

Southwest Institute for Research on Women- SIROW Regional Newsletter

The Southwest Regional Heads and Directors Meeting on the Auraria Campus in Denver, Colorado.



Southwest Heads & Directors Meeting in Denver Draws Record Numbers

Metro State and CU-Denver
Hosted the Annual Gathering

On January 28th and 29th, SIROW regional affiliates converged in downtown Denver for the annual Southwest Heads and Directors meeting. The Institute for Women's Studies and Services (IWSS) at Metropolitan State College of Denver and the CU-Denver Women's and Gender Studies collaboratively hosted the event, held for the first time in Colorado. The meeting drew the largest group of heads and directors to date. The twenty-one participants hailed from Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Wyoming. This broad representation of southwestern institutions allowed for

rich conversations about regional efforts to bolster feminist academic programs, research institutes, and student services.

Despite major cutbacks in institutional spending, Women's Studies departments and programs have boasted incredible growth in the southwest in the last year. Many institutional representatives reported increases in course enrollment, undergraduate majors and minors, and graduate certificate students. The attraction of students to the unique offerings of Women's Studies has laid the groundwork for other developments including new courses, enhanced programming, and expanded degree options.

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The Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW), established in 1979, is a regional research and resource institute within the Gender and Women's Studies Department at the University of Arizona. SIROW's region includes Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, and Northwestern Mexico.

More information available online: <http://sirow.arizona.edu>

SIROW Mission:

To develop, conduct, and disseminate collaborative research and education/outreach projects with regard to the diverse groups of women and children in the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico.

SIROW Goals:

To develop collaborative feminist research focusing on southwestern problems or populations of interest to scholars in the SIROW region.

- To identify and disseminate research on women, children, and gender differences.
- To provide advocacy for women and children by linking researchers with community organizations and policy makers.
- To support equality for women in the workforce and conduct research on women and gender in the work environment.
- To carry out participatory action research on a wide range of health, legal, and educational issues.
- To support graduate, undergraduate, and K-12 education for women and children.
- To examine women's contribution to literature, the arts, and southwest heritage.

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Regional affiliates are building courses in a variety of cutting edge areas—girls' studies, LGBTQ studies, transnational feminisms, immigration, and public health. Student enthusiasm for engagement in interesting Women's Studies courses—e.g. Prescott College's "Sexuality and Sexual Outlaws" and University of Arizona's distance learning "Sex and the City" course—led many SIROW affiliates to propose new certificate and degree options at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The coming year will likely include additional major and minor options in Women's Studies in the southwest, along with five-year BA/MA programs, joint MA programs with law, public policy, and public health, and undergraduate and graduate certificates in specialty areas.

In addition to transforming minds in the classroom, Women's Studies continues to build intellectual community through extracurricular programming. Along with Women's History Month events offered at most institutions, SIROW affiliates are offering creative programming, such as University of Northern Colorado's recently initiated "Chic Lit" reading group on feminist texts. UT Austin's Center for Gender and Women's Studies received a five-year grant from the Embrey Family Foundation to develop curriculum, a research cluster, a student conference, and other opportunities in the area of women's human rights. The grant additionally provides support for the collaborative creation of a "Women's Rights and Performance" summer course with an area high school, an example of one of the many ways that Women's Studies and regional research institutes are working to serve local communities.

Regional departments also have a strength in collecting and archiving oral histories of marginalized populations in the southwest, and these efforts to contribute to local and regional knowledges about the everyday lives of women, indigenous people, Chicanas, and LGBTQ people continues to grow. In 2009, UTEP Women's Studies launched a research project to record the oral histories of the El Paso LGBTQ population. The UNLV Women's Research Institute of Nevada, which has an extensive oral history research project, reorganized its website as a platform to disseminate research. The University of Arizona has an oral history project connected to the Women's Plaza of Honor to pay tribute to women's contributions to regional history.

The keynote presentation by Dr. AnnJanette Alejano-Steele (Metro State) highlighted another exemplary community partnership in Denver, Colorado to combat human trafficking. (See article on page 3.) Dr. Alejano-Steele offered state information for each of the participants to build similar programs at their universities, and the SIROW affiliate representatives discussed hosting a regional conference on human trafficking.

Another important activity at the meeting was a session on how to support undergraduates in the region who want to attend graduate school, particularly strategies for preparing students going onto Ph.D. programs in Gender & Women's Studies (currently offered at Arizona State University, University of Arizona, and Texas Woman's University).

