⁰ Students who attended New York State Universities also began getting involved in politics. For example, the Administration at the University at Buffalo sent out a statement to the community discussing a “group of vandals,” and how the “campus security officers [had to enter] the Student Union [to see] a wild and horrifying physical fight ensued.”²¹ In the midst of the chaos, college women faced a lot of restraints that limited the way they dressed, their health benefits (or lack thereof), and limited what they could or could not do in their spare time. Their inspiration to destroy these constraints came from a group of women, who on a national level saw similar constraints and began to fight to overcome them in everyday life.

Liberal and Radical women specifically fought to gain an identity not only on these university campuses but in the male- dominated world of the mid-20th century. Although racial discrimination, limitations on free speech, and the Vietnam War affected women, they stood in the shadows as men, both on campuses and across the nation made decisions for them.²² In 1967, women from across the nation gathered in Chicago and concluded that women needed to come together and create a united front to gain equality.²³ At the conference, “the women instinctively reached out to the female constituency generated by women’s experiences in organizing, marches, demonstrations, and campus groups.”²⁴ These women strongly believed that in order to

²⁰ See *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* for more information on student protests of the late 1950’s into the 1960’s.

²¹ Campus Unrest Collection, 1967-1972. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Campus Unrest Collection), Box 2

²² Sara Evans, author of *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* notes that the Student Democratic Society “SDS”, the group that gave students a say on University campuses did not give women a lot of opportunities to be leaders in the organization. Many women, in fact felt that although racial and free speech issues were being tackled by the SDS and other organizations, both liberal and conservative, women’s issues remained unaddressed.

²³ *Ibid.* Evans notes that the women who attended a conference entitled The National Conference for New Politics (NCNP), in Chicago were denied the right to speak about issues because they did not make the priority list. The women therefore, decided to meet separately a week later.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 199

gain equality, women themselves, not men, had to fight; they had to mobilize and stand united. This idea that women could have a voice, a say on issues that directly pertained to them, rang throughout the nation and captured millions of women's attentions. Thus, the Women's Liberation Movement was born.

University women following this example began to get involved in the Women's Liberation Movement. According to historian Sara Evans, "normally staid professional meetings began to ring with acrimony as women cried 'foul'...criticizing the male biases involved in the treatment of women and sex roles."²⁵ In 1967, a group of SDS women, "called for the creation of a new society that protected women's reproductive rights, supported communal child care centers, staffed by men and women, and required household work to be shared."²⁶ Women at the University at Berkley, spoke about a woman's place in the Vietnam War, while other college women demanded sexual liberation.²⁷

Unlike other campuses, by early 1969, the University at Albany remained one of the campuses that did not hold weekly demonstrations on the political, social, and racial problems that occurred across the nation. Although quiet, the University limited women on campus. In 1969, freshman women had to sign in and out of their dorms. If the women did not return during the time they indicated, "they would be subject to a decision of the Judicial Committee."²⁸ Although these limitations existed, the University had recently opened its doors to more students as it introduced its new uptown campus. The new campus "composed of 14 buildings...a library,

²⁵ Sarah Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*, (Random House Inc: New York, 1979), 216-217.

²⁶ Ruth Rosen. *The World Split Open*, (New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2000), 126-127

²⁷ Sarah Evans notes that liberal women at the University at Berkley suggested that women fight against the Vietnam War because they sympathized with those that were being oppressed due to Communism. Other college women fought to gain sexual freedom, to dress how they wanted and to freely talk about sex.

²⁸ *Ibid.* page 30

a theatre, and a campus center designed to serve the entire University community.”²⁹ This allowed for a more diverse student body and University community.

The University, although vibrant, dealt with budget cuts in February 1969. On February 7 1969, President Evan R. Collins, held a conference in which he stated that the “financial picture for the State University system of New York might be bleak.”³⁰ The University had been promised a budget of \$493 million for the 1969-1970 school year, however, “after a cut by the central office, a figure of \$443 million was submitted to the State and was promptly cut to \$405 million which was the figure in the Governor’s budget.”³¹ After another cut, the final amount offered to the University ended up being a grand total of \$359 million. According to the University, “the bare minimum amount needed for the 1969-1970 school year was \$391 million which leaves the system \$24 million short.”³²

According to the Student Association (SA), the University’s student governing body, students had the option to boycott classes for two days in March of 1969 and march on the Capitol.³³ A student from SA requested that “All groups on campus, no matter what their interests, must cooperate in this endeavor in order for it to be successful, as must all of the University System students.”³⁴ Although most students shifted their focus to protest the budget cuts, women on campus continued to work on their own goals. For example, the Radical Women’s Association on campus continued to push for abortion rights and representation in the

²⁹ Student Handbooks, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, 1969 page 15.

³⁰ “Collin on Finances, BSA Action Endorsed,” ASP. February 7th 1969. Student Newspaper Collection, Series 6, Volume 55, No 24, M.E. Grenander Archives.

³¹ “Collins Discusses Education Budget,” ASP. Student Newspaper Collection, March 4 1969

³² Ibid.

³³ “March on the Capitol next week,” Student Newspaper Collection, March 7th 1969

³⁴ “Student Alliance to March on Capitol,” Student Newspaper Collection, March 14 1969

government.³⁵ Like women on a national level, these radical women knew that they needed to continue to work on their own goals in order for their voices to be heard.

