



Women's and Gender Studies News

Volume 11, Issue 1 Fall 2013

Who Needs Feminism?

Danielle Lawrence

Before taking a Women's and Gender Studies class here at the university, if anyone had asked me if I was a feminist I would have told them no, because I wouldn't have wanted them to think I was a "man-hating, bra-burning, whiny liberal". After taking Women's and Gender Studies 101 last spring, I learned what it means to be a feminist and what feminism really is. To be a feminist means to support the belief that men and women are created equally and should have equal rights and opportunities. If anyone were to ask me now if I am a feminist, my response would be yes. I also believe that the negative stereotypes associated with being a feminist stops people from supporting feminism and creating equality between men and women.

"Who Needs Feminism?" is a Facebook campaign that has emerged from a Women's Studies course at Duke University. The students wanted to challenge the negative perceptions of feminism by engaging members of their campus and asking them to write down on a piece of paper or whiteboard "why do you need feminism?" The responses they received from this made it quite clear that feminism is necessary today. Professor Kristen Abatsis McHenry, of the Women's and Gender Studies department and I thought that it would be a great idea to try it here, at UMass Dartmouth. We, like many students and faculty on campus wanted to inspire dialogue about feminism and through the project show the same results as the original. This fall semester we created a Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/523458381048896, for the WGS students to post their contributions for the "Who Needs Feminism?" project. You may have seen WGS students on campus taking part in this project, and we hope that you participated! This is a great opportunity to show what feminism means to us. As an honors student, I am taking Intro to Feminist Theory 201 this fall with Professor McHenry, where I will be investigating and analyzing campus perceptions of feminism. I am in-



Danielle Lawrence

terested in seeing how successful this project will be in the end and if the perceptions of feminism will change on our campus after participating. I hope that students and faculty won't shy away from this subject due to the negative stereotypes of feminism because it is important for everyone to see that feminism is needed to make a positive change for both men and women. My analysis of this project will be in the Spring 2014 issue.

Inside:

- 2 WGS Course Descriptions & Alumni News
- 3 WGS Internship Experience
- 4,5 Who Needs Feminism
- 6 WGS Faculty & Affiliate Accomplishments
- 7 Bridget Tebow's Sabbatical Leave
- 8 Co-Chairs' Message

New WGS Courses (offered Spring 2014)

WGS 213: Sex Workers, Nannies, and Maids

Investigation of women's experiences of globalization and migration patterns using feminist theory. This course will engage in feminist analysis of the multiple ways women's labor is crucial to the global economy, yet often women's labor is exploited in global assembly lines, domestic labor, global care chains, and sex tourism and human trafficking. We will examine the feminization of poverty, militarism and environmental degradation and analyze globalization's negative effects for women. A cross-cultural feminist

analysis of women's reactions and political resistance to globalizing forces is adopted and presented through case studies of women's activism in Thailand, Peru, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Lebanon, France and the Philippines.

WGS 369: Global Women's Health Politics and Activism

An overview of women's health through an international perspective will be provided in this course. Various women's health issues such as cancer, fertility, maternal mortality, STI/STD, HIV/AIDS, and violence against women will be researched and analyzed. The investigation of health issues through a feminist political lens is crucial. The relevance and importance of understanding women's health through a human rights framework will be explored. The aim is to understand how gender inequity impacts women's health. Socioeconomic status, nation, gender, and race all play a crucial role in women's health. Most importantly, an investigation into the various political, institutional and activist responses to women's health issues around the world

will be undertaken. The level of political commitment to women's health will be analyzed by focusing on key strategies implemented by international institutions like the United Nations, and look at particular government strategies in countries such as Haiti, India, China, and Ghana.

WGS Alumni News

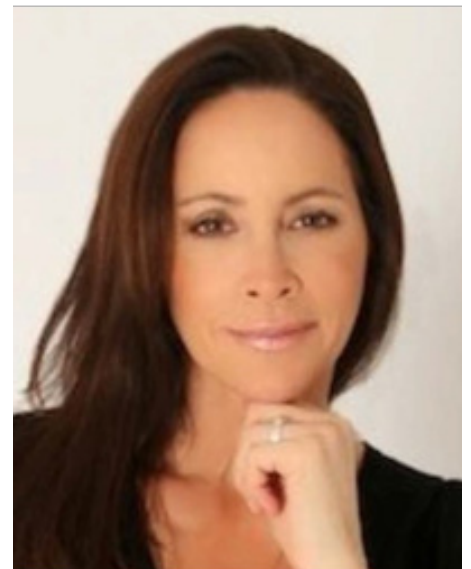
Having achieved my certificate in Women's Studies at UMass Dartmouth was a transforming experience for me. Returning back to school after so many years was a daunting process, yet this program and the tremendous support I felt from everyone connected to it, was so overwhelmingly positive I could only succeed, which I did!

