

IN THIS ISSUE

Awards: Students & Faculty

CWSA Graduate Essay Prize..... 2
 Jackman Humanities Fellowship..... 2
 Milton Society of America 2
 Research Grant from CANFAR..... 3
 2011 President's Teaching Award..... 3
 Outstanding Teaching Award 4
 Undergraduate & Graduate Award
 Recipients..... 4
 Postdoctoral Fellow 5

Events

WGSJ Events 2010-11..... 6
 2011 WGSJ Graduate Research
 Symposium 6
 Rosalind Petchesky 7
 Empower: An HIV Project 7

Milestones: Faculty & Staff

Tribute to Margrit Eichler..... 8
 Tribute to Kay Armatage 9
 Farewell to Angela Fleury 9
 Welcome Judy Finn 9

Publications, Conferences & Talks

Dina Georgis..... 10
 Marieme Lo 10
 Jin-kyung Park..... 10
 Ashwini Tambe 10
 Alissa Trotz..... 11

Reports

Undergraduate Report..... 12
 Graduate Report..... 12
 Leave Report: Ashwini Tambe 12
 WGSJ Report..... 13
 Research Report: Jacqui Alexander... 14

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In the past few years, faculty at the Women and Gender Studies Institute have worked to be at the forefront of North American efforts to redesign the interdisciplinary study of gender and feminism in ways attentive to transnational and post-colonial contexts, in way engendered by, and contributing to, theorizing our location in one of the world's most multicultural cities. We have redesigned our undergraduate curriculum, and launched an M.A. which distinguishes itself from others with its transnational and post-colonial focus. We are thrilled to announce that the University of Toronto has approved the establishment of a Ph.D. program in Women and Gender Studies which will (pending provincial approval) admit its first cohort of students to start in September 2012. The proposed Ph.D. program responds to the increasing incorporation of gender and feminist insights into municipal, provincial, national, international, and transnational government settings, non-profit settings, workplaces, grassroots social movements, and sites and forms of cultural production (whether musical, literary, visual, or performance). It shares with Ph.D. programs at peer institutions a focus on feminist theory and methods, narrative, cultural representations and production, sexuality and public policy; it also incorporates distinctive emphases on transnational thought, political economy, and science and biomedical studies.

The commitment to outstanding pedagogy in WGSJ, at all levels, is evident in two outstanding teaching awards won by our faculty this year. **June Larkin** received the President's Teaching Award, an award given each year to the most outstanding teachers in the whole university. PTA awardees become members of a presidential advisory committee on teaching, which focuses its attention on pedagogical initiatives that benefit the university as a whole. **Alissa Trotz** received the Faculty of Arts and Science Outstanding Teaching Award, for her significant contributions to Women and Gender Studies, and Caribbean Studies, as well as other key sites around the university. Faculty at WGSJ received at least six internal grants for curriculum renewal and other events, and WGSJ as a whole was one of a small number of participants selected to continue participation in the WIT (writing instruction for TAs) program, a program that benefits both graduate teaching assistants and the undergraduates they work with.

In addition, WGSJ faculty continue to receive significant recognition for their research. This year **Mary Nyquist** received a career award from the Milton Society of America; she will also hold a Jackman Humanities Institute fellowship next year. Other research accomplishments in WGSJ this year include:



Directors' Message
 Professor Bonnie McElhinny

four new research grants; one book; over 20 journal articles or chapters; and over a dozen articles and commentaries in public intellectual fora.

We are delighted to announce that **Dr. Lisa Yoneyama** will be joining the Institute next year. Dr. Yoneyama has an outstanding research record. She has written two books, *Violence, War, Redress: Politics of Multiculturalism*, and *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space, and the Dialectics of Memory*, each of which has also been published in Japanese. She co-edited *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* with T. Fujitani and Geoffrey White. She is currently completing a manuscript *Cold War Ruins: Feminism, Colonialism and the Americanization of Justice*. She has also published 34 articles and chapters, in English and Japanese as well as French and Korean, in such notable journals as *Amerasia Journal* (a journal of Asian-American studies), *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *American Quarterly* (for US studies), *Journal of Asian Studies*, positions (the most prominent journal for East Asian cultural studies) and *Public Culture* (a key cultural studies journal, with an anthropological focus). She arrives with significant administrative experience as well, as Director of the Critical Gender Studies program at the University of California, San Diego.

Finally, it is with sadness that we announce that **Kay Armatage** has retired, after close to forty years of contribution to Women and Gender Studies, and Cinema Studies, at the University of Toronto. Dr. Armatage played a crucial role in building our undergraduate and collaborative program. We are pleased to announce the establishment of the Kay Armatage Graduate Women and Gender Studies Entrance Prize in her honour to recognize and attract outstanding graduate students to our M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

Alex Rowson awarded CWSA Graduate Essay Prize

Negotiated Nuptials: A Transnational Analysis of the International Marriage Broker Industry and the Russian 'Mail-Order Bride'

Abstract

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Internet in the first half of the 1990s, the international marriage market, which had mostly been comprised of women from South East Asia and Latin America searching for husbands in the West, became increasingly populated with Eastern European women, primarily from Russia and Ukraine. Labeled as 'mail-order

brides,' these women and the men they enter into relationships with are often portrayed in stereotypical ways that are indicative of cultural misunderstandings. Viewed as either naive victims of exploitation and human trafficking or conniving schemers looking for financial support and a free ticket to America, the actual motivations for women who become mail-order brides is often left unaddressed. In the process, the agency of women in Internet-mediated marriages is often diminished or dismissed in both popular media representations and academic discussions of the industry. In order to provide a more nuanced examination of the

International Marriage Broker (IMB) industry, its clients, and the gender and cultural relations it involves, my paper examines Russian mail-order brides and their American husbands as transnational figures whose unique experience is a result of the combined influence of global and local factors. At the same time, I argue that the IMB industry and the circuits of money, ideas, and people that constitute it are too multifaceted and multifarious to be ascribed to simplistic binary and dichotomous categories of good or bad, victim or perpetrator, and freedom or exploitation.



Mary Nyquist awarded a Jackman Humanities Fellowship

Mary Nyquist has been awarded a Jackman Humanities Fellowship for the upcoming academic year, 2011-12, the topic for which is *Location/Dislocation*. Her project, *Barbarism and Freedom*, will examine the various visual and discursive means whereby Euro-colonialist discourses translate spatial distance or geo-political location into temporal distance or developmental dislocation from a postulated teleological end. Designed to raise awareness of the subtlety, pervasiveness, and longevity of the links with barbarism forged by Euro-colonialism, the proposed monograph will focus on three features of feminist, anti-slavery, and revolutionary literature of eighteenth century England and France: derogatory representations of ritual prostration; the legitimization of only very specific forms of political resistance (relevant to the Haitian revolution); and assumptions regarding the comparative absence of violence against women in England and France as civilized nations where "freedom" flourishes.

Mary Nyquist elected 2012 Honored Scholar of the Milton Society of America

Professor Mary Nyquist was recently elected the 2012 Honored Scholar of the Milton Society of America, a lifetime achievement award. Mary joins august company; in the Society's 72-year history, only four other Canadians have been so honoured: Northrop Frye, Douglas Bush, Arthur Barker, and Balachandra Rajan. The award recognizes her not only as a world-class authority on Milton and feminism but as a sophisticated thinker on a remarkable variety of other writers and issues. While her 1987 co-edited collection of essays, *Remembering Milton*, remains a classic in Milton studies, her new monograph, *Arbitrary Rule*, focuses on Buchanan, Hobbes, and Locke, on slavery, tyranny, and the kind of sovereignty that comprises "the power of life and death." Her scholarship is recognized worldwide as capacious, learned, theoretically sophisticated, and lucid. Its impact has brought great credit to the University of Toronto—so much so that it is one of the principal reasons why Yale Professor David Quint recently hailed Toronto as "the centre of Milton studies in North America." Mary will receive her award at the MLA convention in January 2012. *From: Newsletter of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, February 2011 (No. 76).*

JUNE LARKIN AWARDED RESEARCH GRANT FROM CANFAR

Congratulations to June! GAAP (a project for which she is co-investigator with Denise Jaworsky (medical student, LetsStopAIDS)), has just been awarded a research grant of \$25,000 from the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR) to continue our work on peer sexual health education of HIV/AIDS. The grant will strengthen GAAP's community partnerships and add to its record of community-based research.



