A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear alumni, friends and allies,

I write this letter at the end of our academic year 2015/16 and after my first three semesters as a new Chair of the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. We have gone through major changes, starting with the retirement of our former Chair, Dr. Joanne Hershfield in January 2015. The academic year was truly successful, full of events and accomplishments, as you can read in the individual faculty profiles. We are flourishing in every respect – the numbers of our undergraduate Majors and Minors have gone up again; we just celebrated the graduation of the Class of 2016 with 58 seniors on the stage! We held the event in the University Room of the Institute for the Arts and Humanities, as every year we seem to need a larger space to accommodate our students, their families and friends – it is a truly exciting time that we wish to share with you. We are proud of our graduating class and trust that their path forward will be filled with success, a positive impact on this planet and concern for all. Please read on about the various events and accomplishments in this Newsletter, and mainly stay in touch.

So much of what we do would not be possible without support from generous alumni and friends. I hope you will consider a year-end gift to the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies. Private giving enables recruitment of top-notch undergraduate and graduate students, engaged learning opportunities and applied real-world experiences for undergraduates, visits from exceptional faculty, lecturers and artists from around the world and professional development for students and faculty, including access to internship programs and professional conferences. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift, please click here for secure online giving. Gifts of all sizes make a difference. Make an Online Gift

Best wishes,

Silvia Tomášková, Professor and Chair
Charlotte Eure, Class of 2016

I will be forever grateful for the time I spent as a WGST major at UNC. Going back to school later in life as a transfer student was intimidating, but the support and encouragement I received from professors and other students in the department simultaneously humbled and empowered me to be my most honest self and to do my best work. Every single class I took imparted wisdom and skills that I use on a daily basis—not just professionally, but in my relationships with others and in how I relate to myself. I learned to be more conscious in all that I do, to see how even the seemingly small things in our lives matter in major ways, and that there are countless opportunities to be present and to care. In the two years I spent pursuing the major, I developed an intersectional feminist framework that critically informs how I perceive the world and my place within it and inspires me to continuously strive for justice and compassion. Since graduating in May, I have been working for the Southern Oral History Program as a co-producer and cohost of their podcast, Press Record, covering topics like LGBTQ voices in the South and emotions in oral history. I became involved with the SOHP through the WGST internship program during my last semester, so I have the WGST major to thank directly for my current work! Although I am not entirely sure what is next for me, I will continue to pursue meaningful work in both my personal and professional life, and I am certain I will carry with me into any endeavor a strong sense of self and community as a result of the WGST major.

Bailey Brett Jackson, Class of 2016

The Racial Justice Program (RJP) aims to preserve and extend constitutionally guaranteed rights to people who have historically been denied their rights on the basis of race. RJP works in four areas: race and criminal justice, race and education, race and economic justice, and American Indian rights.” As a fellow, I have been conducting research on School Resource Officers’ roles in schools and how the increase of SROs feeds into the school-to-prison pipeline by disproportionately criminalizing actions by students of color that would normally be handled with school disciplinary actions. I have found that my women’s and gender studies background influences how I analyze research, as I am constantly asking how intersectionality plays into the policing of kids. For example, what is the race of the SROs and how does that impact their roles in schools? Why do so many studies leave out girls and young women? Soon, I will be reaching out to community partners to interview young people who have experience with School Resources Officers and who have been expelled from school.

Just last week I was offered a full-time job here at the ACLU with the Reproductive Freedom Project. I will be working as a Legal and Administrative Assistant. “RFP works to ensure that every woman can make the best decision for herself and her family about whether and when to have a child without undue political interference. RFP works on abortion, birth control, religion and reproductive rights, and abstinence-only curricula.
Interview with Rose Peifer, Class of 2015

Question: Tell us a little bit about what you’ve done since graduating, Rose.

My senior year at UNC, I participated in the WMGST Department internship program. I interned at the Compass Center for Women and Families, an amazing agency in Chapel Hill that provides domestic violence crisis services, legal services, financial and career counseling, assistance finding resources, and youth/adult community education. I worked in youth and adult community education, facilitating presentations on domestic violence, youth dating violence, bullying, and healthy relationships, as well as working at the front desk assisting clients in person and over the phone. After graduation, I continued as an intern at the Compass Center as the Youth and Community Education Intern, where I continued to facilitate presentations, as well as working to update and develop the curriculum for the presentations. In my last 2 months at the Compass Center, I also worked in the Teens Climb High Program, part of whose work is to teach reproductive health in local middle school health classes. I worked to develop the curriculum for that program, and facilitated 2 weeks of classes at a local middle school.

