Message from the Chair’s Desk:

MUSING ON HUMANITIES CAREERS

The other night I was sitting with friends over my favorite summer meal—corn picked that morning and homemade pesto—and trying to have an adult conversation while our preschool children threatened to hit each other with blocks. We talked about the ups and downs of life: work, children, health, and trying to do good in the world while making decisions that affirmed commitments to love or children or elderly parents. Life stuff. At some point, we realized we had all been Women’s Studies majors in college, and recalled that it seemed like that’s where all the smartest people were. In certain ways, you could say that we were an impressive group who had done our major proud: a disability rights attorney specializing in class-actions, a national expert on girls’ bullying, and me, just back from The Hague to participate in discussions about the Convention on Intercountry Adoption and a possible future document on cross-border surrogacy. If you had taken a snap-shot of our lives at various points, though, you might have gotten a different picture—unemployed full-time activist, college drop-out, stay-at-home mom. But we were proud of the “bad” decisions we’d made along the way, decisions that in some ways define us still.

This is where I enter the conversation about whether humanities majors make better or worse salaries than those who major in STEM or a professional school: it’s not all about the money. There’s a lot at stake for us in this conversation; North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory singled out gender studies as something he would like to eliminate at public universities because “it’s not going to get someone a job.” He joined a rising chorus of Republican and business-focused critics of the humanities at public universities. In January, the American Association of Colleges and Universities fired back with a study showing that by their mid-fifties, humanities graduates make more than those who got professional degrees. Of course, nowhere in this conversation is a smart gender analysis that acknowledges:

(1) that humanities majors are disproportionately female, while the comparison groups are disproportionately male;
(2) for all sorts of reasons, including direct discrimination, women make less than men; and (3) given the ways neoliberalism has shrunk the public resources for child care, elder care, and people with disabilities—the life stuff—women are frequently forced out of paid work to do caring labor, a problem that has gotten worse, not better, in the past 40 years.

We must address the problem of care work, and also acknowledge that there are good reasons—passion, commitment, a desire to build a better world—to not seek the highest paid work available. Until we do that, I’m not sure that there’s any way to enter this conversation about wages and the humanities and make it more sensible. I hope that some of our students find fulfilling, highly paid work, but I also hope others take the risk to follow me down the road of
"bad" economic decisions and hand-to-mouth-existence to do the work that matters to them, at least for some part of their lives.

**FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

In department news, I’m delighted to report that **Svati Shah**, who just returned from a Fulbright in India, was officially awarded tenure in July—after having gone up a year early, no less. Her book, *Street Corner Secrets: Sex, Work, and Migration in the City of Mumbai* recontextualizes sex work in Mumbai, India from the focus on “trafficking” or exploitation that has dominated governmental and NGO responses to an understanding of it as work that is taken up when other work—notably construction—is unavailable. Ultimately, the decision to engage in sex work is rooted in the failures of the rural economies (and access to water) in the communities from which these women migrated.

This fall, we are also welcoming back **Angela Willey** who is returning after completing prestigious fellowships at Dartmouth on the science of sexuality and love (and the problems therein) and at Rice University on new materialism.

Even as they return, we are saying goodbye for a while to two others. **Tanisha Ford** has completed her book manuscript on the politics of Black women’s adornment in the second half of the twentieth century—from the U.S. South to South Africa to London. Now, she’s leaving for a research leave on a Ford Foundation fellowship and a Schomberg Center Scholar-in-Residence Fellowship to do a big transnational project on the history of sexuality and gender in Black Europe. **Banu Subramaniam**’s new book, *Ghost Stories for Darwin: The Science of Variation and the Politics of Diversity*, is due out very soon from Illinois University Press. This year, she is on sabbatical to do work on a book called *In India’s Modern Temples of Science: Science, Religion, and their Gendered Imaginations* to look at religious conservatism in India and its great comfort with—indeed endorsement of—science. Looking among other things at understandings of gestational surrogacy, Banu’s project promises to help us understand why it differs so sharply from Christian fundamentalism, and its century-long rejection of science.

**Miliann Kang** won a Faculty Research/Healy Grant to do research for her new book on the “Tiger Mother.” Miliann’s new project treats the gallons of pundit ink spilled on Amy Chua’s *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* as symptomatic of a cultural fault line produced around racialized mothering that made Asian American mothers and their children the target of white anxieties about downward mobility. Miliann argues that this and similar racial ideologies projected onto Asian American mothering are related to a particular kind of problem she characterizes as “maternal citizenship,” whereby the success or failure of Asian American women to be understood fully and meaningfully U.S. citizens is related to their mothering. We’re looking forward to many groundbreaking new books out of this department!

**Alexandrina Deschamps** will be Associate Dean of the Commonwealth Honors College this coming year, continuing and expanding her important work with the Emerging Scholars Program. Alex has been working with first-generation college students who are or could be eligible for the Honors College to encourage them to take advantage of its resources. Alex remains a member of the department and is in fact teaching our introductory class this fall. Congratulations Alex!

