

DEPARTMENT OF

WOMEN'S, GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES

2017 NEWSLETTER



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



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On the cover:

On March 8, 2017, the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies observed International Women's Day — read more on page 10.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



The Department of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies at Ohio State continues to thrive and flourish. With activism kicked into a particularly high gear in 2017, the WGSS undergraduate students, graduate students, staff, and faculty all continue to excel across campus and beyond. As you will find across the pages of this Newsletter, WGSS is a busy hub of intellectual inquiry and activity broadly committed to feminist justice.

We have been particularly proud to host several events on campus, in addition to a number of public lectures. On March 8, 2017, WGSS undergraduate and graduate students, along with faculty and staff support, held the first ever "International Women's Day Strike/Teach-In" at Hale Hall. More than 1,000 undergraduate students streamed through Hale Hall as we hosted over 25 speakers for six hours of non-stop teaching on the roots and legacies of the socialist holiday.

Shout out, particularly, to Maryam Abdi, Haley Swenson, and Tess Pugsley for their fabulous work on this ground-breaking event! In November 2017, Professor Wendy Smooth hosted a remarkable gathering of scholars and writers from across the country to discuss "The New American Electorate." This two-day event analyzed the various obstacles confronting electoral representation for minority populations across the United States and spawned creative strategies for overcoming them. I particularly look forward to the edited volume that will likely emerge from this important conference.

I am also very pleased to introduce our new colleague, Azita Ranjbar, who recently completed her PhD in WGSS and Geography at Penn State and is already teaching exciting courses in transnational feminism, with a focus on Iran and Islamic feminisms (see a fuller introduction inside). We are very happy to have Prof. Ranjbar join the WGSS faculty, who continue to work on a broad array of research areas: feminist and queer analyses of incarceration; black, trans* activists; reproductive justice in India; Chilean murals; feminist analyses of addiction and sobriety; non-human animals' imbrication in political economies; the globalized movement of the religious right; the twinned etiologies of modern concepts of race and sexuality; Polish feminism; women in comedy; black girls and leadership; feminist analyses of aging and health care; histories of feminism in Latin America; and many, many more.

Many faculty and graduate students presented at the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association, which was hosted in Baltimore to the theme of "40 Years After the Combahee River Collective." Among many fantastic panels, I was very happy to see the boisterous book-signing by Professor Treva Lindsey for her new book, *Colored No More Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington D.C.* The signing was crowded and the book sold out!

The WGSS Department continues to buzz with creative energy, blazing the trail on engaged scholarship, service-learning, and student activism. In the fall of 2017, the President and Provost announced renewed commitments to diversity in all areas of the campus. As one of the most longstanding diverse departments on campus, WGSS is proud to model a deep commitment to building inclusive environments for all members of the campus community — and to fostering teaching and research that engage these dynamics across a wide array of approaches.

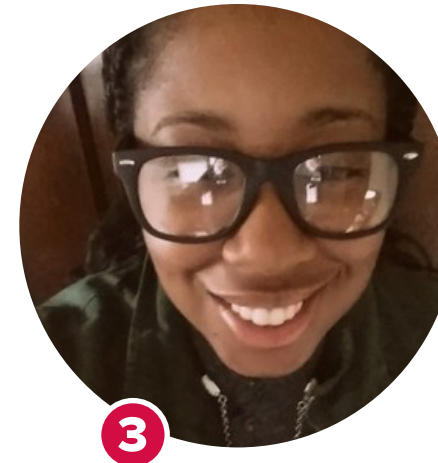
Serving as the Chair of this remarkable space on campus is truly an honor. I hope you enjoy a sampling of our activities, aspirations, and achievements. Most of all, I hope you all enter 2018 with renewed commitments to sustaining feminist communities here at Ohio State and wherever you live.

Professor Shannon Winnubst, Department Chair

GRADUATE ADDITIONS

The Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies welcomed 11 wonderful graduates into the graduate program this year!