I also volunteered teaching English with an organization in Carrboro called Orange County Literacy Council. My classes had 7 women, 5 from Mexico and El Salvador, and 2 women from Burma, most of whom had not finished high school, and some of whom had not even had the opportunity to go to middle school. I had an amazing experience with these women, and got to witness the power education can have on a person’s life.

During this time, I was in the process of applying for the Peace Corps. Eventually, I was accepted and I am currently serving in the Peace Corps as an English Education Volunteer in the Republic of Georgia, and will be here for the next 2 years.

Question: How did you become involved in the Girls in STEM initiative in Turkey with Aziz Sancar? How would you describe your experiences in traveling to Turkey and working with Dr. Sancar?

My godfather, Aziz Sancar, is currently a professor in the department of Biochemistry at UNC. He was born in rural Turkey and has always maintained close ties to Turkey, where all of his family still lives. He also has been an advocate for girls’ education in Turkey and around the world. Turkey is a country in which girls’ education is, unfortunately, still a problem in some areas, because of issues of poverty, early marriage, and gender inequity. This past year, Aziz Sancar was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. This gave him a larger platform to speak about the issue of girls’ education in Turkey, particularly STEM education. He was invited to participate in a project called the Girls in Stem Project, which would promote girls education, specifically STEM education, in Turkey through summer camps held in towns around Turkey where girls could get together and learn about STEM, and have the opportunity to invent an item. I was also invited to participate, as Aziz knew of my interest in the issue of girls’ education and gender equality.

In March, I traveled with the organizers of the project to Turkey to promote the project. We met with businesspeople, women leaders, and government officials in Ankara and Istanbul to talk about the project. We also held a news conference about the project to raise awareness about it, and conducted an interview with CNN Turk about the project and girls’ education in general in Turkey. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the summer camps,
The girls had an amazing time and their inventions were so creative and interesting! I was also so proud of the camp held in Şanlıurfa, where Syrian refugee girls attended alongside Turkish girls, and they had an opportunity to interact and collaborate in friendship and understanding.

Question: Can you tell us a little bit about your decision to join the Peace Corps and the post that you have as a PCV in the Republic of Georgia?

I had considered joining Peace Corps for years, and finally made the decision to apply after I graduated. I was looking for an opportunity to be involved in both education and gender equity work abroad, and found Peace Corps to be a perfect fit. I am currently serving as an English Education Volunteer in the Republic of Georgia, a small country bordering Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia. I am posted in the Western Guria Region of Georgia in a small town. Starting in September, I will be teaching English in a public school alongside a Georgian English teacher. I will also be involved in secondary projects outside my teaching role. I will be involved in two Peace Corps projects: SELF Camp and the National English Spelling Competition. SELF Camp is a summer camp for girls in the Guria and Adjara regions of Georgia that focuses on fitness, healthy eating, and self-esteem/confidence/leadership, as well as awareness of gender equity issues in Georgia. Girls’ participation in sports, as well as knowledge of healthy eating, is very low in Georgia, and this camp aims to empower girls to raise awareness about these issues in their home communities after camp is over. I am also the Assistant Regional Coordinator for the National English Spelling Competition, which is implemented in schools across Georgia to make the English learning experience fun and motivate students and teachers. I am very excited about these projects, and look forward to creating more projects in my community over the next two years!
STUDENT LEADERSHIP

DAYLA MENDEZ, CLASS OF 2016

This past spring semester I had the opportunity to work as a Latino Services intern at the Compass Center for Women and Families. I started by doing mainly interpreting and translation. I found that increasing access to resources for the Latino community is more than just translating all documents to Spanish, although that is also necessary. When looking at a database, you must think about things like social security requirements. Learning to look for culturally sensitive information is an important part of creating a more inclusive environment.

I was also trained as a hotline advocate and was able to see how problems are easily compounded for the Latino population. For example, there is no domestic violence shelter in Orange County so clients have to be referred to neighboring counties. Aside from distance and transportation issues, Latina clients, must also deal with factors such as hostile conditions. While shelters aren’t supposed to check for documentation there are cases in which they have been denied entry. Many shelters lack or have limited bilingual staff and have predominantly English speaking victims. As an advocate, you must consider these factors and explain them to a client before making plans to move them to a shelter. If they are very likely to leave a shelter, it may ultimately be safer for them to stay with their abuser.

