

WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES AT LSU

at Louisiana State University



**Director's Notes
with
Michelle Massé**

Dear Friends,

The semester is ending on an upswing. I've just finished the last of our exit interviews with our four graduating B.A.s, and the convivial luncheon Kate Jensen organized for our graduates last Friday gave me yet another opportunity to get to know students I haven't had the pleasure of teaching (see photos on right). Although reading more essays at this time of the semester isn't something I usually seek out, I was fascinated by what I learned about these individual students, as well as about their development as thinkers, writers, and feminists in reading a 2000-level essay, a 4000-level essay, and a reflective statement from each.

Where they've been in the last four years told me and the second faculty member they chose to meet with a lot: I learned about gender and cake decorating, motherhood and medicine in Southern slavery, how female matadors redefine masculinity, and the evolving definition of "women's work" in the United States post-World War II. Even more engaging than finding out where our students have been, though, is learning where they're going. Casey Kayser and Jessica Ketcham Weber, our graduating Graduate Minors, will make their mark in the world; so will Julia Bent, Tamara Craig, Rachel Mayeux, Rachel O'Pry, and Karen Quebedeaux, as they re-shape policy, health, and the law in the decades ahead.

Our students also let me know, time and again, the difference each of you has made. This year's retreat, at which we took the time to learn more about one another as faculty members, provided me with the same rare opportunity. My admiration for my colleagues grows as I learn more about them, their scholarship, their teaching, and their commitment to what they do and why they do it. The ballast that keeps WGS stable while budget, curriculum and policies shift with every turn of the flagship, is our faculty and supporters.

With best wishes for a productive and restorative summer —
Michelle

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Springing Forward

WGS Graduate Minors Earn Ph.Ds



After English PhD Candidate and WGS Graduate Minor Jessica Ketcham Weber defends her dissertation, "Strategic Media Representations, Tactical Media Interventions: Public Pedagogies of Collective Resistance" in May, she and her family will move to Seattle, where she will join Cascadia Community College, a liberal arts community college with an emphasis on pedagogical interdisciplinarity. As a tenure-track faculty member, Jessica will teach writing, literature, film, and media studies, and help create their Women's Studies program.



Casey Kayser recently defended her doctoral dissertation, "Writing About the South In Her Own Way: Gender and Region in the Work of Southern Women Playwrights," and will graduate with her Ph.D in English and a Graduate Minor in WGS in May 2010. In the fall, She looks forward to searching for a tenure-track job that allows her to pursue her teaching and research interests in WGS, American literature, southern literature, and drama.

Celebrating Our Graduates



Julia Bent



Tamara Craig



Rachel Mayeaux



Rachel O'Pry



Karen Quebedeaux

The Women's and Gender Studies Program honored our graduating majors and minors at a celebratory lunch at Juban's restaurant on May 7. Attending were graduates Julia Bent, Tamara Craig, Rachel Mayeux, Rachel O'Pry, and Karen Quebedeaux and faculty Kate Jensen, Michelle Massé, Laura Moyer, Margaret Parker, and Jack Yeager. It was a wonderful event that we expect to make it an annual occurrence.

Tamara will begin law school at Southern University in the fall, and Rachel O'Pry will enter the Master's of Social Work program here at LSU. Julia continues to work for Planned Parenthood, and Karen is pursuing a Graduate Minor in WGS while working for Pennington Biomedical Research Center. We wish all of our graduates well and look forward to the bright futures they have ahead of them. Congratulations!

If you have graduated from LSU with a major or minor in WGS, we want to hear from you too! Please email us and let us know where you are and what you're up to.

In and Out of the Classroom

Spring Engendering Scholarship Lecture Series



This spring, WGS faculty members Kate Jensen and Stephen Finley gave talks based on their research. In her lecture, "Mother-daughter Relations in French Women Writers," Professor Jensen discussed what she calls the ideology of mother-daughter reflectivity, explaining that mothers in 17th and 18th century France often funneled all of their productive energies into the creation of daughters as their "masterpieces."



Professor Finley argued that it is necessary to interpret the religious and political activity of Minister Louis Farrakhan in light of his September 1985 UFO experience in Mexico in which he reports being taken into the "Mother Wheel" and encountering Elijah Muhammad and Master Fard Muhammad, the "Messenger of Allah" and "God-in-Person." He also explored the significance of the UFO as

feminine as well as the relationship of its gender to the politics of race and the erotic vis-à-vis the defining religious event in the life of Louis Farrakhan.

