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## Gender and Women's Studies Newsletter for Spring 2009

URI Gender and Women's Studies Department

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# THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND WOMEN'S STUDIES

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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

## Director wants more dialogue across color lines

**T**his semester brings many reasons to celebrate the empowerment of women and their voices, including URI's joining women around the world on International Women's Day to screen a new Zambian documentary made by Zambian women telling their stories.

Closer to home, on her office wall, Professor Donna Hughes has a placard quoting Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

We are fortunate at URI to have many such thoughtful committed citizens, Hughes among them. In December 2008, Hughes was invited by the White House to attend the presidential signing of the Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Act she helped craft.

Such committed citizens also make up the URI Equity Council, of which I am a member. The Council works in exemplary and inspiring ways to address race, gender, and class issues that are also at the core of Women's Studies.

In the last month, the Council worked together to submit to the press two important editorials. One editorial condemned the *NY Post* cartoon that depicted the shooting of a chimpanzee and alluded to the "next stimulus plan" — a clear racist attack on President Barack Obama. The Council called the cartoon an "abhorrent" "affront to the dignity of people of color... undermin[ing] the values of racial justice, equity and respect for humanity."

Another editorial by the Equity Council voiced concern about the state's current fiscal crisis, specifically the threat of losing URI as a public Rhode Island institution

should URI's need to gain more out-of-state students (read higher tuitions) reduce local resident access.

The Council also encouraged a spokesperson to address the legislature about the need to endorse a bill that would allow undocumented immigrant high school students who complete high school in Rhode Island, or do a GED, to be charged in-state tuition to attend URI.

The Council's commitment to racial and class equity and respect is in itself inspiring to see and be part of. Equally inspiring is the diversity at the Council's meeting table. Such honest, open, and lively dialogue across color lines is a model I hope WMS and URI can continue to strive for.

Jody Lisberger



Photo credit Danielle Oliva



Photo Courtesy of Donna Hughes

Congratulations to Professor Donna Hughes (in white turtleneck and glasses), who was invited to witness former President George W. Bush sign the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act in December. Read more about her historic achievement on page three.

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## Dr. Jody Heymann:

Jody Heymann holds a Canada Research Chair in Global Health and Social Policy. She is Founding Director of the Institute for Health and Social Policy at McGill University and the Project on Global Working Families at Harvard University.

She has served in an advisory capacity for the U.S. Senate, the World Health Organization, and written for UNESCO and the International Labor Organization, among other global bodies. Dr. Heymann has more than a hundred publications, including, among others, *Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2006), *Healthier Societies: From Analysis to Action* (Oxford University Press, 2006), *Unfinished Work* (New Press, 2005), and *The Widening Gap* (Basic Books, 2001).

A professor in the Faculties of Medicine and Arts at McGill University and an adjunct professor at Harvard University, Heymann's has had work featured on CNN Headline News, Good Morning America, and National Public Radio, in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *USA Today* as well as other publications around the world.

Biography credited to <http://www.mcgill.ca/ihsp/team/>

## Dr. Nancy Fey-Yensan:

Dr. Nancy Fey-Yensan, PhD, RD, is the Associate Dean of the College of Human Science and Services and a professor of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. Before earning her doctoral degree in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Connecticut in 1995, Fey-Yensan worked in Connecticut as a chemosensory researcher at UConn Medical School, and then as a community nutritionist in urban Hartford, Conn.

It was in Hartford that she learned about and struggled with the magnitude of poverty and the profound effects poverty had on the health, well-being and quality of life of her clients – women, their families, and older adults.

Although now Associate Dean of the College of Human Science and Services, Fey-Yensan's

has not lost passion for her work as a community nutritionist.

She and her close colleagues in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences have worked over the last twelve years and continue to build a unique community nutrition outreach, education, and research program focused on resource constrained families and older adults.

Her research interests, related to the impact of poverty on diet quality, aging, minority health, and obesity have brought almost \$9 million in funding.

Dr. Fey-Yensan has a federal appointment as the National Research Panel Manager, United States Department of Agriculture/CSREES NRI Human Nutrition & Obesity Program, Washington, DC for 2007-2008.

Her recent publications include: "Issues and strategies related to fruit and vegetable intake in older adults living in the Northeast Region." *Topics in Clinical Nutrition*, volume 19:3, 2004.

## Dr. Vanessa Wynder Quainoo

Dr. Quainoo, Interim Director of the African and African American Studies Program, has taught at the University of Rhode Island for more than 20 years. Her major areas of scholarship include the rhetorical appreciation of women's faith narratives, including the sermons of women clergy; critical analysis of the works of Dr. Maya Angelou, and the shared narratives of African and African American women.