- 1** **Deja Beamon** received her MA in WGSS with The Ohio State University. She is returning to pursue her PhD, focusing on psychoanalysis and racial identity development of biracial women.
 - 2** **Amy Elhadi** is a PhD student and her current research focuses on the role of women in conflict and conflict resolution in Darfur, Sudan. She received her BS from Ahfad University for Women in Sudan, and her MA from SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont.
 - 3** **Sai Isoke** is returning to the department after receiving her MA in WGSS. Pursuing her PhD, she is studying black queer studies, femininities and masculinities.
 - 4** **Maggie Jackson** is pursuing her PhD with the department as a Distinguished University Fellow. Coming to us from Goldsmiths, University of London, her research interests involve intersections of gender, sexuality, fan culture and media representation.
 - 5** **Juwon Lee** is currently studying for his MA in WGSS. Juwon's main research interest is how queer gender and sexuality impact people's movement, such as migration and queer refugees.
 - 6** **Lesia Pagulich** is working towards her PhD with the department. Earning her BA from the Kyiv National University of Economics in Ukraine, and MA from Georgia State University, Lesia's main focuses are in the fields of post-soviet, decolonial, critical race and queer studies.
 - 7** **Katherine Ritter** is pursuing her PhD with WGSS as a Dean's Distinguished University Fellow. Her research interests cover LGBTQ health and the significance of gender and sexuality for lesbian, bisexual, and queer identified women as it relates to their access to care.
- Amy Rodriguez** is a PhD student in the department and a Dean's Graduate Enrichment Fellow. Her current research interests involve race and gender identity formation, and nationalism in the Caribbean and Latin America.
- 8** **Lauren Schulman** is an MA student with the department. Earning her BA in Political Science from Bowling Green State University, her research interests include representation of women and LGBTQIA individuals in government, and legislation affecting women and the LGBTQIA community.
- Katie Swindler** is a University Fellow pursuing her MA with WGSS. Her current research interests center around reproductive rights and justice.
- 9** **Tjalling Valdés Olmos** is a PhD student in WGSS. Receiving his MA from Utrecht University in the Netherlands, his research at OSU explores notions of (queer) subjectivity, politics of representation, and decolonial and coalitional counterpoetics/aesthetics.



*Not pictured:
Amy Rodriguez and Katie Swindler*

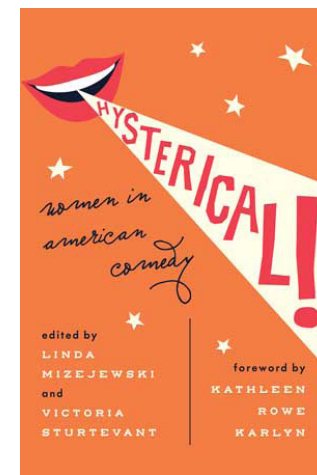
FACULTY AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Cynthia Burack published several articles, including “Top Down, Bottom Up, or Meeting in the Middle? The US Government in International LGBTQ Human Rights Advocacy” in *LGBTQ Politics: Critical Reader* and “No Human Right to Sodomy: Christian Conservative Opposition to SOGI Human Rights,” presented at the 2017 Human Rights Conference at the University of Dayton. She is currently working on her forthcoming book, titled *Because We Are Human: Contesting US Support for Gender and Sexuality Human Rights Abroad*, which will be published in 2018.

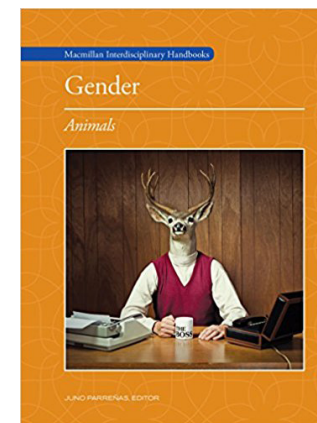
Guisela Latorre co-authored *Murales Rebeldes! L.A. Chicana/Chicano Murals under Siege*. The text tells the stories of eight underrecognized Chicana/o murals from the 1970s to 1990s. The authors explore their relevance and celebrate the artists’ contributions and creations. Professor Latorre’s most recent book manuscript, *Hecho en Chile: Street Art and Visual Democracy of the Post-Dictatorship Era*, is currently under review.