June notes: "Our community partners are LetsStopAIDS (Children's AIDS Health Program) and Youth 4 Youth. Our academic team includes scholars from York University, Ryerson University and the University of British Columbia. We also have support letters from the Centre for Urban Health Initiatives (Toronto, Ontario), Island Sexual Health Society (Victoria, British Columbia), YouthCO AIDS Society (Vancouver, British Columbia) and the Youth Action Network (national).

Unique to this proposal is CANFAR's agreement to include youth as co-investigators. Henry Luyombya, a New College student who has just completed the Namibia summer internship and Sarah Switzer who completed the WGS Collaborative graduate program as well as an undergraduate major in Equity Studies and a minor in WGS are both very active in GAAP and have been approved as co-investigators on the project. Representatives from our community partners are also co-investigators."



June Larkin receives 2011 President's Teaching Award

Dr. June Larkin, Senior Lecturer in Women and Gender Studies and Equity Studies, is an award winning teacher widely recognized for her excellence in teaching, educational leadership and community-university connections. She has an MA in Educational Psychology from the University of Western Ontario and a PhD in Education from the Ontario Institute in Studies in Education, OISE/UT. Her MA thesis won the Phi Delta Kappa Best Thesis award and her book, "Sexual Harassment: High School Girls Speak Out", based on her doctoral dissertation, is included on the Women's National Book Association list of Eighty Books for 21st Century Girls.

As a postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Larkin began her university teaching in the Women's Studies Program at the University of Toronto and went on to become Undergraduate Coordinator and Acting Program Director. She established and continues to administer Equity Studies at New College, a unique undergraduate program that has led the way in innovative programming around equity issues. As Vice Principal of New College since 2007, Dr. Larkin has headed up college-wide curriculum initiatives that include a rapidly expanding local and international service learning program, a skills building writing program, a global food equity initiative with local food groups, and a New Media project that provides instructors with the training to teach students the multi-modal arguments new media require. Her curriculum leadership is international and extends beyond the University of Toronto to Costa Rica, Namibia and South Africa. Dr. Larkin has authored or co-authored a number of curriculum documents as well as publications for university classrooms.

Through her community-based research program, The Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) Project, Dr. Larkin creates opportunities for students to work with youth, community workers, researchers and policy makers on studies and initiatives related to youth, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. Her students benefit from the wide networks they access through GAAP and the opportunities for publication, conference presentations and research training. They learn about the new emerging field of

arts-informed research, the key methodology of GAAP, and try their hand at photography, video making, performance and other arts activities. The arts-based products students develop through GAAP become teaching tools in Dr. Larkin's classroom, creating a seamless connection between her research and teaching. Studies conducted through GAAP are notable for not merely studying youth, but for engaging them as fellow researchers. One project resulted in Dr. Larkin and her colleagues receiving the Synapse Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, in recognition of her outstanding mentorship of Canada's next generation of health researchers. Dr. Larkin is also the recipient of a Community Based Research Award of Merit, for exemplary participation in community based research.

Dr. Larkin brings together scholarship, community work and activism in a unique approach to undergraduate education that values student experiential learning. She includes a community service requirement in all her courses as a way of creating a learning environment that extends far beyond the university walls. At the same time, she provides innovative ways to bring the community to the university through partnerships linked to her research and curriculum initiatives. The Daily Bread Food Bank gives an annual lecture on food security and invites students to help distribute their program evaluation survey; educators from the 519 Church Street Community Centre do a workshop on transphobia; Lee Maracle, a well-known Aboriginal author, reads from her novels. All of this is connected to the course material allowing students to see the social relevance of knowledge. Such teaching has earned her a prestigious Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) Award for university teachers as well as an APUS-SAC Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Described as a "teacher's teacher" and "an amazing lecturer" Dr. Larkin's overall goal is to produce socially engaged citizens who can apply their academic knowledge to real-life situations for social justice ends. Through her teaching, research, and community work she provides an exemplary model for putting this philosophy into practice.

ALISSA TROTZ WINS FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARD

Alissa Trotz received an Outstanding Teaching Award from the Faculty of Arts and Science this year. This award recognized her strong performance in the undergraduate classroom, but also the key role she plays in developing and transforming the undergraduate curriculum in WGS and Caribbean studies, her publications on transnational pedagogy, her other teaching awards, her role in numerous campus and off-campus initiatives devoted to incorporating more fully into the curriculum groups that are under-represented on campus and in university structures, and her significant role in public education.

Since joining the University of Toronto in 2000, Dr. Trotz has been central to a striking transformation of the undergraduate curriculum at the Gender and Women's Studies Institute. With WGS colleagues, she has redesigned the two large classes (WGS160Y, WGS260Y), which are compulsory for majors and specialists in women's/gender studies in their first and second years, in order to take transnational frameworks and analytics more fully into account.

Since 2006, Dr. Trotz has been the Director of the New College Caribbean Studies program. She currently plays key roles in Caribbean Studies, as member of the editorial board of Social and Economic Studies and Associate Faculty at the Centre for Gender and Development Studies, Cave Hill, University of the West Indies. She also served as the Programme Chair for the annual Caribbean Studies Association meetings in Barbados in May 2010. During Dr. Trotz's term as director, Caribbean studies fielded a new summer course on Caribbean Migrations and Diasporas in response to student requests for more diversified course offerings, collaborated with Latin American Studies to develop courses on Cuban Film and the Hispanic Caribbean, worked with the Faculty of Music to introduce a course on steel



pan, and worked with Equity Studies, Latin American Studies, and Diaspora/Transnational studies to develop a joint course on quantitative reasoning.

Lecture Series and Faculty/University-Wide Initiatives. Dr. Trotz has been a key player in initiating a number of initiatives that benefit undergraduate and graduate students alike. In 2002-3, with other colleagues in WGS, she organized a lecture series on "Theorizing transnationality, gender and citizenship." This lecture series attracted a group of internationally renowned scholars that included (among others) Angela Davis, Saskia Sassen, Sonia Alvarez, Jacqui Alexander, Kum Kum Bhavnani. In this series, as well as in a more recent project to bring a Native women's theatre ensemble to campus, Trotz has displayed a talent for developing interdisciplinary intellectual and financial support for ambitious, innovative projects.

In 2008-9, Dr. Trotz coordinated a South-South Encounters series with doctoral candidates Jon Soske and Hillina Seife, with the support of a Jackman Humanities Grant to three area studies programs at New College – Africa, Caribbean and South Asian Studies. South-South offered a sustained exploration of the politics and poetics of encounter across Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia.

In addition to her work on curricular transformation at WGS, Trotz was part of a group of Black faculty who met with two Deans of FAS to consider issues of equity, and one of the key organizers of a 2003 roundtable entitled "Teaching for our Times" which incorporated an international group of scholars and administrators to discuss transforming curriculum to make it, and universities, more equitable. In keeping with her theoretical and pedagogical focus on developing transnational analytic frameworks, she was part of a working group that developed a successful Academic Initiatives Fund Proposal for a Centre on Diaspora and Transnational Studies.