I've walked away with a level of knowledge that has permeated my thought process, which has allowed me to further my business and my education. I've been accepted to Sophia University, where I hope to complete my Doctorate in Transpersonal Psychology in the near future.

I want to thank everyone in the Women's Studies Department and especially Prof. Catherine Gardner and Prof. Jen Riley for my letter of recommendation and continuing support.

With Regards Always.

Alycia Setlin
Munich, Germany
July 29, 2013



WGS Internship Experience

The Women's Center of New Bedford, MA
Tiffany Tavares, WGS & PSY Major, 2014



Tiffany Tavares

"The door to a future free from violence" is the message included on all of the materials associated with the Women's Center located in downtown New Bedford, MA. This year recognizes 40 years of services that they have provided to many women, and men, who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as the resources to address their problems and have the power for freedom and fulfillment.

The different programs available to individuals who have been victim to domestic violence and/or sexual assault include educational programs through group and private counseling services, residential services, a child & adolescent trauma program, as well as legal and medical advocacy. Different group classes cover topics such as self-esteem and empowerment, the definition and the different layers of sexual assault and domestic violence, and also art therapy groups allowing the ability for expression. To maintain these different programs as well as running their 24-hour hotline, the agency employs different welcoming staff members, volunteers, and interns. This fall of 2013 marks my first semester as an intern at the Women's Center and so far, I have met different survivors and staff members who are fantastic individuals with so much to offer to their community and society. I have had the chance to sit in on different group classes learning about the issue of domestic violence.

In addition to community outreach services, education, and advocacy the Women's Center also participates in different community-based programs that bring about awareness of the prevalence of violence within society. October is recognized not only as the awareness of breast cancer but also as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. As a special service to recognize people who have survived and those who unfortunately did not, the staff at the Women's Center, the First Unitarian

Church, and community members of New Bedford put together a candlelight vigil and silent walk from the City Hall to the church, where there was a service with readings of biographies of deceased victims, poems describing victims' rights, musical tributes, and personal stories told by survivors. Unfortunately it is an event that needs to be had to bring awareness to the community of the prevalence of such a devastating issue, but I was alongside many other people who support the end to such violence and the beginning of an era for the love of equality and peace amongst the members of society. In preparation for the candlelight vigil, held on Tuesday, October 29th, a recent art therapy class had been dedicated to creating T-shirts for the Clothesline Project. This is a national program that allows survivors as well as secondary victims such as family and friends to decorate T-shirts with different messages. I had the opportunity to join this class and be alongside these incredible women who had created different messages inspiring hope and courage despite their past/current lifestyles. Our messages were hung on a clothesline that wrapped around the church during the services at the First Unitarian Church. It warmed my heart to be able to share that moment with them and watch the beauty created in response to such ugly points of life.

WHO NEEDS

“The F-Word”

Tricia Breton, WGS & ENL Major, 2014

There seems to be an F-word epidemic on campus. The word is being tossed around the campus center, the dormitories, and even the library. Students are talking about it, debating it, and they are asking a big question.

Who needs feminism?

In 2012, sixteen women from Duke University’s Women in the Public Sphere class began a campaign that challenged the existing ideas about feminism by asking the question, “Who needs feminism?” They aimed to expose the myths about feminism.

We are not radical, bra-burning, man-haters who fail to live up to the feminine ideals. We are not sluts. We are not prudes.

We are feminists.

Following the path that Duke University paved, Dr. Kristen Abatsis McHenry asked this question to her two Intro to Women’s Studies classes. In doing so, she developed UMass Dartmouth’s “Who needs feminism?” campaign.

“I’ve always felt strongly about the need for feminism and I wanted to be part of the project in order to inspire dialogue about feminism at UMass Dartmouth,” said McHenry. “Also, I wanted my students to engage with their community and participate in a form of feminist activism.”

