

Letter from the Chair

What a whirlwind this year has been! The Gender and Sexuality Studies (GSST) Department welcomed four new faculty members: Amalia Cabezas, Katja Guenther, Anthonia Kalu, and Eric Stanley, launched a Sustainability Studies BS, and incorporated UCR's existing Lesbian, Gay, Intersexual, and Transgender Studies (LGBT) Minor. And in June, we will say goodbye to a phenomenal group of graduating seniors.

Two of our new faculty members joined us from other departments in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. Amalia Cabezas splits her campus responsibilities between the Media and Cultural Studies and GSST departments. Professor Cabezas's research and teaching interests include Chicano and Latino Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Tourism and Leisure Studies, as well as Gender and Sexuality Studies. Katja Guenther joined us from the Department of Sociology. Professor Guenther specializes in feminist and women's social movements and gender and the state. She teaches courses related to this research as well as core courses in GSST.

In fall, Anthonia Kalu joined the GSST and Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages departments from Ohio State University. Professor Kalu's research and teaching focuses on African and African diasporic women's writing and culture,

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For more news and event information, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UCRGenderStudies and visit our website at genderandsexualitystudies.ucr.edu

Combating Islamophobia

By Sherine Hafez

Our first Islamophobia event on January 14, 2016, provided the campus community with ways of understanding increased Islamophobia and strategies for dealing with it. Both faculty and students presented at the event. The panels examined how reactions to Muslims emerge, what they stem from, and what the social and legal ramifications of Islamophobia are. Presenters explored the social manifestations of hate and how they shift social values and policies and affect the lives of millions of American Muslims.

GSST Professor Sherine Hafez organized the first event with assistance and support from Tina Aoun, director of the Middle Eastern Student Center. Faculty from the Middle East and Islamic Studies (MEIS) program constituted much of the panel. UCR speakers included Professor Zarinebaf (History), chair of MEIS who introduced the series. Professors Muhammad Ali (Religious Studies), Ruhi Khan (Media and Cultural Studies) and Jeff Sacks (Comparative Literature) gave riveting presentations of their own. Two outstanding guest speakers, Professor Khanum Sheikh (Gender Studies) from Cal State Northridge and Azza Basarudin (Women's Center) from UCLA discussed current state measures that counter Islamic extremism, CVE (Countering Violent Extremism). Professors Ben Liu (Hispanic Studies) and Erith Jaffe-Berg (Theater, Film and Digital Production) expertly moderated the panels and commented on the talks.

*An interdisciplinary effort,
event sponsors included
Anthropology
Ethnic Studies
Gender & Sexuality Studies
Global Studies
History
Media and Cultural Studies
Religious Studies
Theatre, Film and Digital
Production*



*Faculty
participants
in the
Islamophobia
teach-in*

The students' panel was most successful. It featured three Muslim students and included both graduate and undergraduate students. Their presentations conveyed an honest picture of what it is like to be a Muslim on campus and in the larger community on a daily basis. Presentations were followed by open discussions in which students and scholars discussed increased hostility and fear of Muslims in the U.S. today. We hope that continued attention to Islamophobia will help members of our campus and the broader society become more aware of the roots of Islamophobia and be better able to stop it.

Pedagogies of Visibility: Lesbian Studies in the 21st Century

By Alicia Arrizón

Although I believe that the terms lesbian and feminism have complicated trajectories in women, gender and sexuality studies, their interrelated epistemologies have contributed to redefine and challenge dominant feminist discourses and theories. In the struggles for gay and women's liberation movements, Lesbian Feminism has evolved, defying the assumption that everyone is straight and that society should be organized mainly to serve heterosexual needs. In GSST 135: Love, Desire and Lesbian Sexuality, the exploration of lesbian visibility and experience is paramount to recognize the ways in which the tyranny of heterosexuality and cissexism disempower all women by silencing some.

This is the message that threads through Adrienne Rich's work. In her essay "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," Rich calls for women, and particularly heterosexual women, to confront the forces of patriarchy in general and of compulsory heterosexuality specifically. Rich has taught us that the critique of heterosexuality is key to deconstruct capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. She insisted that for a woman to desire the same gender and to build a relationship based on love and sex with another woman is to stake a claim against hetero-normativity. This is particularly true when examining some of the most critical issues that pertain to love, desire and sexuality

as they define, influence, shape and affect lesbianism. GSST 135 examines such issues including the politics of desire and identity, the question of love as a same-gendered emotion, the complexity of lesbian lives across cultures, class, race, ethnic, age, and the transgenering of the lesbian body.

