

# WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES AT LSU

## at Louisiana State University



**Director's Notes**  
with  
**Michelle Massé**

Volume 6, Issue 2

Spring 2009

## A Year of Transitions

On Friday, four WGS majors and our first Graduate Minor will march across the stage at Commencement; last week both they and other colleagues marched across the steps of Marybeth Lima's house to receive WGS awards while some 60 of us applauded (see below). The realities of financial crisis, restructuring, and personnel shifts surround us, but 2008-09 has nonetheless also proven to be a year in which we have much to applaud. We've:

tripled the numbers of majors and minors (from 9 to 33);

quadrupled of the numbers of Graduate Minors (from 5 to 20);

had a successful search for a joint WGS/English appointment;

moved the WGS offices to a larger space with faculty offices.

This year, like last year, 40% of ATLAS recipients in Louisiana are WGS faculty members, and our list of university and national awards and recognition are too numerous to mention here.

We will begin next year with another celebration as we have a grand opening for WGS's new offices in 118 Himes and ready ourselves for a year in which we have a lot to accomplish. Our achievements create new "challenges," as the language of mission statements has it. I'll be asking for your help in building upon the foundation you've already laid, in tasks ranging from new course proposals, through mentoring programs, to actively recruiting for majors and minors.

I hope that this summer is everything (or at least some of) what you long for, personally and professionally. I look forward to hearing about both when we all reconvene this fall.

Warmly, Michelle

### New Offices

This spring marked a physical transition of the program to a large new office suite. Due to the generosity of the College of Arts and Sciences, WGS will now call 118 Himes Hall its home. New features that this suite offers include a reception area for student workers, offices for our four joint faculty members, an office for graduate students, a lunch room, a file room, and a work room. The acquisition also includes a new library in 112 Himes, which will function as a casual meeting space for faculty and student groups.

To celebrate the result of months of collaboration with facility services, interior designers, and technology specialists, we will host an open house in the fall. We look forward to celebrating with you our new space and the possibilities that more visibility and traffic will bring in the future!

### New Faculty

We are happy to announce that **Benjamin Kahan** is the newest WGS/English joint appointment faculty member. For 2009-2010, he will hold a yearlong fellowship at The Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry at Emory University. This Center brings together Emory faculty and outside scholars in order to create an environment for intellectual exchange and research. Kahan's research and teaching interests include gender and sexuality studies, queer theory, American literature, international modernism, poetry and poetics, and psychoanalysis. He is currently at work on a book manuscript entitled "Modern American Celibacies, 1886-1969" which charts a history and theory of celibacy. This project examines celibacy both as a social form in modern America and as a central model for literary production within modernism. Kahan argues that celibacy enriches and recasts the histories of homosexuality, the women's movement, and modernism. We look forward to welcoming Benjamin in the fall of 2010.

### New Coordinators



In the midst of a campus-wide hiring freeze, we were thrilled to be able to fill the Administrative Coordinator vacancy with the hiring of **Rebecca Huckleba**. Rebecca comes to us from Los Angeles, where she worked in the UC-Northridge system. Her degree from Grinnell College was in English and WGS and she brings with her an enthusiasm for WGS issues that has already infused the office!

This fall we will welcome new Program Coordinator, **Jennifer West**, into the office. A 5th year PhD student in English, Jennifer researches representations of childbirth and medical discourses in popular culture and advice literature. A former magazine editor and Make-A-Wish foundation coordinator, Jennifer will bring both publicity savvy and experience with curriculum design to the program.



## WGS Programs

### WGS Lecture Series



This year, WGS brought the scholarship of junior and senior WGS faculty to the university community through two lecture series. As part of the *Engendering Scholarship Lecture series*, we heard about Marybeth Lima's work on the LSU Community Playground Project, Pamela Monroe's work with the Louisiana Poverty Initiative, and Christine Corcos' work on images of gender in the witchcraft trial of Helen Duncan. For the *Brown Bag Lecture series*, Dana Berkowitz presented her research on the parenting experiences of gay fathers, Challen Nicklen shared her research on the political rhetoric in the United Nations' Conference on Women, and Sarah Becker highlighted dilemmas associated with doing feminist research in nonfeminist spaces. Next year, the two series will be combined under one theme to become the "Engendering Dialogue" lecture series.

