



University of Massachusetts Amherst



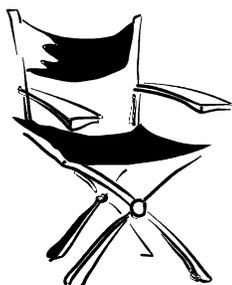
Women's Studies Program

Newsletter

Spring 2005

208 Bartlett Hall
Amherst, MA 01003-9269
413-545-1922

www.umass.edu/wost
womens-studies@wost.umass.edu
FAX: 413-545-1500



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Fall semester was centered on preparing for the **Academic Quality Assessment and Development (AQAD) review**. Mandated by the trustees in 1999, the review is designed to both measure the performance of the department and to make plans for the future. We have taken the opportunity of the AQAD to do some serious assessment of the program, where we are and where we want to go. To that end the core faculty and staff and the undergraduate and graduate studies committees have met many times, and made recommendations about our future direction. Most of the meetings of the executive committee were devoted to the issues raised by these meetings, and to modification and

approval of these recommendations. While this process has been extremely time consuming, it has also been productive and I have been able to write the self-study based on these important discussion. We are now very well prepared to meet our evaluators, Beverley Guy-Sheftall, Anna Julia Cooper Professor, Spelman College; Bettina Aptheker, Chair, Women's Studies, University of California at Santa Cruz; and Lynn Weber, Director of Women's Studies, University of South Carolina, who will be here in early March. After reading the self-study, meeting with the faculty, staff, students, the dean and the provost, the team will prepare their review, and the department responds with a written response and an action plan based on the review. We are optimistic that the plan will lay the groundwork to implement our hopes for the future of the department.

During this process, we have also begun to think about ways we can involve our **alumni** in helping us to fund raise, and sent them a survey polling them on their interest in connecting to the program. We are gratified that so many have responded so quickly and are anxious to help us. If you did not get a survey, please email Linda Hillenbrand at lindah@wost.umass.edu and she will send one out to you.

Despite all of this extra work, many of us found time to be involved in the election, both on a local and national level. We went to New Hampshire, stood on street corners in Amherst with signs, gave out literature, urged our students to vote, and as I waited in line at my polling place surrounded by students, many of whom were voting for the first time, I knew that the effort to get out the vote had been wildly successful. We hope that students who became involved in politics during this election will continue to see themselves as a part of the efforts to make a more just society.

We were busy on campus as well, organizing to protect the Office of ALANA Affairs, and in response to the racial incidents on campus. I was chosen as the only faculty member from an academic department to speak at the Campus Forum held by the special **Commission on Campus Diversity** appointed by the administration to assess the racial climate on campus and make recommendations for improvement. Using women's studies as a model of a department that has brought women of color from the margins to the center through an integrative analysis, I called for the Commission to address the ways in which a white perspective infuses the curriculum, sending the message to students of color that they are the "other" and to white students that they are the norm. Most of the other speakers were representatives from student groups, primarily groups of students of color, and I was moved by their testimony for its intelligence, eloquence, passion, and righteousness. We hope that the findings of this Commission will result in significant action to address the increasingly hostile climate for students of color on this campus. We are also hopeful that we will see some significant changes in Humanities and Fine Arts since our Dean, Lee Edwards, appointed Alex

(continued on page 2)

(Director's Message
continued from front page)

COMINGS & GOINGS

Deschamps to head the CDSJ (Community, Diversity and Social Justice) committee for the college. Linda Hillenbrand is on the CDSJ Team for Academic Affairs and designed the website that showcases the work of her team. (see Linda's article for more info.)

I want to thank some very special people who have contributed generously to women's studies. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman of the psychology department has sponsored students doing internships at some of the programs at the Everywoman's Center for many, many years. Her commitment to women's studies has benefited both the students and the Center by making it possible for students to get valuable experience and for their work to allow the Center to offer their programs to a larger constituency. Our alums have been very generous this year, thank you all and a very special thanks to Kath Cote.

The next time I write this message I will have news about the results of the AQAD. I will also describe a collaboration we are planning with the new program in Africana Women's Studies at **Bennett College for Women**, a small, private, Historically Black College in Greensboro, North Carolina. I met with Valerie Kaalund, the director of their program, and other faculty, students, and senior administrators at Bennett in January, and all are very enthusiastic about our work together. Professor Kaalund will come to our campus in March to continue these conversations with our faculty, staff, students, and administrators. This partnership can be a model for productive collaboration between diverse institutions.

