



Voices AND Visions

Spring 2018

A New Identity

Dr. Rose-Marie Avin, Director

Welcome to the 2017-18 Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) newsletter! This is a report on the activities, achievements, and contributions of our students, faculty, and staff. I thank them for helping to create a strong program committed to social justice!

As you may already know, the program will have a name change beginning Fall of 2018 from Women's Studies (WMNS) to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). At the 2017 WMNS retreat in August, WMNS members began their discussion by asking the following question: "What could, would, and should it mean to be a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program at UW-Eau Claire?" Although we spent a long time discussing this question at the retreat, a reflection on this question had already started in March of 2017 when we invited Dr. Catherine Orr, chair of the Identity Studies Department at Beloit College, to give two presentations during Women's History Month. The first presentation was a workshop entitled "What is State of the Art of WGS (Women's, Gender, and Sexuality)?" In the afternoon, Dr. Orr gave an all-campus presentation entitled "Telling Stories about Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: An Exercise in Letting Go."

The 2017 Women's History Month celebration culminated with the WMNS Awards Ceremony on



Rose-Marie Avin,
director of the Women's,
Gender, and Sexuality
Studies program

March 30 where awards were given to students, faculty, and staff for their achievements and contributions to the program. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the WMNS affiliates who are members of the Curriculum, Liaison, and Steering Committees. Their services to the program are invaluable.

In April of 2017, we reached out to four alumnae to come back to campus and tell their stories of empowerment with their WMNS degrees. On April 18, the Women's Studies program and Career Services sponsored a panel of WMNS alumnae to discuss their various careers after graduation. The panel was composed of Gretchen Bachmeier (Target — Production Controller), Elizabeth (Litz) Nowobielski (AIDS Resource Center of WI-EC — Prevention Specialist), Caitlin Opatik (AIDS Resource Center of WI-EC — Community Case Manager), Jeni Haddad (Family Support Center in Chippewa Falls — Domestic Violence Program Director), and Abby Hinz (Eau Claire City-County Health Department — Public Health Nurse).

In August of 2017, we welcomed to the program Dr. Sandibel Borges, who received her doctorate in 2017 in Feminist Studies from the University of California—Santa Barbara, and Dr. Kong Pha, who received his doctorate in 2017 in American Studies at the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities. Our two new scholars have brought a lot of energy, passion, and new ideas to the program. Although Dr. Pha is an assistant professor in Women's Studies, his primary role at the university is to teach courses and eventually develop a program in Critical Hmong Studies. In fact, Dr. Pha has already created a new cross-listed course entitled "Intersectionality: Critical Approaches to Identity and Injustice" to be taught during Fall of 2018 while Dr. Borges will be teaching a new course entitled "Women of Color Feminisms" during Spring of 2019.

In November of 2017, Dr. Borges, Dr. Pha, and I attended the National Women's Studies Association Conference entitled "Forty Years after Combahee: Feminist Scholars and

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Activists Engage the Movement for Black Lives.” It was inspirational to listen to the conversations among many “feminist warriors,” such as Angela Davis, Alicia Garza, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty.

In December of 2017, the program adopted a new logo created by Amanda Thao, a major in integrated strategic communication (advertising emphasis) with a multimedia minor. Please read the story in this newsletter on page seven about how the logo was created. The program also created two new awards. The Outstanding Senior Award is awarded to a graduating senior who is a WGSS major at UW–Eau Claire, whose service to the program contributes to the advancement of the program, or whose scholarship and/or activism exemplifies the mission of the program. The second award, the Chandra Talpade Mohanty Award, goes to one undergraduate student whose scholarship and/or activism uses transnational feminism as a tool of analysis and/or organization.

The 2017-18 academic year has been a dynamic and productive one, adding new faculty and creating two new courses to reflect the new scholarship in the discipline of Women’s Studies. We appreciate all the important contributions of the new faculty to the program, especially their work with students with marginalized identities. The WMNS students love their energy, their passion, their commitments to social justice, and the new perspectives they bring to the program.