In 2009-10, Dr. Trotz engaged in significant public intellectual work addressing the earthquake and its consequences in Haiti, as well as other issues in Caribbean studies. This work included serving as a speaker at Haiti Teach-ins at the Faculties of Social Work here as well as at Ryerson, giving radio interviews and submitting material for the weekly newspaper column she edits for the Caribbean diaspora.

Also, in 2009-2010 the "Blackface Incident" at UT (in which students participating in a Halloween costume contest sponsored by several colleges were given the best award for blackface costumes) excited considerable concern among many students and faculty. Dr. Trotz participated in the Teach-in sponsored by the Black Students Association, mentored the BSA and the undergraduate students' association in ap-

propriate responses, and worked with student and other faculty to liaise with appropriate UT offices to address faculty and student concerns.

Community Outreach and Public Education. Trotz's investment in education does not stop with the University of Toronto. She has been an active participant in the University of Toronto Regent Park Learning Exchange, serving as both instructor and a member of the steering committee. In 2009-10 she was the keynote speaker at the Black Students' Association Annual High School Event. She has also written a number of popular articles, which are a way of teaching a larger audience (e.g. papers and newspaper articles in *Against the Current*, *Stabroek Daily News*), and participated in radio shows in a variety of settings on topics linked to her academic areas of specialization. She is editor of, and a contributor to, a weekly newspaper column *In the Diaspora* in the *Stabroek Daily Newspaper* in Guyana. The fact that she invites undergraduate and graduate students to contribute to this column is further evidence of her commitment to education. Since 2007, she has written 42 newspaper articles or columns on issues ranging from Cuba's economic shift, and violence in Jamaica, to reactions to the earthquake in Haiti and Honduran women and the coup. These initiatives all share the goal of finding ways to reach groups who might not otherwise think of university education, and finding a way to create opportunities for active intellectual engagement, that may ultimately extend to considering further education. She thus recognizes that addressing equity issues is not merely a matter of addressing the needs of existing students at the University of Toronto, but also thinking about how we attract a diverse student body, and how we transform existing institutional structures.

GRADUATE AWARD WINNERS 2010–11

Kay Armatage Graduate Women's Studies Entrance Prize (value \$500) (awarded on the basis of academic excellence to an incoming student to the Collaborative Program)

David Seitz Master's Student, Dept. of Geography and Master's student in the Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies.

Janka Seydegart Scholarship in Feminist Studies (value \$500)

Ethel Tungohan Ph.D. student, Dept of Political Science and Ph.D. student in the Collaborative Program in Women and Gender Studies.

City of Toronto Women's Studies Graduate Scholarship (value \$2,800)

Savitri Persaud Master's student in the Master's Program in Women and Gender Studies.

WGS TA Award

Omisore Dryden Ph.D. student, Dept. of Sociology & Equity Studies in Education, OISE/UT. WGS Teaching Assistant for both WGS370H1F and WGS367H1S.

Margrit Eichler Student Leadership Award – not awarded.

UNDERGRADUATE AWARD WINNERS 2010–11

City of Toronto Women's Studies Undergraduate Scholarship (value \$5,000)

Leah Burke Specialist student in the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program.

Women and Gender Studies Grant (value \$850)

Grace Yoo Specialist student in the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program.

Toronto Women's Bookstore Essay Prize (non-monetary award)

Maria Cichosz Specialist student in the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program.

Essay title: "But what a trap: The Negotiation of Black Female Sexuality as a Site of Agency and Subjectivity in Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and *Maryse Conde's I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*."

Elsie Gregory MacGill Prize in Women's Studies (most outstanding student graduating with a major or Specialist in Women and Gender Studies)

Maria Cichosz Specialist student in the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program.

Helen Gregory MacGill Prize in Women's Studies (student who achieves highest standing in WGS160Y or WGS261Y)

Melissa Horn highest grade in WGS261Y, Minor student in the Women and Gender Studies Undergraduate Program.

Postdoctoral Fellow: Megan Rivers-Moore

In August 2010, I began a two-year SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship at the Women and Gender Studies Institute. My PhD research focused on the experiences of sex workers, sex tourists, state and non-governmental sector workers involved in various ways in the burgeoning sex tourism industry in San José, Costa Rica. The postdoctoral project "Reversing the Global Care Chain: Gender, Sexuality, Tourism and Migration" goes beyond the sexual-economic exchange of sex tourism to consider the interconnections between masculinity and sexuality in transnational gendered relationships that are connected to, but also exceed the boundaries of, the sex industry. The aim of the project is to explore the experiences of North Americans in Costa Rica who started out as sex tourists but became permanent migrants. While sexuality has been widely studied in relation to tourism, much less is known about the role of sexuality in migration and as such, this project attempts to explore the sexuality of mobility. The 'global care chain' refers to the trend of women from the global south migrating to care for the young and the aged in the global north. I suggest the male migration to Costa Rica marks a reversal of the global care chain, as men migrate from north to south seeking out affection, care, and sex. I carried out a pilot study in Costa Rica during the winter of 2011, re-establishing existing contacts with academics and with the North American ex-patriot community. I did interviews and some document collection, but continue to undertake research for the project.

In 2010, I published an article in the *British Journal of Sociology* called "But the kids are ok: Motherhood, consumption and sex work in neoliberal Latin America" and a chapter on space, gender and nation in the edited

collection *New Sociologies of Sex Work*, edited by Kate Hardy, Sarah Kingston, and Teela Sanders and published by Ashgate Press. In 2011, I published a chapter in the book *Shattering Myths on Immigration and Emigration in Costa Rica*, edited by Carlos Sandoval and published by Lexington. I also have an article sex, race, power, and the silences in sex tourism that is forthcoming in *ACME: International Journal for Critical Geographies*. In April 2011 my colleague Kate Hardy presented a paper we co-authored at the International Labour Process Conference in Leeds, UK. The paper explores sex workers' rights movements in Argentina and Costa Rica, and we are currently rewriting the paper for publication. I also prepared and submitted a book proposal to a university press entitled *Gendered Itineraries: Sex Tourism and Social Mobility in Costa Rica*.

During the 2011 summer session, I taught a third year undergraduate course called "Feminist Studies in Sexuality." The course sought to denaturalize sexuality in order to study it as socially, historically, and politically constructed. Taught from a transnational perspective, topics included feminism and queer theory, sexuality and the nation-state, trafficking, and the commerce of intimacy.

The combination of job-hunting, writing, travelling, research, and teaching has made for a whirlwind year. The support, encouragement and mentoring I have received from my colleagues at the Women and Gender Studies Institute have been crucial for learning how to juggle the multiple responsibilities of academic life with at least some semblance of grace and good humour. I am looking forward to an equally challenging and stimulating second year at the Institute.

