



Newsletter

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Boston University
Women's Studies Program

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Shahla Haeri, Director



The Women's Studies Program left another exciting year behind buoyed by the presence of Dean Virginia Sapiro as the first woman dean of the College of Art and Sciences. The WSP is poised to start the new academic year with Professor Deborah Belle as its Interim Director while I am away on sabbatical. I plan to spend my time in Iran and conduct research on Iranian women's political mobilization.

Reflecting on the WSP institutional mission and activities, I am delighted to say that we have realized the Program's broader goal of making it a dynamic educational center for BU students. The WSP faculty encourages, supports, and teaches the skills that young women - and men - need to become productive and active members of their communities. We believe knowledge is best gained if education integrates learning with actual life experiences. Toward that objective, the Program organizes extra curricular activities to involve Boston University students with the larger community. Academically, I published one journal article, "Resiliency & Posttraumatic Recovery in Cultural and Political Contexts: Pakistani Women's Strategies for Survival," and have three articles forthcoming: "Sacred Canopy: Love & Sex under the Veil," "Women, Religion, and the State in Iran: Edging toward Democracy?" and "Fascination with 'Difference': Democratizing Anthropology, Conducting Fieldwork among Equals."

The popular excitement surrounding Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign seems to have created a greater demand for my video documentary, "Mrs. President: Women and Political Leadership in Iran." I was pleased to screen it in several institutions, the last being in June at St. Andrews University, Scotland.

Deborah Belle, Interim Director

Deborah Belle, Professor of Psychology at Boston University is Director of the Human Development Program and a member of Boston University's Council on Faculty Diversity and Inclusion. She will act as the Women's Studies Interim Director in 2008-2009. Deborah Belle earned her doctorate in Human Development at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 1976. Her research has focused on poverty and economic inequality, stress and depression, social networks and social supports, work/family issues, and women's mental health. Her books include *Lives in stress: Women and depression*, *Children's social networks and social supports*, and *The after-school lives of children*. She has been a William T. Grant Foundation Faculty Scholar in the Mental Health of Children, Evelyn Green Davis Fellow in Psychology at the Bunting Institute, and Fellow at the Radcliffe Public Policy Center. She is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association's Division on the Psychology of Women and of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Professor Belle is principal investigator of a National Science Foundation grant designed to advance women faculty in the sciences and engineering.



Diane Balser, Co-Director

Professor Diane Balser has been teaching in the Women's Studies program since 1996. She teaches Global Feminism and Women In Politics. Professor Balser has placed several WS student interns in the Massachusetts State House or Congress, as well as, on some women's organizations outside of the United States. This year, Professor Balser conducted workshops regarding the Presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton. On March 12, she spoke at the Boston Public Library, Copley Square on 'Women and Politics' for Boston Cares.



April 10, Professor Balsler moderated a panel 'The Growing Role Of Women In Politics an Interactive Panel,' (see page 5). And on April 26th, Balsler was the Keynote Presenter and Panelist for the NOW Regional Conference (Harvard University) on 'Women and Politics; Presidential Election.' Professor Balsler continues to conduct workshops nationally and internationally on topics such as women and leadership, women's empowerment, and other women's issues.

Barbara Gottfried, Co-Director

Professor Gottfried has been teaching in the Women's Studies Program since 1994. This past Fall she taught a seminar on Asian Women's Literature, Autobiographies, and Film, which interwove fiction by women, women's autobiographical narratives, and films directed by women (or featuring female protagonists). Professor Gottfried and her students celebrated the end of the course with a banquet at a Vietnamese restaurant in Allston, (see page 7). In the spring Professor Gottfried gave a paper at a conference at BU sponsored by the associate provost for undergraduate education on "Constructing the New Humanist in Undergraduate Education." In her paper, Professor Gottfried argued for making "global multicultural literacy a structuring principle of a humanistic undergraduate education."



Professor Gottfried is currently Boston University's representative on the Board of Directors of the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, (see page 8) and the faculty advisor to BU's Women's Center, which will open Fall 2008, (see page 7).

