

Voices and Visions

A Newsletter of the UW-Eau Claire Women's Studies Program

Spring 2011



"JUST BECAUSE I'M
SHORT DOESN'T MEAN
I CAN'T STAND TALL"

HOLLY BERGMAN

The Eau Queer Film Festival

I have always pondered how to bridge the gap into the epic world of praxis, a place that every Women's Studies student hopes one day to roam whilst fulfilling feminist pedagogy at its finest. For me, this stepping stone was the Eau Queer Film Festival. Twelve other students and I traveled to San Francisco, California in the summer of 2010 with two professors as a part of the first-ever Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ) Studies: San Francisco Travel Seminar. While trying to maintain our giddy selves and remain respectable UW-Eau Claire representatives on the other side of the nation, we successfully navigated the city and fully experienced the fortieth annual San Francisco Pride celebration. We all transformed into mini film-makers and networked our way through organizations, executive directors, and divalicious dance parties to create documentaries for our campus's inaugural queer film festival. Basically, we had the time of our lives.

The Eau Queer Film Festival feels like a small child of mine. It was a rollercoaster ride a lot of the time! Along with several of my peers, I worked countless hours organizing, designing, and eventually putting all our plans into action. It was a rush, an amazing learning experience, and a test of our wills, sanities, and beliefs. We wanted this momentous event to form a bridge between campus and the greater community, showcase works of art that would entertain...

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Progress towards LGBTQ Studies Certificate Program

The Women's Studies Program received funding in a 2010–2011 BluGold Commitment grant to develop a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ) Studies Certificate Program. Similar to the Women's Studies Certificate currently offered at UW-Eau Claire, we envision this new program as a four-course option of twelve total credits.

Pam Forman, Ellen Mahaffy, Bob Nowlan, and Audrey Fessler are the primary planners of the certificate program. They are working closely with the Women's Studies Curriculum Committee to develop two new courses that will be required for the certificate; in addition, students will select two electives from a list. An introductory level course, Perspectives in LGBTQ Studies, recently received approval through the College of Arts and Sciences and will be offered beginning in Fall 2011.

A 400-level course in queer theory and politics will follow in Spring 2012. A visiting assistant professor will teach these courses in 2011–2012. We will be recruiting a half-time tenure-track appointment (a joint position with the Department of Sociology) for the following year to teach these and other women's studies courses and provide advising for the certificate.

—Pam Forman
Assistant Professor, Sociology

Coordinator's Corner

Dear Friends of Women's Studies at
UW-Eau Claire,



With Susan Turell's departure for Pennsylvania, where she will serve as Clarion University's associate provost, and with Katherine Rhoades's official and well-deserved retirement, it has been a whirl wind first six months serving as the new Women's Studies Program coordinator, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have this opportunity. Many exciting things are happening in the program, and the future promises even more wonderful developments to look forward to in the coming years.

The articles in this newsletter give just a hint of the amazing energy of the faculty, staff, students, alumnae, and friends of Women's Studies. Here are some of the other highlights of what has been going on in the past year:

Last spring, students in Katherine Rhoades's section of the Feminist Analysis and Practices course continued the work on "Faces

and Voices of Feminism in the Chippewa Valley," a collaborative oral history project begun in 2009 by the Women's Studies Program in collaboration with Special Collections and Archives. The projects are archived in the MINDS@UW digital repository (<http://minds.wisconsin.edu/handle/1793/34303>), and include interviews with Eva Santos Phillips by Crystal Kazik, Jane Marie Pederson by Anne K. Estling, Karen Osborn Pope by Kila Weeks, Osonye Tess Onwueme by Hannah Moen, and Nicole Schultz by Jenny You.

This past fall, the WAGE (Women and Gender Equity) Center put on a number of important events, including most notably Love Your Body Day (see Abby Vercauteran's article on p. 3 and the accompanying photos throughout this newsletter) and "Out With It," a spectacular celebration of National Coming Out Day.

This year marks the official beginning of a Women's Studies Affiliate Program at UW-Eau Claire, and application is open to all interested faculty and staff. Women's Studies will still keep its "friends of Women's Studies" distribution lists, so those who do not wish...

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Honoring Susan Turell

About two years ago, Susan lent me a video entitled *Light in the Shadows*. “Watch it,” Susan said. “I think about it a lot, and I’d like to talk to you about it.”

