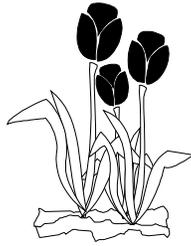


WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2004

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

We begin 2004 having won some victories. After a long struggle, the legislature finally funded our raises and although we still have to work to ensure that those raises and the retroactive pay will be funded for the full three years, the principle that the state must honor collective bargaining agreements was unequivocally upheld. The legislature restored some of the funding for higher education that was vetoed by the Governor.

The University is once again a political football and we cannot let down our guard.

Watch the papers, and contact your legislators when appropriate. We have won this battle only with an enormous organizing effort. The war to maintain the quality of public higher education in this state (and the nation) is far from over.

Most of you probably already know about a momentous decision made by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts that the denial of civil marriage to same sex couples violates the Massachusetts state constitution. The court instructed the legislature to enact their decision within 180 days of their November ruling. There is no appeal. The Supreme Judicial Court is the highest body in the state and cannot be superseded by the state legislature, the United States Supreme Court, or by the U.S. Constitution since this state's constitution is the oldest in the country. Despite the strong reaction against this ruling, nothing can be done to stop it within this time frame outlined by the court. So we can look forward to a bevy of May brides and brides and grooms and grooms, and the pride in this state being the first in the nation to validate all couples and families.

By the time you read this newsletter, thirty women's studies faculty, undergraduates and graduate students will have been to Cuba for a gender studies conference jointly organized by women's studies at UMass and the University of Havana. A group of us was excited when we heard about a Women's Studies conference hosted by the University of Havana, but were then disappointed when we realized it was in the middle of our semester. I suggested to Ann Ferguson that with her extensive contacts in Cuba we (she) could organize a conference with our Cuban colleagues. With her characteristic willingness to take on enormously time consuming projects, Ann agreed. Undergraduates, graduates and faculty participated on panels with Cuban women's studies faculty addressing such issues as: alternative models of development; pedagogy of race and gender; domestic and sexual violence; women's health in Cuba; globalization, immigration, and women's work; women and social movements; and media images. Many, many thanks to Ann Ferguson for her hard work in making this conference possible.

Closer to home, women's studies collaborated with a number of groups on campus to host a very exciting conference on the vision of June Jordan on February 27 and 28 (see inside for conference description and schedule). The idea for this event emerged from the very powerful memorial/celebration of Jordan's life we organized in the fall of 2002. Using Jordan's vision, activists, scholar

(continued on page 2)

(Director's Message continued from front page)

activists, and activist artists will discuss the state we are in and what to do about it. Sonia Sanchez will give the keynote on Friday night. Many wonderful people will gather in roundtables on Saturday, and the New World Theater will produce an exciting evening of performances that night. All the events are free, and we hope faculty will attend and encourage their students to attend.

Our first Feminist Foundations Seminar Series was a great success, drawing an engaged audience for each session. We are grateful to the many faculty who gave presentations, commented on the texts, and led discussions. We are especially delighted to welcome some of our new colleagues from across the campus. Thanks to: Joyce Berkman, Marta Calas, Paula Chakravarty, Barbara Cruikshank, Suzanne Daly, Alex Deschamps, Dayo Gore, Julie Graham, Bernie Jones, Sangeeta Kamat, Miliann Kang, Sara Lennox, Joya Misra, Agustin Lao-Montes, Dean Robinson, Srirupa Roy, Banu Subramaniam, Millie Thayer. We also appreciate the hard work of Nancy Patteson and Banu Subramaniam for making this wonderful series possible.

We enter this new year guardedly optimistic about our future. Dayo Gore and Miliann Kang, our new tenure track faculty, have exceeded the high hopes we had when we hired them. Now that we have a full compliment of tenure track faculty we are able to evaluate the curriculum and make plans for the future. We are also delighted that the expertise of many of the new faculty hired in departments across campus is in women's studies. We list their courses, send them students, and call on them to be more involved in the program.