One of the key approaches at the Compass Center was that of empowering the client to make their own choices. Many clients come from situations in which they have been powerless to make their own decisions and have had decisions made for them by their abuser, law enforcement, and those around them. It is all too easy to decide what the correct “feminist choice” would be from afar. One could say that deciding to return to an abuser or not ending an abusive relationship is the anti-feminist, wrong choice. However, in coercing or guilting a victim of domestic violence into leaving a relationship when they are not ready, we are employing the same manipulative tactics as their abuser. Instead, we must provide the support to allow them to decide for themselves what is best and ensure they do not feel guilt or shame over the actions they must take for self-preservation. The fact that they made that choice of their own volition is what, by default, makes it a feminist act.

MARY TURNER LANE AWARD 2016

EMMY JOHNSON, 2016 WINNER

Mary Turner Lane was one of the primary founders and foremothers of Women’s Studies as an academic unit at UNC. In 1977 Mary Turner Lane was named as the Women’s Studies program director. This university award in her name honors a senior who has made an outstanding contribution to research (or creativity activity) on women’s and gender issues. We had submissions from outstanding students from many departments. We chose Emmy Johnson for her work on clothing, gender identity and subversion. Johnson’s paper, “It Just Wears: Gender Presentation Negotiation for Trans and Gender Non-conforming People” uses theory and interviews to explore how non-binary trans people negotiate daily life in terms of clothing. Her work addresses issues of passing, safety, and emotional duress.

This was her final paper for the capstone course—Women’s Studies 695: Principles of Feminist Inquiry. We asked Emmy to reflect on her experience conducting research on her topic:

This project was incredibly personal to me. My goal in writing the paper was to educate and spread the stories of the people I interviewed, but my goal in conducting the research was to learn from other trans people in the hopes that their answers would help me figure out what I want to do. It was incredibly successful in that way. My understanding of gender, as experienced by others, grew and changed in such a way that my understanding of my own gender now feels more solid and safer, less scary than it did before. Additionally, the discussion of clothing made me feel more free to experiment and has empowered me to try things I hadn’t before. I want to extend a huge thank you to the people I interviewed for their assistance with this project and, more so, their support and assistance with my own growth.

I am so honored to receive this award, particularly for a project into which I poured so much of myself. The WGST department has been a place of growth for me since I started the major. This is where I was given space to explore myself and my place in the world, and this is where I felt like I could be completely myself. This department, all of the professors and all of the students, are wonderful, and I feel so lucky to have been able to be part of it.

Michele Tracy Berger & Emily Burrill
During the past three years, the department has had a strong presence at the Southeastern Women’s Studies Association Conference (SEWSA). Dr. Berger, Dr. Booth and Dr. Vigil have presented at several SEWSA conferences and have also accompanied undergraduate presenters.

This year we had the highest number of graduate students attend and present at SEWSA. In the Fall 2015 Dr. Berger taught her popular WMST 890 class: ‘Intersectionality: Exploring Intersectionality Theories, Methods, and Practices of Social Change’. Enrolled students’ disciplines spanned the humanities, social sciences, STEM and biomedical sciences. The call for SEWSA was announced in November and when the WMST 890 students saw that the upcoming conference theme was ‘Intersectionality’, the majority of the students decided to propose a roundtable on interdisciplinary methods and intersectionality. Their proposal was accepted and they presented “Struggling Together: the Benefits of Interdisciplinary Classes for Learning Intersectional Approaches” to an enthusiastic audience. Four of the six attending students are in the process of completing their graduate certificate in women’s studies.

Below, two students discuss their experiences attending SEWSA 2016:

**Francesca Bernardi**

I very much enjoyed attending this year’s SEWSA conference. It was my first women studies conference, and very different from my usual experience of mathematics or physics meetings. The atmosphere was very relaxed overall and less intimidating than I was expecting. Attendees were mostly females, quite the opposite of what I am used to. I met scholars from a variety of disciplines and specialties, who were all very open and supportive to me, making me feel much more at home than I usually feel at scientific conferences.

