WHY WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES?

As scholars in the field of Women's and Gender Studies, we are often asked, "What in the world can you do with that degree?" We know that our studies, research, and contributions to academia and the world are important and necessary. Communicating that knowledge is a subject that we have dedicated this newsletter to.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, Women’s and Gender Studies programs are not for the sole benefit of women and women’s rights. Women's & Gender Studies programs offer an interdisciplinary approach to gaining an in-depth understanding of the way gender, sexuality, and identity play critical roles in all aspects of our lives. (Continued on pg. 3)
A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dr. Wendy Hoofnagle

twelve new members to the Advisory Board, including an elected graduate student member, staff from the Center for Multicultural Education and the Gender and Sexuality Center; and faculty from the Rod Library and several colleges across campus. We are also pleased to introduce our new graduate student cohort; just this past spring, we had three new students join mid-year (one of whom is a Fulbright scholar) in addition to admitting eight new students for the coming year (four of whom are Fulbright scholars). It is an exciting time for the WGS Program, to be sure!

To encourage participation in WGS-related activities on campus and promote the creation of classes focusing on sexuality and gender, we created two new awards that we hope to begin granting next year: the WGS Faculty and Staff Excellence Award and the LGBTQ* Curriculum Award. Along these lines, we also revised the format of the annual CROW (Current Research on Women) Forum to the SWAG (Sexuality, Women and Gender) Forum, in order to encourage a wider variety of subjects and presentation styles (including workshops) to appeal to a more general audience and increase participation. This new format is more inclusive and embraces research on gender and sexualities through multiple perspectives. It is my hope, moving forward, that these initiatives will increase the visibility of the program and its activities as well as recognize the efforts of faculty, students, and staff in these areas; without their support and enthusiasm, none of this work would be possible.

We have a busy summer ahead in the WGS office as we begin work on other curricular and programmatic initiatives, so I look forward to sharing more progress with you in our fall newsletter. I welcome your questions, thoughts, and suggestions as we move forward during this crucial period in our history, both inside and outside the university. Please feel free to stop by the WGS office and chat, give me a call, or send an email. I would love to hear from you!

Best wishes for a summer of fun and relaxation, wherever your travels may take you!

Wendy Marie Hoofnagle
WHY WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES?

(continued from front page) When we consider the continuum of violence and oppression in our societies, it is vital to critically analyze these issues from different perspectives. Our program and those like it undoubtedly offer a wider view of such issues and expand into other areas where oppression is highly present such as sexism, racism, exploitation and socioeconomic differences.

Our Women’s and Gender Studies classes explore the social, political, and cultural construction of gender, as well as the history, experiences and achievements of women and other marginalized populations. For instance, our “Comparative Feminist Theories” core class assists students in understanding past and present feminist theories and in evaluating practices, beliefs, and standards about gender that shape our daily experiences. The program also highlights critical thinking across disciplines, and so the knowledge and skills our students gain are applicable to a variety of other studies, programs, and careers. Our students respect and have insight into differences, a trait that is a key to success in any career path.

By engaging in Women’s and Gender Studies, you not only find a more accurate picture of history, but also become aware of the ways in which we can learn, develop and move things in the right direction from here on, for future generations.

Careers in WGS

A degree in Women’s and Gender Studies prepares you for a myriad of professions! The interdisciplinary nature of the program introduces students to historical events, engages them in exploring complex social structures, and addressing injustice and oppressive systems. Undoubtedly, many employers prefer liberal arts graduates, knowing that liberal arts education focuses on critical thinking, writing, and presentation skills. A Women’s and Gender Studies degree provides all these and many other benefits.

- professor or academic
- sexual assault/domestic violence advocate
- human rights lawyer
- k-12 teacher
- social worker
- director of human rights organization
- victim counselor
- non-profit or foundation director
- therapist specializing in LGBTQ+ or sexual violence
- university diversity and inclusion coordinator
- shelter manager
Galentine’s Day

Galentine’s Day is about women celebrating each other and their friendships. On February 13th, a Galentine’s Day event was organized and we had students, faculty and staff join us to celebrate their best gals. We provided refreshments, as well as craft and decorating materials for Galentine’s Cards! We also provided pictures of famous female friendships, so cards could feature taglines like "You’re the Lucy to my Ethel" or "You’re the Leslie to my Ann!"

