This year has been a period of great transition for Women’s Studies! A committee chaired by Anthropology Head Dr. Ellen Gruenbaum and consisting of Women’s Studies Joint Appointed and Affiliated Faculty, began searching for a new director in the fall and successfully completed the process this spring. One exciting aspect of the position is that the director will have 100% effort dedicated to Women’s Studies! In the past, we have had only 50%, so this is a new level of commitment from the College of Liberal Arts to the Women’s Studies program.

We are so excited to be able to welcome our new director this fall semester! Dr. Tracey Jean Boisseau (TJ) comes to us from Akron’s Women’s Studies and History Departments. Her major fields of study include Women’s Studies, U.S. Women’s History, and African-American Women’s History. In addition to being an excellent scholar, she is both an activist and dedicated mentor. Her activism includes membership on the board of an international non-profit organization, Corporate Accountability International, originally called the Infant Formula Action Coalition which launched the worldwide boycott of Nestle products in the 1970s. The boycott was in protest of the company’s marketing of infant formula to women who often had no access to refrigeration or safe drinking water! As a mentor, Dr. Boisseau established and chaired a campus-wide Women’s Studies organization for feminist faculty and then a second organization aimed at professionalizing and training Women’s Studies graduate students. As you can see, we are very lucky that her energy and enthusiasm will now be directed at our program!

This semester Women’s Studies co-sponsored with our undergraduate student organization, Feminist Action Coalition for Today (FACT), and the Butler Center for Excellence in Women’s Leadership, the inaugural showing of the new documentary Miss Representation. Over 200 faculty and students participated and FACT President Jenna Lee led a stimulating discussion after the film in celebration of Women’s History Month.

This spring the CLA Curriculum Committee approved our new course, Introduction to LGBT studies. Professor Evie Blackwood from Anthropology developed the course and will teach it this fall. We hope that this is the first step toward the creation of a new Women’s Studies’ Sexualities Minor.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Moghadam for the outstanding contribution she made as Director to our program. She has helped us to establish a global presence through her Global Network in Women’s Studies and Gender Research which is affiliated with the Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO. It includes feminist scholars and women’s studies departments at universities in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Europe and Oceania. Also, through her encouragement, and the work of Dr. Alicia Decker, Women’s Studies will offer its first study abroad class in Uganda. We wish Professor Moghadam good luck as she begins her new position this spring semester as Director of International Affairs Program at Northeastern University in Boston.
Alumni Accomplishments

Heidi Lewis graduated from Purdue in the Summer of 2011 with a Ph.D. in American Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies. We are thrilled to announce that Heidi was awarded the Lloyd E. Worner Teacher of the Year Award at Colorado College for her teaching this past year. The Award is the highest CC bestows for teaching. She is completing a visiting position this year before starting her tenure-track position at CC in the Fall.

Sherrema A. Bower graduated in Spring 2009 from Purdue University with her MA in American Studies, a Concentration in Sociology, and a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies. She taught for the Women’s Studies Program in 2008-2009. She will now begin her PhD in Anthropology at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand on September 1, 2012. Sherrema plans to do her dissertation on women's gender roles in Christian fundamentalism and evangelicalism, especially Pentecostalism. This will be a cross-cultural study between Christian fundamentalism and women's gender roles in New Zealand and in the United States. Sherrema plans to interview fundamentalist and evangelical Christian women in both countries. Sherrema was awarded the Doctoral Scholarship from the University of Otago, an award that will cover living expenses while she researches for her dissertation along with a tuition waiver.

Women’s Studies Awards Reception
April 26, 2012

Congratulations to this year’s winners!

