

WOMEN'S STUDIES UMASS AMHERST * NEWSLETTER * SPRING 2003

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This newsletter is published twice a year funds permitting. Written and edited by Karen Lederer. Design and production by Linda Hillenbrand. Articles contributed by Arlene Avakian, Linda Hillenbrand, Nancy Patteson, Emily Silverman and Banu Subramaniam. Thank you to student contributors Jamielle Walker, and Lisa Dawn Thompson. *Editor's note: Special thanks to my colleagues for their understanding this past fall.*



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR "Some Bright Spots Amidst the Gloom"

Writing this director's message has become more and more of a challenge. Beginning any semester thinking about what is to come is always risky, after 9/11 and the ensuing attack on civil liberties and the growing racism against people identified as Arabs, the war on Afghanistan, the deepening budget crisis in the state and the University, and now the imminent pre-emptive attack on Iraq, EVEN I am almost speechless. Once again, I have no idea what the state of the world or the state, or the University will be when this newsletter reaches you. But, I am also heartened by the resistance. As I write this message hundreds of thousands of people all over the country are preparing to demonstrate against the war. During the Vietnam war it took years of struggle by the antiwar movement, and thousands of deaths of American soldiers before we had these kinds of demonstrations. In the face of such crises, we must remember that it is more important than ever to not only struggle against immediate injustice, but to continue to engage in our long term goals of making a better world.

At the moment, we do have some very good news. Women's Studies has permission to search for two Assistant Professors, one in African American Studies, and the other in Asian/Asian American Studies. As you know our tremendous loses in tenure track faculty over the last decade were replaced primarily with year to year lecturers, often funded late in the Spring semester-a difficult situation both for the Program and for the people in these positions. While we have been very fortunate to have some excellent people in these positions, the future of the program is more secure with permanent faculty positions. We will be able to plan the curriculum more than one semester in advance and even begin to think about implementing some of our long term goals. We hope those of you in the area will come to hear the candidates' public presentations, and give us your feedback.

As always, we have several great events in the works. Building on the wonderful response to the celebration of June Jordan's life, we are organizing a conference for the Fall of 2003 on Jordan's political legacy-how we can use her political vision and acuity to help us deal with the current situation. We already have the beginnings of an excellent committee. If you are interested in joining us, please get in touch. We look forward to this semester's very timely and important Roundtable "Gender and Globalization," and the celebration of the publication of This Bridge Called Home.

I want to end with a thanks to everyone involved in the Program-staff, core faculty, associated and adjunct faculty, undergraduates, and graduate students-for contributing all that you do to Women's Studies. In these difficult times your commitment and dedication to Women's Studies, your generosity, and above all, your good humor has been crucial to our ability to continue our work.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Congratulations to Arlene Avakian and Banu Subramaniam for being nominated for the University's Distinguished Teaching award. Our program's reputation for excellence in teaching continues! Congratulations and Bon Voyage to Arlene Avakian for being invited to participate in the prestigious Oxford Roundtable. The focus is women's rights and gender discrimination. Arlene will be in Oxford for 1 week during the Spring semester.

GREAT NEWS!

WOMEN'S STUDIES SEARCHES!

As with many programs at UMass, Women's Studies had not been able to replace faculty members when they left the university or retired. We are delighted to tell you that we are now in the process of searching for two tenure track faculty members to join the program in the Fall of 2003. We are looking for scholars with teaching experience. One search focuses on a faculty member with expertise in African American women, the other is for a faculty member who is a social scientist with expertise in Asian/Asian American women. Professor Alexandrina Deschamps is the chair of the search committee. Complete versions of the job descriptions are available on our website www.umass.edu/wost under opportunities. Once these positions are filled, we will ensure the future of the program at least into the next decade.

We look forward to welcoming and introducing two new faculty members in the next edition of the newsletter. Thank you to the support of our Dean, Lee Edwards, for her foresight in preserving the program for future generations.

Budgets and More Budgets

The above good news notwithstanding, the state budget and the University budget (and the economy in general) are in some grim times. News changes quickly, suffice it to say that if you care about the University, stay tuned to the news, check out <http://www.umass.edu/ambassadors>, and let your elected officials know what you think about the cuts to education, local aid and services.

By the way, a Dec. 23, 2002 Reuters News story indicates that "Taking part in protests and demonstrations can be good for your physical and mental health" according to a new study. "Psychologists at the University of Sussex found that people who get involved in campaigns, strikes and political demonstrations experience an improvement in psychological well-being that can help them overcome stress, pain, anxiety and depression." This backs up a long held belief in Women's Studies that empowering oneself to act, even in difficult circumstances, feels better than not doing anything! Keep speaking up and finding your voice, it is good for you and you might even get what you want. So, advice from Women's Studies this winter: eat right, exercise, bundle up for the weather, and be as politically active as you can.

The official inauguration of our new Chancellor Lombardi took place on Feb. 7. Women's Studies was well represented highlighting the important contributions we bring to this campus.

LIBRARY NEWS

Many new full-text databases are available through the Library. Check the Library web site at www.library.umass.edu and use the database locator, the ejournal locator, or the subject research guides to get started with your research. Librarians are available 24/7 to assist you - just click on the ASK 24/7 button. To set up a research consultation, contact Emily Silverman, the WOST librarian at 545-0995 or essilverman@library.umass.edu

SPOTLIGHT

We are trying a new idea in this edition of the newsletter. We asked one undergraduate and one graduate student to write a short article about their experiences and projects in Women's Studies. Here are the first segments of this new feature.

