



Women's Studies



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2002

From the Director

Joy Ritchie



Women's Studies has been on the road this semester. As the cliché says, on each trip the journey was as important as the destination. In January several faculty members loaded into a huge van to participate in the first joint UNO, UNK, UNL Women's Studies Institute, where Barbara DiBernard led a very successful workshop on feminist pedagogy. Traveling away from our own classrooms and offices helped us as faculty to get acquainted with colleagues at other institutions and discuss the goals and challenges we all share. In March, Helen Moore and I with several students, braved an icy spring storm to attend the "No Limits" Women's Studies Conference at UNK. This was the first year of our rotation of the conference among the three campuses. The trip to "No Limits" allowed students to get better acquainted with each other, to meet students from other campuses around the region, and to receive recognition for their scholarship and creative work. Traveling together also gave us time we often don't have for serious and not so serious talk, for laughter, and socializing. Our conversations with students as we traveled and ate together were as stimulating as any seminar. So, even if a weekend in Kearney doesn't sound like something you'd choose, I'd recommend it

for its rejuvenating effects and for the reminder it provided that important teaching and scholarly interactions occur outside of our classrooms and offices.

This newsletter also provides evidence of the importance of Women's Studies extra-curricular activities – internships in the community, formal lectures and informal conversations with UNL faculty and visiting scholars and writers. All of these enrich and extend the scholarship that we hope to nurture in our classes.

I'm pleased to announce another Women's Studies landmark. After twenty-five years as a program with an undergraduate major, the Graduate Specialization in Women's Studies has now been approved. With 12 hours at the Ph.D. level and 9 hours at the M.A., students will have opportunities to examine connections between Women's Studies and traditional disciplines and to challenge those disciplinary paradigms.

The program is well positioned to offer a graduate specialization. The outstanding quality of the faculty and students of the Women's Studies Program is apparent in the pages of the newsletter. I hope you'll note again the number of awards and honors Women's Studies faculty members have received this academic year.

I'm sorry to announce, though, that we'll be losing two of our faculty at the end of this year. Venita Kelley and Malea Powell have been invaluable to Women's Studies. Venita has taught Gender and Communication, a course



that has enriched many students' experiences for several years. She has also supported the Women's Studies Association in a variety of ways, but most visibly and memorably by acting in and co-producing *The Vagina Monologues* for three years. She has inspired us as a teacher, a colleague, and as a versatile actor and singer. Malea Powell has taught Native American Literature and Native Women Writers. She has always been ready and willing to take on tasks for Women's Studies and to mentor students. Malea has made presentations for the Colloquium Series and chaired the Awards Committee for three years. Malea will be leaving UNL for Michigan State University this summer. We'll miss Malea and Venita and wish them well as they take to the road and arrive in their new professional homes.

Joy Ritchie is Director of Women's Studies and Professor of English.

Wendy Hines Receives NSF Grant



Wendy Hines of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics won a \$180,000 grant from NSF's ADVANCE program for her research in mathematical equations which model the evolution of dispersal rates in biological populations.

The ADVANCE program is designed for untenured researchers who are returning to full time after having worked half time for a period in order to care for young children or aging family members. The purpose of the program is to help promising researchers re-establish their research programs with the goal of obtaining tenure. About 10-15% of the proposals are funded.

Hines has been half-time for the last 4 years in order to care for her daughter. Her daughter started first grade this year and so Hines is returning to full-time and restarting her tenure clock. As part of her ADVANCE program, Hines will spend the Fall semester of 2002 at the Center for Dynamical Systems and Nonlinear Studies at Georgia Tech. The Center is internationally recognized as one of the top places in the field, and Hines will be joining a group of distinguished scientists there working on problems from mathematical biology. She is very excited about this opportunity to get "back in the thick of things" after having to maintain a

slower research pace the last 4 years. She is also very grateful to the UNL math department for supporting her effort to balance family and career in such a progressive manner and to the group at Georgia Tech for inviting her to join their research team.