Researcher Profile: Rosi Andrade, Ph.D.

"Community is the essence of social change."

Since my early graduate training at the University of Arizona College of Education, I have worked in community-based research (with women, families, children, mothers, immigrants). The work we do at SIROW is life altering for all involved. I believe that the most important contributions of my work are one-on-one; it is from there that we make an impact on communities. As immigrant mothers in Leadership through Literacy, often share, "We are all learners and teachers, no one better than the other." I have learned that to become a partner in challenging disparities in society, we must be integrated in the communities we hope to or chose to collaborate with. I grew up in the barrio of South Tucson, in the house my father's father built. I come from several generations of bilingual Mexicanos/Mexican Americans on my father's side (whose ancestors ranched in the area before it became Arizona), and Spanish speaking immigrants from my mother's side. All this, and more, form the foundation of who I am as a person and an academic.



Combating Human Trafficking at Metropolitan State College of Denver: An Interdisciplinary Affair

Although human trafficking is regarded as one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world, generating over \$5 billion annually, it has existed largely under the radar...until recently. At the Institute for Women's Studies and Services (IWSS), Metropolitan State College of Denver, combating human trafficking has been the centerpiece of an interdisciplinary effort toward awareness, analysis, and eradication. Led by Professor AnnJanette Alejano-Steele, human trafficking is the subject of curriculum, research, and activism—all accomplished through campus and community collaborative efforts.

Dr. Alejano-Steele has created a unique upper division undergraduate course, "Human Trafficking," which is cross-listed in six departments: African African-American Studies, Criminal Justice, Human Services, Psychology, Social Work, and Women's Studies. The interdisciplinary nature of the course is an intentional marker of the complexity of the issue and the need for dialogue among a variety of constituencies. In its third year, the course is extremely popular.

In 2010, Dr. Alejano-Steele helped create the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking (LCHT), a non-profit organization that conducts community-based research, training, and leadership development through intentional collaboration. LCHT, which has acquired significant private funding to further its efforts, is a partner of IWSS, sharing faculty and student resources to mutual benefit. At Metro, Dr. Alejano-Steele has also established the Human Trafficking Academic Response Team consisting of members from Admissions, Campus Police, Career Center, Center for Individualized Learning, Counseling Center, Financial Aid, Health Center, Immigrant Student Services, Phoenix Center, and Registrar to help expedite and accommodate the special needs of students who are human trafficking survivors. Roughly 20 trafficking survivors have thus far come to Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Another interdisciplinary effort led by Dr. Alejano-Steele is the writing of the



Dr. A.J. Alejano-Steele

first-of-its-kind undergraduate textbook on human trafficking that involves faculty from a number of a different disciplines. Quite fittingly, Dr. Alejano-Steele was awarded the 2010 Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Award for outstanding community service at Metropolitan State College of Denver.

Can We Collaborate? Approaching "Gender & Personal Finance" from (Very) Different Disciplines

In fall 2010, University of Arizona Gender & Women's Studies hosted a colloquium with two professors who are setting a model for scholarly collaboration across distinctly different disciplines. Dr. Miranda Joseph, associate professor of Gender & Women's Studies, and Dr. Joyce Serido, assistant research professor in The Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences, discussed how their scholarly training, research methods, and relative locations in the university make for an interesting, and at times frustrating, exploration of social issues within the broad theme of gender and financial behaviors.

Serido is a quantitative social scientist conducting a longitudinal study of the financial behaviors and attitudes of young adults. "Arizona Pathways for Life Success for University Students," or APLUS, is a study guided by questions about how these young adults form their financial behaviors and attitudes. APLUS researchers collected data on these

Concrete Connections

For ten days spring 2011, University of Arizona's No More Deaths student group divided the campus with the largest mock border wall constructed to date. The wall was meant to disrupt "business as usual" and provide an educational forum about immigration and the impact of militarization on borderlands communities.

The project was part of an ongoing No More Deaths campaign called "Concrete Connections/Conexiones Concretas" developed to highlight linkages between the U.S.-

Mexico border and the Israeli apartheid wall. The students received a letter of support from Archbishop Desmond Tutu and inspired a "mock wall movement," as other students at

colleges worldwide are planning similar events on their campuses. More information about the project is posted on the No More Deaths website: <http://www.nomoredeaths.org/University-of-Arizona-NMD>

UA Gender & Women's Studies graduate students were pivotal in planning the project. The department created a banner with a quote from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* to cover a section of the wall. (Pictured below.)