A sad note. Some of our most esteemed colleagues have decided to retire this year. We bid a reluctant farewell to Margo Culley and Arlyn Diamond, two of the founding members of this program, and Carol Wallace, director of Everywoman's Center, who has sat on our Executive Committee for many years. We bid farewell to faculty and colleagues in other departments such as Pat Griffin in Education. We are also sorry to hear of the many staff across campus whose expertise and service to our students will be sorely missed. We wish you all well.



NEWS

Graduates and friends, please remember that we'd love to list your e-mail on our website. We'd also be happy to add you to our listserv created especially for graduates and friends. Send an e-mail to Linda at lindah@wost.umass.edu for information.

Twice last semester the wost-events listserv received racist spam from an outside, unknown source. Although we do control who subscribes to the list we cannot control what gets posted to the list. For various reasons it's an open list. The University does use filters, but spammers, by using clever usage of words, get through the filters. We are not the only ones who get these spam messages and we agree it's disgusting. But, at this point, it's important to leave the list open so relevant events can be sent from legitimate sources. When these offensive e-mails are sent to the list they are immediately sent to the University postmaster with a complaint. As you know spam is an international problem, our troubles are not unique. We'd like to ask everyone to hang in there with us and trust in the University's postmaster.

COMINGS AND GOINGS



Welcome to the minors who entered in Fall 2003: **Erika Arthur, Kimberly Ann Childs, Raven East, Rachel Goldberg, Lauren Goodman, Tracy Kirschen, Aura Spivak and Jennifer Wood.**

Another terrific group of majors joined the program in the fall. Welcome to: **Lucienne Arsenault, Stacy Carvalho, Sarah Coombs, Courtney deBlieck, Stephanie Parker, Noelia Santana, Jose Santiago, and Stephanie Vesekis.**

Best of luck to our December graduates. Majors: **Amy Ferrer, Ashley Hodges and David Lambert.** Graduating minors: **Anatasia Dubrovsky, Danielle Lapierre, Allison Leshefsky, Laura Mele and Maria Tabia.** Congratulations!

EVENTS

A Revolutionary Convening: 2004 June Jordan Conference

Poet, novelist, essayist, professor, orator, performance artist and political activist, June Jordan was one of the world's most articulate and essential voices of the liberation struggles of the past forty years. Jordan's work flourished at the crossroads of arts and activism. Confronting white supremacy and imperialism, celebrating resistance struggles across the globe, extolling the strength and endurance of African American culture, and singing lyrically about the healing power of love, Jordan's work transcended traditional bounds of self and society with the vision of a passionate revolutionary.

Women's Studies, in collaboration with a number of campus and five college groups including New WORLD Theater, Student Activities, Black Student Union, Office of ALANA Affairs, and the women of color leadership network presents an artist/activist gathering which will build on Jordan's vision as a way to think about how to confront the political situation we face today. Intergenerational roundtables will address the anti-racist and anti-sexist activism; anti-imperialist struggles; revolutionary pedagogy; and revolutionary pedagogy. The conference is free and open to all. For updated schedule information, and complete list of co-sponsors, look on the Women's Studies website, www.umass.edu/wost/events/wost.htm.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

7:30 p.m. KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Student Union Ballroom SONIA SANCHEZ, Poet and Activist

