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Alumni Matter

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Summer 2016

Alumni Matter, Summer 2016

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program
Illinois State University

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F.L.A.M.E. continues activism on campus

The students in F.L.A.M.E engaged in year-long community activism beginning with the annual Take Back the Night march during the fall semester. The Clothesline Project graced our Quad twice this year, once in preparation for the march and again in April for Sexual Assault Awareness Month. On-the-ground activism continued with F.L.A.M.E. members posting panty liners with the phrase “imagine if men were as disgusted with rape as they were with periods” around campus to challenge the community and raise awareness of sexual assault. The annual production of Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues* had another successful fundraising year. Proceeds from the event were donated to the YWCA’s Stepping Stones program and the Neville House.



QUEERtalks: New Work in LGBTQ Studies

The Women’s and Gender Studies Program hosted a new lunchtime colloquium series in 2015-2016 that highlighted cutting-edge scholarship in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer studies. The series was organized by Professor Erin Durban-Albrecht to coincide with the core courses for the new Queer Studies Concentration: WGS 292 Intro to LGBTQ Studies and WGS 392 Queer and Transgender Theories.

The QUEERtalks series included well-attended research presentations about black lesbians in the South, queer polyamory in Mexico City, lesbian feminist support of the Black Panther Party, intersex and materialism, and queering generational relationships in Asian American novels. The final presentation by Professor Jafari S. Allen on black queer transnationalism doubled as the keynote for this year’s WGS Symposium.

Update from WGS assistant director

Greetings WGS Alumni!

As the assistant director, I advise our undergraduate minors and graduate certificate students. The WGS Program continues to grow, thanks in large part to our amazing faculty, enthusiastic and active students, and diverse campus programming. This year we said goodbye to 33 graduating students. Goodbyes are sad, but I’m always excited to hear about our graduates’ post-ISU journeys!

Many of you pursue graduate work in Women’s and Gender Studies. Others find employment in areas that builds on their interest in gender and social justice issues. If you went to graduate school for WGS, or if you use your WGS background in your job, please email me! I am collecting alumni advice about job searching, graduate school, and following your passion, and I’d like to pass along any words of wisdom you wish to share. Our students benefit greatly from alumni connections and mentoring.

I continue to work on developing internship experiences for our students. So, if you work for an organization that offers college internships please let me know. More and more students are looking for opportunities outside of Bloomington/Normal, especially internships in the Chicago area.

Cheers to a great year!

Stacia Kock
skock@IllinoisState.edu

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Follow us on Twitter @ISUWGS

The WGS website and social media pages are great ways to keep up with the program, see what our students are doing, and check out some good reads. Come find us!

WGS ALUMNI MATTER

SUMMER 2016

From the director

Greetings fabulous WGS alumni:

It’s been another banner year for the WGS Program at Illinois State University. We completed our *WGS Strategic Plan for 2016-2020*, and we have quite a vision for the next five years. We did a soft launch of the new Queer Studies Concentration, and as soon as the ink dries on the new brochures, we’ll make our big announcement about this course sequence in the fall. This summer we have plans to start working on developing a WGS major! It’s something our students have been requesting for a very long time, and we finally have the staff to do this.

We also continued to expand our footprint on campus and in the community. Professor Erin Durban-Albrecht joined our faculty in the fall and hit the ground running, becoming a popular teacher and mentor to our students. Her *Queer Talks* lecture series was highly attended and will continue in the fall. Last year, Ms. Mandy Dartt, our administrative clerk extraordinaire, helped facilitate Illinois State’s first Lavender Graduation. It was such a success that the committee planned an even more fabulous celebration this year. She also organized a screening of *The Hunting Ground*, a powerful documentary on campus sexual assault, which packed a 300-plus seat classroom.

Stacia Kock, our assistant director, has been busy growing the minor, graduate certificate, and social work certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies. We currently have 51 minors and 30 graduate certificate students, having graduated over 30 of our students this past year. Stacia has also developed an internship workshop for our students and has moved a number of her courses to a summer online format. She also led the new WGS graduate pinning ceremony, the newest part of the annual WGS symposium.

Also, we now officially have dedicated art gallery space in the program office foyer, and our curator Jamie Pitts (WGS graduate assistant), has put together a number of very engaging shows for the community.

As part of our outreach, we’ve included an alumni giving envelope. We hope you’ll consider making a gift to our program this year.

The most exciting part of the year is hearing from our WGS alumni. We know that many of you are working on graduate degrees, starting families, moving away to start new careers, working as community activists, and even returning to ISU! Your successes are what keep all of our faculty and staff doing what we love to do. Please know that the work you do does make a difference. And, please let us know if you are ever back this way. We’d love a visit!