Check out our new and improved
web site at:
<www.unl.edu/womenssp/wshome.html>

Congratulations to:

Kris Gandara (December graduate) for being awarded the UNL College of Arts and Sciences Student Leadership Award. The award was for her work on GLBT advocacy in the community, her efforts against passage of Initiative 416, and leadership in Women's Studies.

Melba Cope (Alumna) for receiving the Alice Paul Award from the Lincoln/Lancaster Women's Commission.

Cherisa Price & Kris Gandara (recent graduates) who were elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the national scholastic honorary society for students in the Arts and Sciences.



Kris Gandara

WS Program Newsletter
Gwen Bedient,
editor and designer
(gbedient@bigred.unl.edu)



Faculty Announcements

Shari Clarke - was honored at the 2001 YWCA Tribute to Women. She was chosen because of her work as Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equity at the University of Nebraska.

Barbara Dibernard and Pat Tetrault - received the Chancellor's GLBT Award on



March 27, 2002.

Gwendolyn Foster - continued as the Editor of *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*. Gwendolyn also

finished writing two books last summer. The first, *Performing Whiteness in the Cinema*, is going to be published by SUNY. She co-edited an anthology on experimental cinema with Wheeler Dixon. She continues her work helping to preserve early women's films with the Pioneer Women Filmmakers Project. Gwendolyn also helped Barbara Streisand on her film about women in film.

Amy Goodburn - was selected as a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. The UNL Teaching Council and Academy members select only two faculty members annually for induction into the Academy.

Maureen Honey - gave a lecture on feminist readings of the World War II pin-up art of Alberto Vargas, sponsored by the Spencer Museum of Art at the University of Kansas. Maureen gave another lecture on experiences of African American and white women in the World War II economy and on images of them in the media at Michigan State University. She has been contacted by three producers for help in constructing a Hollywood film on black nurses during the war, putting together a PBS documentary on women government workers in Washington D.C., and making a documentary in New York sponsored by NEH on women war correspondents.

Venetria Patton and Maureen Honey - have published a gender-balanced anthology of the Harlem Renaissance which is the first to include equal numbers of contributions by women and men, to highlight gay and lesbian issues, and to include drama, as well as original art work, *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology* (Rutgers University Press 2001). Venetria and Maureen participated in a book signing in February at the Culture Center.

Venetria delivered papers at the American Women Writers of Color Conference and the National Association of African American Studies International Conference.

Venita Kelley - has several articles accepted for publication: "Home Talk: A Rhetoric of Self Redemption for African American Women" in *Womanist Theory and Research*; "Good Speech: An Interpretive Essay Investigating an African Philosophy of Communication" in *Western Journal of Black Studies* and "The Aliens in the Alien Quatrology: Cultural Policy Representations of Gender and Race in a Generic Film Series" in *Encore Journal*.

Carole Levin - was appointed as a Willa Cather Distinguished Professor. Her book, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* was published. She also received the 2002 College Distinguished Teaching Award and she received an NEH longterm fellowship to the Newberry Library.

Malea Powell - received a College of Arts & Sciences Distinguished Teaching Award. Her essay "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians Use Writing" appeared in *College Compositions & Communication* recently.

Hilda Raz - won the University-wide Outstanding Research and Creativity Award. This award recognizes individual faculty members for research and creative activity of national and international significance.

Joy Ritchie - and co-author David Wilson received the Outstanding Writing Award from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education for their book *Teacher Narrative as Critical Inquiry: Rewriting the Script*. The award recognizes excellence in a book, book chapter, monograph, or article in print.



Kenny Fries: Disability from the Inside Out by Tracy Peck

Kenny Fries spoke at UNL on February 28, 2002. He has written several books including, *Anesthesia* and *Desert Walking* two collections of poems. In *Body Remember: A Memoir* and *Staring Back: The Disability Experiences from the Inside Out* he offers his audience different life perspectives through an examination of his Jewish upbringing and identity. He illuminates the meanings of being gay, disabled, and a writer/poet in his home environments and throughout his many travels.