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topics from nearly 2,100 university freshmen in spring 2008. The largest study of its kind, APLUS made headlines in media sources including *The New York Times* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, with growing attention in the wake of the financial crisis.



Dr. Joyce Serido

Joseph learned about APLUS when Serido and her associates were about to embark on the second wave of the study. Joseph is a social theorist who uses cultural studies methods to explore the relationship between economic processes and social formations. She expressed interest in APLUS as part of her research about the ways credit, debt and accounting shape subjectivity under neoliberalism. Her collaboration with Serido began when the APLUS team conducted focus groups to craft new questions for the second wave survey. Serido asked Joseph to participate despite the fact that Joseph does not have a background in conducting quantitative research. She faced a steep learning curve, but her training in ethnographic methods proved very useful to the collaboration.

At the colloquium, Serido characterized their differing scholarly styles as, "I take all these little pieces of data and put them together to tell a story. What Miranda does is take a story and rips it apart." Two such "stories"—that the family is a central influence in the financial behaviors of young adults (the family values argument) and that gender has a determining role in differences in financial behaviors and coping with financial stress—became provocations for engagement. One of Joseph's suggestions was to expand the range of considered influences (that had originally been shaped by social construction theory) to explore the impact of, for instance, the media. Another one, which ended up unraveling the "gender story" that Serido had planned to write, was that perhaps other factors made a more significant impact; Serido learned that

socioeconomic status or "access to resources" played a greater role than gender in shaping young adults' financial behaviors.

Both scholars reported that the collaboration has been productive for their own research. Even though Joseph expressed concern that she might be doing the thing she was trained to critique—reiterating and recirculating existing categories and thus laying the ground for reaffirming existing norms in the survey findings—she nonetheless found the engagement with the APLUS project fruitfully challenging as a scholar and helpful for her work. Joseph said that statistics show up in her research in a variety of ways,



Dr. Miranda Joseph

and that beginning to grasp the fundamentals about their production has been incredibly useful. With regard to other aspects of the research, she was interested in the way students articulated the relationship between gender and financial behaviors in the focus groups. For example, a male participant commented, "That's what I learned in marketing class, guys specifically target one object and that's what they are going to buy and, this is a large generalization but this is what marketing class teaches us is large generalizations, women in general go out for the experience." She also said that the APLUS research reinforces her argument about the change in the norm entrepreneurial subjectivity (referring to saving behaviors & financial responsibility) after the financial crisis.

While both presenters acknowledged that they often had a difficult time understanding each other, they touted their collaboration across entrenched disciplinary divides as a great model for public discourse. Serido described the collaboration as an eye-opening experience. "Every time we get together, I leave thinking about the research differently. I understand a different way to look at it. It's an opportunity to pause and let room into your own work."

NAU to Pilot an Interdisciplinary Program on "Women and the Land, Outdoors, and the Environment"

Women's and Gender Studies at Northern Arizona University is launching an exciting interdisciplinary program called "Women and the Land, Outdoors, and the Environment." The five parts of the program explore the many ways women interact with the earth.

Students take a first year seminar on "Women and the Land" with Dr. Arianne Burford that emphasizes indigenous and postcolonial studies. The program additionally includes two upper-division courses taught by WGS affiliates in Geography and Recreation and Communication—"Women on the River in the Grand Canyon" and "Women, Nature, and Culture."

Students in the three courses will conduct participatory action research and collaborate with partnering organizations off-campus such as Girls on the Run and the Grand Canyon Trust as well as Students for Sustainable Living and Urban Gardening. As the program grows, upper-division students will mentor first-year students and NAU anticipates creating a learning community in the dorms by fall 2012.

—Dr. Karla B. Hackstaff, Director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program

SIROW now has an organization page on

facebook

Search for "Southwest Institute for Research on Women." From this page, click the "Like!" button in the top right-hand corner, and you will be able to follow SIROW updates.

NEW Leadership Development™ Network Coming to UT Austin

With funding from the Embrey Family Foundation, the Center for Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin is pleased to announce that The NEW Leadership™ Development Network, a national partnership dedicated to expanding political knowledge and participation among college women, will hold its first summer institute at UT Austin in 2012.