I don’t know what took me so long to watch it, but I didn’t return it until Susan was about to leave for her new job at Clarion University. The video features a group of women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds discussing racism. At one point, a white woman admits to needing to come to terms with her own denial so that she can do the work of antiracism. It’s a powerful moment. Then, a black woman calmly shreds her, frustrated by “having to tell my life so that you can do your work.”

When I mentioned this line to Susan, how the black woman could have been speaking to any of us, she said, “That’s it. That’s the line that I always remember too.” Susan liked the line because it made plain the privilege of being able to think about social justice as “work.” Like injustice itself, social justice is just “life,” something that many people simply can’t defer or circumscribe.

When I first learned that Susan was leaving, I told her that her new work would be fulfilling for herself and transformative for others. The sentiment was sincere but also all wrong. The only good thing about my taking two years to watch the video was that it brought a lot of clarity to my thinking about Susan’s departure. Work alone could never define her commitment to anything, especially people. Days before Susan left, at a party with dozens of her other admirers, I was glad to have another chance to tell her how I felt. “Thank you, Susan,” I said. “You changed my life.”

—David Shih, Associate Professor, English

The Eau Queer Film Festival (cont.)

a variety of interests, and create comfort and awareness around LGBTQ culture. International emails were sent, minds were picked for logos and program design, and the panic button was hit when some student shorts almost didn’t get finished in time. In the end, I learned several things, yet one stands above the rest: social justice never comes easy.

Nonetheless, there is nothing as enticing as the thrill of fighting the good fight and finally putting all that knowledge and angst to good use. With over 600 in attendance over the course of the weekend, I would most definitely say that the first Eau Queer Film Festival was a success. My memories of Pride will remain with me forever. I will not forget how much it meant for every single one of my classmates and how much we learned and experienced there together. Pride was a time of love, family, freedom, and liberation in many forms. Pure happiness reigned from the streets, and that is what I hope the Eau Queer Film Festival can begin to ignite in my peers. I understand that not all may accept my viewpoint, but I appreciate the steps being made on our campus to make this a safer and more equitable home for all.

—Crystal Kazik, Current Women’s Studies Program student

2010 Women’s Studies Program Awards

Helen X. Sampson Awards

Undergraduate Research Paper Category

First Place: Christina Huber- Fighting the American Mistress: America and the Female Self in The Journal of Madam Knight

Faculty Sponsor – Cathy Rex

Second Place: Kelsey Hillestad- Kate to Petruchio’s Bride: A Lesson in Wifely Deference

Faculty Sponsor – Theresa Kemp

Undergraduate Project Category

Derek Brochu- Research Paper and Related Art Project- Vandana Shiva

Faculty Sponsor – Laurel Kieffer

Graduate Project

Lisa Cooper-Murphy- Beyond the Metaphor: Ethically Teaching Literary Depictions of Sexual Assault in Rape Culture

Faculty Sponsor – Theresa Kemp

Virgiline & Joseph See Award for Poetry

Award Sponsor – Patti See

First Place: Lisa Zondlo- The Shackles of Freedom: Damning Racist

and Misogynistic Discourses in William Shakespeare’s Othello

Faculty Sponsor – Theresa Kemp

Second Place: Anne Estling Andrews- From Death to Life: Changing Visions of Masculinity in Cameron Crowe’s Elizabethtown