While updating the syllabus for GSST 135, it was unavoidable to think of comments made by a few students who took the class the last time I taught it. A minority group in the class suggested that the term "lesbian" was in need of a replacement. Perhaps a new configuration that would be less "antagonistic" was needed, one of the students implied. "In reality, the term does

not mean anything in my culture," a queer-identified student intervened in the discussion.

Influenced by the dialogue in that class, this quarter I started the first day of classes asking students about the use of the term lesbian as it relates to their knowledge and daily discursive vocabulary. Among the

27 students in the class, some responded that they usually avoid using the term "lesbian" and prefer to use the term "queer." Although they want to learn more about lesbianism, some students affirmed they would prefer to use queer when making references to women loving other women. Other students use the term comfortably and would not substitute it.

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"Mary Magdalene and Virgin of Guadalupe" 1997, by Alex Donis, pastel on paper

Report from the Women in Black and Courts of Women

Conferences in India

By Margie Waller

In early November, I participated in two remarkable events during a week in Kolar, India (near Bangalore/Bengaluru). The first was a meeting of a transnational network known as Women in Black, which came into existence in the 1970s as women from Israel, Serbia, and the UK, protesting against various kinds of militarized violence-- became known to one another through the efforts of Italian

politician and future Vice President of the European Union Luisa Morgantini. Though their issues seemed diverse on the surface--the installation of nuclear warheads by the US at the Greenham Common Royal Air Force base in the UK, “ethnic cleansing” in the former Yugoslavia, and the Occupation of Palestine—the women quickly realized that they were all interrelated.

Methodologically and imaginatively, the Women in Black drew inspiration from the vigils of the Argentinian Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, (who stood vigil to protest the disappearances of their sons and daughters by the junta) and the Black Sashes of South Africa who protested against Apartheid.

Women in Black conferences occur every two years at different locations around the world, and the self-organizing network of groups has grown and evolved over the past four decades. In 1995 at the NGO Forum paralleling the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing, over three thousand

Women in Black from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, Europe, and North America converged for a epochal silent vigil, followed by a more vocal sit-in when the police tried to clear the intersection. In 2001, the Women in Black network was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Climaxing three days of workshops on issues ranging from the Palestinian Occupation to conflict resolution

in South Central L.A., war and climate change, the destruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, fighting in Syria, border conflicts in Northeastern India, the Indian blockade of Nepal, farmer suicides and female infanticide due to neoliberal agribusiness policies, and many other

issues, the group of over 130 Women in Black held one of their signature silent vigils at a busy intersection in downtown Bangalore. Passing drivers and pedestrians were enthusiastically friendly, sometimes joining in. The event was covered by both television and print media, appearing as front page news the following day.

There seems to be a highly developed appreciation among the general public in India for the urgency of the issue of militarized violence—perhaps not surprising in a country whose anticolonial struggle is deeply identified with Gandhi. In conducting research for the workshop I led on “War and Climate Change,” I discovered that the



world's militaries (the U.S. having the largest in the world) are the single greatest emitter of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Without them, the goal of carbon neutrality could easily be achieved.

The other focus on the week's gathering was what our hosts, a women's activist group called Vimochana (Liberation), call the "Courts of Women." The Women in Black travelled into the city a second time from the conference center in the countryside where we were meeting to serve as jury members and witnesses reflecting on forms of violence for which there are no local, national, or international legal remedies. The Courts of Women were developed by Vimochana and the Asian Women's Human Rights Council in the early 1990s to bring international attention to issues ranging from the wartime sexual slavery of "Comfort Women" abducted from Korea, the Philippines, and other locations by the Japanese military during World War II, to nuclear testing in the South Pacific, women's access to land, the effects of the Green Revolution, the genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans, neoliberal poverty, and many more interrelated issues. The Courts of Women decenter nation-state epistemologies, producing spaces for the emergence of what their envisions, Corinne Kumar, calls a "new political imaginary" which has deep cultural and philosophical roots in the Global South.



