

From the Director
August 2016

MAKING HISTORY



In 1920 American women belatedly won the right to vote. 96 years later a woman was finally nominated for the American presidency by a major political party.

As we walk the razor's edge between hopeful possibilities and unimaginable calamities, the interconnection between women's oppression and environmental collapse, women's empowerment and human survival, is clearer than ever. The earth cannot wait another 96 years for major change.

In 1997 a coordinated effort by feminist faculty and professional staff led to the establishment of UB's Institute for Research and Education on Women and Gender. Join us in 2017 for our **20th anniversary celebrations!**

BLACK | WOMEN'S HISTORY MATTERS

Recent surges of racial, religious and gendered violence lend new urgency to illuminating how systems of gender and sexuality are intertwined with other modalities of social difference. In 2015-16 Gender Institute spearheaded two projects to promote research, education, and public awareness related to African American history and Muslim women's rights.

I. Reclaiming Our Ancestors

Descendants of such anti-slavery writers and activists as Dred and Harriet Scott, Solomon and Anne Northup, Venture and Meg Smith, Jeffrey and Susan Brace, and William and Clarissa Grimes came from across the United States for an unprecedented three-day workshop held at the Gender Institute in fall 2015.



Prof. Lillian Williams (far left) talking with Rhonda Brace and other descendants of antislavery activists

Sharing family stories, photographs, and artifacts, the group garnered international attention, including coverage in the New York Times, NPR's "All Things Considered," "Fresh Air," and other news sources. Workshop leader Kari Winter and several participants were invited to speak at the University of Utah and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem in spring 2016.

"Reclaiming Our Ancestors" is forging a powerful public history network of scholars and activists.



*Schomburg Center, New York Public Library
Lapidus Center for the Historical Analysis of Transatlantic Slavery*

II. Muslim Women's Rights

Our ongoing series supporting Muslim women's rights will continue with a symposium on October 28, 2016 focused on women, religion, and violence. Speakers will explore how to develop networks of well-informed, effective scholars, lawyers, judges, first responders, doctors, journalists, community groups and friends. Visit our website for details.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

In 2016-17 we are launching new initiatives to promote women's leadership aimed to:

- 1) strengthen diversity in administrative and intellectual leadership;
- 2) illuminate how gender equality drives positive organizational and societal change;
- 3) promote women's visions and voices in the public sphere.

We look forward to welcoming you to our events and learning from your ideas in the coming year.

Kari J. Winter
Director of the Gender Institute
Professor of Transnational Studies

Signature Programs

Gender Week 2015: Wonder Women and Super Men

Sept. 24 to Oct. 2, 2015

From X-Men to Harry Potter, Buffy, Lisbeth Salander and proliferating comic-book-movie-tv franchises, the world's cultural imagination is bursting with super-enlarged male and female parts, freaks, mutants, vamps, zombies and goddesses. Do superheroes bend, twist and challenge gender, or do they reinforce - with a vengeance - retro gender stereotypes?

These and other questions were discussed during Gender Week 2015.

Major speakers and events included:

Gabrielle Esperdy, Architecture, New Jersey Institute of Technology
Dorota Koczanowicz, Artistic Culture, University of Wroclaw, Poland
Nnedi Okorafor, English, UB

Jill Lepore, American History, Harvard University, sponsored by UB's Humanities Institute

Fiction writer and conceptual artist Shelley Jackson, part of the English Department's Exhibit X Fiction series

Erie County's Break-the-Cycle Bike-a-thon & Opening of Tribute Garden honoring victims of domestic violence



Nnedi Okorafor

Upcoming . . . Gender Week 2016!

*Monday, Oct. 24, 4:00-6:00 pm UB Art Gallery, Center for the Arts, North Campus
Annual Welcoming Reception for New and Returning Faculty and Staff*

*Wednesday, Oct. 26, noon-1:30 pm Gender Institute, 207 UB Commons
Feminist Research Alliance Workshop
Paola Ugolini, Asst. Professor of Italian
Department of Romance Literatures and Languages, UB
"Anti-feminism and Anti-courtliness:
The Use of Misogynist Topoi in Writings against Courts and Courtiers"*

*Wednesday, Oct. 26, 4:00 pm Gender Institute, 207 UB Commons
Excellence in Mentoring Award presented to Dr. Letitia Thomas,
Director of STEM Diversity Programs, UB School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Presentation and reception*

*Thursday, Oct. 27, 4:00 pm, location tba
Janice L. Moritz Distinguished Lecture on Women and Labor
Margaret Sallee, Assoc. Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy
UB Graduate School of Education*