Thanks to Professors Finley and Jensen for sharing their research and to Dana Berkowitz who organized this year's lecture series! Stay tuned for another round of enlightening lectures in the fall, organized by Challen Nicklen.

Headed to Washington!



Laurel Keys, double major in WGS and business, will be interning with the Feminist Majority Foundation in Washington, D.C. Laurel tells us that her duties will include monitoring press conferences and coalition

meetings, researching information, attending rallies, and organizing events. She will also work closely with a staff member on projects such as education equity, global health and rights, government relations, a media team, a web team, women's health research, the Choices Campus leadership program, the National Center for Women and Policing, and the National Clinic Access Project.

Laurel's internship is supported by the Honors College, the College of Business, and the College of Arts and Sciences.

Graduate Student Spotlight: Bruce Parker

By Lindsey Mancuso, WGS Student Worker



Bruce Parker is more than just a Ph.D. student in Curriculum Theory and Women's and Gender Studies; he is also the Coordinator for the Safe Space Campaign for the Office of Multicultural Affairs. The goal of the Office of Multicultural Affairs Safe Space Campaign is to make LSU a safer place for all students, staff, and faculty regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. Parker's primary goal is to improve the support and community involvement for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) students, and he hopes to leave Safe Space strong and fully integrated with the other programs in the office

when his time with the Office of Multicultural Affairs is done. He also dedicates much of his time to working with Spectrum, a program that mentors and advocates for individual students and provides educational and social programming for LGBTQ students.

Bruce's research focuses on the use of young adult life-based literary narratives as multicultural education tools for various audiences such as undergraduate students, pre-service teachers, practicing teachers, and higher education administrators to provoke conversations about racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. He uses feminist, postcolonial, narrative inquiry, poststructuralist, and queer theories to provide a theoretical grounding for his work in both curriculum theory and women's and gender studies.

When asked what he thought the Women's and Gender Studies program should focus on in the future, Bruce said, "I am impressed with how well the department addresses issues of gender by providing courses that address feminist theories and masculinity studies. I would love to see an increased focus in the curriculum and in the WGS community on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer issues as well as more in-depth discussions of the relationships between race, nation, sexuality, and gender in local, regional, national, and global contexts." Bruce says he believes that some of the most innovative work at LSU is being done by the WGS Program and that he hopes other students will see all of the positive things that can occur from minoring or majoring in WGS.

WWII Veterans Speak to Women's History Students



Professor Carolyn Lewis's History 4079 had a visit from the Louisiana women veterans of WWII. When asked what inspired her to bring them in, Dr. Lewis said she "found them as a fluke in the newspaper. I saw a blurb and it struck me as a way to bring real people into the classroom. They responded right away and they were thrilled at the opportunity. It really brings history to life. I wish there was a way to bring other women in. The WWII era feels like a long time ago, but when they can see real examples, it opens connections to history for students."

On the left (above), Jackie Vance tells the students about her time serving in the Navy. On the right: Vance, Flo Smith, Lillie Clark, and Irma Darphen take questions from the students. You can find more information about the Women Veterans of Louisiana on their Facebook page.

Faculty Spotlight: Interview with Carolyn Lewis

By Tamyra Craig, WGS Student Worker



Professor Carolyn Lewis joined the LSU Faculty from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she earned her Ph.D. An assistant professor in the Department of History and a member of Women's and Gender Studies, Dr. Lewis's research focuses on sexual health, particularly in the Cold War era. Her work encourages women to think critically about their bodies and the way the medical profession views them. Her book, *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era*, is forthcoming from the University of North Carolina Press.

How did you get interested in Women's and Gender Studies?

I think I was always interested in WGS, even before I knew there was such a thing. I went to college and was very interested in women's history. But I didn't know it was "women's history" really; I thought I wanted to be a war/military historian because I had become very interested in the Vietnam War era. But really, it was women in war I was really interested in. So, I made a transition: I was in a flexible study program, and it allowed me a lot of freedom to study in the direction I desired. So I took a wide range of women's studies classes, and pursued what I wanted.

I got into my current research while getting my M.A. I had always been interested in history of sex- although, my friends said that it was made up. Nevertheless, I started to consider definitions of sex. I even read the Kinsey report and started to think about the relationship of science and sex. One day, while at a garage sale, I picked up a book which centered on science changing in a social movement. I became so interested that I started to read medical journals. After a while I knew this was the direction I wanted my research to go in, so I centered my research on particular aspects of heterosexuality in health.

