A Letter from the Co-Director

It has been a very good year for the Women’s and Gender Studies Center. Thanks both to the many years of hard work and advocacy that Women’s and Gender Studies faculty members have devoted to promoting the program, and to the generosity of our recently departed Interim Dean, Albert Labriola, we have, in one year, achieved many of the goals that we have long pursued for our program. We have finally been authorized to offer a second major. We have been granted “Center” status. We have been authorized to change our administrative structure so that rather than two Co-Directors, we will have a Director and an Assistant Director, and the Director’s compensation has been increased. We have been granted a permanent Graduate Assistant position to staff our office.

With these changes will come new opportunities and new roles for the Center. Our office will extend its hours from 10 to 15 per week, making it significantly more visible and accessible. We are hoping that office traffic will increase, and more people will stop by for coffee, or to peruse our magazines and books.

As a University Center, we will work on outreach to other schools within Duquesne; we are seeking steering committee members and affiliated faculty from beyond the college, and are working to make it practical for students from other Schools within Duquesne to take our classes and pursue our degrees.

Part of our mandate as a center is to reach out to the community, and we have begun to take steps in that direction. Our “Women and Work” presentation, which occurred on March 26th, for instance, brought in four woman graduates found through the Alumni Relations office, as well as an alumnus from WGS. We are also taking more steps to encourage community members to attend our speakers and other events. Our talk by Helen Fielding (Thursday, March 19) was followed by an extremely engaged and interdisciplinary discussion, and we were very pleased at the attendance (60 people) and discussion following our kick-off event, Holly Mayer's talk, “Remembering the Revolution’s Women.” We are aiming high in our invitations for speakers for next year’s Women’s History Month as well.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, I have written an article about one of the most immediate consequences of our “Center” designation: a very generous library “start-up” allocation, which has allowed us to purchase hundreds of books and other materials to enhance the library’s collections in our discipline.

We also hope that our new major will increase undergraduate participation in our program. So far, we already have 2 majors! We feel that there is real room for growth there, and hope that everyone will encourage their undergraduates to consider our program. Our graduate certificate program continues to thrive, with about 18 current students—8 of which have signed up since the beginning of fall 2008—who are being drawn from an increasingly broad array of graduate programs.

It is an exciting time for our new center, and we have hopes that great things will continue to happen in the years to come, as we transition into our new role.

Dr. Elaine Parsons

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Aimée Light

Dr. Aimée Light is an Assistant Professor of Theology. She received her doctorate in Religious Studies from Yale University in 2004. Dr. Light is currently working on multiple projects, including a forthcoming book titled *Pluralists, Feminists, Panentheists: The Cosmological Shift Behind Inclusive Theologies*, and is a founding member of *The Journal of Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Dr. Light sees this journal as being very important to Feminist Theory and Theology: “Many forms of feminism work to expand participation in structure. This journal seeks to work for peace, justice and equality across religious traditions using a dialogical model. If feminism believes that we should work toward the good of women and all persons, this journal works to serve that agenda.” Dr. Light’s fields of expertise include contemporary feminist theologies and postcolonial feminist theologies, interests she will continue to use in her research and teaching in the future.

Save the Date!

**Spring Reception:**

**Wednesday, April 22**

4:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. - 643 CH

Come celebrate another successful semester with fellow friends and faculty!
Library Orders

As part of a generous opportunity from Gumberg Library, Women’s and Gender Studies was able to expand the current available library selection by almost 400 titles!

As many of you know, our Center had the opportunity this year to purchase a large number of new texts and other materials for Gumberg Library. We usually are allocated $1000 per year. This year, however, to support our transition to a center, Library Director Laverna Saunders generously allocated to us an additional $8,777.25. While excited at the prospect of enhancing the library’s Women’s and Gender Studies collections, I was initially somewhat daunted at the labor that would be involved in selecting, with care, so many books! As it turns out, however, finding enough quality books to order was no problem. Indeed, our graduate students and affiliated faculty more than rose to the challenge, submitting requests for well over $12,000 worth of purchases, the vast majority of which were books costing in the range of $20-$40. That’s about 400 books, all carefully selected. The library has already purchased many of our requests, and, whenever possible, is finding additional funds to work through the “overage” list that has not yet been purchased. Additionally, Madeline Archer, chair of Art History offered to use part of their allocation to purchase art history titles from our list. We anticipate that all of the requested materials, if they are in print, will have been purchased by this summer or, failing that, with our next year’s regular

I wanted to thank all of those who submitted lists, some of which obviously represented many hours of work: Tsekani Browne, Pat Dunham, Adrienne Freeland, Maureen Gallagher, Kathy Glass, Christine Lorenz, Holly Mayer, Shreyashi Mukherjee, Jotham Parsons, Maggie Patterson, Judy Suh, Agnes Vardy, and Steven Vardy.

Many thanks to our library liaison, Melodie Frankovitch, who has been very supportive and flexible during this process, to Laverna Saunders, who made the budget decision, and to Bridget Miller and others in Purchasing, who have spent many days processing our requests.

Bridget Miller has put together a list of all of our purchases, which will be made available soon on our website. In the meantime, I encourage everyone to stop by the “new books” display in Gumberg, which includes many of our selections. It’s an exciting list, and includes many titles relating to sexuality, race, reproduction, gender in non-western contexts, manhood studies, art (including performance art), and political and legal issues. It includes everything from classics in women’s and gender studies to a number of very recent titles.