Fries spoke to audiences on two separate occasions, once in the afternoon about disability in the world, and again in the evening, reading from his newest book, *The History of My Shoes*, which is still in progress. In his afternoon talk he started with some basic notions of disability, reminding the audience that 40 million people belong to the disabled camp. This includes any person discriminated against and oppressed in a culture because of their physical or mental differences, according to the measurements of ability against society's idea of the 'norm'. He discussed the topic of his new book explaining that while his shoes, the one and only pair customized for Fries, are out for repair, he remains in his home in contemplation and writing on his life's enjoyments and difficulties in relation to his deformed legs and societal set-backs. He evaluates his ability to write when his travels and experiences in everyday life become limited and less accessible. He also posed serious questions on the experiences that society deems as valuable.

Fries offered up the newest examination of disability and its construction, which often links physical and mental disabilities. He then pointed out the real *barriers* that need removal in society: current popular culture that portrays damaging, insensitive ideas of every person living with a disability. He suggested that bad information in addition to the lack of true disability representations is holding back a progressive climate on disability. He warns us that back door entrances next to trash bins are *not* equal access and to keep a watchful eye on the current dismantling of the ADA.

Tracy Peck is a junior Women's Studies major.

No Limits Conference 2003

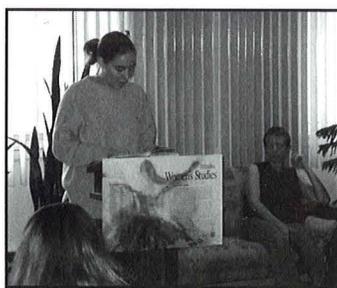


February 28-
March 1, 2003
University of
Nebraska-Omaha

* The conference is free
and open to all interested

For More Information contact :
Karen Falconer Al-Hindi
Director of Women's Studies, UNO
402 554-3834

Note From The Women's Studies Association



Erin Teuber

Shakespeare's Sister was revived this year after a two year absence from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Campus. The Women's Studies Association organized the

marathon reading of women's words that took place on March 6, 2002 in the Bailey Library. The day was a success due to the many students and faculty who participated in the readings and as members of the audience. It was a wonderful, uplifting day filled with insight and knowledge. I hope the tradition will continue for years to come!

We are always glad to see new faces among us, so if you are interested in WSA, please feel free to call me at 472-9392



Opening Spaces: Women Re-conceive Ourselves for the 21st Century

By Kelly Payne and Heather Hunter

As a first experience with an academic conference, No Limits 2002, "I am that I am: Women Challenging 21st Century Boundaries," stretched our conceptions of scholarship, creativity, and who we are and can become as women. Through presentations, interactions, and witnessing women's participation in key world movements, we explored our collective experiences and our lives as women in personal and global contexts. Shared narratives and research challenged us and rekindled our spirits.

The first presentation became the hallmark of the conference, invoking collective spirits and interweaving the personal and political. Nola, Carole, and Johnice Jeanpierre recounted five generations of rich oral history in their family. Their songs and narratives presented a dramatic re-telling of their family's journey from slavery, life in rural Georgia, across the "trail of tears" into Arkansas and later to life in Omaha.

The presentations that followed throughout the conference explored the voices of women, past and present, in their economic, political, social and personal realities as well as those depicted in literature. Students representing the University of Nebraska as well as other Midwestern institutions presented papers on such issues as: the role of women in Russian history; international women's movements; present day obstacles; women's role in the Civil Rights movement; religious roles of women in Native American traditions; Pre- and Post-War attitudes in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (Heather Wood); poetic interpretations of women's voices throughout history (JC Reilly); dyke poetry (Kris Gandara); international female student's academic success (Rachida Faid-Douglas); and a dramatic presentation of what it is to become women (Jamie Stock and Melissa Raabe). Emotionally charged presentations brought the scholarship to life, giving tangible meaning to the experience of education.

