

**EMPOWER, RECORDS OF, 1991-1993**

**Series 31/6/54**

**Box 1 (half-size)**

**History**

In April 1991 Northwestern sorority members Heather Bogdanoff (Delta Gamma), Laurie Bonney (Kappa Alpha Theta), and Allison Newman (Pi Beta Phi) founded the Panhellenic Office of Women's Empowerment (emPOWER) in response to "certain stigmas and stereotypes associated with both the Women's Center and the sororities." A self-described feminist group linked with Northwestern University's Panhellenic Association, emPOWER was designed to raise awareness of women's issues within the sorority system of Northwestern University and to foster communication between Northwestern's sororities and its Women's Center. To achieve these ends, emPOWER scheduled activities that promoted feminist values and addressed issues such as sexual violence, pornography, and eating disorders.

EmPOWER activities from 1991 to 1993 included fireside discussions; retreats; speakers; coffeehouse socials; self-defense classes; and the construction of a wreath symbolizing victims of sexual assault (1992). While most activities were limited to sorority and fraternity members, each year emPOWER also offered or participated in events open to the entire student body. In 1993, for example, emPOWER co-sponsored the campus-wide, sixth annual "Take Back the Night" march against sexual abuse.

EmPOWER acquired a national charter in 1993 and encouraged the establishment of chapters at other educational institutions, including Albion College (Albion, Michigan), the University of Southern California, and Ohio State University.

**Description of the Series**

The Records of emPOWER date from 1991 to 1993 and include historical materials; an official handbook; agendas and minutes; rosters; surveys; materials relating to events and programs; pertinent articles; and a copy of emPOWER's first national newsletter (November 1993).

Historical materials comprise the original proposal prepared by founders Heather Bogdanoff, Laurie Bonney, and Allison Newman in 1991; emPOWER's 1992 constitution; and minutes of Northwestern's Panhellenic Association over the period of emPOWER's establishment, February- May of 1991. Also included is an invitation to the 1993 presentation of emPOWER's records to Northwestern University Library's Women's Collection.

The organizational handbook dates from the 1991-1992 academic year and includes founding documents, schedules, and workshop itineraries.

The agendas and minutes document emPOWER's bi-monthly meetings from May 20, 1991 to May 20, 1993. Rosters comprise listings of emPOWER's officers between Fall 1991 and Fall 1993. In May 1993 emPOWER evaluated its organizational structure and programming by means of a questionnaire, which is filed with other, undated surveys of emPOWER's general reputation and relevance to the sorority system at Northwestern University.

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The records of emPOWER's National Outreach program – intended to establish emPOWER chapters at other institutions – include correspondence and promotional materials dating from March to October of 1993.

Articles from the *Daily Northwestern*, *Glamour*, and sorority/fraternity papers date from 1991 to 1993 and pertain to emPOWER's feminism, intentions, and programming. Also included are two newsletters published by emPOWER in Fall 1992 and November 1993.

**Provenance:** The records of emPOWER were transferred to the University Archives by Russell Maylone of the Library's Special Collections Department on 2 July 1999 as accession #99-101. They had originally been presented to the Special Collections Department by emPOWER on November 16, 1993.

**Restrictions:** None.

**Separations:** A small number of duplicate items were removed and discarded.

**Processor:** Rae Sikula; July 1999.

**Reformatted by:** Rachel C. Teuer; June 29, 2004.

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**Container List**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
1	1	Historical Materials	1991-1993
	2	Handbook	1991-1992
	3	Agendas and Minutes	1991-1993
	4	Rosters	1991-1993
	5	Surveys	1993
	6	Events	1992-1993
	7	National Outreach Program	March –October, 1993
	8	Articles	1991-1993
	9	Newsletters	1992-1993