I hope you will all have a good New Year, and join with us in the ongoing struggle to make a better world.

Welcome to new instructors for this spring: **esther Cuesta** is teaching "Intersectionalities Among Latin American Women and U.S. Latinas" Womensst 294B this spring. Welcome! **Jeannine Marks** returns to teach "Black Women in the U.S.", Womensst 297E. It is nice to have you back. Welcome to familiar faces **Kirsten Isgro** and **Bev Weber** into your new roles as instructors of 187. It will be a terrific semester.

We welcomed two new work study students this past fall. They will continue to work in the office in the spring, stop in and say hello to **Renee Hadad** and **Ashley Trotman**.

Many thanks to fall 2004 instructors: **Trimiko Melancon** who taught "Representations of Black Women in Literature: A Feminist Perspective" and **Claire Schomp** who taught "Writing for Women's Studies Majors."

As always we officially welcomed a great new group of majors and minors this fall at a festive dinner.

Welcome to new majors: **Jill Aliberti, Christine Carter, Chelsea Gazillo, Jennifer Mainville, Grey Marcaux, Meghan McNamera, and Marjorie Valdivia**. Welcome to new minors: **Jamie Mason, Laura Merwin, Gabrielle Shaw, Annamarie Wacha** and to **Mellisa Decker, Jacqui Dejesus, Kelly Dolan, Michelle Kozlowski, Wendy Matys, and Nissa Perrott**.

Congratulations to December major grads: **Lucienne Arsenault, Caroline Goodman, Leah Lissauer, and Cheryl Walters** and to minor graduate **Iva Brito**.

NEWS

Some interesting news....the Women's Studies listservs are now being "managed" through a web-based program called Mailman. This will, most definitely, cut down on spam. When a non-member posts to the list one of us gets an e-mail and we go into the system to either accept, reject or discard the e-mail. 99% of the e-mails that come to us get deleted and we are able to get all future e-mails from these addresses rejected permanently. Members of the lists can remove themselves from the list - a feature we're glad to see - by clicking on the link at the end of the message. You can also change your e-mail address. And another little wonderful feature is that you will know that it's from a Women's Studies listserv because you will see it in the subject line. We love it!

Blaine Arakian



NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

Students sit on all important program committees including graduate studies, undergraduate studies and the Women's Studies executive committees. To get in touch with student representatives, contact us.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Seniors: Come in and see Karen to check over requirements. End of Program reports are due at the end of finals. **Potential students,** come in for an advising appointment. Major applications for the spring semester are due April 1 with new major (and new minor!) dinner to follow. **Minor** applications are accepted anytime. If you need help finding a sponsor contact us. All majors and minors are welcome to come in for advising. As always, come in with questions and ideas about **internships, careers, resumes, honors, domestic exchange, study abroad, general education and college requirements, double majors and minors,** and more.

If you are in Women's Studies and in **Commonwealth College** keep in touch with Alex Deschamps, honors coordinator for Women's Studies. Be attentive to deadlines, and get your plans approved early rather than late. Women's Studies students have received funding for research in the past from Commonwealth College. Consult <http://www.comcol.umass.edu/> for applications and details. Do not hesitate to ask questions about honors work, and keep track of relevant deadlines.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Application Deadline

A reminder that applications for the graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies are due by Thursday, March 10, 2005 for Fall 2005 admission into the program. Applications are available in the Women's Studies office or online. Contact the graduate program coordinator, Nancy Campbell Patteson, for advising.

Retreat

The annual graduate program retreat will be held on Friday, February 11, 2005 from 12:30 to 4:00PM in the Everywomans Center conference room. The retreat provides an opportunity for all Certificate students to come together to eat, socialize, collaborate, and foster community. This year the retreat will host an interactive panel of scholars to consider disciplinary approaches to teaching feminist scholarship.

NEWS FOR OUR GRADUATES

It has been great to hear from so many of you in response to our survey! We have gotten a strong response. We know we can count on you. We love to be in touch. Keep those cards, letters and emails coming, alumni news will be in the fall issue.

We still want your input, so if you graduated with a major, minor, or graduate certificate in women's studies, and you didn't get the survey, contact us and we will send you one. We welcome information about alumni we have lost track of, and we adore hearing your feedback and about your wonderful projects. We brag about you all the time! We are also assembling a career network, in addition to fundraising and possibly other committees, contact us for information.