Treva Lindsey published her first book, *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington, D.C.* She has also authored several articles this year for *Cosmopolitan*, analyzing relevant subjects such as campus sexual assault, protesting, and politics.

Katherine Marino participated in an *Origins* podcast on the Equal Rights Amendment with emeritus Ohio State History professor Susan Hartmann and Miami University history professor Kimberly Hamlin in the spring of 2017, as well as a podcast on histories of human rights with WGSS colleague Professor Jennifer Suchland this summer. Her article and documents project “U.S. Empire, 1820-2004: United States Women Shape Political Culture in the Panama Canal Zone, 1903-1975” was also published in the digital journal and database *Women and Social Movements in Modern Empires since 1820*. In November, she gave the keynote speech at the annual meeting of the Ohio chapter of the National Organization for Women.



Linda Mizejewski edited the text *Hysterical! Women in American Comedy*. The anthology views women in the world of comedy, from silent films and stand-up to movies and talk shows. This text explores topics such as racial/ethnic/sexual identity, stardom, censorship, cuteness, and postfeminism across multiple media.



Juno Parreñas edited the 1st edition of *Gender: Animals*, a part of the Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks series. She was also recently featured and interviewed on the German radio station *Deutschlandfunkkultur*. The interview was internationally streamed and the recording is now available in English on Mixcloud.com.

Corinne Reczek participated in collaborative research and published “Do Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Spouses Differ in the Ways They Care for Each Other During Physical Illness?” for the PRC Research Brief Series.

Mytheli Sreenivas won the 2017 Ronald and Deborah Ratner Distinguished Teaching Award. The Ratner goes to up to five faculty members within the Division of Arts and Humanities who have shown themselves to engage, motivate, and inspire students. Recognized faculty members are especially noted for impacting and making a difference in their students’ lives, educations, and careers.