American Studies/Women’s Studies Outstanding Graduate Student Award
Suzanne Clemenz

Women’s Studies Outstanding Senior Award
Whitney R. Thomas

Women’s Studies Undergraduate Award for Outstanding Leadership
Jenna Lee

Women’s Studies Outstanding Faculty Award
Alicia Decker

Berenice A. Carroll Feminism, Peace and Social Justice Awards

Undergraduate:
Lauren Zylla, Recipient
Rachel Tobias, Honorable Mention
Amanda Postolowski, Honorable Mention
Bailee Brown, Honorable Mention

Graduate:
Amy Harris, Recipient
LaToya Hobbs, Honorable Mention
Don Unger, Honorable Mention
Although I’ve taught various versions of English Composition for the past seven years, this spring was my first semester as an instructor of women’s studies. I was a teaching assistant in the fall, so even though I was prepared to teach the course, I wanted to expand a little on what I had learned in the fall. To be more specific, one of the things I really loved about Professor Decker’s class was the mini “what’s going on in the news” segment we had at the beginning of each class period. However, because we had so much else to cover, these segments only lasted three or four minutes. I was always excited to hear what the students had learned or seen in the news in regards to feminist or women’s studies issues, and I decided that this semester, I’d figure out how to expand on that idea to get the students more involved with current women’s studies issues.

Thus, the Women’s Studies in the News newscast was born. The idea was simple: student groups would create a newscast, complete with an anchor and four reporters, to present current news on women’s studies or feminist issues. They would have to present newstories in the categories of global news, sports, entertainment, and politics, and the anchor would direct the production. On the blog I created for the course, I shared links to various feminist blogs and media sources, although they were free to look for news stories elsewhere, as long as it was a pro-feminist news source. Another stipulation was that there would be no PowerPoint presentations; student would actually PRESENT the news, not read it from slides, or show long videos. In fact, they were limited to still images or a clip of no more than 60 seconds.

I have to admit that I wasn’t quite sure how well the students would take to this assignment, but I am happy to report that I was completely blown away by my students’ presentations. Over the course of the semester, we were educated and enlightened by “The WOST Post,” “The Friday Feminist News,” “The Feminist View,” and other aptly named newscasts. They even had theme music! The students presented segments such as “What Not to Say to a Stay-at-Home Mom,” “Your Weekly Encouragement,” “Labor for Life,” and “The Five Most Dangerous Places for Women.” We learned about human right’s abuses in Guatemala, gender inequality at the Oscars, National Girls and Women’s Sports Day, abuses of immigrant wives in Korea, sexism in Superbowl Sunday advertising, the Athlete Ally program at UCLA designed to combat homophobia in sports, same-sex adoption in Arizona, slavery in Mauritania, transwomen in Kuwait, and a myriad of other feminist, and women’s studies issues in the news over the past five and a half months. The students also created a tribute to Trayvon Martin and Whitney Houston and discussed racial profiling and drug addiction, as well the anti-racist work that needs to be done in order for true social change to occur.

Overall, I was very pleased with the way this assignment turned out, and I’ll add it to my permanent “bag of tricks” for teaching this course. One of the senior graduate instructors, Michaela Null, mentioned one Friday that, “your students are so cute and so serious about their presentations.” That day, everyone on the panel was dressed in a suit and they had arrived at the classroom super early. Michaela actually initially thought that the students were visitors to my class, because they all looked so professional! To be sure, each group seemed to want to do a little more than the previous group, so although there was a bit of a competitive spirit among the groups, it never got out of hand. In fact, each group seemed to refine and build upon what the previous groups had done. I’m so proud of this class; mainly for the particular ways in which they sought out and presented on issues that were important to them and that were emblematic of the issues we tackle in women’s, feminist, and LGBT studies. I am also proud of how well they worked together as a class and as smaller groups to create such wonderful presentations to teach each other, as well as myself, about so many important issues facing women and girls today.
Meet the Graduate Instructors

Adrianna Lozano: This semester has been a whirlwind for sure! I am currently teaching the Introduction to Women's Studies course here at Purdue for my fourth year! I am also teaching Sex & Sexuality and Introduction to Women's Studies at IUPUI in and Global Issues at Franklin University in Indianapolis. Teaching is my passion, and as such the heavy teaching load gives me the constant reminder of why I am so invested in completing my dissertation. On the research side of the fence, I successfully defended my dissertation prospectus during the fall semester and have since been working on grant applications and research preparation for this summer. I will be co-facilitating the first Women's Studies in Uganda study abroad trip with Dr. Alicia Decker this summer. This is something I am extremely excited about and proud to be participating in. We have 9 students committed to global feminist study and activism, all ready to hit the ground running for five weeks of learning and adventure. After the students return home I will be saying on for an additional month to complete my field research and conduct interviews for my dissertation. I look forward to being back home in the fall for a full semester of dissertation writing, getting married, and welcoming in our new director!