Professor Margie Waller, left center, at the Courts of Women conference

Networked with hundreds of NGOs around the world, the Courts of Women have also been involved with the World Social Forum, the Arab Spring, and the Zapatista Movement. At the "World Court of Women Against War, for Peace" in Bangalore, we heard the testimonies of young peace activists from Afghanistan, Iraq Armenia, Tunisia, South Africa, Basque Country, and India. Afghan and Indian men testified in solidarity with women against war, the development of nuclear power plants in southern India, state-sponsored homophobia, and environmental degradation, among

other pressing issues. Testimonies were complemented by dance and theatrical performances and by a powerful poetry reading by Palestinian American poet, Lisa Suhair Majaj. This event also became front page news the next day in Bangalore, renewing my frustration with the extremely limited coverage offered by the corporate-controlled media in the U.S.

The founders of the Women in Black are now in their late sixties and early seventies and are looking for new ideas and participants to carry on their work. The next conference will take place in Cape Town, South Africa. It is open to anyone who wishes to come. Please think about attending. Participants who need financial help are welcome to ask for it. You will come away with your life changed.

Faculty News

Chikako Takeshita

Prof. Takeshita became the Program Director of the new Sustainability Studies B.S. in Fall 2015. She has been energized by the students who signed up for the major and are taking the initiative to spread the word about the campus's newest major as well as the inspiring talks given by speakers of the Sustainability Studies lecture series. She is looking forward to serving another year as the director to put all the pieces of the curriculum in place and create a website for the sustainability studies program. Prof. Takeshita is also a member of the Affordable Course Material Initiative that has been running pilot courses with faculty members who have volunteered to replace costly commercial textbooks with Open Educational Resources to save students money. Prof. Takeshita enjoys working on her research projects that explore pregnancy and childbirth through feminist science and technology studies. Her article in progress examines representations of childbirth in the documentary film *The Business of Being Born* and the BBC historical drama *Call*

the Midwife. Her next project seeks to suggest a way to conceptualize at the mother and the fetus as symbionts rather than independent organisms one nested inside the other.

Jane Ward

Jane Ward's book *Not Gay: Sex Between Straight White Men* was recently named a 2016 Lambda Literary Award finalist in LGBT Studies and was featured in *New York Magazine*, *Forbes*, *The Guardian*, *Newsweek*, *Vice*, *Salon*, *Huffington Post*, *Cosmo*, *Bustle*, *Mic*, and *Pacifica Radio* in 2015-2016. Professor Ward has been speaking about the book at several universities (including NYU, Columbia, UT Austin, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Wake Forest University) as well as in bookstores throughout California. Her current projects include two essays on queer methodologies, one in a forthcoming special issue of *Women's Studies Quarterly* and one to appear in the UC Press volume *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology* edited by Tey Meadow, Kristin Schilt, and D'Lane Compton.

Lesbian Studies, continued from page 3

"Lesbian is lesbian," one student stated. Spanish signifiers are generally used by another group to stress the power of cultural context. Terms such as "tortillera," "jota," and "marimacha" were marked deliberately to represent broad epistemologies of the lesbian body.

The discussion of terms and signifiers representing or unrepresenting the lesbian body was productive and useful as starting point. The discussion was prefaced by a work of art in which Mary Magdalene kisses the Virgin of Guadalupe. The queer Latino artist, Alex Donis (<http://www.alexdonis.com/>) painted the Virgin of Guadalupe kissing Mary Magdalene as part of "My Cathedral," a series that showed people of opposite viewpoints kissing in same-sex pairs. The connection of lesbian desire intertwined with spirituality embodies the power of a liberatory consciousness which I believe must be rooted in the dialectic of lesbian studies.

As part of the launch of the new B.S. in Sustainability Studies, we developed a year-long speaker series to highlight research connecting sustainability to issues of gender, inequality, international development, capitalism, and social justice in local, national, and global context. Speakers in the series were drawn from academic, activist, and policymaking circles, providing a diverse range of perspectives on sustainability and its significance to everyday life.

The series began with The Yes Men, a “culture jamming activist duo” committed to raising awareness of social and political issues. They came to campus to screen their new film *The Yes Men Are Revolting*, which they followed the next day with an interactive workshop where they shared strategies for developing everyday actions to bring public attention to climate change.

