Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Newsletter Spring 2012

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News from the Director:

Spring 2012 was a semester of transitions for the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WS) Program. In January, I was appointed the first Director of the School of Cultural and Critical Studies (CCS), and although I continued serving as Acting WS Director, our program quickly embarked on a search for the next Director. I am very happy to announce that Dr. Lesa Lockford will begin her position as the new Director and Graduate Coordinator of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program in August 2012.

Dr. Lockford is a scholar and artist with substantial administrative experience, especially in relation to graduate programs. Dr. Lockford is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Theater and Film where she has served as Graduate Coordinator since 2008. She is author of the book *Performing Femininity: Rewriting Gender Identity* (AltaMira, 2004), and her articles include “Placing Words” in press at *Qualitative Inquiry*, “Performance is… Sex” published in *International Review of Qualitative Research* (2010), and “Performing the Abject Body: A Feminist Refusal of Abjection” in *Theatre Annual* (2002), among others. In addition, Dr. Lockford is a performer, writer, and director. In 2011, she contributed to our Women's History Month series of events with her solo performance of “Naming Survivor.” This May, her one-person show, “Lost Lines,” was the plenary performance for the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry.

Last semester, we also had the opportunity to search for an Assistant Professor jointly appointed in WS and CCS. After an extensive search that included well over 100 applications, WS and CCS offered the position to Dr. Sarah Smith Rainey. If that name sounds familiar, it is because Dr. Rainey has been an Instructor and the Undergraduate Studies Coordinator in our Program since 2009. Dr. Rainey is an interdisciplinary scholar who has a wide range of research and program-development experience. Her areas of expertise include Disability Studies and Sexuality Studies, and she is author of *Love, Sex, and Disability: The Pleasures of Care* (Lynne Rienner, 2011). In addition to several solo-authored articles in progress, Dr. Rainey is currently working on a book review co-authored with one of our undergraduate majors, Shayna Noonen. Dr. Rainey has been a dynamic contributor to the WS Program for the past few years, and I have no doubt that she will continue on this path.

Please consider joining us at the fundraising gala celebrating the contributions of Elizabeth Boyer ’37 and the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL) on September 24, 2012. Our keynote speaker will be renowned feminist activist and writer Gloria Steinem. Proceeds from this event will support the newly created Elizabeth M. Boyer Fund for Student Mothers. This fund provides financial assistance to BGSU undergraduate female students who have primary custodial responsibility for one or more children. WS is very happy to be collaborating with our partners in the Women’s Center on this important initiative.
Spring semester has been a time of celebration and change! At the annual Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Research Symposium in March we celebrated some fantastic student research and creative work (see article and pictures on page 7). Twenty-one undergraduate and graduate students presented at the symposium on a wide range of interesting topics, including youth culture, athletics, muscle cars and motorcycles, consent, representations of femininity and much more! Adeya Pinnix won the award for Best Undergraduate Presentation for “The Truth Behind Closed Doors: A Quantitative and Qualitative Study of Romantic Relationships Regarding Young Black Women.” We had a tie for Best Graduate Presentation and awarded the honor to both Suzanne Berg for “Falling Spell/Spelling Fail: Examining Physical and Emotional Abuse through Relational Dialectics and Accidental Ethnography” and Brock Webb for “Assemblages of Consent and the Irreducible Body.” Students who won the Women’s Equity Action League (WEAL) Legacy awards also presented at the symposium. WEAL closed its doors last year, but it has generously provided monies to help support the student essay competition at BGSU (full list of WEAL Legacy award winners on page 3). It was great to hear these fantastic papers at the symposium.

We also continue to celebrate the new Sexuality Studies minor in the WGSS Program. This year, six students have declared Sexuality Studies as their minor (see article on page 9). We look forward to working with each of them.

In terms of change, we are excited about the “new” courses in the School of Cultural and Critical Studies. As was announced in previous issues of our newsletter, WGSS is now part of the new School of Cultural and Critical Studies, along with American Culture Studies, Ethnic Studies, and Popular Culture. One important aspect of the new school is that all four of those units will have a common undergraduate core curriculum. This means that students declaring a major in WGSS in Fall 2012 and beyond will have new major requirements (see our website for these new requirements). A few of these courses are former Women’s Studies or Ethnic Studies courses, but they’ve been revamped to fit the needs of all four units in our school. For example, WS 3710 is now CCS (for the School of Cultural and Critical Studies) 3710: Gender, Race, and Community-Based Practice. Several of these new courses will be offered Fall 2012, including CCS 3710, CCS 3030: Intersections of Race, Gender, and Culture, and CCS 4850: Qualitative Research Methods.

