The Matrix
The Story of Women and Gender Studies
2014-2015
Letter from the Director—Angela Hattery
Eradicating Sexual Violence on Campus

Once again, this year has brought many wonderful changes to Women and Gender Studies. Most notably, after conducting a national search, Tashia Harris was hired as our new Associate Director. Most of you know Tashia who served as our Program Coordinator since November, 2012. After Tashia moved into the AD office, we conducted another search and successfully hired Nancy Xiong as our new Program Coordinator. Many of you will remember that Nancy worked with us as a graduate student staffer. I cannot express how amazing it is to be “fully staffed” for the first time in more than a year.

I want to highlight one of the many pieces of important work we have done this year. Following up on several White House initiatives, as many of you may know, President Cabrera made several statements to the University community of his concern about sexual violence on campus. Additionally, in her new strategic plan, Vice President for University Life and founding mother of Women and Gender Studies Rose Pascarell, made the eradication of sexual violence one of her top 10 strategic priorities. Women and Gender Studies played a pivotal role across campus in this work. I was pleased to be selected to serve on the President’s sexual assault task force which delivered a report to the President in late spring and which includes many recommendations for implementation that will begin in August.

In October we collaborated with Wellness, Alcohol, Violence Education Services (WA VES) and LEAD to bring a new program to campus, Fear 2 Freedom. Founded by Rosemary Trible, Fear 2 Freedom couples educational programming with volunteerism. October 8th students, faculty, and community members gathered to hear guest speakers and assemble 350 after care kits that contain amenities—clean, never worn clothes, toiletries, a journal, and a teddy bear— that are distributed locally to adult and child victims of sexual abuse who undergo SANE exams or “rape kits”. All 350 kits were delivered to INOVA hospital in Fairfax for use in our own community. Check out the Facebook page (Fear 2 Freedom at George Mason University) for pictures, statistics, and information for next year’s event to be held on Tuesday, September 22, 2015. Fear 2 Freedom was “kicked off” by President Cabrera who invited Rosemary Trible, founder of Fear 2 Freedom, to be his Freedom and Learning Forum guest. Additionally, incorporated into the Fear 2 Freedom event, students, faculty and staff were invited to take Mason’s Pledge to End Sexual Violence. Immediately following the Fear 2 Freedom celebration, President Cabrera and Athletic Director Brad Edwards led the fans at the men’s soccer game against UVA in the pledge. If you have not signed the pledge or gotten your t-shirt, please visit us in the Women and Gender Studies center where more than 200 members of our community have come in to sign the pledge. THANK YOU for all that you do to make Women & Gender Studies among the most successful units on campus (publications, lectures, installations, teaching awards) but also one of the most collegial and fun places to work!
Greetings All,

It is with great enthusiasm that I continue the introduction or the continued knowledgeable presence of our academic, university life, and resource center. Since my transition to Associate Director of the department, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving the Mason community, the university’s mission, and our departmental mission in a higher capacity.

The Women and Gender studies covers an array of social justice issues through a feminist lens and we are involved in nearly every avenue of the university that works with the aspiration of increasing multicultural and global competencies within the university that will hopefully span outside of this campus with our graduating students. Consistently, we have assessed the successes and the gaps in our dynamics in order to give us room to sustain and approve. This year in conjunction with African and African American Studies we have sponsored programs around race, specifically under the theme of “Policing the Black body.” We greatly looking forward to continuing this discussion on a broader range with our upcoming theme of “Killing The Soul” to address the manner in which social justice, current events, and acknowledging the fatigue as well as resilience to keep our souls alive!

Our resource center has become such a diverse place for bodies, a safer space, as well as a learning objective learning space which promotes constructive conversation and unpacking not only of what is learned in campus experience, but also a chance to see our students flourish in their own empowerment. In our courses, we make sure we try to continue our presence and dedication to the concept of the feminist umbrella way beyond the classroom to ensure our students understand that our campus collaborative efforts as well as our independent programs.

In conclusion, it has been a significantly gratifying pleasure to continue to work in the Institution, and serving the institution in multiple manners in programming, resource management, and academic veins with a wonderful team concerning feminist multicultural and collaborative efforts to ensure our students, faculty, and staff are immersed and exposed to the interconnectedness of Mason’s core values. Thank you for all that support us and have had the ability to make my transition so gratifying. Though our staff is small, we have managed, much like in history to present, to successfully make sure our presence in a multitude of ways contribute to the importance of why we do this work!
As the newest program coordinator, I am delighted to reflect on 2014-15 with Women and Gender Studies.