And...wait for it...we have three (or four) new faculty members! **Mecca Sullivan**, a poet, queer theorist, and scholar of African-American and global diasporic literatures and artistic production, will be teaching a new course on (among other things) *Love in the African Diaspora*. **Kirsten Leng** will teach courses in her specialties, European feminisms and the history of sexology. **Abigail Boggs** is teaching WOMENSST 201 this semester and is hard at work on the Graduate Certificate and programming. Her work is on critical university studies (look for a spring course!) and transnational feminisms, including the history of international students at US universities. Our fourth new faculty member isn’t coming just yet—**Kiran Asher**, who will spend one more year in Indonesia as a senior scientist at the Center for International Forestry Research. She has another life as an anthropologist of Latin America—she is the author of *Black and Green*, a book about movements for sustainability among Afro-Colombians in the Pacific lowlands, and will be an outstanding addition to our strength in Feminist Science...
Studies and the university’s—and students’—growing interest in environmental justice. Also joining us this year is Cora Fernandez-Anderson, the Mellon Post-doc who has been joint with Hampshire and Mt. Holyoke and will be in residence this year at UMass and teaching courses on Reproductive Politics in Latin America. With all the new faculty we look forward to progressing on our Ph.D. proposal process!

EVENTS

Even with some faculty away, and completing multiple searches, we had some great events last year (2013-14) including our terrific symposium last spring: "Critical Feminist Thought And The African Diaspora" keynoted by Dorothy E. Roberts, University of Pennsylvania and attended by many campus, five college, and community members. In April our graduate students completing their certificates presented their work. It was a wonderful day of new research and included a keynote by Abbie Boggs on "Queer Transnational Approaches to Critical University Studies: Transforming Academe?" Also last spring we sponsored a career fair—thank you to the alums who joined us!—together with History, STPEC, Labor Studies, and Afro Am. Last fall we brought Mireille Miller-Young to speak on black women and illicit eroticism in pornography and Elizabeth Oglesby who spoke on genocide, justice and the Rios Montt Trail in Guatemala.

And, looking forward to 2014-15, it's already remarkably busy around here. I and a number of other UMass folks recently returned from the Transnational Feminisms Summer Institute at Ohio State, for which UMass was a major sponsor (together with other Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies departments with the Ph.D.). The conference was extraordinary—I can’t remember the last time I felt so intensely that I was engaged with other feminists in a common intellectual and activist project. Not that we didn’t disagree—we certainly did!—but in the spirit that our differences were important, and we were prepared to listen, change, and disagree. We heard roundtable presentations and work-shopped each other’s papers on topics from Native/indigenous feminisms, settler colonialism, feminist activism from the Middle East to South Asia to Africa to the former Soviet Union to Japan and China, taking up a range of historical periods. We also thought about transnational surrogacy and plastic surgery in South Korea, “cyberbraceras” in the Philippines, Tahrir, “postcolonial homophobia” in Haiti, and other topics too numerous to mention. The conference worked hard to minimize the importance of academic rank or employment, provide high quality childcare, and provide subsidies to those coming from outside the United States, graduate students, and others who needed them. It was an exciting event, and other groups are looking into hosting it for next year—some faculty at Temple University, an NGO in Armenia, a university in Bangladesh. All very exciting.

Meanwhile, we’re planning our own conference for February 25-26, 2015 on citizenship and migration, with an emphasis on gender, sexuality, and youth. Look elsewhere in the newsletter for more information on this conference, but let me just say: we’re very excited about our keynote speakers, Chandan Reddy and Eithne Lubheid (Freedom with Violence and Entry Denied, respectively), and that our new Provost, Katherine Newman, is appearing on a panel to speak about her work on youth and migration to South Africa (from her new book, After Freedom). It’s not often that we get to meet our Provost as an intellectual (or that we have a Provost who works on impoverished women and children!), and we’re grateful for her generosity in joining us.

GOOD NEWS ABOUT SPACE

As you know, Bartlett is scheduled to be torn down. After lots of meetings, WGSS and Art History will be included in the new South College Academic Facility, slated to be added onto South College, occupancy around 2016. Thanks everyone for all the support!

Look for other exciting news and events over the year—read on for information about talks by Lisa Lowe and Jack Halberstam, new undergraduate courses planning for a graduate Ph.D. and more. It’s promising to be another exciting year!
Welcome!

We are so pleased to be bringing on three new faculty members this fall! Below are interviews and background information about Kirsten Leng and Mecca Jamilah Sullivan. You can learn more about Abbie Boggs, including her welcome letter on page 7.

