A Letter from the Directors

Hello everyone,
The Center for Women's and Gender Studies has enjoyed a busy spring. With the support of many departments, we offered nine undergraduate courses from six different departments, and five graduate courses from four disciplines. Many of these courses are new to the program. Our interdisciplinary curriculum is sustained through the contributions of so many departments and programs, and we are pleased that the School of Music has added "The Gendering of Music" to the course listings, joining the McAnulty College in offering Women's and Gender studies courses for the University's students.

Each year, the Center helps the University honor Women’s History Month by celebrating women’s contributions in a myriad of fields and endeavors. In 2011, the Center organized a series of events, often held in collaboration with co-sponsors for Women’s History Month. These events included:

- a talk and reading by British poet and installation artist Caroline Bergvall (co-sponsored by WGS & English);

- a panel of faculty from various disciplines (Moni McIntyre, Social & Public Policy Center; Sister Mary Agatha Ozah, School of Music; Alison Colbert, School of Nursing; Sarah Miller, Department of Classics) presenting their work in gender studies (sponsored by WGS);

- a three day sequence of readings, music, and talks commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire (sponsored by WGS, organized by Graduate students in the Certificate Program);

- a lecture by theorist/artist/filmmaker Trinh Minh-ha (co-sponsored by WGS, Provost, McAnulty NEH, CIQR, Carlow University, Departments of Classics, English, History, Philosophy, Political Science, and Psychology).

These events were well attended and drew attendees from across the Duquesne community and beyond, contributing to the intellectual, creative, and interdisciplinary culture valued at Duquesne.
Continued from page 1

while also making that culture visible and open to a broader Pittsburgh audience. For example, the events commemorating the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire involved participants from various social justice groups in the region, and interested Pittsburgh-area attendees gathered on March 25 in one of only two events in the city to pay tribute to the memory of the women who died on that day in 1911, a catastrophe that helped lead to important labor reforms in America. A substantial crowd also gathered for the lecture by international scholar Trinh Minh-ha, a talk of clear interest to individuals from other area universities who came to our campus for the event. Caroline Bergvall’s reading and talk also brought artists and writers from around the city to Duquesne and generated an article in the City Paper. The faculty panel engendered a fascinating set of connections and conversations across wide range of disciplines and topics, including medieval discourse about women’s bodies, current health issues affecting women in prison, the gendering of ritual and practice in African dance, and the relationship of women religious to the Church in the twenty-first century.

As an interdisciplinary Center housed within the McAnulty College, Women's and Gender Studies strives to foster interactions among faculty and students across the disciplines, while also reaching out to the Pittsburgh area in relevant ways. Thank you for your continued interest in the Center's various activities and for your support of our students, faculty, and programs.

Have a good summer and see you all in the Fall of 2011!

Linda A. Kinnahan, Acting Director, and Laura Engel, Associate Director

---

Dr. Alison Colbert Named a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ‘Nurse Faculty Scholar’

Alison Colbert, Ph.D., assistant professor of Nursing, won a competitive grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to develop interventions to improve the health of incarcerated women as they re-enter society. Colbert is one of just twelve nurse educators from around the country to receive the three-year, $350,000 Nurse Faculty Scholar award this year. It is given to junior faculty who show outstanding promise as future leaders in academic nursing.
Faculty Spotlight: New Book by Dr. Laura Engel

Dr. Laura Engel’s new book, *Fashioning Celebrity, Eighteenth Century British Actresses and Strategies for Image Making*, takes a new approach to the study of late eighteenth-century British actresses by examining the significance of leading actresses’ autobiographical memoirs, portraits, and theatrical roles together as significant strategies for shaping their careers.

In an era when acting was considered a suspicious profession for women, eighteenth-century actresses were “celebrities” in a society obsessed with fashion, gossip, and intrigue. *Fashioning Celebrity* considers the lives and careers of four actresses: Sarah Siddons, Mary Robinson, Mary Wells, and Fanny Kemble. Using conventions of the era’s portraiture, fashion, literature, and the theater in order to create their personas on and off stage, these actresses provided a series of techniques for fashioning celebrity that still survive today.

By emphasizing the importance of reading narratives through visual and theatrical frameworks and visual and theatrical representations through narrative models, Engel demonstrates the ways in which actresses’ identities were imagined through a variety of discourses that worked dialectically to construct their complex self-representations.

*Fashioning Celebrity* suggests that eighteenth-century practices of self-promotion mirror contemporary ideas about marketing, framing, and selling the elusive self, providing a way to begin to chart a history of our contemporary obsession with fame and our preoccupation with the rise and fall of famous women.

