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## CONFERENCES

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### WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION TO MEET

The 9th Annual International Conference on Women in Higher Education will be held on January 4-7, 1996 at Camino Real Paso del Norte Hotel, El Paso, Texas. The conference is hosted by the Women's Studies Program and the Division of Professional and Continuing Education, the University of Texas at El Paso. The conference will focus on women in their various roles in higher education. Previous conferences were attended by participants from Australia, Canada, Greece, Mexico, Argentina, Turkey and Bahrain. The conference will provide an opportunity for networking and discussing possible collaborative research ventures. Paper abstracts on women in international education, multicultural women's studies issues, equity issues, women in their disciplines, women's roles in higher education, career mobility, minority women in higher education, and support systems for women in higher education.

Contact: Office of Women in International Development, University of Illinois at Urbana, 320 International Studies Building, 910 South Fifth St., Illinois.

### BRAZIL: FIRST CONFERENCE OF WOMEN PAJES (SHAMANS)

In 1994, GRUMIN's President, Eliane Potiguara, was honored by PEN CLUB INTERNATIONAL, both as author of the book "A Terra e a Mae do Indio" (The Land is Mother to the Indian), a teaching aid published by GRUMIN with support from the World Council of Churches' Anti-Racism Program, and for her dedication to the struggle for indigenous rights. The award to Eliane Potiguara was supported by the Committee of Writers in Prison during its 58th International Congress, which voted unrestricted political support for indigenous writers. Potiguara was appointed an honorary member of PEN CLUB WET (USA).

Before Brazil was "discovered", it held more than 5 million Indians. Today they number 250,000. In the past, indigenous women used to have the final say in Assemblies. They could go against the word of their fathers, brothers or husbands. The invasion, sexual violence and the psychology imposed on some women have led them to shelter themselves in the rear guard of our men. Old women in some tribes still have the last word and are venerated as great sages. For 10 years, GRUMIN has been fighting to restore respect for indigenous women in the home, in the community and in the country.

The National Seminar "Indigenous Women's Health: Our Right" voted and approved a proposal to hold a First Conference of Women Pajes (Shamans). This decision was taken because, in some communities where colonial and neocolonial influences are strong, women have no effective participation in spiritual activities and little recognition for their spiritual gifts.

Preparatory stages to this conference involve the creation of four community herb gardens in four different states, to recuperate and preserve a variety of herbs that have fallen into discredit since the arrival of allopathic medicine, which has also served to undermine the status of the pajes and women herbal doctors, as well as traditional methods of childbirth and curing. For all these reasons, the Seminar also discussed Indigenous Women's Reproductive Rights at length.

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Departments:  
BULLETIN

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## REPORT

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### IS POVERTY FEMALE? A NEW BRIDGE REPORT

It has become common in development circles to talk of the 'feminisation of poverty'. The phrase implies that poverty is becoming a female phenomenon, or that women are becoming poorer relative to men. This trend is often linked to an increase in the number of female-headed household, to the informalisation of labour markets and, generally, to the economic crises and adjustments of the 1980s in Latin America and Africa.

Because many studies in poverty do not look inside the household, evidence is lacking to show a feminisation of poverty. Moreover, the evidence we do have does not always show that more women than men are poor, or that their proportion among the poor, relative to men, is increasing.

Certain groups of women - including some but by no means all female heads of household - may be particularly vulnerable to poverty. Women are discriminated against within the household, in legal and property rights, in access to financial resources, in labour