Message from the Chair

It has been a busy semester with a steep learning curve for me as our department’s acting chair, and I’m proud to say that everything has gone wonderfully, all things considered. We are weathering tough economic times that have put pressure on all parts of the CSU system, and WGS is no exception. Nonetheless, we have continued to strengthen our department, and we’re moving in many dynamic directions, building on the energy that comes from new and eager faculty. I will admit, though, that this fall I will be happy to turn the helm back over to Professor Charlene Tung!

Even with our fearless leader on a much-deserved sabbatical, WGS has continued to bring new feminist and queer scholarship and programming to the campus. In April, Dr. Lena McQuade worked with students and Circle of Sisters to bring the annual Power of Know conference to SSU. Read more inside about how dozens of middle-school girls explored an array of topics most central to their lives and ambitions. Also in April at the WGS Annual Program, founding Women’s Studies Program director Ann Neel joined longtime SSU staff member Chuck Rhodes, Lena, and me for “Gay Back in the Day: An Intergenerational Roundtable.” It was a far-reaching discussion with a packed room of students, faculty, and alumni on everything from lesbian feminism and gay liberation to AIDS and from the precariousness of institutional memory to the shifting spaces for queer people on campus and in the community. Our annual Queer Studies Lecture Series, funded through the Instructionally-Related Activities Program, also brought twelve cutting-edge scholars, activists, and artists to SSU. This time, I also enhanced the series by screening several documentaries after which students enjoyed intimate Q&As with the filmmakers (details inside).

We sustain the department not only through empowering students, but through our connections with alumni and community members. Keep in touch! Send along any updates to Newsletter Editor Lena McQuade (mcquade@sonoma.edu). If you can, also consider sending a donation to our WGS Foundation (see last page). Your contributions allow us to put on WGS programming that will keep us leading the SSU campus community by inspiring, provoking, and bringing together diverse people and issues in the ways that only we can.

Dr. Don Romesburg
Spring 2009 Activities

Gay Back in the Day:
An Intergenerational Dialogue

On April 23, nearly 50 people came to listen, learn, and join in the conversation at the annual WGS topical panel. At “Gay Back in the Day: An Intergenerational Roundtable,” recently hired WGS professors Lena McQuade and Don Romesburg interviewed current SSU Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Chuck Rhodes, and Ann Neel, who was the founding Women’s Studies Coordinator from 1972 to 1975. In a poignant and powerful discussion, panelists shared memories about activism, community, controversies, and campus climate for LGBT people during Sonoma State’s early years. The roundtable testified to how precarious institutional memory can be, and how crucial it is to transform legacies of the past into opportunities for the present and visions of the future.

Rhodes, a member of the SSU community since 1980, the former advisor to QSA/Bi-Glass, and a father and grandfather, described negotiating being open and out in the 1980s when so many campus lesbians and gay men were closeted. He also spoke to the painful impact of HIV/AIDS on campus and the activism it inspired. Rhodes marked how a tight-knit and engaged queer community back then is substantially different from the more dispersed queer life on campus today.

Neel talked about her own coming of age in an era of lesbian pulp novels and alienating “expert” texts. She saw her time at SSU as part of a larger movement for lesbians and feminism, and developed the “Woman-Identified Woman” course to, as the first description read, “help liberated women and lesbians survive in a world that is hostile to them.” She spoke of the radical perspectives and activities that WGS enabled on campus and beyond in the 1970s.

It was a night to remember, and was recorded for posterity! Check it out on the SSU YouTube site: http://www.youtube.com/CSUSonoma.

2009 Queer Studies Lecture Series Most Popular Yet

The Spring 2009 Queer Studies Lecture Series brought 12 amazing and diverse speakers to SSU and enjoyed regular weekly attendance of 70-plus students, faculty, staff, and community members. Activists, scholars, care workers and professionals each put their own spins on the general themes for the semester, “Community and Care” and “Queer Cultural Productions.” Topics included: immigration, drag, and trans identity; LGBT community centers; queerness, identity, and transnationalism in literary studies; youth gender diversity; same-sex marriage debates and race; contemporary HIV prevention innovations; queercore music; female-to-male counseling and aging; queering the add-ons of Hollywood DVDs; queer and feminist publishing; heteronormativity and the history of sex education; and diversity and expression in queer porn produced by women of color. The series was cosponsored by the WGS department and the Instructionally Related Activities Program.