Kendra Unruh has finished her dissertation “‘Jubilant Spirits of Freedom’: Representations of the Lindy Hop in Literature and Film from the Swing Era to the Swing Revival,” and will defend it in mid-May. Last fall, she published her article “From Kitchen Mechanics to ‘Jubilant Spirits of Freedom’: Black Working-Class Women Dancing the Lindy Hop” in the Journal of Pan African Studies. This spring, she organized a women’s studies course for the Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association (WALLA), and presented her own research about Black, working-class women. After she graduates in August, she plans to continue teaching English and women’s studies courses.

Ryan Plis – Women’s Studies & Anthropology: This semester, I completed my PhD proposal for my dissertation research. I will be leaving in June to begin a year of fieldwork with the female-assigned, black transgender community in Memphis, Tennessee. My PhD work focuses on the way transgender individuals use their bodies to express themselves as gendered people, negotiating embodiment and social identities, like race and gender, as they navigate different spaces. I was also a finalist for the Graduate School Excellence in Teaching Award this year. Finally, Dr. Evelyn Blackwood and I won the Purdue Center for Diversity and Inclusion’s Award for Excellence in Research for our co-authored book chapter. The chapter, “Trans Technologies and Identities in the United States,” is to be published in September 2012 in Culture, Health, and Sexuality, a volume edited by Lenore Manderson.

Suzanne Thompson Clemenz presented papers at two conferences. She delivered a talk titled "Remapping Eden: The Fiction of Olympia Vernon" at the Gender Matters Interdisciplinary Conference at Governor's State University in Illinois. Here at Purdue, at the American Studies annual symposium, she presented a paper titled "Bullying, Queerness, and the Interminable Search for Tolerance." She also participated in the WALLA Women's Studies course organized by Kendra Unruh, delivering a presentation on Rebecca Skloot's The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. In April she successfully defended her dissertation prospectus, "Morality Play: Framing 'Family Values' in Contemporary U.S. Southern Cultural Production." Suzanne is happy to be returning to a weekly volunteer position at the YWCA Women's Shelter, and she currently spends a good chunk of her weekend rooting for her three sons on the soccer field.
Caroline McKenzie has enjoyed teaching another section of WOST 280. She has finished her coursework and will be preparing for her up-coming pre-lims. She looks forward to attending the 5th Annual Alternative Sexualities Conference: Cultural Competencies, Clinical Issues, Research, and Education in Chicago later this summer.

Stephanie Allen: This past year has been really busy! Last November, I passed my major and minor field preliminary exams in English. In October, I presented my paper “Don't Explain and "Don't Say It" Either: Black Lesbians in the Fiction of Gomez and Shockley” at the Celebrating African American Literature: Race, Sexual Identity and African American Literature conference at Penn State University. In January, I defended my special field exam in American Studies and moved from Ph.D. student to Ph.D. candidate. I also presented my paper “Who’s Your Mammy?: Tyler Perry and the Limits of Black Spectatorship,” at the National Council of Black Studies Annual Meeting in Atlanta, GA in March. In just a couple of weeks on May 9th, I’ll defend my prospectus and focus most of my attention on my dissertation. I also received a Purdue Research Fellowship for the summer, which will certainly help me get a jump-start on my dissertation research this summer.

Michaela A. Null has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Fond du Lac. She will join their faculty in Fall 2012, where she will teach Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Sociology of Marriage & Family, among other sociology courses. She is excited that several of her colleagues are also Purdue alumni.

Update from FACT (Feminist Action Coalition for Today)
By: Jenna Lee, President

This semester FACT has been very involved in activism on and off campus. Several members attended the National Young Feminist Leadership Conference in Washington D.C. They were able to attend by raising money through bake sales, business donations, and assistance from the Butler Center for Leadership.

This Valentine's Day, Planned Parenthood donated over 700 condoms to FACT. We passed out all of these condoms in Stewart and MSEE along with messages about the importance of practicing safe sex.