CROW (Current Research on Women) Forum

This coming Fall, WGS is changing the name of our monthly CROW (Current Research on Women and Gender) Forum to SWAG (Sexuality, Women and Gender) Forum. WGS recognizes that the name “SWAG” is more inclusive and embraces research on gender and sexualities through multiple perspectives.

We kicked off the semester with a presentation by Dr. Yasemin Sari (assistant professor of Philosophy) on “Refugees & Artificial Equality” in the ScholarSpace in Rod Library.

In April, WGS hosted the final CROW forum for the academic year. For this final forum, WGS MA student Sara Naughton, the winner of the WGS Outstanding Graduate Paper, presented her research paper titled, “Female Grief For Civil Rights Martyrs: Emotional Labor As Activism.”

CROW Forums present unique opportunities for UNI to learn about ongoing research and work from different academic fields, and we look forward to continuing our monthly forums. Join us next year!
Every March for Women’s History Month, WGS takes the time to honor and celebrate the many achievements of women throughout time, both on our campus and across the globe! As part of the celebrations this year, WGS organized and collaborated with several departments and student services on campus to organize educational and social programs. Our keynote address titled "Assassinating the Tyrant Within: Claiming Self-Love in an Age of Hate" was presented by best-selling author Cynthia Bond, whose book "Ruby" was featured on Oprah's Bookclub 2.0 list. Here are some highlights of Women's History Month 2019:

- World Hijab Day Panel: Women of Muslim Student Association
- Panel Discussion on Surviving R. Kelly and Beyond: Women and Girls of Color in the #MeToo Era
- Keynote Address and book signing with speaker and author Cynthia Bond
- Reading Group and Book Discussion with author Cynthia Bond
- A ‘Feminine Utopia’: Dr. Barbara Cutter
- Diversity Colloquium: Family and Separation
Take Back the Night

In partnership with Northern Iowa Feminists, WGS hosted our annual Take Back the Night rally and march on April 18th. Take Back the Night is an important event that advocates for the support of survivors and the end of sexual violence. As we know, sexual violence is common on college campuses, so this event created the opportunity for the UNI campus community to show their commitment to this issue. The rally featured a survivor speaker and a spoken word poet. The march began from the Maucker Union and ended at Kamerick Art Building for the "What Were You Wearing" Exhibit, sponsored by the Office of Compliance and Equity Management.

Gridshock

On April 15th, WGS partnered with the Center for Violence Prevention and several other campus organizations and departments to host a screening of the award-winning documentary Gridshock. Gridshock is a film about the realities of sex trafficking in Iowa. Filmmaker Vanessa McNeal, a UNI alumna, joined the event along with a survivor featured in the film and a Friends of the Family advocate for an educative Q&A panel following the screening.
Congrats to the following students for their awards!

**Agathon Fellowship**
This fellowship supports students, (graduate and undergraduate) who have demonstrated a strong commitment to, and have had active roles in, supporting the LGBTQ+ community. The 2019 Agathon Fellowship winners are Eli Williams and Melody Kosobucki.

**Eli Williams** is an incoming first year graduate student in the WGS program and he is greatly involved in LGBTQ+ issues here at UNI. Eli is an active member of UNI Proud and serves as a volunteer for Pride Week. He also volunteers as an event coordinator for Self Care Fridays at Gender and Sexuality Services at UNI, and lastly he serves as the president of Northern Iowa Feminists (NIF). NIF is a feminist group on campus that strives for equality for all and brings intersectional issues to light. Eli rekindled a movement with Northern Iowa Student Government to get free menstrual products available in all bathrooms on campus.