### 12th Annual WGS Conference

Contributed by Laura Marks, WSGO President 2008-2009

Graduates, undergraduates and faculty gathered in Peabody Hall on March 6<sup>th</sup> for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Conference. This year's theme, *Reinforcing and Resisting Feminist Representations: Spaces, Voices, and Identities*, encouraged participants from a variety of fields to engage with feminism, gender expression, which women's and gender studies have addressed and conference featured a multitude with papers addressing topics pedagogy and the classroom, and sexuality. Presenters and appreciation for a space where scholarship from such a wide presented in a supportive capacity for networking and witnessed in the many taking place over lunch,



Jessica Gray talks about witches, gender, and popular culture.

variety of fields to engage with feminism, gender expression, which women's and gender studies have addressed and conference featured a multitude with papers addressing topics pedagogy and the classroom, and sexuality. Presenters and appreciation for a space where scholarship from such a wide presented in a supportive capacity for networking and witnessed in the many taking place over lunch, attendees alike expressed their women's and gender studies variety of disciplines can be environment. The conference's exchange of ideas could be enthusiastic conversations provided by WGS.



The conference was framed by a keynote talk by Dr. Janet Miller, *Transnationality, Subjectivity, Representation: (Im)Possibilities of Feminist Autobiographical Practices*. Miller addressed the difficulties of writing the self in autobiographical writings, interrogating the multiple identities individuals necessarily inhabit in different contexts, such as nation, ethnicity, gender, and location.

Janet Miller is pictured left with members of the conference committee, Jessica Ketcham Weber, Dana Berkowitz, and Laura Marks.

## Disability Studies Scholar Visits LSU

This spring, WGS co-sponsored a lecture by Michael Bérubé, entitled *Disability Studies & the Boundaries of the Humanities*. Bérubé is the Paterno Family Professor in Literature at Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of six books to date, including: *Public Access: Literary Theory and American Cultural Politics* (Verso, 1994); *Life As We Know It: A Father, A Family, and an Exceptional Child* (Pantheon, 1996); *What's Liberal About the Liberal Arts?: Classroom Politics and "Bias" in Higher Education* (W. Norton, 2006.)



His talk served as both an introduction to the field of disability studies as well as an demonstrative analysis of the complexities of the representation of disabilities in public policy, the media, and popular culture.

*Life As We Know It* was a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year for 1996 and was chosen as the inaugural book for the newly formed Disability Studies Reading Group at LSU, led by Professor Jenell Johnson. Jenell welcomes those interested to join the group: "we warmly and enthusiastically welcome group members with disabilities, students, staff, and faculty from LSU, as well as members from the larger Baton Rouge community to participate in this interdisciplinary group."

Contact Jenell for more information at [jjohn@lsu.edu](mailto:jjohn@lsu.edu).

## Interviews with Graduating WGS Seniors

Written by Sara Koivula, WGS Student Worker

**Jennifer Bowman, WGS and English Double Major**

**Future Plans:** Law School, and then pursuing a career in both academia and with a practice



### Thoughts about WGS

Jenny views the WGS program as "the most intimate department at LSU." In particular, she feels that "the faculty is amazing," and the strength of the department's small size enables more "personal attention and interaction." As a result of participating in WGS, Jenny feels a greater commitment to her community because she has learned so much more about herself and what she wishes to represent. In Jenny's opinion, WGS classes "value opinions more than most classes" and have contributed to her communication skills with both men and women. Jenny also appreciates other

aspects of the WGS program such as conferences, the opportunity for independent study as well as the possibility of attending graduate classes whenever appropriate.

**Views about Feminism:** Jenny thinks that one of the biggest misconceptions about feminism is that it does not exist anymore or that it is "a dirty word." Overall Jenny finds that many people think that feminism "was our mothers' battle and that you can have it all. But you can't and it's a harsh reality." Jenny also calls feminism an "honor" and feels as though people should earn the label by working for their specific feminist goals. As such - in what Jenny calls a separatist view - feminism isn't for everyone.

**WGS-related Extracurricular Activities:** Jenny went through Safe Space Training with Spectrum last year and also has attended the Vagina Monologues. She also supports the local drag king troupe, the Capital City Kings, in their work with dismantling gender.

**Michelle Linschoten, Psychology Major, WGS Minor**

**Future Plans:** Obtain MA in Public Health; Teach sex ed in schools; Perhaps obtain a PhD in Women's and Gender Studies. She plans to work on reproductive health and rights.



**WGS-Related Extracurricular Involvement:** Michelle is very active in LSU student organizations including Women Organizing Women (WOW), Voices for Planned Parenthood (VOX), Spectrum, and Environmental Conservation Organization (ECO). Currently she is the president of WOW which focuses on education, advocacy, and community service. WOW holds table sits, movie nights, and discussions in classes. Michelle also is a public affairs intern for Planned Parenthood and works with HIV awareness and women's birth control rights and also teaches sex education at the Big Buddy Program.