I particularly appreciated the chance of being part of a panel discussion with my fellow classmates. It was a unique and instructive experience that I will treasure for a long time. And since our panel was among the first on the program, we then had the opportunity to focus on other people’s work, without any worries.

**Ashley Mattheis**

Participating in the SEWSA conference is much more than a CV line-item, it is a space where scholarly commitments are encouraged and supported. The intimacy of the conference allowed me to get great feedback during my individual panel presentations and offered many opportunities to engage with and to have fun with other participants. For me, the most special aspect was our Intersectionality class round table talk which allowed us to reconnect as a group and to contribute to scholarship by recreating and discussing our transformative, transdisciplinary class experience.
INTERSECTIONALITY IN ACTION

Intersectionality Web by Susan Harbage Page

On the third day of class a ball of yarn passed from student to student became a way to bring a new class of students together and visualize “intersectionality” in my Introduction to Feminist Thought (WMST 202) in the Spring 2016. It was my first time teaching the class and as a conceptual visual artist I wanted to incorporate creativity, performance and experiential learning to help visualize the theoretical material we would be studying. I believe using the body and movement in space to visualize ideas is a powerful way to internalize and understand concepts and their multiple meanings that sometimes may be elusive when students are learning only with text or traditional teaching methods.

I had just completed a performance and installation “The Red Spider Web/La Ragnatella Rossa” near Pisa, Italy which included using a red thread to weave a 3d spider web in a room full of spectators. The performance surprised me. It initially started out as an artwork separate from the audience. During the experimental performance I decided to weave the audience into the work, handing spectators a piece of thread so they became a part of the structure. The audience ended up holding the web in place. I had chosen the web as the central point of this artwork based on my long-time explorations of women, labor and textiles. A spider web is woven and created from the center outward as a crocheted doily is. It is flexible, has the tensile strength of steel, and is often invisible until one is close upon it or walks into it. By enlarging and changing the scale of the spider web, combining it with a soundscape, the process of weaving, and the images of the Amaretti di Santa Croce (tradition cookies from the area), The Red Spider Web/La Ragnatela Rossa invited new perspectives on femininity, labor, vulnerability, and interconnectedness. It also related to an earlier video piece “Sewn Border” where I literally sewed politics into geography by sewing a dotted black borderline into a topographical map. You can view “Sewn Border” here and a few images of “The Red Spider Web/La Ragnatella Rossa here.

One aspect of my teaching philosophy is that students engage more when they are responsible for their own learning, so I charged two students, Danielle Spitzer and Madeline Harrison, to lead the third day of class in an activity that would demonstrate intersectionality, one of the core concepts of feminist thought. As we prepared for the class together we conceptualized the basic idea of this project and decided to try out our “Intersectionality web” activity out in class the next day.

We stand in a circle to unite the group and help us see each other. One student holds the thread/yarn and calls out something about their life, for example, “I am the first student in my family to go to college.” They continue to hold the end of the yarn passing the ball of yarn to another person who is also the first person in their family to go to college, so they remain connected. When all the students who are the first in their family to go to college are connected, the last person holding the ball of yarn calls out something else like “I own a car” and the yarn is passed on to everyone who owns a car.

In the end, everyone in the room was holding on to the yarn, including me, and we had created our own “web” of complicated connections.

Our exercise “Intersectionality Web” helped the group get to know each other. We laughed as we figured out how to throw or pass the yarn from one person to the next, how to hold the thread/yarn at different levels to make it more 3d. During this process we discussed what “intersectionality” meant, how we are directly and indirectly connected to our peers, and how systems of power including but not limited to race, class and gender operate. We realized that we each have many points of power and privilege intersecting in different ways. We often hold those visible and invisible structures in place just as we were holding the yarn in place. We all identify and see ourselves in multiple ways, have unique combinations of identities and these effect the way we walk in the world.
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2016 GRADUATES
Lilly U. Nguyen is an Assistant Professor and an anthropologist of information, technology, and knowledge with a specific emphasis on Vietnam and the Vietnamese diaspora.

As an interdisciplinary scholar, my research leverages critical theories of difference and race from ethnic studies to articulate the ethical stakes of transnational circulations of information technologies. As such, my work builds intellectual bridges between Asian-American studies and feminist science studies.

