

WGS Symposium continues to inspire our community

We always feel nourished and empowered after the WGS Symposium. This year was particularly amazing. The 2017 symposium featured 11 student panels, one knock-out performance, and a powerful community talk-back session that came out of Diversity Advocacy's "Power to the People" 12-week mini-course.

Highlights included panels and papers on gender and higher education, Black feminist thought, narratives of resistance, testimony and survival, the women's march on Washington, D.C., race and film, queer rhetorics, and ethnography and embodiment. This year we had a special performance of "Ain't I a Woman?", a student-authored piece on Black women and feminist identity that came out of Associate Professor Venus Evans-Winter's Black Feminist Thought class.



This year Professor Mariana Ortega was our keynote presenter. Her campus visit included a breakfast book group with seven of our WGS students, who gathered in the resource center to discuss Ortega's work over coffee and pan dulce! Ortega also gave a special presentation to the Visual Culture seminar on "Aesthetic Ignorance and the Possibility of Seeing Otherwise." Her symposium keynote was titled "Bodies of Color, Bodies of Sorrow: On Resistant Melancholia."

The WGS community lost one of its more beloved faculty this year. In tribute to Rhonda Nicol, the WGS program committee instituted two memorial book prizes in her name. We feel Rhonda's loss deeply, and are honored to institute the **Dr. Rhonda Nicol Memorial Book Award** in her memory.



The symposium also celebrated three scholarship awardees this year. **LaCrisha McAllister** won the Anne M. Sendlak Scholarship. She is working toward a master's degree in social work. McAllister volunteers with The Boys and Girls Club, where she created the SMART girls expo, organized a water drive for Flint, Michigan, residents, helped with the organization of The Immigrant and Refugee Rally on campus, and organized and took part in a student panel for the Culturally Responsive Campus Community Conference.

Delany Auth was the recipient of the Luellen Laurenti Scholarship. Auth is a junior psychology major. She was Peer Educator in Planned Parenthood's Teen Awareness Group in high school. She joined Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower (FLAME) her first year, at which time she was voted vice president, and every year since she has been the president of FLAME. She hopes to work as a clinical psychologist who specializes in treating women and girls with trauma.

This year's Dorothy E. Lee Scholarship went to **Louisa Gomez!** Gomez is a sociology major with a minor in women's and gender studies and a queer concentration certificate. She returned to the University with hopes that her daughter would be influenced positively by her courage and ultimately because she has a thirst for knowledge.

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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!



ALUMNI MATTER

A bulletin of Illinois State University's Women's and Gender Studies Program

SUMMER 2017

From the director

Greetings, fabulous WGS alumni:

I'm not going to lie to you. This year has been difficult for all of us. In November we lost our beloved colleague Professor Rhonda Nicol to a stroke. The Illinois budget situation and presidential election had a visible impact on all of us who care about justice. However, I'm proud and inspired by the ways WGS students have stepped up to be part of the many, many conversations we've had in the wake of the election. Rallies in support of students of color, queer students, and immigrant and undocumented students filled the public spaces in front of Schroeder Hall. Diversity Advocacy hosted a 12-part "Power to the People" social activist boot camp. Many WGS students were part of this program and learned to channel their fear, anger, and joy into productive resistance projects. Our community flew the Black Lives Matter flag on the Quad. We supported CAUSA, the new group working with undocumented students. FLAME raised funds for local women's organizations, which have lost a significant amount of their funding over the past 18 months.

Yet both ISU and the WGS program remain strong. Our students have found new courage. This year marked the first year of the Queer Studies Concentration. We expect seven students to earn their certificates in the fall. In partnership with the LGBTQ Institute and Diversity Advocacy, we sponsored six speakers for the QueerTalks series. We are offering more summer online classes. We hosted at least two art shows in our office gallery. Our office assistant Bailey Marie Schmidt founded a chapter of Triota, the Women's and Gender Studies Honors society. Mariana Ortega gave a killer keynote address "Bodies of Color, Bodies of Sorrow, and Resistant Melancholia." She also spoke to students in the Visual Culture graduate program and hosted a breakfast book group for seven of our graduate students who read chapters from her new book.

As always the most exciting part of the year is hearing from our alumni. We know that many of you are working on graduate degrees, starting families, beginning your careers, doing community work, and even returning to ISU! Please know that what you do each day makes a difference. Stay strong! Stay brave! Stay in touch!

In solidarity,

Alison Bailey

Director

What's happening at WGS?

QUEERtalks completes second year!

In its second year, ISU QUEERtalks: New Work in LGBTQ Studies grew from being a modest lunchtime colloquium series to complement courses for the Queer Studies Concentration to one that regularly packs the institute with people who want to learn more about LGBTQI+ issues. Seven interdisciplinary feminist scholars from around the United States presented on a range of topics: theorizations of black female sexuality, transgender philanthropy, homophobia in Haiti, rural queer politics in the Midwest, women's anti-imperialist activism in the Bay Area, anti-transgender bathroom laws, and queer affiliations and collectives to contest racial capitalism. The two most popular presentations were a performance ethnography by Mario LaMothe (University of Illinois at Chicago) about gay Haitian men responding to increasing anti-gay violence in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and a lecture by Carly Thomsen (Middlebury College) about her research with queer women in the rural Midwest that she will be turning into a documentary film.



Mother and Daughter WGS Minors!

Delaney Auth is a junior psychology major and women's and gender studies minor. Throughout her life, since she was a small child, she has been attending rallies and been involved with activism with her mother, Rebecca Auth. Rebecca was a WGS minor, leader in Feminist Led Activist Movement to Empower (FLAME), and served as a student worker in the WGS office for many years. Her daughter has stepped into her shoes in many ways! Delaney joined FLAME her first year at ISU, at which time she was voted vice president, and every year since she has been the president of FLAME. For the past two years she organized Take Back the Night, as well as



The Vagina Monologues, the latter of which raised \$4,600 to donate to the YWCA's Stepping Stones and Mid-Central Community Actions Neville House. Delaney hopes to work as a clinical psychologist specializing in helping and treating women and girls dealing with trauma, and she believes all of her knowledge gained in WGS courses will be immeasurable and has overall made her a better person.