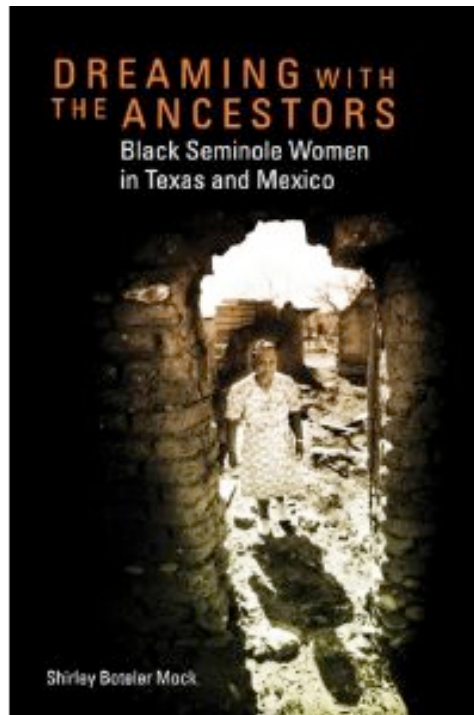
The Center for Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers University began the initiative to establish NEW Leadership™ programs at colleges and universities across the United States. Since 1999, CAWP has been working with educational institutions across the country to help them plan and initiate NEW Leadership™ programs on their home campuses.

The Development Network currently includes 21 colleges and universities serving women in 25 states. There are currently two participating universities in the region, UNLV and the University of Denver; the University of Arizona NEW Leadership will also begin in 2012. To date, more than 3500 college women have participated in regional NEW Leadership™ programs.

The NEW Leadership™ summer institute is an intensive residential program, which educates college women about politics and policy-making and inspires them to get involved in the political process. During the six-day program students meet with women in the public sphere, learn about women's political participation, explore ideas about leadership and politics, and participate in hands-on skills building exercises. Students will be recruited from colleges and universities throughout Texas.

The Center for Women's and Gender Studies is excited to bring this important educational portfolio to women in Texas. In partnership with Rutgers University, this program will enhance their political awareness and perhaps influence their own civic leadership aspirations.

—Nancy Ewert, Program Coordinator for CWGS at UT Austin



Dreaming with the Ancestors

The SIROW southwest book series spring 2011 highlight is the recently published *Dreaming with the Ancestors*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010). This book makes significant scholarly contributions to women's, black, and indigenous histories of the Americas. The groundbreaking book delves into the often-ignored role of women in communities descended from Indian freedmen with African roots and shaped by southeastern Native American and Mexican influences. Shirley Boteler Mock, a research fellow at the Mesoamerican Archaeological Research Laboratory at the University of Texas, Austin, illuminates the lives and contributions of Black Seminole women in Texas and Mexico. Her documentary research and extensive interviews with these women highlights their incredible history.

Mock reveals a unique maroon culture, forged from an eclectic mixture of religious beliefs and social practices. At its core it is an amalgam of African-derived traditions kept alive by women. She tells how these women nourished their families and held fast to their Afro-Seminole language even as they fled slavery, endured relocation, and eventually sought new lives in new lands. Of key importance were the warrior women keepers of dreams and visions that bring to life age-old African customs.

BECOMING OLDER

Myra Dinnerstein, Research Professor Emerita at the University of Arizona, and a friend, Sandy Heiman, have started a blog: *Becoming Older*.

The blog is designed as a forum to exchange and discuss ideas, experiences, and resources as we become older. We welcome contributions which can be anonymous or signed.

To view the blog: <http://becomingolder.wordpress.com>

To post an entry, send an email to becomingolder@gmail.com

Send an article to SIROW News!

If you would like to highlight the accomplishments, ongoing research efforts, new scholarship, or student projects in your program, department, or institute, submit an article for the fall 2011 newsletter.

Stories and publications must be 350 words or less and showcase the depth and breadth of Gender and Women's Studies projects in our region. Submit stories in Microsoft Word via email by October 3rd, 2011. To submit stories or for more information, email sirow@email.arizona.edu.

Notes from the Editor:

Thank you to the SIROW editing team, Nina Rabin and Corey Knox, for their work on the newsletter.

We also appreciate article submissions and materials from the following people: Dr. Maurice Hamington, Dr. Miranda Joseph & Dr. Joyce Serido, Nancy Ewert, and Dr. Karla B. Hackstaff.

The page 3 photo of the No Mas Fronteras banner is from the UA-No More Deaths event archive.

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