My scholarship builds these intellectual bridges across several critical sites of techno-culture. First, my work considers the role of software in mediating technological modernity for people in Vietnam and the Vietnamese diaspora. This monograph project, provisionally titled *Software Otherwise: Forming Technological Modernity in Vietnam*, is based on twenty months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted of multiple sites of software production such as mobile app ‘start-up’ companies, free/open source software volunteer projects, and pirated software disc shops. This project examines the interrelationships between desires for global likeness, the haunting of forgotten futures, and postcolonial entrepreneurial cultures as software takes on greater material and symbolic importance in global modernity.

Second, my work takes a critical feminist lens to analyze hacking. Hacking has recently emerged as an important trope in the aspirations that surround information technology. Hacking comprises a technopolitical ethos that reifies masculine scripts of heroic genius, entrepreneurial creation, and individual achievement. By interrogating hacking as a gendered discourse, my research shows the perpetuation of global divisions of visible and invisible techno-labor. This scholarship of hacking has resulted in several publications including a journal article titled “Infrastructural Action in Vietnam: Inverting the Techno-Politics of Hacking in the Global South” in *New Media and Society*, as well as an edited special issue for the *Journal of Peer Production*, “Feminism and (Un)Hacking.” As part of this work, I also organized a conference panel titled “Labors of Coping: Racialized Forms of Entrepreneurialism” for the Annual Meeting for the Association for Asian-American Studies in Spring 2016.

My other research project, “Ethnic Configurations and the Ethnoburb,” is still in its early stages and examines the configurations of ethnicity in place and through memory. This project comprises a study of the Southeast Asian Archive at UC Irvine, situated within the suburban sprawl of Orange County, California. Rather than simply viewing archives as a mere repositories of records and data, this project explores the ways that archives are active sites of encounter and dialogue and become technologies for new writings of history.

Michele Tracy Berger is an Associate Professor whose research interests continue to concentrate on African American women and girls’ health. This year she received a contract with New York University Press for her book project, *Thriving vs. Surviving: African-American Mothers and Adolescent Daughters on Health, Sexuality, and HIV*. Its focus is on southern African American mothers and their adolescent daughters and examines the themes that emerge, from focus groups, about health, information about and access to health and health care, and sexuality at a crucial period of girls’ lives—early adolescence. It also pays particular attention to mothers’ framing of intimacy, relationships and ideas about HIV risk. Analytically, the book uses a Black feminist and intersectional lens to examine the lived realities of racial and gender health disparities.

She completed her second year as co-PI and collaborator with Professor Keval Kaur Khalsa through Duke University’s Mindfulness in Education and Human Development—Bass Connections’ project. This grant brings UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke students together in an experiential learning opportunity to conduct research. Since fall 2014, she has been researching the mental and physical health effects on at-risk middle school children, mostly girls of color, who participate in an after school yoga program. She co-leads the learning team of UNC and Duke students and teaches them how to conduct research methods in the field. This February, she helped to coordinate a one day symposium on ‘Healing Trauma from our Roots: Mindfulness and Movement Work’ that highlighted the project’s research and brought together teachers, youth advocates, activists, and researchers.

She has articles forthcoming in the *Journal of Colorism* and *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice.*
Emily Burrill is a social historian who examines themes of law and society, gender and power, and statecraft and knowledge production. Her 2015 book, States of Marriage: Gender, Justice, and Rights in Colonial Mali (Ohio University Press) is a modern history of the ideological debates surrounding the meaning of marriage, as well as the associated legal and sociopolitical practices of women and men in colonial Mali. States of Marriage is the 2016 winner of the Alf Andrew Heggoy Prize from the French Colonial Historical Society.

In addition to authoring several articles and book chapters, Emily Burrill is also the co-editor of Domestic Violence and the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa (Ohio University Press, 2010), with Richard Roberts and Elizabeth Thornberry. Currently, Dr. Burrill is working on a second book-length project on West African women who were self-described political radicals against the colonial state, and then architects of postcolonial states, from the 1940s through the 1970s. This project focuses on the lives and experiences of particular women who embraced socialist political ideology, Muslim faith, and transregional communities of belonging through the period that we now think of as decolonization and independence. In particular, she is interested in mobility — the ways these women moved through space and across regions in West Africa (at times through exile), the way they produced knowledge and information that circulated in Atlantic and Sahelian flows and networks, and the way that social mobility was either circumscribed or enhanced by the choices that each of them made. This book will contribute to our historical understanding of nationalism in African contexts, particularly Muslim societies in Africa, and socialist and communist political organizing in the Cold War era.