**Melody Kosobucki** is currently an adjunct faculty member in the School of Music at the University of Northern Iowa. She is an incoming first-year graduate student in the WGS program and hopes to gain more knowledge on how religion could incorporate and accept women and LGBTQ+ community members, instead of pushing them to the sidelines. Melody is a member of OneIowa - an LGBTQ+ organization - that works to preserve and advance equality for LGBTQ+ individuals. She has also been listed as one of the faculty members that LGBTQ+ students can contact if they need support.

**Francis L. Webster Scholarship**
The Francis L. Webster Scholarship seeks to support any declared WGS graduate student or Sexuality, Women and Gender (SWAG) minor who has completed or is completing at least six hours of Women’s and Gender Studies required courses. Rachel Dillavou is the winner for the 2019 Francis L. Webster Scholarship!

**Rachel Dillavou** is currently majoring in Anthropology and Religion with a minor in WGS and she is on track to graduate in Spring 2020 in University Honors with Distinction. Her educational background, self-driven nature, and inherent interest in WGS issues places her as a great candidate for this scholarship.

**Outstanding Graduate Paper Award**
This annual competition is designed to encourage and reward graduate scholars (within or outside of the WGS program) on their research in the area of gender issues. The prize includes a $100 cash award and being spotlighted as our final CROW Forum presenter for the academic year. WGS graduate student Sara Naughton was the 2019 awardee!

**Sara Naughton** is finishing up her first year in the WGS graduate program as a student on the applied track of study. She has enjoyed her time in the program so far both as a student and as a programming graduate assistant! Her research focuses on issues of accessibility in community services for survivors of violence with disabilities. Sara’s winning paper is titled, “Female Grief For Civil Rights Martyrs: Emotional Labor As Activism” and was presented at our final CROW forum for this academic year.
Meet our Newly Admitted Graduate Students

Shareece Burrell  
she/her/hers

Hometown: Des Moines, Iowa  
Shareece earned her bachelor's degree in 2018 from Bradley University in Sports Communication with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. She is a graduate assistant and video coordinator for the UNI Women's Basketball team.  
Applied Track Student  
Research Topic: Equal Rights and Gendered Issues in Women's Sports

“I chose the WGS program because I want to be a women’s college coach and this will help me have a better understanding of women’s rights and inequalities of gender.”

Lamis Ahlam Laouar  
she/her/hers

Hometown: Mila, Algeria  
Lamis is a Fulbright scholar who received her bachelor's degree in 2015 from Brothers Mentouri University in Constantine, Algeria. She went on to earn her first master's degree in British and American Studies in 2017. She is a graduate research assistant for Dr. Hoofnagle helping with the book "Knowledge of the Flesh: Womanly Wisdom in the Middle Ages."  
Thesis Track Student  
Research Topic: The Rite of "Tasfih" in Algeria: Preserving Female Chastity?

“I chose the WGS program because I want to work with/for women in my country and contribute to improving their state in a patriarchal society like that of Algeria.”
Meet our Non-Traditional Graduate Students

Megan Vogt-Kostner
she/her/hers

Megan Vogt-Kostner started the WGS program in 2015 and she’s currently finishing up her research paper to graduate soon. She works on campus as a Research Analyst in the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness. In the future, she is considering a PhD program.

Applied Track Student

Research Topic: Community Perceptions: An Outsider’s View of Domestic Violence Shelters

Fun Fact 🌞
I love all water activities: swimming, tubing, skiing, etc.

I completed my first master’s degree in social work in May 2015 and accepted a full-time job following my degree completion. I really enjoyed the classes I took during my time at UNI and wanted to continue to complete the master’s degree in Women’s and Gender Studies. It is a topic I am very passionate about.

Susie Grover
she/her/hers

Susie Grover started the WGS program in 2016. In addition to her studies, she also serves on the board for the UNI Museum. Currently, she’s not sure of her professional goals, but her academic goals are vast. Susie is interested in mothers and children, ecofeminism, food inequality, among other things.

Thesis Track Student

Fun Fact 🌞
I was an archaeologist and worked in many states across the country.