Brenda Gael McSweeney

Brenda Gael McSweeney, Professor of Gender and International Development, had another exciting year at BU. Professor McSweeney is currently finalizing a volume of essays titled Another Side of India, with works by professors and social activists concerned with India and South Asia. In



April 2008, UNESCO published Professor McSweeney's feature article titled Burkina's Women Forge Progress, based on her recent fieldwork in Burkina Faso, West Africa (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.phpURL_ID=42419&URLDO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html). This material is available to her students for their case studies. That same month, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invited Brenda to teach Gender Main-streaming, a mandatory course of the UNDP's Virtual Development Academy with participants from every corner of the globe. She also serves on the UNDP's Advisory Board for the Regional Programme for Africa.

Roberta Micallef

Assistant Professor of Turkish, Modern Language and Comparative Literature, Roberta Micallef had a busy and eventful academic year. In addition to teaching she was involved with a human rights project which culminated in an article about female political prisoners in Turkey. Professor Micallef reviewed a number of books for academic journals and contributed a couple of pieces to the Oxford Encyclopedia of Islamic Studies online. Professor Micallef continues to work on two publications, one an edited anthology on Muslim travelers, and the other a monograph on the reemergence of 19th century intellectuals in contemporary Turkic political discourse.



Carrie Preston

Assistant Professor of English, Carrie Preston, has been teaching an annual WS course since 2006. She recently completed a book Manuscript titled "Solo Performance: A New Genealogy of Modernism" that is currently under review. Preston organized her Feminist Theories and Movements class around the question of whether or not feminist and gender theory promote activism and have relevance to our lives. To that end, Preston and her students organized a



a series of events, they called Genderfest, (see page 6). Professor Preston plans to make Genderfest an annual event.

Deborah Swedberg

Deborah Swedberg has been teaching at Boston University since 1975. She began teaching WS Courses in 1984. She is also the managing editor of the scholarly literary journal *Studies in Romanticism*. On March 26, she joined WS faculty Carrie Preston for a Genderfest presentation. 'The History and Future of Women and Gender Studies at Boston University' discussed the legacy of the Women's Studies movement at BU, as well as the future of a women and gender studies program. Two students joined the panel discussion.



Michelle Robinson

Candidate for PhD, Michelle Robinson, in the American and New England Studies Program had a very interesting time teaching WS114 in the fall and spring, especially the forays into detective fiction, stand-up comedy, children's literature, and science fiction. She presented two papers: one titled "White Housewives in Blackface: Turning out the Feminine Mystique in Funny Face," at the Tufts English Graduate Organization Conference in October 2007, and another, "Diagnostic Criminal Biography and 'The Problem that Has No Name,'" on Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* at the New England American Studies Association Conference at Brown University in November 2007. Robinson's interview with the author Paul Auster and a few of her poems will be published in the anthology 12X12, forthcoming from the University of Iowa Press.



Jamie Ann Sabino

Jamie Ann Sabino has been teaching Women, Law and Society at Boston University since 1988. Ms. Sabino, a lawyer, is an active member of the *pro bono* committee. She is also the co-author of "A Minor's Right to Abortion: The Unconstitutionality of Parental

Participation in Bypass Hearings," *New England Law Review*, 25:4, April/May 1991; and "Tell it to the Judge: PPLM v. Harshbarger," *Women's Bar Association Law Journal*.

Visiting Scholars

Elke D'hoker,

Associate Professor at the University of Leuven Belgium, Dr. Elke D'hoker, was a visiting scholar at the Women's Studies Program for the spring semester 2008. She worked on her book about the modern Irish short story by women writers. She was also eager to learn more about the courses, activities and organization of the Women's Studies Program, since she will be engaged in setting up a new center for women's and gender studies in her home university. Dr. D'hoker's research stay was made possible by a scholarship from the Flemish Fund for Scientific Research.