CCS 3710: Gender, Race, and Community-Based Practice should be of interest to anyone thinking of a career working with women, girls, or other marginalized populations. This service-learning course partners with Perrysburg Heights Community Association, Adelante and other community organizations to organize a Girls Empowerment Conference in the fall for area girls in the 7-10th grades. This is one of several service-learning courses that WGSS students can take. Dr. Anne Mitchell (Ethnic Studies) and I are also running a summer service-learning workshop on Critical Feminist Pedagogy and Anti-Racist Leadership that is partnering with the YWCA in Toledo. Our service-learning efforts were also recently recognized by the Office of Service-Learning at BGSU. Dr. Susana Peña and I were nominated for the Faculty Member Excellence Award for Service-Learning & Civic Engagement for our work developing CCS 3710.

Finally, our biggest change (and cause for celebration) will be the departure of all our great WGSS majors and minors who are graduating! Congratulations to each of you, and we wish you well!
Student Awards

Women’s Equity Action League Legacy Awards
Undergraduate first place winner: Lauren Schulman for “Evaluating Sexist Media Coverage of the 2008 Presidential Election”
Graduate winner: First place, Marne Austin for “A Dark Event in a Lighted Place: A Mother-Daughter Co-Narrative of the Relational Experience of Anorexia” and second place, Sarah Lamont for “Islam, Nationalism, and Public Miseducation: The Effects of Public Education on Hijabi Identity Construction in the United States and France”

Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Scholarship
Awarded to Katrin McBroom

Feminist Falcon Awards
Supportive Parent/Guardian: Susanna Shoaf (nominated by her daughter, Cassandra Collier)
Best Introduction to Women’s Studies Student: Cassandra Firak (nominated by Dr. Jamie Stuart)
Kari-Anne Inness received the F. Lee and Patricia H. Miesle Award for her outstanding dissertation within the Department of Theatre and Film

Student Publications


Student Presentations

Kate Reynolds:
“Hair: The Final Frontier for Female Shephard,” Popular Culture Association National Conference, April 2012;

Britta Moelders:
“Shattering ‘the World’ of War: The Trauma of the Familiar in Mary Borden’s The Forbidden Zone.” Battleground States Conference, February 2012
Carly Toepfer:
Art showcased at Battleground States Conference, February 2012: “This art is a young activist’s visual search and claim for truth and justice. Dealing with topics such as social strata, gender, rape, and body image, the artist tries to understand these topics through her own art”

Katie Barak:
“Eleanor, Angela, and a Bunch of Cats: Constructing Feminine Propriety through Spinster Humor,” Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, May 2012

Faculty Publications


Faculty Presentations

Dr. Mary Krueger:
“From No Means No to Yes Means Yes: What Has Changed (and What Hasn’t)?” Race, Gender, Class, Sexuality Symposium, Wright State University, February, 2012
The Graduate Women’s Caucus at Bowling Green State University is an organization dedicated to sustaining a community of graduate students who are committed to women’s issues and providing opportunities for members to channel their energy and resources into promoting the awareness of women’s issues, both on and off campus. This spring, GWC has committed to supporting the Cocoon Shelter, which provides advocacy and emergency services for victims of domestic violence in Wood County. They solicited donations as they trained for various races at the Glass City Marathon. GWC members ran (or walked) everything from the 5k to the full marathon. They had set themselves a marathon fundraising goal as well, hoping to raise $2,000…and they have surpassed it, and raised $2,858! Race day was April 22, and the team had a great time! Though the event is over for this year, the Cocoon Shelter can always use more support. If you want to donate, find “BGSU Graduate Women’s Caucus” on Facebook, and ask how you can give. The team can’t wait for next year’s marathon. They hope to raise even more for this great organization. Thanks for your support!