Mecca Jamilah Sullivan is Assistant Professor of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, and an affiliated faculty member in English and Africana Studies. She received her B.A. in Afro-American Studies from Smith College, her M.A. in English and Creative Writing from Temple University, and her Ph.D. in English from the University of Pennsylvania. Working at the intersections of black feminism, queer theory, African diaspora studies, and poetics, her research focuses on the relationships between identity and creative form in African Diaspora literature and culture. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in publications including Feminist Studies; Palimpsest: Journal of Women, Gender and the Black International; GLQ: Lesbian and Gay Studies Quarterly; The Scholar and Feminist; From Uncle Tom to The Help: Critical Perspectives on White-Author NARRatives of Black Life; Callaloo; Jacket2; The Root; Ebony.com; Public Book; and The Feminist Wire, where she serves as Associate Editor for Arts & Culture. She is also the author of a short story collection, Blue Talk and Love, which will be published later this year. She is currently working on a book manuscript exploring how voice, genre, and poetic form work to contest dominant models of identity in contemporary women’s writing of the African diaspora.

What are you most looking forward to about coming to our department at UMass Amherst?

There’s so much to look forward to. I’m very excited about joining a department full of scholars, students, and staff with such a wide range of interests within the field of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies. Although I’m new to campus, I’ve already seen the vibrant intellectual exchange that happens among the faculty, students, and staff in the department, much of which I think has to do with the interdisciplinarity of the WGSS community at UMass. I’m eager to join these illuminating conversations, and to add my own perspective to the mix.

What do you want students to know about you?

I’ve always enjoyed connecting with UMass students, and with other students in the 5-College area. I did my Bachelor’s degree at Smith, and I’ll never forget the incredibly inspiring, energizing conversations I had with UMass students during that time. That experience has served as a model for all of my teaching since then. There’s nothing like the feeling of leaving a classroom knowing that your ideas have been challenged and your mind opened in brand new ways. In my classes, we work to create an environment where critical thought, rigorous reading, and intellectual curiosity make for truly great conversation. I look forward to some fantastic conversations with students and colleagues this year.

Please describe a recent project or current research.

My current project looks at the connections between poetic form and identity in contemporary women’s writing.
of the African Diaspora. I’ve always been fascinated by the relationships between creative aesthetics and social/political experience. In this project, I think about how black women writers since the end of the 20th century have used voice, genre, and creative form as ways to challenge dominant models of identity, either breaking from primary concepts of established genres (like the sonnet, the short story, or the coming-of-age novel), or by creating their own genres (like Ntozake Shange’s “choreopoem,” Audre Lorde’s “biomythography,” or Ama Ata Aidoo’s prosepoem novella). I explore how, in their formal choices, these writers extend and critique various feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial logics, using subversive poetics to place intersectional and experience at the center of their work.

Is there anything else about your background, training or expertise you would like to share with us?

One of the reasons why I’m excited to join such an interdisciplinary department is that I really enjoy seeing how ideas translate across different intellectual communities. For me, this is part of a larger love of language and how it can be used to create politically-engaged connection and stimulate social change. English is my first language, but I’ve also been speaking Spanish for most of my life, and I’m currently strengthening my French in preparation for my next research project, which involves the translation of queer African Diasporic texts. I also studied Mandarin Chinese as an undergraduate, and I’m eager to pick it back up one day, too.

And is there anything else you can tell us about other activities you are or have been involved in including special interests, activist projects, etc.?

In addition to my research and scholarly work, I also write fiction and plays. My creative work takes up themes similar to my research interests—experiences with voice, gender, desire and the body in black cultures. Of course, in my creative writing I look at these issues from very different vantage points. For me, my position as a writer/scholar is an important part of my work and my teaching. Many of the feminist theorists whose work I most admire have also been creative writers (for example, Audre Lorde, Cheryl Clarke, NourbeSe Philip, Abena Busia, and June Jordan, to name just a few). I find that exploring a set of ideas in different kinds of writing is a great way to expand your perspective and hone your ideas. For that reason, I like to offer students some kind of creative option in my courses, and I encourage them to take it—sometimes it’s challenging, but the risk always pays off in surprising, exciting ways. Welcome Mecca! If you want to get in touch meccas@wost.umass.edu.

Welcome Kirsten Long!

Kirsten is an Assistant Professor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Before coming to UMass, she held postdoctoral fellowships at Northwestern University (with the Sexualities Project at Northwestern) and Columbia University (in the Department of History and Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality). She received her Ph.D. in History and Women’s Studies from the University of Michigan. Her current research examines the gender politics involved in the creation of sexual knowledge in German-speaking Europe between 1890 and 1933, and draws attention to women’s neglected intellectual contributions to the formation and development of sexual science. She has articles and book reviews published in journals such as the Journal of Women’s History, Gender and History, and Signs, and essays in volumes such as After the History of Sexuality: German Genealogies with and Beyond Foucault (Berghahn, 2012).

What are you most looking forward to about coming to our department at UMass Amherst?

I’m very much looking forward to becoming part of this dynamic, diverse, and growing department dedicated to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. I stress the term because it is so rare (and wonderful) for WGSS to be a full department, and I’m excited about the possibilities that this institutional status and presence can offer. I’m already so impressed and enthusiastic about all of the great and wide-ranging programs the department offers, and by the undergraduate curriculum’s incorporation of internships and field placements. I’m really looking forward to engaging with and learning from my colleagues, both at the University of Massachusetts and throughout the broader Five Colleges community of feminist scholars.
What do you want students to know about you?