Next, Nick Slobodian visited campus to talk about his work as a conservation program manager in Ecuador’s forest communities. As Director of Agroforestry at Third Millennium Alliance, Nick works to help preserve Ecuador’s coastal Pacific Forest and to partner with local communities to restore forest area that has been lost. His presentation linked species conservation with sustainable farming techniques and long term community engagement in exciting ways. He also highlighted forest conservation internship opportunities with Third Millennium Alliance.

Betsy Hartmann was our next speaker. Dr. Hartmann, a Professor Emerita at Hampshire College, is well known for her book, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs: The Global Politics of Population Control*. In her presentation, Hartmann critiqued the ongoing ways global population growth is identified as the source of a range of social and environmental

problems- including climate change, civil unrest, and international migration. She argued that these narratives distract attention from the true sources of environmental and political instability, namely capitalist extraction and resource development, as well as militarization.

Dyanna Jaye arrived on campus, fresh from several weeks spent in Paris for the international climate change conference known as COP21. Jaye is a youth climate activist working with SustainUS, a national organization that empowers young people to take action on global sustainable development. Jaye led the official U.S. youth delegation to COP21, where her team engaged in street actions, performance art, and other strategies to bring attention to the need to approach climate change from a justice-based perspective. She highlighted the important role youth can play in shaping public debates on climate change and other global environmental issues, and demonstrated the ways young people can use social media and other communication tools to shape the broader story of sustainability.

At the time of this writing, two additional speakers are planned for the Sustainability Studies lecture series. The first is Dr. Traci Brynne Voyles, an Assistant Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies at Loyola Marymount University. Dr. Voyles is an environmental historian whose recent book, *Wastelanding: Legacies of Uranium Mining in Navajo Country* explores the legacies of pollution permeating Navajo lands, communities, and bodies as a result of U.S. government-sponsored uranium mining projects. Her new project, which she will present April 19th, explores gender and racial

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A Student Perspective on the New Sustainability Studies B.S.

By Charles (Chris) Pinkel

This past fall quarter, I enrolled in GSST 131: Sustainability, Gender and Development in the Global South with Professor Sasser. This is where I first heard about the new major in Sustainability Studies. I had already been introduced to the GSST department in a class by Professor Hafez, which challenged my ideas and my entire education in the most wonderful way, but I was very curious about how gender relates to sustainability. Until then, gender and sustainability were separate and unconnected concepts for me. Thanks to Sustainability Studies, I now realize that women are commonly and unfairly held responsible for environmental issues when they themselves are disproportionately affected by the issues. In reality, women's roles with the environment are highly complex and generally beneficial.

During the start of the year, there were only three Sustainability Studies majors, and two of them, Unnati and Aaliyah, were in the 131 course with me. Strangely enough, we ended up in the same group, and after some encouragement from Aaliyah, I met with my Academic Advisor to discuss the major. That same afternoon, I changed majors and never looked back.

At a small get together that fall quarter, the three of us met with the Sustainability Studies Faculty committee, headed by Professor Takeshita. They welcomed us into the major and described all of the major requirements. It's strange to say, but the room was just very electric. The idea of this new major, and us three as the first students was thrilling. It wasn't because we were the guinea pigs; rather, it was more about laying the groundwork for future students and working

together in this new space to create a foundation. The Sustainability Studies major is unlike others because there isn't a mold. Of course we have required courses, but we also have the freedom to design our education around our own interests. It is wonderful because the major is a process and as you advance, you grow, you change, your being changes, and it's wonderful. The courses from each college and the different departments are important, but when you put them together, it creates a complicated and integrated and holistic perspective that is unmatched in other majors. Things just fit together.

Professor Takeshita asked Aaliyah, Unnati, and me at the lunch if we would be willing to work on an open house to introduce and kick-off the major to UCR. We agreed and under her advisement, we put together a flyer, reserved a room, ordered food, scheduled speakers and organizations, and advertised for the event. This has been a great opportunity, and I am very thankful for my good friends Aaliyah and Unnati for all their hard work on the open house. We hope to continue to develop the major and we hope to possibly start a peer mentor group to help other students with their journey as well.

I think Sustainability Studies is so important because it teaches us how to think and how to avoid the heteronormative, western mold for a more critical and human lens. We are at a very important time in history when our collective decisions of the next generation will have direct impacts our environment, economy, and global politics. Sustainability Studies provides an education to link both the sciences and the social aspects through practical application.

