

WGS By the Numbers

- Number of graduates with WGS majors since 2000:

12

- Number of graduates with WGS minors since 2000:

18

- Number of WGS Faculty, Associate, and Affiliate members:

82

- Number of Departments represented in WGS:

28

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Women's & Gender Studies News

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2006

15 years of WGS: Honoring Our Past, Present, and Future

In 1954 a women's curriculum was established at LSU to prepare women for their "ultimate destination." Classes were developed in the areas of homemaking, parenthood, and citizenship. Women who planned to work outside the home took courses in office and library work, applied music, and recreational work. Forty years later, the Women's and Gender Studies has revolutionized the



Michelle Massé and Emily Toth in a photo from the Dec. 1988 edition of *Louisiana Woman*.

term "women's curriculum" at LSU.

In 1988, *Louisiana Woman* did a story on the WGS program entitled, "Women's Studies—An Awakening Giant at LSU?" The article highlighted the development of courses on the study of women, as well as the Women's Studies Alcove and Browsing Room in Allen, which the article describes as, "only slightly larger than a closet."

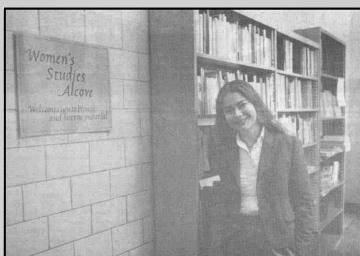
Three years later, the Women's and Gender Studies Program was officially founded, and WGS moved out of the "closet" into its current location at 238 Himes Hall.

In 1991, Women's and Gender

Studies at LSU joined the then more than 600 already established WGS programs in colleges and universities across the nation. At the time, WGS was represented by approximately 50 faculty members representing 15 academic departments. It was the first year WGS offered a minor degree to LSU students.

The development of the program was further helped by two summer institutes funded by Louisiana Educational Quality Support Grants. In summer 1992, 16 faculty members from four different college and 6 graduate students participated in a summer institute focused on faculty and curriculum development. At that time, future goals were established, including the development and approval of a Women's Center on campus.

This summer institute also fea-



Homes of WGS (Then Above, 1991, and Now, 2006)



First WGS Executive Committee, 1991. From Left: Robin Roberts, Emily Toth, Michelle Massé, Kate Jensen, Ann Simon, and Idee Winfield.

tured noted feminist scholars in the field of WGS who consulted the burgeoning program and advised on the needs and future directions of the program. One such reporter, Hilda Smith of the University of Cincinnati, wrote that, "While at your institution, I was impressed with the amount of time and commitment devoted by a number of faculty to women's and gender studies even before such a program exists."

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**A women's studies
program is not just
a series of courses.
It's a vision and
reality that women
have the same
status as men.**

—Emily Toth
Louisiana Woman
Dec. 1988

Congratulations!

Marybeth Lima, winner of the 2006 Tiger Athletic Foundation President's Award

Carolyn Ware, winner of the 2006 Alumni Association Faculty Excellence Award

Becky Ropers-Huilman, winner of the 2006 Distinguished Faculty Award

Timeline of WGS History:

1991—Women's and Gender Studies achieves status of Program, and establishes WGS minor degree

1992—First WGS Summer Institute

1993—WGS 2500 & 4500 first taught

1995—Second WGS Summer Institute

1999–2001—WGS works on applying for B.A. in WGS

2002—B.A. program in WGS officially begins

2003—First WGS majors graduate

2004—WGS granted first half-line faculty position

2004—WGS receives grant to research Old South Baton Rouge

2005—WGS Constitution and Mission Statement amended to reflect changing WGS Program

LSU Finalist for NWSAJ Site

In March of 2006, representatives of the National Women's Studies Association Journal (NWSAJ) will visit the Women's and Gender Studies Program to consider LSU as a possible future site for the journal. If selected, WGS at LSU will utilize the breadth and depth of its faculty to continue developing a

high-quality, international journal that reflects the interdisciplinary scholarship in our field. This on-site visit marks the culmination of months of work towards applying to host the journal on the part of WGS Director Becky Ropers-Huilman in collaboration with WGS Faculty Members Katrina



Powell, Nina Asher, Kate Bratton, Margaret Parker, Angeletta Gouridine, Helen Regis, and Marybeth Lima as well as our prospective Managing Editor, Brenda Macon.

15 years of WGS, cont.

In 1993, WGS 2500 and 4500 were taught for the first time. The program continued to grow and attract LSU faculty members, leading to the first faculty retreat in 1994.

The following year, the WGS faculty elected to develop a major in WGS, a project that consumed much of the Program's



First Faculty Retreat, 1994

time and energy for the next six years.

In 1998, a proposal for a new B.A. in WGS was presented to the Board of Regents. Authored by Margaret Parker and others, this proposal described the significance of WGS: "As an interdisciplinary unit that draws upon faculty expertise across departments and colleges, WGS is a vivid example of the reconfiguration of knowledge—and departmental structures—nationally."

After this approval, WGS continued to work towards the goal of establishing a Bachelor's Degree in Women's and Gender

Studies. In 2001, WGS hosted a panel of external reviewers to assess and critique the program's needs and potential. In the reviewers' report, credit was given to an already thriving program: "This is the time to give recognition to an already operational program of study with broad participation."

Months later, in 2002, the B.A. in Women's and Gender Studies was officially instated. This was done under the condition that LSU would submit a progress report describing the efforts of the university to adequately address the resource needs of the program for two years. The next



First WGS Graduate Student Conference, 1997

year, WGS graduated its first two students with major degrees.

