The Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) Regional Network includes gender and women's studies programs from throughout the US Southwest and the US–Mexico border region. The SIROW regional network has three complimentary goals: (1) to disseminate information about its members via SIROW's website, regional newsletters, and annual meetings, (2) to support the advancement of scholarship and research in gender and women's studies across the region, and (3) to sustain and broaden a network of gender and women's studies scholars and researchers – solidifying a supportive relationship between students, scholars, researchers and other feminist professionals.

Greetings Regional Partners and Supporters!

Congratulations on the conclusion of another semester and another academic year in the books!

And oh my, what a semester it has been! When I first began drafting this newsletter earlier in the semester, the world sure looked a lot different! Since that time, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent social interventions we have all taken to reduce its transmission, have changed so much of our day-to-day lives, both professionally and personally.
Fresh on the heels of the new year, we held our 2020 annual Regional Partner Meeting on January 24th and 25th, 2020. For another consecutive year, our members converged in Tucson for a weekend of networking, brainstorming, and visioning. We had representation from Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Brigham Young University, Colorado College, University of Colorado Boulder, Metropolitan State University Denver, University of Nevada Reno, University of Nevada Las Vegas, Regis University, and Texas Tech University!

Our group discussed a number of pressing issues including how to support students in the midst of increasingly visible hate crime incidents across our campuses, how to prevent burnout and mentor new leaders in administrative roles, and how to best prepare our gender and women's studies students for the post-graduation job market.

At this year's meeting SIROW's associate director, Claudia Powell led an additional workshop on collaborative and community-based research. Attendees found useful in getting the wheels turning for future projects and opportunities for collaboration throughout the region. We also enjoyed a lunch time lecture on the history of consciousness raising in the feminist movement from Liz Kinnamon, a PhD candidate in Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Arizona. We were also lucky enough to visit the University of Arizona's Art Museum and stroll through Tucson's 4th Avenue District after our official business came to a close.

We all recently learned about the cancellation of major in-person conferences including the 2020 National Women's Studies Association meeting and other large gathering that serve as the connective tissue for the field nationally. Despite this cancellation, we must continue to find creative ways to maintain our connections, further develop our collaborative potential, and lean on one another for support and solidarity.

One of our members, Dr. Guillermina Gina Nunez-Mchiri has offered some reflections on what the field of Gender and Women's Studies specifically has to offer to society at large, right now in the midst of this global pandemic (see below). Here, she offers an important reminder about the unique position we hold as feminist researchers and teachers to advocate for our students, colleagues, and communities.

Even as many of us adjust to working in isolation and working under the financial uncertainty that has swept through higher education, SIROW's Regional Network is still here to serve as a resource to support Gender and Women's Studies throughout the Southwest.

We are stronger together and we will persevere!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Murphy
Assistant Research Social Scientist
Southwest Institute for Research on Women
The response to Coronavirus is a feminist issue.

- The Center for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP)

The Center for Feminist Foreign Policy has compiled this helpful resource guide intended to facilitate feminist research and teaching in response to the COVID19 pandemic.

Reflections on What the “Studies” Offer During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By: Dr. Guillermina Gina Nunez-Mchiri
Women’s and Gender Studies Director
University of Texas at El Paso

As we are in the midst of facing the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been pondering on the contributions of Women’s and Gender Studies to our student’s education and to society at large. We must recognize that
women have been at the front lines of many social, economic, and environmental crises in the U.S. and throughout the world. We have learned that women have organized to shift the worlds we live in by organizing for the right to vote, to seek better wages, against sexual harassment, sexism, domestic violence, and multiple forms of oppression. So what do we offer students in our Women’s and Gender Studies courses? What do the Studies offer society at large?

The following is a short reflection of key contributions of our field. In Women’s and Gender studies courses, we learn about historical social movements to organize, speak up, push back, seek representation and advocate for equity in our society and abroad. Many of these movements have involved mobilizations and public protests, so how do these lessons translate into our present time when medical professionals and governmental ordinances advise us to stay at home, study from home, and work from home?