Students from both classes divided themselves into groups of five – a leader, secretary, media manager, and two recruiters. The leader oversaw the entire process; the secretary recorded data; the media manager took photos; recruiters went looking for participants.

As they prepared themselves and structured their groups, excitement brewed. Many of the students felt that this was a creative way to get people to think about feminism. “I’m so excited, you don’t even know,” said freshman Tony Beal. “I can’t wait to preach the word.”

Unfortunately, the word is a loaded term that carries an arsenal of negativity. Part of the problem is that the F-word lacks a clear, concise definition that everyone uses. It’s not one-size-fits-all. Feminism is fluid and its

definitions reflect individual experiences and beliefs.

Aware of feminism’s fluidity, McHenry hoped that the project would help students educate the UMass Dartmouth community and, in doing so, educate themselves too. “I wanted them to have the opportunity to educate their peers on feminism,” said McHenry. “Also, I wanted my students to consider the often misunderstood and misguided perceptions.” So the two classes set out to investigate UMass Dartmouth’s collective definition about feminism by asking participants the million-dollar question: Who needs feminism?



Tricia Breton

Using a whiteboard or piece of paper, each group needed ten individuals – eight students and two faculty members – to write their answers down, hold their board or paper up, and get photographed for the class Facebook page. There was a lot of apprehension from both of McHenry’s Intro to Women’s Studies classes prior to heading out on their own. They were worried about backlash – rude or negative comments – from their peers. “Students worry me more, they are uneducated,” said freshman Tenley Gomes. “Faculty won’t take it as a joke.”

But most of the interviewees took the question pretty seriously. Sarah Pavao, a sophomore history major, was actually surprised with her group’s outcome. “I thought it would be harder and people wouldn’t be willing to participate,” she said. “There was a very positive reaction.”

A positive reaction is exactly what McHenry wanted for everyone – her students and the community. “I hoped that the ‘Who Needs Feminism’ campaign would have a positive impact on my students and the larger community UMass Dartmouth,” she said. “And I hoped that this would start a campus-wide dialogue about feminism and gender equality.”

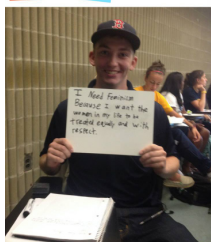
It did.

People are talking and listening. “This made me realize a lot of things,” said McHenry’s sophomore student, Hailey Barboza. “Everyone needs feminism.”

FEMINISM?

"This project was pretty interesting in the way that people reacted to the question. Some people were very reluctant to answer the question, both men and women alike. I learned that people do not know what feminism is. Feminism is important to me because I want my mother to be able to have the same pay as the men in her position."

WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Ryan Hennessey

"Feminism is necessary for a variety of reasons. We need it to be equal, because in the end, we're all humans, we may not be built the same but we all have hearts and feelings and we deserve the same opportunities. America is supposed to be the land of hope and freedom, and faith, but how can we grow as individuals if we treat one another differently based on gender and sex?"

WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Ruth Alvarez

"Throughout this project I learned that feminism is not discussed enough between students on this campus... or any campus. Most of the students that we approached had a negative or apathetic reaction to the question 'Why do you think you need feminism?' One student even used the famous statement 'I'm not a feminist but...', indicating that they don't want to be associated with the cause. Regardless of initial negative reactions, the fact that many students found a way to relate feminism to themselves indicates that everyone needs feminism to an extent they've just never thought about it"

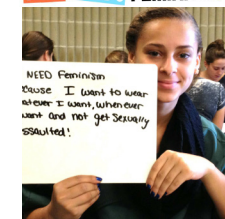
WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Rola Hassoun

"From this project I learned that people don't even realize there is inequality through the sexes and have yet to open their eyes that it is all around us, it is something that has become so familiar that it becomes normal to us. Most people really had no idea what the meaning of the word was or only had the idea that it was negative. We explained to several participants, several times, that feminism has to do with women's rights in every way, whether it was socially, politically or economically making women equal to men."

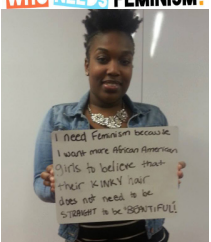
WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Roseli Rodriquez

"Having the opportunity to work on 'Who Needs Feminism' project was an eye opening experience. Whether it was the experience of recognizing the amount of people who were unfamiliar with what feminism even meant, or the selective statements used to describe why others believed they personally needed feminism in their lives."

