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.

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SIROW Regional Partners Converge for 2018 Summit Meeting
By: Stephanie Murphy

The Southwest Regional Network started out the new year with our annual Regional Partner Summit Meeting, which took place on January 26–27th, 2018 at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. We are grateful to all the attendees for their time, enthusiasm and insight. Special thanks go out to Gender and Women's Studies Program Head Dr. Charlotte Dunham, Program Coordinator Patricia Earl and their team for being excellent institutional hosts.

Over the weekend we enjoyed social dinners, an invited panel discussion on teaching, a walk around a campus filled with sculpture art, and even a visit with some of Lubbock’s influential resident women artists, including Robin Germany, Carol Flueckiger, and Shannon Canning, Corina Cormona, and Patricia Earl. These artists shared examples of their work, which varied from oil painting and photography to textile art and public murals. They each spoke to us about what feminist art meant to them.

But the weekend was not all recreation! We also made time for program updates as well as dialogue and small group break out brainstorming on best practices given recent success and challenges in the field of Gender and Women's Studies. Program and department heads from universities in Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas shared strategies for transformative teaching, recruiting and retaining students, navigating administrative climates, supporting feminist scholars, and connecting to contemporary social activism.

Participants reiterated how useful the annual meeting has been to them. Alicia ReCruz, director of Women's and Gender Studies at University of North Texas said it best. "I want to express my deep, deep gratitude for sharing your wisdom and experience...I brought back a metaphorical backpack filled with creative ideas.
metaphorical backpack filled with creative ideas, strategies, discourses and expectations. I am excited for the conversations and exchanges until our next meeting in 2019.”

By Saturday’s end, we already had the beginnings of an agenda for next year. And, we’re looking forward to our continued collaboration throughout the coming year!

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**Program Spotlight:**

**University of Texas El Paso**

**Women's and Gender Studies**

By: Dr. Guillermina Gina Núñez-Mchiri
From left to right: President Diana Natalicio, Guillermina Nuñez-Mchiri, Areli Chacón, Cynthia Marentes and Liz Chavez (Photo: Rene Delgado, "Paso del Norte region leadership initiative for women awarded by UTEP," The Prospector, March 20, 2018)

This 2018 year has brought wonderful surprises to the Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) Program at The University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. Gina Nunez-Mchiri (Director of WGS), Dr. Areli Chacon-Silva (Director of Leadership Studies), and Cynthia Marentes (College of Liberal Arts) in partnership with Wise Latina International, a non-profit organization that empowers women through arts and entertainment, received the Presidential Meritorial Service Award for its Leadership, Education, Advocacy, and Development (L.E.A.D.) initiative to empower women in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez border region. Dr. Nunez-Mchiri is a leading scholar on service learning and community engagement. She has recently co-edited a book with Azuri Gonzalez, Director of the Center for Civic Engagement, on Community Engagement as a High Impact Practice in Higher Education (Kendall Hunt 2018), with twenty-one chapters highlighting community-university partnerships in the El Paso border region.

The University of Texas at El Paso is partnering with El Paso Community College to host the 2018 Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS) Summer Institute with the theme of Convivencia y Resistencia: Fronterizas for Social Justice from August 1st to 4th in El Paso, Texas. The Institute will provide pre-conference workshops on writing, healing, and nutrition, in addition to three days of panels, round table discussions, and plenary panels. Colleagues and students can join the MALCS Summer Institute by registering at malcs.org beginning May 7th, 2018.

Innovative Curriculum and Study Abroad Experiences at UTEP WGS

As part of its summer programming, WGS is offering two study abroad opportunities in Morocco focusing on comparative women’s health and food, culture, and society in Spain. WGS at UTEP has a high demand for face to face and online courses as part of its BA and minor in WGS. The WGS faculty focus on women’s health, gender and technology, feminist praxis, gender–based violence, leadership and community development on the U.S.–Mexico Border and Global Feminisms and offers courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

For more on UTEP WGS: Click Here!
Third Annual Feminist Border Arts Film Festival Premieres

By: Dr. Laura Ahn Williams

Gender & Sexuality Studies at New Mexico State University (NMSU) held the third annual Feminist Border Arts Film Festival on Monday, April 16 at the CMI Digital Media Theatre. Festival director, Dr. M. Catherine Jonet, associate professor of Gender & Sexuality studies, created the event to highlight independent short films that deal with contemporary social issues and to showcase narratives by and about underrepresented communities. “Inclusive filmmaking is often assumed not to also be visionary filmmaking. People might not think that a film with a message can also be full of beauty, artistic technique, or creative innovation,” said Jonet. “These films do all of these.”

“This year’s festival focuses on a variety of themes. These include films that reflect today’s urgent social crises like refugee and migration stories, trans experiences, and different ruminations on borders and walls,” said Dr. Laura Anh Williams, director of Gender & Sexuality Studies. “We have films that are documentary, animation, live-action and although the majority of submissions are from the United States, we received films from 103 countries this year.”

In order to be as inclusive as possible, the festival expanded this year to accommodate the high volume of accepted submissions. In addition to the live screening event, a collection of submissions were exhibited as “Border Zones, Liminal Bodies,” a one-day video art exhibition at the NMSU Art Gallery. Additionally, a collection of films will be featured on the Gender & Sexuality Studies website. The online film showcase will be up for a month at genders.nmsu.edu/film–festival. Other selected films have been organized into shorter collections that will be screened by students enrolled in Gender & Sexuality Studies courses.

The Feminist Border Arts Film Festival is organized by Gender & Sexuality Studies in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in collaboration with NMSU’s Creative Media Institute in the College of Arts and Sciences.
Festival attendees enjoy a screening in progress.

**Student Spotlight:**

New Mexico State University senior, Diana Lopez was selected as the 2018 College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s Award for Undergraduate Excellence for her extraordinary academic successes traversing interdisciplinary studies with three BA’s—Spanish, Gender & Sexuality Studies, and Psychology. Congratulations Diana!

**SIROW to Celebrate 40th Anniversary in April 2019!**

SIROW will be celebrating a major milestone next
Spring: 40 years of innovative research and action projects!
To commemorate, we are planning an anniversary celebration event next April. All our affiliates, partners, and fans are welcome! More information to come this Fall.

Spring 2018, University of Arizona Southwest Institute for Research on Women
https://sirow.arizona.edu/
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