Quratulain Bakhteari

Dr. Quratulain Bakhteari, is the Founding Director and President of the Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP), in Pakistan. The title of her project was 'Women Creating Their Own Space: Experiences from Baluchistan Pakistan.' Dr. Bakhteari had to cancel her appointment due to unforeseen circumstances.



Faculty Grants and Awards

- ❖ Barbara Gottfried was awarded a Humanities Foundation Grant for the academic year 2008-2009 to bring to campus a woman film director and a scholar of film both of whom will address the representation of violent women in film and on television.

- ❖ Shahla Haeri & Brenda McSweeney were jointly awarded the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair, <http://unitwin.blogspot.com/>, (see page 7).
- ❖ Shahla Haeri was awarded a Jeffery Henderson Senior Research Fellowship in the Humanities 2008-2009.
- ❖ Brenda McSweeney received:
 - * a Doctor of Humane Letters *honoris causa*, and gave the Commencement address at Lackawanna College in Pennsylvania, May 2007.
 - * a Verdienstkreuz 1. Klasse des Verdienstordens der Bundesrepublik Deturrschland award, granted by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany for "outstanding services rendered to our country [Germany] and to the international community."



Persian Girls: A Memoir

On November 14, Nahid Rachlin discussed *Persian Girls* based on her childhood and coming of age in Iran.

Imageries and Imaginaries: Photographing the Transgender Self



On Mar 23, Jyoti Puri, Director, Graduate Program in Gender/Cultural Studies Chair, Department of Sociology Simmons College and Board of Directors Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (see page 8) presented photographs taken by and of Kinnars (Hijras/Transgenders).

Women's Studies Events

Peace, War, & Poetry...

On September 24, Alicia Ostriker, Professor Emerita at Rutgers University, (right) and Carrie Preston, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies and English, shared an evening of poetry, photography, and music by women in response to war. Dr. Wafaa Muhammed, Radcliffe Fellow in Residence, Harvard University, recited poems by Iraqi poet, Bushra Al-Bustani.



Small Justice: Little Justice in America's Family Courts

Garland Waller, BU Assistant Professor of Communication, Department of Film and Television, discussed her Documentary, October 29. Her film won the 'Best Social Documentary' at the New York Film and Video Festival.



From Seneca Falls to Badasht: Reading and Misreading Iranian Women

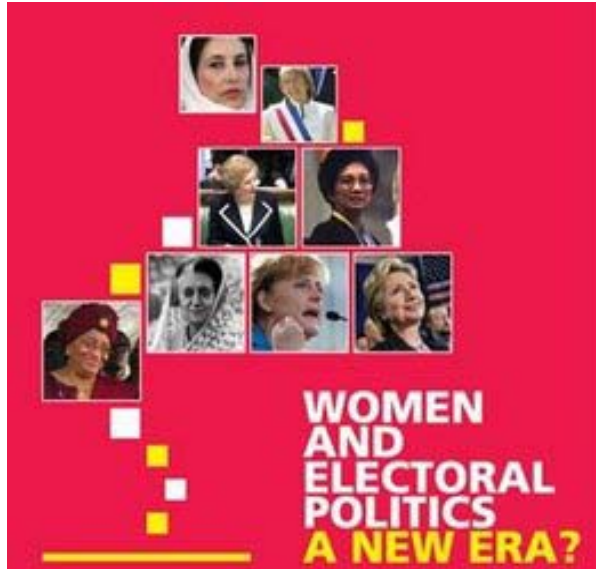
Farzaneh Milani, Carnegie Scholar & Professor of Comparative Literature & former Director of Gender and Women's Studies at University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Reading the Past to Write the Future: Iranian Facts and Fictions

Bahiyyih Nakhjavani, international best selling author of *The Saddlebag* and honorary doctorate, University of Lieges, Belgium. On April 10, Milani and Nakhjavani shared insights about the understanding and misunderstanding of Iranian women.



*Women and Electoral Politics:
A New Era?*



On March 18, the Women's Studies Program organized "Women and Electoral Politics: A New Era?" welcoming the appointment of Virginia Sapiro as the first Woman Dean of BU's College of Arts and Sciences. Dean Virginia Sapiro, was one of two distinguished speakers. Professor Pippa Norris, the McGuire Lecture in Comparative Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University was the other presenter. Professor Douglas Kriner, Department of Political Science at BU, moderated the event.