WGSJ EVENTS 2010-11

WGSJ kicked off the year with a talk by Laura Wexler, Professor of American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Yale University. In October, **Ashwini Tambe** and **Megan Rivers-Moore** organized and hosted "Prostitution Law in Ontario: The September 28 Decision and What's to Come". Speakers were **Mariana Valverde**, **Kamala Kempadoo**, **Valerie Scott**, **Victoria Love**, **Cheryl Auger**, as well as Ashwini and Megan. They discussed the context of the new ruling, its potential effects on lives of local sex workers, and comparative reflections on the state's role in the sex trade. In November, WGSJ hosted "Going to Grad School", a seminar for students pursuing graduate studies. The seminar covered topics such as

choosing a school, sources of funding, graduate programs in women's studies, and getting letters of recommendation. In March, The Raging Grannies came to WGSJ in honour of International Women's Day. That same day, **Judith Butler** spoke at Bahen Auditorium on "The Cultural and Academic Boycott"; more than 500 attended the talk, with some students lining up four hours early to secure a seat for the lecture. Finally, throughout the year, the Women and Gender Studies Research Seminar heard from outstanding speakers. In October, **Jesook Song**, affiliate from the Department of Anthropology, spoke about "Gender Effects in a Compressed Capitalist Society: An Alternative Interpretation of Financialization from a South



Korean Case". In December, **Melanie Racette-Campbell** and **Jessica Westerhold** presented "A Feminist Analysis in Classics". **Geeta Patel** visited in January with "Reading the impossible impassible object: Reading Ismat Chughtai". **Corinn Columpar**, affiliate from the Cinema Studies Institute presented "Toward a 'Postcolonial' Poetics: Issues of Aesthetics and Politics in Aboriginal

Cinema"; and to wrap up the year, from Queen's University, **Samantha King** spoke about "The Transnational Politics of Breast Cancer Awareness: Corporate Philanthropy as Foreign Policy". The theme of the WGS Research Seminar this year was "Disrupting Economies."

Rosalind Petchesky, "Biopolitics at the Crossroads of Sexuality and Disaster"



On March 24th, 2011, Dr. Rosalind Petchesky spoke at the William Doo Auditorium. Her talk argued that combining a feminist view of intersectionality with a Foucauldian analysis of biopolitics gives us a useful vantage point for understanding the sexual dimensions

of disaster and the geopolitical dimensions of sexual controversies. To do so, Petchesky examined two recent case studies: the anti-homosexuality bill and murder of David Kato in Uganda and the hurricane, cholera epidemic and sexual violence in Haiti. She looked at the ways these crises function as magnets for various forms of neo-colonialism and militarized capitalist investment and the challenges they present to feminist, LGBTQ and human rights activists.

Dr. Petchesky founded the International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group (IRRRAG), which she directed from 1992 to 1999. Petchesky's numerous publications include *Negotiating Reproductive Rights: Women's Perspectives across Countries and Cultures* (edited with Karen Judd, Zed Books/St. Martin's Press, 1998), the widely cited "Fetal Images: The Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction" and, after 9/11, "Phantom Towers: Feminist Reflections on the Battle between Global Capitalism and Fundamentalist Terrorism."

Her more recent research interests have entailed a re-visioning of reproductive and sexual rights in the context of globalization, militarism, and transnational feminist activism. In 2003 her book on this topic, *Global Prescriptions: Gendering Health and Human Rights*, was published by Zed Books. Petchesky's most recent book (co-authored with Sonia Corrêa and Richard Parker), *Sexuality, Health and Human Rights*, was published by Routledge in 2008. She is also a research consultant to the Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies, based in Istanbul, and a member of the Advisory Committee of Human Rights Watch's LGBT Rights Project.

Sponsored by: The Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) Project, The Centre for Urban Health Initiatives, York University, and Planned Parenthood.

Empower: An HIV Capacity Building Project for Youth by Youth

Is a one-year project made possible by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Bringing together diverse Toronto youth, Empower trains youth peer educators to use a community-arts based approach to HIV prevention and other sexual health issues. The project represents a collaboration between Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP), Central Toronto Community Health Centres, and CATIE.

GAAP is located at New College, University of Toronto. GAAP brings together youth, community based service providers, policy makers, students and researchers on projects that use participatory approaches to working with young people in relation to sexuality, HIV prevention and AIDS awareness. For more information see: www.utgaap.info

Inspired by the success of "Empower: Youth, Arts, and Activism – An HIV/AIDS Arts Activism Manual for Youth by Youth," this project provides youth with the opportunity to use art as a tool for social change. Participants include youth of colour, street-involved youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited, transgender and queer youth, youth living with HIV, youth with disabilities and Aboriginal youth. Young people between the ages of 16 and 29 interested in HIV issues and community engagement are working with peer education mentors. Participants are learning how to use their stories and experiences to create and deliver arts-based workshops and resources to their own communities. They are also creating digital stories to share their experiences as HIV peer educators.

Sarah Switzer, WGSJ alumni, is the Empower project coordinator. For more information on the project see: www.empoweryouth.info



1st WGSJ Graduate Research Symposium to be held in September 2011

Students of the 2010-2011 M.A. cohort are organizing a research symposium to be held in September 2011. This symposium will be a chance for the M.A. students to share the Major Research Papers they have been working on throughout the school year. It will be a nice way to gather the graduating students together for one last, formal academic get together. This will also be a way for the incoming M.A. students and the graduating students to meet one another.

The organizers are planning for a non-traditional symposium, potentially with performance and multimedia presentations. Since much of the students' work is pushing conventional academic boundaries, it follows that the symposium would reflect these epistemological and methodological matters.

This will be the Women and Gender Studies Institute's first graduate research symposium.

Tribute to Margrit Eichler

Margrit Eichler, Director of WGSJ from 1999-2003, retired this year. The following poem celebrates her career.



An Ode to Mighty Margrit

WGSJ was but a dream - here at UofT
For years admin ignored our calls - despite our many pleas
Our energy was waning - what more could we all do?
Until mighty Eichler came our way - on the heels of provostial review

She was hardly a stranger - to those of us at NEW
Her scholarship was world renown - and informed the work we do
Gender-based analysis - well now it's 'bias free'
She's out to rid the whole wide world of social hierarchies

She came to us with lots of heft (as luminaries do)
She headed up our Institute - but it was oh so new
Within her precious notebook she recorded all our dreams
And after much consulting she then began to scheme

She said, "Our Institute will be - the best in all the lands."
But then we found her at her desk, her head upon her hands
She said, "There is so much to do - how shall we all begin?
Especially when resources - are so very, very thin."

But that Margrit she's a fighter, she said "We can, we can"
Especially when she figured out - the academic plan
She said, "We need more faculty" - She said, "We need more staff"
She set out to negotiate - this is her finest craft

She met with the department chairs - she met with all the Deans
She bugged them all at Simcoe Hall - until we had some steam
Soon there were appointments, soon there was a lounge
The Institute became a place where scholarship abounds

The conference on Utopias put us on the map
Delegates around the world were here and photographed
For every Institute event regardless of the size
Became another entry in the WGSJ archives

For some these feats would be enough - we'd come so very far
But that Mighty Margrit Eichler - yet again she raised the bar
She had her sights on PPD&C where none of us had sat
She shook her head, raised a brow and said, "Enough of that."

For Margrit - institutional blocks - are really quite absurd
She got us to the table and she made sure we were heard
Now those in higher admin posts were getting somewhat worried
The Institute was growing fast...this all seemed rather hurried
Margrit was unstoppable, the Deans would often say
But when she mentioned 'MA' she got a firm "No way"
She responded with diplomacy, she always had such tact
But as she left the room, she said, "You know that I'll be back."

Our MA program's four years strong, the doctorate starts next year
Grad students are a legacy of Margrit's grand career
From a tiny little program to an Institute renown
We owe our fame to Margrit's grit - her refusal to back down

What makes her so intrepid, why does she never falter?
Insurmountable obstacles never seem to stop her
But there is a secret weapon that keeps Margrit oh so hearty
And that is her philosophy of party, party, party!

So as we gather here today - to honor Mighty Eichler
We praise all her achievements - but more importantly - we like her
Her infectious laugh envelops all who come her way
And Margrit, WGSJ thanks you - for the success we are today.