During the summer of 2016, Burrill will travel to Dakar, Senegal to attend “Innovation, Transformation, and Successful Futures in Africa,” a collaborative international conference hosted by CODESRIA, the African Studies Association, the American Anthropological Association, and the West African Research Association. She will also devote time to archival research here in the UNC libraries, and to her writing on the second book project.

Karen Booth is an Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and adjunct Associate Professor in Global Studies.

In my work, I apply methods and theories from cultural studies, political sociology, and critical science studies to feminist analysis of the politics of HIV and reproductive justice. My current research focuses on debates about HIV testing and treatment in relation to pregnant women in the U.S. and globally, drawing particularly on material from the archives of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. I am also studying the contradictory ways in which gay-identified news media and activists represented and responded to feminist concerns about reproductive justice, especially abortion, before and during the HIV/AIDS crisis. I have published research on both international and US domestic battles over research, clinical, ethical, and journalistic interventions in women’s reproductive and sexual health. In addition, I have participated in and studied lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer movements to win human rights recognition at the international level.

My teaching reflects these research and advocacy interests. My favorite course is the “International Politics of Sexual and Reproductive Health,” in which students and I examine the differences and the sometimes surprising similarities across debates over eugenics in mid-twentieth century North Carolina, female circumcision and abortion in colonial Kenya, HIV/AIDS treatment and vasectomies in Mexico today, and the newly booming surrogacy industry in India. I also love teaching my classes on “Introduction to Sexuality Studies” and “Comparative Queer Politics,” as well as courses on feminist theory and methods. I recently helped to create UNC’s new policy on sexual assault prevention, reporting, and adjudication. Currently, I am the faculty adviser for Students United for Reproductive Justice (SURJ) and serve on the Board of the Sexuality Studies Program.
Susan Harbage Page is an Assistant Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies. She continues her work on two projects: the “U.S.–Mexico Border Project” focusing on race, gender, (im) migration, and nation and the “Merletti/Lace” project concerning issues of gender and labor.

Harbage Page spent a week in Fall 2015 on the U.S.–Mexico Border doing fieldwork walking along the U.S.–Mexico border wall. She also completed studio photographs of almost 900 objects collected from the border for her “Anti-Archive of Human Trauma on the U.S.–Mexico Border” which challenges who is worthy of documentation, attention, and remembrance. In Spring 2016, Harbage Page spent three months in Spello, Italy, doing fieldwork and creating a new series of paintings and drawings “Regola.” She also did fieldwork in the Negev Desert returning to a Bedouin Community and Women’s Weaving Cooperative (summer 2015) she documented and worked with almost twenty years ago.

In addition, her site-specific solo performance and installation, “The Red Spider Web/La Ragnatela Rosa,” premiered at Villa Pacchiani, Pisa (Santa Croce Sull’Arno), Italy, in April, 2015. For this performance she collaborated with composer Kenneth Stewart to complete a musical composition. “Precarity,” remixed from the sounds she made while baking a black walnut cake in her kitchen was the soundscape for her performance weaving a large-scale red spider web in the gallery. Her work was also featured in the exhibitions “Il Sangue Delle Donne, Traccie di Rosso Sul Panno Bianco,” at the Casa Internazionale delle Donne, Rome, Italy (October, 2015); and in “Migration Experiences,” at the Global Gallery, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio (2015). Harbage Page presented and performed “Cross the Border: An Art Action” sponsored by Galeria 409 of Brownsville, Texas (2015). She spent eight hours continually walking back and forth across the International Gateway Bridge between Matamoros, Mexico and Brownsville, Texas on December 19, 2015. “I’m asking why information, technology, goods, and culture can pass freely over a borders, but bodies can’t. Why must thousands of people annually put their bodies at great risk to walk the same path I walk easily, in an attempt to be safe, provide for their families, and simply belong?”

Harbage Page’s work is currently on view in a three-year exhibition “Imagining Home” at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Maryland; two of her works were acquired for the collection of the Ackland Museum of Art at UNC-Chapel Hill (spring 2016); the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University also acquired a new work for their collection. She completed a permanent art installation Cantante Celeste (Maria Callas) at the L’Ex Albergò Capitol e Crotone, Crotone, Italy (2016).