I love teaching. It is undoubtedly one of the most stimulating and enriching aspects of my academic life. I’m grateful to have learned so much from my students—their insights and enthusiasm have frequently opened up new ways of thinking about subjects and issues I have wrestled with for many years. For these reasons, I view teaching as a dialogue and collective process. My goal as a teacher is to encourage students to critically engage with ideas presented in class both independently and through wide-ranging and respectful discussion, and to arrive at their own insights.

Please describe a recent project or current research.

Currently I’m working on my book project, which examines women’s theories and research on sex, gender, and sexuality as they took shape in early 20th century Europe and contributed to an emerging interdisciplinary science of sex called sexology. I focus on German-speaking Europe (i.e. Germany and Austria) because it was one of the most prominent and prolific sites of intellectual knowledge production about sex at this time. Sexology is interesting because in many ways it is responsible for creating many of our present-day understandings about “normal” and “abnormal” sexual behaviors and identities. However, it’s also interesting because at the turn of the century, it provided a space, a language, and a set of intellectual tools for a range of actors to work out new, unconventional ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality that had all kinds of different personal and political consequences. While most of the existing scholarship about sexology has focused on the work produced by male doctors, my research has found that many women, including feminist women, were active in sexology. These women engaged sexological discourse as a way of redefining female sexualities and creating new possibilities for gendered existence—discursive acts that had their own complicated implications. Engaging the history of women’s contributions to sexology helps us better understand that gendered and sexual identities are not static, fixed, or “natural,” but that they change over time, and that people in the past have thought much differently about their bodies, behaviors, and desires than we do now.

Is there anything else about your background, training or expertise you would like to share with us?

I’m Canadian, and moved to the US for graduate school about nine years ago. In many ways I’m still learning about US history, politics, geography, identities, etc... Before moving to the US, I had lived abroad as part of various exchange programs (specifically to Australia and Germany), so if you are interested in spending time abroad, I’d be happy to discuss that opportunity with you. My training is diverse and spans the Humanities and Social Sciences—I have a Bachelor’s degree in English Literature and International Development Studies, a Master’s Degree in Political Economy, and a Ph.D. in History and Women’s Studies. So, drawing on my experience of shifting fields, if you are having difficulties picking a major/minor, I’d be happy to talk through these things as well.

And is there anything else you can tell us about other activities you are or have been involved in including special interests, activist projects, etc.?

I’m a very active person—throughout high school and college I ran varsity track and field and cross country, and still do marathons and half marathons. At the moment I am training for my first triathlon, and am hoping to resume boxing (which I began a few years ago). So beyond my research into the intersections of sex, science, and feminism, I’m also interested in the intersections of gender, sexuality, athleticism and sport. At the moment I’m also beginning to investigate my long-standing interest in the intersections of politics, humor, gender, and sexuality, and to think about the ways feminists and queer activists have (or have not) been able to use comedy and humor for political ends. After becoming more settled in the Pioneer Valley, I hope to become involved in issues regarding labor and literacy; in the past my activist work has focused on issues of poverty and geopolitical violence.

Welcome Kirsten! If you want to get in touch with her kdeng@umass.edu
Welcome Abbie!

New Associate Director for Graduate Studies and Acting Graduate Program Director: Abigail Boggs

We are thrilled to welcome a new faculty member to teach, work with graduate students, and help coordinate the graduate program.

Biography

Associate Director for Graduate Studies, Abigail Boggs’ work brings the insights of transnational feminist cultural studies, queer theory, American Studies, and critical ethnic studies to bear on the emerging field of critical university studies. She received her B.A. in Women and Gender Studies from Wesleyan University in 2002 and her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies with a certificate in feminist theory and research from the University of California, Davis in 2013. At UC Davis, she also received two teaching awards – one for outstanding graduate student teaching from the graduate school and, just this spring, a second honoring her as the best lecturer/professor in the college of letters and sciences from the student government. Between her degrees, Abbie lived in New York city where she bartended and worked with Queers For Economic Justice, an organization she remained connected to while in California. She is currently working on a book manuscript based on her dissertation entitled Prospective Student, Potential Threat: International Students, U.S. Higher Education, and American Futures, which traces the ways in which the paradoxical figuration of international students as both model minorities and would-be “terrorists” has contributed to the gendered, racialized, and sexual politics of U.S. colleges and universities. Her other publications include a just released article entitled “Imagining Otherwise: Educated Hope and Emancipatory Knowledge” in S&F Online and a forthcoming piece entitled “Hillary Clinton’s NeXt Initiative: On the State’s Desire for Mobile Muslim Women Students” in the forthcoming collection Mobile Desires.