Faculty Sponsor – Patti See

Third Place: Marguerite Berg- Lace’s Passage: A Fragmented Journey

Faculty Sponsor – Jenny Shaddock

Tille Olsen Award for Fiction or Creative Nonfiction

Award Sponsor – Patti See

First Place: Betty Rae Matthews- It’s a Girl Thing

Faculty Sponsor – Audrey Fessler

Second Place: Mai Yia Moua- Daddy’s Little Girl

Faculty Sponsor – Emily Krusack

Third Place: Susan Santee-Buenger- It Is What It Is

Faculty Sponsor – Karen Loeb

Mary Catherine & Caroline Kessler Award

Award Sponsor – Patricia Quinn

Abby Vercauteren- Hardship and Perseverance: A Gendered Analysis

of the Impact of War, Sanctions, and Occupation on the Lives of Iraqi Women

Faculty Sponsor – Katherine Rhoades

Donna C. Turrell

Award Sponsor – Susan Turell

Marci Korb- Sarah Harder Oral History Project

Faculty Sponsor – Katherine Rhoades

Cecelia M. Belter Award

Award Sponsor – Jodi Thesing-Ritter

Sarah Gonzalez: Student Leadership

Faculty Sponsor – Jodi Thesing-Ritter

Mickey Crothers Award

Andrea Fuss and Angela Nieman- En Travesti: The Mezzo-Soprano as Leading Man

Faculty Sponsor – Mitra Sadeghpour

Ailish Frances Barcelo Award

Award Sponsor – Christine Webster

Catherine Emmanuelle

WAGE Sponsors a “Love Your Body Day” at UW–Eau Claire

According to 2010 statistics published by the National Organization of Women (NOW), eighty percent of women in the United States are dissatisfied with their physical appearance. Although negative body image affects millions of people worldwide, college-aged women continue to struggle with eating disorders and low self-esteem in disproportionate numbers. In an effort to combat the negative messages perpetuated by the media and billion-dollar diet industry, NOW founded “Love Your Body Day” which is celebrated nationally each October.

In honor of “Love Your Body Day,” UW–Eau Claire’s Women’s and Gender Equity (WAGE) Center has organized an exhibit that features the photographs of twenty UW–Eau Claire students, faculty, and staff, each accompanied by a quote that expresses why she loves and respects herself. The messages of self-acceptance that WAGE received were diverse and empowering. While some women emphasized their integrity, confidence, and compassion, others challenged the many industries that benefit from encouraging society to view women’s bodies as sites to be critiqued, changed, and degraded. One student brilliantly proclaimed that her body is not a “project” that can be shaped by unrealistic—and, more importantly, trivial—expectations. It is essential to continue to challenge

DEAR DAUGHTER,

IN A WORLD OF UPSIDE-DOWN, MIXED UP MESSAGES, THE BEST WAY I CAN TEACH YOU TO TRUST, HONOR, RESPECT AND LOVE YOUR BODY IS TO LIVE THOSE PRINCIPLES MYSELF! EVEN WHEN I’M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO, I PROMISE TO HOLD YOU CLOSE AND HAVE OUR DAILY DOSE OF SILLINESS ALONG THE WAY.

LOVE,
MOM

P.S. PLEASE DON’T DANGLE ME OVER YOUR SHOULDERS WHEN I’M AN OLD LADY!



“I LOVE MYSELF BECAUSE I HAVE LEARNED TO LOVE OTHERS WITH ALL MY HEART. WHEN I FIND A TRUE FRIEND, I AM LOYAL, HONEST AND FAITHFUL TO THE NTH DEGREE. THE FREEDOM TO LOVE WITHOUT RESERVATION COMES FROM FINDING TRUE HAPPINESS WITH ONESELF. I HAVE REACHED A STAGE IN MY LIFE WHERE THE JOURNEY HAS BECOME JOYOUS - NOT WITHOUT PAIN AND TRIALS, BUT A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, ACTUALIZATION AND AWARENESS. I AM HAPPY! AND, I AM LUCKY THAT MY STURDY, BUILT FOR POWER AND ENDURANCE, VERTICALLY-CHALLENGED BODY IS UP TO THE JOURNEY AT HAND.”

- PAULA STUETTGEN



the messages and images that reduce women to body parts, rather than capable and intelligent beings.

The “Love Your Body Day” Exhibit will be displayed on the first floor of the McIntyre Library during the month of March. The exhibit will contribute to UW–Eau Claire’s celebration of Women’s History Month. The women and stories that are honored during Women’s History Month prove how beneficial and necessary women’s contributions are to a healthy society and world. In order to ensure that women’s voices be heard and valued, we must continue to work to abolish the tyrannical beauty standards that trivialize women’s experiences, abilities, and societal contributions.

—Abby Vercauteren
Women’s Issues Program Coordinator

Feminism and Football

It was hard not to get caught up in the football frenzy that swept Wisconsin as the Green Bay Packers made their Super Bowl run. As a proud Wisconsinite, I love my Green Bay Packers, but there is no way to ignore the contradiction between my feminist ideology and love of the gladiatorial sport.