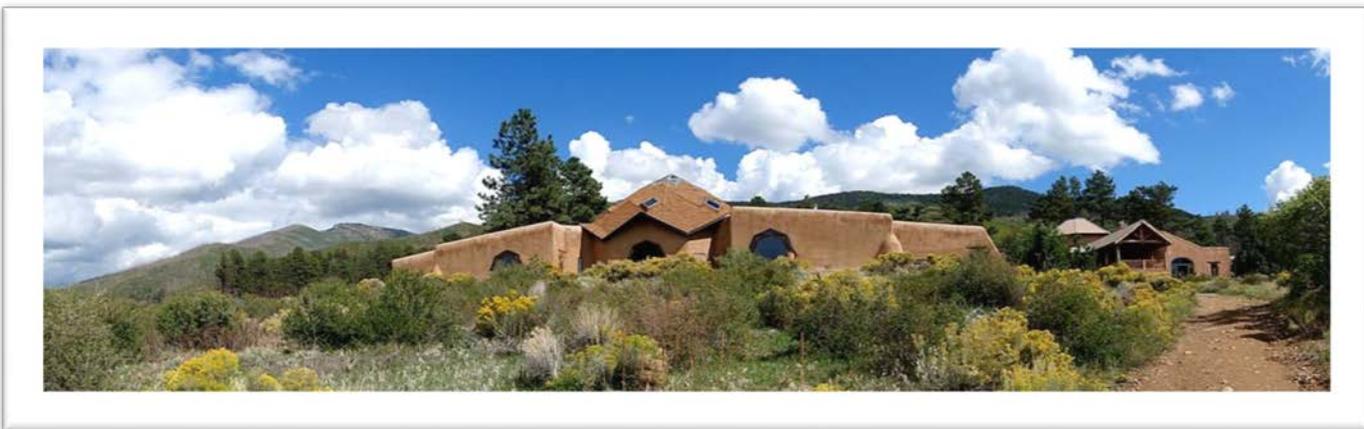
Summer Sustainability Program

By Juliann Emmons Allison

In July 2016, the Gender and Sexuality Studies Department, in cooperation with the School of Public Policy and the Office of Undergraduate Education, will launch the first annual Summer Sustainability Program. The program integrates a five-week internship-based research experience at UCR with a two-week commune residency to provide students with the academic and technical skills necessary to create sustainable lifestyles and communities.

Internships will be arranged in either UCR's Community Garden—R'Garden—or the campus Sustainability Office. Students who opt to work in the garden will achieve an understanding of and experience with our current food system and agriculture in Inland Southern California, and opportunities to investigate what sustainable food system in this region might look like. Those who choose to work in the Sustainability Office will develop an understanding of the methods and systems used to establish sustainable institutions, including.

The residency will take place at the Lama Foundation, an intentional community in Northern New Mexico, twenty miles from Taos in the Carson National Forest. Students will gain experience living in a beautiful, diverse, self-sustaining community that produces all of its own food, water, and energy with a minimum of waste. They will share in the social and intellectual life of the community, and be invited to share in its work—gardening, food preparation and service, shop, recreation and entertainment etc.



The Lama Foundation, Site of the Summer Sustainability Program

Students will earn eight units of upper division credit toward the Sustainability Studies BS or the Public Policy BA by completing PBPL 129: “Understanding Sustainability” and GSST 171: “Environmental Health and Social Justice.” PBPL 129 requires a practicum, which students will fulfill by interning with Fortino Morales in the R'Garden or John Cook in the Sustainability Office. Work in the R'Garden will include cultivation, life cycle analyses related to agricultural production, and outreach to local farmers and others involved with agriculture in Riverside/San Bernardino. Activities ongoing in the Sustainability Office in summer include development of the Annual Sustainability Report, a resiliency and adaptation plan within the Climate Action and Sustainability

Action Plans, and/or Greenhouse Gas mitigation strategies for campus purchasing. Highly motivated students may petition for a collaborative internship with the City of Riverside for resiliency planning. After four weeks of preparation on campus, student participants and I will embark on a road trip to the Lama Foundation, where we will live and work as part of an active, rural “eco-village” established in 1967. Stops en route to Lama will include the University of Northern Arizona’s Sustainability Office and SLUGG (Sustainable Living and Urban Gardening) Garden, the University of New Mexico Sustainability Institute, Earthship Biotechture, the New Buffalo community, and canyons near Taos. In addition to workaday activities and more academic discussions, life at Lama will incorporate public lectures, readings and performances, yoga and hiking/running, and screenings as time and student interests permit.