The oldest of three daughters of a deeply religious family, Dr. Quainoo grew up in Springfield, Ill, in the loving, supportive "village" of the African American Church.

She graduated from Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill, with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication and Christian Theology from Western Illinois University with a Masters in Communication Studies, and from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Mass. with a Ph.D. in Rhetoric.

In 2001, she completed advanced study for ministerial licensing and was ordained as a Minister. Dr. Quainoo is also a writer and readers theater performer. Her latest work is "Cry Elmina," which she performed in Elmina,

Ghana, at the Elmina Slave Castle during the observance of the 50th year of Independence for the nation of Ghana.

She has also presented "Cry Elmina" at the Eastern Communication Association Conference and for the Rhode Island Historical Association Series on the Slave Trade.

## Jane Lazarre:

Jane Lazarre is an award-winning writer of fiction, memoir, and personal essay. Her most recent books are *Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: A Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons*, and, *Wet Earth and Dreams: A Narrative of Grief and Recovery*, both published by Duke University Press. Duke has also reissued her first memoir, *The Mother Knot*.

She has read her work and spoken about writing, race, and American identities in many universities, conferences, and secondary schools. She is on the faculty of Eugene Lang College, New School University, where she directed the Creative Writing Program for many years and now teaches writing and literature.

## Jan Clausen:

Jan Clausen is a poet, novelist, liberal activist, book critic and reviewer. She has written eight books including the nonfiction *Beyond Gay or Straight: Understanding Sexual Orientation*, and the novels *Sinking*, *Stealing*, and *The Prosperine Papers*. Her short fiction, articles, poetry, and book reviews appear regularly in numerous magazines including *Kenyon Review*, *The Village Voice*, *Ms.*, *The Nation*, *Poets & Writers*, and the *Women's Review of Books*.

She is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fiction fellowship. Jan is the director of Eugene Lang College, a division of the New School University (formerly New School for Social Research) in Manhattan, where she teaches fiction and autobiographical writing. She is currently working on a book of poems, *In the Dazzlegarden* and a novel, *The Observable Moment When Things Turn Into Their Opposites*.



## Editors Note

As we approach the end of March, women around the world and especially women in the United States have seen a change with the new administration. Obama has lifted the gag rule to fund abortions in other countries and has signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act.

While these acts are important, they still remain secondary to his current economic policies. His bailout plans are going to affect women in many areas including healthcare, education, and jobs, and only time will tell if these effects will be negative or positive. Obama has delivered by signing the Fair Pay Act, but until there are more jobs available to women during these difficult economic times, the Fair Act will not be able to fulfill itself.

Our own URI students – as featured in this newsletter – are also working towards changes through volunteer work at various Rhode Island organizations. These women are working through activism to improve the lives of women one step at a time. Service learning is crucial within the Women's Studies program because, like one course title, it puts "Feminist Thought into Action!" – Kara Lafferty

On the first official day of Professor Donna Hughes' "Critical Issues and Feminist Scholarship" class, she said something I instantly scribbled in my notebook. "If feminism stands for everything," she said, "it will stand for nothing."

For those who consider themselves feminists, and those who do not, it is imperative that we all strive for the same goals. From the radicals to the egalitarians to the gays, straight and transgendered, men and women – uniting should be the ultimate goal of the third wave of feminism.

Aristotle's Golden Mean urges society to strive for happiness as an end goal, with the idea that morality and virtuous acts will come from it. If we apply this idea to feminism, the one goal that feminists stand for is Equality.

What does it matter how it is achieved as long as it gets done? It's time to put aside differences, and work together toward equal rights for women. Your concerns might be in the field of abortion, marriage equality, sex trafficking, or something else, but as long as divisions grow among those who ultimately want justice, we will lose the important goal for all of us: Equality. – Chloe Thompson



## Prof. Donna Hughes helps craft new anti-trafficking legislation

By Melanie Shapiro

In December, Professor Donna Hughes was one of eight people invited to witness former President Bush sign into law the “William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act,” which passed by unanimous consent through the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate on December 10, 2008.

The Wilberforce Act is the third revision of the Act, all of which Professor Hughes worked on drafting.

According to Professor Hughes, the Wilberforce Act helps reduce the burden of proof on victims to testify, places an emphasis on the actions of perpetrators, and works to combat the demand for commercial sex acts. This newer approach is much the result of Professor Hughes’ U.S. State Department sponsored research, “Best Practices to Address the

Demand of Sex Trafficking.”