The contradictions I’ve found in football have been more challenging than those I’ve encountered, for example, in vegetarianism. Unlike vegetarianism, football is intended explicitly for heteronormative, hypermasculine men. It’s not as though I can personally identify with any of the players, or members of the coaching staff, or most announcers and reporters.

But there’s something about the intense camaraderie of Sunday potlucks during football season that makes me feel good. And regardless of the difficulty that comes with navigating the contradictions, cheering on the Pack for a Super Bowl win felt good too. How do I resolve the feminist-or-football-fan dilemma? Maybe a better question is: is it possible to be both?

—Megan Bartos, *Current Women’s Studies*
Program student

“AFTER YEARS OF BATTLING WITH MY BODY, I’VE FINALLY FULLY ACCEPTED WHO I AM, BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY. AND, YOU KNOW WHAT? I LOVE GUACAMOLE, BLTs, OREO COOKIES, AND RAW COOKIE DOUGH. AND, I LOVE MYSELF BECAUSE I AM RESPONSIBLE, DEDICATED, CARING, AND TRUSTWORTHY.”

- ABBY VERCAUTEREN



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Sarah Beam, Andrea Galloway,
Lauren Kurkowski, Benjamin Michael,
Connor Vail, and John Werner

Letters From Alumnae

Embracing her Writing Career



Photo courtesy of author

Since graduating in 1998 with a UW–Eau Claire Women’s Studies minor, I’ve been an independent medical writer in Rochester, Minnesota. Since my UW–Eau Claire days, I have produced evidence-based consumer health content for the likes of the Mayo Clinic, the American Diabetes Association, the University of California, Ladies’ Home Journal magazine, Health.com (Time Inc.), Rodale, Everyday Health, Univita Health, Life:Beautiful magazine, and Harvard Health Publications. I recently authored a book entitled *Alcoholism (Biographies of Disease)* (Greenwood Press, 2009), and am currently the content director for GetBetterHealth.com. All that aside, my “real” job is single-parenting my spirited eight-year-old son Karl.

—*Maria Gifford*
Class of 1998

Women’s Studies: My Way of Life

Women’s studies is not just a college program, a class, or a degree. Women’s studies is an ongoing evaluation of self and society that lasts a lifetime. Social hypocrisy, media figures, and so-called “women’s liberation” groups have made my lifelong learning path even more powerful than my college learning path.

My women’s studies experience has turned me into a very conservative, very self-reliant gal. I am a self-employed mother of two and the primary breadwinner in my family.

I have an awesome spouse and my marriage is crazy good. When I think of how I got here, it all comes back to my women’s studies experience and learning to question boldly the world I see around me and to speak without fear.

Thanks to my women’s studies experience at UW–Eau Claire, I see more clearly than ever how we, as women, may be victims of a biased media, a biased society,

and sometimes even a biased political system. I chose to let my experiences as a woman empower me in my life. I could have just as easily chosen to let them make me a victim. I don’t see obstacles, I see opportunities. The individual choices we make will impact generations to come. Nobody can keep a woman down except herself. Thank you to the Women’s Studies Program at UW–Eau Claire for giving me the foundation and tools to make my life’s journey a personal success.

—*Jennifer Aither*
Class of 1993

Greetings from Austin, Texas!

I have been living in Austin for just under three months, and I am finally starting to grow accustomed to life outside of Eau Claire. These last three months have made me eternally grateful for my time at UW–Eau Claire and all of the wonderful people I met there. It has also made me realize how difficult it can be to maintain a strong feminist mindset when your support system suddenly vanishes. I obviously still stay in touch with many of my feminist pals, but life just isn’t the same without those weekly College Feminist meetings, or lectures from Katherine Rhoades (I guess we all probably miss those).

But alas, I am beginning to realize that life must go on and it is time for me to begin looking for another feminist circle for lunch dates and chats. I have been in contact with some fellow Austin feminists and plan to get together for lunch in the near future. So although I will always dearly miss my friends at UW–Eau Claire, I am so grateful for what I learned in my time there and I am excited to spread all of that education, camaraderie, and love to another group of people. Miss you all!

—*Marci Korb*
Class of 2010

We’d love to hear from you!

Stay connected by sending us your news, your stories, and your announcements so we can include them in next spring’s newsletter!