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

- 9:00-10:30 a.m. **Art and Politics**
Magdalena Gomez, Poet; Letta Neely, Poet
Kate Rigg, Performance Artist; Sonia Sanchez, Poet
- 11:00-12:30 p.m. **U.S. Anti-Racism and Anti-Sexism Struggles**
Bhairavi Desai, New York Taxi Workers Alliance
Katja Hahn d-Errico, Breast Cancer Activist
Dawn Martin, Ph.D. candidate, co-editor, *The Fire This Time: Young Activists and the New Feminism* (forthcoming, Anchor Books)
Loretta Ross, Founder and Executive Director
National Center for Human Rights Education
- 2:00-3:30 p.m. **Anti-Imperialist Struggles**
Frances Crowe and Jo Commeford, former and current Directors
American Friends Service Committee
Agustin Lao-Montes, Assistant Professor of Sociology, UMass
Camilia Leiva, Anti-sweatshop Activist, High School Student, Albany, New York
Vijay Prashad, Assistant Professor of International Studies, Trinity College
- 8:00-10:00 p.m. **Blueprints for Revolution: A Performance**
Magdalena Gomez, Poet
Evelyn Harris, Vocalist, Former Member of Sweet Honey in the Rock
Letta Neely, Poet
Project 20/50
Kate Rigg, Performance Artist
Sonia Sanchez, Poet
Jane Sapp and the Voices of Today

EVENTS

GRADUATE STUDENT RETREAT

Friday, Feb. 13, 2004
Noon-5:00 p.m.
(See article in Student News)

NEW MAJORS DINNER

If you are entering the major this spring, you will be invited to dinner after the April 1st deadline (see article in Student News).

PREREGISTRATION EVENT

Faculty describe their fall courses in an informal setting. Refreshments! Look for this event in April!

GRADUATION

Friday, May 21, 2004
Save the date for our festive graduation breakfast!



NORTH AMERICAN SEXUALITIES, POST-WORLD WAR II

The history department presents a one-day symposium on post-World War II sexualities in North America on April 24, 2004.
For more information: <http://www.umass.edu/history/postww2sexualities/index.html>



UPCOMING CAMPUS CAREER FAIRS:

Campus Wide Career Fair

February 11, 2004
10:00-3:00 Campus Center Auditorium

ALANA Job Fair

February 11, 2004
5:30-8:30 p.m., Campus Center Auditorium

Co-op and Summer Job Fair

February 12, 2004
10 - 3 p.m. Campus Center Auditorium

For details and more information:
<http://www-ccn.acad.umass.edu/>



MARCH FOR FREEDOM OF CHOICE

There is a national march for choice, Sunday, April 25, in Washington D.C. This march is organized by the Feminist Majority, NARAL, NOW, Planned Parenthood and more. For national information www.marchforchoice.org.

ANNUAL REPRODUCTIVE RIGHT CONFERENCE FOR STUDENT ACTIVISTS

From Abortion Rights to Social Justice:
Building the Movement for Reproductive Freedom
April 2-4 2004, Hampshire College

This conference promotes a broad understanding of reproductive rights, encompassing the struggle for racial equality, economic justice, civil liberties, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender and intersex rights, environmental justice, peace, youth liberation, access to education, healthcare and childcare, welfare rights, disability rights, immigrant and refugee rights, and freedom from violence. There are workshops, speakers, performances and more. Open to all and free of charge. Housing, childcare and sign language interpretation are available with advance registration. For information <http://clpp.hampshire.edu/> or 413 559-5416.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, MARCH 8, 2004 "THAT TAKES OVARIES!"

Cape Cod Lounge
Student Union 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Come celebrate the brave, bold and brazen women in your life—including yourself!—at this speakout and open mike.



Come Celebrate **Poetry Month** with Everywoman's Center, Perugia Press and Food for Thought Books, April 7, 2004 at 7:00 at Food for Thought, 106 Pleasant Street, Amherst.

Sponsored by the Everywoman's Center, 545-0883
www.umass.edu/ewc



The Five College Women's Studies Research Center located at Mt. Holyoke College has an extensive list of Spring 2004 lectures. For information <http://wscenter.hampshire.edu/events.html>



As always, great events are upcoming. Check out the schedules for the Stonewall Center, New WORLD Theater, Asian Arts and Culture Program and more, all conveniently linked off our website, www.umass.edu/wost.