In the height of the budget cuts- February 1969, the Women's Liberation Front (WLF) first approached the University at Albany's Administration demanding that, "SUNY at Albany establish a full- time infant and childcare center for the children of students, employees, and faculty."³⁶ Like the Radical Women's Association, the WLF felt like their priorities trumped the budget cuts and that if they remained quiet in the background, the institution would not prioritize them. At a national level, the Women's Liberation Front, one of the groups created during the Women's Movement, worked to "educate both the men and women on [the] campus about the particular oppression of women and how that oppression is related to [the] oppressive society."³⁷ Congress passed the Work Incentive Program in 1967, which forced states to create childcare programs so, "welfare recipients could engage in training or work programs,"³⁸ The Workers Incentive Program helped families provide a stable lifestyle by allowing them to drop their children off in a safe place and go to work. The government, however, overlooked the need to create childcare facilities on university campuses. This oversight forced some women and families to choose between getting an education, working, or raising children. In response, the National Organization for Women (N.O.W.) released a Bill of Rights in 1967 demanding that, "child-care facilities be established by law on the same basis as parks, libraries and public schools, adequate to the needs of children...as a community resource to be used by all citizens

³⁵ "Abortion Law Liberalization urged; women asked legislators for reform," Student Newspaper Collection, March 4, 1969

³⁶ "Women Stages Crib In," Student Newspaper Collection, September 22, 1970

³⁷ "Visitations," Student Newspaper Collection, Nov 4th 1969

³⁸ Deborah Dinner, "*The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966-1974*," (*Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 2010), 586

from all income levels.”³⁹ To the N.O.W, members, childcare needed to be offered to any parent or guardian no matter their race, gender, income, or education level.

According to a report from SA later that spring, the Women’s Liberation Front, continuing to work towards gaining a childcare center on campus and hosted a mock center in the University’s assembly hall. The women, never recorded any numbers.⁴⁰ Although the WLF successfully created a mock daycare center, the financial issues that could discredit the University, overpowered the need for the daycare. Despite being ignored by the Administration, the women knew how many students, faculty, and staff needed a daycare center and continued to push for one on campus.

At the same time, the University said goodbye to President Collins and welcomed acting President Dr. Allan A. Kuusisto – who served for the next academic year. When President Kuusisto took office, he announced that “the University should be a cooperative community wherein the administration, faculty, and students are co-equal partners sharing fully in its operation, working together to keep it moving forward.”⁴¹ With an initiative to make the University at Albany a safe space, Kuusisto offered office hours in which students could personally voice their concerns. Kuusisto also created an administrative position that allowed students to have someone they could go to at all times to voice their grievances. A campus viewpoint also stated that students should sit on councils and participate in the everyday activities of the University. According to the statement, “this practice of student participation is

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 588

⁴⁰ There is little information on how the center ran. However, it is likely that they had volunteers have parents drop their children off in the morning and pick them up when they were done with school and work. Please see Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York. Sept 9, 1971

⁴¹ “Kuusisto: Faculty, Students, Admin; co equal for fuller operation,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 30th 1969

so fundamental...The faculty and administration are firmly convinced that student participation in the major decision - making processes of the University is not only desirable but necessary, in order that decisions be as sound as possible.”⁴² Kuusisto hoped open communication would prevent uprisings from occurring on the University at Albany campus.

While President Kuusisto opened up the University to healthy and productive dialogue, the New York State Senate introduced the Henderson Law. The law “penalized any student convicted of an on-campus felony or misdemeanor.”⁴³ This bill, created in response to protests on University campuses, created a divide between the New York State Senate and the University. Campuses across the nation continued to heavily debate issues from civil rights, women’s issues, and the Vietnam War.⁴⁴ The bill, introduced by Senator John E. Flynn a Republican senator from Yonkers, supported the idea that students who “associated themselves with campus demonstrations”⁴⁵ would not receive state aid or scholarships. Although some Democrats in the State Senate argued, “the other side (GOP) was more interested in saving money than in solving the serious social problems which confront us,”⁴⁶ the bill passed to the Assembly.

Interim President Kuusisto requested that the students voice their concerns, despite the bill the State Senate proposed. As more students began speaking out against the Vietnam War, the Women’s Liberation Front created a questionnaire to get the University community’s opinion on an on campus daycare center. The questionnaire, given out in the fall of 1969, asked students,

⁴² “Collin’s Papers,” Series 5, Box 36, Office of the President Records, 1827-2015. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the UAlbany President Records), May 15, 1969

⁴³ “Senate denies aid to State Law Breakers,” hereafter referred to as the Student Newspaper Collection, February 14th 1969

⁴⁴ See Campus Unrest Collection, 1967-1972. Campus Unrest Collection, 1967-1972. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Campus Unrest Collection).

⁴⁵ “Senate denies aid to State Law Breakers,” Student Newspaper Collection, February 14th 1969

⁴⁶ Ibid.

faculty, and staff if needed an on-campus daycare center. The WLF also asked if the person filling out the questionnaire would be using the daycare, how many children they had, what ages the children were, and asked for comments regarding how the daycare should be set up.⁴⁷ The women sent out 5760 questionnaires.⁴⁸ After subtracting questionnaires filled out incorrectly, the WLF received over 300 responses from students, faculty, and staff who favored a daycare on campus. The women were able to see that around 238 children would actually use the facility.

The WLF strategically worked with their data to prove to the University that they needed a daycare center but that they deserved to be a recognized club on campus. According to women in the club, females did not have the same representation on campus and across the nation and that by making the club on campus official, the Student Association would be giving women equal rights.⁴⁹ Much like other women on college campuses, the WLF fought to define their role, in the “[counterculture] movement,” and questioned, “why there [was] a tendency to think about women as filling certain ‘slots’ in the movement.”⁵⁰ Despite showing the University that students’, faculty, and staff needed an on-campus daycare, their voices still went unnoticed. This shows that although conversations about childcare and equal representation happened on the podium, in between the stacks of library books, over late night dinners in the dining hall, and on a larger scale, women felt voiceless on the college campus.

Shortly after the women sent the questionnaire, the Henderson Act became law. The SUNY Senate hoped that the law would, “not be construed to prevent or limit communication between and among faculty, students, and administration, or to relieve the institution of its special

⁴⁷ Day Care Center- Women’s Liberation Front, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 9, Campus Unrest Collection.