Check out the slate of speakers at: www.sonoma.edu/womensstudies/current_lectures.htm
My most memorable moment at this year’s Power of Know conference came during the opening when I looked out over the excited faces of 60 girls from local 6th, 7th, and 8th grades seated in the Multipurpose Room of the SSU Student Union. The girls had just been on campus tours and were eagerly awaiting the start of the workshops. Amy Chevrolet, Program Coordinator for Circle of Sisters, and I queried the girls: “How many of you have ever visited a college campus before?” and a few tentative hands went up. Then we asked: “Who wants to go to college?” and the response was unanimous—all 60 girls shot their hands up in the air. Witnessing that enthusiastic response, I thought—this is the next generation of women college students; the next wave of women leaders; this is the “power of know.”

The Women’s and Gender Studies Department, in collaboration with Circle of Sisters, hosted the sixth annual half-day conference on the SSU campus for middle-school aged girls from throughout Sonoma County. The girls have all been participants in Circle of Sisters, a local community organization dedicated to reducing violence by enhancing the self-esteem of girls through after-school programs. SSU students enrolled in a WGS 311 course designed and presented all the workshops at the conference (see the list of workshops below). In addition to gaining valuable skills in event planning, workshop design, and public speaking, the SSU students had the opportunity, in the words of one participant, “to really make a difference in the community.” Special thanks to AmeriCorps Promise Fellows Becca Schlichtig and Jen Hyman and WGS intern Cassandra Holloway who all helped make this class and conference such a success.

Dr. Lena McQuade

Power of Know Spring 2009 Workshops

“Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds”
- Media Literacy
- Nutrition and Healthy Eating
- Body Image and Self Esteem

“Mean Girls”
- How to Detect and Prevent Bullying
- Cyber/Text Bullying
- Conflict Resolution

“Greeting Me”
- Self Esteem Building
- Positive Self Affirmations
- “About Me” Arts and Crafts

“Ready, Set, Goal!”
- Steps to Achieving Goals
- Personal and Academic Goal Setting
- “My Goals” Arts and Crafts
WGS Student Wins Statewide Award

SSU student Erin Garnett received a FIRST place award at the 23rd annual CSU Student Research Competition, held May 1-2 at CSU, Los Angeles. Erin, completing her BA this year with a double major in Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies, received first place in the Undergraduate Behavioral and Social Sciences division.

Erin's research, "Banning Familial Love: Definitions of Family in GLBT-Themed Children's Literature," is a content analysis study that argues that GLBT-themed children's literature defines family on the basis of love, rather than gender and sexuality, and examines its consequences. She was mentored by Professors Melinda Milligan and Sheila Katz, Sociology.

Over 150 students, representing all of the 23 CSU campuses, competed for the awards. Students submitted a summary of their research and then presented orally before a panel of jurors and were evaluated in several areas, including clarity of purpose, appropriateness of methodology, interpretation of results, value of the research, ability to articulate the research, organization of the material, and ability to handle questions from the jury and general audience. Congratulations Erin!
Department News

Internships

WGS students complete 120 to 180 hours of community involvement or internship as part of their requirements to graduate. Internships enable students to draw connections between concepts they learn in classes and their experiences in local community organizations. Through the SSU WGS Internship program, students logged over 1,800 hours of work this Spring 2009 semester.