CAMPUS NEWS

MERGER OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S COUNCIL WITH MINORITY COUNCIL

For many years the Faculty Senate Council on the Status of Women has fought a proposal to merge with the Status of Minorities Council. However, a new proposal to consolidate the two Councils into a yet unnamed ad-hoc committee on diversity is now moving through the pipeline. This new committee "is an attempt by the Faculty Senate to provide a forum for a campus-wide conversation about community, diversity and social justice issues among administrators, faculty, staff and students." As part of the planned proposal, sub-committees of both the Status of Women and the Status of Minorities Council will be named and sponsored by this new diversity committee. Nancy Patteson, Co-Chair of the present Status of Women Council says, "UMass Amherst is now including women's issues under the larger umbrella of diversity issues. We must remain attentive to the climate for women and advocate for the needs of all women on this campus. I hope this new proposal provides us with greater access and support."

THE COMMUNITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

UMass Amherst has had an initiative underway for a few years now that is dedicated to community, diversity and social justice. This initiative is important in that it encourages the UMass Amherst community to be involved in creating a more inclusive living and learning environment. To gather information about the CDSJ climate on campus a survey was sent to all employees. The process of disseminating the data from the survey and creating reports has been going on for the past year, the results are being talked about and a timeline for a change plan has been set up. Linda Hillenbrand, our office manager, is on the CDSJ team for academic affairs and Professor Alexandrina Deschamps has been working with this initiative from the beginning and is now chairing the sub-group for Humanities and Fine Arts. To read more about this initiative see www.umass.edu/ohr/cdsj or to see the website created by Linda for the academic affairs team www.umass.edu/wost/cdsj.

WOMEN'S STUDIES EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDARS WITH THESE IMPORTANT DATES!

Graduate Student Retreat

February 11, 2005

Deadline for application for the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies

March 10, 2005

Deadline for application to the undergraduate major in Women's Studies

April 1, 2005.

New major and minor welcome dinner

April, date TBA.

Women's Studies and STPEC Alumni Career Forum
Graduates Return to talk about their lives, careers and choices.

Late Spring. Date TBA

Watch your mail and e-mail messages for details

Friday, May 20, 2005

Festive Women's Studies Graduation Breakfast
Save the date!

FEMINIST FOUNDATIONS SEMINAR SERIES

Bi-monthly **February 16 - May 4**
noon on Wednesdays

The Women's Studies Program is again offering the popular Feminist Foundation Seminar Series on Wednesdays in Herter 601 from 12 noon to 1:30PM and is open to all faculty, graduate and advanced undergraduate students. This bi-monthly research and discussion series will revisit some foundational issues in Women's Studies. The series will critically examine four recent interdisciplinary feminist texts. A panel of presenters will give a critical overview of the books. Attending faculty and graduate students are invited to bring up key issues in their own research in the discussions. Among the questions to be addressed are: What were some of the foundational issues in Women's Studies? How has the field addressed and critiqued these ideas? What are the critical issues in the field today? Graduate students and advanced undergraduate students can receive credit for participation in the series. Please contact Nancy Patteson, 545-1922 for more information about the series and how to receive credit.

SCHEDULE

February 16

Celebrating Thirty Years of Women's Studies
Women's Studies On Its Own

By Robyn Wiegman

Duke University Press, 2002.

Book Discussion Moderator: Arlene Avakian

March 2

Undivided Rights:

Women of Color Organizing for Reproductive Justice

by Jael Silliman, Marlene Gerber Fried eds.

South End Press, 2004.

Book Discussion

Guest Speakers: Marlene Gerber Fried

and Loretta Ross

March 23

Black Sexual Politics:

African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism

By Patricia Hill Collins

Routledge, 2004.

Book Discussion Moderator: Alex Deschamps

April 6

Undoing Gender

By Judith Butler

Routledge, 2004

Book Discussion Moderator: Ann Ferguson

April 20

Integrative Analysis: Theories and Methodologies

Panel Discussion

May 4

Women Without Class: Girls, Race, and Identity

By Julie Bettie

University of California Press, 2002

Book Discussion Moderator: Miliann Kang



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

EVERYWOMAN'S CENTER

There are events this spring ranging from a book club to projects against violence against women.

Take Back the Night is in the process of being planned. Stay tuned.