Send items to:

Judy Gray at grayjm@uwec.edu

or

Women’s Studies Program

Brewer Hall 55

University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire

Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004





Coordinator's Corner (cont.)

to apply for affiliate status can continue to stay in the know about what is happening in the program. The Women's Studies Affiliate Program is aimed at building a more formalized network of faculty and staff involved in Women's Studies on our campus. Membership in the Affiliate Program will also enable the coordinator and provost to identify and officially acknowledge the vital contributions that faculty and staff make to Women's Studies. The affiliates will also play an important role in shaping the direction of the Women's Studies Program, especially as it continues to grow and develop with the support of the university's new Blugold Commitment grants, which are being funded by student differential tuition.

The Women's Studies Program has been extremely successful in the first and second rounds of the new Blugold Commitment grants. In the initial round, Katherine Rhoades submitted proposals for 2010–2011, which funded two important curriculum-planning groups this year. One group is creating a Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Queer (LGBTQ) Studies Certificate Program along with the necessary core courses (see Pam Forman's on p. 1).

The other planning group, consisting of Rose-Marie Avin, Louisa Rice, Teresa Sanislo, and Jill Smith, created a new course entitled Transnational/Global Feminisms. Inspired in part by a faculty/student collaboration project between Asha Sen and Petra Mohr (BA 2010), this new course reflects the demand by Women's Studies students for more global content in their learning. The members of this interdisciplinary course-planning group specifically designed the course to allow a maximum flexibility in content to enable a range of faculty—who each bring their expertise in transnational/global studies from a variety of disciplines—to teach the course. Teresa Sanislo (History) is currently teaching the first section with a focus on case studies drawn from India and Egypt, and students are already expressing their appreciation for this new opportunity to gain a framework of questions by which to understand women's lives in locations outside of the United States.

In the second round of Blugold Commitment grants, I submitted four successful proposals, two of which were coauthored with Melissa Bonstead-Bruns in Sociology and Lori Bica in Psychology. Funding from these grants begins in 2011–2012 and will make possible the creation of several new permanent faculty positions. With an eye toward enhancing the program's interdisciplinary strengths, Women's Studies is already working in partnership with the Sociology and Psychology Departments to undertake searches next year for two new tenure-track faculty hires with joint appointments, each to

begin in 2012–2013. One person will be hired to teach in the Women's Studies Program and the Psychology Department; the other new professor will teach the new LGBTQ Studies courses in Women's Studies and courses for the department of Sociology's Family Studies minor. The grants will also provide permanent resources for teaching Transnational/Global Feminisms and the capstone course.

The Women's Studies Program continues to offer several cultural immersion experiences, including Rose-Marie Avin's Women in Nicaragua: Culture, Language & Society; Jodi Thesing-Ritter's Women of the American Civil Rights Movement; and Pam Forman and Ellen Mahaffey's LGBTQA Studies: San Francisco Travel Seminar. These programs have the potential both to transform individual students and make a significant impact on our local community when the students bring back their learning. Students from the LGBTQA Studies: San Francisco Travel Seminar, for example, organized the first annual Eau Queer Film Festival this past October, a four-day event featuring student-made documentaries (see <http://minds.wisconsin.edu/handle/1793/47607>) along with nearly a dozen feature-length films and shorts (see Crystal Kazik's article on p. 1). This impressive festival, which has received Blugold Commitment funding through 2014, promises to become a jewel in the Chippewa Valley art scene, bringing not only campus-wide but statewide and even national attention to LGBTQ issues.

As the program coordinator, I get to see up close how much everyone does above and beyond their contractual obligations to their “home” departments. I am eternally grateful to those stalwart colleagues from across campus who make Women's Studies their home, too. Every day, I am inspired by our majors and minors as they take their learning beyond the requirements of their courses and degrees. In a time of increased anti-intellectualism and hostility toward anti-oppressive social work, including efforts for gender justice, it is tremendously gratifying to be part of a program so alive in its intellectual, creative, and activist work.

Please consider supporting the Women's Studies Program by using the form included in this newsletter to make a tax-deductible gift to the UW–Eau Claire Foundation. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated, and it will help ensure the program's continuing vitality.

Best wishes,

Theresa

Help Us Continue Our Tradition of Excellence!

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Women’s Studies Program
Brewer Hall 55
University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire
Eau Claire WI 54702-4004