Dean Virginia Sapiro



Professor Pippa Norris

The Women's Studies Program acknowledges gratefully the funding for this event by the Humanities Foundation at Boston University.

*Students respond to
'Women and Electoral Politics: A New Era?'*

Jeanette Merrill CASPS 2010 - "I particularly enjoyed Dean Virginia Sapiro's insights concerning the significance of Hillary Clinton's unprecedented campaign. Dean Sapiro offered three interpretations of Hillary's success in relation to the women's liberation sociopolitical and cultural change, a sign of our changing social consciousness, or a harbinger for future gendered progress."

Liz Mashie CASPO 2008 - "Women in both American politics and developing societies have difficulty breaking into new sectors...Some excellent points about breaking down barriers and expanding opportunities were made at the panel."

Jessie Karlin COM 2008 - "I enjoyed Professor Norris' presentation and conclusions, particularly the need to shift from an individualistic emphasis towards a structural discourse. I agree that perhaps some of the US's policies need adjustments to become a more inclusive type of politics....The very fact that BU can now host a Genderfest with such impressive guests speaks volumes about the change that is currently happening on our campus."

*Women's Studies
Collaborative Events*

The Growing Role of Women in Politics

WS Professor Diane Balsler collaborated with the Harriet E. Richards Cooperative House and BUUSINPAC on April 10. Panelist included: Joan Vennoch, Boston Globe Pulitzer prize winning journalist, Ann Murphy, President, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, Vice President, O'Neill and Associates, and Cynthia Stead, Executive Director, Common Cause Massachusetts. The focus was on how the upcoming elections would impact Women's Politics, both locally and nationally, and how younger voters can make a difference in 2008.



- **Genderfest** was a two-week festival that looked at women's roles and representation in politics, religion, and the media. It also examined issues of race, safety, and sexuality. It was a series of programs organized by Professor Carrie Preston's Feminist Theories and Movements Class and co-sponsored by Boston University's Women's Studies Program, Our Bodies Ourselves, and Every Person Counts.
- **Genderfest, the Play: An original adaptation of the suffrage play, Votes for Women, 1907.**
- **Media Diet: Tipping the Scales Towards the Acceptance of Real Beauty:** Judy Norsigian co-author of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and Nancy Redd author of *Body Drama* took on the beauty industry in a hard-hitting lecture and presentation.
- **Speak Up: Stop the Violence against Women of Color: An Information Expo/Rally/Open Mike.** Hosted by BU's Minority Associate for Social Change.
- **Sex(ism), Identity and Intimacy in a Pornographic Culture** a multimedia presentation by Gail Dines, Sociology and WS Professor, Wheelock College

Epicene: 'Epicene' was a magazine or 'zine' that was created and published by Professor Preston's students. The 'zine' included a calendar of events, poetry, journal entries, personal essays, short stories, and artwork by students.



Violence Against Women and Women's Rights in Kazakhstan



On November 26, Larissa Novikova, President of the Women's Rights Informative in Kazakhstan, shared insight on the 'Violence Against Women and Women's Rights.' In collaboration with the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program

Women's Lamentations and the Ethics of War in Ancient Greece and Medieval Persia

Talk given by Dr. Olga Davidson on February 4. In collaboration with the Department of Classical Studies, and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations.



Poetics of Nationalism: Arab American Women's Poetry of the War (1967 to the Present)

On April 22, Poet and Translator, Dr. Wafaa Muhammed, Radcliffe Fellow in Residence, shared moving poetry and pictures. In collaboration with the Department of English, Modern Languages and Comparative Literature and the University Professors Program.

The tanks of the invasion rove.

As high as palm trees
are sorrows of lofty trees.



Blossoming are pollens of grief ...

The feverish land sinks in tears.