I chose WGS as a part-time degree because I work full-time here on campus.
Meet our Newest Advisory Board Members

Angela Pratesi
she/her/hers

Angela Pratesi is an Assistant Professor in Rod Library. She earned her M.A. in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Angela’s research interests primarily lie at the intersection of information, learning, and the arts, but she has a long-standing interest in feminist musicology as well as education. Angela is a new member of the WGS advisory board joining us in Spring 2019.

Fun Fact ☀️
I can bake a good baguette!

Intersectional feminism influences everything I do both personally and professionally. In the classroom I like to develop learning activities that de-center me and emphasize collaborative learning. When I’m leading meetings, I see my job as making space for everyone’s voice so we can collectively build consensus as much as possible. It’s easier said than done, but well worth the effort to keep trying.

Kathryn Wohlpart
she/her/hers

Kathryn Wohlpart is the Thesis & Dissertation Reviewer and Digital Publications Coordinator in the Graduate College. As part of her role she also works closely with Rod Library to promote ScholarWorks. Kathryn holds an M.A. degree in English and Creative Writing from the University of Northern Iowa. Kathryn’s research focuses on creative non-fiction, specifically on questions of agency: who gets to tell what stories and determines how they are told? She also does research on mental illness specific to young adult literature, questioning how the stories of young adults are told in order for them to understand and interpret their daily experiences. Kathryn is also a new member of the WGS advisory board, joining us in Spring 2019.

☀️ Fun Fact: I rescued a dog almost 3 years ago now!

Especially with my research interest, I focus a lot on agency in part because I have a background in Journalism. There are often questions and conflicts with how journalism and mass media portray different groups of people. So my focus in creative writing and my critical research evaluates how these stories are told and if they are being told in a balanced and truthful way pertaining to all groups of people. Further, I look into who should be telling these stories.
Meet our SWAG Minors

Blair Hines
they/them/their

Blair Hines is a junior Digital Media Journalism major with a SWAG minor. They work as a news director at KULT Radio on campus and also serve as a Resident Assistant in ROTH. As part of their volunteering activities, Blair volunteers at the Gender and Sexuality Services as an Event Coordinator. Their professional goals include becoming a radio personality, or working for a newspaper or magazine after graduation in May 2020.

Fun Fact 🍃
I have been a vegetarian for about 7 years now!

I chose the Sexuality, Women, and Gender studies minor because I, myself, am a minority. I thrive on the means of the differences in others as a whole and to learn about them and understand those identities people hold and the obstacles they face in the world. I think it’s important to understand the differences of others and embrace them no matter their age, race, sexual orientation, or gender.

Orion Risk
he/him/his or they/them/their

Orion Risk is a senior Digital Media Journalism major with a SWAG minor. All through their four years at UNI, they’ve worked at the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center: first as a stagehand, then a supervisor and office manager, then as a marketing assistant, and now as the intern to the Executive Director. Orion is also very proud of their volunteer work with Gender and Sexuality Services and membership in the leadership honors society Omicron Delta Kappa. They are also the co-founder and director of Scene D, a local theatre project. Orion is pursuing opportunities for further training as a theatre director and artistic leader, and looks forward to being a Trans voice shaping collaborative storytelling on the professional stage.

Fun Fact: My deepest fear is being upside down.

I took a LAC class I found interesting, and then another — and BOOM I had two WGS requirements completed without even meaning to. So I looked into the minor. When I saw that I could learn about gender, sexuality, and the dynamics of privilege and oppression from a multi-disciplinary approach, I was in. This minor, more than any other aspect of my undergraduate program, has fundamentally reshaped my thinking and given me a lens I take to all my creative and academic work.
Meet our SWAG Minors and Work Study Students

Bekah Bass
she/her/hers

Bekah Bass is a sophomore Sociology major with a SWAG minor. She is a member of the Honors Program, 50/50 in 2020, the Northern Iowa Student Government Supreme Court, and the Lutheran Student Center. While she’s at UNI, she would love to conduct research on the perceptions of asexuality and other marginalized sexualities. In the future, Bekah is hoping to go into advocacy for marginalized populations. Currently, she’s not sure what form this will take or with which population, but she is planning to attend graduate or law school after she graduates.

Fun Fact
I am five minutes older than my twin brother, who I look nothing like.