“Feminism” was chosen as Merriam Webster’s Word of the Year for 2017. So, I would like to end with a quote from the introduction of *Feminist Freedom Warriors* (June 2018): “Feminism matters—a feminism that is anchored in decolonizing, anti-racist, anti-capitalist, transnational commitments keeps us alive and gives us hope... It is the creation of alliances and solidarities across gender, race, class, sexual, and national divides that point the way forward.”

Best wishes,
Rose-Marie Avin, Ph.D.
Director, Women’s Studies Program
UW–Eau Claire ■



The Long View

Featured Faculty: Dr. Barbara L. Kernan

I joined the faculty Fall of 2011 as the program’s first full-time professor with a tenure home in Women’s Studies. I was very happy to usher in this more stable framework for the program. These tenure lines mean good things and a solid future for Women’s Studies at UW–Eau Claire.

I earned my bachelor’s degree from UW–Eau Claire with a double major in English and French. I was a Blugold and have many fond memories of my years on campus. The dramatic change created with the opening of the new Davies Center and the replacement of Campus School with Centennial Hall make lower campus look very different; however, they make it even more beautiful. I traveled to The Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, to earn my master’s degree. Perhaps most famous as the summer home of poet, Robert Frost, Bread Loaf is an idyllic setting to study literature among renowned faculty. I earned my doctorate at UW–Madison. My area of specialization is American Literature: Colonial to World War I with an emphasis in Women’s Writing and Material Culture Theory. My doctorate minor in Women’s Studies allowed me more theoretical grounding in feminist criticism and pedagogy.

My research extends to material culture studies of various types, including domestic architecture and artifacts that help me recover women’s stories. I have written on Edith Wharton and her home, The Mount; Catherine Maria Sedgwick and decorative excess; Nathaniel Hawthorne and drapery; and Anna Julia Cooper and the Victorian chivalric tradition, among other topics. I am pleased to have developed and introduced courses to our curriculum—WGSS 380: “Women and Artifacts” and WGSS 447: “Design and Domesticity”—as well as teach sections of WGSS 100: “Introduction to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies”; WGSS 250: “Feminist Research Methods”; WGSS 301: “Examining Women’s Studies”; and WGSS 490: “Feminist

Analysis and Practices." I have taught WGSS 380: "Women and Artifacts" and WGSS 447: "Design and Domesticity" online and moved an iteration of "African American Feminism" online as a Summer offering. My newest project is piloting a section of WGSS 100 online. Maintaining a commitment to feminist pedagogical method is a challenge in an online format, but I have enjoyed incorporating small group work and a Facebook page for live discussions.

I have taught as an Instructional Academic Staff for the Women's Studies program and English department here since 2001. I have served on the Steering Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Liaison Committee, and I have helped shape the growth of the program. I have worked with six different program directors and have enjoyed the visions each brought with her. It felt most rewarding to have been offered a tenure-track faculty position after many years in the program where I have been so invested.

I have two sons, Jess and Graham McCullough. Both are graduates of the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota. Jess is currently an instructor there, having completed his doctorate degree in archaeology at the University of Leicester in England. Jess's wife, Harmony, is also a St. Scholastica graduate and completed the Masters of Social Work Program taught on UW-Eau Claire's campus by UW-Madison faculty. She is a family support specialist with the Duluth Public Schools. Jess and Harmony have two daughters, Cora Evelyn and Sigrid Ann, my granddaughters and delights. My son, Graham, is engaged to Tara Helgeson, another St. Scholastica classmate. He is working on his MBA at Capella University where he works as an admissions specialist. Tara will complete her doctorate in nursing practice in May, just in time to have some time to relax before they marry in July.

I enjoy kayaking, antiquing, dog walking with my English Setter, Winslow, and reading and writing at home and at the cabin in northern Wisconsin. I write fiction when I can and look forward to doing more of that. ■



Jenny Almquist, Fierce Freedom Founding Executive Director

For Me, It's Personal

Jenny Almquist, Fierce Freedom Founding Executive Director

Several months ago, I was at a wedding where the groom stood at the front of the church before the ceremony and personally welcomed guests. One thing he said was, "Please know that everything that we do today in this ceremony is on purpose. We are not just going through the motions; we made every decision for a reason."