*Friday, Oct. 28, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, location tba
Symposium on religion and violence against women
Cosponsored by the Coalition for Advancement of Moslem Women*

Signature Programs

Sex, Gender, Health Symposium: Transgender Health and Wellness

Nov. 4-5, 2015

Tiq Milan, Senior Media Strategist for National News – GLAAD and Co-Organizer of #ThisIsLuv, shared stories and analysis from his lived experiences as a transgender, African American male and his work as an author, media spokesman, and actor. Over two dynamic days, Milan addressed diverse audiences on and off campus. In a South Campus keynote, he described to dozens of medical students and faculty the struggles of multicultural trans people in the U.S. health care system. He highlighted the needs of trans people that often go unrecognized and suggested simple ways medical workers could meet those needs. At a North Campus lunch at the Intercultural Diversity Center, Milan conversed with students and administrators on topics ranging from his personal experiences coming out as a trans black man on Buffalo's East Side to advocacy, education, and campus as well as pop culture attitudes regarding trans people. The Dreamland Art Center in downtown Buffalo hosted a reading from Tiq Milan's memoir-in-progress, *Man of My Own Design*.



Tiq Milan (left) with UB students and staff

Gender across Borders 2016: “Forging Alliances/Vive les differences”

April 8, 2016

Since 2004 our annual Gender across Borders (GAB) symposium has explored various ways in which feminist work transgresses and subverts some borders while valuing others. Inspired by our physical landscape near Canada and within the border-crossing territories of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee, GAB sparks research and conversations about the kinds of tensions that can be fraught as well as fertile when we face such things as sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, culture, religion, age, (dis)ability, taste, and personality. Our 2016 GAB symposium focused on forging alliances that enrich our research and create positive social change without destroying the valuable differences among people. Building coalitions across lines of difference is a perennial challenge. Sessions included:

What are the most urgent issues facing feminism today? Kristina Darling (English), Karolina Kulicka (Global Gender Studies), Mopelade Oreoluwa Ogunbowale (Global Gender Studies), and Sarah A. Robert (Graduate School of Education) shared their views.



Martha McCluskey
UB Professor of Law and William J. Magavern Fellow
Janice L. Moritz Distinguished Lecture on Women and Labor
“Are We Economic Engines Too?
Precarity, Productivity and Gender”

Presentations about Muslim women's rights issues and activism by Nadia Shahram (Lawyer and Women's Rights Activist); Jennifer L. Gaynor (History); Filomena M. Critelli (Social Work)

Mentoring Matters: Bob Granfield (Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs), Margaret Sallee (Educational Leadership and Policy), and Pat McDevitt (History) presented Excellence in Mentoring Award to Prof. Susan Cahn, described on p. 6

Feminist Research Alliance Workshop

Promoting conversation and collaboration among feminist scholars regionally, nationally, and internationally, the Gender Institute's FRAW invites faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars to present and discuss research-in-progress. A fertile space for idea-incubation, the workshop fosters scholarly networks that transcend home departments and institutions. 2015-16 workshops included:

Sarah Brophy, Professor, English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
"The Stickiness of Instagram: Kara Walker's 'A Subtlety, or the Marvellous Sugar Baby'"

Luis A. Colón, Conger Goodyear Professor of Chemistry; Assoc. Dean for Graduate & Postdoctoral Education, UB "On Mentoring!"

Barbara Bono, Assoc. Professor, English, UB
"The Cult of Elizabeth and the Production of Elizabethan Literature"

Melinda Brennan, Ph.D. Candidate, Gender Studies, Indiana University, Bloomington
"On Fire: Islamophobia, Gendered Geographies of Containment, and the Refusal of the Right to the City"



Visit our website for more information.

*Upcoming Workshops
Fall 2016!*

Wednesday, September 14
Rajini Rao, Professor of Physiology
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Thursday, October 13
Judy Scales-Trent (above), Professor Emerita
School of Law, UB
"A Black Man's Journey from Sharecropper to College President"

Wednesday, October 26
Paola Ugolini, Assistant Professor
Italian/Romance Languages, UB
"Anti-Feminism and Anti-Courtliness: The Use of Misogynist Topoi in Writings against Courts and Courtiers"

Cultivating the Next Generation's Research

Multidisciplinary working groups encourage cross-fertilization, dissemination and clarity of ideas. In 2015-16 the Gender Institute

- hosted ten meetings of our PhD Fellows Working Group for Gender Institute Fellows, Humanities Institute Fellows, and New York Council for the Humanities Public Humanities Fellows to read and discuss chapters from their dissertations;
- facilitated meetings throughout the year of our Dissertation Writing Group, in which PhD candidates from the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Education, the School of Nursing, and the School of Social Work spent three hours every Monday writing and discussing their work;
- cosponsored Duke University's internationally acclaimed Feminist Theory Workshop, held in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina in March 2016, awarding travel grants to four PhD students and one assistant professor to participate in the workshop and to share reports about it when they returned to UB.

