Greetings alumni, current students, faculty, and supporters of Women’s and Gender Studies at Eastern Michigan University. After a long hiatus, we are restarting our newsletter. In this first issue you will find information about exciting developments in our department.

2020 was a difficult year for everyone. Like other institutions, EMU moved to virtual instruction and remote working in March 2020. This shift has been challenging, but we have persisted. In April 2020 we hosted a virtual awards ceremony. During the 2020-2021 academic year, we maintained our usual diverse set of courses, advised students online, and held our lecture series virtually. The 4th annual Women of Color Feminisms and Leadership Symposium was also held virtually and the final stages of the multi-year Survey on Sexual Misconduct Culture took place over zoom.

At this time, we don’t know what fall 2021 will bring, but we know that we will continue to connect with and support our students regardless of whether or not we are able to gather physically.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. I am grateful for the design work of Katie Kiacz, one of our Graduate Assistants.

In solidarity,

Beth Currans, Associate Professor and Department Head (Interim)
The Women’s Resource Center, the Center of Race and Ethnicity (CORE), and the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies hosted the 4th Annual Women of Color Feminisms and Leadership Symposium on March 16th and 17th, 2021. This year’s theme was Reimagining, Rebuilding and Recreating Ourselves as Women of Color. The hope for this symposium was to provide a breathable space for Women of Color to: envision a world without limitations, unlearn false narratives of who THEY told us we should be; and to prioritize healing so that we can create new versions of ourselves without fear.

In spite of the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic, this virtual event garnered 240 registrants from various regions across the United States and abroad. Activist Tarana Burke was our featured keynote speaker. Burke and other speakers including Mariel Buque and Christina Castro focused on healing from white supremacist and patriarchal violence. A panel of Michigan-based activists included Nada Al-Hanooti, a recent graduate of EMU’s Women’s and Gender Studies MA program. Each session provided attendees with a safe space to receive motivation, resources, advice, and strategies, from local and national activists, self-care advocates, entrepreneurs, and performers. Attendees actively engaged with the speakers and attendees during the lively Q & A discussions throughout the event and the musical breaks provided by DJ Lixxer.

We are beyond proud of the contributions of our WGST students, faculty and staff and we look forward to continuing to collaborate on this much needed and powerful initiative.

- Dr. Dyann Logwood and Simone Dixon (WGST MA student)
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MA STUDENTS PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH

ZHANAR TULEUTAYEVA

"To what extent do university prevent efforts address existing issues of campus sexual misconduct and sexual assault in the U.S.?”

Tuleutayeva writes, "This study investigates whether existing university sexual misconduct prevention efforts address campus sexual harassment, sexual assault, coercion, and stalking. Among those initiatives, primary and secondary interventions such as bystander interventions, women’s self defense classes, programs for fraternities and athletes implemented in 33 American universities were analyzed in the framework of this research. The analysis showed that universities are not fully and comprehensively implementing prevention efforts using feminist and victim-centered approaches.”

Zhanar Tuleutayeva is a earning a M.A. in Women’s and Gender Studies. Tuleutayeva plans to enter the workforce upon degree completion.

Presented on April 6, 2021.

HANNAH BOLLIN

"Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies and Intersectional Mentorship”

Bollin's research explores Alim and Paris’ (2017) description of Western schools as having the primary purpose "to forward the largely assimilationist and often violent White imperial project, with students and families being asked to lose or deny their languages, literacies, cultures, and histories...” Bollin’s paper "intends to discuss Alim and Paris' theory of Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies alongside the Project BIG program at Eastern Michigan University. This discussion will outline the foundational overlaps between the two theories such as the necessity for safe spaces for students, validating every student’s identity, and the teaching of critical consciousness.”

Hannah Bollin is completing a M.A. in Women’s and Gender Studies this summer. Bollin’s goal upon completion is to pursue her Ph.D.

Presented on April 6, 2021
“We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems: not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.”
- Grace Lee Boggs

ALUMNI FOCUS: NICOLE CARTER

Since graduating from the MA program in Women’s and Gender Studies in 2010, Nicole Carter completed a PhD in Educational Studies with a research emphasis in Black feminist epistemological practices as emphasized through public art and performance. For the last 5 ½ years, she has worked as the Director of the Women’s Center at Wright State University. She is faculty in the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and African and African American Studies programs. She is also the Sis Brand, a company dedicated to actualizing wellness through writing and art.

She described the MA program in Women’s and Gender Studies at Eastern Michigan University as providing her “with an understanding of relationships between social identity, social structure, and injustice and oppression” that have, in turn, given her “an opportunity... to educate and advocate for myself and others while simultaneously activating change.”

2020-2021 EMU DEPT. OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES AWARDS

Distinguished Leaders Award
Zhanar Tuleutayeva

Margaret Smith Scholarship
Katie Kiacz

Lloyd-Russell Award
Joci McMichael
Honorable Mentions
Natalie Anderson & Taylor Younce

Department Member Service Award
Meg Dobbins
An EMU Student Organization

The Women’s and Gender Studies Student Organization (WCSSO) works to create inclusive feminist spaces on campus. WCSSO is open to undergraduate and graduate students from all fields of study. The Women’s and Gender Studies Student Organization is committed to upholding feminist values and fighting for equality and social justice on Eastern Michigan University’s campus and across greater Ypsilanti and Southeast Michigan communities.

In order to create a more accessible organization, Triota, the women’s and gender studies honors society, is now incorporated within WCSSO. Students graduating with the required GPA will still have an opportunity to become members of the honors society.

(Iota Iota Iota) is a national academic and service-based Women’s and Gender Studies honor society. The Greek letter, iota, was selected to represent the three goddesses Inanna, Ishtar, and Isis. Triota strives to maintain feminist values central to women’s and gender studies:

- Egalitarianism
- Inclusiveness
- Analyses of structures of power in society
- Celebration of the diversity of Women’s and LGBTQ experiences

Contact us to join or for more information by emailing kkiacz@emich.edu
Amanda Allen:


Beth Currans:


Elizabeth Donovan:

Rob Halpern:
Fertility (Sancho Panza Press 2020).


Peter Higgins:

“Gender and Migration” (co-authored with Amy Reed-Sandoval), Handbook of Migration Ethics, edited by Johanna Gördemann, Andreas Niederberger, and Uchenna Okeja, Springer, (forthcoming 2021)


Melissa Jones:
Bodies/Object/Agents, Journal of Narrative Theory 49, no. 3 Edited by Holly Dugan and Melissa J. Jones (2019)

Konnie Kustron:


Dyann Logwood:

Laura McMahon: