

Research and Sponsored Programs

ANNUAL REPORT OF RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

For the period July 1, 2014 – June 30 2015 (FY15)

Center/Institute: Center for the Study of Women and Society

Director: Linda Martín Alcoff

Phone: 212-817-8896

Email: lalcoff@gc.cuny.edu

Office space: Room 5116

A. ACTIVITIES

LECTURES: We organized a monthly lecture series, the Gender and Sexuality Lecture Series, which ran for the 6th year in a row and was very well-attended, with some standing room only events. Funding for the events came from our tax levy funds and our own Director's Fund.

Speakers for the Fall included Rutgers Professor Zakia Salime on "Gender and Sexuality in the Arab Uprising," Barnard Professor Kim Hall and NYU Professor Jennifer Morgan on "Slavery and the Sweet Taste of Empire," and Columbia Professor Lila Abu-Lughod on women and Islam. There were two large events on gender issues in prison with leading activists and theorists in the New York area, and a packed house event for the Fight for \$15 with SEIU President Mary Kay Henry in the Proshansky Auditorium.

Speakers for the Spring included Brooklyn College Professor and holder of the Jay Neuman Chair, Serene Khader, on Religious Identities and Feminist Concepts of Freedom, Michigan State University Professor Kristie Dotson on Decolonial Black Feminism, and CUNY Professor Barbara Winslow on Shirley Chisholm.

We have begun organizing a regular semester event together with the Women's Studies Quarterly to launch new issues. At these events co-editors as well as contributors can speak about their work on the special topic. In the Spring we hosted an event on "Child," the WSQ latest issue, that was co-edited by Hunter College Professor Sarah Chinn.

COSPONSORSHIP: We also co-organized more than a dozen others events at the GC, providing funding and logistical support, advertising, and sometimes more. We gave support to a range of GC-affiliated institutions, including CLAGS, Society for the Study of Women in the Renaissance, the New York Society for Women in Philosophy, Writing Women's Lives, Leon Levy Center for Biography, Center for the Humanities, Middle Eastern Studies, MALS, IRADAC, French Department, English Department, History Department, The Poetics Group, Committee for the Interdisciplinary Study of Science, and the Postcolonial Group. We also helped to host several conferences: the "New Maternalisms" (The Annual Academic MOMS Conference), "Queers and Comics" (CLAGS), and on "Risking Vulnerability" (Political Science and French Departments).

Visiting Scholars: CSWS hosts Visiting Scholars who collaborate with our students and faculty, give talks on their research, and partake in the intellectual life of the Graduate Center.

For 2014/15 we hosted two visiting scholars: Ingrid Cyfer, Professor of Political Theory at the Federal University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and funded by FAPESP (A Brazilian Foundation), who works in the area of feminist critical theory, and Dr. Dirk Reynders, a Belgian Professor of visual communication theory who worked with Professor Paulicelli.

Outreach: We published two calendars (Fall 2014 and Spring 2015) which were mailed to approximately 3,000 individuals. We also published a newsletter (Fall of 2014), and this year for the first time we put it on the website so it could be accessed entirely electronically. We also host a Facebook page and Twitter account. We updated our website, especially to update our extensive 50+ Faculty list.

On December 12 and May 8 we held receptions to honor our graduate students who won CSWS prizes and affiliated faculty who have published books in this AY.

We also hosted a meeting of the CUNY wide 'Discipline Council,' with directors of Women's Studies majors, minors, and programs of interest from all CUNY campuses. We have started a listserv to share information in this group about events.

- B. **ACTIVITIES ASSESSMENT:** This past AY we made progress in developing stronger ties with CLAGS, to cosponsor events and to help us develop the Gender and Sexuality Track for the upcoming MA in Women's and Gender Studies (see below). We also secured good cooperation with other Graduate Center departments and programs of special interest for our MA Program, such as the Middle Eastern Studies program and the Political Science Department.

Yet we did not have funds for a conference of our own, and our ability to sustain a healthy speakers series is inhibited by the absence of support funds. This is a concern as we prepare to launch the new MA in Women's and Gender Studies.

C. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Center for the Study of Women and Society will be an important resource for the new M.A. in Women's and Gender Studies, providing a steady stream of programming on the latest and best scholarship as well as policy and advocacy work in the field.

M.A. Program:

On March 2, 2015, CUNY's Board of Trustees approved our proposal for an MA program, and sent it on to NY State Education Department for approval. We have been advised to expect approval in time for a launch date of Fall 2016, which means that the AY 15/16 will be spent preparing advertising materials, a new website, and getting our curriculum, thesis and internship guidelines, Admissions Committee, Advising procedures, and so forth, into place. The Center for the Study of Women and Society will be a critical support site for our New MA students, providing intellectual resources, programming, and opportunities. Organizing all of this will be a major undertaking for the new Coordinator.

Appointment of new Faculty:

The Graduate Center has now made it possible for interdisciplinary programs to appoint CUNY faculty directly as regular members of their faculty. This is crucially important for us so that we can staff our core courses with the most appropriate professors. CUNY Professors not appointed at the Graduate Center can teach for us but only for 1-2 times in total without getting an appointment here. Our core course, Global Feminism, for example, had only one main faculty member at the Graduate Center—Professor of Geography Rupal Oza---qualified to teach it. Since she is about to take a 2-year sabbatical, we nominated two outstanding CUNY faculty to be appointed into the Women's Studies Certificate Program faculty: Saadia Toor, Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at College of Staten Island, and Serene Khader, Jay Neuman Chair in the Philosophy of Culture and Professor of Philosophy at Brooklyn College. Both were appointed and are now on our faculty, and set to teach core courses for our program over the next two years.

Advisory Board:

Our currently elected faculty on the Advisory Board will continue until 2016; in Spring of 2015 we elected a new slate of student representatives, who typically serve one year:

ARTS AND HUMANITIES FACULTY:

Meena Alexander
Blanche Wiesen Cook
Nancy K. Miller
Domna Stanton

SOCIAL SCIENCES FACULTY:

Hester Eisenstein
Michelle Fine
Dagmar Herzog
Cindi Katz
Leith Mullings (alternate)

STUDENT MEMBERS:

Meredith Benjamin
Christin Bowman
Melina Moore
Jennifer Chmielewski
Heather Denyer (alternate)
Rachel Liebert (alternate)

Change in leadership:

Linda Martin Alcoff, head of women's studies at the Graduate Center since January 1 2014, will begin a sabbatical in the Fall of 2015. She is replaced by Professor of Sociology Hester Eisenstein, who has been appointed to serve a two year term as Director of the Center for the Study of Women and Society and Coordinator of the Women's Studies Certificate Program. She will also direct the new M.A. Program.