

# WOMEN'S STUDIES

## Spring Newsletter

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

MAY 2010

### Leisa Meyer wins service award



In January, Leisa Meyer, Distinguished Associate Professor of History and American Studies, was awarded an inaugural Award for Faculty Governance. Although Professor Meyer is tenured in History and American Studies, we feel as if we have a full second half of her in Women's Studies. Leisa arrived at the College in 1994 and began working with then Director of Women's Studies, Nancy Gray. A few years later, when Leisa succeeded Nancy as Director, she worked hard to ensure that the program grew and flourished. She directed the program *as she went through tenure*, an indication of her willingness to make great sacrifices. She has a strong investment in our work, bringing her intelligence and conviction to all she does. Leisa Meyer has been an outstanding activist on this campus, working for women's issues, expanding our knowledge of gender and sexuality studies, and educating administrators and colleagues on the crucial role of interdisciplinary studies. *(Continued on Page 4).*



### Welcome to Duc-Le Nguyen

In early November, Duc-le Nguyen joined Women's Studies as our new Administrative Assistant. Given all the work she handles—budgets, brochures, scheduling, receptions—she is truly an Office Manager. She has proven a quick study of the Banner system, state reimbursement procedures, and the duo demands of two directors: Christy Burns in Women's Studies and Berhanu Abegaz in Africana Studies. Her learning curve has been high and fast, and we have delighted in her efficiency and reassuring presence.

Duc-le came to us from World Learning in DC, a non-profit that specializes in international education and student exchange. She moved here to join her husband, who is a Ph.D. candidate in Computer Science. Before moving to D.C. she received a M.Ed. from the UMass-Amherst, specializing in international education. Before that, she lived in Hanoi, Vietnam, where she was born and raised. Please stop by and welcome her!

### Saying Goodbye to Elizabeth Currans

We are sad to be losing our Visiting Assistant Professor Elizabeth Currans. The happy news, however, is that she has accepted a tenure track offer in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at Eastern Michigan University. Programs cannot be a tenure base at William & Mary, so we are happy for Beth's more secure future. And we are grateful to her. Her work on theorizing and doing activism has been an inspiration and has raised the level of such work in our program. She taught several new courses for us: an Introduction to LGBTQ Studies, a course on Transgender Studies, and a senior seminar, *Activist Performances, Performing Activism*. She also taught *Queer Theory and Transnational Feminisms* with an emphasis on global solidarity.



She helped our many students, directing honors theses, coordinating our introductory course (WMST 205), and helping organize events addressing topics such as gender and race in the 2008 presidential election, the plight of women in Haiti, and queer women in religion. We will be hiring a new instructor soon, but it's hard to imagine anyone filling Beth Currans' shoes. Good luck, Beth, and thanks!

## Focus: Activism



In the fall we focused on where our Women's Studies alumnae have gone, for jobs, careers, and adventures. In this issue, we honor our activists. We headline with Leisa Meyer's service award, and we focus on some of our student activists. Also, our main introductory course, Women's Studies 205, features many community action projects (CAPs) that students design and execute every spring. You will find a lovely list of those below.

Finally, we are delighted to honor our seventeen graduating seniors and wish them well. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Christy Burns [clburn@wm.edu](mailto:clburn@wm.edu). Thanks to Duc-Le Nguyen for layout and design work.

## Community Action Projects (CAP)

**Conceptualized and Organized by Students in the Introduction to Women's Studies (WMST 205) course**

Instructor: *Elizabeth Currans*  
Mellon Fellow: *Cherie Seise*

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### Questioning Blog

<http://questioningatwm.tumblr.com/>  
"...a safe space for students and others to speak openly about their experiences with their sexual orientation without fear of judgment."

### Namaste

This group is putting together an event, including a self-made education video, to raise awareness in the W&M community about various issues affecting women in rural India.

### "And the Beat Goes On..."

A Walk-A-Thon to raise money for the American Heart Association and to educate the William and Mary community about how heart health affects women.