⁴⁸ Out of the 5760 questionnaires, 1920 were given to faculty and staff and 3840 were given to students. See “University Cannot give Child Care,” Student Newspaper Collection, April 14, 1970

⁴⁹ “Action not talk. Goal of New Group,” Student Newspaper Collection, October 28, 1969

⁵⁰ See Sarah Evans “*Personal Politics: The Roots of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left*”

responsibility for self-regulation in the preservation of public order.”⁵¹ Instead, they hoped that the law would, “prevent abuse of the rights of others and to maintain that public order appropriate to a college or university campus without which there can be no intellectual freedom and they shall be interpreted and applied to that end.”⁵² The law itself listed that students could not physically hurt someone or destroy property. It also contained rules such as, “students can not, without permission express or implied, enter into any private office of an administrative officer, member of the faculty or staff member.”⁵³

While the WLF worked to gain a voice on campus, the students, seemed to be invested in the goal to end the Vietnam War. The University at Albany community began to attend Vietnam protests and moratoriums across the capital area.⁵⁴ The students demanded that Student Association allocate funds to send students to a march on Washington to protest the war because the association, funded by their student tax, should pay for what they felt affected their every day lives.⁵⁵ As students they felt, they should have a say as to how the University used their mandated money. They wanted the University to be a place to express their opinions and be activists in the outside world. Like the world beyond the University, women’s liberation fell short of many women’s expectations. Other groups that fought against the Vietnam War or fought for Civil Rights got money and support from the University, yet the University overlooked the WLF. Liberal women on and off campuses knew they needed to use, “a language

⁵¹ “Guidelines for Campus Order,” Student Newspaper Collection, September, 30th 1969

⁵² “Day Care Center- Women’s Liberation Front,” Campus Unrest Collection, Series 1 Box 1.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Students at the University at Albany began to attend memorials and host information sessions about the Vietnam War. The University itself held a memorial for those who had died in the war. There were guest speakers. For more information, see Student Newspaper Collection, October 13th-17th, 1969

⁵⁵ “The majority of students continued to make the Vietnam War their Priority ‘On to Washington!’ Court Decision in Favor of Busses,” Student Newspaper Collection, October 17th, 1969

of rights to articulate the role that universal childcare would play.”⁵⁶ Therefore, the WLF continued to find ways to gain a voice on campus.

On Monday, February 23 1970, the WLF held a formal meeting to discuss the daycare center. By hosting this meeting, the women hoped to inform the majority of the students about their concerns and they hoped that the majority would have the same response to their concerns as they did to other issues like the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. During the meeting, the women read their written statement which argued the necessity of daycare on the University campus so that men and women could keep their children in a safe and educational place while they went to work or school.⁵⁷ The WLF specifically mentioned that the center should be open to families, not just women with children. By the early 1960’s, colleges saw a growth in married students and by 1964, 87,000 students, both men, and women, started their education after they got married.⁵⁸ Since the government wanted more people to go to college to benefit the workforce, the WLF argued that the daycare center would elevate the problem of women and men not coming to work or school, because they found a place to watch their child. The WLF hoped to show that by creating this positive coalition, they could prove to the University the importance of childcare and that in reality, childcare was more than just a woman’s problem.

The WLF created a list of demands to show the importance of a daycare center. The coalition between the students, faculty, and staff demanded that the University create a plan to open a year-round daycare center by April 1970 with a goal of opening it the following fall. They ordered that “the University be responsible for providing this infant and childcare center

⁵⁶ Dinner, Deborah. “*The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966–1974*,” (*Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 2010), 579.

⁵⁷ “Day Care Center- Women’s Liberation Front,” Campus Unrest Collection, 1970

⁵⁸ Eshleman, J. Ross. “The Influence of Social Class and Children on Participation Patterns of Married College Students.” *The Family Life Coordinator* 16, no. 1/2 (1967): 5-13.

including faculties equipment and staff.”⁵⁹ On top of that, the women wanted the University to allow, “a democratic representative body of parents, students, and members of women’s policies of the center, including the hiring/firing of staff.”⁶⁰ The women wanted full control of the creation of the center because they wanted the University to execute their ideas as they saw fit. The WLF hoped that their involvement with the creation of the daycare center would allow them to be more prominent on- campus.

This statement much like the Bill of Rights released by NOW echoed the idea that “without government funded childcare women would be tied to their homes and would not be able to participate fully in employment, political, or educational opportunities.”⁶¹ Without an on-campus daycare, student parents would be unable to get an education that would help them support their families. The women also demanded that the Administration give a progress report when they held their next meeting the following month.

After waiting almost a month for the University’s Vice President Clifton C. Torne’s response, the WLF held another meeting. Over 200 people attended the March 10th meeting and listened to the Women’s Liberation Front as they demanded that the Vice President give either a yes or no response and that the University, “make women for the first time in history, top priority.”⁶² Vice President Thorne, despite not responding for over a month, said that although willing to listen to the Women’s Liberation Front and others who wanted the daycare, he felt

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹Deborah Dinner, “*The Universal Childcare Debate: Rights Mobilization, Social Policy, and the Dynamics of Feminist Activism, 1966–1974.*” (*Law and History Review* 28, no. 3 2010), 587

⁶² “Child Care Center on Campus: Administration Not Committed,” Student Newspaper Collection, March 10, 1970

unsure about the University's responsibility towards children.⁶³ Other faculty members agreed and argued that that the issue was far more complicated than a simple yes or no answer.⁶⁴

Faculty member, Dr. Harry Hamilton who also spoke at the meeting mentioned that, "the University had a high number of other priorities."⁶⁵ According to Hamilton, the unsound proposal could eventually lead to overpopulation. Interestingly enough, Dr. Harry Hamilton created the E.O.P program on campus. The E.O.P or the Educational Opportunity Program, established in 1968, worked with students whose educational and cultural backgrounds limited them from obtaining a college degree.⁶⁶ The program hoped to show that despite a student's background, they could go on into higher education and become a positive product of society.

Students, especially women, who chose to go back to school after having children often, faced similar discrimination. Like those with different cultural backgrounds, educational institutions often saw women as second-class citizens. However due to involvement in the Cold War and the need for women in the job market, the population of women students increased.⁶⁷ According to statistics, in 1960 a little over 100,000, women went to college. However, by 1970, over 400,000 women attended colleges and universities.⁶⁸ Historian Claudia Goldin noted that many of these women chose a "career before family path," because more jobs became available to women.⁶⁹ This increase in jobs like secretaries and book keepers allowed women in the late 1960's and early 1970's to get a head start on their career before they created a family. Despite

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Educational Opportunity Program Becomes Reality," Student Newspaper Collection, October 29, 1968

⁶⁷ See Ruth Rosen. *The World Split Open*. New York, New York: Penguin Group, 2000.