Highlights of Cosponsored Events

The Gender Institute cosponsored dozens of university and community events in 2015-2016. This sampling highlights a few of the events that we cosponsored with funds, staff support, and publicity.

Pain: An Interdisciplinary Conference, October 8-10: Speakers from medicine, law, anthropology, history, literature, and art history discussed the nature, implications, and experience of pain, the ways in which pain can be defined trans-historically, and the extent to which its meaning and consequences are culturally specific. They analyzed the legal, political, and social challenges pain poses in a variety of different national and affective contexts. The conference consisted of eight plenary talks and a concluding round-table.



2016 Erie County Women's History Month Kickoff, March 3: Under the theme "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Lives in Public Service and Government," the Gender Institute joined regional non-profits for a kickoff of Women's History Month at the Central Branch of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. The Honorable Barbara A. Howe, Erie County Surrogate Judge, gave the keynote address, followed by the presentation of two "Woman of Courage, Character, and Commitment" Awards. In attendance were County Executive Mark Poloncarz, Deputy Erie County Executive Maria Whyte, and Erie County Commissioner of Health Gale Burstein.



Buffalo Bard 2016: Partnering with the UB Humanities Institute's year-long celebrations of Shakespeare, the Gender Institute held a FRA workshop on "the cult of Elizabeth" and co-sponsored a keynote lecture by Emma Smith, Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Oxford University.

"AT BUFFALO @ U at Buffalo," March 31, 2016
A new musical performed for the first time in Buffalo, AT BUFFALO showcased the politics of gender and race surrounding Buffalo's 1901 Pan-American Exposition. Narrated and performed in March by the East Coast-based AT BUFFALO Creative Team.

Culture Wars on Two Fronts: Transgender Medicine and Surgical Correction of Female Genital Mutilation, April 18: Marci Bowers, MD, an international authority on genital reassignment surgery and surgical correction of female genital mutilation (FGM) discussed the technical and social aspects of her pioneering work and her role as an advocate for transgender people and victims of FGM. Bowers, the first transgender woman in the world to perform transgender surgery, is a pelvic and gynecologic surgeon with more than 25 years' experience. One of few surgeons worldwide performing FGM functional reconstruction, she was recently honored as one of the 100 most influential LGBT people on the Guardian's World Pride Power List. Her talk was organized by OUTpatient and Frank H. Hamilton Surgical Society of the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and cosponsored by the Gender Institute.



UB's Second Annual Women in STEM Summit, April 13: The Gender Institute is a central partner in UB's Women in STEM cooperative, which empowers women in STEM by offering educational events and a supportive community. The Summit attracted three hundred

faculty, staff, industry leaders, high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, and members of community. Dr. Gilda Barabino, Berg Professor and Dean of the Grove School of Engineering at City College of New York, delivered an inspiring keynote address on identity and career progression in which she presented data about women in STEM based on her current research and described her obstacle-ridden journey as an African American woman to a successful scientific career. Participants analyzed several key STEM issues in panel discussions, and UB students fielded questions during their wide-ranging poster presentations and networking lunch. An information fair showcased the local Women in STEM community, including UB student organizations, professional organizations, businesses, non-profits, and graduate students.

Gender Institute Inaugurates Excellence in Mentoring Awards

Augmenting our long-standing commitment to honoring the achievements of outstanding mentors and to cultivating a university culture that values mentoring, the Gender Institute established a university-wide Excellence in Mentoring Award in spring 2016.