Feminist scholars have taught us that the personal is political and vice versa. In taking stock of our courses and our students’ educational trajectories, I can respond that we have much to learn about the lessons about women’s struggles and contributions towards making our society more equitable, inclusive, and less oppressive. We take our studies and combine them with our learned experiences from the lessons shared from our ancestors, our mentors, as we navigate a virus threatening our health and social well-being, while politicians weigh out the profits versus the numbers of lives lost or potentially saved. Women are major decision makers, consumers, thought leaders, and social change agents in every day life at all levels of society. We have heard about the second and third shifts women labor in when they work and care for others. Today, our homes have merged with our work, school, and other spaces and institutions and this is exhausting! We hope to continue in the work that needs to be done to redistribute household and childcare responsibilities more equitably. As much as we have made some inroads in the labor force, the private sphere has still been carried on the shoulders of women’s unpaid and unrecognized labor. Let us rest, reflect, navigate, recharge, re-conceptualize, dismantle old ways, redistribute loads, and rebuild ourselves to gather the energies and the strategies to care for our minds, bodies, and spirits. Some of us navigate this crisis home alone, while others are caring and providing for families.

As we look outside our windows, we see the social, economic, emotional, and physical impacts of this virus on some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, people without a safety net, without health insurance, and without the luxury of staying home. The s/heroes today, are those that labor and sacrifice to care for and serve people on the front lines in the supermarkets, in medical facilities, and in other spaces deemed “essential” for our survival. At home, we hear and observe how our leaders and members of our society respond to this virus, while witnessing how people in other countries seek ways to face the threats of this virus within their given their economic resources, circumstances, and lived realities. Our public and private realms have merged, as we stay home, wash our hands, wipe our feet, and practice different forms of social distancing and social interactions to survive.

What do “the Studies” have to offer? Lessons of struggle, of survival, of resilience, and lessons of hope. At the University of Texas at El Paso, we have courses on the history of women’s and gender studies in the U.S. and throughout the world, we have courses on women and health, a course on plagues and pandemics, women and social justice values at work, a course on food, gender, and society, gender and technology, feminist theory,
feminist research methods, gender and religion, and gender representations in the media. These are all courses that inform us about the contributions of women to the many facets of our human expression and representations in the past and in the present. Women's and Gender Studies have provided valuable lessons of struggle, resilience, and resistance within the academy that help us bridge our education and praxis to our lives, families, and communities. Until we meet again.

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**PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT**

Arizona State University
Women & Gender Studies
Faculty Achievements

**Dr. Marlon Bailey** was appointed by the National Academy of Sciences to the Committee on Review of Data and Research on Social Outcomes for LGBTQ+ Populations.

**Dr. Lisa Anderson** was elected Secretary for Black Feminisms and Performance Studies for the Caribbean Philosophical Association.

**Dr. Kim Scott** was appointed to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's, Committee on Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women of Color in Tech.

**Dr. Alesha Durfee** received a 2019 Women's International Study Center writing fellowship, was named a fellow and was in residence in Sante Fe in October.
Dr. Heather Switzer's book, *When the Light is Fire: Maasai Schoolgirls in Contemporary Kenya*, won 2nd runner up for the Aidoo-Snyder Book Prize awarded by the Women's Caucus of the African Studies Association and also received the Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award by the Comparative and International Education Society.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Faculty and Student Achievements

**Olivia Gardner**, a graduating senior and women and gender studies major received the 2020 Equity and Excellence Student Award. The award administered by UC Boulder's Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement is given to a student who exemplifies the promotion of inclusive excellence. For more on the award, click [here](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=ca09aa9f34&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919&simp=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919).

**Dr. Celeste Montoya**, Associate Professor in Women’s and Gender Studies, received the 2020 Outstanding Mentor Award from UC Boulder's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program in recognition of her undergraduate mentorship. For more on the award, click [here](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=ca09aa9f34&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919&simp=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919).