The Vagina Monologues will be presented on **March 4, 7:00** at Bowker Auditorium

Aishah Simmons, Filmmaker,
Showing of her documentary "NO!"
The film takes a powerful look at Black women's lives through a holistic lens addressing the violent manifestations of racial, gender and sexual oppression.

Film & discussion sessions **March 31** and **April 1st**.

The Everywoman's Center can also help with support groups, legal information, health referrals, free counseling and more. Contact Resource Referral at 545-0883 or check their Human Service Providers database at <http://www.umass.edu/ewc/rr/>



As always, the **FINE ARTS CENTER** has numerous events of interest, check it out www.umass.edu/fac. Several offerings through programs such as New World Theater and Asian Arts and Culture focus on globalization, women's issues and other areas of interest. Check online for the spring schedule.



Also check out the **STONEWALL CENTER'S** offerings this spring www.umass.edu/stonewall, they have receptions, performances and are working on a zine.



THE FIVE COLLEGE WOMEN'S STUDIES

RESEARCH CENTER has talks regularly scheduled on Mondays at 4:30 and Thursdays at 7:30. For info www.fivecolleges.edu/sites/fcwsrc 413 538-2527.



THE CAMPUS CAREER NETWORK has several career fairs coming up including:

- Community Service Fair Wednesday, February 9, Student Union Ballroom 11-2
 - Campus Wide Career Fair Wednesday, February 16, 10-3 Campus Center Auditorium
 - ALANA Job Fair, Wednesday, February 16 5:30-8:30 Campus Center Auditorium
 - Summer, Co-Op, and Internship Fair, Thursday, February 17, 10-3:00 Campus Center Auditorium.
- For info: www.umass.edu/careers, or visit 511 Goodell

DONORS

Despite elections and extremes of weather, our donors are ever faithful. We appreciate the support and count on your donations for the extra touches that make our program unique. Our website has more information on donating to Women's Studies.

Keyse Angelo
Robyn Bagley
Barbara Bazemore
Malini K. Bhandaru
Barbara Bigda
Alison Bonney
Peter Bradley
Judith Branzburg
Susan Brown-Zimmerman
Lisa Calchera
Thomas and Jane Carideo
Susan Cayleff
Christina Cincotti
Kath Cote
Diane L. Curley
Kristin Damigella
Suzanne Delbou
Rebecca Dobkins
Hildy Fentin
Joanne Gangi
Mary Hawkesworth
Candis Hayford
Elise Jakabhazy
Jackson Katz
Sylvia Kearney
Teresa Kristan
Dale LaBonte
Sue Lee
Lida Leslie
Jacqueline Levin
Ada Lugo
Birdie Mac Lennan

AnneJulie MacVarish
Lisa MacVarish
John and Deborah Martin
Kathleen Mirabile-Wagner
Judith LeBold
Karen Monaco
Andrea Montalbano
Karen Morris
Andrea Berman Price
Gina Raposa
Tinker Ready
Mary Reilly
Jose and Caryl Rodriguez
Karen Shack
Michelle Sheridan-Milovanski
Karen Shramko
Inez Sieben
Karen Sumner
Jill Tregor
Cynthia Warren
Judith Weiss
Anne Wiley



LIBRARY UPDATE

by Beth Lang

Work on the library deck replacement project is on hiatus for the winter, but indoor changes continue. The new Library Cafe in the entrance lobby of the Du Bois Library is expected to be open by the start of Spring semester, as well as a new quiet study lounge on floor 2. Come by and see these exciting new changes!

And remember - when you need help with your research projects and finding the library resources you need, please contact Beth Lang, Women's Studies Librarian. To make an appointment for a research consultation call her at 545-6890, or email bwlang@library.umass.edu



POST GRADUATE REFLECTIONS

In the spring newsletter we ask recent grads (one from our undergraduate program and one from our graduate program) to share their thoughts on their education in Women's Studies and describe their current projects. Thanks to Julia and Kirsten for their contributions.

By Julia Becker

I am honestly still in shock that I actually graduated from college. There were many points along the way where I thought I would never finish. I battled with long-term illnesses, financial difficulties, and the discovery that I had a learning disability that went virtually unnoticed until a few years ago. I know I never would have been so successful in college if it weren't for the support I received from the Women's Studies faculty and staff.