Coming from a marginalized community where my identities and beliefs are threats to the social norms, Women and Gender Studies have provided a safe space for me to work on these challenges, unlearn and re-learn, dissect, debunk, cry, celebrate and pick myself back up and do it all over again. WGST has also provided the grounds and tools needed to work collaboratively with other women and men in my community to create a world free of violence through the courses offered and dedicated staff who are extremely knowledgeable and supportive.

With this said, I am honored to have the opportunity to work with such an amazing team at the managing, coordinating and supervising level. I started in November 2014 when all students and staff members were well into their courses and the semester was almost over. With much patience, I was welcomed warmly which made it a smooth transition and the semester ended on a wonderful note.

As Spring 2015 rolled in, our small staff geared up for classes and our annual events: Sojourner Truth Lecture, Women’s History Month and Politics of Gender and Justice conference. Some of the greatest moments included celebrating our successes at the Spring Gala where we graduated over 10 minor and certificate students and recognized the amazing accomplishments of our staff, faculty and affiliates. One of the proudest moments was overseeing my staff executing our annual gender research conference. We welcomed over 120 guests and diligently facilitated over 50 presentations. This event truly revealed the strength and capabilities of our small staff. I am thrilled to see what 2015-16 holds for us!

**Looking forward ....**

I am most excited about the following:
- Heading up Mason’s Asian-American Working Group to bring awareness of Asian-American issues and work towards a major/minor.
- Working closely with the Office of International Programs and Services to bring awareness of women and gender issues and help coordinate iCafe.
- Facilitate and organize Women and Gender Studies community service projects.
- Last but definitely not least, having all my student staffers as well as new ones back in the office. I can’t wait to see what we will do as a team in 2015-16.
Letter from the Graduate Assistant - David Corwin

It is with great pleasure that I reflect on this past year in Women and Gender Studies.

As I conclude my second year as part of the Women and Gender Studies staff, I feel honored to have had this time to not only grow professionally but be integrated into such a fabulous program. I especially have found myself excited about the co-collaborative structure of our program as an academic program and a University Life unit. Over the course of this year, I have helped to pioneer some new initiatives as well as maintaining already existing collaborations. Our team in Women and Gender Studies has given back so much to the Mason community both inside and outside the classroom.

I started a women writers reading group that changes topics from semester to semester. So far, we have focused on Contemporary Women Writers; Men Who Write About Women; Women Writers of the Twentieth Century; and Gender, Sexuality, and Victorian Literature. In the fall, we will focus on Transnational Women Writers. Undergraduates, Graduate students, staff, and even alumni have taken part in this reading group and it has expanded every semester and even this summer. We read novels, short stories, poetry, and essays that focus on gender and sexuality issues in a variety of contexts. This opportunity has helped me to share my literary interests with other people in our program and expose people to literature that have not had the opportunity to read until now.

Another program that I have developed has been the Graduate Student and Alumni Happy hour that takes place monthly in the center. This event has brought in students from a variety of graduate programs that have had no exposure to the center. Also, we now have a partnership with Graduate Student Life and Off Campus Programs and Services in our initiative to engage not only our graduate students in Women and Gender Studies, but also in other programs. This year along with our partners hosted our first annual It’s Sweet to Be A Grad Student and hosted a bi-weekly graduate student writing group that meets this summer. We as a team are excited about this collaboration and look forward to our events moving forward.

Women and Gender Studies has provided me with the tools I need to pursue my career in higher education and academia. I have been able to foster my interests in literature and popular culture through my coursework and have presented my work at conferences and am currently working on an article for publication. On the other hand, I continue to foster my interest in student affairs and have participated in signature events such as Take Back the Night, the Sojourner Truth Lecture, and Women’s History Month programming as well as the programming mentioned above. Together these opportunities have helped me to mold my future plans and to have helped me gain experience in the areas that I want to be for my career.

Looking forward to what the new year brings!