This simple statement made the entire ceremony personal, not only for the couple, but for each person attending as well. In a similar way, I hope Fierce Freedom never just goes through the motions to reach our mission. We strive to be intentional in everything we do.

Lately, I have given a lot of thought to all the issues in our world today. A question I have often wondered is if human trafficking and exploitation is a personal issue. Most of us know human trafficking and exploitation is an "issue" because we hear about it on the news, on billboards and posters, and in daily conversations.

When I first heard of human trafficking in 2007, I had young children and was horrified this was happening in our world. I felt like these people were coming for my kids. It affected *my* world; *that* is personal. This year at Fierce Freedom, we would like to help people move from this being just another world issue to being an issue they bring home with them. This will help people see human trafficking and exploitation in their personal worlds and spheres of influence.

Tia, a strong, smart young woman, has a personal story of how she survived being exploited. Please watch her story, [A Survivor's Point of View](#), on YouTube.

"It's personal" has become a theme for Fierce Freedom this year. Has human trafficking and exploitation become personal for you after reading this? Do you have a story to share with us? We would like to hear about it! Email us at jenny@fiercefreesdom.org, message us on [Facebook](#), or call our office at 715-514-2890. Perhaps your story is similar to Tia's or mine! We will not share your story without your permission. ■

Meet the Affiliates

Sandibel Borges



I am a first-year faculty member in the WGSS Program at UW–Eau Claire. I teach WGSS 200: “Feminist Theories”; WGSS 100: “Introduction to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies”; WGSS 301: “Examining Women’s Studies”; and WGSS 490: “Feminist Analysis.” I am also creating and developing a class on “Women of Color (WOC) Feminisms.” In the next few years, I will collaborate to create a Women of Color Feminisms Certificate in the program as well. The WOC Feminisms class will be a core course for the certificate.

My research interests, which go hand in hand with my teaching, include women of color feminisms, queer of color critique, migration studies, feminist and anti-racist methodologies, feminist and anti-racist pedagogies, and healing and trauma studies. Both my research and teaching interests inform each other. For example, my pedagogy is one that challenges systems of power, not only with the texts I assign, but also with my style of teaching and the dynamics students and I collectively develop in class. As an educator and researcher, it is my goal to continue to build meaningful connections with students and support them in their endeavors.

My work has appeared in the scholarly journals *Diálogo: An Interdisciplinary Journal* published by the Center for Latino Research at DePaul University and the *Chicana/Latina Studies: The Journal of Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social*. It has also appeared in the blogs [This Bridge Called Our Health](#) and [Morelos 3.0](#). ■



Analisa DeGrave

The WGSS program has provided me with the opportunity to co-teach the faculty-led course “Nicaragua Women’s Lives and Experiences” (WGSS 422: “Advanced Travel Seminar”) a number of times. The class is truly a transformative experience for UW-Eau Claire students, and it allows me to reconnect with Central America and recharge my batteries for teaching and researching.

I love the fact that UW–Eau Claire is a place where I can teach a spectrum of Spanish language courses as well as classes in Latin American Studies and WGSS. I am an active member of the Latin American Studies program and serve on the LAS Steering Committee.

In terms of my life outside of the classroom, my partner, Jeff DeGrave, and I have participated in a number of delegations to Honduras and Guatemala through the Wisconsin-based non-profit organization, Farmer to Farmer. This past year we adopted our fluffy Great Pyrenees dog, Bumble, who works hard as a therapy dog at Bolton Refuge House and Lakeshore Elementary.