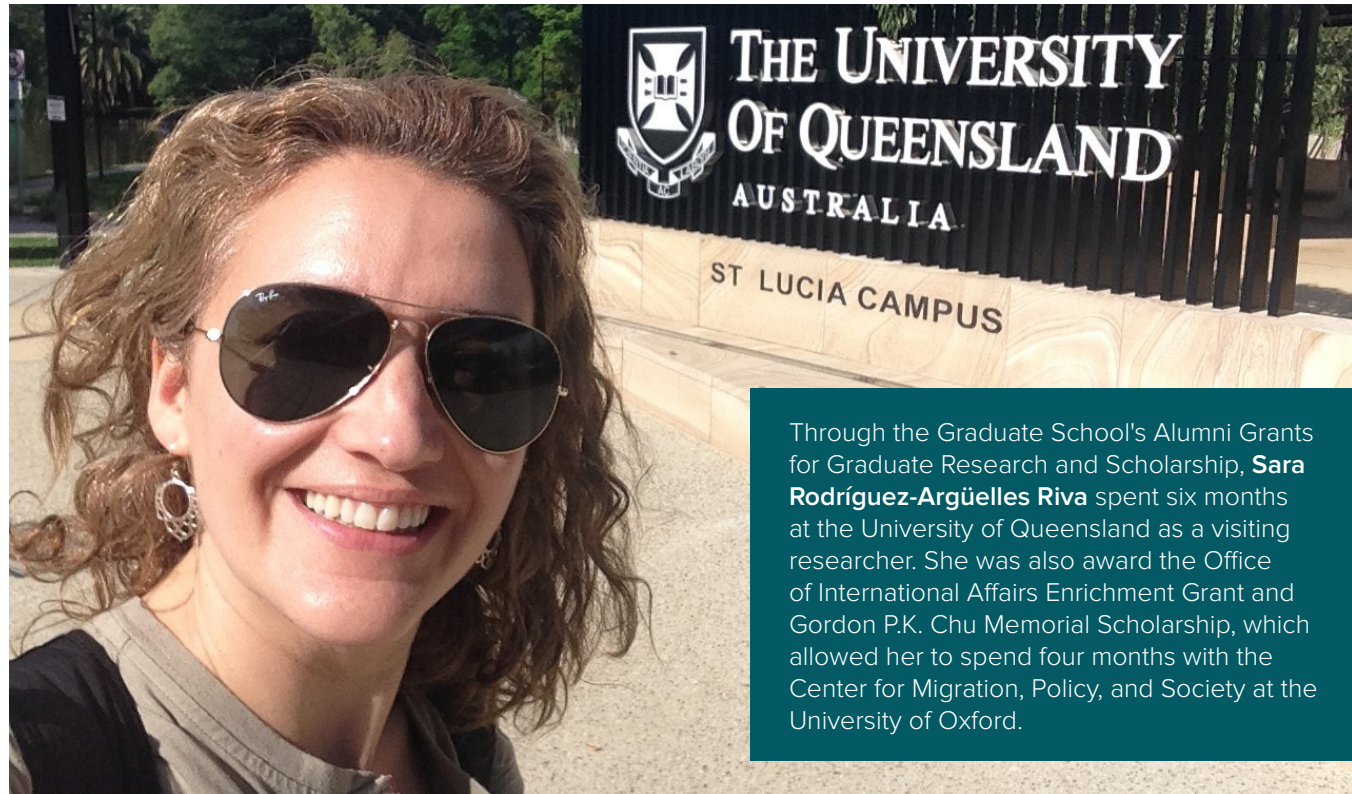


Welcome to Our New Faculty Member: Azita Ranjbar!

Joining the department this year is Professor Azita Ranjbar! Coming to us from Penn State University, Professor Ranjbar focuses in political geography, human rights, environmental justice, and social movements in Iran. Her current research focuses on human rights and pluralism through examining evolving relationships between social justice movements, international institutions, and global civil society. She teaches courses on reproductive and body regulation, globalization, and colonialism in national and international contexts.

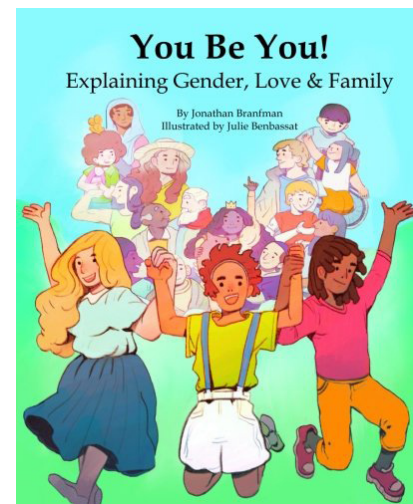


GRADUATE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Through the Graduate School's Alumni Grants for Graduate Research and Scholarship, **Sara Rodríguez-Argüelles Riva** spent six months at the University of Queensland as a visiting researcher. She was also awarded the Office of International Affairs Enrichment Grant and Gordon P.K. Chu Memorial Scholarship, which allowed her to spend four months with the Center for Migration, Policy, and Society at the University of Oxford.

Throughout the year, we celebrated a number of our graduate students in receiving their degrees. Tatiana Faria, Deja Beamon, and Sai Isoke earned their MA degrees, while Krista Benson, Denise Fuller Delgado, Sonnet Gabbard, and Anindita Sengupta earned PhDs.



Jonathan Branfman published *You Be You: Explaining Gender, Love & Family*, a children's book explaining LGBTQIA identity, inclusion, privilege, oppression, and more. It is written for ages 7-12, but is suitable for teens and adults seeking to learn more. Jonathan is working with

translators to have his book translated into ten other languages. He was also recently awarded a Presidential Fellowship that will assist him in completing his dissertation on Jewish masculinities in popular culture.

Anthony Tenney participated in a panel titled, "What Does It Mean to Do Intersectional Work?" Along with other scholars from different disciplines, Anthony spoke about ways to do international social justice work. The full discussion was a part of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity's Weekly Forum series, and is available on their YouTube channel.

Malia Lee Womack published "Troubling Universalized Human Rights: The Complexities of Identity and Intersectionality" in *The Journal of Politics and Democratization* and "The Politics of Freedom: When State Interest Takes Precedence Over Human Rights" in *Feminism: Past, Present and Future Perspectives*.