David Corwin
On August 27th, 2014, Women and Gender Studies and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning Resources hosted the annual welcome week pizza party in the Women and Gender Studies Center. Pizza and soda were served to the students, faculty, and staff who attended. Students and faculty had the opportunity to interact and allowed everyone to reconnect with old friends and make some new friends.
On September 18, 2014 we hosted a film screening of Call Me Kuchu, a documentary about LGBTQ human rights activism in Uganda. There was a discussion panel following the film focusing on global challenges to LGBTQ rights.
In late September we helped host the week-long annual Fall for The Book event. Workshops, storytelling, and skits were held to promote community and engagement with literature. This year Women and Gender Studies supported James Joseph Dean, Earl Smith, and Wendy Hesford.
Shades of Brown welcomes poets, musicians, and spoken word artists who give strong voice to our roots; tie intersectionality of class, race, gender, and orientation; and celebrate our collective hope to uplift our families and sustain our cultures. Special Guest performance by poet, writer, and artist Mariposa (Maria Teresa Fernandez). This event was held on September 25, 2014 and was in celebration of our 25th Anniversary.
Women and Gender Studies along with African and African American Studies hosted an event that brought art to campus by the street harassment artist, Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, who began the "Stop Telling Women To Smile" movement. This event was a part of the "Policing The Body" theme for the academic year. The art was on display Thursday October 2nd, 2014. and an art workshop was held for students that day as well.
Our annual Scholar’s Lecture was held on November 11, 2014, 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM in Georges in the Johnson Center. Students and faculty gathered to hear a lecture given by this year’s featured speakers Suzanne Scott Constantine, Mason professor in Integrative Studies, and Lynne Scott Constantine, Mason professor in the School of Art.
Take Back the Night is an international event and non-profit organization with the mission of ending sexual violence in all forms. Hundreds of events are held in over 30 countries annually. Events often include marches, rallies and vigils intended as a protest and direct action against rape and other forms of sexual violence. Students gathered for the 25th Take Back the Night on October 21, 2014 in Patriot's Lounge to share powerful narratives of empowerment and reclamation!
Fear 2 Freedom, is a global non-profit organization founded by Rosemary Trible to educate about sexual assault and domestic violence. We hosted a “Celebration Night” at George Mason University on October 7, 2014. Fear 2 Freedom was geared toward raising awareness and restoring joy to those who have been impacted by sexual violence. In addition to Rosemary Trible, Mason President Angel Cabrera, Vice-President for University Life Rose Pascarell, and Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences Debbie Boehm-Davis joined us for this event.

Save the date for F2F 2015: September 22, 2015!
Every 2 minutes in the United States someone is sexually assaulted. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators have been signing the pledge to end sexual violence at Mason throughout the year. They receive a pledge card with steps they can take to end sexual violence and a pledge shirt. Stop by JC 240K to sign the pledge!
We hosted a holiday potluck on December 4, 2014. Students and faculty, and staff brought their favorite holiday dishes to share while they spent time interacting in the Center before leaving for Winter Break.
We had a booth at the last two iCafe events of Spring semester. At our table we had props for a photo booth and materials for people to write a response to a prompt and take a picture holding the signs they made. Our first prompt asked students to share who their ‘shero’ is in honor of Women's History Month. The second prompt asked students to explain why they are an ally. With our booth at the café we have demonstrated the importance of intersectionality in Women and Gender Studies.
Students and faculty joined together on April 14, 2015 for this year’s Annual Sojourner Truth Lecture given by University of Pennsylvania’s Professor of Law and Sociology, Dorothy Roberts on the “Biopolitics of Policing Black Women’s Bodies.” Her ground-breaking work in law and public policy focuses on urgent contemporary issues in health, social justice, and bioethics, especially as they impact the lives of women, children and African-Americans. There was a book-signing and reception following the lecture.
On Wednesday April 23 2015, we came together to celebrate the achievements of our faculty and students in the department. We recognized the hard work that our students and faculty have accomplished this academic year, including published articles, books, presentations, awards, and research.
On April 24, 2015 we held our annual gender research conference in Merten Hall. Attendance at the conference increased from last year with over 120 students, faculty, and community members attending and over 50 presenters. There were a variety of presentation styles including: roundtable discussions, performance pieces, panel discussions, and a poster display. During the conference Giovanna Chesler, Mason Film and Video Studies Professor, screened the film *Out In The Night*. 
Gender Studies at Lady Margaret Hall

Participants in this study abroad program spend one year alongside Oxford undergraduates in Lady Margaret Hall where they earn 30 credits for the whole year.

The relationship between our Women and Gender Studies Program and the International Gender Studies Centre at Lady Margaret Hall/Oxford University is not limited to the LMH Visiting Student Programme. In partnership with the IGS, Paula Gilbert and Al Fuertes were involved in developing and leading an intensive workshop on oral history methodology at Yangon University for several days in October 2014, as part of the broader “Burmese Female Ancestor and Heritage Project.” With 35 faculty members from the departments of History and Anthropology at Yangon and Mandalay Universities, the results of this workshop were extraordinarily positive, leading to an invitation to return in October 2015 for a second and even more broadly based workshop. There is, in addition, a larger group of Mason faculty working on issues related to Burma and developing a more encompassing framework that will include, as well, human rights, children’s rights, and social entrepreneurship.