In Her Own Words…

Hi everyone,

I’m so pleased to be joining WGSS with responsibilities that will connect me to undergraduate and graduate students. On the undergraduate side I’ll be teaching two sections of WGSS 201 Gender and Difference: Critical Analysis this fall and one in the spring plus a special course on my own research specialty, critical university studies. Another big part of this job will be working with students pursuing a certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies while helping to design and implement a potential PhD program. Given my history teaching courses and advocating for graduate students at UC Davis, I couldn’t be more thrilled about getting to undertake both of these tasks. I’m especially looking forward to meeting with current certificate students on September 24th (see graduate student news) to learn more about how I can assist them as they navigate both graduate school and the academic job market as feminist scholars. This semester I’ll be holding office hours on Wednesday afternoons from 2-4 in 208A Bartlett Hall but I’m also happy to meet by appointment in person or via skype/googlechat.

Best, Abbie
EVENTS

By the time you read this we hope to have seen you at our welcome back reception in September in our terrific new conference room. Mark your calendars for events coming up!

Lisa Lowe and Jack Halberstam
Perverse Modernities: A Conversation
November 20th 4:00-6:00 p.m., Campus Center 917

In this dialogue, coeditors Lisa Lowe and Jack Halberstam discuss their collaboration on the Perverse Modernities series published since 2001 by Duke University Press. The series publishes work that transgresses modern divisions of knowledge that have historically separated the consideration of sexuality, and its concern with desire, gender, bodies, and performance, on the one hand, from the consideration of race, colonialism, and political economy, on the other, in order to explore how the mutual implication of race, colonialism, and sexuality has been rendered perverse and unintelligible within the logics of modernity. Lowe and Halberstam speak about the project as an unfolding constellation of perversities of many kinds, from disciplinary infidelities and epistemological promiscuity, to theoretical irreverence and heterotopic imaginings.

Save the Date!
The Politics of Migration: Gender, Sexuality, and Citizenship
February 26 and 27th, 2015

We are gearing up for an exciting conference focusing on the politics of migration with a focus on gender, sexuality, and citizenship this coming February 26th and 27th. The conference will feature our new Provost Katherine Newman along with University of Arizona Professor of Gender and Women’s Studies Eithne Luibhéid, author of Pregnant on Arrival: Making the ’Illegal’ Immigrant (University of Minnesota Press, 2013) and Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border (University of Minnesota Press, 2002), and University of Washington, Seattle Professor of English Chandan Reddy, author of Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the US State (Duke University Press, 6455).

Orange is the New Black

The common read for incoming students this year is Orange is the New Black. There will be several events and academic events about this book this fall. Check out the Common Read website for more:

http://www.umass.edu/studentlife/commonread

Piper Kerman, the author, will visit on October 1, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Campus Center Auditorium

5-College Faculty & Community Panel on October 8, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the Commonwealth Honors College Residential Community Events Hall. This panel by faculty from the 5-College Community will include local community educators and activists as they discuss the book Orange is the New Black and the hit Netflix series.
Awards and Accomplishments

We love to brag about "our" people. We brag about students while they are students and once they have graduated and we brag about our faculty and staff award winners.

**Alex Deschamps** won the Distinguished Faculty Partnership Award from the Center for Student Development. She was recognized for her decades of commitment to UMass students and the community in her many roles as teacher, advisor, mentor and more.

Our own **Linda Hillenbrand** received a 2014 Chancellor’s Citation award for her hard work, dedication, innovation and creativity. This highly competitive award is awarded to a few select staff members each year. Linda worked particularly hard this past year so this recognition is well deserved.

**Dawn Lovegrove**, graduate certificate student, got a Dissertation Research Grant from the Graduate School. Congrats!

**Claire Brault**, graduate certificate student, received one (of two!) of the University Wide Distinguished Teaching Awards.

Amherst Regional High School awarded the UMass Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Book Award to **Nina Wolf-Landau**. This award is for a junior who is active in feminist issues or has done outstanding work in women’s studies.

**Joyce Berkman and Ann Ferguson Awards**

**Joyce Berkman** was a founding member of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies 40 years ago, and a long-time member of the History Department. When she retired after years of dedicated service on campus, to WGSS and in the community and the world, Joyce established the *Joyce Berkman Award for Outstanding Graduate Feminist Scholarship*. This annual prize is presented to graduate students who are completing requirements and graduating that year from the University of Massachusetts Amherst Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies.

**Elva F. Orozco-Mendoza** is a doctoral student in the department of political science. The paper was "*Born into a World of Freedom: An Arendtian Reconsideration of Maternal Activism in Ciudad Juárez*".

**Sonny Nordmarken** is a doctoral candidate in sociology. The paper was "*Queering Gendering: Disruptive and Productive Feminist Practices*".

**Ann Ferguson** created a fund through the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts to commemorate her retirement from full time teaching in the Philosophy and the then Women’s Studies program. The award is given in recognition of academic excellence to eligible Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies undergraduate and graduate students. **Katherine Marantz**, doctoral candidate in English, is the recipient of the *Ann Ferguson Women and Gender Studies Scholarship*.