Triota, the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Honor Society, exists to encourage and support scholarship and excellence in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Bowling Green State University and in academia more generally. Triota places specific emphasis on professional development and facilitating an atmosphere where members may flourish in regards to the aforementioned focus of study through fostering an environment centered on social and academic activities. This spring semester, one of Triota’s events was a Career Cafe, where interested members could talk to a Women’s Studies graduate about life after college. Over coffee in the Women’s Center, Carrie Sponseller, a BGSU alum and attorney, talked with members about different options to pursue after graduation with a degree in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Also, see the Symposium section (p. 7) for a photo of this year’s Triota inductees.
What are your research/teaching interests?

I’m completing a dissertation titled “Pastoral Modernism: An American Poetics.” In it, I argue that American modernist writers used the literary mode of pastoral to investigate and challenge how forms of alterity (racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual differences) figured in social and geographical spaces. I claim that writing pastoral—and, indeed, innovating pastoral—for modernists from William Carlos Williams to Djuna Barnes, Claude McKay to Gertrude Stein, was a means to imaginatively reconfigure American spaces as more inclusive, thereby expanding the parameters of national cultural identity. Pastoral isn’t just literature about nature and the environment, but because it requires a human presence, a shepherd, it’s inherently framed by the social. In twentieth century American literature the shepherd figure is a role taken over by the Other, and I’m exploring how, as the country itself was being altered by increases in immigration and migration and by fervent debates about gender and racial inequity, pastoral writing begins to reimagine and remake American space and identity.

My work as a poet dovetails my work as a scholar. I write about women’s experiences and the natural and cultural environments in which women’s voices might emerge (or be silenced). That’s a very abstract way to describe my poems, I admit, but when I write I’m (consciously and unconsciously) seeking an interlocutor. I want to create intimacy with my reader, to find the time and space in which we might connect and convene, whether I’m writing from a persona based on myself or in the voice of the forest, which I do in a poem from my first book, The History of Anonymity. I read poems as spaces of social, cultural, and historical encounter, and I think that’s ultimately the kind of poem I try to write, a poem of encounter.

How does your work intersect with gender, sexuality and/or Women’s Studies?

I’d like to teach a class on women’s poetry and that’s the class I proposed to Susana Peña when I first approached her about becoming affiliated with the Women’s Studies program. My research often stems from the questions that provoke and organize what I teach. I’m interested in women’s poetry, in part, because I’m curious about how the public forum that a published poem supplies intersects with and complicates the domesticated private sphere from which women poets have historically written. In the 17th century, Anne Bradstreet opens her first published book of poems with an apologia, claiming her work as the “ill-formed offspring of my feeble brain” in order to ease her entry into the public sphere, when women’s voices were both rare and not welcome. And as late as the 1960s, Theodore Roethke accuses women poets of “stamping a tiny foot against God… caterwauling,” suggesting that the space for women’s voices was still limited and fiercely contested. I want to explore how this history has shaped contemporary women’s poetry and I anticipate my next book project to study this history, specifically through the lens of that most public poetic genre, the elegy.

What aspects of the Women’s Studies Program are you looking forward to participating in?

I’m looking forward to being part of the conversation, with faculty and students, both inside and outside of the classroom. I’m looking forward to being part of a community that’s clearly thriving exuberantly at Bowling Green.
Covering Women: Journalism, Politics and Activism was the theme of Women's History Month this year. Co-organized by the Women's Center at BGSU and our program, this year's events featured lectures by journalists, politicians, academics and some of our own BGSU students. Some of the highlights included Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, Connie Schultz, who gave a talk about her newest book, “...And His Lovely Wife,” detailing how her professional accomplishments were sometimes forgotten when she became the wife of a U.S. senator. Students, staff, faculty and many guests from the community filled the Women’s Center to capacity and enjoyed Schultz’s stories, jokes and feminist insights.

Another highlight was a panel of student activists who discussed the ways that activism has helped them apply classroom knowledge to make an impact on other areas of the community. They touched on everything from how their politics affected their style and self-presentation to activist groups they had started to prevent violence against LGBT students.

Nickie J. Antonio also gave an inspiring talk about her experiences as a woman and an out lesbian on the campaign trail, and then as a representative in the Ohio legislature. Antonio emphasized the benefit of being an active community presence and really getting to know her constituents. She also shared amusing anecdotes about campaign snafus, and the challenges of being a feminist leader in a political climate that is becoming more stridently conservative.