In 2017, many of our graduates had the opportunity to share their knowledge and research with others through panels, discussions, and various conferences. Maggie Jackson presented at the Midwest Popular Culture Association Conference. Joy Ellison participated at the American Studies Association Annual Conference. Deja Beamon, Jon Branfman, Andrea Breau, Tess Cumpstone, Kristen Kolenz, Mahaliah Little, Lesia Pagulich, Jaclyn Serpico, Tatsiana Shchurko, Anthony Tenney, and Malia Lee Womack presented at the 2017 National Women's Studies Association Conference.

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS



This year, WGSS Ph.D alumni **Amanda Rossie** and **Haley Swenson** were named 2017 Mellon/ACLS Fellows. This fellowship program places recent PhDs in the humanities in staff positions at partnering agencies in government and the non-profit sector for two-year appointments, aiming to demonstrate the humanities have a wide application inside and outside of academics.

Amanda, who received her PhD with WGSS in 2014, is now a Policy Analyst with the National Women's Law Center in Washington, D.C. NWLC works to remove barriers based on gender, open opportunities for women and girls, and help women and their families lead economically secure, healthy, and fulfilled lives. Amanda has already written several articles in the position regarding the wage gap, race, environmental impact on women's jobs, and the economy.

Haley Swenson, who received her PhD in 2016, now works as Editor with The Better Life Lab for New America in Washington, D.C. The organization is committed to renewing American politics, prosperity, and purpose in the digital age. The organization generates ideas, bridges the gaps between technology and policy, and curates broad public conversation. Haley edits and writes for the Better Life Blog on Slate, which tackles the topics of gender parity, work-life balance, and the American family.

Krista Benson received her PhD with the department this year and is now teaching as a tenured assistant professor in the Liberal Arts department at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. Dr. Benson teaches courses on diversity and LGBTQ identities throughout the year, and is currently working on a project titled, *The Kids Who Are(n't) There: Indigenous Youth, Child Removal, and Juvenile Detention*, which explores the ways heteropatriarchal gender norms are imposed on Native children in the system of "in-state care."

Adriane Brown was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at Augsburg University. Receiving her PhD in 2011, Adriane teaches courses such as "Popular Culture, Race, and Sexuality", "Girls, Culture, and Identity", and "Margins as Center: Feminist Theory." She is also completing a book manuscript on gender and race in high school policy debate, and analyzing the significance of gender and race in cosplay at multiple fan conventions for her current research project.

Activism in WGSS Courses:

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

One of WGSS's most recently approved courses, **Reproductive**

Rights and Justice, is a new service-learning course available to enrolled Ohio State students. The course, taught by Professor Mytheli Sreenivas, allows students to learn about rights, technology, and politics surrounding reproductive health. However, what makes this class special is that students work with community organizations that address this subject. About five to ten hours per week, students in the course work with places such as Planned Parenthood, the Adolescent Sexual Health office of Columbus Public Health, and the Women's Policy Network.

FEMINIST ANALYSIS: INCARCERATION

Two new service-learning courses are also currently being planned for future installment.

Professor Mary Thomas, who teaches once a week at the Marion Correctional facility, is currently building a service-learning course for Ohio State students and Marion Correctional students. This has roots in her class, **Feminist Analysis: Incarceration**, which is taught under a general feminist inquiry course where professors can integrate their expertise into the class. In becoming a service-learning course, this would not only become a more permanent and consistent course, it would allow students to learn and interact with the incarceration system, and those affected by it, beyond the classroom.

WOMEN AND ADDICTION: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Professor Linda Mizejewski is also working to make a current course in WGSS into

a service-learning course. **Women and Addiction: A Feminist Perspective** (WGSST 2326) has been taught by Professor Mizejewski this year, and changing it into a service-learning course would allow students to work with organizations focusing in this type of work, such as Safe Point (a program that educates, provides access to drug treatment, and seeks to make the drug-using community healthier) and Star House (a drop-in center for homeless youth in Central Ohio).

Both courses are set to be introduced in the following academic year.



International Women's Strike

On March 8, 2017, the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies observed International Women's Day — a day that celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, and marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity — and the corresponding International Women's Strike, a network of cis and trans women in multiple countries planning a day of action.