I came to UMass Amherst at the beginning of my junior year of college on Domestic Exchange from Sonoma State University in California. I discovered the Women's Studies program during my first semester on campus when I took Critical Perspectives, Womensst 201. I was surprised when I found that my passion for politics, open discussion, social justice, and equal rights was a major. I was also thrilled to find a group of students I connected with on so many levels. After I finished that class, I decided to transfer to UMass Amherst and change my major from Studio Art to Women's Studies. I knew that my decision would require that I stay in college for an additional year, but I wanted my college education to be something I enjoyed and not something I had to "get through" (which is how I felt up until that point).

Through my three years on campus and in the Women's Studies major, I took amazing courses, met inspiring professors, and began to see the world around me through an analytical feminist lens. The extracurricular activities I was involved in (such as VOX: Students for Choice and Take Back The Night) meshed well with my studies and I found I was able to take what I had learned in the classroom and apply it in my activism. Through all of this, though, the most important thing I learned was that I am capable of greater things than I had thought. Women's Studies helped me to push myself past my comfort zone and really challenged me to strive for more.

Currently, I am working in property management for subsidized and market housing. I am also preparing to take the LSATs in June and apply to law schools in the fall for Fall 2006. My long term goal is to be a lobbyist for feminist causes, such as pro-choice legislation or international refugee laws surrounding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

By Kirsten Isgro

Just recently I was talking with a Women's Studies (WOST) colleague, Mitch Boucher, about the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies at UMass Amherst. I graduated from the program in May 2003, and am currently completing my doctorate in the Communication Department. Mitch and I were reflecting on the importance of the WOST certificate program for graduate students, and how in many ways it has offered us a sense of collaboration and support in an intellectually and politically engaged community. Not only has WOST been a place for us to meet other students who are also committed to feminist theory, politics, and pedagogy, but it has been a place where the intersection between race, class, gender, sexuality, and nationality is brought into the curriculum in a very meaningful way. As I trek through my final chapters of my dissertation, I am constantly aware of the need to incorporate these intersections in my own analysis. My dissertation focuses on the practices and political interventions of a large national conservative Christian women's organization. I'm exploring how both feminisms and religious nationalisms are forces that attempt to address local and global conditions. WOST faculty and staff (thanks Linda, Karen and Nancy!) have been continually interested in my work, putting newspaper clippings in my mailbox that are relevant to my dissertation, and asking me questions about my progress when I pass them. This has been invaluable during a time when I have been tentative, frustrated and/or unmotivated in the dissertation writing phase.

In addition to completing my doctoral research, I am also in the throes of seeking post-dissertation employment. When I look at other Women's Studies programs, I am proud to note that UMass Amherst has a very diverse, vibrant, and thoughtful curriculum for both undergraduate and graduate students. I feel well prepared to speak to the beauty of interdisciplinarity within the academy—thanks in part to some useful conversations I have had with Ann Ferguson, Alex Deschamps, Banu Subramaniam and other faculty affiliated with WOST. Additionally, I have established some of the most important and meaningful relationships from this WOST program while here in Western Massachusetts. As a case in point, I've been meeting with three other WOST graduate students for the last 2 years; we read each others work, push each other to rethink how we are theorizing, and keep each other accountable to include more than just gender in our analysis. We try to look at the intersections between economic, cultural, and political life, engaging with the asymmetries of power—no easy task, but one I believe worth pursuing. I'm entering a major transition moment in my life as I prepare to leave graduate school and move into unknown terrain (stay tuned for further adventures!). I am excited about what is ahead, and in large part because I feel well prepared to take my WOST training and continue to apply it in my academic and political work. Thanks WOST! You have really made a difference in this one woman's life!!!

This newsletter is published twice a year funds permitting. It is written and edited by Karen Lederer. Design, production, and distribution by Linda Hillenbrand. Thanks to our work study students for their help with distribution. Thanks to Arlene Avakian, Linda Hillenbrand, Nancy Patteson and Beth Lang for submissions. Special thanks to Julia Becker and Kirsten Isgro for their contributions. This publication is online at www.umass.edu/wost. The Fall newsletter will have alumni news, send us info on your lives, careers and activism. Write soon!

Inside you'll find news for students and alums, comings and goings, upcoming events in Women's Studies and on-campus, post grad reflections and much more. Get your date book out and catch up on old friends!

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Women's Studies Program
208 Bartlett Hall
130 Hicks Ways
University of Massachusetts Amherst
Amherst, MA 01003-9269
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