My research centers on Latin American poetry and Central America, and my publications can be found in *Chasqui: Revista de Literatura Latinoamericana*, *Confluencia: Revista Hispánica de Cultura y Literatura*, *Hispanic Poetry Review*, *MaComère*, *Feminist Teacher*, and *Ixquic: Revista Hispánica Internacional de Análisis y Creación*. ■

Jeni Haddad

I have been an adjunct instructor in the WMNS/WGSS program since 2013, and most frequently have taught WGSS 100: "Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" and WGSS 310: "Women and Violence," though this past fall I taught WGSS 250: "Feminist Research Methods" for the first time, which was fun and interesting. My full-time job is as the Domestic Violence Program Director at Family Support Center. I love this work and am proud to work with such strong and inspiring survivors as part of the anti-violence movement. The last few years, a few colleagues and I have presented about the concept of feminist advocacy in anti-violence work, which engages ideas about challenging and sometimes conflicting praxis-based applications of power on multiple levels within the anti-violence movement.

I live in Eau Claire with my partner and our two wonderfully weird cats. I love reading, yoga, and summer! ■



I created and regularly teach two courses, WGSS 210: "Culture of Third Wave Feminism" and WGSS 260: "Masculinities Studies and Feminist Theories." These two classes are not only fun to teach, but the material on contemporary gender justice or on the effects of hypermasculinity offers concepts some students have never discussed, much less even considered. I love being a part of their "awakening!"

I recently mentored two public history students with whom I worked to collect the oral histories of people who have lived on Lake Hallie the longest. We then created the documentary "[Lake Hallie Lives: An Architectural and Oral History Project](#)," which included these voices along with old and new still photos. This is the first project of its kind to document the history of Lake Hallie and these few lakeside residents.

My projects tend to grow out of my own encounters: whether caring for a dying parent, teaching at-risk students, or sitting on my dock. My work has appeared in *Salon Magazine*, *Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Developmental Education*, *The Wisconsin Academy Review*, *The Southwest Review*, *HipMama*, *Inside HigherEd*, as well as many other magazines and anthologies. I am the author of a first-year experience textbook, [Higher Learning: Reading and Writing About College](#), 3rd edition (Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2011), and I wrote the blog "[Our Long Goodbye: One Family's Experiences with Alzheimer's](#)," which has been read in over 100 countries.

As a freelance writer, I often give voice to women's experiences. ■

Patti See

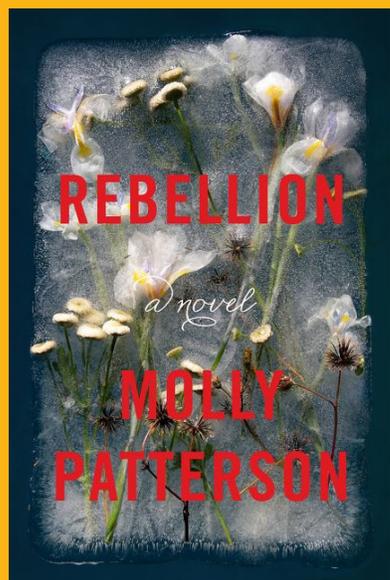


Kong Pha

I have been at UW–Eau Claire for almost a year now and have been so happy to be teaching various courses in the WGSS program. I will be teaching a new course, HMNG 130: "Hmong American Experiences in the U.S.," in Fall of 2018. I have also taught the courses WGSS 206: "Perspectives on LGBTQ Studies," WGSS 406: "Queer Theories and Sexual Politics," and WGSS 308: "Asian American Women's, Queer, and Feminist Cultural Productions" for the WGSS program. All three courses are primarily geared toward completing the LGBTQ studies certificate. Currently, I am writing several articles and book chapters on Hmong American gender and sexuality and its intersections with processes of racialization and refugee migration. I am fortunate to be able to think, teach, and research at the intersections of feminist, queer, and critical race/critical Hmong studies! ■

Affiliates' Corner

Find out what affiliates are reading, listening to, and engaging in on campus and beyond!



Dr. Jenny Shaddock —
Professor, English

Rebellion, a Novel.