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**Congratulations to all!**

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**Laura Briggs at Hague Forum on Intercountry Adoption and Surrogacy**

Laura Briggs, Chair of WGSS and expert on transnational adoption and author of *Somebody’s Children: The Politics of Transracial and Transnational Adoption*, was invited to participate in the International Institute of Social Studies International Forum on Intercountry Adoption and Surrogacy this past August. Nearly one hundred
scholars, activists, and policymakers from 27 different countries discussed ways to improve international standards around the evolving practices of cross-border adoption and surrogacy, in which children typically move from poorer to wealthier countries. The Forum takes place ahead of the next Special Commission of the Hague Conference’s Convention on Intercountry Adoption in spring 2015, which will discuss the ongoing concerns about intercountry adoption in light of patterns of fraud and ‘failed’ adoptions. The goal of the Forum was to provide an evidence base for international adoption and surrogacy problems and/or best practices, and to address children’s best interests, families and countries of origin, and issues of fraud and coercion.

The Hague Conference has also issued a report on surrogacy, expressing concerns over the exploitation of women and the status of children born under international surrogacy arrangements.

Other News

New Men and Masculinities Center on Campus!

The Division of Student Affairs and Campus Life has launched the Men and Masculinities Center. The director is Tom Schiff, who has been instrumental in producing Phallacies (http://www.phallacies.org/index.html) and taught Healthy Guys or Healthy Guise: Men, Masculinity and Health for our department last spring and will be offered again in the spring of 2015. The Men and Masculinities Center is located in 120 Thoreau.

The Men and Masculinities Center seeks to interrogate and deconstruct traditional forms of masculinity to promote healthy relationships and positive expressions of masculinity within UMass Amherst and beyond. Within this charge and in collaboration with existing campus programs, offices and centers the Men and Masculinities Center priority is to:

- operate from a pro-feminist, male positive, multicultural perspective that recognizes and explores the intersections of men’s identities;
- foster men’s development through scholarship, leadership development, outreach, and advocacy;
- promote social justice at UMass and beyond;
- support the implementation of a system of programs, collaborations, assessments, and advocacy that institutionalizes multiple levels of support for male student success by targeting identified areas of need in accordance with larger success objectives.

Please be on the lookout for programs, events, and initiatives from the Men and Masculinities Center. For more information or to get involved, please contact Tom Schiff at tschiff@umass.edu, or 577-4636 (4MEN).

UMass Site of Conference on College Men June 2015

UMass Amherst has been chosen as the host site for the 2015 Conference on College Men. Conference dates are June 22-24, 2015. The Conference on College Men is a collaborative effort between NASPA and ACPA.

Bringing together the most diverse and talented educators in the field of men and masculinities research and practice, the Conference on College Men has become the premier venue to explore and examine issues related to men and masculinities in higher education. As particular populations of college men continue to struggle in their postsecondary transitions and engagement, the Conference on College Men will challenge attendees to critically reflect upon how their own identification and expression of gender influences their work with college and university students while also treating them to the most recent scholarship and services in the field. For more information or to get involved, please contact Tom Schiff at tschiff@umass.edu.
UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

Welcome back all! Please stop by the office, make an appointment and come meet all our new faculty! Having all these new faculty mean we will have more classes overall and a larger variety of classes. Our faculty have been busily developing new classes including new gen ed classes. Stay tuned for particulars.

Some required classes are only offered once a year:
- Junior Year Writing is offered every FALL
- Theory (for the major requirement) is offered every FALL
- Integrative Experience is offered every SPRING

We are operating with the requirements we adopted beginning in Fall 2013 regarding distribution requirements for both the major and the minor. Note: Even if a class is listed under more than one distribution requirement, that class can only fulfill one requirement, not both. If you were admitted to the department under the old requirements (women of color inside/outside the U.S.) those requirements still apply to you. If you have a question about these requirements, or any others, make an appointment with Karen.

UMass Women in Leadership

UWiL (UMass Women in Leadership) is a 1 credit course based in the Department of Political Science designed to provide hands-on leadership training and professional preparation for a career in public service. Students will be introduced to research and scholarship about the gender gap in public service, attend professional development workshops, and be provided with mentoring and networking opportunities to explore public leadership careers. UWiL students are expected to attend a weekend-long workshop. Graduates of UWiL will have access to scholarships to support unpaid internships in public agencies and organizations. Interested students must apply online this fall at http://www.umass.edu/uwil/apply/

Our own alum, Christina Knowles, is co-chair of the board of UWiL! For more information on Christina http://www.umass.edu/uwil/people/knowles.html and see our alum news.

Five-College Graduate/Professional Schools Information Day
Wednesday, October 29, 2014 11:00-3:00pm
Student Union Ballroom

If you are thinking of going to Graduate School now, next year, or even two years from now, you should plan to attend this event. Take this opportunity to meet one-on-one with representatives from over 125 graduate, medical, dental, law, social work, theology, international relations, education, library science programs and a range of other post-baccalaureate options from across the US and abroad. www.umass.edu/careers

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS
(See Abbie Boggs welcome letter and bio on page 7)

Grad Certificate Student Events

Final Research Project for the Graduate Certificate – Students planning to complete their certificate this year attended an organizational meeting on Monday September 15th to discuss the final project process and form working groups. Save April 10, 2015 for an all day conference highlighting their work.
Grad Meet, Greet and Brainstorm: September 24th
Graduate students in the Certificate met Abbie Boggs the new Associate Director of the Graduate Program for WGSS and suggested professionalization workshops they’d like to have over the course of this year. These would include discussions about and presentations on going on the job market, navigating academic conferences (specifically preparing for NWSA but also other disciplinary and interdisciplinary events), submitting journal articles, or finding academic advisors.