Professor Hughes recently indicated three provisions she found highly valuable:

- 1. If a minor is trafficked, the prosecutor no longer has to prove the trafficker knew the victim was a minor.**
- 2. If a trafficker knew that a victim was addicted to drugs or alcohol, it is considered a form of coercion.**
- 3. The demand standard in the annual State Department Trafficking in Persons Report has been elevated to evaluate efforts of a country to reduce demand for commercial sexual exploitation as a means of reducing the demand for victims of sex trafficking.**

In speaking with her about her presence at the White House for the signing, Hughes said:

“ [It was] an incredible experience because in the early 1980s, when I was involved in the anti-rape movement, I was working with women’s groups around

rape, incest, and sexual exploitation. At that time few people believed the victims. It never occurred to them anyone else would believe them.

“[The recent vote] shows how far the women’s movement against sexual violence has come to be able to be in the Oval Office watching the President of the United States signing a law against sexual exploitation and slavery of women and girls.”

The Wilberforce Act is a step forward. Its passage is a great testament to the respect Professor Hughes receives for her work as a leading international sex trafficking expert, scholar, and activist in the modern abolitionist movement.

Hughes has a saying that hangs on the wall in her office that exemplifies her influence and makes her students hopeful of future progress:

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” – Margaret Mead.*

## Gail Faris leads URI effort to address housing and poverty

By Jody Lisberger

If you ask Gail Faris why she works so hard to implement the URI service-learning course that culminates in a week-long building project with Habitat for Humanity, she’ll tell you it’s because of “the light bulbs that go off in students’ minds when they see how all this learning and activism comes together.”

Since 2006, Faris has been the catalyst for URI students’ taking a semester-long academic class to study issues of poverty, homelessness, the working poor, leadership, and activism and then participating in a service project during the week of spring break.

Just after Hurricane Katrina, Faris and the staff of the URI Women’s Center felt compelled to organize students to become involved in a service-learning experience that would extend beyond the classroom.

In 2006, 19 students took the course and traveled to Albany, Georgia, to build houses with Habitat for Humanity. This spring, the course has grown to become

an Honors Colloquium for 25 students who will also be traveling to work with a Habitat affiliate in Birmingham, Alabama.

The program has received support from the President’s Office, the Center for Ethics and Public Service, Student Life/Student Affairs, the Alumni Office, University College, and even Ocean State Job Lot.

“Students themselves are the best ambassadors of the program,” Faris says. This year, the program’s being offered as the spring colloquium for honors students speaks to the contagious support students and faculty have generated from this commitment to service learning.

Faris says “sometimes students don’t see the end result of a project, but somehow they do get a clear sense that they have contributed to a bigger thing. They may finish a porch, or put the sashing around all the windows, or complete 10 air-conditioning table units, but they know this was necessary work for the completion of the project.”

Students also get to see the important historical sites in the areas where they work. This spring in Birmingham, they will use day trips to the Civil Rights

Institute, Kelly Ingram Park, and 16th Street Baptist Church to enhance the strong civil rights component of the course.

Many URI colleges and departments also have students working in service capacities, generally connected to the particular major. The Women’s Studies Program has as one of its major requirements the option to do an internship (WMS 300) or take a more structured action-oriented class, Feminist Thought Into Action (WMS 320).

Faris’ “classroom without borders” further adds to URI’s internship legacy. In 1975, the URI Internship Program was the first of its kind to offer full-time internships for academic credit, enabling students to link academic theory to real world practice. Today, students can choose from 600 opportunities in Rhode Island and beyond.

“This experiential learning time often gives students a chance to reevaluate, and sometimes even form, their values,” Faris says. The program “starts quietly from the first class and builds to the end of the semester, showing everyone through learning, discussion, and action how we can be our sister’s keeper.”

## Upcoming Women’s Studies Speakers

**April 9 - Fredrika Wild Schweers Memorial Lecture on Women and Health, Dr. Nancy Fey-Yensan, “Poverty and Nutritional Health: The Gender and Age Divide,” Galanti Lounge (3rd floor URI Library), 7 p.m.**

**April 16 - Eleanor M. Carlson Lecture, Dr. Jody Heymann, “Meeting the Needs of Working Families: Getting to the Core of Global Gender Inequalities,” Swan Hall 7 p.m.**

**April 21 - Dana Shugar Colloquium, Dr. Annemarie Vaccaro, “Using Critical Race and Feminist Perspectives to Explore the Intersections Between the Race, Gender, and Educational Engagement of Non-Traditional Age Undergraduate Women,” Lippitt 402. 4:30 p.m.**



## URI adopts "a model policy" for dual career couples

By Chloe Thompson

In February 2008, the University of Rhode Island adopted dual career guidelines that will help maintain a comfortable environment for working couples by trying to find placement for a partner when the other has obtained a job.