In solidarity,
Alison Bailey
Director

Alumni News

Brooke Barnhart '15 has completed the first year of her Gender and Women's Studies Master's Program at University of Wisconsin–Madison. This year she worked as a teaching assistant for both Introduction to LGBTQ Studies and the Introduction to WGS course. She tells us that this has been a great and exciting way to put her ISU class work to use! Brooke has started work on her M.A. thesis: a critical exploration of the Feminist Majority Foundation's Campaign on Afghan Women and Girls and the tension between how the campaign engages feminist ethics of care in ways that reinscribe United States imperialism. Brooke has just been hired at the Campus Women's Center. She loves living in Madison with her cat, Olive, who is super adorable!

Tomas Bolivar '14 is currently working as an admissions counselor at Stritch School of Medicine: Loyola University Chicago. The staff is very focused on creating access to education and recruiting socially conscious medical students. Tomas uses his WGS knowledge every day by helping craft the diversity initiatives his team is implementing in their recruitment protocol. In addition, Tomas was recently accepted into the M.A. in Women and Gender Studies at Loyola. Congratulations!

Malia Haanio '15 just recently returned from China where she was teaching kindergarten and first-grade English language. Malia is headed to Denver, Colorado, to pursue a position in a domestic violence and sexual assault prevention and education organization. The organization also helps create curriculum for elementary and middle schools on the importance of sexual assault awareness, as well as working directly with survivors. Malia is looking forward to starting a new career in a field that she is immensely passionate about and that puts her WGS minor to great use!

Josette Lorig '14 is finishing up Ph.D. coursework at University of Colorado at Boulder this semester. Her research focus is on American women's literature, history, and culture from 1940-1973. Josette has been teaching courses in the department and will also be working as a research assistant for the Race and Popular Culture Lab at UC Boulder over the summer. Josette is enjoying the sunshine, the mountain air, and hanging with her cat, Lady Georgina.

Jenna Goldsmith '08 minor, '10 graduate certificate, was awarded both the University of Kentucky Women's Club Endowed Fellowship and the *Lexington Herald-Leader* Fellowship. She was also nominated for the University of Kentucky Women's Forum Sarah Bennett Holmes Award, which recognizes women working at the university who promote the growth and well-being of other university women. Her interview with poet Juliana Spahr was accepted for publication in *Interdisciplinary Study of Literature and Environment* and will appear in 2016. Best of all, Jenna successfully defended her dissertation, *Life Matter: Women Subjects and Women's Objects in Innovative American Poetry*. This fall, she will join the faculty in the School of Writing, Literature, and Film at the brand new Oregon State University–Cascades in Bend, Oregon.



Matt Rillie '15 is currently living in Madison, Wisconsin, working for DreamBikes, a nonprofit organization that strategically places used bicycle stores in traditionally marginalized communities. The shop itself takes donated bicycles, refurbishes them, and places them back into the community so that people have better mobility and can easily access public transit and jobs. The staff at DreamBikes is all teenagers placed into a work program. Matt works directly with them as their development manager and mentor. He tells us, "The WGS program has been the rock of my education. My experience has helped me view every situation with such critical frameworks. My staff constantly calls me out for challenging them in everyday practices and speech, and I attribute that skill directly to the WGS experience."

Erica Thurman '09 is writing and managing grants and contracts with the National Partnership for Women & Families. She continues to blog at Life Behind the Veil (ericathurman.com). Erica's writing continues to gain a wider audience. Next year she will

have six book chapters in print, all in a three-book series on race and American television. It's safe to say that she is putting her WGS minor to good use. Congrats Erica!

Katelyn Wood '07 completed her Ph.D. in Theatre History, Literature and Criticism with an emphasis on African American Studies at The University of Texas at Austin in 2014. Katelyn has been a visiting assistant professor in theatre history and theory at Miami University. This fall, she starts a tenure-track position in theater history and performance studies at the University of Virginia. In addition to teaching the history sequence, she is excited to be teaching courses in feminist theory and in race and performance. Katelyn is also working on a book on the politics of U.S. black feminist comedic performance in the 20th and 21st centuries. "I can absolutely say that the experience I had with WGS was the foundation for my academic life, political activism, and artistic work. The interdisciplinary nature of the program exposed me to amazing and supportive professors and diverse student perspectives."



WGS program celebrates scholarship recipients at Symposium

This year we were proud to honor and celebrate the accomplishments of the following scholarship recipients at the 21st Annual WGS Research Symposium.