During this time, the WGS Program worked tirelessly to promote and advocate the needs of women on campus. WGS was instrumental in the establishment of the Women's Center, the Women in the Arts Program, and the LSU Child Care Center.



2003: Kayla Bourg and Marla Erwin become first WGS majors to graduate from LSU.

Without the Women's and Gender Studies Program, and the tireless efforts of the women and men who worked so hard to establish it, the climate and topography of LSU would be a much different place. The first fifteen years of the



WGS Faculty and others demonstrate for child care facilities at LSU, 1996.

program have seen dynamic changes and advancement in the work of the WGS program. With the continued support and commitment of LSU's faculty, students, and staff, the next fifteen should be equally as vibrant and exciting.



Fall Fest 2005

Remembering Ann Simon

By Michelle Massé



Ann Simon at her graduation party, 1997

In celebrating our first fifteen years of existence, let us also remember someone who was key to WGS's development: Ann Simon.

When WGS first began, undergraduate student workers and Ann, a graduate research assistant chosen as Coordinator, were the sole staff support for our new and busy unit. Ann was at the center of everything, whether stuffing envelopes or debating philosophy. Many of our courses and initiatives were shaped by her ideas as

a member of the Coordinating Council and at the first WGS Summer Institute.

Ann completed her MFA at LSU in 1993 with a poetry chapbook, "My Life as a Mouth Breather." When she died in 2003, she was working on a dissertation, directed by Judith Butler, about changing feminist interpretations of modernist novels by women, and had twice received Berkeley's Eisner prize for creative achievement in literature.

Ann gave WGS a great deal. That legacy continues, as does the one passed down through the Ann Veronica Simon Outstanding Feminist Dissertation Award. Established by her family and friends, the award recognizes students who show some of Ann's own critical acumen, creativity, and intelligence. In order to keep Ann's memory alive through future years, please give generously when you get a letter asking for contributions or contact Michelle Massé to donate now.

Contributions can be sent to:
Ann Simon Award/WGS
LSU Foundation
3838 West Lakeshore Dr.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Welcome, New Faculty Members!

This academic year, four new faculty members have joined WGS. We wish to welcome these newest members of the WGS family.

Solimar Otero is an Assistant Professor in English. She specializes in folklore of the Latino Caribbean and the Afro-Atlantic world.

Carol Plummer is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work. She has worked extensively on the topic of sexual abuse prevention.

Susan Gardner is an Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership, Research, & Counseling. Her research is focused on issues of social justice, graduate education, and student affairs in higher education.

Nichole Guillory is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Curriculum & Instruction. She has recently written on Hip Hop Pedagogies of Black Women Rappers, and is currently teaching "Hip Hop Feminism."

Interview with Margaret Parker

Margaret Parker has been a member of the WGS faculty since its inception 15 years ago, and served as the director of the program from 1995 until 1998. Dr. Parker teaches in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, specializing in the study of women in Hispanic literature.

How long have you been involved with the WGS program at LSU?

In the 1970s I was active in the Baton Rouge NOW chapter and in lobbying at the state legislature on issues that affect women. When Michelle [Massé] formed a committee to establish an organization of faculty

members interested in Women's Studies in 1991 I joined that group. I am a charter member of the unit that became Women's and Gender Studies.

What do you see as the greatest achievement WGS has made in the last fifteen years?

The development of the unit as the premier interdisciplinary program at LSU, based upon the large number of faculty members from different disciplines involved, growth in the number of students, two successful grant proposals, and strong commitment and participation by the faculty.

What do you hope will be a fu-

ture achievement for WGS?

More faculty lines, more majors, and more office space.

Any thoughts you'd like to share with WGS undergraduate students?

Students benefit enormously from the interdisciplinary methodology and pedagogy of WGS courses and develop critical thinking skills and awareness of diversity.



The atmosphere was charged with positive energy.

—Margaret Parker on WGS Summer



Women's & Gender Studies at Louisiana State University

238 Himes Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

Phone: 225-578-4807
Fax: 225-578-4804
E-mail: wgs@lsu.edu

WWW.LSU.EDU/WGS

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2—NWSAJ Site Visit Reception,
Vieux Carré Room, LSU Union, 3:30-5:00

March 2—WGS Film Series Presents "Mi
Vida Loca," 5:00 at the Women's Center

March 8—International Women's Day

March 23—WGS Film Series Presents
"Hasta Cierta Punto (Up to a Certain
Point)," 5:00 at the Women's Center

March 24—WGS Student Conference,
LSU Union

March 30—WGS Film Series Presents
"Tough Guise," 5:00 at the Women's Cen-
ter

April 6—WGS Film Series Presents "Bride
and Prejudice," 5:00 at the Women's Cen-
ter



Don't Forget! NWSAJ RECEPTION

March 2
Vieux Carre Room, LSU Union
3:30-5:00

Refreshments Provided

WGS Student Conference

March 24

LSU Union
All Day

Please join us for the 10th annual
WGS Student Conference! On
the tenth anniversary of this con-
ference, we will be joined by par-
ticipants from colleges all over
Louisiana. Make a date to attend
some panels and celebrate
Women's and Gender Studies
from around the state!

WGS Film Series

March 2—*Mi Vida Loca* presented
by Sue Weinstein

March 23—*Hasta Certo Punto* pre-
sented by Solimar Otero

March 30—*Tough Guise* presented
by Susan Gardner

April 6—*Bride and Prejudice* pre-
sented by Pallavi Rastogi and
Carolyn Ware

****Films shown 5:00-7:00 p.m. at
Women's Center. All are welcome!**