TRIBUTE TO KAY ARMATAGE

For the grand, celebratory event in honour of Professor **Kay Armatage** held on 27 May, 2011—hosted and coordinated by Innis College and Cinema Studies with contributions from WGSJ—**June Larkin, Kathryn Morgan, Heather Murray** and **Mary Nyquist** performed a song written by Murray in 2000 at the time Professor Armatage stepped down as Director of the Women's Studies Programme (the precursor to the current Institute). Many of the qualities humourously extolled in that song are not ordinarily found together, for example fearlessness ("She's not afraid to face the lion in the den decanal") and frankness ("Honey, I am here to get the money"), or efficiency ("her sense of rules and regs is sure") and flair, even glamour ("Her leopardskin and sunglasses make tweedy types look anal"). The two tributes that were delivered on that occasion, one by **Charlie Keil** and one by **Mary Nyquist**, emphasized Kay's unique ability to combine amazing, personal style with genuine unpretentiousness; remarkable academic and administrative achievements with unwavering

generosity and loyalty; restless, creative energies with passionate engagement with the task at hand, whatever it be. Never willing to flatter or ingratiate herself, Kay's forthrightness, it was agreed, was an aspect of her trustworthiness but also an expression of her attunement to the unexpected. Kay's path-breaking career as founding member of both Women Studies and Cinema Studies exemplifies her temperamental attraction to working on the cutting edge—whether that "edge" is intellectual, artistic or institutional—together with her extraordinary ability to translate that attraction into action.

Just a few highlights of Kay's many, many outstanding, lasting contributions to Women Studies at New College. In 1996, Kay organized the Silver Anniversary of Women's Studies, which celebrated the first course on women's lives offered at this university—a course taught in 1971-72 by **Jill Ker Conway** and **Natalie Zemon Davis**, two eminent historians. What this anniversary obscures is the less exalted, indeed marginalized, origins of the Women's Studies pro-

gram itself, which began with a course in "Women in Canadian Society" taught by a collective that included Kay and **Ceta Ramkhalawansingh** and which quickly attracted over 200 students. In 1974 the collective produced an unauthorized course calendar with the UofT crest on its cover, an intervention that in context—Hart House had been open to women for only 2 years, and U of T was not known for its enthusiastic backing of radical causes—had virtually a militant charge. It drew so much attention that a committee was formed to institute an officially sanctioned Women's Studies program. The rest is now, officially, history.

Kay became Director of Women's Studies in 1988 and in 1994 was appointed founding Director of the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women's Studies. This may have been Kay's most arduous contribution to institution-building. In addition to initiating, with **Heather Murray**, the Pro-vostial Review that brought the Institute into existence, Kay established the collaborative graduate program from the ground

up. Her tasks included scrounging for office furniture, hiring an administrative assistant, purchasing equipment, coordinating the design and publication of a brochure involving more than 60 courses and 90 faculty, numerous meetings with graduate coordinators and chairs of collaborating departments, and much more. Without Kay's labour-intensive, no-holds-barred administrative initiatives, the Institute would not now be in its current position of offering (as we have recently learned) an interdisciplinary degree in Women and Gender Studies, beginning in 2012.

In recognition of this work, as well as the untold contributions that have not been recalled here, the Institute is naming the Graduate Entrance Scholarship after Kay Armatage. This honour is especially fitting since it is a scholarship that Kay herself established. We hope that in the future our undergraduate and graduate students will become aware that they are standing on Kay's strong, broad, and fashionably attired shoulders.



Marian Reed, Angela Fleury, Carrie Moody

Farewell to Angela Fleury

We will miss that cackle. Among the many beloved traits of **Angela Fleury**, the WGSJ Business Officer since 2002, was her ability to make us all laugh whether times were good or bad. With her wisdom and patience, Angela helped to shepherd the growth of WGSJ from an infant institution to a larger unit, mentoring three Directors along the way. Those who worked closely with Angela will miss her especially, but we nonetheless wish her well across the street in her new position in the Department of Statistics. Hopefully they will have a sense of humour, too!

Welcome to Judy Finn

This March we welcomed Judy as the new WGSJ Business Officer. Judy has worked at the University of Toronto for over 30 years. Her previous position was as the Financial Officer at Family & Community Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine, a position she held for almost 13 years until wanderlust brought her to WGSJ. We are very excited to be working (and laughing) with Judy as she takes on this new role and helps us to navigate the many ways WGSJ continues to grow and change.

Dina Georgis

Publications

Georgis, Dina, "What Does the Tree Remember? The Politics of Telling Stories." *TOPIA*. 25: 53-60, 2011.

Georgis, Dina. "Bearing Cancer in Graphic Memoir." *Canadian Women Studies*. 28 (2/3): 105- 109, 2011.

Georgis, Dina, "Masculinities and the Aesthetics of Love: Reading Terrorism in *De Niro's Game and Paradise Now*," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*. 12: 134-148, 2011

Conferences

Two stories in one and the perils of group belonging in Palestine and Israel. Critical Ethnic Studies and the Future of Genocide Conference. UC at Riverside, LA, March 2011.

Delivering the Human in War. Association of Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society. Rutgers University, New Jersey, October 2010.

Queer Affects and the Adjectives of Pain. Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities, Concordia University, Montreal, May 2010.

Queer Affects and the Limits of Group Bonding in Palestine and Israel. Historical Materialisms, York University, Toronto, May 2010.

The Personal Archive: Delivering the Human in War. The Archive and Everyday Life Conference. McMaster University, Hamilton, May 2010.

Marieme Lo

Publications

Self-image and self-naming: a discursive and social analysis of women's microenterprises in Senegal and Mali" in Eyeronke Oyewumi (ed), *African Gender Epistemology* (2011), Palgrave MacMillan.

Revisiting the Chad-Cameroon Pipeline Compensation Modality, Local Communities' Discontent, and Accountability Mechanisms. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies* 30 (12):153-176, 2010 (Special issue: Extractive Industries, Regulation, Dispossession, and Emerging Claims).

Conferences & Notable Talks

"Inside the shadow economy: a critical gaze and urban ethnography of transnational entrepreneurship" the Center for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, Method café series, University of Toronto, December 3, 2010.

Panel organizer and chair: "Complex Dialectics: Mobility Patterns, Diasporic Transnational Practices, and Politics of Belonging, Citizenship, and Solidarity," with Rosalind C. Fredericks, Columbia University, "Rappin' Politics: Senegalese Hip Hop and the Art of Global Citizenship," Abdoulaye Gueye, University of Ottawa, "The Bird May Roost on a High Branch but It Will Never Forget the Ground: The Commitment of the Senegalese Scientific Diaspora towards their Home Country," and Ousmane Kane, Columbia University, "The Homeland is the Arena. Religion, Transnationalism, and the Integration of Senegalese Immigrants in America," African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 17-21, 2010.



"Diasporic Social Networks, Economic Positioning, and Social Ethics: Negotiating Belonging and Solidarity in Diasporic Economic Milieu" African Studies Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, November 17-21, 2010.

Participant in the workshop on Extractive Industries organized by The Extractive Industries Research Group (EIRG) at York University, University of Toronto, November 6-7, 2010

Organized an international and interdisciplinary conference: "Gender, Material Culture, and Cultural Diplomacy" October 7-9, 2010, University of Toronto.

Presented paper: "Senegalese women traders: Embodying a gendered economics of aesthetics & consumption" Gender, material culture, and cultural diplomacy" October 7-9, 2010, University of Toronto.

Organized a curated event, a prelude to the "Gender, Material Culture, and Cultural Diplomacy" conference, titled "Embodiment and Visualization of Material Culture Across Time and Space" An exhibition of hand crafted

cloth and fashion from Africa and the Diaspora to illustrate the making, circulation, use, and commercialization of material culture and its symbolic, mercantile, functional and gendered meanings across time and space, October 7, 2010, University of Toronto.