Amanda Bautista  
Lattice Educational Services (Santa Rosa, CA)

Leslie Burns  
Napa Valley Hospice and Adult Care (Napa, CA)

Dzidzonu Djugba  
SSU Student Health Center Intern

Sophie Eckert  
SSU Teaching Assistant for WGS 375

Laura Egelhoff  
Circle of Sisters (Santa Rosa, CA)

Jennifer Gonzalez  
United Against Sexual Assault (Santa Rosa, CA)

Rachel Higgins  
Sonoma County YMCA (Petaluma, CA)

Cassandra Holloway  
SSU Power of Know Conference Organizer Intern  
WGS Department Event Planning

Julie Lewis  
Newsletter Intern, WGS Department

Bianca May  
YWCA Sonoma County

Elizabeth Mackey  
New Beginnings Center (Novato, CA)

Marissa Oswald  
United Against Sexual Assault (Santa Rosa, CA)  
Sonoma County Health Department (Santa Rosa, CA)

Megan Quinn  
Women’s Health and Birth Center (Santa Rosa, CA)

Lindsay Schweichler  
Women’s Initiative (Novato, CA)

Linda Smith  
Family Connection (Santa Rosa, CA)

Spring & Summer 2009  
WGS Graduates  
~ Congratulations! ~

WGS Majors

Amanda Vinluan Bautista  
Ali E. Boecker  
Maureen Burch

Ashley Nicole Carrion  
Dzidzonu Abla Djugba  
Sophia M. Eckert  
Laura Jean Egelhoff  
Erin Showler Garnett  
Rachel Claire Higgins  
Cassandra Holloway  
Stacie Jensen  
Megan Vieno Johnson  
Julie Rae Lewis  
Elizabeth A. Mackey  
Bianca May  
Shelby Lynn Means  
Alyssa Messer  
Marissa Ann Oswald  
Megan Quinn  
Jacquelyn R. Weiss

WGS Minors

Jamie Rae Akard  
Nikole Ashley Harmon  
Katherine Roze Menzies  
Kyle Francis Shaw  
Sheryl Ann Wells

Women’s Health Minors

Dzidzonu Abla Djugba  
Shelby Lynn Means  
Marissa Ann Oswald
WGS Alumni News

Nicole Andaya (2007), WGS major, is living and working in Rohnert Park as a Property Manager. She is enrolled in a certification course to teach English as a Second Language and looks forward to working abroad teaching English. She hopes “the WGS program continues to grow and enrich the lives of its students, the way it did mine.”

Stacy Cohen (2003), WGS major and Psychology minor, is now the Assistant Dean of Students at Sonoma Academy in Santa Rosa. She writes: “I hope to go to grad school soon for a Masters in Education, Counseling, Psychology or Adolescent Studies. Currently, I teach health and wellness classes, advise students, and lead international trips with groups of teens. WGS gave me a solid background in race, class, and gender, all topics of my current work. It also gave me the skills to work with teens who face a variety of compelling issues—we all know high school is not just about academics. I have a special appreciation for Dr. Charlene Tung. She was my most memorable professor. Not only did I learn so much in her courses, I also learned a ton about myself.”

Jill Gover, Ph.D. (1976), WGS minor and Psychology major, is Director of Mental Health Services at Long Valley Health Center a federally qualified (FQHC) integrated community health center serving Mendocino County. Jill looks forward to doing a presentation in London for National Health Service psychologists working in primary health care settings.

Heather Henderickson (2004), WGS major. Masters degree from the University of South Australia (2007).

Heather tell us: "Last month I traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to work as a volunteer at the Selamta Family Project, an NGO that provides housing, food and medical care for 80 orphans. There are over 1 million children orphans in Ethiopia as a result of the AIDS/HIV epidemic. On the last day of the trip we brought 3 girls to live at Selamta. Both parents had died; the mother in childbirth 8 years ago, and the father quite recently (probably from AIDS). The elder sister, Zara, with scarf had turned to prostitution to help take care of her younger sisters—ages 8, 10 and 12. The girls now receive a private school education, 3 meals a day, medical care and a loving family: all for $1,000/ child/year.”

Megan Izen (2005), WGS major and Math minor, is working with Applied Research Center, a racial justice think tank and home for media and activism. She writes: "I am a regular contributor to RaceWire.org, the ColorLines magazine blog. I just joined the Advisory/Community Outreach Team for the Vote Reverend Billy Talen for NYC Mayor Campaign.”