She participated in the Learning from Artists’ Archives: Preparing Next Generation Art Information Professionals through Partnerships with North Carolina’s Artists’ Archives” grant as an artist participant, Museum and Library Services (IMLS), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (fall 2015).

She lectured about leadership and diversity this year at the following places: American Leadership Forum (Charlotte Region, Concord North Carolina), Baltimore Museum of Art (Maryland), Community Building Initiative (Charlotte, North Carolina), Carolinas HealthCare System First Responders (Charlotte, North Carolina) and was featured in the podcast Creating the Anti-Archive of the U.S. Mexico Border, Institute for Arts and Humanities, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Harbage Page was honored with the following grants and awards: the Carolina Women’s Center Faculty Scholar Award (fall 2014), a Fellowship from the Institute for the Arts and Humanities, UNC-Chapel Hill (fall 2015), a travel grant from the Center of European Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill (spring 2016) and an Academic Excellence Award, Institute for Arts and Humanities, UNC-Chapel Hill (spring 2016). She was honored as a member of the Order of the Grail-Valkyries, UNC-Chapel Hill (spring 2016).
Tanya Shields is an Associate Professor and literary and cultural critic who specializes in the Caribbean and comparative plantation studies. She is the author of Bodies and Bones: Feminist Rehearsal and Imagining Caribbean Belonging (University of Virginia Press, 2014) and the editor of The Legacy of Eric Williams: Into the Postcolonial Moment (University Press of Mississippi, 2015). She will be on leave during the 2016-2017 academic year to pursue research on her current project, “Gendered Labor: Place and Power on Female-Owned Plantations,” which explores women’s roles as legal owners of U.S. and Caribbean plantations. This book project interrogates how women negotiated power and how their power impacted their belonging. What range of power did ownership give women? The project draws on novels, films, cultural representations, archival documents, and secondary sources about women who owned plantations during the 18th and 19th centuries. The work pivots to the 21st century to examine plantation tours, which serve as cultural and historical repositories, and women who still use plantations or plantation dynamics in the businesses they own or manage. Thus far, Dr. Shields’s research has resulted in the forthcoming article, “Magnolia Longing: Plantation Tourism and the (In)Visibility of Slavery,” which will be published in the journal Souls.

This year, in addition to presenting at conferences at Howard University and the College of Charleston, Dr. Shields co-convened and co-chaired, along with Kathy Perkins in Dramatic Art, the Telling Our Stories of Home project. This National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored event brought more than 28 participants from over 10 countries, including India, Rwanda, Brazil, and Haiti for 6 days of panels, roundtables, performances, and workshops to discuss issues of home from war, gentrification, religion, development, mass incarceration, and health. The various programs reached more than 1400 students, staff, faculty and members of the broader community. Funds secured from the NEH grant also support the African Diaspora Fellows Program (ADFP), a week-long summer seminar for North Carolina teachers to develop curricula on Africa and its Diaspora.

Professor Shields served as President of the Association of Women Faculty and Professionals (AWFP) and will be a fellow for the Academic Leadership Program at the Institute for the Arts and Humanities in Spring 2017.

Ariana E. Vigil is an Associate Professor of Women's and Gender Studies who specializes in U.S. Latina/o literature and culture, specifically issues of militarization, transnationalism, and activism.

Dr. Vigil is the author of War Echoes: Gender and Militarization in U.S. Latina/o Cultural Production (Rutgers University Press, 2014). She is currently working on a new project that places U.S. Latina/o literature in conversation with Latina/o media and communication studies. This book-length project, tentatively titled Gender and Journalism in U.S. Latina/o Literature examines how contemporary U.S. Latina/o authors - including playwrights, novelists, poets, and memoirists – utilize and engage journalistic themes and tropes in their work.

A portion of this project was recently published in Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies. This article, “The Ends of Representation: Media and Activism in Cherríe Moraga’s Heroes and Saints” focuses on one character within the play, the reporter Ana Pérez. The article argues that Pérez challenges the supposedly positive correlation between media access and political power.

During the summer of 2016, Dr. Vigil will continue to work on Gender and Journalism, as well as a second book project, Understanding Francisco Goldman. This project, which will be published as part of the University of South Carolina Press’s Understanding Contemporary American Literature series, will be devoted to explicating the work of Guatemalan-American novelist and journalist Francisco Goldman.