What made you want to focus your research on women and health? Do you think the world has taken a step in the right direction to better understand the complexity of the female body?

Yes and no. In some ways, there is a better understanding. Women are being included in clinical trials and there is an understanding that our bodies are not the same as men's. It influences how we think about wellness, diagnosis, and treatments. But, there also seems to be a sort of disconnect between seeing a body as a system and seeing a person, a woman, as an individual. This is where society and the medical profession still have room to improve. It especially seems this way in regards to the pro-life movement, but also in pressures about having a "good" pregnancy and delivery, too. It seems like, in a way, there has been a massive step back to thinking of women's bodies as incubators.

You have a book coming out really soon. Can you tell me about it?

It's called *Prescription for Heterosexuality: Sexual Citizenship in the Cold War Era*. It'll be out this fall. [It's available for pre order on Amazon.] I started with my M.A. thesis question: How did science change in response to a social movement?" It looks at what American doctors were saying about sexuality and how they were linking it to sex/ gender performance and sex/ gender identity, and how they linked it to the larger American identity in the midst of the Cold War.

You have taught several history classes here at LSU, one of which I am enrolled in. What about the history of women makes you want to keep teaching it? Do you have a favorite era in the history of American women, or an era that you think was important for women?

I love WWII and the post-war era. My students are also really interested, which makes it fun. Teaching women's history is teaching students about their own history. I mostly get girls who haven't taken a women's studies course ever, and it's a very eye-opening experience to watch them go through the process. I love watching them resist, then get angry, and then get empowered. Most of them won't go revolutionize, but they will make better choices. In addition, it's important for male students, too. Most of them are more feminist-oriented and not the dominant type, but it makes them think about their own families, their mothers and sisters.

What goals have you set for yourself in the next ten years as a professor and researcher?

Tenure. In research, I want to look at the Chicago Maternity center, which promoted home births for women in the 20th century. I'd like to write another book long-term, and publish some articles before then. I'm also thinking about different classes in women's and gender history that I'd maybe like to propose. But, it's just an idea right now, and I'm still thinking about it. I'd possibly like to teach a class that focuses on post-1945 to present.

One last thing. Have you tried the crawfish yet?

No, I'm not a seafood person! But, I am branching out to tilapia. I do want to try alligator one day.

Coordinating Council News & Notes

An enormous thank you to the exiting Coordinating Council members, for all of their hard work and service to WGS:

Leigh Clemons, Curriculum

Jack Yeager, Faculty Development

Katie Henninger, Grants and Research

Brenda Macon, Community Connections

Dan Novak, Programs

Daphne Cain, Awards

Kate Jensen, Undergraduate Advisor

New CC members for the fall include: Maud Walsh, Awards and Loretta Pecchioni, Faculty Development. Leigh, Katie, Dan, and Kate will continue to serve.

We are still in need of a chair for Community Connections; if you are interested in taking over this fantastic committee, please contact Michelle Massé.



Brenda Macon, who has served as this year's Community Connections chair, is retiring this spring. She has

worked hard to establish a strong relationship between WGS and its LSU community: the reading group she started continued its discussions into the spring, and group members visited the Employee Resource Center on campus and have continued to discuss fruitful ways to involve WGS with the efforts of that center.

A hearty thanks to Brenda for all her hard work for WGS this year. We wish you well in your retirement and your continuing connection with WGS!

Selected Faculty & Graduate Student Accomplishments

Andrea Adolph, the first recipient of the Ann Veronica Simon Dissertation Award, recently published a book, *Food and Femininity in Twentieth-Century British Women's Fiction*. Andrea has graciously donated a copy of the book to the WGS office; come by and check it out!

Nina Asher has been invited to serve on the Fellowship Review Panel for the International Fellowships Program of the American Association of University Women. As a member of the panel, Asher will review and rate master's, doctoral and postdoctoral fellowship applications from women who are not United States citizens.

Jim Catano's and **Dan Novak's** edited collection, *Masculinity Lessons*, has been accepted for publication by Johns Hopkins Press. The press anticipates that the 400-page volume, which is part of the *Feminist Formations* series, will appear in its Spring 2011 list.