⁶⁸ Russell W. Rumberger, "The Job Market for College Graduates, 1960-90." *The Journal of Higher Education* 55, no. 4 (1984): 437. doi:10.2307/1981442.

⁶⁹ Claudia Goldin, "The Long Road to the Fast Track: Career and Family." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 596 (2004), 14

these job growths, women often faced challenges when coming back to school. Women who went back to school were often, “mistaken for a member of the faculty or staff,” and “women often were mistaken for being a “matron who was dabbling in enrichment courses.”⁷⁰ Unlike those in EOP, the WLF not only felt discriminated against because of their background but also because the University lacked support for them. These women argued that the other minorities on campus received support, but when they asked for help, it got denied. Despite being shut down by the Administration and faculty members, the WLF pushed the Vice President to respond to their demands because they wanted the University to really represent the inclusivity that the Administrators preached.

The Women’s Liberation Front finally received a response from Vice President Thorne on April 9. Both the University’s Administration and the State University of New York’s Administration “noted that under the legal provisions constituting the university, its funds and facilities cannot be used for the purpose of child care.”⁷¹ According to both governing bodies, state agencies offered childcare and, “in order to preserve tax payers funds, facilities cannot be duplicated.”⁷² The *Public Papers of Governor Rockefeller* mentions that during the 1970 fiscal year, New York state created a fund that helped daycare centers with mortgage loans and “provided technical assistance and encouragement to business and industry to sponsor daycare centers located at or near the places of employment of mothers of children enrolled in the centers.”⁷³ Therefore, the Administration claimed that on campus daycare seemed unlikely because the state already allocated funds and loans for mothers and families in need of childcare.

⁷⁰ Mendelsohn, Pam *Happier by Degrees: A College Reentry Guide for Women*. (Penn State University: Ten Speed Press, 1986).

⁷¹ “Child Care Center on Campus: Administration Not Committed,” Student Newspaper Collection, March 10, 1970

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Nelson A. Rockefeller, “Public Papers of Nelson A. Rockefeller: Fifty-third Governor of the State of New York” (Public Papers, Albany, New York, 1970), 22

The University therefore only offered assistance to help students, faculty, and staff find centers near the school. The Administration even suggested that those who wanted the daycare to create a private corporation, however, they would have to buy their own building (which could not be on University property).⁷⁴

The WLF felt unsatisfied when they heard Thorne's response. A member noted that Vice President Thorne cited state laws, so he already knew that the daycare "could not exist on campus," and they were furious that he did not tell them sooner.⁷⁵ The Women's Liberation Front also stated that SUNY Buffalo and Cortland had daycare centers so therefore the Vice President had to be lying. The women, therefore got a lawyer and argued that; "Many women [were] unable to attend classes or hold employment at this university because they [had] small children, and that by not creating a day care the University, the Administration discriminated against women."⁷⁶ The WLF also reminded the University that faculty and staff also needed the daycare center in order to teach and work on the University campus. The women backed up their claim of discrimination by stating that they did not want to take funds from other parts of the University community, they simply just wanted to be a part of it. The women argued that by not creating a daycare center, the University denied women access to education and a fair workplace.⁷⁷ This discrimination of forcing students, faculty, and staff to choose between their education or job and their children went against everything that the University supposedly stood for. The women also argued that the University was a social institution, not just an academic one and that it was unfair to deny a student organization something they needed without just cause.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "Where is the Day Care Center?" Student Newspaper Collection, March 10, 1970

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ibid.

The University's Administration then handed the daycare issue over to the Student Association (SA). On May 14 1970, SA met to discuss Bill 7071-08, the appropriation for the daycare center. A member noted that if the University created an on-campus daycare center, that the "New York State Social Services [would] probably match the appropriation or give more."⁷⁸ SA discussed a budget that totaled to \$5000; \$1500 for recreational equipment, \$1500 for educational tools, and \$2000 for food.⁷⁹ Some members lacked support for the daycare and argued that any money not given through the state would come out of the University's budget, specifically the student fees. The student fee a tax that every paid, went to clubs and other parts of student life. Members of SA, like the University Administration, felt hesitant in giving funds to non-students because non-students did not pay the student tax. The members decided that if they allowed those who received a waiver on this tax to use the daycare center, a clause must be added to say that, "provisions [must] be made that fees be taken for faculty, staff, and non-tax paying students."⁸⁰

Other members questioned who would directly get these funds and some even said that according to the Financial Committee of the Student Association, the Women's Liberation Front could not hold the funds because they were a political group.⁸¹ The Central Council, which Student Association ran under, featured a specific council for political groups like the Young Democratic and Republican Society, as well as the Committee to end the War in Vietnam.⁸² However, the majority of the members understood that the value of the daycare center

⁷⁸ Central Council Meeting Minutes, Series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, May 14, 1970

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Student Handbooks (1959, 1962, 1967). M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York.

outweighed the politics that the Women's Liberation Front brought to the table. Since the WLF fell under the general Student Association, not the council for political groups, the Student Association continued to try to allocate funds for the center.

During the last month of school, while the women worked to start the daycare center, riots broke out at the University at Albany campus. Despite the WLF's perception that the University focused on the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement, the Third World Liberation Front attacked the University claiming that the Administration had continued to allow racism and inequality to exist. The University forced only African American students to show their identification when entering dining halls and buildings while professors, fraternities, and the Administration still continued to use derogatory terms.⁸³ The Administration also got criticized for not expanding the history department and for cutting the E.O.P budget.⁸⁴ SA also received criticism and got called, "undemocratic and unrepresentative."⁸⁵ Students, much like the Women's Liberation Front demanded that the Administration and SA begin to represent all students fairly and equally and follow through with their promises of equal opportunities.