2011 Eleanore Holveck Essay Award

Michelle Raley was chosen as the Undergraduate winner of the 2011 Eleanore Holveck Essay Award for her paper, “Jane Austen’s Treatment of Silence: *Pride and Prejudice* vs. *Mansfield Park*.”

Marcie Panutsos received the Graduate Essay Award for her paper, “Naming the Unspeakable: Constructions of Multicultural Identity in *The Woman Warrior*."

Spring 2011 Events

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Commemorative Events

To commemorate the anniversary of the March 25, 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, English and Women’s and Gender Studies graduate student Michelle Gaffey organized two collaborative readings of Chris Llewellyn’s poem “March 25, 1911,” as well as screenings of the films Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl and Made in Thailand.

Trinh Minh-ha: Women’s History Month Keynote Speaker

The Center for Women’s and Gender Studies was pleased to have internationally recognized theorist, artist, filmmaker, and cultural critic Trinh Minh-ha deliver the 2011 Women’s History Month Keynote Address on April 1, 2011.

Dr. Trinh’s talk, “Miles of Strangeness,” was a poetic exploration of war, identity, global movements, and what it means to travel—both literally and emotionally—using examples of recent peace initiatives around the world, from China to Mexico.

The Center for Women’s and Gender Studies is grateful to the following for their support of the event: McAnulty College NEH Endowment; Office of the Provost; Departments of English, History, Psychology, Philosophy, Modern Languages, Political Science, and Classics; CIQR; and Carlow University.

Women’s and Gender Studies Faculty Panel

The fascinating “Gender Across the Disciplines” faculty research panel, held March 21, 2011, generated a stimulating discussion of interdisciplinary applications of gender studies in the current scholarship of Duquesne faculty. Moni McIntyre (Center for Public Policy) raised important issues and questions about women religious; Sister Marie Agatha (Music) spoke eloquently about gender and African dance rituals; Sarah Miller (Classics) educated us about disturbing 14th-century understandings of women's bodies; and Alison Colbert (Nursing) raised our consciousness about health issues and women's incarceration.

Caroline Bergvall

International writer and cross-disciplinary artist Caroline Bergvall gave a lively, thought-provoking talk and reading on February 15, 2011, sponsored by the English Department and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies. Bergvall’s work crosses boundaries of performance, installation, visual text, and written text, often exploring earlier writers and artists. Her most recent book is Meddle English.
Michelle Gaffey: 2011 Recipient of the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award

Michelle B. Gaffey, a doctoral candidate in English with a Certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies, was honored as a 2011 recipient of the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award at the annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in San Francisco, California. The award recognizes graduate students who show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education; who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others; and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning. Michelle was one of eight recipients of this national teaching and leadership award this year and was selected from a competitive pool of nearly 225 nominees. In her application materials she described her “Community Listening Project,” an experiential service-learning opportunity she helped organize for the *Fides* learning community in Fall 2007. She also discussed her work as a community anti-sweatshop organizer and her role in developing Carlow University’s interdisciplinary course, *Women v. Sweatshops*, which she has co-taught three times since the proposal was approved in 2007.

Upcoming Events

In January 2012, Sarah Beckwith, Professor of English and Chair and Professor of Theater Studies at Duke University will give a talk at Duquesne University, sponsored by the English Department and Women’s and Gender Studies. Professor Beckwith works on late medieval religious writing, medieval and early modern drama, and ordinary language philosophy. Her books include *Christ's Body: Identity, Religion and Society in Medieval English Writing* (1993), *Signifying God: Social Relation and Symbolic Act in York's Play of Corpus Christi* (2001), *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (2011). She is currently working on a book about Shakespearean tragedy and philosophy’s love affair with the genre of tragedy.

Next year, Women's History Month coincides with the presidential primary season, and the Center is planning a focus on "WOMEN AND POLITICS."

Regina Lawrence, co-author of the influential and well-received book *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics and the Media on the Campaign Trail* (2009), is scheduled as our keynote speaker, with a tentative date set for March 8, 2012. She is currently the Kevin P. Reilly chair and Professor of Mass Communication/Political Science at Louisiana State University. Addressing issues of gender in relation to the American political system and media representation, her work will be of great interest to a broad audience of faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, and Pittsburghers as they engage in the presidential primary discussions for 2012.

In addition to this talk, the Center is planning a series of events that speak to multiple dimensions of the focus on women and politics. Other events in the planning stage include roundtable discussions bringing together different resources and perspectives from the Pittsburgh area; the showing of a documentary film on women, politics, and media; and student-generated activities planned by Women’s and Gender Studies students.