Instructor: *Elizabeth Currans*  
Mellon Fellow: *Jessee Vasold*

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### Surry Listening Project

A documentary to convey stories, with minimal influence from the producers, of the lives of the women organizing the Surry Justice League against the construction of the Surry Coal Plant.

### Every Body is Fashionable

<http://fashionwm.blogspot.com/>  
To promote & educate campus about the diversity of body types, especially when it comes to fashion and different styles by hosting a fair on the Crim Dell Meadows.

### Women's History

Develop a performance adaptable to audience of different age groups to educate young women and men about prominent women in history and the contemporary.

Instructor: *Danielle Currier*  
Mellon Fellow: *Cate Domino*

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### The Hook-Up Etiquette Class

An opportunity to create an open dialogue about hook-up culture and consent at W&M. Students shared their research with those attending.

### "Hair"

A film screening, followed by a guide discussion, to demonstrate the myriad relationships that women have with hair. It is a combination of artistic photographs and stories.

### Gay Play Day

An opportunity for the athletic community and the LGBTQIA community to come together. The event was open to everyone, regardless of their athletic status or orientation.

Instructor: *Caroline Hasenyager*  
Mellon Fellow: *Abby Cox*

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**Women in the Military**

Raised awareness of the difficulties faced by women serving in the military. Sent care packages to women on the military bases.

**Mary Blog**

(<http://marywm.wordpress.com>) Addressed real and relevant concerns to W&M students. Blog topics range from fashion and film to community happenings and campaigns.

**Women and the Environment**

Screening of the documentary "Love, Labor, Loss" to raise awareness of the impact of environmental degradation on quality of life with emphasis on the particular ways women are affected.



Instructor: *Sasha Prokhorov*  
Mellon Fellow: *Elizabeth Miller*

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**Recreation Center**

Helped men and women feel equally comfortable in a public space. Created a free-weightlifting class strictly for women at the Recreation Center.

**Schools and Self-Esteem**

Built self-esteem in young middle school girls by introducing them to feminist fairy tales that lead to interesting discussions on gender and feminism.

Instructor: *Alix Jerome*  
Mellon Fellow: *Casey Sears*

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**Education brings Freedom**

A Music and Poetry Festival to help raise money and awareness for the Central Asia Institute.

**Women's Access to Education**

Collaborated with the Forum for African Women Educationalists to send school supplies to Sudan.

**Same Sex Marriage Rally**

Raised awareness for the struggle to attain same sex marriages across the US.

**Real Beauty**

Supported the Dove Real Beauty campaign in encouraging a healthy body image among W&M students. Conducted surveys among students.

**Congratulations to our Graduating Seniors!**

**MAJORS**

Andrea F. Brown  
Abigail L. Cox  
Kelly N. Danner  
Irene Davidson  
Catherine P. Domino  
Jennifer B. Entwistle  
Kaley L. Horton

Meghan E. Hottel  
Ashley M. Lugo  
Lisa A. Maund  
Emily S. Rafal  
Sarah V. Rose  
Cherie A. Seise  
Katherine S. Williams



**MINORS**

Karyn L. Bruggema  
Megan C. Gazzola  
Rachel T. Sharp

**Honors**

**Andrea Brown, Highest Honors:** *The Best That You Can Be: Conflicting Messages of Liberation and Oppression in Indian Cosmopolitan Magazine.*

**Megan Hottel, High Honors:** *Sex is Still Politics: An Analysis of Race, Gender Performance, and Political Learning in the Thomas-Hill and Clinton-Lewinsky Sex Scandals.*

**Emily Rafal, High Honors:** *Legislating Sex: The Influence of Public Opinion on Sex Education Policy in Virginia*

## Kathy Davis's Keynote: *The Transnational Travels of Our Bodies, Ourselves*



For our 14th Annual Minnie G. Braithwaite Lecture, Professor Kathy Davis of the Institute of History and Culture at Utrecht University in The Netherlands, delivered a keynote speech on *Feminism as Traveling Theory: The Case of Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

In 1969, a group of U.S. women met in Boston to discuss women's issues. They talked about sexuality, about abortion, pregnancy, childbirth and their experiences with the medical profession. Frustrated with their doctors' approaches to women's bodies, they founded the Boston Women's Health Collective (BWHC), which eventually produced *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, a feminist classic book on women's health issues. Kathy Davis explored the world-wide travels of this book, examining the ways in which it was transformed in the process of its many border crossings.