When the University resumed in the fall of 1970 under a new president, Louis T. Benezet, the Women's Liberation Front went straight to work. On September 17th, 1970, the WLF teamed up with the New Left Organizing Committee, and parents to stage a sit-in, or what they infamously called a "crib-in," in the President's office. This coalition made the WLF stronger and allowed them to have more of a presence on the campus. This coalition helped support their political stance of childcare being a universal issue. These families wanted to help show that

⁸³ "It Couldn't Happen Here..." Student Newspaper Collection, April 17, 1970. The article along with the *Black Students' Statement* underneath it show the constant inequality that occurred on campus during the 1969-1970 school year.

⁸⁴ See any 1970 Albany Student Press Paper, Student Newspaper Collection, 1970-1979

⁸⁵ "Thoughts on Central Council," Student Newspaper Collection, April 28, 1970.

childcare went beyond a “woman’s issue,” and they hoped that by joining in on the fight, the University would see past the politics behind the WLF. The coalition of sixty women and families, “armed with balloons, carriages and babies,” stormed into President Benezet’s office to question the progress of the daycare center. Although their actions violated the Henderson Law, they did not care. Tired of not being told the truth and being pushed around, these supporters wanted to know the University’s exact plan for the daycare. Those who participated read the original demands to the President and told him they would not leave until they got an answer. Many argued that the University refused, ““recognize the basic issue of (this) entire struggle, the oppression of women in a male dominated society.”⁸⁶

In response to the protest, President Benezet, stated that the Benevolent Association donated \$10,000 to create the daycare center, and that, “the release of funds from the State will be an emergency grant but further grants will have to be made by supplemental appropriation by the legislature”⁸⁷ The President also noted that the daycare center would host 46 children and most likely be on the downtown campus located in the basement of a dormitory.⁸⁸ The WLF and the families who supported the daycare complained because the space could fit up to 120 children.⁸⁹ They argued that by limiting the number of children the Administration forced the center to create a “competitive system ... whereby use would be determined by financial rather than practical or total need.”⁹⁰ This limitation also created unfair advantages to those that signed up first because once the all the spots filled up, parents who did not make the cut would have to choose between watching their children and getting an education.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “Women’s Lib Stages Crib-In,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 22, 1970.

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ “Day Care: The Basic Issues,” Student Newspaper Collection, October 9, 1970.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

He also mentioned that only students would be able to use it, despite the effort that the WLF put in to make sure the center would be open to staff and faculty as well.⁹¹ The President also mentioned that there would be a sliding scale fee, determined on an individual basis by the Financial Aid for those who wanted to use the daycare.⁹² The sliding scale worked better than a fixed rate because most of the parents were students and could not afford a fixed rate every week. The President concluded the “crib-in” by stating that those who wanted the daycare, “had asked for nothing unreasonable,”⁹³ (even though he had not granted the supporters all their demands) and that, “the project [would] succeed and could become a model of Child Day Care Centers in universities.”⁹⁴

PART II: The Construction of the Daycare Center

Finally, the construction began on the daycare center. The Administration decided to create it on the downtown campus. The downtown campus, or the main campus up until the 1968 school year, featured Alumni Quad, where some students who attended the University resided during the academic year. The construction took place in Pierce Hall, so the Administration named the center the Pierce Hall Day Care Center. When the construction started, the students living in Pierce Hall and in the surrounding halls began to complain. They angrily told the University that the construction disrupted their daily activities and that the building should not be used for non-residential purposes.⁹⁵ Listening to the students, but also knowing that they could not stop the construction of the center without complaints from the Women’s Liberation Front and the families, the Administration came up with a plan. To please both the residents and those

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ “Day Care Site Protest,” Student Newspaper Collection, October 6, 1970.

who wanted the daycare, the University began to section off the daycare from the rest of the hall so that way it remained separate and out of the way.

The center's director Blair Barrett hoped that despite the student complaints, the Peirce Hall Day Care Center would open on time (December 1 1970). Barrett told the Albany Student Press that the daycare would be open from 7:30am to 5:30pm all year long and that it would accommodate children ranging from six months to six years old.⁹⁶ To register a child, parents filed out an application. After being interviewed by the Social Services committee, parents then waited for the committee to look at their financial situation, the number of children who they wanted in the center, and their class schedule.⁹⁷ The child also had to pass a physical and could not have any emotional or physical disabilities.⁹⁸ Once they passed all of those steps, their child could officially start in the center. This long process, which took a long time, forced the parents to prove to the University their need for the center. This process shows that the University at Albany community felt hesitant to just let any child have a spot in the center and that if money was going to be invested, parents needed to justify their need for the center.

PART III: The Struggle for Daycare

Barrett hoped that the center would be a place of learning not a just a place where parents dropped their children off. Barrett even wanted men to work in the daycare center because she wanted the children to realize that, "many people rather than just his mother, care for him and teach him."⁹⁹ Barrett advocated for male involvement because she believed that childcare should not be just a mother's responsibility. Barrett knew that women and families with children deserved the chance to get an education. Like the WLF, Barrett saw child care as a universal

⁹⁶ "Day Care Center Explained," Student Newspaper Collection, October 6, 1970

⁹⁷ "Day Care Center Opens," Student Newspaper Collection, December 4, 1970

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ "Day Care Center Explained," Student Newspaper Collection, October 6, 1970

right. By granting women and families access childcare, the University would be creating equal educational opportunities. With these goals in mind, Barrett continued to push for the opening of the center.

Finally, on December 4th, the Pierce Hall Day Care Center opened to 30 children between six months and 5 years of age. The Pierce Hall Day Care Center was the only center in the Albany area that took children under two years of age. Most of the children stayed in the daycare from the time it opened to the time it closed.¹⁰⁰ Those who worked hard to get the daycare started could finally catch a breath. Their hard work had paid off and the day care was in full swing.