Graduate Certificate Admissions
If you aren’t yet part of the Graduate Certificate for Advanced Feminist Studies, please be advised that applications are due March 1, 2015. You can find instructions for applying and the digital application form on our website. However, if you’re interested in the certificate you can begin taking electives towards the certificate as early as this semester. Just check out the list below. You’re also encouraged to start talking to potential WGSS faculty and affiliated faculty about serving as your advisor and drop by office hours for our Associate Director for Graduate Studies, Abbie Boggs, Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 in Bartlett 208B.

Fall Courses
For full descriptions of each course as well as their course number and time/location please visit our website.

Feminist Theory requirement
  • Feminist Theory with Swati Shah

“Feminist Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approach” requirement
  • Sex and Science: Power of Knowledge with Kirsten Leng
  • Race, Class and Gender in Higher Education with Benita Barnes
  • Issues of Gender in Science and Science Education with Kathleen Davis
  • Women and Gender History with Laura Lovett
  • Collective Action/Political Change with Sonia Alvarez
  • Gender Seminar with Joya Misra

“Transnational/Critical Race Feminisms” requirement
  • Women Writers of Japan with Amanda Seaman
  • Women Writers of Portugal with Jose Omelas

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES
If you are planning on going on the job market or applying for funding this fall, you should be sure to request letters of recommendation from your advisors as soon as possible. Whenever possible, include all pertinent information about the position or fellowship and a draft of your application materials along with the request.

External Funding:
  • AAUW Dissertation Fellowship – Full year of funding - Deadline Nov 5. (http://aauw-amdissertation.scholarsapply.org/)
  • Ford Foundation Predoctoral (Nov 19), Dissertation (Nov 14), and Postdoctoral (Nov 15) Fellowships – Full year funding (http://sites.nationalacademies.org/pga/fordfellowships/index.htm)
  • Woodrow Wilson Foundation in Women’s Studies - Full year of funding - Deadline is Oct. 15 (http://woodrow.org/fellowships/womens-studies/)
  • Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF)– Full year of funding – Nov. 5 (http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/idrf-fellowship/)

Internal Funding:
  • Ann Ferguson Women and Gender Studies Scholarship through the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts  http://www.communityfoundation.org/scholarships/
  • Also be sure to visit GrantSearch (http://blogs.umass.edu/gsgs/) for more information on external fellowships for UMass, Amherst students
Here is just a small sample of what our fabulous alums are doing. They are making the world better through service, advocacy, art and more. Go WGSS people--the world really needs your contributions!

Mindy Chateauvert writes that it has been a busy year with lots of changes: "In January, I published a new book, Sex Workers Unite! A History of the Movement from Stonewall to SlutWalk with Beacon Press; the paperback version will be out in January 2015. I was on book tour for five months and am still looking to do some bookstore and university gigs...In other news, I have a new position as a fellow in the Center for Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, while continuing to serve on the board of the Leather Archives & Museum in Chicago and advising Women With A Vision in New Orleans, and the Positive Justice Project. Finally, the unspouse and I just forgot our 28th anniversary...because we were soaking up sun and the sounds at Jazz Fest in New Orleans."

Ellen Church works with court-involved youth on a U.S. Department of Labor grant at a vocational program for those young people involved in the juvenile justice system in the Massachusetts South Coast and Boston area.

AnnMarie Duchon writes: "In January, I participated in a National Town Hall event with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Actress Cynthia Nixon, Congresswomen Rosa DeLauro & Donna Edwards, Lily Ledbetter, & Maureen Evans Arturs, discussing issues of fair pay, the need for paid family leave and affordable child care. On May 13th, I testified at the US Senate Budget Committee on Expanding Economic Opportunity for Women and Families."

Sarah Dunton continues to maximize the credentials she earned as a Women's Studies undergraduate through her work as the Director of Education at Girls Inc. of Holyoke. Sarah and her team are embarking on year two of the Girls Inc. Eureka! program. Eureka! is a five year science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) program that also combines health and wellness and personal development courses for middle and high school girls. This program is run in collaboration with the College of Natural Sciences (CNS) at UMass. Over 60 professors, graduate students and undergraduate students provide their knowledge and expertise to the girls of Eureka!

Andrew Elder emailed us: "Since early in 2012, I've been the Digital Archives and Outreach Librarian for University Archives & Special Collections at UMass Boston. As part of my work at UMass Boston, I manage the university's institutional repository for scholarship and research, take part in department projects and programs such as the Mass. Memories Road Show, and work with the university's online digital collections. In the fall of 2013, I published a book, with Jeremy C. Fox, called Boston's Orange Line (Arcadia Publishing) on how that rail line's configuration has evolved, since it opened in 1901, in response to changes in the city, society, and technology. More info at www.bostonorangeline.com. Andrew adds: "I'm still very much involved with The History Project, a volunteer-run, community-based archives devoted to documenting, preserving, and sharing the history of Boston and Massachusetts' gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) communities."