Brynne McMackin, has been accepted into this Visiting Student program for 2015-16. Brynne is majoring in Global Affairs with a minor in Women and Gender Studies.
Student Accomplishments

Valeria Pareja and Brenna Denicola, WGST Minors
- Attended the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) at the University of Maryland, College Park

Rodrigo Velasquez, WGST Minor
- One of the recipients of the Hattery Family Foundation-Franki Rutherford Memorial Scholarship

David Corwin, Graduate Assistant, MAIS Student
- October 2014 - presented at the Women & Society Conference at Marist College. The presentation was titled "Women as Part of the Patriarchy" Masculinity, Women, and Relationships in Virginia Woolf's Novels“ The Journal for Cultural and Religious Studies has asked him to submit his essay for publication
- One of the recipients of the Hattery Family Foundation-Franki Rutherford Memorial scholarship
- Feb 2015 - presented a paper at the Southwest Popular Culture and American Culture conference in New Mexico. The presentation was titled: "Queering Spira: Gender, Power, and Defeat in Final Fantasy X“
- March 2015: presented a paper at the Global Discourses on Women Conference at Middle Tennessee State University: The paper was titled "Why Marry?: Marriage, Women, Social Status, and Education in Japan"

Abby Picard, WGST Minor
- Published an article in the Columbia Spectator on sexual assault and disability

AJ Jones, MAIS Student
- Precarious Genders: Vulnerability, Transgender Identity and Political Asylum. April 2, 2015; Critical Intersections: Conflict, Gender, and Power, George Mason University

Monica Gaskin, WGST Minor
- First student to be admitted into the Accelerated MAIS in Women and Gender Studies Program

Tanya Carrie, WGST Minor, accepted a research position at the DC Mayor’s Office for African Affairs
Faculty Accomplishments

Karen Rosenblum received the David King Teaching Award.

Cortney Hughes Rinker, Ricardo Vivancos Perez, and Lynne Scott Constantine received Teacher of Distinction Award from the Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence, George Mason University (2015).

Rachel Jones received tenure and promotion to associate professor.

Cortney Hughes Rinker was nominated for Career Connection Faculty Award, Center for Career Services, George Mason University (2015).

Hermoine Pickett received the December 2014 Employee of the Month Award and wrote a brief article for the MAAN Newsletter, completed the Mason Advisor Certificate program as well as presented on our Adult Degree program at this year’s Mason-VCCS symposium in February.

Lisa L. Lindley received The Lambda Distinguished Alumni Award 2015.

Ashley Gaddy was appointed to Coordinator for Research and Scholarship for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee for the Southeastern Association of Housing Officers, March 2015.

Paul Gorski coordinated the development of the MAIS concentration in Social Justice and Human Rights.

Melissa Masone Ulmer was elected to serve in a national volunteer role with NASPA as the Co-Chair of their Parent & Family Relations Knowledge Community.

Rachel Lewis was invited to talk -“They Wanted Me to Prove that I’m a Lesbian but they Wouldn’t Tell Me How I Could”: The Problem of Credibility in Lesbian Asylum Narratives," Political Asylum and the Politics of Suspicion Symposium, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, March, 2015.

Nick Lennon’s program Right, Wrong or Different (Ethics Dinner) was identified as one of the top 14 programs nationally for integrating international and domestic students.
Faculty Publications


Tashia Harris- Black, Queer, and Looking for a Job: An Exploratory Study of Career Decision Making Among Self- Identified Sexual Minorities at an Urban Historically Black College/University in the Journal of Homosexuality (Published July 28, 2014)


Liz Huergo– “Coming Home to Writing” (essay) Poets & Writers Magazine (November/December 2014)
Did you know that for the price of two coffees a month you can make a significant impact on the next generation of Women and Gender Studies students at Mason?

Sign up now for monthly online donations of $10 or more at http://bit.ly/1IREbs5 to support our students, faculty, and those the Center serves, breaking down gender stereotypes and helping more people than ever before. You will be recognized annually as a member of CHSS Dean’s Circle, an exclusive opportunity to receive updates on the Center and Women and Gender Studies' faculty, student, and alumni activities – and an annual token of our appreciation.

Click here to support the next generation today. http://bit.ly/1IREbs5

Be sure to apply your gift by entering Women and Gender Studies in the “Other” field.
Thanks for a great year!