My colleague in creative writing, Molly Patterson, has just come out with a novel published by Harper's that is getting superb reviews across the country. The novel is about the linked stories of four women across continents and generations. It explores women's identities and their plight

within grand historical events (the Boxer Rebellion in China and beyond). This novel and its reception is a huge accomplishment for Professor Patterson, and I hope you will add it to your reading list! ■



Creanna Cote — Advising, Retention, and Career
Center Advisor – Life and Health Sciences

Nancy podcast and *Code Switch* podcast. I LOVE a good podcast! It makes any chore more enjoyable, and I learn so much. Two of my favorite podcasts this year have been *Nancy* and *Code Switch*. *Nancy* is about LGBTQIA+ and *Code Switch* is about race. Both podcasts do a good job of focusing on intersectionality, current events, and history. For me, these podcasts offer a more informal way to stay educated and push myself to think about identity, politics, culture, and the change (personal and institutional) needed to be an active and engaged citizen today. Be sure to check them out! ■



Hannah Peterson
at waterfalls in
Nicaragua

Adventures in Nicaragua

Hannah Peterson

If you are someone looking to study abroad during your time at UW–Eau Claire, I highly suggest you do so soon. There is no better time than now to change the course of your life and to widen your view of what the world has to offer. When I applied for my Winterim travel course, “Women’s Lives and Experiences in Nicaragua,” I was doubtful about even getting in, but after I was accepted, I was overwhelmed with a mix of excitement and nervousness. My decision to apply came after a challenging first few semesters at school, and I was in a place where I needed change. I had never left the United States before my immersion experience, but I attempted to prepare as well as I could by watching videos and looking at maps and city guides. To my surprise, there was no real way to prepare for such a life-changing journey that still continues to inspire and drive my life goals. The only way to prepare for this journey was to just go. My study abroad trip gave me many things, but I believe the largest was a newfound sense of independence and a changed perspective on how women live and thrive in other countries.

The class offered is under the WGSS program and is centered on learning about the feminist movement and the lives of women in Nicaragua. Each of us in the program stayed with host families that allowed us to form relationships, witness what Nicaraguan home life is like, and in return, further immerse ourselves in Nicaraguan culture. The program I participated in was well-rounded; we learned through readings, lectures, and guest speakers equally. Every experience my group had added to our education. Each week, we completed a journal assignment to assess everything we had learned. In my final journal, I wrote, “I can feel the amount of growth I have

accumulated through this immersion experience, and I will forever be changed as a person after this trip. My understanding of women's lives and the struggles here in Nicaragua has completely expanded my worldview beyond anything I was expecting coming in. Every small encounter and conversation accumulates into a greater understanding, and I am often in awe of the grace and strength I see in the women of Nicaragua." Even though the women of Nicaragua live under the burden of gender-biased ideals and hypermasculine societal norms, Nicaraguan culture has changed a lot in the last two centuries in terms of gender equality. By talking to different feminist groups and women's cooperatives, I saw the changes and advancements women have been making in a country where the government and church dictate almost all ways of life. My group was also very lucky because we spoke with many native Nicaraguans and feminist leaders who lived and fought in the Sandinista revolution, which reshaped the entire country of Nicaragua in the 1980s. Every organization and person I met added to my knowledge of Nicaraguan culture and history; I heard many stories I will never forget.

My choice to study abroad came from a desire to know more, to experience things for the first time, and to return with an open heart to pursue the ideas I learned in Nicaragua. I now know what life is like for women in developing countries that deal with high levels of violence and poverty while still trying to create better lives for themselves. If you are looking for a program that will change your view in a short amount of time, this immersion experience will give you everything you need and more! ■

Nicaragua Experience

Lindsay Sherman

My time in Nicaragua was a life-changing experience; a culture I knew almost nothing about embraced me. Every moment of the experience was life-changing, but my favorite part was when we got to meet with the students from the Mulukuku Cooperative. The María Luisa Ortiz Women's Cooperative in Mulukuku, Nicaragua, puts on a program for young women to learn about their bodies and their sexuality. The rates of teen pregnancy and sexual assault crimes are high in Nicaragua, so the goal of this program is to reduce those numbers. We were able to eat lunch and talk to the young women about their experience in this program, and they only had positive things to say about it! More than half of the young women did not know anything about sex, their bodies, or their rights, something that is crucial for young women to learn. By informing girls, we can help reduce teen pregnancy and support individuals who have experienced sexual assault. Luckily, I was able to attend the girls' graduation, something they were all excited for; it was a moment I will not forget! ■



Lindsay Sherman at María Luisa Ortiz Women's Cooperative in Mulukuku, Nicaragua

New Logo? New Identity!