Dr. Davis has taught psychology, sociology, and gender studies at universities in Europe and the Netherlands. She is the author of many important books: *Power under the Microscope* (Foris, 1988), *Reshaping the Female Body* (Routledge, 1995), *Dubious Equalities and Embodied Differences* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) and she has also given feminist studies many outstanding anthologies: *The Gender of Power* (Sage, 1991), *Negotiating at the Margins* (Rutgers University Press, 1992), *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body* (Sage, 1997), and *The Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies* (Sage, 2006) with Mary Evans and Judith Lorber.

When Kathy Davis turned toward this latest project, she planned to write a cultural history of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, doing an oral history along with archival research, working with BWHC. She wanted to publish a history that would explain the enormous social impact of the book on women in the U.S. Yet several years into the project, she discovered that the book had had a life outside the U.S. as well. It has been translated, adapted, and disseminated by local groups of activists around the globe. There are now 34 editions and the end is nowhere in sight. As Professor Davis noted, "It has been U.S. feminism's most popular export."

Translation and adaptation appeared in European countries in the 70s and 80s. It was published in Japan in 1975, and by the 1980s moved south and east, to Egypt, Israel, Russia, South Africa, India, Thailand, and the list continues. Using traveling theory, Dr. Davis found that the book traveled because it was a best seller. In addition, the BWHC used royalties to send free copies to women's clinics abroad. Feminist travelers took copies of the book in their backpacks, leaving them in women's clinics. When less affluent countries found translation, adaptation, and publication impossible, the Collective helped local women write for grants.

### **Leisa Meyer wins service award** *(Continued from Page 1)*

Phil Daileader, Chair of History, notes that "From Strategic Planning to coaching Women's Rugby, Leisa has done it all. Leisa's service has been especially effective in making the College a more diverse and a more tolerant place." Prof. Meyer has served on the national level on the the American Historical Association's Committee on Gay and Lesbian History, and as a co-chair of the its Taskforce on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History/Historians. We are proud and delighted to see Leisa honored with this award. Cheers for Leisa!

## Casey Sears, Activism Award Winner 2010

**Main Focus:** The bulk of my activism usually focuses on reproductive rights and sexual health education. This year, in response to a wave of bigotry directed at the LGBT community in Virginia, my activism has shifted to LGBT rights and equality. The main work that I did was a shared burden between Cassie Ad-dair, Becky Little, Laura Andrews, and countless others. We organized a phonebanking effort directed towards AG Cuccunelli and Gov. McDonnell, we organized an on-campus protest demanding LGBT inclusion in the W&M by-laws, we created press packets and virtual media campaigns, and we did our best to keep everything current with the goals of national organizations such as Get Equal and the National Equality March.



**Why Doing Activism Matters:** These issues are all about social freedom and the ability to determine how one leads his/her/hir own life. The LGBT rights movement will directly affect hiring policies, governmentally sanctioned family structures, and tax benefits. Much to my own chagrin I'm realizing that I'm coming very close to living in the "real world," and these matters will impact my life in critical ways. If I want to have the same rights and freedoms as heterosexual citizens, I'm going to have to fight for those rights and freedoms. I hope that one day we all won't have to fight as hard as we do to work towards social justice, but until then I'm not going to stop doing what I'm doing.

**Its Influence on Your Future:** This has already influenced my future career a good deal. I'm planning to apply to Teach For America, and then go into graduate school for either Public Health or Gender Studies. Either way, I'm going to end up in a career that focuses on how activism can help those who need it and can protect the rights of global citizens.