Christina M. Knowles is now the Executive Director of the Boston Women’s Workforce Council, a first-in-the-nation public-private partnership working to make Greater Boston the best place in the country for working women by closing the wage gap and eliminating other barriers to women’s advancement in the workforce. Knowles was elected Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the recently-formed UMass Amherst Women into Leadership (UWiL), an initiative designed to train undergraduate women to become leaders in public service careers. She continues to serve on the Board of Directors for Our Bodies, Ourselves and the Betty Taylor Board Fund for the Education of Women in Politics and Government.

Sherri Martin writes that she is now Sherri Martin-Baron. She is a Visiting Instructor in Education and Writing & Rhetoric this year at Hobart and William Smith Colleges and added "Women's Studies changed my life!"
Laura Merwin has spent the past 7 years working in the residential program at Perkins School for the Blind. She writes: "I was recently hired to be a teacher at the school. I will be teaching visually impaired and multi-handicap adolescents in the area of home and personal management skills. I will also be starting graduate school in the fall, pursuing a Master's in Education at UMass Boston, with a specialization in Visual Impairment and Orientation and Mobility."

Becky Sivitz is now the Program Director for Pathways, a therapeutic after school program in Northampton.

Stefana Soitos is currently working as a Program Coordinator for Student Leadership at City College in New York City. She works with students in the Colin Powell fellowship programs on professional development and career advisement, and each spring, coordinates the recruitment and selection of the new cohort of fellows.

Annie Tummino recently moved from Brooklyn to Queens. Annie's son turned 2 in July, and she is working as an Archivist for the Queens Museum and continues her activism with National Women's Liberation and Red Stockings.

LaKenya Webster is a police officer in the City of Boston, and a proud active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated. Lakenya serves as a Graduate Advisor to students at Northeastern University.

Graduate Certificate Alum Awarded Fellowship

Katherine Maich graduated in 2007, with an M.S. in Labor Studies at UMass and worked with Ann Ferguson and Joyce Berkman. She writes: "I'm currently writing my dissertation in Sociology at UC Berkeley, and wanted to announce that I received an American Association of University Women [AAUW] American Dissertation Fellowship for the 2014-15 year, which I'll complete this year while finishing the dissertation in Buenos Aires. My research focuses on the social consequences of labor legislation for household workers in New York and Lima, Peru."

Obituary

Birdie MacLennan

We were sad to hear that our graduate, Birdie MacLennan died in March. Birdie was an early graduate of the program and always kept in touch and generously supported the department. We loved getting her updates about work and life. After working at Harvard and Merrimack and receiving a Master of Library Sciences, she began work for the University of Vermont Library in 1990. Below are some excerpts from the obituary from the University of Vermont Libraries:

"Since 2008, she served as Director of the UVM Libraries' Resource Description and Analysis Services Department. Her service to the library profession resulted in widespread recognition from her peers around the world. In 2005 she received a Master of Arts in French from UVM; these studies greatly informed her teaching and scholarship. She was the Libraries’ subject liaison to the Romance Languages department, where her growing proficiencies in French and Italian benefited faculty and students and satisfied her deep intellectual curiosity. Birdie was an accomplished and internationally recognized scholar. Her in-depth research on the Grande Bibliothèque of Québec resulted in published works on libraries and cultural identity. In addition Birdie leaves behind a
Thanks to our donors!

Every month reading the donor report is like opening a present. We remember old friends, graduates, and make new friends as well. Your donations support programming and the little extras that make us who we are---a lovely graduation event, T-shirts, buttons and more. Thank you.

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Leona Rockwood
Inez Sieben
Catherine Stewart
Timothy Valentine
Cynthia Warren
Douglas Warren/Pamela Berry
Lakenya Webster
Eliza White
Alita Woodcock-Parody
A look back 15 years.....

In the spring 1999 we were ahead of our peers and the newsletter featured our four listservs in a section we called, Technonews@wost. Smart phones, google calendars, and widespread access to the internet were yet to be invented. In fact even laptops were not typical for students, they were expensive, heavy and had to be plugged in to access the internet. (We will spare you the stories of dial up internet, floppy discs, miniscule hard drives, and other features of computing in that era.)

Attention Grad Certificate alums and major and minor graduates: We know you are doing great and wonderful things and we love to brag about you! Please send us your news about jobs/degrees/awards/projects and more. Alum news is included in the fall newsletter. Not only do we like to hear from you--your stories, accomplishments, decisions and milestones are inspirational for our current students. When we are asked "What can you do after studying WGSS?" we answer with your examples! Send your news to: Karen Lederer lederer@wost.umass.edu anytime, but before next August to be included in the Fall 2015 newsletter.