**Views about Feminism:** According to Michelle, feminism is "a broad world view that can be taken a lot of directions" and "a mindset for looking at the world." Michelle feels that there are quite a few misconceptions about feminism in today's world, especially with regard to who feminists are and what feminism really is. She feels as though many people incorrectly assume that feminists are "angry, hippie-looking lesbians" and that men cannot be feminists. She also feels that feminism is often thought of as women believing that men are taking over and that the only solution is to overthrow all the men from power - a view which she strongly disagrees with.

**Thoughts about WGS:** Michelle feels that "feminism applies to so many areas it is neat that they [different disciplines] crossed" in WGS. Michelle appreciates the fact that the class sizes for WGS courses are mostly small, allowing for in-class discussions and that most students who are taking WGS courses really want to be there and actively participate in class. After taking WGS 2500 with Professor Challen Nicklen, Michelle felt as though she had found the "love of her life" and had found what she wanted to study. She strongly recommends that class to every student, no matter what their major.

## Selected Faculty & Graduate Student Accomplishments

**SARAH BECKER** received a \$5000 2009 Summer Stipend grant from the Council on Research, which will support a month of summer research in "Gardner Village," the setting of the three-year ethnography she conducted for my doctoral degree. Her previous research in Gardner Village examined the rhetorical devices that sustain punitiveness and fear in communities without high crime rates. This work is part of her wider research effort to direct attention to (and gain a better understanding of) the consequences of community-police partnerships in socially, economically, and racially diverse communities.

**ELIZABETH DOMANGUE** (WGS Grad Minor) was recently selected by The Myra Sadker Foundation as this year's recipient for the Myra Sadker Dissertation Award. Elizabeth and her director, Melinda Solmon, received the American Educational Research Association SIG-Research on Learning and Instruction in Physical Education Exemplary Paper Award for their article published in *Gender and Education* titled "A Feminist Poststructuralist Examination into the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Awards Program." Elizabeth has accepted a tenure-track position beginning this fall at San Jose State.

**BENJAMIN KAHAN**, a new WGS/English joint appointment, has recently been awarded a highly competitive fellowship from the Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry at Emory University for 2009-2010. Benjy will be working on a book, *Modern American Celibacies, 1886-1969*, and will defer joining us until fall of 2010.

**CASEY KAYSER** (WGS Grad Minor) is the recipient of the 2008-2009 LSU Alumni Association Teaching Assistant Award, which recognizes outstanding teaching ability and service to students. She will be honored at the annual Faculty Awards Reception on May 5.

**MICHELLE MASSÉ's** essay, "All Things Visible and Invisible: Believing in Higher Education," appeared in the "Critical Credos" special issue of *the minnesota review* (Winter/Spring 2009), which was a reprise of the famous *Kenyon Review* special issue. Michelle gave two presentations this spring at panels organized around her forthcoming edited collection, *Over Ten Million Served: Gendered Service in Language and Literature Workplaces* (SUNY). She spoke on "Transforming Servitude into Service: Feminist Activism in Higher Education" (Mid-Atlantic Women Studies Association Conference) and "Work Matters: Gendered Service in Language and Literature Workplaces" (Working Class Studies Association Conference).

**LAURA MULLEN** was in Helsinki for the performance of the "Undersong" cycle by Jason Eckardt: the composer set poems from her book "Subject\* to music (Tony Arnold sang, the work was performed by the International Contemporary Ensemble, Eric Dudley conducting). There was a conversation between the composer and the poet before the performance. Mullen has forthcoming work in *Hotel Amerika* (prose) and *Bomb* (poems), and a conversation on poetics was just published in the anthology *12 X 12* (University of Iowa Press). Mullen's work is also featured in the new Norton anthology of poetry, *American Hybrid*.

**PAMELA MONROE** has been named a Fellow of the National Council on Family Relations. According to *LSU Today*, "This honor is awarded to NCFR members who have made outstanding and enduring contributions to family science in the areas of scholarship, teaching, outreach and professional service, and who have maintained a consistent record of superior contributions to NCFR over time." "The word extraordinary appears often in discussions of Dr. Monroe's contributions to her university, state and many professional venues," said Maxine Hammonds-Smith, NCFR board president. "This is not surprising, as the many challenges she has weathered are remarkable and the leadership demonstrated of the very best kind."