Presented paper: "Gendered Dynamics and Patterns of Urban Livelihood Strategies in the Changing Landscape and Ecology of Dakar" at the conference titled: The Urban Experience in Africa: The Living City and its Local Policy Challenges, organized by the Comparative Urban Studies Project (CUSP) of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the University of Toronto, Washington, D.C August 30-31, 2010.

Organized « Atelier II /Débats » jointly with Dr Lamine Sagna, Princeton University, and Forum des Organizations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations (Forim), France, titled « Immigration, citoyenneté et développement: repenser les questions du capital diaspora, du retour et de la gouvernamentalité de l'immigration en Afrique », Dakar, Sénégal, July 13-23, 2010.

Ashwini Tambe

Publications

Tambe, Ashwini (2011) "Climate, Race Science and the Age of Consent in the League of Nations," (23 pages) *Theory, Culture and Society*, 28(2): 109-130.

Tambe, Ashwini. (2011) Invited review in special forum on Phillip Howell's "Geographies of Regulation" (2009, Cambridge University Press) in *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 1 (1): 124-127; followed by author response, p. 135-138.

Tambe, Ashwini (2010) Invited review of Gargi Bhattacharya's "Dangerous Brown Men: Exploiting Sex, Violence and Feminism in the War on Terror" (2008, Zed), in *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 12, 3: 520-521.

Tambe, Ashwini and Shruti Tambe (2010) "Commentary: Cheerleaders in the Indian Premier League" (1980 words) *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sept 4, vol XLV no 6, 18-21.

Jin-kyung Park

Notable Talks

Husband Murder as the Sickness of Korea: Carceral Gynecology, Women's Disease, and Tradition in Colonial Korea, 1926-1932, Disease and Crime: Social Pathologies and the New Politics of Health, Centre for the Humanities and Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, April 19, 2011.

Corporeal Colonialism: Medicine, Women's Disease, and Race in Colonial Korea, Methods Cafe, Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies, University of Toronto, April 1, 2011.

Puinby'ng, Gynecology, and Reproduction in Colonial Korea, The Hahn Moo-Sook Colloquium, The George Washington University, Washington D.C., November 6, 2010.

Biomedical Research and Meanings of Women's Bodies in Colonial Korea, Biosciences in East Asia, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, October 8, 2010.

Alissa Trotz

Publications

Alissa Trotz (2011) Bustling across the Canada-US border: Gender and the remapping of the Caribbean *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, 35: 59-77.

D. Alissa Trotz (2010) Shifting the ground beneath us: Social reproduction, grassroots women's activism and the 2005 floods in Guyana, *Interventions: Journal in Postcolonial Studies*, 12(1): 112-124, reprinted in Shalini Puri (ed) (2010), *The Legacies of Caribbean Radical Politics*, London: Routledge.

Alissa Trotz (2010) 'Gender, Racialization and Poverty in Guyana,' in Sylvia Chant (ed). *The International Handbook on Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Practice*, Hants' Edward Elgar Pub, p. 655-660.

Conferences & Notable Talks

'Unleashing the Potential Within Us [?]: Cautionary Notes on Diaspora, for 'What is Caribbean Studies: Prisms, Paradigms and Practices,' Yale University, April 1 & 2, 2011

'Rethinking Security: Notes for a Caribbean feminist geopolitics,' IV Conferencia Internacional El Caribe del Siglo XXI, Universidad de La Habana, December 6-8 2010

GRADUATE REPORT by Michelle Murphy, Graduate Coordinator

We are thrilled to announce the approval of our WGS Ph.D. proposal. With a focus in transnational feminist studies, we hope that this Ph.D. program will attract students from across Canada and beyond who are compelled to do critical and creative research on questions of gender and sexuality as entangled with articulations of race, nation, global capitalism, colonialism, citizenship, and other urgent questions. We will be accepting applications this winter and have begun the exciting work of planning our Ph.D. launch for September 2012. Years in the works, **Bonnie McElhinny** took the lead in shepherding the Ph.D. proposal through the labyrinthine twists of governance, where we are pleased to note that it was lauded at every level. Hopefully some of our wonderful past M.A.s will consider applying to our new Ph.D.!

Meanwhile, our 2010-11 M.A. program began its fourth year with the arrival of ten energetic M.A. students and a packed public lecture by Laura Wexler (Yale) which prompted us to debate the politics of representation and

transgender bodies. November brought the convocation of our 2010 M.A. class, who re-assembled in particularly glamorous attire to celebrate with us. We were delighted to learn that **Tara Cookson**, from the M.A. class of 2010, won a Bill Gates Scholarship to Cambridge University, where she will begin her Ph.D. in Geography. Congratulations to all our graduates!

The 2010-11 M.A. class were extolled by our faculty (and others) as a particularly open and engaged group who were lovely to work with. Among this year's cohort of talented M.A. students, several were award winners. **Savitri Persaud** and **Golshan Golriz** were both recipients of the Hammed Shahidian Graduate Award. Savitri was also awarded the City of Toronto Women's Studies Graduate Scholarship, and will be moving on to undertake a Ph.D. in Social and Political thought at York. Jack Hixson-Vulpe will be joining Women's Studies at York for his Ph.D., and is also the publicity intern for the upcoming publication *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*. Instigated by Teresa Cheng (who is moving on to work towards a teaching

degree), this year's M.A.s are organizing a September conference to present their summer research papers to the incoming graduate class—an event we are very much looking forward to.

Our collaborative program also welcomed 12 new members who did much to enliven our WGS seminars. **David Seitz** (Geography), who works on questions of queer and raced geographies in urban North America, won the CWGS entrance prize (which we have renamed in honor of the retirement of Kay Armatage, an original founder of women's studies at U of T who also crafted our collaborative program in 1995). This year the Janka Seydegart Scholarship was awarded to **Ethel Tungohan** (Political Science) for her work on migrant domestic workers' movements. We also learned more about the work of **Melanie Racette-Campbell** and **Jessica Westerhold**, both from Classics, who presented their work in the WGS research seminar, discussing the deep history of sexuality in the politics of poetics and oratory.



Jack Hixson Vulpe, Teresa Cheng



Lauren Cullen, Victoria Keller



Lauren Cullen, Megan Mullally, Savitri Persaud, Victoria Keller, Ursula Wolfe, Jack Hixson Vulpe, Stephanie Latella, David Seitz

Undergraduate Report

2010-11 was a great year for the WGS undergraduate program principally because the level of student engagement and initiative was so high. The Women and Gender Studies Student Union produced a rich and exciting array of events and activities. Students published their second edition of their journal, *Intersections*, highlighting students' intellectual work and research. They hosted a panel on women and disability, a film screening on the politics of fat activism attended by over 150 students, and participated in forums and events in the greater Toronto Area on violence against women and HIV/AIDS. A number of WGSSU graduates won top awards and admission to graduate school, but managed to mentor upcoming students to fill their positions and keep the union, and students in the broader WGS community, ready to resume activities in the fall.