By that point, the Women's Liberation Front backed away from the center. They fought with the University to create the daycare center and worked to make sure that it opened. Once the daycare opened, the liberation rhetoric of access to daycare came to an end. The women succeeded and although the University failed to meet all their needs, the University opened a center women and families could use while they went to class.

The Women's Liberation Front continued to be active on the University at Albany campus. By March of 1971, the WLF started a protest in the on-campus bookstore where they, "proceeded to gather several magazines, particularly "Playboy," and threw them on the floor."¹⁰¹ The WLF also demanded that the Infirmary give women, "free genealogical examinations...free birth control and information...to all women in the University community including students, faculty, and staff."¹⁰²

The Women's Liberation Front successfully showed the University at Albany that students needed an on-campus daycare center. Although they failed at creating a center open to faculty and staff as well, the WLF convinced the University that daycare went beyond "women

¹⁰⁰ "Day Care Center Opens," Student Newspaper Collection, December 4, 1970

¹⁰¹ "Women demand healthcare reform," Student Newspaper Collection, March 10 1971

¹⁰² Ibid.

politics.” By forming a coalition with the families in need of the center, the WLF proved to the University that daycare would help a group of students continue to get an education.

PART IV: Daycare and Family Values

After the Women’s Liberation front shifted focus, a group of those families who worked with the WLF came together to create the University Parents for Day Care. This group became the forerunners of the fight for the Pierce Hall Day Care Center.

The daycare continued to run smoothly until March of 1971 when the New York State Senate informed the University that they could be hit with a budget cut of up to 25 million dollars.¹⁰³ According to the budget summary of 1970, Barrett stated that the daycare needed at least \$7300 to run and that the budget cut would probably affect the future of the daycare. Barrett stated that “There has been a great deal of talk about meeting people's needs but whenever the budget has to be cut, people's programs go first.” The University once again promised to provide a daycare center, yet once again when it came down to if they should continue to fund the football team, get beer for the residential programs or support the daycare center, the daycare got the cut.¹⁰⁴ This shows the University community’s continuous uncertainty to their commitment to the daycare center. The University still lacked the understanding of the value of daycare for these student-parents. Although minorities of the student body, the daycare center still benefited student-parents. Without the parents might have to choose between watching their children and going to school.

¹⁰³ SUNY wanted to cut budgets and give money to community colleges to increase class sizes.

¹⁰⁴ Various parents, staff and faculty were interviewed for this thesis. Special thanks to Paula Rosenberg, Sheila Mahan and Gloria Desole

The University officially informed Barrett and the parents of the children, that for the upcoming semester (Fall 1971), they could not allocate funds and that the parents must find funding on their own. According to the Student Association, parents and those who supported the daycare should approach the Urban Center and the State for funds. Barrett and the parents, unfortunately, were unsuccessful.¹⁰⁵ Their bad luck continued into the summer of 1971 and when the University resumed in the fall, they continued to fight for funds because they knew that their needs were just as important.

The University Parents for Day Care met with the SA on September 2, 1971, and demanded that SA give the center a \$32,000 budget. Although far fetched since SA promised more money, Peter Pollack, the graduate student who ran the University Parents for Day Care, stated that the University originally created the budget. The supporters of the center quoted that the “staff salaries would be twelve thousand dollars for a Director, ten thousand for a program Director/Certified Teacher, eighty-five hundred for an Infant Supervisor/Nurse, and six thousand for a Secretary/Bookkeeper.”¹⁰⁶ On top of that, the cost for food, equipment and insurance rounded up to another \$4,000.¹⁰⁷ The final budget therefore came out to \$60,000. Since the parents failed at finding funding on their own, the center only had about \$28,000 from parent fees.¹⁰⁸ Pollack argued that increasing the parent fees would not work because the parents were already on a tight budget since they attended school and were raising a family.

Someone then suggested that SA takes money back from other groups. According to Michael Lampert, a member, “ [SA had] made a fiscal commitment when the budgets were

¹⁰⁵ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 2, 1971

¹⁰⁶ “Day Care Requests Aid from Council,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 10th, 1971

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

passed and the groups in turn have made commitments,” and therefore no funds could be allocated for the daycare center.¹⁰⁹ Pollack argued that SA had the money to give to the center because they kept, “an Emergency/ Spending line of approximately thirty-eight thousand dollars.”¹¹⁰ SA members, unsure if they should give the center money, suggested that they loan the center the money and that, “if new sources of funds are not found after eighteen weeks, the Student Association would furnish the remaining appropriation.”¹¹¹ The members also noted that the center still lacked an official license and that the parents needed to go to Social Services to get approved. This shows that although the parents wanted money, they still needed to get the daycare up and running. The parents needed support from the University because they not only needed to handle the daycare but their academic and private lives as well. After coming to no conclusion, SA ended up pushing the decision on the daycare back a week.¹¹²

When SA reconvened to discuss the financial situation of the Pierce Hall Day Care Center, they allowed parents to come sit in the gallery and watch how they made their decision. As the meeting went on, some members felt distracted by the gallery and asked if the parents and screaming children could be removed, however other members noted that if the motion passed then everyone, including those who sat on the daycare committee would also have to leave since they were not on the main council.¹¹³ Still, SA members persisted that they felt distracted and eventually, the parents were asked to take their children outside. SA members later said that

¹⁰⁹ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 3, 1971

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 9, 1971

¹¹³ Ibid.

“most parents reluctantly removed their children, but not without comment. Throughout the debate over the Center, parents yelled insulting remarks at [us].”¹¹⁴

After endless debates on the wording of the bill and the legitimacy of the funds, the meeting minutes showed that SA ended the meeting undecided about how to handle the center. The bill (as usual) failed. At the end of the meeting, SA member Rich Friedlander “pointed out that funding the Day Care Center would start a precedent- students paying for something that the state should pay for.”¹¹⁵ The councilmen “cited the interests of fourteen thousand students against the interests of eighty children that would use the center, and that the attitude of the gallery towards Central Council [SA] affected the outcome of the vote adversely.”¹¹⁶ This shows that the parents still continued to fail at showing SA the value of daycare on the college campus because the University still saw them as a minority group. The parents needed to figure out a way to prove to the University that they represented the student body just as much as the majority of students.

