

# WGSS News

Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program • SUNY New Paltz • June 2012

Greetings from Southside! It's been a very exciting year for us here at WGSS, full of challenges and rewards. The program ultimately adopted a new name this year (Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies) and hosted a What's in a Name? evening in March to celebrate the change, and allow current majors and minors

## From the Coordinator

an opportunity to change their major name to the new one (or remain the last of the cohort of



Women's Studies major/minors). Professors Heather Hewett and Karl Bryant explained to students the process by which the Steering Committee had come to the decision to change the name, to better reflect who we are today, and what we do, all while respecting where we came from. As a result of the change, the program "retired" the Women's Studies major code (590) and all future students will register as WGSS

majors (591). Additionally, thanks to our representatives in the student senate and affiliates all over the faculty governance system, a resolution supporting a change from a program to a department was approved at the final faculty meeting, May 10, 2013 by a vote of 88 in favor to 8 opposed. While non-binding on the decisions of the president and provost, the resolution demonstrates the broad faculty and student support for the greater autonomy (particularly in hiring) that such a change in status would allow the WGSS program. I look forward this summer and over the next semester to working with the administration on furthering this proposed change. And finally, but not lastly, we held our 30th Women's Studies conference here at New Paltz on Saturday, April 27 on Reproductive Justice 40 Years After Roe vs. Wade. Read on to hear about program highlights, and view photos of the event.

*Kathleen M. Dowley, Associate Professor and Coordinator of the WGSS Program*

## Life After Women's Studies – Suzanne Kelly leaves SUNY New Paltz

By Amy Kesselman

Suzanne Kelly, who has taught in the Women's Studies Program for 11 years, will be moving on this summer to explore her other interests. Suzanne received her PhD in Comparative Studies from Florida Atlantic University, has taught "Women: Images and Realities," "Feminist Theory" and two courses that she designed: "Women and Popular Culture" and "Women, Love and Sex." Teaching both as a lecturer and adjunct over the years, she received the 2008 Liberal Arts and Sciences part-time teacher award for excellence in teaching. Kathy Sarno, who worked with her in Women: Images and Realities, described her as "a great colleague who was a pleasure to work with."

Students appreciated her passionate engagement with the material she teaches and her ability to explain complex ideas clearly. I have

found her a delight to work with: insightful, collaborative and funny.

Suzanne has made enormous contributions to the Program. She organized a panel on "Gender, Sexuality and Evolutionary Psychology," played a central role in organizing our 2011 conference "Green Feminisms: Women, Sustainability and Environmental Justice" and coordinated this year's conference on Reproductive Justice.

Two major projects lie in Suzanne's immediate future: continued work on her book on green burial practices and the development of a garlic business. I know that she will be sorely missed by the students and faculty of WGSS.



Photo: Robin Weinstein

## 30th Women's Studies Conference: The status of reproductive justice, 40 years after *Roe v. Wade*

Over 150 students, faculty and community members attended the 30th Women's Studies Conference at SUNY New Paltz on April 27. The conference committee selected Reproductive Justice as the theme, in part to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision, and in part as a response to recent state legislative attacks on the protections offered by it. The keynote panel included **Loretta Ross**, founder of SisterSong; **Katherine Cross** of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project; and **Angela**



Loretta Ross

**Hooten**, State Policy & Advocacy Director of The Center for Reproductive Rights in New York City.



Photo: Robin Weinstein

Alison Nash

Additional panels included conversations and presentations on Historical Perspectives on Reproductive Justice, Protecting Pregnant and Parenting Women, Reproductive Justice and YOUTH, Bridging Faith

and Reproductive Justice, Organizing for Reproductive Justice, Global Dimensions of Reproductive Justice, and the Economics of Reproductive Choices.

The conference closed with a call to action from **M. Tracey Brooks**, President and CEO of Family Plan-



Photo: Robin Weinstein

Ashley Dryzmala

ning Advocates of New York State, asking participants to help support Governor Cuomo's Equality Agenda, followed by a reception and photography display, titled "Beggars and Choosers: Motherhood is Not a Class Privilege in America," curated by historian and author **Rickie Solinger**.

For additional images and information about the conference and upcoming events, please visit our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/SunyNewPaltzWomensStudiesProgram](http://www.facebook.com/SunyNewPaltzWomensStudiesProgram).



Photo: Robin Weinstein

Rickie Solinger

### Department status for WGSS gains momentum

A resolution calling for the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program to be recognized as a full department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was adopted by the faculty at its final meeting of the year by a vote of 88-8. Student Senator **Mary Bacorn** and Academic Affairs Chair **Janice Anderson** share their thoughts about the achievement.

*Mary:* As a Black Studies major, Dr. Karanja Carroll taught me in the Black Studies introductory course that departmental status is what has allowed the discipline to flourish. For me, this became a lesson in learning from the past.