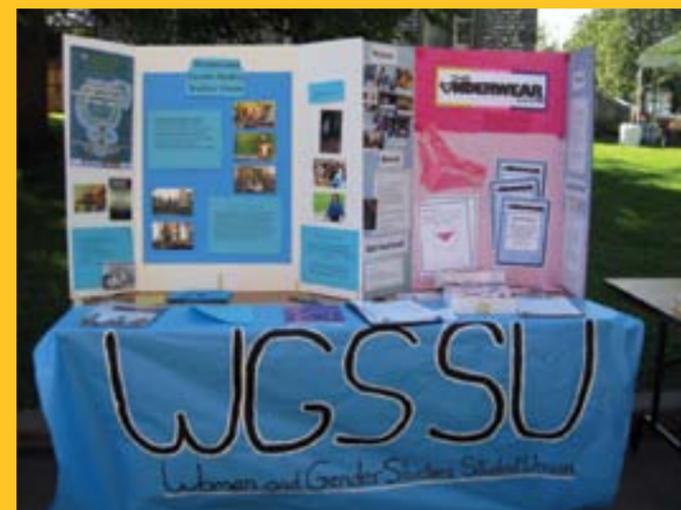
In 2010-11, we introduced WGS272Y: Queer Cultures, WGS386H: Gender and Critical Economy, WGS426H: Gender and Globalization - Transnational Perspectives, and WGS370: Utopian Visions, Activist Realities. Twelve students participated in our undergraduate thesis writing course, conducting research on topics such as gender and theft, university approaches to diversity, and sex education in the Catholic board. Students participated in the Going to Graduate School and Occupational Trajectories workshops enthusiastically, listening to the reflections of and dialoguing with alumni from the worlds of work and study. This next year, we look forward to working with continuing and new students to advance the vibrant intellectual community, events, courses, and activities we currently have at WGS.

Leave Report Ashwini Tambe

I spent my spring term in the Washington DC area, continuing research and writing on my SSHRC-supported project on the shifting boundaries of girlhood in modern India. I carried out research at the Library of Congress on the contexts shaping UN and League of Nations conventions and resolutions, benefiting from the assistance of helpful librarians and beautiful marbled interiors. The book has a better and clearer structure now and a new title. I also completed final touches on several publications which appeared in the past few months. I presented a research talk at University of Maryland on the project, and also completed co-editing a special issue of the journal *Feminist Studies* on Conjugal and Sexual Economies in India. I have also been involved in planning a transnational workshop on girlhood and a conference on feminist law.

WGSSU REPORT 2010-11

The Women and Gender Studies Student Union is coming off of a busy and exciting year. With the dedicated work of a committed executive team, the support from faculty and staff of the Women and Gender Institute, engagement with student members and student unions, as well as Arts and Science Student Union (ASSU), we (WGSSU) were able to have an exciting and productive year. WGSSU had a great year putting on thought provoking academic seminars; interesting and engaging film screenings; creating our hoodies; completing the second annual journal *Intersections*; supporting and promoting community initiatives; and hosting two exceptional socials for students. These accomplishments earned WGSSU the Outstanding Student Union/Group award presented by University of Toronto Student Union (UTSU).



Student Events and Promotions

WGSSU started off the year in September UTSU's clubs day. WGSSU had a booth where students from all over campus could access information from our previous events as well as leave suggestions for future events for the year.

WGSSU held two socials (in October and February) for students and faculty members. We had activities, such as DIY button making, which provided great entrainment. The socials were able to foster informal community building. As well we held an event *Feminist SolidariTea*, which was aimed at talking about self care techniques within activist work.

In January WGSSU hosted a career workshop entitled "So, What Are You Going to Do with That Degree?". Students in the women and gender studies department were invited to hear from academics, past undergrad and master students, and community members through two panels discussing possible career paths for a women and gender studies graduates. The aim of the conference was to give a sense of the many different career paths one can take with this degree.

A promotional initiative that WGSSU created this year was our hoodies. WGSSU designed and sold (at a reasonable price) our WGS program hoodies. The initiative was aimed at creating a greater presence on campus, and we found it was very successful; we had requests from both faculty members, current and past students.

Academic Events (Conferences and Film Screenings)

In November as part of Trans Awareness week, WGSSU co-hosted (with the center for Women and Trans People) a film screening of *Two Spirits*, with a facilitated discussion to follow. The event was a part of "Linked

Oppressions: Racism Homophobia and Transphobia". The film screening was immensely successful with approximately 150 students and community members in attendance. The film created an interesting dialogue and thought provoking discussion.

In December working alongside Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP) to put on the event *Sex Positive Seminar: A World AIDS Day* event. A research presentation and sexual health games created an open environment to address issues in HIV prevention and education.

In March WGSSU co-hosted (with Equity Studies Student Union and Caribbean Studies Student Union) the 3rd annual conference "Decolonizing Our Minds," an all day conference that combined panels and performances. WGSSU provided 2 speakers, Mercedes Umana PhD Candidate and Dr. Roberta K. Timothy, for the panel on disability and education. The event was highly successful with a turn out of approximately 250 attendees throughout the day.

In March WGSSU hosted "Fat: A Film Screening and Discussion on Feminism and Fat Activism", which included showing numerous short films from director and academic Allyson Mitchell and the documentary "Rub My Chubb". This event was in response to a request from student members and proved to be one of the most successful events of the year. Both filmmakers were in attendance along with around 150 audience members. The event created an interesting and engaging discussion.

Community Engagement

One of WGSSU goals this year was to provide community engagement through promotions for community organizations as well attending various community events. Among some of the events that



WGSSU attended and promoted were: the march *Take Back the Night, No More Silence* (a vigil for missing Aboriginal women) and *International Day for Women's Rally and March*; at all events we attended as a union and invited student members to come along.

Intersections

WGSSU is pleased to announce that we were publishing our 2nd annual journal *Intersections* this summer. Off the success of our first journal we are delighted to publish our 2nd volume that highlights the academic work of students engaged in intersectional analysis.

This year proved to be exciting, engaging and educational. A special thank you to all who made this academic year a fantastic success.



In Solidarity WGSSU Executive Co-Presidents *Jolene Cushman* and *Chelsea Fung* Vice-President and *Intersections* Editor in Chief *Maria Cichosz* Treasurer *Dhanela Paran* Internal Coordinator *Gabriella Richici-Fried* External Coordinator *Mahwash Bhimjee* Events Coordinator *Jennifer Galley* Education and Political Coordinator *Marissa Campbell* ASSU Representative *Fiona Lacey*

RESEARCH REPORT

JACQUI ALEXANDER

M. Jacqui Alexander, Professor in WGSJ, returns to Toronto this academic year after a sojourn at Spelman College in Atlanta where she had been invited first as a Distinguished Cosby Endowed Chair, and later as Research Professor through the Women's Research and Resource Center, on an Arcus Foundation funded project on institutional change and LGBT issues at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Alissa Trotz caught up with Jacqui to welcome her back and to talk about her work, and plans for the future.

Alissa: Jacqui, your presence was sorely missed! But your work has kept us connected in important ways while you were physically gone. Can you share with us a bit of your experience as a Cosby Chair?

Jacqui: A significant piece of the work in my first year away as Cosby Chair, was linked to Women's Studies through the Women's Research and Resource Centre, and had to do with deepening conversations that had started prior to my arrival, about sexuality in the African diaspora. That was a very crucial move. The second piece was to explicitly engage the queer and the spiritual together among African diasporic immigrant populations, which I did primarily through teaching. The focus on diaspora, feminism and even Black Studies is surprisingly miniscule at many Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), so to wrestle with these questions at the Women's Resource Centre and Spelman is really unique. It is perhaps the only program in Women's Studies at HBCUs that holds on to these intersectional, diasporic, global dimensions of feminism.

I taught two courses, *Migrations of the Sacred and Indigenous, Black and Immigrant Women in the Land of Dollars*, both of which had substantial LGBT content. One of the great things about the Chair was its interdisciplinary dimension, in the sense that I was able to establish deliberate linkages with members of the Women's Studies Steering Committee through their 'home' departments, if you will, especially English, History/Caribbean History, and African Diaspora and the World, which at Spelman is offered as a year-long required course. I participated in an important panel discussion conversation between Spelman and the Greater Atlanta community as part of an interactive artistic exhibit launched by the Spelman Museum of Fine Arts—a very active community-based art gallery—that coincided with the spiritual aesthetic of the renowned Afro Cuban artist, Magdalena Campos-Pons, *Dreaming of an Island*. The culminating event of the Chair was called, *Africa in the Americas: Movement, Light, Sound and Water*, a two day symposium that brought together cultural workers, students, scholars

and practitioners to discuss the continuities and transformations of Africa throughout the diaspora, primarily through the lens of the spiritual. And of course we had critical conversations about the ongoing intellectual work of the Women's Center, its crucial link to activism in a manner that supersedes this fictive schism between activism and scholarship and about ways to foreground questions of LGBT sexuality through the Arcus project as an important component of the Center's political and epistemological work.