FALL 2003 HIGHLIGHTS



Women's Studies welcomed our new faculty and offered many interesting events this past fall:

The Feminist Foundation Series had 4 well attended book discussions, lectures, and a panel on globalization. The series explored feminist theories today, its histories as well as current controversies. The group read foundational texts that explored the development of feminist theory and explored its current relevance and applicability as well as evolution and mutations. In particular, the series explored the challenges that women of color, critical race feminists and third world feminists have raised in the development of feminist thought. Other foci included the development of women's studies as a field and the relationship of academic feminism to the feminist movement. Faculty and students came from across the disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, generating a vibrant and engaging conversation. Given the success of this series, we hope to continue it in future years.

State Representative Ellen Story gave a lively lecture on "Progressive Women in Elective Office: A Woman's View from Inside the Massachusetts State House" in November. She discussed the possibilities for activism and social change, described the current situation in the statehouse, and commented on the Supreme Judicial Court ruling on gay marriage, the presidential race, and other issues.

Women Who Move Mountains – An Interdisciplinary Inclusive Exhibit was a class project organized by students in Alexandrina Deschamps' Women's Studies 187H class. The exhibit was in the W.E.B. Du Bois library and featured women leaders past, present, and future, from campus, the surrounding area, and from around the world.

And some new traditions: New Majors dinner. For the first time, incoming majors were welcomed at a dinner where they could meet the faculty and one another. We revived an old tradition of a *Pre-Registration Event* where faculty describe their upcoming courses in a relaxed social atmosphere. See upcoming events for the spring semester.

WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS ARE KNOWN FOR TAKING INITIATIVE AND GENERATING CREATIVE AND IMPORTANT PROJECTS. THIS PAST SEMESTER TWO OF OUR SENIORS LED AN INNOVATIVE, AND AS YOU CAN SEE, SUCCESSFUL CLASS.

Analyzing Today's Feminism: Reflections on a Student-Taught Class *By Amy Ferrer*

Over a year ago, an idea sparked in Julia Becker's head. Women's Studies students seem to always be talking about feminist issues in current events, in and out of the classroom, but none of the classes the department offered gave us much time to discuss these issues freely with other students because there was a curriculum to follow. There should be a class for us to talk about current world issues and how they relate to feminism, we thought, and we decided to create it. What resulted from two semesters worth of hard work and research was "Analyzing Today's Feminism", a two-credit pass/fail student-taught discussion-based course offered during the Fall 2003 semester. By choosing readings from contemporary sources, feminist magazines and local newspapers, and creating a flexible and broad syllabus, we created a space for Women's Studies students to put our heads together - to study the world today and look to the future of feminism itself.

Now that the class is over, it's hard to believe how much work went into it. It's also hard to believe how rewarding it was for us, as students and as teachers, and how successful it was. The class discussions touched on everything from the recent "partial-birth" abortion ban to the supposedly gender-neutral phrase "you guys." We watched films and critiqued their feminist content, deconstructed editorials in the Daily Collegian, and had workshops with the Everywoman's Center's La Wanza Lett-Brewington and a panel from the Stonewall Center. Our students did presentations on women in the punk/hardcore scene, a feminist analysis of Christina Aguilera, and a comparison of feminisms of women of color with mainstream white feminism. The work we saw and discussions we had were analytical, honest, and hopeful.

We put more time and hard work into this project than any class we'd taken before, but we got more learning and life experience out of it than anything else we've done in school. If you've ever had an aspiration to take on a project like this, and you have the dedication it takes, pursue it. Thank you to our supervising professors, Alexandrina Deschamps and Arlene Avakian, and to our amazing students - the class was a success because of you.

-----STUDENT NEWS-----

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Applications for the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies are due by 3/10/2004. Students interested in learning more about Certificate, advising and program planning are available on a walk-in basis (208 Bartlett) or by contacting Nancy Campbell Patteson, 545-1922.

Graduate Student Retreat: The Challenge of Building Community **By Nancy Patteson**

As program coordinator of the Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies, I often ask students what they want me to provide for them that is relevant to their lives in graduate school. A common response is a need for a sense of community. That it is easier said than done.