Lauren Coats has just received an Andrew W. Mellon Planning Grant for \$50,000 to underwrite founding a digital journal, tentatively titled *Archive*, that focuses on scholarly interactions with objects and texts in special collections.

Christine Corcos's edited collection, *Law and Magic*, has just been released. The collection, rightfully described as "fascinating" in readers' comments, includes an equally fascinating essay by Christine which she presented in the "Engendering Scholarship" series last year: "Ghostwriters: Spiritualists, Copyright Infringement, and Rights of Publicity." Christine is of course identified on the cover as both a member of the Law faculty *and* a member of WGS. She too generously contributed a copy of her book to the WGS library.

Dydia DeLyser was Associate Producer on a documentary about Pancho Barnes, an aviatrix of the 1920s who later became famous for her "Happy Bottom Riding Club."

Stephen Finley has been awarded the Charles Redd Fellowship Award in Western American History at Brigham Young University, in Provo, UT. The grant will allow Stephen to do research in their Special Collections archives, utilizing their Afro American LDS Oral History Project, Women's Manuscript Collection, and their Western Americana Collection for his book "Sojourners in a Strange Land: The Religious and Social Lives of African American Latter-day Saints."

Petra Hendry was recently quoted in the *New York Times*. Check out [the February 13 article](#) about the new Louisiana museum dedicated to the life and memory of Eddie Robinson.

Benji Kahan has won a Harry Ransom Center Research Fellowship for the summer at UT Austin called the Dorot Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Jewish Studies.

Carolyn Lewis has been awarded a Manship Summer Research Fellowship to start her next project, "The Chicago Maternity Center: Gender, Medicine and Power on Maxwell Street."

Laura Marks helped research adult films and wrote an introductory essay, "I Want to Suck Your...: Dracula in Pornographic Film," for *Dracula: The Sourcebook, A Guide to Film and Television, Comic Books, and Video Games*. Edited by Caroline (Kay) Picart and John Edgar Browning, the collection is forthcoming from McFarland Press. Laura also won the Sarah Liggett Teaching Award presented by the English Graduate Student Association.

Michelle Massé is serving as the 2nd VP for the Women's Caucus of the Modern Languages Association, as well as on the Executive Committee of MLA's Aging Studies Discussion Group. She presented at a special MLA session sponsored by the Women's Caucus: "Over Ten Million Served: Gendered Service in Language and Literature Workplaces," which focused on her forthcoming edited collection by the same title. Michelle also gave a presentation, sponsored by the Faculty Senate Committee on Bargaining and Representation: "What's Your Job?: The Silent Economy of Service in Higher Education."

After long-time service to LSU, WGS faculty member **Brij Mohan** retires this year.

Dan Novak is a 2010 recipient of a Tiger Athletic Foundation Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Solimar Otero has been teaching a graduate seminar for the Harvard Divinity School and the Women's Studies in Religion Program titled "Women, Folklore, and Afro-Atlantic Religion."

Emily Toth has been invited to write a column on women, literature, and related topics for the *Women's Review of Books* blog. Her first column, with the overall title "Nothing But the Toth," will be online in late February.

WGS Awards Ceremony

WGS students, faculty, friends, and family gathered at the home of Holley Galland and Richard Haymaker to celebrate the many accomplishments of 2009-10. Awards were handed out, fantastic food was consumed, engaging conversations were had, and, despite the rain, the kids really enjoyed the pool!

WGS Awards, 2009-10

Award for Outstanding Major
Rachel O'Pry, WGS graduating senior

Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Minor
Tamyra Craig, graduating senior in Political Science

Award for Outstanding Graduate Minor
Brigitte McCray, Ph.D. student in English

Beatrice Remillard Award for Outstanding Returning Student
Joe Smith, Ph.D. student in Sociology

Ann Veronica Simon Dissertation Award
Elizabeth Domangue, Ph.D. in Kinesiology for "A Critical Examination into Motivation and Gender in Youth Physical Fitness Testing"

Award for Outstanding Feminist Activist
Carol Plummer, Assistant Professor of Social Work

Outstanding Faculty Contribution to WGS
Jackie Bach, Assistant Professor of Educational Theory, Practice and Policy

Outstanding Contribution to WGS by a Non-Faculty Member
Brenda Macon, Associate Director of Communications and Development, College of Arts and Sciences



A Champion for Children



of sexual abuse prevention.