The University Parents for Day Care decided to hold a meeting to discuss their options. The daycare would remain unopened until they found a way to receive funds. At the meeting, Pollack suggested that the parents form a Student Association group.¹¹⁷ Parent James Spas and his undergraduate wife, suggested that the parents work with the State Social Services Board to receive funds for “children of families that qualify for Welfare or Aid to Dependent Children”¹¹⁸ If a family still fell short on payments, “then the State Social Services [could] supplement the

¹¹⁴ “Parents Heckle Council For Killing Day Care Funds,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 14, 1971

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ “Day Care Continues Search for Money to Fund Center,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 24th, 1971

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

remaining funds.”¹¹⁹ By getting proper documentation to show that the daycare qualified for funding through the welfare program, the University Parents for Daycare hoped to show the University that they desperately needed the funds. The parents hoped to show the University that since they qualified for welfare, the University should allocate funds for the center.

On top of getting documents from the Social Services board, the parents ended up creating a Student Association group in hopes of receiving funding. Their bylaws included that membership, “shall consist of all parents of children served by the facility and all those who pledge their services towards the continuance of this program both in the operation of the day care center and the administration of the sponsoring corporation.”¹²⁰ All members had to pay \$5 per year and had to regularly attend meetings. The parents also willingly stated that they would give credit to students who needed community service in exchange for their help.¹²¹ The SA needed the reassurance that the staff and parents of the center were putting in efforts and not just begging them for money and the parents hoped that the club created a justification for SA. Social Services granted the parents permission to run as a co-op as long as they found a program director.¹²² Member “Chris Braden spoke and expressed that the main concern of the Center is to be a viable part in the University community.”¹²³

¹¹⁹ Ibid. Aid to Dependent Children, part of the Social Security Act, allowed families to receive federal support if they did not make enough to support their families.

¹²⁰ “Day Care Opening Delayed Due to Insufficient Funds,” Student Newspaper Collection, November 5th, 1971

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, November 11, 1971

¹²³ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 7, 1972

Although the parents created the club, many argued that as parents and students taking part in a club on campus required extra responsibilities and time. Todd Clear, the Vice President of center spoke out against the student tax because of its unfairness to divorced or non-married students because it placed an extra financial burden on top of their regular tuition and daycare fees.¹²⁴ Partner-less, the students lacked someone split not the cost of the tax and help them with the extra involvement and their every-day parental duties. The parents also noted that “the day care center interacts with the University and provides a service to the University by employing three work study students, allowing students and faculty to study and observe the children, and having a student teacher.”¹²⁵ The parents hoped that allowing community involvement would help them justify their commitment to the University and allow them to dissolve the club.

After listening to the parents, SA discussed the idea that the center should open spots for the faculty or staff to get more money. Some members protested against the faculty or staff having spots because the “club” fell under Student Association. Since Student Association received their budget from students who paid a “student tax,” members of SA felt that allowing non-students to have a spot in the daycare center went against their “for the students” motto. Despite some hesitation, the Student Association allocated spots for faculty and staff in the daycare center because the parents desperately needed the funds in order to run the center.

According to SA member Mike Lampert, “the Finance Policy [stated] the price for non payers of the student tax could not be equal or lower than the price for payers of student tax,”

¹²⁴ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, September 7, 1972

¹²⁵ Ibid.

and that “exceptions could be granted by the chairman of the tax committee.”¹²⁶ SA, therefore, charged the faculty and staff a higher fee for a spot in the center. Ben Stokem then added an amendment to the bill, “which stated that no child of a student could be excluded in favor of a child of a non student.”¹²⁷ By adding this clause, the Student Association allowed the University community to be non-bias to the faculty and staff.

Finally, with the help of the faculty and staff, the parents received enough funds to reopen the center. With 26 children, the center remained open from Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and officially cost each family three dollars a day.¹²⁸ Although the center offered a variety of activities, it continued to lack supplies. For example, the parents desperately needed, “a real stove with an oven that works and that has more than two burners,” and a refrigerator that held an adequate amount of space for lunches and milk.”¹²⁹

Despite the chaos, the Pierce Hall Day Care Center parents and staff worked with what they had. The staff made the children feel welcomed and loved since most children stayed in the center from open till close. The cook Sterling, made vegetarian meals and the children often put on plays for the parents after their long day of school and or work.¹³⁰ The parents often remembered shows that their children put on after their long day of work or school. A lot of the parents wanted to give the teachers a raise because they worked overtime, taught their children skills for kindergarten, and comforted the children after their parents left them for the day.

¹²⁶ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, November 18, 1971

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ “Day Care Center Opens In Despite Critical Lack of Funding,” Student Newspaper Collection, February 18, 1972

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Paula Rosenberg (former parent of child in daycare) in discussion with the author, March 2017

Despite the teacher's hard work, the limited funds prevented the parents from giving them more money.

Like other daycare centers, the Pierce Hall Day Care Center long waiting list often forced parents to deny incoming parents due to the lack of funds.¹³¹ Staff members also worried that if they increased the funds of the center, parents would take their children out, and the center would have to close.¹³² Parents paid \$25-\$40 dollars and according to an article entitled, "Pierce Hall Day Care Center in Full Swing," they volunteered to clean the center because the University only supplied the building, not the maintenance.¹³³ One staff member exclaimed that the center could only afford to hire the cook for only two hours a day. Another staff member noted that most of the children had to have babysitters after the center closed because their parents were still in class and they could not afford to keep the center open any later than 5:30pm.¹³⁴ When the center's staff members reached out to SA, member Howie Grossman said that the council never received a request for funds.¹³⁵ Whether Grossman lied and SA had received the funds or the center never made a request is unknown. However, in the latter case SA still never went out of its way to see if the center needed money because they did not think the center fell under their responsibility.