Debbie McCallum (2000), WGS and Creative Writing major went on to earn a Masters in Counselling at SSU (2005). After taking the last 2 years to be home with her daughter, she is now back to work part time starting a private practice in Sebastopol.

Hilary Moore (2007), double major in WGS and Human Development with an Anthropology minor. Hilary is currently in graduate school at Prescott College in Arizona through a distance/ correspondence program, studying Social Ecology and Activism. She reports that: “although I am a part-time personal assistant, my WGS degree absolutely prepared me for grad school; it permeates your thinking processes and leaves you wanting to know more.” Her advice to current SSU students: “Learn the processing skills of WGS and begin to envision a society with endless dialectic potential.”

Justine Wiley, WGS major, has been accepted into the Samuel Merritt Nursing School.

We love to hear from you (as do your fellow Alumni). Please contact the WGS Newsletter Editor at mcquade@sonoma.edu with your updates! Let us know how you are using your WGS degree and what your life looks like now that you have graduated.
"Internships to Employment: WGS Majors Prepare for Great Jobs and Pursue Masters Programs"

Student Perspectives

Megan Johnson:  WGS Major, 2009

What types of internships have you undertaken as a WGS major?

While a WGS major, I have had the opportunity to experience a couple of different internships. The first was with Circle of Sisters, an organization that runs after-school programs for middle-school aged girls. I have also interned with the WGS department, running an events page on face book and maintaining the department's on-line presence. I am currently volunteering with United Against Sexual Assault as a crisis line counselor.

What opportunities have developed as a result of your WGS internship experiences?

Recently, I started the application process for the Peace Corps. At first, during my Peace Corps interview the representative questioned if I had enough volunteer experience. As our interview continued and the representative reviewed the detailed volunteer experience paperwork I submitted, she was excited to see that between high school and college I had roughly six years of volunteer experience.

How does your internship experience set you apart from other applicants?

The Peace Corps representative noted that the work I have done and currently do with minorities and marginalized people was definitely what makes me a competitive applicant.

Julie Lewis: WGS Major, 2009

Describe your internship experience through your WGS Major?

I began in September 2008 as editorial assistant to Dr. Ellyn Kaschak, editor of Women & Therapy Journal, a highly-reputed psychology journal based at SSU. I am also assisting Dr. McQuade, editor of the WGS Newsletter.

In what ways will these internship experiences assist you in your future plans?

I hope to have my writing published in the future. Working on these two projects has given me a great deal of insight into what goes into a publishable piece of writing and getting items to print. The internships have also provided me the opportunity to meet and work with an incredible network of women activists, scholars, administrators, and fellow students. I believe these will be invaluable assets to me in future endeavors.

How will you use internships in your future plans?

I am pursuing a Master's in Inter-disciplinary Studies, where I am designing my own program through the History and Sociology departments. I hope to focus on Poverty and Structural Inequity Studies culminating with a publishable project. I will likely continue my internship with Dr. Kaschak and hope to stay involved with the WGS Department as an alumnus in whatever capacity I'm needed.
WGS Welcomes Your Support

Alumni and community members often ask us how they can stay involved or support WGS. There are numerous ways! Please see below! The WGS Foundation was set-up specifically to assist the department in providing quality curriculum enhancements and activities for students of WGS. Possibilities for use include travel grants, research opportunities, and technological innovations.

I am interested in:

___ Sitting on a WGS Alumni Panel  
___ Contributing to the WGS Foundation*  

| $5-$50 Friend |
| $50-$75 Supporter |
| $75 & above Advocate |

___ WGS Alumni Book Club  
___ WGS Alumni Facebook/MySpace or other online community  

* Checks payable to: WGS Foundation  
* Mail form/email interest to mcquade@sonoma.edu  
Department address below.

Contact Us

WGS Department Office. 707-664-2840. Joann.Smith@sonoma.edu