I have considered myself a feminist since I was in the sixth grade, so continuing to educate myself on topics related to gender and sexuality made the SWAG minor an obvious choice. Additionally, as a sociology major, I always want to know more about how our society functions with (and how it would function without) forces like heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity.

Cameron Harrell
he/him/his

Cameron is one of two work study students in the WGS office. Cameron is a junior Family Services major. Currently, he is a member and an induction officer of Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity. He is also a mentor for the multicultural mentoring for student success program through the Center for Multicultural Education and a Unidos member. In the Fall of 2018, Cameron was a Jumpstart Pathfinder. Next Spring, his undergraduate studies will be taking him to University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. His professional goals include providing counseling and family services for under-served and underrepresented adolescent and youth communities in the Pacific Midwest.

Fun Fact: I enjoy spending time with black cat Lucifer.

I was drawn into the WGS office by its inviting energy, warmth, and openness, and immediately felt that I would enjoy working within the WGS program. Over the past two years that I have worked within the WGS Office I have enjoyed seeing all of the programming and events that the office offers as well as its never-ending support for its students. It’s been a wonderful opportunity to not only learn the ins-and-outs of office life, but also to partake in aiding an office that does so much for its students here on campus.
2018

Finn A. Blaho
Finn is a recent graduate of the WGS program, having graduated in July 2018 in a thesis track of study. Finn recently starred in one of Scene D’s productions, “The Christians.” They work as a receptionist at New Directions, a mental health agency based in Waterloo. Additionally, Finn is doing LGBTQ+ activism work in the Waterloo area with a group called Cedar Valley Unity. The group focuses on educating organizations, institutions, and businesses to make the Cedar Valley a more inclusive place.

Mirishahe Syla
Mirishahe is also a recent graduate of the program, having graduated in May 2018 in the applied track of study. Mirishahe currently works at the Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Kosovo. She is also conducting a research paper titled “The Role and Engagement of Youth in Violence Prevention.”

2017

Casey Anne Brimmer
Casey Anne graduated in July 2017 in the thesis track of study. Casey Anne is currently completing their second MA in Communication Studies at UNI and teaches Fundamentals of Oral Communication for Hawkeye Community College. They plan on attending Virginia Tech to pursue a PhD in Sociology with focus on Trans and Gender variant issues.

Alexis St. Clare
Alexis graduated in December 2017 in the thesis track of study. She served as an adjunct instructor for the Women’s and Gender Studies program in Spring 2018, and she is currently working at Fund for the Public Interest.

2015

Xavia Publius
Xavia graduated in July 2015 from the thesis track of study. Xavia is currently a second year PhD student in Performance Studies at the University of Alberta, Canada. She is also preparing for conferences and her first non-thesis professional publications.

2011

Johnanna Joy Ganz
Johnanna graduated in July 2011 from the thesis track of study. Johnanna is the Sexual Violence Justice Institute Director in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She also completed a TEDx Talk that focused on her dissertation research and her years of experience in occupational identity development.

We want to hear from you! Please e-mail us with what you have been up to since graduating! We want to hear about careers, moves, families, marriages, or professional work! Please send pictures and info to wgseuni.edu or call the office at (319)273-7102.
NOTABLES & QUOTABLES

professional development achievements
Several of our graduate students took time out of their busy schedules this semester to further their professional and academic development through conference and symposium presentations! Congrats and good work to the following students:

Sara Naughton: Presented her paper "Denaturalizing 'Natural' Disasters: Advocacy and an International Ethics of Safety" at the Middle Tennessee State University 'Creating Global Change' Interdisciplinary Conference.

Alia Afzal: Presented her research titled "My Discovery of Transnational Feminism: The Urge for Inclusion" at the UNI Graduate Student Symposium. Alia also presented research titled, "Bridging Transnational Feminism and Eco Feminism" at the North American Review Conference at UNI.

Ashley Meyers: Presented her research titled "Beyond Born This Way: Reconsidering Trans Narrative" at the UNI Graduate Student Symposium. Ashley's presentation won first place for her room!