*Janice:* As a faculty member who once sued New York State for equal pay, I too have learned from my experiences. After being denied promotion to full professor twice, I have seen how threatening it can be to some academics to explore the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class in your research and social activism. Such activities speak directly to issues

of power and powerlessness. We both saw that the WGSS "program" at New Paltz lacked legitimacy and autonomy. The "reasons" why WGSS was not a department did not add up. Sexual and domestic violence, transphobia, queerphobia, sexism and discrimination are alive and well in the United States and at New Paltz. As a new student senator and as a long-term survivor of the gender wars at New Paltz, we were thrilled to make change. We recognized that by working together we had the the ability to be catalysts in a 40-year struggle to strengthen the program by pushing for departmental status.

Mary Bacorn best conveys the feelings after the vote: "Cheers rang, tears fell and a weight was lifted that afternoon." Now the entire faculty, along with the student body, has voted in favor of the change. Although the Provost, **Phillip Maurceri**, will make the final decision, the 2013 spring semester at SUNY New Paltz was a giant success.

---

## Faculty News

---

**Karl Bryant** (Assistant Prof. of WGSS/Sociology) published “William’s Doll and Me” in *When We Were Free To Be* (U. of North Carolina Press), a collection of essays commemorating the 40th anniversary of the children’s classic *Free to Be... You and Me*. He also published a book review in *GLQ*, and gave presentations at the American Sociological Association and Eastern Sociological Society meetings. Professor Bryant will be teaching a new course in the fall on “Transgender Studies.”

**Giordana Grossi** (Associate Prof. of Psychology) gave a presentation for Women’s History Month at SUNY Fredonia this March. Entitled “Hardwired Sex Differences: Analysis of a Persistent Claim,” her talk critiqued the concept of hardwiring and the evidence said to support it. Her analysis revealed that the term “hardwiring” is mainly used in writings for a general audience, where it assumes a variety of meanings that are vague and scientifically unjustified.

**Heather Hewett** (Associate Prof. of WGSS/English) enjoyed teaching the WGSS senior seminar for the first time this spring. She published a review of African women’s fiction in the July/August 2012 issue of the *Women’s Review of Books*, a review of the novel *White Dog Fell from the Sky* in the May 15 issue of *The Washington Post*, an essay, “Toward a Feminist Analysis of Motherhood, Family, and Food Allergies,” in the anthology *What Do Mothers Need?* (Demeter Press 2012) and an opinion essay on public schools and nut allergies in the summer 2012 issue of *Brain, Child: The Magazine for Thinking Mothers*.

**Edith Kuiper** (Assistant Prof. of WGSS/Economics) has two forthcoming publications. “Invisible Hands: Adam Smith and the Women in His Life,” (*Adam Smith Review*, June 2013) claims that Smith’s dependence on the women in his household affected his ethics and economics. Professor

Kuiper edited and wrote an introduction for *Women’s Economic Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (Routledge, December 2013). This series of three volumes contains 43 texts of 18th-century women authors who wrote on economic issues. Most of the texts are unknown in the history of economic thought, which has focused on the writing of men.

**Susan Lewis** (Associate Prof. of History) and her co-author, **Emily Hamilton-Honey** from SUNY Canton, presented “Running the Gamut and the Gauntlet: Mixed Messages in World War I Girls’ Series Fiction,” at the Honors Center, in February, as part of the WGSS Winter Colloquium Series.

**Meg Devlin O’Sullivan** (Assistant Prof. of WGSS /History) gave two presentations this year, one at the Women’s Studies Conference at SUNY New Paltz (“Desired Control and Coercive Tool: Sterilization and Activism in the United States during the Twentieth Century”), and one for Women’s History Month at Dutchess Community College (“In the ‘Best Interests of the Child’: Adoption, Native American Women, and the Solution of Sovereignty”). She will be teaching a new course this fall on the History of Reproductive Justice in the United States.

**Anne Roschelle** (Prof. of Sociology) published “Why Do you Think We Don’t Get Married? Homeless Mothers in San Francisco Speak Out About Having Children Outside Marriage,” in *Advances in Gender Research*, vol. 17: 89-111.

**Eve Tuck** (Assistant Prof., Educational Studies and Native American Studies) and her co-authors, **Maile Arvin** and **Angie Morrill** published “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” in *Feminist Formations*, Spring 2013.

---

## Student & Alumni News

---

The Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies program congratulates all of its graduates and acknowledges some of this year’s award recipients. The Alice Fix award, to recognize feminist activism, was jointly awarded to **Petra Vega** and **Cody Hill**. The 2013 WGSS “Outstanding Graduate” awards were presented to **Kaitlin Montelione** and **Jasmine Shovlin** by SUNY New Paltz President Donald Christian. Women’s Studies minors **Hilary Horowitz** and **Cinthia Pimentel** were honored at the First World Graduation Ceremony on May 18.

WGSS minor **Arianna Cember** went to Albany for a week this summer to attend the NEW Leadership New York Summer Institute on the SUNY Albany campus. She is one of 20 young women from around the state chosen to participate in this program.



Arianna Cember

**Ruth M. Lindner** (2010) finished her Master’s in Women’s History at Sarah Lawrence College this May and works as the Development and Executive Director Assistant at the Empire State Pride Agenda.