POST GRAD REFLECTIONS

After recently completing my undergraduate career I look back and realize the significance of the relationships and alliances formed as a result of my involvement with the Women's Studies Department. Through my studies as a double major in English and Women's Studies, I have learned about the theory of PRAXIS both in and out of the classroom. This learning was made possible in part by the Independent Study/Field Work Study option that I, as a Women's Studies major was encouraged to pursue by faculty sponsor, Alex Deschamps.

My Women's Studies concentration was women of color (particularly the health of women of color) and during my last two semesters through my Field Work project, I worked closely with Jacqui Pinn, Director of Women of Color Leadership Network, and was able to facilitate and coordinate informational health workshops which focused on women of color on campus. As a result of these workshops, coalitions were built with Tapestry Health in Amherst as well as with Lisa McCarthy and Rani Varghese from ALANA Health and Outreach Education at University Health Services.

This theory of PRAXIS, which I was able to experience first hand, is a very valuable tool in my personal and professional growth. I encourage you all to personally challenge yourselves to implement the idea of "learning outside of the box" in your lives by taking advantage of Independent/Field Work opportunities you have as Women's Studies majors and minors.

-Jamielle Walker

Editors note: Congratulations on graduating and good luck!

PROJECT TO ELIMINATE HOMOPHOBIA IN SPORT

Lisa Dawn Thompson, Ed.D. Candidate in Social Justice Education, and Women's Studies Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies candidate was recently hired by the Women's Sports Foundation as Director of their Project to Eliminate Homophobia in Sport. Lisa was hired to produce an educational video and accompanying manual "It Takes A Team! Making Sports Safe for Lesbian and Gay Athletes." The tone of the education kit consistently asserts a positive, "can-do" approach encouraging participants and leaders to "join the team" and do their part to eliminate homophobia in sport so athletic participation is accessible and enjoyed by everyone. Lisa wrote the following encouraging the use of "LGBT safe zone" stickers saying:

"We invite you to declare your school and athletic department a safe space for LGBT athletes to enjoy the benefits of sports participation like everyone else. We hope that you will declare and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for any anti-LGBT sentiment expressed verbally or behaviorally among athletes and between coaches and athletes. We understand that educating ourselves around the complexities involved in LGBT issues takes time and we don't expect you to know everything already. We invite you to simply create a "Safe Space" to engage in open and honest dialogue so that respect for difference is developed over time."

Lisa will remain with the Project to promote and distribute the video and education kit to high schools and colleges nationwide. For information about the project www.homophobiainспорт.com, 800-227-3988.

NEWS FOR STUDENTS

The Women's Studies lounge is new and improved and recently cleaned up by Nancy and Linda during the January break. Two computers are there and have on-line capability and one computer can print papers for those who find themselves in an emergency printing situation. We now have a small table which can be used for meetings (fits 6 comfortably), TV/VCR combinations for tape viewing, a fridge and other amenities. We also have comfortable couches. See Linda in the office for availability times.

NEWS FOR UNDERGRADUATES

The major deadline for spring is April 1, 2003. If you want to change to Women's Studies this semester, an application, complete with a faculty sponsor is due by that date. For information or assistance contact Karen Lederer for an advising appointment, lederer@wost.umass.edu

As all students and staff know, the new computer system has created many changes in the ways students register for classes. It is more important than ever to keep track of your academic career. All majors, minors, students planning internships, exchanges, or honors projects, commonwealth college students, potential majors and minors and particularly seniors are encouraged to set up a time to come in and go over your records.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE NEWS

REMINDER that the application deadline for admission into the fall 2003 Women's Studies graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies is Monday March 10, 2003. Information and advising is available by contacting Nancy Campbell Patteson, Certificate Coordinator, in the Women's Studies office. patteson@educ.umass.edu

RETREAT

The Certificate mid-year retreat was held on Friday, February 7, 2003 from 3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. in the Everywoman's Center Conference Room, Wilder Hall. Past and present Certificate students attended despite the snowy weather. This event provided an opportunity for students to socialize and to dialogue over current issues.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

The spring lecture series is back in partnership with the graduate Certificate "Issues in Feminist Research Seminar." Guest speakers will be presenting on selected Thursdays, from 4:00-5:00PM in Bartlett 127.

The schedule includes:

March 13

Professor Banu Subramaniam, Women's Studies
Professor Arlene Avakian, Women's Studies

March 27

Professor Julie Graham, Geography

April 17

Professor Millie Thayer, Sociology

April 24

Associate Professor Alexandrina Deschamps
Women's Studies

Plus other research presentations t.b.a.

COMINGS AND

GOINGS

Welcome to new majors: *Julia Becker, Jackie Enos, Nadhege Jean, Nellie Krentzman, Christina Knowles, Nicole Laurence, Leah Lissauer, Kristi Nelson, Noriko Oiwake, Jessica Peters, Nicole Potvin, and Christine Rutkowski.* **Welcome to our new minors:** *Winifred Chen, Corey Hessinger, David Lambert, Allison Leshefsky, Samara Marblestone, Astariea Martin, Edwina Nunez, Pande Parul, Melissa Perez, Mary Ann Ruszala, Maria Tabia and Marjorie Valdivia.*

We graduated a larger than usual group this January. Congratulations to major grads: *Andrew Elder, Marny Levasseur, Caryl McCabe, Jessica Peters and Jamielle Walker.* Best of luck to minor grad *Kristal Ornellas.*

ATTENTION WOST ALUMS:

Alumni News will be in the fall 2003 newsletter. We love to hear about your careers and lives, and your example inspires others. Send us your cards, letters and emails.

DONORS

As always, the state budget wavers but our donors don't let us down. Your donations enable us to offer special events, and continue the long-standing tradition of awarding our grads T-shirts. Special thanks to:

Jayne M. Adams
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