Susan Cahn (center) and her mentees

Our first award was presented in April 2016 to renowned historian of women and sports, **Professor Susan Cahn**. Michael Rembis, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Center for Disability Studies, remarked that as soon as he arrived on campus, Susan Cahn “went out of her way to make me feel welcomed . . . and she has been a consistent source of support and comradeship in both my professional and personal life” over many years. Other colleagues expressed similar sentiments. “Susan Cahn is the most sought-after PhD adviser we have,” said Professor Jim Bono, Chair of History. Dr. Cahn’s current and former students credit her with inspiring confidence to follow their intellectual passions. She provides rigorous but encouraging “feedback not just as a scholar but also as a person with tremendous life experience.” Shuko Tamao, a PhD student in History, observes: “Dr. Cahn understands the challenges that I face as a racial minority woman who grew up outside the United States. . . [S]he encourages me to learn from these challenges and . . . to recognize the stories of people who have been regarded as ‘unimportant’ and to represent their narratives as a powerful discourse of social change.” Terriane K. Schulte, Assoc. Professor of History at D’Youville College, spoke for many of Susan’s advisees who have moved on to successful careers: “I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today if it were not for Dr. Cahn.”

Our second award will be presented to **Dr. Letitia Thomas**, Director of STEM Diversity Programs, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, on October 26th. A tireless advocate for underrepresented, first generation, and low income students, Dr. Thomas has received national recognition for her work and a Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Professional Service (2011). Dr. Thomas’s students credit her with helping them to believe in themselves and excel academically. PhD student Nancy Campos, for instance, thanks Dr. Thomas for creating “an environment for students of color at UB that makes them feel like they belong.” Jess Turner, a sophomore in Environmental Engineering, praises Dr. Thomas “as a role model for students from all backgrounds.” Joseph Carleton, a sophomore in Mechanical Engineering, echoes that praise, noting that “she wants to enable every one of us so that we will believe we are capable of great things. . . . Dr. Thomas has opened doors for me that otherwise would have remained shut.”



Letitia Thomas

The Gender Institute is grateful to Susan Cahn and Letitia Thomas for inspiring students and colleagues to achieve their highest potential, to work as engaged citizens of the world and to advance research and education on women, gender, equity, and social justice.

Gender Institute Undergraduate Scholarship 2016-17



Congratulations to our 2016-17 Undergraduate Scholarship Awardee, **Cathleen Alarcón**, a junior in Romance Languages and Literatures whose project involves translating the play, *Casi Transilvania* (2014), by Mexican playwright, Bárbara Colio, from Spanish to English. Supervised by RLL Professor Margarita Vargas, an accomplished translator, Cathleen received permission from Colio, the playwright, to work on the translation. Cathleen’s project unites her passion for Spanish literature with her love for theater. She hopes to develop a career as a translator and speech interpreter for a major global organization, such as the United Nations or the European Union.

2015-16 Faculty Research Grants



Carrie T. Bramen
Associate Professor of English
“*Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Florida Plantation: The Orange Tree as Sign of Black Resilience*”



Emily J. Grijawa
Assistant Professor of Management
“*Gender and Perceptions of Leadership Emergence: An Updated Meta-Analysis*”



Stephanie Clare
Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature
Earthly Encounters



Marla B. Segol
Associate Professor of Jewish Thought
“*Sexing the Sacred Body in the New Age*”

Gender Institute PhD Dissertation Fellow 2016-17

Molly Ranahan, PhD Candidate
Urban Planning, School of Architecture

Molly Ranahan’s dissertation aims to “identify planning and community development strategies to help improve the recognition of the LGBT community by aging-oriented policies and community initiatives.” Molly commented: “I presented the results of an early research project during my undergraduate work as part of Gender Week in 2009. This experience, and my involvement in Gender Week and the PhD Dissertation Workshop during my graduate and PhD work, have been incredibly impactful on my journey.”



2016 Isabel S. Marcus International Research Fellowship

Anne Marie Butler, PhD Candidate
Global Gender Studies

Anne Marie Butler’s research combines her interest in Middle Eastern art and culture, Third World feminisms, critical race and gender theories, post colonial-decolonial theories, and visual studies. Her dissertation, “Tunisian Art 2010-2016: Women’s and Queer Engagements with Socio-political Unrest,” analyses the social histories of women’s and LGBT contemporary art in Tunisia.



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Would you like to create a living legacy in support of gender equality around the world? Please join us by making a donation to the Gender Institute. You can make a tax-deductible donation via credit card at our secure site (<http://genderin.buffalo.edu/contribute.shtml>) or by sending a check to: the Gender Institute, 207 UB Commons, 520 Lee Entrance, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14228-2567. You may designate your gift to support our General Fund, the Isabel S. Marcus International Research Fellowship, or the Janice L. Moritz Distinguished Lecture on Women and Labor.

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UB's Gender Institute

*20 Years and Beyond:
Remembering, envisioning
and creating knowledge,
justice and peace*