WGS Pilots Black Feminist Thought Seminar

In partnership with Educational Administration and Foundations, the WGS program offered its first stand-alone seminar on Black Feminist Thought seminar this spring. Venus Evans Winters taught an over-enrolled section with 22 students. The class generated a number of powerful on-campus events. Jessica White helped organize a *Sista Sista* evening discussion on black feminism, which drew over 60 people. LaCrisha McAllister and Luisa Gomez (seen here with Professor Bailey) spoke on the Black Feminist Politics panel at the WGS Symposium. Seven members of the class performed their play *Ain't I a Woman?*



Three WGS Faculty nominated for YWCA Women of Distinction Awards!

Each year YWCA McLean County gives special recognition to women who have made their mark on our community. The Women of Distinction award dinner draws hundreds of community members to celebrate our strengths. Proceeds from the event benefit the diverse programs offered through YWCA McLean County. The WGS community is beaming with pride this year because three of our faculty were nominated for Women of Distinction Awards. Congratulations to professors Beichner (CJS), Cleavenger (CJS), and Toro Morn (SOA)!



Tanya Diaz Kozlowski joins WGS

This year the WGS program hired a new instructional assistant professor, Tanya Diaz Kozlowski. Her research interests encompass the areas of Gender and Women's Studies, Chicana/Latina Pedagogies, LGBTQ youth of color, Writing for Social Change. As a Latina educator, Tanya's intersectional scholarship is committed to exploring the complex and productive tensions between bodies, genders, radicalized sexualities, and politics; as well as how people attempt to cultivate bridges between diverse sites of education, policy, and activism that reimagine pathways to equity, democracy, and community making. She's already won the admiration of the students in her sections of Gender, Sex, and Power. We are very happy that she'll be staying on with us next year. She'll be teaching a new course on Chicana Feminisms! Welcome to our community!



WGS Program starts Triota Chapter!

Iota Iota Iota, or simply Triota, is a National Women's Studies Honor Society with over 50 chapters nationwide. The Greek letter, iota, was selected for the name to represent the three goddesses Inanna, Ishtar, and Isis. Triota strives to maintain the feminist values central to Women's and Gender Studies and encourage diversity, egalitarianism, and a supportive academic environment for all students. The society also encourages volunteerism, advocacy, and activism within the community as important methods for promoting and maintaining feminist values.

The Delta Phi Chapter of Triota at Illinois State University held its first induction ceremony in May 2017 to recognize the academic achievements of students in our WGS program. Bailey Marie Schmidt, our very own WGS undergraduate office assistant, organized the chapter as part of a service work project. This year we had nine students join the inaugural chapter. Thanks, Bailey!

Alumni updates

Venise Keys '16 is teaching Art Appreciation at Illinois Central College in Peoria. Her assemblage work was exhibited at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago as part of the 2017 Black Creativity Juried Art Exhibition. Portions of her thesis *Black-\'Blak*, will appear in *Kalfou Journal of Ethnic and Relational Studies*. And, she has a month-long residency in painting and drawing at the School of Visual Art in New York this summer.



Brooke Barnhardt '15 just finished her M.A. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her thesis was titled "The Privilege to Care: An Intersectional Analysis of the Ethics of Care and the Feminist Majority Foundation." She received the Early Excellence in Teaching award. She is working as a teaching assistant for Introduction to LGBTQ+ studies this summer. She lives in Madison with her partner, Brett, her two cats, Olive and Cirrus.

Muriel Dorsey-Johnson '15 enrolled in the Critical Ethnic Studies M.A. program at DePaul University after graduation. It is the only CES program in the country currently and her incoming cohort was the first in the program. She is also completing a graduate certificate in the Women's and Gender Studies program. The highlight of her graduate experience was meeting black feminist icon Barbara Smith!

Devon Rae Hartwig '14 is home-pre-schooling her almost 2-year-old daughter Josephine while pursuing an online master's in marriage and family therapy. She attended the Women's March in Washington, D.C. and just finished a 64-hour domestic violence and sexual assault crisis training. She's living outside of Normal and tells us that her WGS minor has helped her immensely in navigating both graduate studies and motherhood!



Annaliisa Ahlman '09 just graduated from Roosevelt University with her master's in theatrical direction, and she continues to teach high school theatre and English at Niles North in Skokie. This summer she looks forward to returning to the dance and yoga world now that her graduate work is complete. She will participate in a creative artist retreat at the Tofte Lake Center in Minnesota. Recent travels have taken her to San Diego, where her wife, playwright Georgette Kelly, had an original play, *Ballast*, premiere.



Jenna Goldsmith '10 is an assistant professor in the Writing and American Studies programs at Oregon State University-Cascades. She serves as faculty advisor to the OSU Cascades lgbtq+ student organization, the student writing organization, and the Cascades Writer's Guild. She was awarded an OSU Women's Giving Circle Grant for her initiative "Building Cross-curricular Hands-On Learning through Active Learning Lab (ALL) Kits." She misses her WGS family, the Coffeehouse's vegan chocolate chip cookies, and the coziness of Rachel Cooper Hall.

Julia Drauden O'Dell '10 was promoted to editor in the Business, Marketing, and Career Education department at Goodheart-Wilcox Publisher. She is serving as lead editor on her third major textbook revision project at the company. In September, she and her husband are expecting their second son, who will join his 2-year-old brother.