Living arrangements at Lama are rustic. Participants may sleep in yurts (men’s and women’s “dormitories”) or tents—within an easy walk of bath house/solar showers/outhouses, classroom/auditorium, and kitchen/patio area, where program participants and Lama residents will meet for meals. Our classroom will be a large dome-shaped meeting room with adjacent library and music room. Other amenities include a den with computer facilities, second library, shop, and greenhouse.

Fifteen students will participate this summer, with the support of merit and need-based scholarships provided by [currently...UCR’s Office of Undergraduate Education, the GSST Department and the School of Public Policy]. We expect the program to grow in size and organizers are already seeking sources of ongoing financial support to enable UCR students studying sustainability and/or committed to learning how to live more sustainably to participate in the future.

Speaker Series, continued from page 8
politics of birds in U.S. environmental politics, focusing on bird conservation at California’s Salton Sea. In it, she argues that the meaning projected onto bird bodies (both living, dying, and dead) has long been central to human relationships to the sea as a whole. Our final speaker, Jacqueline Patterson, visited May 11th to present the Department’s annual Jane Block diversity lecture. Patterson is the Director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program, and works at the local, state, national, and international levels to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, advance energy efficiency and clean energy, and improve community resilience and livability through an intersectional social justice approach.

UC Global Food Initiative Student Video Project

SST students received funding from the UC Global Food Initiative to create a documentary related to food and agriculture on campus. Pegah Rashidi (Sustainability Studies major), Edgar Ortuno (Sustainability Studies and Theater, Film, and Digital Production double major) and Brayan Cruz (Gender & Sexuality Studies and Ethnic Studies double major) are working on a film on the food justice movement at UCR. It follows the story of one of the crew, who experienced food insecurity as a UCR student. This person eventually found the campus food pantry and the campus community garden, and is now very involved in local food security issues. The film also features R’Garden coordinator Fortino Morales, R’Pantry coordinator Grecia Marquez, and student activist Daniel Lopez. The film will represent our campus among other UCs at the national conference of Sustainability Agriculture Education Association in July 2016 in Santa Cruz.

2016 Presidential Election: An American Spectacle

Emilie Vancelette and Heather Steele are currently seniors expecting to graduate this Spring. Emilie will graduate with a degree in both English and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Heather will graduate with a Gender and Sexuality Studies major and an Education minor. In the follow dialogue, Emilie and Heather evaluate the current U.S. political climate using a multifaceted feminist lens.

HS: I want to start with the incident in February with Madeleine Albright and Gloria Steinem at a New Hampshire rally. According to Albright and Steinem, young females who support Bernie are only doing so because that's essentially where the men are at. The assumption here is that our political interests are not organic to ourselves; basically, our political agency is determined by the assumption that we all want to find men to date.

EV: Like that's the most important factor for me when I decide my politics... This incident for me seems to be a perfect example of how the primaries consistently essentialize and stereotype female voters.

HS: And I feel like this is also a clear representation of the divide between feminisms and the impact this divide has on perspectives. Second wave feminists (i.e. Albright and Steinem) have a pretty extensive track record of being exclusionary in the name of their goals. All the while turning on other women with the very tools that have been used against them.

EV: Positions like this oversimplify our opinions in terms of our age group-meaning my feminism, according to Steinem and Albright, is heavily defined by the fact that you and I- and countless others- are

millennials who inherently don't appreciate the work done by our predecessors or don't believe there is more work to be done.

HS: Yes, the assumption equating evolving feminisms to disrespect does a huge disservice to the very real complexities that exist in and among feminism. That accurately sums up the differences among the waves of feminism and insisting that one has more worth over the other is simply comparing struggles that can't be compared. Ignoring this reality feeds directly into the stereotypes about feminists and reprimands women who perform their feminism "poorly".

EV: Speaking of performance... The 2016 primaries demonstrate political performance at an all new low. Each candidate in this election is engaged in a performance of a heteronormative gender role in order to become politically legitimate. In Hillary's case, this manifests in a nonthreatening, hyper performance of safe femininity- feminine but not too feminine, tough, but not too tough, someone to respect but still approachable. Her twitter bio literally proves this; changes have been made which highlight her role as wife, mother, and grandmother over her position as Secretary of State while also obscuring her career as a lawyer and author.