Over 1,000 Ohio State staff, faculty, graduate and undergraduate students, and Columbus community members participated in a day-long solidarity teach-in, coming together to learn and participate in the international strike.

Alumna Sonia Mathur (2014) majored in psychology and minored in WGSS and French. She reached out to one of our professors to share her feelings about the classes, department, and her work with the Peace Corp in Tanzania:

Hello Dr. Mizejewski,

I am sitting at an internet cafe in Tanzania, reflecting on the past few years of my life and I thought of you. I've been wanting to reach out for a long time now but somehow never got around to it. I'm sorry! I've owed you this for a long time now. I have so much to thank you for:

Your class opened the door to WGSS for me. It might sound dramatic, but it changed my life. I don't think I realized until then that there could be careers in WGSS or that I could take classes that really spoke to what I wanted out of life. If I had had any other professor to introduce me to WGSS, I don't know how quickly I would have jumped into doing a WGSS minor. I'm sure I would have, because of how passionate I am about it but I think that the way you made us think really set off that passion inside me. Truly, you were (and still are) such an inspiration. Thank you.

You made me realize my potential. I, like many other younger women and girls, never really saw myself as smart. Sure, people told me that I was but I never really believed it. In my head, I was convinced that I had somehow tricked them into thinking that. Sometimes, I still have trouble believing it. But you made me feel like my voice was valid and my opinions were worth hearing. I was never afraid to speak in your classroom. It helped me build confidence. When you told me that I was smart, it really stuck with me. Thank you.

I have been here for almost one whole year. It's been wild. I love it so, so much and it also sometimes breaks my heart. Tanzania was one of the Peace Corps countries under the amazing Let Girls Learn program started by Michelle Obama (which no longer exists but we are still continuing a gender empowerment program under a different, less catchy name). As a teacher, I try to bring to my classroom the same passion and enthusiasm that so inspired me in your classroom (though my subject is not quite as exciting, I do love English).

I try to promote gender equality every single day, however subtly I do it. The gender issues here are so intense. I am the youngest teacher at my school (in a culture where age determines how much respect you get) and one of 4 female teachers. They're very good to me overall but my youth and gender sometimes make it difficult to be taken as seriously as others. Some days I feel like I've done nothing (this is usually me being impatient, most volunteers don't start projects until after the one-year mark). But then I will see little steps of progress, that I'd like to believe I had influence over.

My headmaster made the whole staff watch the program I put on for International Women's Day. One of the highlights of my service so far was when a form 4 girl (high school senior) who I don't even teach approached me to thank me and said that I had sparked a conversation among the girls that day (IWD) and she said, "Madam, on that day you inspired many womens." I cried. That moment will live in my heart forever. One of my really bright form 1s (freshman) regularly comes to me to discuss how to empower her fellow girls. Her name is Lydiah. My first ever interaction with Lydiah was when she approached me about how to help her friend Maria. Maria was snuck out of her village and brought to school by her mother. She is a Maasai girl who had recently been forced into FGM [female genital mutilation] and was about to be forced into marriage with a man who was more than three times her age. She was brought to live with her uncle, who is our school's accountant. Maria does not know any English (secondary schools in Tanzania are all English medium) and barely knows Kiswahili (the national language) because at home she only spoke Kimaasai. My counterpart and I were able to help counsel Maria and, while she still has trouble in academics, I see her improving little by little. I've watched her confidence grow. She smiles more. I'm so in awe of her strength and her resilience. These girls make me so proud.

These things make every challenge worth facing. They sometimes seem small but the effects of them have the potential to be huge. I can't possibly take full credit for these but the role I've played here has been important in the lives of these children. It sometimes overwhelms me to think about.

The credit that I can take from these things, I also owe to you. Without having taken that first class with you, I don't know if I would have known how to start these conversations. I don't know who I would have become and if she would even be here. And, of course, without your recommendation, would I even be here? Thank you, thank you, thank you.

You have been and always will be such an inspiration to me. I hope that we can stay in touch after this!