Alissa: Over the last three years you were also involved as a research professor in an Arcus Foundation funded project on facilitating climates of institutional change at HBCUs, and which focused specifically on LGBT issues. Could you talk a bit about this?

Jacqui: I was actually a co-investigator on this project with Beverly Guy-Sheftall, which was intended to really engage HBCUs and discuss how to bring about institutional change on these campuses whose climate LGBT persons experienced as chilly. We addressed a number of areas: policy; institutional commitment; curriculum; student life; housing; residence life; counseling and health; public safety. We looked at 11 HBCU's, in a wide-ranging consultative process that involved focus groups with senior level administrators, staff faculty and students. About 7-8 of the campuses had very active LGBT student organizations and some had done work with social justice organizations (such as the Diversity Initiative within Human Rights Campaign, Campus Pride and the National Black Justice Coalition, which was a meeting ground of civil rights and queer issues), which was extremely important. In April the historic Audre Lorde HBCU Summit was held at Spelman, "Facilitating Campus Climates of Pluralism, Inclusivity, and Progressive Change at HBCU's." In addition to our findings, which also reported on best practices on college campuses, we created an extensive document that included five commissioned scholarly papers that served as the intellectual underpinnings of the project, resources for teaching, research and activism. We mailed this 300 odd pages document to 103 HBCU's around the country. The Summit Resource Book was important because we wanted to solidify an intellectual base for the project. We felt that without that, it would be easy for LGBT issues to be dismissed in some circles as merely lifestyle choices that we were trying to impose on people; and we have to see this also in the context of several HBCU's coming into existence through religious affiliations that would not have been amenable to LGBT issues. We also found that there was not much feminist and queer curriculum at many of the campuses we visited. So we wanted to have the debate. What we found, and Spelman is the model for

this, is that the presence of an active and engaged program in Women's Studies and an active Women's Centre can create the intellectual and political underpinning for the introduction of strong feminist curriculum. In fact Spelman was the only school that had a visible queer theory course. Perhaps what this means is that feminism is the gateway into LGBT/queer scholarship and politics at HBCU's; it is the route to meaningfully open up these conversations on campuses.

Alissa: One of the things you were committed to when you went to Atlanta was forging connections between students in both places. What kinds of work did this entail?

Jacqui: The courses I taught at Spelman had been developed at the University of Toronto, and one of them, *Migrations of the Sacred*, brought students from Toronto and Spelman together for the entire year. The whole purpose of this course was to explore the relationship between immigration and modernity-tradition, and in particular to interrogate the arguments about whether 'immigrants' travel with their traditions, making it difficult for them relate to modernity, a position that not only replicates binaries but obscures the ways in which modernity spawns its own traditions, especially in the context of religious fundamentalisms. The course was designed to get at those questions, and it also provided a space for students to map the spiritual biographies of their own families, which they did through interviews with their mothers (and in one case, a father). What happens in the space of migration, how are spiritual practices configured at this historical moment, what does that mean for understandings and practices of family? In Toronto, many students in the class were second-generation (children of immigrants), and what was phenomenal was how few of them had any access to those intimate histories prior to the interviews. For many of the family interviewees, there was some reluctance or struggle to name difficult experiences (and this silence had been generationally reproduced), and it turned out that these spiritual practices had provided a crucial space to address those experiences of fracture, how to live in Canada as Canadian and hold on to what they knew of themselves. For our students, this was new knowledge, and it was extremely powerful; at the end of the course when the reports were presented, several mothers and other family members came out.

In Atlanta, a couple of graduate students, Moya Bailey and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, who were very politically active and intellectually savvy built a website that would enable the class to regularly communicate with the Toronto students. This led to an ongoing

technological exchange, and during the culminating Cosby Chair event at the end of the year, included a live video exchange between Spelman and Toronto students, who had developed a set of questions they jointly addressed. It was an amazing experience. Since then, four of the University of Toronto students in Toronto - Lisa Child, Deena Dadachanji, Sara Mohammed and Danielle Smith - spent a year and a half developing an essay, "Cyberquilting: Weaving Our Herstories Through Anti-Colonial Feminist Research," that they have submitted for an edited publication, *Feminist Cyberspaces: Pedagogies in Transition*.

Alissa: How are you linking up all of these elements, your research on the kinds of work that women spiritual practitioners are engaged in, in the context of globalization, the students, the communities of practitioners?

Jacqui: In the most exciting way. I have for the past few years been involved in an extraordinary effort to create a multi-faith centre in Trinidad and Tobago, that so far has involved the national herbarium of Trinidad and Tobago, colleagues at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Jamaica, and conversations with the Carib Center of Trinidad and Tobago, and members of the Orisa/Ifa community, spiritual practitioners of Nigerian Yoruba and descendants in Trinidad and Tobago. Although I have mentioned working with indigenous communities in Canada, I also refer to indigeneity in the context of the Caribbean and specifically Trinidad and Tobago, not only to refer to Amerindian populations, but also to name a set of spiritual practices that were created on this soil by virtue of people's own migration. They were forced to develop a set of practices that some might refer to as variants on 'original' models from other parts of the world, but whose iteration is really specifically Caribbean. That is how we are thinking of indigeneity in relation to the spiritual centre we want to build, as a multi/inter faith centre that is open to all, a spiritual site that can be reconfigured in order to accommodate cosmological ways of thinking and practices of all groups seeking to use it. A ten acre parcel of land has been acquired in Tobago, adjacent to the rainforest reserve which is known as one of the oldest rain forest reserves in the 'West'. We are hoping that the ground will be broken at some point in early 2012, which is an important year in the Mayan cycle that is understood as an important moment for the reconstitution of global cosmic consciousness.

Read the full interview with Prof. Jacqui Alexander on our website wgsi.utoronto.ca

GRADUATE STUDY

WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES INSTITUTE



Graduate study at WGSi offers funded PhD and MA degrees, as well as a collaborative program with other disciplines.

PhD and MA

Our PhD* and MA degrees in Women and Gender studies focus on the preoccupations of **transnational feminist studies**. We encourage study in interdisciplinary theories and methods that grapple with how gender, sexuality, and race are informed, lived, and reinvented amidst entwined yet discrepant narratives, geographies, and histories. Our graduate faculty is over 40 strong, with research that engages with the tangled questions of citizenship, governance, nation and diaspora, embodiment, technoscience, global capitalism, activism, violence, cultural production, aesthetics, environmental politics and sites in Canada, Africa, the Caribbean, East Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, South East Asia, and the United States.

Funding for Everyone

All international and domestic graduate students admitted to a WGSi graduate degree are guaranteed funding support.

Collaborative Program

Our Collaborative Program provides advanced training in feminist studies alongside a degree in a home discipline.

Our collaborative degrees are currently available through over 30 departments across seven faculties (Arts & Science, Information, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Education, and Social Work).

Application and Contact

Application information available at www.wgsi.utoronto.ca/graduate

Due Date: January 17, 2012

The Women and Gender Studies Institute is located in the heart of downtown Toronto. For more information contact us: grad.womenstudies@utoronto.ca

**Pending final provincial approval*