**SOLIMAR OTERO** has been named as a Research Associate and Visiting Faculty for the Women's Studies in Religion Program at Harvard Divinity School. 's Women's Studies in Religion Program for the 2009 - 2010 academic year. Both Soli and **CAROLYN WARE** have entries on women's culture in Louisiana and the Caribbean. in "the brand spanking new Encyclopedia of Women's Folklore and Folklife," and Soli reports that she "took special pleasure in writing the entry for the vagina dentata motif."

**ADELAIDE RUSSO** won the Modern Language Association's 2008 Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for French and Francophone Literary Studies for her book, *Le peintre comme mod le du surréalisme l'extreme contemporain* (*The Painter as Model: From Surrealism to the Extreme Contemporary*). For more information, see: <http://www.theadvocate.com/features/38304914.html>

**EMILY TOTH'S** major professional achievement is her new book, *\_Ms. Mentor's New and Ever More Impeccable Advice for Women and Men in Academia\_* (University of Pennsylvania Press), plus the continuing Ms. Mentor column, now in its twelfth year on the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* online edition. It's their longest-running column.

Two essays by **SHARON WELTMAN** have appeared recently: "Sondheim's Sweeney Todd on Stage and Screen" has just come out in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37.1 (2009): 301-310; her "Victorians on the Contemporary Stage" was published in *Journal of Victorian Culture* 13.2 (October 2008): 303-309. She has presented papers this year on "Arcadias of Pantomime": Ruskin, Child Labor, and the Illustrated London News" (the North American Victorian Studies Association Conference) and "Not for Me the Happy Home": Oliver!, Victorianness, and the Anti-Angel in the House" (Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference).

**JESSICA KETCHAM WEBER** (WGS Grad Minor) received an LSU Dissertation Award to complete her dissertation, "Ephemeral Media, Persistent Action: Visual Culture, Digital Texts, and Public Pedagogies, 1999-2009."

### ATLAS and Board of Regents Recipients

4 of the 10 ATLAS grants in the state were awarded to WGS Faculty.

Congratulations to: *Kate Bratton*: "Legislative Networks: Determinants and Consequences"

*Petra Hendry*: "The Last Lost Cause: Public Education in Louisiana"

*Elsie Michie*: "The Vulgar Question of Money"

*Carolyn Ware*: "Gender, Performance, and Play in Veterinary Medicine"

Congratulations also to BoR recipients: *Myriam Chancy*, *Angeletta Gourdine*, and *Solimar Otero* for "Caribbean Dislocations/ Caribbean Diasporas ACWWWS Conference and Caribbean Women's Postdoctoral Program" and *Elsie Michie*, *Daniel Novak*, and *Sharon Weltman* for "The Dickens Project at LSU"

## Coordinating Council News & Notes

An enormous thank you to the exiting Coordinating Council members, for all of their hard work and service to WGS:  
 Jackie Bach, Curriculum  
 Denise Egea-Kuehne, Programs  
 Dan Novak, Research & Grants  
 Carol Plummer, Undergraduate Advisor

Replacing them for 2009-2010 are:  
 Leigh Clemons, Curriculum  
 Dan Novak, Programs  
 Katie Henninger, Research & Grants  
 Kate Jensen, Undergraduate Advisor

Brenda Macon will serve as Community Connections Chair, revitalizing the charge of the committee by focusing on building relationships with LSU Staff.

Daphne Cain will continue to serve as Awards chair and Jack Yeager will continue to serve as Faculty Development chair.

The members of the CC look forward to redefining and sharpening each committee's charges this fall.

Jackie Bach was especially busy this year as Chair of the Curriculum Committee. She diligently worked on assessments for our two general education courses, WGS 2500 and WGS 2900, as well as a program-wide assessment. Though these tasks required quick turnaround and careful attention to numbers, Jackie worked efficiently and capably to produce these documents.

Jackie also contributed to a preliminary report on the state of internationalization at LSU by detailing how our curriculum focuses on international, transnational and global issues.

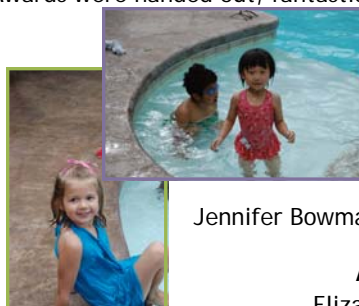
A hearty thanks to Jackie for all her work for WGS this year!

# WGS Awards Ceremony



Despite spring thunderstorms that commenced just as the party did, WGS students, faculty, friends, and family gathered at Marybeth Lima's house to celebrate the many accomplishments of 2008-09.