Best wishes,
Sonia Mathur

2017 HIGHLIGHTS



Throughout the year, the department invites several guests to campus to discuss their topics under the broad umbrella of women's, gender, and sexuality studies.

Transgender and immigration rights activist **Jennicet Gutierrez** joined us on campus to discuss peaceful, loving, and transformative actions we can take to survive, and to resist the current political climate of fear, hate, and exclusion.

Kimberly Scott, Women and Gender Studies professor and Founding Executive Director for Gender Equity in Science and Technology at Arizona State University, visited to discuss creating initiatives for underrepresented girls in the fields of science and technology. Professor Scott referred to her own experience with the program COMPUGIRLS, touching on challenges, its creation, and the implications of engaging in disruptive scholar-activist work.

American Studies professor **Nicole Fleetwood** of Rutgers University visited with us to speak about the intersection of art and mass incarceration. She touched on gender dynamics, tensions, debates, and practices that emerged in the collaborations between incarcerated and non-incarcerated people. Professor Fleetwood focused on the situations of those incarcerated, the forced gender conformity of incarcerated and facility visitors alike, and anti-racism projects taking place in prisons.

1 Ohio State Trip to Human Rights Watch Film Festival
A small group of Ohio State students and faculty, including several of our own WGSS members, took a trip to attend the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York City this summer. The visit included film screenings, talk-backs with the film directors, visits to relevant and popular locations, overall understanding of the intersection of human rights issues and art, and the complexity of playing witness to injustices while acting to address them.

2 National Women's Studies Association Conference
Multiple WGSS faculty, graduate, and undergraduate members attended the National Women's Studies Association annual conference in November, held this year in Baltimore, Maryland. Most WGSS attendees presented papers at the four-day conference, and all were able to attend panels and discussions on various subjects, such as panels on women of color, intersectionality, racism, and sexuality. The theme for the 2017 conference was "40 Years After COMBAHEE: Feminist Scholars and Activists Engage the Movement for Black Lives."

3 New American Electorate Symposium
Hosted by Professor Wendy Smooth, speakers and guests joined us on campus for the symposium, "New American Electorate Beyond the Voting Booth: Building an Inclusive Democracy." Speakers from around the country attended to present their ideas on inclusion of underrepresented groups that make up the new American electorate.



DEPARTMENT OUTREACH



WGSS Sex Education

WGSS graduate students are continuing to deliver feminist sex education to the Ohio State community. In the past year, the presentations have reached over 900 students, and over 4,000 since 2013. A number of presentations are given by graduate students throughout the year, particularly during the fall semester for the First Year Success Series.

High School Visits

Triota, the WGSS Honor Society, visited high schools this year to discuss women's, gender, and sexuality studies, along with aspects of identity and intersectionality with students. They discussed topics and issues brought forth by young women in the sessions, such as stereotypes, visual expectations, and sex education.



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Please consider making a gift or donation to the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Each and every gift makes a tangible difference in the lives of our students, faculty, and for the future of feminist studies.

For the department to realize its opportunities for excellence, it must build upon the base established with state and tuition funding by drawing support from its alumni and friends. The following are a few ways you can invest in the department and its programs:

Program Support

This department fund is used to support a variety of departmental initiatives, such as speakers, technical support, service learning and outreach, study abroad and other programming. Currently we are working to use these funds to expand out outreach and engagement initiatives and to pursue engaging scholars who enhance our pedagogy.

Graduate Student Development

For activities that contribute to the professional development of graduate students in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies.

The Max Rice Jr. & Sarah Smith Women's Studies Fund

This Fund provides student and faculty support to create opportunities for Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies to advance the study of disability and/or sexuality.



Cunningham Appalachian Scholarship Donations

In memory of WGSS alumna Dr. Patricia Cunningham II, the Cunningham Appalachian Scholarship is funded to provide scholarship opportunities to undergraduate students from Appalachian counties. Dr. Cunningham focused on outreach, education, leadership, serving underrepresented students on and off-campus, and founded the Appalachian Project Ohio which focused on pathways of education for Ohio State's Appalachian students.



These are just some of the funds that support the department. For more information, please visit wgss.osu.edu/give.



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