The problem with providing a sense of community is scheduling. I can open the lounge, provide speakers, arrange workshops and facilitate discussions. When students get to an event, they are glad, but the hard part is finding times that work in their and other students' schedules. With this in mind, I consciously plan events to minimize disruption to student lives and maximize potential relevance.

One primary event designed to bring students together is the Graduate Student Retreat. This annual event brings Certificate students together for both social and professional development. This year, the Retreat is on Friday, February 13, 2004, from 12:00 to 5:00PM. It will include a faculty and student luncheon. Assistant Professor Banu Subramaniam and new faculty members Dayo Gore and Miliann Kang will lead a workshop on feminist research and publications. Several graduate students will facilitate discussions on relevant issues. The retreat provides an opportunity for a diverse and interdisciplinary group of students to develop a sense of community. Attendance at the retreat is highly recommended.

ASK EMILY

Need help with research? Looking for an esoteric article? Wading through Google searches? Or just trying to find a good book? I'm the Women's Studies librarian and I'm here to help. To make an appointment for a research consultation, call me at 545-0995 or email me at essilverman@library.umass.edu
I look forward to working with you.
Emily Silverman, 415 W.E.B. Du Bois Library



UNDERGRAD NEWS

The **deadline for declaring a Women's Studies major** is April 1st. Completed major applications, signed by a faculty sponsor, are due by that date in order to officially be in the major. **Do your paperwork!** If you need helping thinking through the concentration question, or assistance in finding a faculty sponsor, make an appointment with Karen. New majors will be invited to meet one another, and the faculty and staff at a dinner after the April 1st deadline. We have double majors and even **triple majors** at the moment, so come in and discuss your options! Minor applications, signed by a faculty sponsor, are accepted throughout the semester.

For current students: It is crucial to keep on top of major requirements, minor and honors requirements (if applicable), college requirements (for example foreign language for Humanities and Fine Arts Majors, Global Education for Social and Behavioral Sciences, etc.) and University requirements (120 credits, grade point average of at least 2.0.) We are here to help you, make an appointment with Karen if you have questions, or want to discuss your academic program. lederer@wost.umass.edu.

Honors options: The Commonwealth College provides options for students interested in in-depth research, special projects, and graduation with Latin honors. If you are interested in honors options in Women's Studies, make an appointment with Honors Coordinator Professor Alexandrina Deschamps. There will be a meeting for Women's Studies honors students during the spring semester. Sign up to be invited to this meeting.

FACULTY SENATE COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN: STUDENT REPS WANTED

The membership of the UMass Council on the Status of Women includes faculty, staff and students interested in working on campus wide issues for women. The SOWC meets several times a semester, usually at lunchtime, to discuss child care, tenure, family benefits and the working climate for women in academia. We are looking for both undergraduate and graduate student representatives. If this interests you, contact the Co-Chairs: Nancy Campbell Patteson at patteson@educ.umass.edu or Elizabeth Chilton at echilton@anthro.umass.edu.

POST GRAD REFLECTIONS

We again asked recent graduates (one each from our undergraduate and graduate programs) to discuss their education and current projects.

By Kristi Nelson

I must say that I had a very unusual (even by outside the box criteria) undergraduate life; one that warrants featuring if only to validate the many, circuitous ways that people navigate their undergraduate life.

I was thrilled to discover Women's Studies as a major. It was exactly the kind of multi-disciplinary, eclectic education that I craved in order to satisfy my many interests and fields of inquiry. I knew I wanted to study many areas from a feminist perspective and I did just that. Until I fixed on women and management as my concentration, I took almost all my classes from among the women's studies course offerings. I was clear what I wanted and was glad that Women's Studies could accommodate me. I was an older student when I entered in 1982, and even older when I graduated in 2003 - 22 years older, to be exact.