## Kali Murphy

My involvement had to do with planning a conference hosted by *Every 2 Minutes* in November 2009. I planned it with the help of Trisha Hunsaker and Katie Robeson, the goal being to create a stronger network between peer education groups in Virginia. We hosted a day with seminars that discussed writing a script, getting an audience involved, and other things. This semester I am President of *Every 2 Minutes* and have been working on the continual editing and practicing of our script. Besides *Every 2 Minutes*, my other big focus this past semester was finishing up a service project Shannon Linehan and I created together. We worked with Berkeley Middle School to host an after school program to discuss ways to do community service, what it is, and also empowerment for future life goals. We were able to bring a few speakers in from the College and answer their questions on going to college, etc. The conference and the empowerment through service program were my primary projects in Fall 2009.

## Kim Green

Some of the things I've done fall into a very broad category of activism. I worked on the Russell campaign with the Tidewater Labor Support Committee. This consisted of writing an article that was published in the *Flat Hat* and organizing letter delegations. I ran for Freshman Class Senator and received majority votes. After my first semester, I resigned to apply for a position that concerned me more, and have just recently been appointed Undersecretary of LGBT Affairs. Other work in the range of activism: read W.E.B Dubois' "Credo" with Bailey Thompson at the NAACP's Black History Program; spoke at Queer Expressions I and performed a non-heteronormative/queer poetry at Queer Expressions II; also performed non-heteronormative/queer poetry at IPAX's Monologue Showcase. Finally, I submitted an original poem to the I AM W&M campaign that was also posted in the "Questioning" blog.



## **Prizes from Women's Studies: 2009-2010**

### **The Dean's Prize for Student Scholarship on Women**

**Teresa Ingraham:** "It Was Not Too Late": Winterson's Use Of The Female Body In Producing A New And Uniquely Feminine Representational Form (written for ENGL 465: Postmodern Fiction and Theory with Prof. Christy Burns)

In Teresa's paper on Art & Lies by Jeanette Winterson, she explores comparisons of the female body to parchment, canvases, maps and books – all of which intimately tie feminine methods of representation to unique expressions of desire, sexuality, and creational power. She argues that Winterson parallels the female body to a text or canvas to emphasize the masculinity of representational history and to call for a reclamation of female expressive power. Her conflation of language and body and the relocation of creative agency to the female's sex successfully 'genders' a new representational form and excludes masculine participation in the 'meaning-making' process.

**Laurel Daen:** Martha Ann Honeywell and the Art of Self Presentation in American's Early Republic (written for HIST715: American History to 1815 with Prof. Brett Rushforth). Laurel's essay examines the early nineteenth-century itinerant artist Martha Ann Honeywell who traveled throughout America and Europe exhibiting her cut-and-paste silhouettes, embroidery, waxwork, and miniature writing samples. Interestingly, Honeywell also had a physical disability and was born without hands and with just three toes on one foot.

Laurel is pursuing her MA in History and Teresa is majoring in English and Psychology.

### **Friends of Women's Studies Student Activism Award**

Casey Sears (WMST major, graduates 2011)

### **Carol Woody Internship Awards (for travel-related internships over spring break or the summer)**

All four students used their Carol Woody funding to go on the William and Mary delegation with seven other W&M students and a group of Argentine students to Borderlinks on the U.S.-Mexico border. They spent a week learning about border issues first-hand. They studied a variety of organizations (both governmental and grassroots) involved with immigration at the U.S./Mexico border. Their travel was linked to a course on Borderlands, taught by Jennifer Bickham-Mendez and Silvia Tandeciarz, in Sociology and Hispanic Studies.

**Virginia Jenkins:** Hispanic Studies and Environmental Science and Policy.

**Kate Hibbs:** Hispanic Studies and Self-Designed major

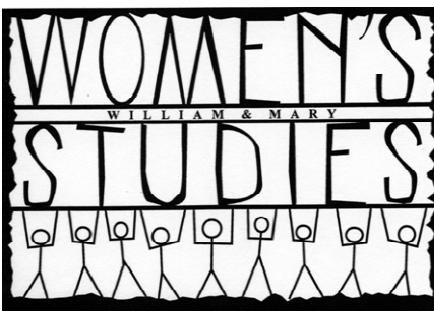
**Jessica Gold:** Sociology

**Kate Ainsworth:** Kinesiology and Sociology



**Majors, Minors  
Graduates**

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