



# Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Greetings from Southside House!

It has been a busy and rewarding year for us in AY 2015-2016, and Cookie and I are enjoying a quiet June trying to recover and get ready for next year. We are finishing up our 5 year program review, and will be inviting in external reviewers in the early fall to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the program and our priorities for the next 5 years.

This past year, in addition to sending off into the world another amazing group of graduates (see Student News), we hosted a Life After WGSS Alumni Panel and reception, co-sponsored the biennial Queer Studies Lecture, completed a full year of the pilot LGBTQ+ Living Learning Community, Rivera House, and celebrated the success of our fabulous faculty and staff, with two of our faculty, Professors Heather Hewett and Denise Oliver-Velez, winning teaching awards, while Professor Edith Kuiper (WGSS/Economics) received tenure and promotion, and our own Concetta Chandler accepting the 2016 President's Award for Classified Staff for her exemplary service to our program!

We welcome back Professor Karl Bryant (WGSS/Sociology) from his year-long sabbatical, and welcome the addition of some talented new female faculty in the Black Studies Department, Assistant Professor Cruz Caridad Bueno (PhD Economics) and Nicole Carr (PhD English), both with research and teaching interests on the intersections of race and gender. To see photos of past events, and stay abreast of our upcoming events, including the spring 2017 WGSS biennial conference, please find and follow us on Facebook. Have a great summer!




Find us on Facebook @SUNYNewPaltzWomensStudiesProgram

**Rivera House**  
An LGBTQA+ Living-Learning Community

Under **Dr. Jessica N. Pabón's** direction, and the guidance of an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental steering committee,\* our newest Living Learning Community has had a very successful pilot year! Rivera House students (21 to start; 19 first years and 2 transfers) had priority access to programming specifically for LGBTQA+ individuals and their allies. Together, we cultivated meaningful relationships within an intentional community of supportive peers, faculty, and staff working together to create safe, informative, and welcoming spaces to discuss LGBTQA+ issues and have fun. We offered programs including: a "Safe Sex" seminar; a talk on Queer Spirituality; a trip to the SUNY PRIDE Conference; Meditation with the Sky Lake Meditation Center; a Creative Writing Workshop with Award Winning Author Sassafras Lowrey; an Art & Pride Drag Performance; a bimonthly Film Series; a Popculture Roundup; and a Body Positivity workshop. One of our students—a transman of color who came to Rivera House to find a safe and supportive environment within which to transition—spearheaded the chartering of a new student club, TRANSaction, which organized a very successful day of Trans-focused programming in April. The results have exceeded our expectations both in terms of student evaluations of the LLC and expressed interest in applying to it for next year. We look forward to launching our second year in the fall! To keep up with Rivera House please LIKE us on Facebook. @SUNYNPRiveraHouse



*"Rivera House makes me feel like I belong."*

Special thanks to **Dr. Andrea Gatzke** (History and WGSS affiliate), **Dr. Cris M. Livecchi** (Geography and WGSS), **Dr. Laurie Bonjo** (Psychology), **Marcia Tucci** (Advising), **Ryan Brigante** (WGSS 2016 graduate), and **Amanda Norton** (Res Life) for their hard work and perseverance! We'd also like to thank the WGSS secretary **Concetta Chandler** for her unwavering support.

**Trip to the United Nations:  
#CSW60**



In March, Professors **Edith Kuiper** (Women and Work) and **Heather Hewett** (Transnational Feminism) traveled to NYC with WGSS students to attend the 60th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW): the main intergovernmental body "exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women" (UNWomen.org). Students attended sessions at both the UN and the UN Church Center on topics such as violence against women and girls, human trafficking, "pathways to equality" for indigenous women and girls, the role of sports, and efforts to make the Sustainable Development Goals address the needs of disabled women and girls. Many students reported that they enjoyed the day and learned a great deal about ongoing efforts to work towards global gender justice. Kuiper and Hewett hope to make this trip a regular feature of their courses.

Roughly two years ago, WGSS affiliate and Associate Professor of History, **Susan Lewis**, conceived of a wide-reaching conference marking the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in New York. In partnership with The Benjamin Center for Public Policy Initiatives at SUNY New Paltz, The FDR Presidential Library, The New York State League of Women Voters, and the SUNY New Paltz History Department, Susan Lewis, **Kathleen Dowley**, and **Meg Devlin O'Sullivan** are organizing the April 20-21, 2017 event: "100 Years: NYS Women's Suffrage, 1917-2017."

The centennial offers a unique opportunity to reflect on this benchmark moment in the history of the women's movement and to examine women's human and civil rights as advanced by suffrage and women's subsequent political activism in New York. By bringing together scholars of different New York State regions, with a variety of approaches and research specialties, the conference will offer a dialogue that links an understanding of past accomplishments to a clearer picture of present problems and an agenda for the future. Designed for a broad audience of scholars, teachers, students, activists, and community members, the conference will feature not only academics but also current and former elected officials. Though focused on the achievement of suffrage, the conference aspires to strike neither a purely celebratory tone nor an exclusionary academic one. Rather, the event promises a lively, intellectual, and engaged investigation of this important historic moment, including assessments of accomplishments and limitations. We hope you can join us, so please save the date and look for announcements regarding registration this winter on our Facebook and webpage.