On top of the financial problems, non- daycare users who lived in Pierce Hall began to petition to remove the center. These students, much like those in 1970, found the center to be a disturbance. Elise Douglas, the student who created the petition argued that the Pierce Hall Day Care Center took up useful meeting and study space for those that lived in the hall. The petition,

¹³¹ "Day Care Center Needs Funds," Student Newspaper Collection, September 15, 1972

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ "Pierce Hall Day Care Center in Full Swing," Student Newspaper Collection, September 18, 1973

¹³⁴ "Pierce Hall Provides Unique Child Care," Student Newspaper Collection, December 3rd, 1974

¹³⁵ Ibid.

signed by 121 Pierce Hall Residents (out of 135), suggested that the center be moved to another dorm hall because it had an unused basement. Douglas attacked the University and stated that by not offering the Pierce Hall residents a place to meet and study, the University, “was being discriminatory.”¹³⁶ However, Douglas added that although the students believed, “strongly in the day care facility, [they] also believe strongly in equal facilities for all the residents of the University.”¹³⁷ One of the students who petitioned suggested that they should be allowed to use the center space when the center closed for the evening and weekend. This shows that although the majority of students understood the need for the center, many felt annoyed that it interrupted their daily activities. The University understood the student’s concerns but they noted that if they allowed the students to use the space, they would have to pay for maintenance of the center. SA stated that the University did not have the budget for it and decided to try and make another space for the students to study.¹³⁸ This shows that although SA continued to allocate funds for the center, they still failed at understanding the full extent of the value of the daycare center on the campus.

By 1975, the parents still demanded funds from the University. The parents wanted SA to give a budget of \$2150, the cheapest they ever asked for; \$150 for group expenses, \$1700 for staff salary, \$200 for supplies and \$100 for a newsletter.¹³⁹ Pollack begged SA to accept this budget because the center, short a staff member, did not meet State Regulations. Member Barbra Jampole stated that the center, “should be either given the \$1700 for staff or not receive any funding”, while SA member, “Stu Klein felt that they should raise the fee in order to make the

¹³⁶ “Day Center Protests Here,” Student Newspaper Collection, September 25, 1973

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, January 27, 1975

\$1700.”¹⁴⁰ He noted that since the center now served 42 families it would not be that much of a financial burden and that personally, “he felt that SA should not be responsible for this funding.”¹⁴¹ Pollack felt that the parents justified their commitment to the University time and time again and that the daycare served a purpose on the campus. The parents, therefore, should be able to get funds. Klein like many SA members still struggled to understand that these parents probably did not work, but instead went to school and raised their families. The parents argued that any increase in fees would be a financial burden to them. Once again SA could not come to an agreement and postponed the budget request.

The parents continued to beg SA for money, in hopes that they would give in. Specifically, the parents wanted a dishwasher so they could clean up quicker. However, SA members hesitated in giving the money because, “the equipment would then belong to SA, and if the Day Care Center is not funded in the future, SA would have to reclaim the equipment.”¹⁴² Two months later the parents tried again and requested \$70 for a phonograph. The minutes stated that the, “discussion centered that it is not the business of SA to run a Day care center, that there are other sources of income for the center and that they should not rely on SA for funding every time something breaks down.”¹⁴³ Despite the hesitation, SA gave the parents the money for the dishwasher and the phonograph.

Although members of SA never fully understood the between the daycare center and the University, the persistence of the parents allowed the members to see that the daycare needed

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² “Pierce Hall Day Care Center: A Worthy Investment,” Student Newspaper Collection, February 4th 1976

¹⁴³ Central Council Meeting Minutes, series 1, Student Association Records, 1921-1989. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York, March 28, 1977

their financial commitment to stay open. Although the parents only gained a small amount of money from SA, the parents demonstrated to the University that the Pierce Hall Daycare Center was of value to the University community. Without the center and the support of the University, the parent's educational opportunities would fall behind the average student. By continually justifying the value of the center to SA, the parents showed the University that despite their hesitation, the daycare was an integral part of the University at Albany community.

Eventually, during the late 1980's - early 1990's, the Pierce Hall Day Care Center moved off campus and into a local church because of flooding in Pierce Hall. The University community then came together to create a daycare on the uptown campus. The President, H. Patrick Sywgert worked with student, faculty, and staff on the campus to figure out what they wanted out of the daycare center.¹⁴⁴ The University funded the daycare through a series of grants through the SUNY system where students received the money based off of their income. The money then went to the faculty and staff followed by University alumni, and then the general public.¹⁴⁵ The center, located on one of the quads, also worked with one of the resident hall kitchens to provide breakfast and lunch for the children in the center and originally allowed the college students to volunteer in the center. Named the U-kids Child Care Center, the center remained open until 2016, when the staff combined with other Albany daycare centers to create the Capital Milestones Childcare non-profit organization.¹⁴⁶

The persistence of the Women's Liberation Front and the parents who fought to create and maintain the Pierce Hall Day Care Center, allowed the University at Albany to understand

¹⁴⁴ Shelia Mahan (former staff of the University at Albany's President's Office, in discussion with the author, December 2016)

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ "Capital Milestones Child Care (formerly UKids)." University at Albany - State University of New York. Accessed May 11, 2017. <http://www.albany.edu/ukids/>.

the value of daycare on college campuses. The efforts of the coalition allowed the University's Administration and Student Association to understand that by creating an on-campus daycare center, they created a community that allowed for equal educational and work opportunities. The hard work of the Women's Liberation Front forced the University to see that childcare went beyond "women's" politics and that women needed representation on campus. When the Women's Liberation Front stepped away from the daycare scene, the parents who took over the daycare center worked to prove to the University that their financial commitment represented equal educational and work opportunities for student-parents, faculty, and staff. Although the Administration and Student Association often times felt unsure of how to justify their financial commitment to the center, the Women's Liberation Front and the parents showed the University time and time again, the value of the center on the college campus. Although small, the financial gains that the parents received from the University showed that over time, the Administration and Student Association began to understand that the daycare center was an integral part of the University community. When the University community established the Ukids Daycare, they truly understood the importance of having a daycare on the college campus and were able to create a daycare that lasted on campus for years to come.

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