In Ellen Mahaffy's Fall of 2017 CJ 380, a graphic design portfolio development course, she invited Dr. Kong Pheng Pha to work with students to create a new logo for the WGSS program's new identity. Amanda Thao's logo design was selected at the end of the project.

Thao states: "Instead of focusing on incorporating just one symbol, the finished identity is a combination of three intersecting triangles. Each triangle is then assigned to a separate part of the WGSS program—women's, gender, and sexuality. This represents intersectionality within the three disciplines. The colors chosen are also historically reflected within the disciplines. I opted for a softer shade of purple, grey, and pink." ■



Becoming a Social Justice Warrior

Kessa Albright, WGSS Major,
Communication Studies Minor

In every Women's Studies intro class, at some point in the semester, there will be an assignment asking students to define feminism and write on the classic prompt of "are you a feminist?" When I was assigned the task of describing feminism and what it means to me, I struggled not to go beyond the minimum word requirement. I have always believed fighting for justice and equality is part of living a fulfilled life. Perhaps that idea comes from my single mom, who raised me to live my life in the pursuit of creating a better world for both myself and for others who are less fortunate. She always made sure I had autonomy to choose my path in life—from enrolling me in guitar, karate, and dance lessons all throughout my childhood to always supporting my decision to major in WGSS. Or perhaps I was born a social justice warrior, knowing from my first breath I would be discriminated against, make less money, be sexually assaulted, made to feel unintelligent, and be generally oppressed—all because I am a woman.

My time in the WGSS program at UW–Eau Claire cultivated my feeling of needing to do good in the world. This program has provided me with countless opportunities, both professionally and intellectually. In Fall of 2016, I took a semester off school to work as a campus organizer for the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, and it was an honor to work to nominate the first woman presidential candidate for a major party. After returning to UW–Eau

Claire in Spring of 2017, I worked to revive the College Feminists student organization with the help of my peers who are equally devoted to working for local progress. The College Feminists is the most wonderful group of people I've ever met, and I'm so proud to be able to do work around feminist activism, while providing a space for students, community members, and faculty to discuss the issues that impact our lives and personal politics. In Spring of 2017, I also worked as a trip coordinator for the Something New Alternative Spring Break trip, where around 80 students and faculty travelled to Clarkston, Georgia, to work with and learn about the refugee population in the city. We visited schools and local organizations to participate in volunteer work and learn about how we can make a change nationally and locally.

This year has been a difficult one for me personally and for the world politically; however, I find strength and power in performing feminist actions and connecting to my community. I would not be where I am today without the people I've met and classes I've taken in the WGSS program. I'm excited to see where my education takes me and the change I hope to make. ■



Students Engaged in "Something New"

Dr. Nicole J. Schultz
Something New Alternative
Spring Break Trip Faculty Coordinator

Immigration and the vast array of refugee experiences have been in the forefront of media recently. The current political climate surrounding immigration may create confusion for individuals who do not have a high ego-involvement in the subject of immigration. This class explores student experiences on the Something New Alternative Spring Break (ASB), a university supported Domestic Intercultural Immersion (DII) high impact practice. The primary purpose of the current research is to expose Blugolds to the reality of refugees under the current political climate, activism, and community partnerships. The conclusions students reach about their experience exemplify the significance of DII trips in supporting the development and implementation of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI) initiatives on campus, assessed and contextualized using tenets of the Social Judgment Theory. The overarching goal of incorporating the Something New ASB trip into Communication and Journalism (CJ)/WGSS 111 is to integrate learning across courses and disciplines and between campus and community life. ■



Abby Anderson, Something New Alternative Spring Break Trip Student Coordinator

Through the WGSS program, I have been given the distinguished honor of becoming a lead coordinator for the Something New Alternative Spring Break trip affiliated with CJ/WGSS 111: “Gender, Race, Class, & Communication.” Designed as a DII trip, the Something New ASB provided fellow students and me the opportunity to engage in cross-disciplinary actions including, but not limited to, refugee resettlements in Clarkston, Georgia, and the Civil Rights Movement in Selma,

Alabama. Through this trip, students can bring back their new experiences and perspectives to the CJ/WGSS 111 class and, more importantly, to the UW–Eau Claire campus. ■



LGBTQIA+ Student Support at UW–Eau Claire

Julie Poquette

At UW–Eau Claire, student Chandler Roberts has found something he’d long been searching for: a community where he feels supported in his identities within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) community.