Awards were handed out, fantastic food was consumed, conversations were continued, and the kids really enjoyed the pool!



### WGS Internal Awards

**Award for Outstanding Major**  
 Jennifer Bowman, WGS/English double major

**Award for Outstanding Graduate Minor**  
 Elizabeth Domangue, Kinesiology PhD Candidate

**Beatrice Remillard Award for Outstanding Returning Student**  
 Karen Quebedeaux, WGS and Sociology Major

**Award for Outstanding Feminist Activist**  
 Jessica Ketcham Weber, English PhD Student and WGS Graduate Minor

**Outstanding Faculty Contribution to WGS – Co-Recipients**  
 Irene Di Maio, Professor Emerita of Foreign Languages and Literatures  
 Denise Egea-Kuehne, Professor of Educational Theory, Policy, and Practice

**Outstanding Contribution to WGS by a Non-Faculty Member**  
 Jessica Ketcham Weber, English PhD Student and WGS Graduate Minor

### WGS External Awards

*Maud Walsh*: CASE Louisiana Professor of the Year

*Marybeth Lima*: LSU Distinguished Faculty Award

*Elaine Maccio*: Tiger Athletic Foundation President's Award

*John Protevi*: Tiger Athletic Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award

*Pallavi Rastogi*: Tiger Athletic Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award

*Susan Ryan*: Tiger Athletic Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award

*Pamela Monroe*: National Council on Family Relations Fellow

*Heather Ondercin*: Robert Udick Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching Award

*Casey Kayser* (Graduate Minor): LSU Alumni Association Teaching Assistant Award

*Jessica Ketcham Weber* (Graduate Minor):  
 LSU Dissertation Fellowship Recipient



**Congratulations to our WGS graduates!**  
 Pictured left are Emily Bowman, Jennifer Bowman, Karen Quebedeaux, and Sarah Lancaster, with Director Michelle Massé.

Women's & Gender Studies  
Louisiana State University  
118 Himes Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
Phone: (225) 578-4807  
Fax: (225) 578-4804

[www.lsu.edu/wgs](http://www.lsu.edu/wgs)

### Mark Your Calendar!

The National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Annual Conference will be held November 12-15 this year, a permanent change from the usual summertime meeting dates.



THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
Leading the field of women's studies  
in educational and social transformation



## .WOW and WGSGO.

This semester, WOW has focused on celebrating women, from here at home to abroad, physically, spiritually, and culturally. As usual, we also helped publicize and attend the Women's Center activities, such as the Women in the Arts exhibit and the Gender on Film Series. For Eating Disorder Awareness Month we hosted a "Love Yourself" tabling, where we passed out flowers, goodie bags with chocolates, condoms, and positive image cards, as well as hand mirrors with positive messages written on them (all designed by WOW)! March 10th was Women's and Girl's HIV/AIDS awareness day. WOW joined VOX and Spectrum for a tabling fair, where we passed out information about safe sex methods, how to talk to your partner about sex, and HIV/AIDS stats in American women populations. For Women's History month, we had a party where we dressed up like our favorite women of history and made vagina art, while watching Thelma and Louise! WOW co-hosted "Growing Up Muslim: Persepolis, Gender, and the Islamic world," with the International Studies Society. This forum took a look at a very different world of women that our members and most LSU students had not considered before. For Earth Day we hosted an Ecofeminism table where we educated the general public on ecofeminism, earth-friendly menstruation solutions, and the connection between trashing the earth, animal abuse, and domestic violence. WOW also hosted The Vagina Monologues as a fundraiser for the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault in April. As you can see, it's been a very busy semester! For more information or questions, please email [wow@lsu.edu](mailto:wow@lsu.edu).

WGSGO has had an exciting Spring semester. We kicked it off with the Women's and Gender Studies Graduate Student Conference, featuring keynote speaker Janet Miller. With participation from several WGSGO members, and the support of WGS, the conference was a success and demonstrated the wide range of research going on in Women's and Gender Studies at LSU and surrounding institutions. WGSGO also participated in a service project at the Battered Women's Shelter, organized by Casey Kayser: we had a crafts day with the children of women living at the shelter, making cards, painting flower pots, and planting their community garden. It was a great success, and we look forward to an equally successful service project next year. For more information about WGSGO email 2009-2010 President, Brigitte, at [bmcra4@tigers.lsu.edu](mailto:bmcra4@tigers.lsu.edu) to sign up for our listserv, go to <http://groups.google.com/group/wgsgo>.