Three Women's and Gender Studies students received the Jacob Van Ek scholarship, one of the UC Boulder College of Arts and Sciences' highest honors. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of academic merit and contribution to the campus community. They are **Madie Boreman**, **Mariana Galvez Seminario**, and **Olivia Gardner**. For more on the award, click [here](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ik=ca09aa9f34&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919&simp=msg-f%3A1666409338988524919).
All across the region, Gender and Women’s Studies faculty have shown creative approaches to e-teaching, which have become especially helpful as universities throughout the US turn to online education in the wake of COVID-19.

Below you will find some helpful resources and examples!

Dr. Agatha Beins, Associate Professor in Multicultural Women’s and Gender Studies at Texas Woman’s University, has edited a volume entitled *Films for the Feminist Classroom*, which includes a resource guide for films/video available online. It can be found [here](#).

Dr. Beins has also written an article titled "Small Talk and Chit Chat: Using Informal Communication to Build a Learning Community Online" which was published in *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*. The piece, found [here](#), explores best practices in feminist approaches to distance learning.

At Brigham Young University, this semester’s Gender and Women’s Studies capstone conference was held over Zoom. In total, 28 minors presented their senior research projects. According to program director Dr. Valerie Hegstrom, the conference had between 30-40 students, faculty mentors, friends, and family members “attend” every paper. One session even had 55 audience members via Zoom! Students each spoke for 15 minutes, followed by virtual applause and thumbs up, and audience members asked questions in the chat box, which presenters had five minutes to answer.

At the University of Texas El Paso, students in Prof. Ruth McDonald’s Gender and Technology course complete a semester long digital career portfolio project. This includes a professional resume, a Linked-in profile, and a Wix.com webpage to organize media elements and graphics. Students achieve several outcomes with this project such as creating a professional online presence, targeting the profile, gathering leads, making connections & networking in an industry, as well as, finding examples from job descriptions of professional internships or profiles of those who are already working in the student’s dream career and connecting with them.

The [Gender Institute for Teaching and Advocacy (GITA)](#) at Metropolitan State University Denver has transitioned to providing all of most of their regular services online. According to institute director Dr. Kat Martinez, existing programs like the GITA book club, Wellness
Workshop, and Sex Cafe are all being offered online as well as scholarship tutoring and advising being offered remotely. GITA has even set up a virtual lounge for community engagement using Zoom!

Congratulations to Metropolitan State University Denver’s Dr. Anahi Russo Garrido on the publication of their new book!

From Rutgers University Press: “Tortilleras Negotiating Intimacy: Love, Friendship, and Sex in Queer Mexico City is the first ethnography in English to focus primarily on women’s sexual and intimate cultures in Mexico. The book shows how these individuals reconfigure relationships through marriage, polyamory, friendship, and sex. Tortilleras Negotiating Intimacy suggests that “new” intimate cartographies are emerging in Mexico City, ultimately redefining relationships, gender, and mexicanidad. Building on ethnographic data collected over the past decade, including forty-five in-depth interviews with women between the ages of twenty-two and sixty-five participating in LGBT spaces, Tortilleras Negotiating Intimacy shows how lesbian women (mainly cis, but some trans) negotiate friendship, same-sex marriage, polyamory, and sexual practices, reinventing love, eroticism, friendship, and ultimately the social organization of Latin American societies.”

The book will be available for purchase on June 12th, 2020!

Congratulations to University of Texas El Paso’s Dr. Naomi Fertman who recently co-produced the documentary Birth in Pieces!

The documentary dives into the fragmented maternal health system that currently exists in the United States. The film highlights the perspective...
of parents and medical providers living and working along the U.S./Mexico border in El Paso, Texas and researchers working throughout the state. It has been shown widely through both the border region and throughout the country. In the past 6 months the film has screened at a number of national conferences including; National Women’s Studies, Society of Humanist Sociology, Sociologist for Women in Society, and Sociology of Reproduction. The film is available for purchase for use in classrooms and for university wide and public screening. The film trailer is available here and for more information please contact Naomi Fertman at nrfertman@utep.edu

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