# Queer Studies Lecture Series



**Dr. Pabón** teamed up with **Dr. Sharina Maillo-Pozo** (LACS, LLC, and WGSS Affiliate) to organize the biannual Queer Studies lecture. This year, we invited Carlos Rodriguez (Dominican visual artist/activist) and Dr. Celianny Rivera-Velázquez (Puerto Rican scholar/filmmaker/activist) to screen their films—*Trans'It* and *Queen of Myself: Las Krudas d' Cuba* respectively—and offer a comparative look at the current realities of LGBTQ lives in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. After a very well attended screening and talk, where students in the audience thanked the organizers and speakers for bringing a much needed conversation about LGBTQ Latinxs to SUNY New Paltz, students had the opportunity to interact with our guests at a special reception. Event co-sponsors included Academic Affairs, the Black Studies Department, the Center for International Programs, the Dean's office in LA&S, Feminist Collective, Languages, Literatures & Cultures Department, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program, Latin American Student Association, Rivera House Living Learning Community, Romance Language Living Learning Community, New Paltz Pride, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.





The **WGSS Outstanding Graduates for 2016, Sam Lacovara and Alen Quints**, were honored at the President's reception for outstanding grads on May 13. **Sam** was also awarded the Alice Fixe Award for campus activism, and presented their independent research paper, "Gender as Affect: Feeling the Radical Potential for Queer Survival Beyond Binaries," at the 2016 SUNY Undergraduate Research Conference at SUNY Cobleskill, under the direction of **Professor Pabón**.

We celebrated all of our graduating seniors at an end of year reception at Coordinator **Kathleen Dowley's** home.

## Alumni Discuss Life After WS/WGSS

On April 11, students in Professor **Meg Devlin O'Sullivan's** senior seminar were invited to attend our biennial **Life After Women's Studies (or now WGSS) Alumni Panel**, sponsored by the Major Connections program on campus, to hear alums speak about how they navigated that initial post-graduation job search, and provide some sage advice and encouragement to our outgoing senior class.

Panelists included **Crystal Vuole** (2008), **Jen Herman** (2012), **Brenna McCaffrey** (2014), and **Sherlyn Abdullah** (2015). Both Brenna and Crystal have gone on to pursue PhD's and the academic life: Brenna at the CUNY Graduate Center in Anthropology and Crystal, after receiving her MA here at New Paltz in the Humanistic and Multicultural Education Program, at SUNY Binghamton in Sociology. Jen Herman currently works for Family Services of Poughkeepsie, as the Sexual Assault Response coordinator, where and she is also continuing her education pursuing an MSW at Adelphi.

Our most recent graduate, **Lyn Abdullah**, discussed how many cover letters and job applications and interviews she had sent out (and been rejected from!) before she landed her "dream job," working for the Center for Reproductive Rights in NYC, where she got to travel with her boss to Washington DC this past year to hear oral arguments in the Whole Women's Health vs. Hellerstadt Supreme Court case! **Emily Zurner**, liaison to the WGSS program in the New Paltz Career Resources Center, finished off the program with some tips for our seniors as they begin to prepare for the job/graduate school application process.



**Ryan Brigante** (2016) was honored with an internship recognition award for their work with Rivera House, initially part of their practicum experience in WGSS, but extending well beyond the fall semester through the spring. In her nomination letter, **Dr Pabón** noted that she was pleased she the opportunity to discover how "motivated, organized, and reliable they are in a position that required self-direction weighted with great emotional and pragmatic responsibility."

So great to hear all the amazing ways our alums are putting their feminist values to practice and work in real life, so if you have news you want to share with us about your "life after WGSS" please send them along to Cookie at [chandlec@newpaltz.edu](mailto:chandlec@newpaltz.edu).



## WGSS Faculty Honored with 2016 LAS Teaching Awards



The SUNY New Paltz College of Liberal Arts & Sciences distributes awards to exceptional faculty in two categories: Research and Creative Work and Teacher of the Year. This year, two Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies faculty were recognized as Full and Part Time Teachers of the Year! Please join us in congratulating **Heather Hewett**, Associate Professor of WGSS and English, and **Denise Oliver-Velez**, Adjunct Professor in WGSS and Anthropology. They will have their names etched on a plaque in the Jacobsen Faculty Tower Lobby and receive funding for professional development. You can read more at: <http://bit.ly/1syW4sB>



## Congratulations Heather and Denise!

**Meg Devlin O'Sullivan** returned after having been on a Dr. Nuala McGann Drescher Leave in spring. She presented at NWSA on women and addiction recovery memoirs, and had two of her articles come out: "Informing Red Power and Transforming the Second Wave: Indigenous Women and the Struggle against Coerced Sterilization in the 1970s" in **Women's History Review** and "'In the Best Interest of the Child': Native American Women, Child Welfare, and the Solution of Sovereignty" in **The Journal of Family History**.