In addition to her research and teaching, Dr. Vigil has given several public talks in recent months. In early April she was a plenary speaker at Virginia Technology’s annual ASPECT graduate student conference. She was also the keynote speaker at University of Maryland-College Park’s Semana de la Latina, where she gave a talk entitled “La Lucha Sigue: Feminist Resistance to U.S. Military Intervention in Central America.”
I finally inhabit the mantle of a Chair more-less comfortably, with three semesters in my pocket. The time, energy, multitasking, constantly having to think like a bureaucrat, while expecting a forest fire every day when the computer screen lights, and have only a few minutes to spare for reflection, were all new adjustments. However, this role taught me how to focus solely on others and set my interests completely aside. I try to view every faculty member in the department through the lens – how can I help them be the best they can be, without meddling, imposing my ideas, yet keeping in mind my responsibility for the balance between the larger institutional picture and our collective, firmly held convictions, rooted in our scholarly discipline of gender studies. The transition was not easy, yet after my first full year I can say with confidence that I am proud of the work we as a department do; the research, the teaching, mentoring and community engagement are all done with conviction, heart and clarity about our place in this university, the state, and the world.

In my spare moments this academic year I dreamed of research, fantasized about long-term plans, and attended several conferences to present the results of my ongoing work. The digital models of prehistoric engravings from the Northern Cape province in South Africa are gradually coming together on my computer, with a steep learning curve and regular corrections as a part of the everyday. I frame my work in contrast to most research on prehistoric art as a study of material practice. My central question is – how do people get to be good at anything; how do they practice; and can we tell practice from perfect? As someone not very good at the technical aspects of art but with a vivid imagination and endless curiosity in everything, I would like archaeologists to think about a broader range of skills, practices and arts. Ultimately I hope to show that the past was so much richer in ways of being, doing and living than we usually hear when we speak of the distant past. To discuss all these issues with rock art experts I went in September 2015 to Alta, Norway, all the way past the Arctic Circle to a striking landscape, a setting with rock engravings around every corner. I also attended the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association in Denver as a respondent to a panel on “Palaeolithic Women” – a fabulous collection of creative, smart and wickedly funny serious research; and the annual meetings of the Society for American Archaeology to discuss “What is Prehistoric Art?” with a group of scholars quite ranging in opinion on the matter. A special issue of a journal published by Cambridge University will come out next year to answer this burning question. In addition to the shorter pieces I started drafting a book manuscript on Prehistoric Art: A Global Journey, a textbook for introductory courses, since there is no text at the moment. Several publishers are interested in bringing a general survey into this void. I will be working with Oxford University Press in the few hours that any one of my days has left for this project.

Wistfully remembering how much I love fieldwork and working in South Africa, in the Fall 2016 I submitted a grant application for the next stage of my rock art research in the Northern Cape to the National Geographic Society. I made it through the lengthy competitive review process, and in May 2016 I was awarded a two-year research grant. I will be returning to South Africa next summer! Moreover, I will also visit museums in Vienna, Austria and Prague, Czech Republic. Readings about the colonial history of the Northern Cape led me to accounts of a Czech doctor who lived in the region at the end of the 19th century. Upon return to his homeland he hauled (looted – in the common tradition of his day) a vast collection of materials back. Among them are rock engravings from the area, which he donated to museums in Vienna and Prague. After one hundred years of storage, the engravings will have a chance to come out, and I look forward to studying them. I will work with local curators who have been kind and responsive to all inquires, and I will report to my research collaborators in South Africa who are rock art experts. I will thus collect more data and hopefully find the time to reflect, think, and tell a feminist science story about a very distant past in South Africa.
As a woman growing up in Latin America, I was always very aware of social issues. Although machismo was not part of my household growing up, it was and still is a major part of Latin culture. It was something I both resisted and felt pressured to accept. Speaking or acting out against this part of my culture did not seem even remotely possible.

When my daughter, Julia, decided to pursue her degree in Women’s and Gender Studies I was happy that she was going to focus some of her energy on social issues. I had no idea what an impact her studies would have on her life and mine. She not only challenged me to consider ideas on which I had not given much thought, but she helped me transform so many feelings and experiences into words and positive actions.

More than anything, this teaching and learning cycle gave me the courage to continue the change that she and all those in the Women’s Studies department have already begun. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do!

Written by Martha Da Silva
Edited by Julia Da Silva

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