Included in the conference was an appearance by Adilah Barnes, Award-Winning Stage Actor of ABC's "Roseanne," who gave a dramatic interpretation of influential historical, political, and literary figures. The women portrayed included: Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Mary McLeod Bethune, Zora Neale Hurston, Lorraine

Hansberry, Angela Davis, and Maya Angelou, voices spanning from 1797 to the present. This one-woman act transformed and challenged the idea of what it is to be woman, to be black, and to create. Barnes noted that both the purpose and importance of her creation is to bring these revolutionary spirits to the present and realize the interconnectedness of their voices. Thus, the conversation continues spurring revolution and action.

Also calling women to act, Elisabeth Kopp, the Minister of Justice in Switzerland, spoke on what women can contribute through political action. Emphasizing that physically filling political positions with women is vital to fulfilling feminist visions of equality, Kopp reiterated that the role and presence of women as policy makers shapes the nature of political exchange, both in what is produced and in how those negotiations come to be made. Moreover, this action supports a society that values women, children, and families. Among the first of elected women in Switzerland, as women there gained the right to vote in 1971, Elisabeth Kopp is representative of women living without limits, breaking through 21st century boundaries.

The interplay of women's sexuality, motherhood, sisterhood, friendship, and intellectual prowess proved that women's inquiry leads us to even greater understanding of ourselves, our world, and our ways of knowing. We want to thank all of those involved, and especially the Women's Studies Program at the University of Nebraska at Kearney for making this rewarding experience possible for us .

Kelly Payne and Heather Hunter are M.A. students in English.



JC Reilly, Heather Wood, Heather Hunter, Tosha Sampson-Choma, Kelly Payne, (in back) Prof. Linda Lewis, Bethany College, former UNL Alumna.



“Can Values be Good for Science”

A Review

by Margit Berquist-Tracey

Dr. Helen Longino presented an informative and provocative lecture “Can Values be Good for Science” to the UNL community on 20 February 2002. Dr. Longino is Professor of History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Minnesota. She has authored books, chapters and essays. Among these are *Science As Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry* (1990) and *The Fate of Knowledge* (2002).

Based on the lecture’s title, the audience might have assumed that her stance would be “no”, that the goal should be achieving what supposedly already exists, valueless science; science that is truly objective. However, Longino’s theory involves recognizing and utilizing multiple positions and biases. She would like to see the question of who decides truth(s) move to a consensus approach by bringing together multiple critical communities. She disputes current scientific methodology where the questions asked in large part determine the answers found.

To achieve these new critical communities, Longino advocates inclusiveness and the presence of both intellectual and cognitive knowers at all stages of research. An intellectual knower is a person who can participate in the discourse while not being an expert in the field under discussion. The cognitive knowers would be the people traditionally considered “experts” in the field. The communities must embrace diversity to be able to effectively and critically question. Power is thus diffused, and the questions are changed.

The question of expertise in a community has applications outside of science as well. For example, when electing an official, do you support a representative who holds your view (and assume s/he will vote that way), or do you depend on him/her to investigate and issue and apply the “common good” standard when voting?

What we must realize is that a perceived “truth” can not direct inquiry; the truth (or truths) is/are what inquiry seeks. Therefore, to paraphrase Dr. Longino, values do, and must continue to, have a constructive role in science and the production of knowledge.

While on campus, Dr. Longino also met with the Women’s Studies Senior Seminar and the Women, Gender and Science class. In the seminar, she went into greater detail regarding the formation of critical communities. She

acknowledged the difficulty of their formation while restating her belief that they are absolutely necessary. The formation of these communities is the philosophical ideal we must reach for. Another question that came up in seminar was the relevance of these critical communities. The question then becomes a variation of “who decides” and “on whom do the masses rely?”