HS: There are regular instances of toxic masculinity occurring within the primaries as well. For example, Marco Rubio (who has since dropped out) and Donald Trump squabbling over finger size, comparing shoe sizes and making allusions to their "manhood". In another performance of heteronormative masculinity (although nontoxic), Ted Cruz felt obligated to

defend his wife's honor in response to Trump.

EV: Personally, I completely respect Cruz for his tasteful response to Trump's misogyny (the latest in a long line, of course) and therefore, I'd argue that Cruz displays a less toxic masculinity than others we've seen during the primaries. Yet, it still provides an example of how he and pretty much every other candidate has significantly engaged in heteronormative gender performativity as the standard for political legitimacy.

HS: It's problematic when political legitimacy is determined by an individual's ability to successfully perform a heteronormative gender role as well as "American whiteness". For me this reiterates that this insidious regression into rigid gender roles and fear of the foreign will continue. It's a scary time to be anything other than white, heterosexual male; there's no space for anyone "other".

EV: You are completely right, but that's manufactured by the newsmakers that control our headlines and the issues. There are always going to be a faction who want to keep the barriers of race, gender and sexuality in place

but we have to keep pushing back. There are examples of folks using social media to fight against the heteronormative, xenophobic and homophobic rhetoric out there; however, all too often the voices of ignorance are louder than the voices of dissent. We can't let that be the case any longer- the stakes are too high.

HS: This all ties into the importance of the ability to critically think. Without being critical of current politics and social issues we can't begin to unpack their implications. This means educating others about these discourses and why they're problematic. We can not afford to be neutral parties and let others tell us how we should feel or interject dated perspectives. In this sense ambiguity is equivalent to passivity and allowing the dominant narrative to stand unopposed.

EV: Basically, this means that feminists- whether we identify as millennial or not- have to keep using our situated knowledges to critique and question the mainstream world while we are interacting in it. Not everyone we encounter will possess a feminist lens so it's imperative that we offer up this perspective so as to counter the dominant narrative.

Congratulations 2016 GSST Graduates!

Christina Escudero
Karla Guzman
Jessica Hernandez
Kharen Hernandez
Hannah Hobson
Madusha Jayagoda
Shabnum Khashi
Jennifer Kim
Kierstin King
Dulce Leguizamo
Bianca Linares
Jenny Morales
Marilyn Orosco-Figueroa



*May the road rise up to meet you;
May the wind be always at your back.*

Eunice Perez
Yesenia Ramirez
Desiree Robinson
Alexis Rojas
Kathya Salazar
Natalie Sanchez
Victoria Solis
Heather Steele
Chay Tadeo
Alejandro Tenorio
Ashlee Turner
Emilie Vancelette

Giving Back: The MDU Staff goes beyond the campus to give back to the community. Over the years, children and families receiving county mental health services continues to increase. During the past Holiday Season, we decided to “Pay It Forward” by providing food to families in need through the Riverside County Department of Mental Health – Children’s Services/Parent Support Division. It was a huge success and we were able to provide a large variety of food items. We also participated in donating to “Toys for Tots” to deliver a message of hope to some of our nation’s most valuable resources – our children. We look forward to future charitable deeds.



Health & Wellness: We have stepped up efforts to engage staff in living a healthy and active lifestyle. Staff member Kristine Specht volunteered to be a UCR wellness Ambassador and provides us with enthusiasm, strategies, and motivation in promoting a healthy work environment. Kristine also created an MDU Wellness Board that shares information about nutrition, exercise, and other health topics. All of the MDU staff participated in this year’s UCR “Mission: Possible 3”, an 8-week team wellness challenge. We completed all the weekly missions and activities and was presented with awards and a certificates of completion.

Other Activities: We are also becoming more pro-active in emergency preparedness, attending RAIN training and participating in emergency drills. Within CHASS College staff activities, we also strive to excel which was demonstrated by being winners in the CHASS Staff Chili Cook-off, the fall Costume Competition, and the Pumpkin Carving contest. Our Academic Advisors happily reach out to students to help them with their short- and long-term goals. They participate in campus outreach programs such as UCR Discover, Highlander, and Community College Days. Staff members also volunteer for the UCR Commencement Ceremony, Pride Prom, and Diversity Enhancement Programs.