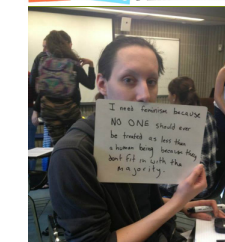
WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Dominique Metayer

"Overall I feel this project is something I feel everyone should experience, because it opens up issues that most try to ignore. It brings a dialogue that only peer to peer discussion can bring about, not just in a classroom but out in the actual world, questioning them in the passing of everyday events and making it apparent that social issues do exist and it is in fact everyone's job to think about them. Each individual can help change the world for the better by fighting against stereotypes they encounter and form."

WHO NEEDS FEMINISM?



Matthew Cicero

Please visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/523458381048896 to find out more about this project.

WGS Faculty Affiliate Accomplishments

Anna M. Klobucka, Professor, Department of Portuguese, presented at three international conferences in Summer and early Fall. At a colloquium on the Portuguese nineteenth century held at the University of Lisbon in June, she read an invited paper, “Regarding Libaninho: The Spectacle of Homosexuality in *The Crime of Father Amaro*.” In early September, she participated in the biannual conference of the Association of British and Irish Lusitanists at Oxford University (UK) with “Between Women: Reassessing Portuguese ‘Feminine’ Poetry of the 1920s,” and in late September she was a plenary speaker at the first Congress of Polish Lusitanists in Krakow, with a lecture on queer cosmopolitanism in Portuguese modernism.

Susan Krumholz, Professor/Director of Crime & Justice Studies, coauthored a textbook, *Crime and Justice: Learning Through Cases*, that has just been published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Shawna E. Sweeney, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Policy, recently presented her research on women’s rights and the global HIV/AIDS pandemic at the Peace Science Society and International Studies Association Joint International Conference in Budapest, Hungary (June 27-30, 2013). The PSA and ISA are the most respected and widely known scholarly associations dedicated to peace science and international studies. Shawna has also presented her research at the Columbia University Human Rights Seminar on October 7, 2013.

Bridget Teboh, Associate Professor, Department of History, has published the following edited volume and two research articles: Toyin Falola and Bridget Teboh, eds. *The Power of Gender, The Gender of Power: Women’s Labor, Rights and Responsibilities in Africa*. (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press 2013). “Global Health, Food Security, and Medicine in Africa,” co-authored with Karen Flint, in Mbah, Emmanuel and Salm, Steven J. (eds.), *Globalization and Changing Trends in Modern African History*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2012), 165-276. “Designing Research, Emerging Herstories and the Politics of Biographical Production on Cameroon, West Africa,” in Toyin Falola and Bridget Teboh, (eds.), *The Power of Gender, the Gender of Power: Women’s*

Labor, Rights, and Responsibilities in Africa. (Africa World Press, 2013), 137-161. Dr. Teboh also presented 2 conference papers and was guest on 3 TV Programs: 2013, Invited Talk “Empowering a New Generation of Women in Cameroon: Challenges and Prospects,” at the *International Women’s Day Celebration*, organized by the Cameroon Baptist Convention Women’s League, Yaounde, Cameroon (West Africa), May 10, 2013. 2013, presented “Conflicting Agendas and Colonial Woman Palavar: Madame Maternity’s Un/likely Career Path,” at the International Conference Honoring Edward A. Alpers, on *Migration and Socio-political Mobility in Africa and the African Diasporas*, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), April 2013. Guest Speaker on three TV programs, Yaounde, Cameroon, West Africa, April and May 2013.

Robin Robinson, Associate Professor, Sociology, has been appointed a Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge (England), to support her work on the sociological and psychoanalytic contributions of the late Julius Carlebach to Britain’s policy and practice regarding girls in care in the mid to late 20th C. She continues her Simon Visiting Professorship at the University of Manchester (England) School of Law, collaborating on a theory-building project about annihilation anxiety and crime. She is lead author on an article, “Psychosocial Perspectives of Girls and Violence: Implications for Policy and Praxis,” in the November 2013 issue of *Critical Criminology*. Her work on transporting/trafficking of British women convicts to colonial America appears in the Fall 2013 newsletter of Duke University’s Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture, which supported this research.

Catherine Villanueva Gardner, Associate Professor, Women’s and Gender Studies & Philosophy, has moved her tenure home from Philosophy to Women’s and Gender Studies, which makes her the first tenured member of WGS. Said Gardner, “I will always be a philosopher at heart, but the WGS department needs tenured faculty in order to help us build a home for new tenure-track faculty and mentor them.”