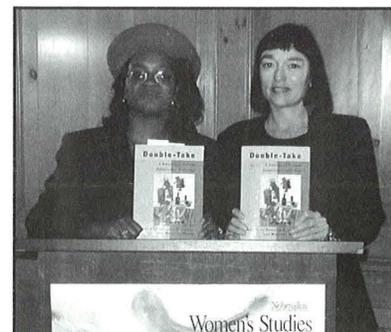
I suspect the discussion in Dr. Mary Beck and Dr. Peg Bolick’s class was just as lively. As an aside, I highly recommend their class to anyone who can take it. You don’t need a heavy science background to appreciate and learn from it.

Margit Berquist-Tracey is a senior Women’s Studies major.

Pictures from Women’s Studies COLLOQUIA



Crystal Edwards, Dr. Kwakiutl Dreher, Dr. Valerie Lee, Dr. Venetria Patton & Tosha Sampson-Choma at the Colloquium on “Neo-Slave Narratives: Writing Race & Gender for the 21st Century”



Venetria Patton & Maureen Honey at Colloquium on “Women’s Studies & African American Studies: A Revisionist Anthology on the Harlem Renaissance”



“Mentoring for Women: Who Cares Enough to Fund It?”

A report on a Women Studies Internship

by Alaina Bupp

The work that I am currently involved in with the Marj Marlette Center focuses upon starting the mentoring program for incarcerated women who have served their sentences and are re-entering society. The goal of this program is to provide the women with a resource in the community who can provide emotional and mental support, access to the community, and who can help the women re-establish their lives.

I have been having difficulties actually starting the mentoring program. The Marj Marlette Center now cooperates with Fresh Start Homes and is based in their facility. The move and integration was a long process with several financial repercussions. The funding for the Marj Marlette Center is now in conjunction with Fresh Start Homes; before the move it was a separate entity with its own federal grant money. The recent move and merger happened because a few dedicated women decided not to let the center close after it lost its grant. The center's service is invaluable to a community such as Lincoln where many women are forced onto its streets simply because of a lack of resources available to female ex-convicts. The center provided help to over a hundred women in its first year, but lost its funding due to political negotiations. Mary Kite, the head of the center, took a large pay cut, gave up her private office, and moved the entire operation in order to keep it serving women.

Because of the financial strains already on Fresh Start Homes and facing the Marj Marlette Center, starting the mentoring program has been difficult. I created a brochure advertising the program to potential mentors and organizations that would provide mentor candidates. However, I have not been able to mass print these brochures to distribute them. I have gotten many quotes on printing the brochures, but each time, the price is too expensive.

I was very excited about the project when I first started, but the more I get delayed and put on hold, the more I realize that government cares little about this cause. Lack of government funding (both organizations are not for

profit) has caused both Fresh Start Homes and the Marj Marlette Center to be forced to service fewer women in fewer ways.

My success in starting the mentoring program depends upon government funds; these funds are just not allocated to groups whose focus is women who have been in prison, even though these women often have incredibly difficult times succeeding and surviving in society. My experience, while frustrating, has taught me that these women need someone to give them a voice more than anything else. We need more active women to volunteer their time and energy to make this cause (and many others) more visible to the public and the government. Without more support from willing people in the community, programs like this will die, and without the services of this program and others like it women will turn to their old lives upon getting out of prison.

Alaina Bupp is a sophomore Women's Studies and English major.

*Congratulations to the following
Women's Studies Major and Minors
who will be graduating:*

**Majors: Sarah Hochstein &
Melissa Nosal**

**Minors: Kari Bzoski,
Genevieve Critel, Liz East,
Marissa Gill, Amy Hastings,
Karen Moran & Kylie Wolf**

*Graduation Reception
Wednesday May 1, 2002
3:30 pm
Nebraska Union
Everyone Invited to Attend!*

Be a Friend to the Women's Studies Program!

Yes, I will give to the Women's Studies Program!

- My check for \$100, \$50, \$25, \$10, Other _____,
payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation, specify account #5285, is enclosed.
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Exp. Date _____ Signature if making a pledge or using your credit card.

Amount pledged to support the Women's Studies Development Fund: \$ _____ Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

- I'd like to fulfill my pledge over a period of _____ years (not to exceed five years) beginning _____ (month) of _____ (year)

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