One of our major events this semester was the screening of the documentary *Miss Representation*. This 2011 film discusses women’s portrayal in the media and in politics. This was a very successful event; we presented the film to over 120 students, faculty, and members of the community.

This whole year FACT has been involved in the process of joining coalitions that focus on sexual assault awareness. A few members of FACT along with myself are members of a multi-organization coalition through Purdue Health Center for Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness. One of our major goals is to create programs for sexual assault education and promote the creation of an on-campus rape crisis center.
Patrice Buzzanell received the CLA Center for Research on Diversity & Inclusion Faculty Grant in April as well as the Teresa Award for the Advancement of Feminist Scholarship from the International Communication Association, and the “Woman of Distinction” Award, Salute to Women Celebration from the YWCA in Lafayette. For the Summer of 2012, she will be the Scholar-in-Residence for the National Communication Association Institute for Faculty Development.

She received an award for the Top 2 and 3 Papers in the Organizational and Professional Communication Division of the Central States Communication Association.

She will present the following papers: “The frames of leadership by corporate social responsibility practitioners” with R. Mitra. Paper will be presented to the Organizational and Professional Communication Division of the Central States Communication Association, conference to be held in Cleveland, OH. Her second presentation will be “Constructing a feminist organization’s identity in a competitive marketplace: The intersection of ideology, culture, and image” with S. D’Enbeau. Paper will be presented to the Organizational and Professional Communication Division of the Central States Communication Association, conference to be held in Cleveland, OH.

She and R. Mitra won the CSCA Federation Prize for “Performances of Meaningful Work by Sustainability Professionals.” She held a Gender Transformation Workshop for WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) at Michigan Tech U and an Advanced Communication Skills Workshop for the Lafayette Chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP) in Lafayette.


Jennifer Freeman Marshall returned to Purdue this semester following her research leave during which she continued work on her book manuscript titled Icon, Token, Canons and Zora Neale Hurston. In the past year, she received the 2011 Women’s Studies Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award from the Purdue Black Cultural Center and the National Council of Black Students (NCBS). This spring, she gave the AASRC Harriet Jacobs Lecture, presenting her paper “Erykah Badu’s Mothership: Maternal Tropes in Black Popular Music,” which explores maternal tropes in Badu’s music. She looks forward to presenting her paper entitled “Ain’t I a Person?: Maternalist Politics, Racial Discourse, and the Rise of Personhood Amendments” on a panel along with graduate students Emma Bertolaet and Michelle Carreon at the 2012 National Women’s Studies Association Conference in Oakland. The panel, organized by Bertolaet and Carreon, is titled “Maternalism, Economic Citizenship and Exploring Dimensions of Care in a Feminist Future.” Marlo also serves as the faculty adviser for the Purdue Black Student Union.

Alicia Decker published an article this semester with a WS grad student, Mauricio Castro entitled “Teaching History with Comic Books: A Case Study of Violence, War and the Graphic Novel.” The History Teacher 45, no. 2 (February 2012). Alicia will be leading the first WS study abroad trip to Uganda from May 30-July 6.

Anne Fliotsos has been promoted to full professor.

Ellen Gruenbaum has been involved with the new Global Women’s Health initiative and the International Breast Cancer and Nutrition project. IBCN is planning an international conference at Purdue in October that will focus on the research on breast cancer prevention. The group wants to go beyond early detection to fostering research on primary prevention. So an international effort is developing to enable epigeneticists, nutritionists, and many other disciplines—including anthropology and communication!—to get involved. One part of the project is to engage scientists in partner countries (Lebanon, Ghana, Uruguay, France, Japan, and the U.S.) to do research on healthy breast tissue donated by women who want to further the research.

Venetria Patton delivered papers related to her current book project on ancestors at the National Council for Black Studies and the College Language Association conferences in March. She will be presenting “The Dead Are Not Dead: The Ancestral Call in Black Women’s Texts” at Ohio University in April.