Carol Plummer has been named one of this year's Champions for Children. She was honored at an awards presentation at the "Kids Are Worth It!" Conference Champions for Children Luncheon at the Astor Crowne Plaza in New Orleans. The program describes Carol as a "true leader" in the field

As Assistant Professor of Social Work and WGS faculty member, Carol was awarded one of the first available federal grants to develop and implement sexual abuse prevention curricula. She consults nationally and internationally in places such as Kenya, India, and Afghanistan to promote children's rights and safety.

Annual Spring Retreat



Twenty-six faculty and graduate students gathered at lovely Heming-bough, 20 miles north of Baton Rouge, for the Annual WGS Spring Retreat. Discussions over dinner at the Oxbow; group sessions on "What the F Word Means to Me," "Feminist Balancing Acts Between the Per-

sonal and the Professional," and "Creating Feminist Worlds"; and traipsing around the serene property were highlights of the weekend. Also, Michelle taught Sadie Becker and John Larkin how to knit (see the photo on the right).



LSU TODAY

Daphne Cain, Elaine Maccio, Rebecca Miller, and Dan Novak were all featured as Flagship Faculty Members on *LSU Today*. Check out their profiles in the [archives](#)!

Comic Relief



Jessica Halem with WGS faculty member Dana Berkowitz.

Jessica Halem, a comedian who identifies herself as a Jewish, radical feminist, lesbian, performed in the African American Cultural Center at LSU on Thursday, April 22. Faculty and students gathered for wine, cheese and Halem's most recent show, "Everybody Likes You."

Jessica Halem, called "brave and bawdy" by *Time Out Chicago*, was raised by hippie Jewish artists from the East Coast, which was anything but normal - or easy - in small town Ohio. But it did help to foster this very funny "on-your-face" comic who puts her queer spin on Sudafed, sexual politics, and glory holes. Halem now lives and performs in New Orleans; you can find more information about Jessica, including tour dates, on [her website](#).



WGS undergraduate minor Tamara Craig enjoys the show.

This event was sponsored by Women's and Gender Studies with support from The Women's Center and Jewish Studies. Thanks to Jessica for making us laugh and to everyone who came out to hear her!

ATTENTION GRADUATE STUDENTS!

The WGS Graduate Organization is in the process of restructuring, and we want to hear from you! If you are a WGS Graduate Minor or a graduate student interested in WGS, please join us in rethinking how WGSGO could best serve the needs of graduate students. We are looking for co-organizers to help decide how to foster feminist community on our campus, and we'd love your ideas! If you're interested, please contact Wendy Braun at wbraun1@tigers.lsu.edu. And, if you haven't already, join our Google group: <http://groups.google.com/group/>

Women Organizing Women

By Claire Miller

Women Organizing Women is the student-run organization that focuses on feminist activism on the LSU campus and in the Baton Rouge community. This spring we have focused our efforts on a few small projects along with our usual goals of creating a safe space for men and women to come together in order to discuss feminist-related issues, to educate the campus in regards to these issues, and to make a positive impact on at least one person's life on campus or in the community. WOW's goal, above all others, is to open the minds of others and to support a dialogue in order to create change.

This spring WOW held its annual Women's History Month party at the LSU Women's Center and celebrated the often forgotten Third Wave. WOW learned about the Riot Grrrl Movement, watched the Riot Grrrl Documentary, *Don't Need You*, and made their own zines to be distributed at a later date. Hopefully, with this newfound "do-it-yourself" energy, WOW can work to reach a wider audience in the upcoming semesters.

WOW also sponsored LSU's student-run version of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*. Many of WOW's members and supporters helped to make this year's production a success for both entertainment purposes and awareness purposes. All proceeds from the show went to the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LAFASA). WOW would like to give a special thanks to the organizers and the entire cast of this year's production for being hard working and all around awesome ladies!

WOW is always looking for new and enthusiastic members. If you would like to find out more about WOW or if you are looking to become a member you can find us on Facebook or email abobet1@tigers.lsu.edu. WOW is currently looking for students who are interested in leadership roles and of course, students who are interested in donating time and effort towards an amazing cause. Without the members and the help of the WGS program, WOW would not exist. Thanks to everyone for a wonderfully fun and productive year!

Women's & Gender Studies Louisiana State University 118 Himes Hall Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Phone: (225) 578-4807 Fax: (225) 578-4804 E-mail: wgs@lsu.edu www.lsu.edu/wgs