The Anne M. Sendlak Memorial Scholarship was awarded to **Fabiola Rosiles** who just completed her bachelor's degree in communication studies (organizational leadership) and double minor in civic engagement and women's and gender studies. Fabiola is a very active student: she volunteers with the Friendly Faces campaign, has attended Alternative Break service trips, and was the president and academic chair of her sorority, Gamma Phi Omega. This fall, Fabiola will start her graduate work in women's and gender studies at DePaul University. There, she will expand on her deep passion for social justice as a graduate assistant for their Take Back the Halls Program.

This year the Dorothy E. Lee Scholarship was awarded to **Coretta Jackson**. Coretta is a double major in political science and sociology. After many starts and stops in her university career, Coretta returned to Illinois State to complete her bachelor's degree. She has been a great role model for her three children. Coretta wants to make a difference in her community. She hopes to continue her studies and get her master's degree in sociology and enter the professional field of juvenile offender reform.

The Luellen Laurenti Scholarship was awarded to **Rachel Mackinnon**, a sophomore political communication major and women's and gender studies minor. Rachel's studies focus on her passion for social activism and politics. She wants to work on a political campaign in the future. This summer she is hoping to work with Women Employed based in Chicago. Rachel is an incredibly active student but proudly maintains her high GPA.

This year, **Stephanie Machotka** was honored with the WGS Achievement Award. Stephanie just completed her bachelor's degree in English education with a women's and gender studies minor. Her passion for women's issues has translated into work with our on-campus feminist student organization (F.L.A.M.E) and the YWCA's Stepping Stones program. She also worked with the Feminist Society at the University of Leicester, England, during her year aboard.

WGS staff partners with the Division of Student Affairs on multiple initiatives

Administrative Clerk Mandy Dartt was excited to partner with Health Promotion and Wellness, Student Counseling Services, and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access to screen the powerful documentary *The Hunting Ground*. The film, centered around campus sexual assault, was screened to a standing-room only crowd of over 300 participants! A lively panel discussion followed the screening.

For the third year in a row, WGS partnered with Diversity Advocacy to coordinate the annual Sister Circles workshop. Sister Circles is an event that addresses issues of self-esteem,



self-awareness, spirituality, empowerment, identity, and development. This year's theme focused on health and wellness promotions and included events on healthy eating, positive body image, spirituality, mindfulness, and financial wellness.

Mandy also partnered with Diversity Advocacy on the second annual Lavender Graduation and the inaugural Nuestros Logros graduation. These cultural commencement ceremonies honor LGBTQ and allied students and Latin@ students respectively. Both ceremonies featured opening remarks by President Larry Dietz, dynamic keynote speakers, entertainment, and amazing students. We look forward to continued partnerships to come!



WGS Symposium continues to inspire

We always feel nourished after our annual WGS student research symposium. Our students continue to amaze us, and this year was no exception. Our 2016 symposium featured 12 interdisciplinary panels of student work including a short film, works of creative nonfiction, and presentations on a variety of topics.

Some of the highlights included papers on women in the workplace, black women's hair, queer sexuality in modern art, necropolitics and the prison industrial complex, a critique of Disney's treatment of Middle Eastern women, Latina testimonies, and sex work, and the construction of identity. Thanks also to Professor Heather Dell (University of Illinois-Springfield) for bringing some of her students to present at ISU!

This year was the first year for our new WGS pinning ceremony. Assistant Director Stacia Kock presented WGS pins to 18 of our minors and certificate students, who are now officially alums of the program! The Anne M. Sendlak, Dorothy E. Lee, and Luellen Laurenti Scholarships were presented after lunch, and we were thrilled to have Joseph Laurenti and Bill Sendlak there for our presentation. We are always so happy when our scholarship donors can meet the students who benefit from their continued generosity.

As part of our efforts to launch and grow the WGS Queer Studies Concentration, we invited Professor Jafari Allen to give our keynote address, "Queer Afropolis: There is a Disco Ball between Us." Allen also met with students from Professor Durban-Albrecht's Queer Studies seminar for a book talk at Milner Library.

WGS ROCKS!

This year, many of our amazing faculty and staff were honored by university and community groups for their outstanding contributions to our campus, community, and the profession. Please give them a round of applause!

Assistant Director Stacia Kock—Commitment to Diversity Awards—Outstanding Staff Winner

Professor Kyle Ciani—2016 Strand Diversity Award Winner

Professor Erin Durban-Albrecht—NWSA University of Illinois Press' 2015 First Book Prize

Professor Erin Durban-Albrecht—Ralph Henry Gabriel Dissertation Prize

Administrative Clerk Mandy Dartt—Division of Student Affairs Awards—Promotion of Diversity Winner (Lavender Graduation)

Administrative Clerk Mandy Dartt—YWCA Women of Distinction Winner