*For more information about our GSST staff,
please go to <http://mfau.ucr.edu/>*

An Epic in the Making

By Reyna Rouse

As of April 18th, I will have been on hormone replacement therapy for a year and a half! In my first half year I experienced many physical changes. In these first few months, joy over took every day. My face was like a present and every other week was Christmas. Jokes aside, it was awesome. Family and music saves my life.

My second half brought on a lot of teenage angst, with phases all too familiar. Old concepts I once strolled through became overbearing strangers. I pushed through every day with a burden, no sense of irony. Every moment I was trying to put pieces back together (either it be a sketch, a thought, a fear). Shame and guilt were weekly themes. Family and music saves my life.

In this recent half year, I had enough...
I couldn't focus when reading.
I couldn't express thoughts.
I couldn't stand being mistaken as a fool.
I couldn't stay calm.
I struggled in almost everything.
And so, I've made the decision to withdraw from Spring Quarter.
In my time off, I am working on goals as a living artist.
I've set foundations for far too long.
I am working on an album.
I am working on a novel.
Music saves lives; that's a truth worth
all of my dedication for the rest of my life.

Reyna Rouse is a GSST major currently on leave from UCR

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oral history and historiography, and women's experiences of war. She is an advocate for Afro-centric programs of study, particularly at African universities and spent Summer 2014 University of Ilorin-Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, where she was a Carnegie African Diaspora Fellow at the on capacity building, research development and mentoring for faculty and graduate students. In January, Eric Stanley, former UC President's Post-Doctoral Fellow at UC San Diego, joined us and

immediately energized and expanded our Trans Studies curriculum and activities. Professor Stanley organized a Trans Studies symposium that celebrates the release of the second, expanded edition of *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*, edited by Stanley and Nat Smith. The event features a panel discussion between Reina Gossett, activist, writer, artist and the 2014-2016 Activist-In-Residence at Barnard College's Center for Research on
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Women, and CeCe McDonald, celebrated Black transgender woman and LGBTQ activist from Minneapolis, to highlight the linkages between institutions, racialized force, and unfreedom.

Our new Bachelor of Science in Sustainability Studies, which emphasizes the historical and contemporary ways environments change, and are changed by, human activity got off to a quick start in Fall. The Sustainability Studies major was designed to accommodate transfers from the College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (CNAS) and others who have more than the usual interest and/or training in math and science, yet still aspire to get an interdisciplinary education in sustainability. This strategy has been successful in recruiting many of our current majors. Program Director, Chikako Takeshita reports that fifteen students have already declared the major and we expect to have fifty majors by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

The GSST Department has developed a reputation for interdisciplinary collaboration and support for campus events that address gender and sexuality, diversity, and social justice. During the 2015-16 academic year, our sponsorships and independent offerings have included a screening of "The Yes Men are Revolting," about the activities of a parody group dedicated to environmental and social activism and a series of speakers focusing on climate change, social responsibility and justice, and sustainability, more generally: Laura Pulido (USC, Environmental Justice & Racism), Lindsay Dillon (UC Davis,

Geographies of Sustainability), Hanna Garth (UCI, Agriculture and Food Justice), Betsy Hartmann (Hampshire College), Dyanna Jaye (SustainUS), Traci Voyles (Loyola Marymount University) and Jacqui Patterson (NAACP, Climate Change and Environmental Justice).

We expect our administration and development of the LGBT Minor to prove just as successful as the BS in Sustainability Studies has been. Currently directed by GSST Professor and Vice Chair, Jane Ward, the LGBT Minor, established a decade ago to provide interested UCR students with education and training in critical, theoretical, and methodological developments across disciplines that focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersexual, and transgender issues. I extend my heartfelt thank you to my colleagues in GSST, who have worked steadily and cooperatively this year to support and encourage one another, as well as our students. The payoff has been a remarkable level of individual and collaborative research productivity, in addition to a larger, stronger, and more comprehensive program of courses, events, and opportunities for our students. Of course, our success has depended on the Multidisciplinary Unit academic advisors and staff, to whom we remain ever grateful. No wonder I am thrilled to say "Congratulations!" to our graduating majors and minors. Do stay in touch! Come back and visit. Send your new emails and updates to the department at genderstudiesucr@gmail.com.

Yours,
Juliann Emmons Allison

Keep in touch with us at www.facebook.com/UCRGenderStudies