“As a Blugold, the university’s Gender and Sexuality Resource Center has provided me with a community that I previously lacked,” Roberts said. “I have been interning with the Resource Center for about two years now, and I’ve made so many connections with a variety of students, faculty and staff who have given me a sense of validation in my identities. It is extremely comforting to see so many support the LGBTQIA+ community here on campus.”

Recently, that supportive campus environment earned UW–Eau Claire recognition as the best college for LGBTQIA+ students in Wisconsin. The recognition comes from BestColleges.com, which partnered with Campus Pride in releasing its list of “[Best Colleges for LGBTQ Students in Every State](#).” BestColleges.com is a recognized national publisher of college rankings and other student resources, and Campus Pride is the country’s leading nonprofit organization working to create more LGBTQIA+-friendly learning environments at colleges and universities. UW–Eau Claire’s newest LGBTQIA+-friendly recognition follows a No. 3 national ranking in May on College Choice’s 2017 “[50 Best Colleges for LGBTQ Students](#)” list.

Dr. Tamara Johnson, UW–Eau Claire’s assistant chancellor for equity, diversity, and inclusion, said these recognitions reflect a UW–Eau Claire campus community that is supportive of efforts to be inclusive of those who have historically been marginalized. “This is very exciting news and while definitely a reflection of the leadership and vision of Chris Jorgenson in our Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, this distinction is only possible with the support of university community members invested in moving forward together to ensure our campus is welcoming and inclusive for all of our students,” Johnson said.

Through a vetting process, a panel of experts from Campus Pride selected UW–Eau Claire for the recent best-in-Wisconsin honor based on BestColleges.com’s academic quality and affordability measures. “To have achieved this ranking speaks to the collaborative efforts on the part of faculty, staff, administrators, and students to ensure that UW–Eau Claire is a safe and welcoming campus for LGBTQIA+ people,” said Jorgenson, the university’s Gender and Sexuality Resource Center director.

Kallie Friede, a 2017 UW–Eau Claire graduate, interned in the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center as an undergraduate student and now serves there as a graduate assistant while pursuing a master’s degree in student affairs through UW–La Crosse. Her work in the Resource Center has been as an ally. “For me, a lot of the support I’ve received through the

LGBTQIA+ Student Support at UW–Eau Claire - continued

center has been in learning about my privilege, deconstructing my worldview, and learning how I navigate the world quite differently because of my identities,” Friede said. “Chris was incredibly patient with my learning and was consistent in calling me into important conversations when I was exercising my privilege in harmful ways — and still does that for me as a graduate student.”

Friede agreed UW–Eau Claire’s successes in providing LGBTQIA+ support have been possible because of Jorgenson’s leadership in the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center as well as support from administration and other offices on campus.

“When I talk to students, I think a large part of our success is that our programming and our office isn’t an afterthought,” she said. “The support for our work allows us to be visible and to do impactful things for students.”

Jorgenson noted that while UW–Eau Claire’s most recent honor for LGBTQIA+ support is cause for celebration, it also serves as a reminder of the work yet to be done.

“The safety and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people is only possible by engaging in anti-racist, trans-positive work, such that all students, faculty, and staff succeed at UW-Eau Claire,” Jorgenson said. “We are committed to that work and hope to continually live up to this new ranking.”

Through connections at UW–Eau Claire, Roberts attended the Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender Ally College Conference and was able to speak with other LGBTQIA+ college students from around the region. Roberts discovered many universities lack resource centers like UW–Eau Claire’s and struggle to get appropriate funding and support from administration.