It took me over two decades to finally complete my degree because I left UMass with a handful of incompletes when personal issues took precedence over finishing college in 1987. I was already working in fundraising for progressive not-for-profits when I left school and I have continued in this field of organizational management and development through the present moment. My work life increasingly reflected and integrated my feminist education when I became the Executive Director of a women's foundation in 1997. My work involved the creation of fundraising, grantmaking and programming strategies which advanced our organization's deeply-held political and spiritual values - from a feminist perspective. This career - and its accompanying teachings - was the most satisfying work experience that I could ever imagine having. I loved it, and knew that I wanted to continue to love my work as much as that experience. So, when I left the organization two years ago, I decided to return to school in order to bring "completion" (something I had come to increasingly value) to my undergraduate life so that I would never feel that doors and opportunities were not open to me.

When I humbly re-approached Women's Studies staff and faculty to propose the delayed culmination of my studies, I was very fortunate to find that my undergraduate values were still shared, my work and life experiences since school were so valued and, especially, to find so many old friends still working in the department. I was able to pick up where I left off, and that was an unparalleled blessing. I do not take it for granted. Even in the year since I finished, I know that the cutbacks have taken a huge toll on the resources and familiar faces available to returning students, and it will not be without great losses. I am grateful to all the staff and faculty who remain to continue to fight the good fight to offer this great Women's Studies resource to others. Thank you.

By Priscilla Page

I graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in May 2002 with an MFA in Dramaturgy and an advanced certificate in Feminist Studies. After graduation, I became a visiting lecturer of theater at Hampshire College and UMass. The courses I teach are Contemporary Playwrights of Color, Latino Theater in the U.S., Re-writing the Classics: Race, Gender, and Performance, and An Introduction to Theater and Social Action. My concentration on feminist studies during both undergraduate and graduate school informs both the subject matter for my courses and the teaching style I employ. I gained invaluable skills and knowledge from both my peers and my professors in the Women's Studies Program. In particular, both Alex Deschamps and Ann Ferguson provided incredible guidance and support during my graduate studies.

I must say that in the past year and a half I have been very busy. In addition to teaching I have worked and continue to work on a number of projects. What follows is a list of the highlights. From June 2002 to May 2003, I worked as a special events producer and a grant-writer for The Fund For Women Artists in Florence, MA. I worked closely with Martha Richards and gained insight on running a feminist non-profit organization. In Spring 2003, I joined the Women of Color Leadership Network as a workshop facilitator. I will direct Body Politics, a theater piece written by, for and about women of color this spring with the Women of Color Leadership Network and ALANA Health Services. In Summer 2003, I performed in New WORLD Theater's (NWT) presentation of Women, directed by Laurie Carlos and Marlies Yearby, with Talvin Wilks as the dramaturg. This was a truly memorable experience because of the formidable creative team in Laurie, Marlies, and Talvin. This past September, I worked with NWT and the Multi-cultural Arts Council of Western Massachusetts on their collaboration of New WORLD Theater's production of Undesirable Elements: Pioneer Valley, written and directed by Ping Chong and Talvin Wilks. I traveled to Manila, Philippines in November 2003, where I participated in the Sixth Women's Playwriting International Conference. The keynote speakers and invited guests included Jessica Hagedorn, Ellen Stewart, and Alice Tuan who are all U.S. women and professional theater artists. It was an honor to meet them and hear them speak about women and theater in an international context. Lastly, I have begun creative writing and continue my academic writing. I am currently writing a short piece on feminism, identity politics and the arts that I hope to present and/or publish shortly.

DONORS



The state cuts the budget but our donors don't budge in their support. Thanks for the financial and moral support. Your donations cover events, presentation of T-shirts and flowers to graduates, and other Women's Studies touches. If you are a graduate and you cherish your precious, unobtainable red t-shirt, consider donating to maintain this tradition. Earmarking to programs is easy - contact us for information.

Nancy Arienti
Robyn Bagley
Barbara F. Bazemore
Susan Brown Zimmerman
Lisa Calchera
Susan L. Casey
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