Marlo David received a Purdue Research Foundation Summer Faculty Grant for the summer of 2011. During the grant period, she continued work on her manuscript Mama’s Gun: Maternal Figures, Black Women and the Politics of Transgression. In the fall, she presented a paper on Octavia Butler’s novel Dawn at the bi-ennial American African Novel Conference at Penn State University. In the fall, she also taught a graduate course, entitled “Postmodern Blackness: African-American Literature in the Age of Obama,” which explored contemporary black literature and performance within the context of discourses of “post-racial America.” Prof. David moderated two graduate student panels at the Purdue Black Cultural Center and the National Council of Black Studies (NCBS). This spring, she gave the AASRC Harriet Jacobs Lecture, presenting her paper “Erykah Badu’s Mothership: Maternal Tropes in Black Popular Music,” which explores maternal tropes in Badu’s music. She looks forward to presenting her paper entitled “Ain’t I a Person?: Maternalist Politics, Racial Discourse, and the Rise of Personhood Amendments” on a panel along with graduate students Emma Bertolaet and Michelle Carreon at the 2012 National Women’s Studies Association Conference in Oakland. The panel, organized by Bertolaet and Carreon, is titled “Maternalism, Economic Citizenship and Exploring Dimensions of Care in a Feminist Future.” Marlo also serves as the faculty adviser for the Purdue Black Student Union.
Women’s Studies Program Would Like to Thank...

Stephanie Allen would like to thank Ryan Plis for his guest lectures on trans-identities and families in her class this semester. “The class sat rapt in attention during his presentation, and several of them wrote about his presentation in their reading responses that week. I think Ryan’s presentation really opened up their eyes about trans issues as well as put a human face on the issue. I’ll certainly be inviting him back! I’d like to thank Arthur Banton for his very informative presentation on Title IX and women in sports. Even several weeks later, my students were still commenting on the disparities in women’s and men’s sports and how it needs to change.”

Adrianna Lozano would like to thank Namrata Mitra for her guest lecture on Women & Work, Globalization & Gendered Economics. "Namrata is an exceptionally talented scholar and as such makes a wonderful guest lecturer. My students regularly enjoy her personal brand of dry wit and savvy feminist knowledge. Thank you so much for all of your help this semester and your above and beyond efforts!"

Caroline McKenzie would like to thank Arthur Banton, Jim Gilligan and Ryan Plis who guest lectured this semester. “My students and I send our thanks! Arthur Banton lectured on Women and Sports: Title IV & Professional Sports; Jim Gilligan lectured on Bullying and the documentary Bullied; Ryan Plis lectured on Contemporary Transgender Issues. These lectures generated wonderful classroom discussions and writing responses.”

Michaela Null would like to thank several speakers. “Every semester I am delighted to bring fellow grad students to speak about their respective interests in my Introduction to Women’s Studies course. This semester I would like to thank the following speakers, who took the time and energy to come to my class and broaden the horizons of my students: Brittany Bayless Fremion, History (3 Waves of Feminism); Kendra Unruh, American Studies (Gender, Race, & Class on the dance floor); Ryan Plis, Anthropology (Transgender issues and basic introduction); Stephanie Allen, American Studies (Black Women in Popular Culture); Megan Gilligan, Sociology (Domestic Violence research and realities); Cheryl O’Brien, Political Science (Rape as a War Crime and War & Feminist Policy Analysis); Emma Bertolaet, American Studies (Abortion rhetoric of the 1970s and finding a midwife who will participate in a home birth).”

Suzanne Thompson Clemenz would like to thank two speakers: “Tonya Agnew, Director of Communications for the College of Education, spoke to my students about issues concerning LGBTQ families. Betty Memmer, Senior Educator for Planned Parenthood, presented on how Planned Parenthood serves Indiana. Thanks to both of them for discussing the personal, social and political importance of these issues in our contemporary moment.”

**Become a Friend of the Women’s Studies Program**

Your gifts of any amount make it possible for us to publish this newsletter every semester, in addition to providing funds for awards for both undergraduate and graduate students, organization of on-campus Women’s Studies events, helping sponsor events organized by other university programs, and travel support to attend and present at conferences. You may make your gift check payable to Purdue University (with “for the Women’s Studies Program” on the memo line) sent to the Women’s Studies program, 6164 Beering Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098.