“Thankfully, our university is working to find out how to make our campus inclusive for all students by listening to our concerns and needs, and that cannot be taken for granted,” said Roberts, who then echoed Jorgenson’s caveat about the continued work ahead: “I would add that although we’ve received this recognition in Wisconsin, that doesn’t mean there still isn’t room



for necessary improvement to further the environment for the LGBTQIA+ community here, but I am hopeful UW–Eau Claire will continue to move forward.” ■



The Fight Isn’t Over Kristie Ash

It’s super simple, right? A few decades ago, a nice old lady decided to not give up her seat on a bus. After that, there were a few marches, a few speeches given, such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream,” and suddenly, there were equal rights for everyone! Wrong. The Civil Rights Movement is portrayed in our textbooks and classrooms as separate events that just somehow magically led to “civil rights.” The Civil Rights Pilgrimage offers a real and more authentic way of learning and immersing individuals in the history of our nation.

Going into the Civil Rights Pilgrimage and through my women’s studies course, WGSS 222: “Women of the Civil Rights Movement,” I thought I knew how incorrect the portrayal of our nation’s fight for civil rights was. Going on the trip and spending ten short days walking through museums and meeting historical figures was eye opening. Meeting Joanne Bland, one of the youngest members to participate in the Voting Rights March from Selma to Montgomery, and going to the school where nine brave African American first integrated into public schools majorly impacted my point of view.

A picture of the Freedom Riders that always surfaces shows a mob of men attacking two Freedom Riders when they got off the bus in Birmingham, Alabama. One of the men who was brutally beaten and attacked was Charles Person, the youngest participant in the Freedom Riders. To hear him retell history first-hand, not from a boring, washed-out textbook, was impactful. He ended his presentation by reminding us that the fight isn’t over; injustice and oppression still exist in our society. However,

it's not just their fight anymore; it's my generation's too. We need to be the brave foot soldiers to stand up in the face of adversity and continue to fight for the rights and voices of marginalized people.

One of my most memorable experiences from the trip was going to the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama. We had the opportunity to meet Anthony Hinton, a man who was wrongly convicted and spent forty years on death row. This is where the trip came full circle for me. In high school, I took a sociology class where we read *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, a book that confronted America's past with the systematic criminalization of African American males after the Civil War and the problem with death row sentencing. As a high school student, it was an interesting book to read, but as a college student, being able to meet the person who inspired the book was an unforgettable experience.

I think that's what makes UW-Eau Claire's liberal arts education so special. I am currently pursuing a dual degree in accounting and information systems and even though my WGSS class is not related to any of my business classes, it has broadened my education. Through classes like this, I cannot only see the history of injustice but can also work toward making it better. Cultural immersion experiences teach people about the holes that are overlooked in our education system. On this trip, we learned that



Hattie Salzman, Kristie Ash, and Emily Huerta pose with Freedom Rider Charles Person

there were four known accounts of people refusing to give up their seat before Rosa Parks, and that for those speeches and marches to happen, there were hours of planning by multiple committees and organizations. In the words of the late President Lyndon Johnson, "There is no Negro problem. There is no Southern problem. There is no northern problem. There is only an American problem." ■



2018 Women's History Month Award Winners

Honored at a celebration on April 4th, 2018

Ailish F. Barcelo Memorial Scholarship

(Award Sponsor – Christine Webster)
Kessa Albright and Valerie Walowit

Donna C. Turell Award

(Award Sponsor – Susan C. Turell)
Yen Lyn Goh

Helen X. Sampson Undergraduate Project Award

Hannah Marie Peterson and Lily Kline

Mickey Crothers Award

Amanda Jonason

Virgiline and Joseph See Award

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Lauren Hovde

Tillie Olsen Award

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Abigail Johnson

WGSS Outstanding Senior Award

Kessa Marie Albright and MacKayla Y. John

Feminist Teacher Awards

Sandibel Borges and Kong Pha

Feminist Mentor Award

Nicole Schultz

Feminist Service Award

Jan Stirm

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