The Graduate Women’s Caucus, as part of their annual Feminist Film Series, brought the film '!Women Art Revolution', to campus. The film, directed by Lynn Hershman Leeson, details the birth and growth of the feminist art movement. Comprised of footage collected over 40 years, the film presents the story of women who combined art and politics to critique existing cultural institutions and practices. All of our Women’s History Month events provided opportunities for people to come together and discuss feminist issues, and have a lot of fun. We hope you can join us for Women’s History Month 2013!
This year’s Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Research Symposium was a great success! We had several panels featuring both graduate student and undergraduate student research, with a diverse range of topics, such as “Gendered Bodies” and “Cars, Motorcycles and Athletics.” Our keynote speaker, Dr. Maria Cotera from the University of Michigan, gave a dynamic presentation on Chicana feminism and online archiving, entitled “Taking it to the Streets: Transforming Scholarship in an Age of Necessity.” We also presented scholarships, the Feminist Falcon awards, and inducted several new members into Triota, the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies undergraduate honors society. On top of all of that, we had a great time hanging out as a community, with compelling conversations and delicious desserts. Next year, be there or be square!
Dr. Mary Ellen Mazey encourages participants at the Girl Power! Empowerment conference, organized by WGSS and CCS students.

Several WS faculty participated in this year’s Practicing Diversity and Inclusion group in the Curriculum Learning Community.

Dr. Mary Krueger and Dr. Sarah Rainey represent WS service learning courses at the BGSU Teaching and Learning Fair.

What do you do at your internship?
I go once a week for five hours and help children ages 5-17 with homework. I also coordinated a fundraiser for the community center. It was a fashion showcase featuring a runway show. The shows took place on April 27th and 28th at 7 pm and admission was $5, it was held at the Perrysburg Heights Community Center.

Where did you see the knowledge you gained from WGSS classes intersecting with the things you do at your internship?
At my internship I work with kids of various races, genders, religions and socio-economic status, and my Women’s Studies classes have helped me learn to work with many different types of people which translates well into the work I do at the Center.

Why did you take the internship option? What do you hope to do once you graduate from BGSU?
I took this internship option because I grew up in Perrysburg and have always been aware of the negative stigma attached to the Heights. I want to help the community improve and help the children at the Center strive for a future where education is a viable option. After graduation I would really love to become more involved in activism; specifically I want to help women who have been victims of rape and/or domestic violence.

Why is it important for college students to get “real world” experience by doing internships and service learning?
I think the ‘real world’ experience is necessary because while textbooks can give you facts, hands on experience is where real knowledge is gained. While readings and class assignments helped me prepare for my internship there are still situations that I have encountered that I would never have experienced in a classroom setting.
BGSU Feminist Alumni Network or BGSU FAN

Want to know what that awesome feminist you sat next to in Women’s Sexuality class is up to these days? Searching for a job or networking opportunities? Alums want to develop a BGSU Feminist Alumni Network that will reunite classmates, connect current and former students through networking and mentoring, and more!

BGSU FAN is looking for alumnae (or soon-to-be alumnae) to volunteer and get the organization up and running! Do you have a talent you’d like to share - outreach, web design/social networking, experience starting new organizations? If so, contact Emily Resnik at bgsu.feminists@gmail.com

Students Speak on Sexuality Studies:

A minor in Sexuality Studies is one of the newest offerings in the department of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at BGSU. Students have learned about the new minor from a few different places. Some have heard about it from WGSS faculty, some from student organizations, and some from friends. Gary Strain, sophomore, heard about it from his friend Kyle: “He handed me the info sheet about the minor, and I was pretty much sold.” The advantages of the sexuality studies minor are many, according to students. Sophomore Caroline Nelson was pleased that in her sexuality studies classes, they “covered a lot of very interesting topics on sex and sexuality that are usually taboo to discuss.” Gary also enjoyed the broad range of topics discussed: “In talking about important but often hushed perspectives or concepts, we are able to delve into discussions much more deeply and insightfully than in other classes I’ve had.” Students also have great things to say about the faculty teaching the Sexuality Studies classes. Sophomore Kyle Shupe says, “The professors for the courses, Marissa Oehlhof and Julie Haught, are amazing professors who were very willing to help and provide information.” If you would like more information on the Sexuality Studies minor, please check it out on our website or contact the Undergraduate Coordinator, Dr. Sarah Rainey at sasarah@bgsu.edu.

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