"Andalusian Songs for the Wounds of Iraq" -Bushra Al-Bustani
Translated by Wafaa Muhammed & Sanna Dhahir

Our Innocence, Foreign Perversions, Gender and Sexuality in Nationalist Discourse

was presented on April 24, by
Aganieszka Graff, Polish
Writer, Translator, and Human
Rights Activist in
collaboration with the
Institute for Human Sciences.



News from Women's Studies Students & Faculty

Dina Navar: Women's Studies Minor

As a minor in the WS program, I got to know a diverse network of talented individuals who have instilled in me a curiosity to learn more about the challenges that women face worldwide on a daily basis. In my four years at BU, I took a variety of courses through the women's studies program and was able to gain a deeper understanding of the position of women from a domestic and global perspective. Nivar (far left) with WS students and Professor McSweeney (center) are captured in this presentation photo of 'Changes. A Love Story.'



Alexandra Alderfer, WS Minor '09, was awarded the Herbert and Mary Greig Scholarship for the 2008-2009 academic year. The scholarship is in part to encourage civic responsibility. Alexandra is currently the co-coordinator of Events at BU's new Women's Center (below)

and was the 2007-08 President of 'Everyone Person Counts.'

End of the Year WS305 Class Banquet



Professor Barbara Gottfried
(1st row, 2nd from right)

Women's Resource Center



The members of the Women's Center Coalition, Mackie Welch and Carrie Chiusano, Co-Directors, are happy to announce the opening of the Boston University Women's Resource Center. It is slated to open in the fall semester of 2008. The primary mission of the Boston University Women's Resource Center is to increase awareness of women and gender related issues and inspire student action around such matters. The Center will be run entirely by students; with two full-time Behavioral Medicine staff members. In addition to counseling, the Center will provide a variety of resources on women and gender related issues such as sexual health, eating disorders, emotional well-being and sexual assault.

The Center is a non-discriminatory setting for all students, both undergraduate and graduate, regardless of gender, who are interested in the advancement and well being of women at BU. It is located in the George Sherman Union. For further information, email sophibop@bu.edu.

Annual Faculty Awards Recognition Luncheon



**Dr Brenda McSweeney,
Provost David K. Campbell &
Shahla Haeri, Program Director**

Photo Credit: Steve Marois

Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies – GCWS

Founded in 1990, the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies consists of eight Boston area universities. BU joined the GCWS in 2006. The GCWS was developed by women scholars who wanted to create an institution that would encourage continued feminist scholarship and train the 'next generation' of feminist scholars. Courses are team taught and '...designed to open paths to the creation of new knowledge...' the GCWS '...provides intellectual support for students pursuing feminist work with the framework of traditional disciplines,' 2008-2009 Courses [GCWS](http://web.mit.edu/gcws), MIT: Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies. Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, MIT. Its interdisciplinary focus synthesizes developments in gender studies currently confined to traditional disciplines, emphasizing systematic attention to the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and gender as categories of analysis and as coordinates for policy and practice. GCWS website: <http://web.mit.edu/gcws>

UNITWIN/UNESCO

Launched in 1991, the UNITWIN (University twinning) is a UNESCO sponsored international partnership intended to strengthen higher education

in the developing countries through appropriate mechanisms for enhancing inter-university cooperation. BU Women's Studies was awarded a UNESCO Chair/UNITWIN Network in 2007 to continue its project on "Gender, Culture and People-Centered Development." The Women's Studies partners include: Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab; Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan, West Bengal. The main objective of this UNITWIN Network is to boost the interface between academia and development initiatives with participating Non-Governmental Organizations by sharing our work and research.

UNESCO/UNITWIN website:

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=22017&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.htm=201.html

Carla Pack-Bailey, Program Coordinator

Carla (Carly) joined the WSP in the Fall of 2007. She received her BA in Women's Studies from UMASS. Carly was the Student Director of the Women's Studies Mentoring Program at UMASS. She finds it very exciting to be working in the Boston Women's Studies network again. She looks forward to doing more interesting work and continuing her studies at BU.



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