Sabbatical Leave in Cameroon, Africa

Bridget A. Teboh, Associate Professor, Department of History; WGS and AAS Affiliate

I spent the second half of my sabbatical leave (Spring 2013) in Cameroon, Africa conducting archival and oral research and collecting life histories for my new research proposal, “Life Histories and Life Writings and their Intimate, sometimes Problematic Relationship with African Gender(ed) History.” This was really an academic adventure. Why adventure when research is supposed to be a serious academic pursuit? Well, the short answer is you never really know what might happen especially when you’re dealing with Africa. In Cameroon relevant documents are located at the National Archives in Yaounde, the capital city, as well as at the Regional Archives in Buea and Bamenda, the regional headquarters for the Southwest Region and the Northwest region of Cameroon respectively. To add to the challenge of physically getting to these archives is the fact that they are approximately 450 miles apart in both the Francophone and Anglophone parts of the country. As an “insider” from Cameroon, I was ready (or so I thought) and knew exactly where to go and what to do. Plans were made on schedule to obtain permits to access archival materials. After all, I was familiar with these research sites and archives in Cameroon and had sustained good working relations with archivists since I had consulted these materials at different times in the past.



Prof. Teboh: Dec. 2012: Meeting with Batibo Traditional Council.

Cameroon was colonized by three different competing European powers: the Germans, the British and, the French. Consequently, my research on women and gender inevitably looks at African social institutions, routes of women’s empowerment, power and authority in society, and the impact of colonization on not only women but Africa in general. It involves the use of an interdisciplinary methodology transcending disciplinary boundaries. What better place to start than at a Palace in Batibo, Moghamoland?

As part of the UMD community I have always known that wherever I go I represent the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth be it at international and national conferences.



Prof. Teboh: May 26, 2013 Batibo: SDF at Party Rally.

Little did I expect during my sabbatical to become literally the unofficial UMD representative or Ambassador to Cameroon. At least that was one way of explaining why on a hot morning in April, I was whisked away to CRTV (Cameroon Radio and Television) station, Mballa II, Yaounde, for a live TV program hosted by journalist Charles Ebune, following the Boston Marathon bombings. The day before that, my cousin and I watched in shock the events unfolding in Boston on CNN. Then I saw Boston under “virtual lockdown” and a search at UMass Dartmouth! It was all surreal. I had gone to church on Sunday, and as was customary with all visitors I was introduced as a professor from UMD. When news broke that UMD was the campus that one of the Boston Marathon bombers attended, reporters came looking for me. That is how I became the unofficial UMD ambassador to Cameroon, fielding all sorts of questions about UMD, the USA, and defending my campus in the process.

In spite of all the distractions (too much to eat, daily power outages, unexpected visitors, and faulty internet services), I still managed to conduct archival research as planned and extensive oral interviews with women, representatives of the government, female politicians, and the chiefs (*Fons*) and elders of the Bamenda grasslands to compliment my findings from written reports and government papers. Some of these interviews are being used for the video-documentary project which I envision as a companion piece to *Unruly Mothers*, my completed monograph.

It was an incredible journey and adventure! I look forward to sharing some more details later. I can’t wait to go back to Africa, Cameroon for more. Preliminary findings derived from this project will be presented at annual international conferences, submitted as articles for subsequent publication in refereed academic journals and as chapters in edited volumes.

Women's and Gender Studies

285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth, MA
02747-2300

Phone: 508.910.4586

Fax: 508.999.9235

WGS Website: www.umassd.edu/CAS/WMS

Designer: Yasaman S. Louhghalam
ylouhghalam@umassd.edu

Editor: Paula Cabral
pcabral2@umassd.edu

Dear Women's and Gender Studies Students, Friends, Supporters, and Faculty,

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the outgoing chair, Catherine Villanueva Gardner, for her invaluable work in taking WGS from a program to a department. We look forward to ensuring the continued growth and success of the department.

There is growing interest in our major and minor and a continuing need to bolster our ability to offer scholarships to students. We would be most grateful if friends, supporters, and faculty could make a commitment to the Women's Studies Scholarship Endowment. For further information, please contact one of us.

We thank you on behalf of our students,

Heidi Berggren and Stephanie O'Hara
Co-Chairs, Women's and Gender Studies