Affiliate and Associate Librarian **Morgan Gwenwald** presented "Capturing, Preserving, Creating: 40 Years of the Lesbian Herstory Archives," at "Gay American History@40, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer History: Past, Present, and Future," at the New School for Social Research, and together with Sandy Marsh, she created a 12 panel display on "Sojourner Truth: Her Life and Times" at the 2016 Underground Railroad History Conference, at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York.

Morgan has also been awarded a Fall 2016 sabbatical, and we wish her the best!

**Heather Hewett** published three articles in edited books: "Linking Economic Justice and Women's Human Rights: Feminist Approaches for the Human Rights Classroom" in **Teaching Human Rights in Literary and Cultural Studies** (MLA Press, 2015). "Rewriting Human Rights: Gender, Violence, and Freedom in the Fiction of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie" in **The Critical Imagination in African Literature: Essays in Honor of Michael J. C. Echeruo** (Syracuse University Press, 2015) and "Vigilance and Valour in the Kitchen: Feeding, Eating, and the Intellectual Work of Motherhood in Food-Allergic Families" in **Mothers and Food: Negotiating Foodways from Maternal Perspectives** (Demeter Press, 2016). In addition, she presented new research on identity, power, and privilege in the "food allergy biosphere" at NWSA in November 2015.

In addition to teaching for the first time our new required Feminist Methods (WOM 321) course this past spring, affiliate **Kate McCoy** (Education) had her book, **Land Education: Rethinking Pedagogies of Place from Indigenous, Postcolonial, and Decolonizing Perspectives**, coedited with former New Paltz Professor Eve Tuck, published by Routledge Press in February. Her chapter, “Manifesting Destinies: A Land Education Analysis of Settler Colonialism in Jamestown, Virginia, USA,” was also included.

**Jessica Pabón** is happy to announce that not only was her chapter “Ways of being Seen: Gender and the Writing on the Wall” published in the **Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art** this spring, but her book **Graffiti Grrlz: Performing Feminism in the Hip Hop Diaspora** is now under contract with NYU Press! Additionally she presented “All-Grrl Jams: Transforming Precarious Belonging Through Collective Performance” at the University of Toronto in October, “Fierce Feminist Takeovers: Street Art’s Ephemeral Aesthetics and the Transformation of Precarious Belongings” at NWSA in November, and closed the academic year with “It Was No Change the World Bullshit”: Chicana Graffitera JERK’s Excessive Feminist Masculinity” at LASA in NYC in May.

WGSS adjunct **Robyn Sheridan** received the Poderosa award for her work with the student organization Latinas Poderosas Unidas, Inc. and she had her spoken word poetry published this summer in an anthology titled, **Identity and Anonymity: An Artful Anthology**, edited by Leslie Fandrich and Stephen Sprecht.

Affiliate **Melissa Yang Rock** (Geography) co-led (with Affiliate **Salvatore Engel-di Mauro**) an ASIANetwork Student-Faculty Fellowship research trip with five undergraduates to Chongqing, China to study the politics and practices of urban farming. In October, the team shared findings at NYCAS. At NYCAS Melissa also presented “Interstitial Spaces of Caring and Community” She presented “To C-Section, or Not to C-Section” at the Annual Association of American Geographers in CA in March. She co-organized (with Affiliate **Annie Swafford**) the DASHlab workshop series, as well as the Digital Spaces Unconference. Last, but certainly not least, on December 24th, 2015, Melissa gave birth to her second child, Avi Vaughn Rock-Stryker.

**Meg, Karl, and Heather** co-authored an article, “Unlearning Introductions: Problematizing Pedagogies of Inclusion, Diversity, and Experience in the Women’s and Gender Studies Intro Course” for a special issue of **Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice** in June 2016.



New affiliate **Rachel Somerstein** (Digital Media and Journalism) received an American Association of University Women Summer/Short Term Research publication grant to complete work on her article on NBC Nightly News's coverage of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.



New affiliate **Sharina Maillo-Pozo** (Languages, Literatures, Cultures) was awarded the 2016-2017 National Supermarket Association (NSA) Dominican Studies Fellowship to further research on the Intellectual Legacy of Camila Henríquez Ureña. She presented “Peeling off the Skin: Representations of Alternative Spaces of Dominican Womanhood in Contemporary Visual Arts and Performance” at LASA and “Teaching Dominican Identity at SUNY New Paltz” with several of her students at the Dominican Studies Association (DSA), both in New York City in May.

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WGSS gave me the tools to apply feminist theory and praxis in all aspects of my life while also allowing me to get a job in my field right after graduation!



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Rory Kennedy '16

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