"The demographics of our faculty are changing such that dual earner couples are almost the norm rather than the exception now," Director of ADVANCE Barbara Silver said. "Finding placement for partners is a standard request."

Recently, URI was featured for providing a "model policy" in an appendix of a Stanford University publication about dual career academic couples.

"The issue of partnered professionals is having a growing impact on an institution's ability to recruit and retain faculty, especially women and people of color," Silver said.

She was quick to point out the differences between the practice of nepotism—showing favoritism—instead of basing employment on qualifications.

The new dual career policy at URI emphasizes qualifications.

A document answering questions about URI's policy states, "Nepotism rules are becoming less prevalent in higher education, largely because they have been implicated in discrimination against women. In the past, the wife of an academic hire was unfairly excluded from positions due to nepotism rules."

The document continues, saying dual career policies act as a catalyst for affirmative action, "If we are truly committed to this philosophy, then we must make every effort to promote diversity through the inclusion of family-friendly programs."

Because the dual career notes on ADVANCE's Web site are more like "guidelines" than actual legality, Silver said the university has not collected data on how many people choose to view the policy. She also acknowledged that the university's tough financial situation makes it more difficult to find jobs for someone's partner, but the policy "was passed before this crisis came upon the university."

Simply mentioning the policy, however, will not guarantee placement at URI, but it will make the administration

aware of a couple's situation. "[The policy] lends some visibility to the issue," Silver said. "It makes it a clear and expected part of the hiring process to mention the fact that you might have a partner that needs employment."

Silver said there are different types of dual career couples.

One example is when one partner is interviewed and he or she says in the interview that the partner might need a job. Another is when one partner is already at the university, and their partner is somewhere else, making for a difficult personal life if either one has to commute or live elsewhere.

"There was a couple here awhile ago," Silver said. "He was here, and she was several states away and they only saw each other on weekends. It just became unworkable."

Silver, whose ADVANCE team worked alongside the President's Commission on the Status of Women, said the university deans were receptive and supportive of the idea of dual career couples.

The bottom line, she said, is that if a couple "has a situation, they should feel comfortable speaking up about it."

## 'V' is for Vagina: Review

By Heather Wright

This was the first time I saw "The Vagina Monologues" performed at URI. It turned into the perfect date for my girlfriend and me (she is what I would call a "Vagina Monologues" enthusiast). She explained that the "Monologues" is not just a play but an experience. She was definitely correct about that.

The lobby of Edwards Hall, where the play was held, was exploding with vagina pride. There were T-shirts for sale at the "Cuntry Store," prize-drawings, and an agent for Athena's home novelties, goodies for the body.

"The Vagina Monologues," a play written by Eve Ensler, is a tribute to hundreds of women around the world based on interviews. The stories are about the women's greatest successes of womanhood in enjoying their sexual pleasures and recognizing intense vulnerabilities as abused wives and sexually violated prisoners of war.

This was the seventh annual performance of "The Vagina Monologues" at URI. I spoke with Anna Siradze, the director for this year's performance. She explained that the show was put on every year to raise money for the URI Peer

Advocates, a group that works to prevent campus violence. The show is part of a national effort to proclaim Valentine's Day as a day to end violence against women. A portion of the proceeds go toward global efforts to help victims.

"[The show] was not seen as theater,



Photo courtesy of Anna Kiradze

but a means to connect all women around the world," Siradze said. Regardless of acting experience, the play was open to women across various academic disciplines.

I got a huge kick out of the how the designers decorated the curtain to look like a huge vagina that parted for the performers. When Juliette Holtzman became frantic on a couch because she had lost her clit during a monologue called, "The Vagina Workshop," I laughed out loud.

Brianna Knox turned "My Angry

Vagina" into one of my favorite moments of the play, as she strutted around the stage venting about her disgust for tampons, douching, and gyno exams.

If there was ever a tough moment of the play it would have to have been the devastating telling of "My Vagina Was a Village" by Turenne Beauvais. The monologue recounted a women's horrific experience being raped by soldiers' guns. Her vagina acted as a metaphor for the raping of an entire village in Bosnia.

No one could forget "The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy," a funny monologue about a woman who found her calling collecting various moans from other women. Kayla O'Connell came close to stealing the entire show as she displayed an entire catalog of moans, ranging from the panting "doggy moan" to the deeply aggressive "uninhibited militant bisexual moan."

The monologue titled, "I Was There in the Room," a memory of Ensler's experience at her grandchild's birth, was performed most eloquently by Kathleen Smith, a moving and poetic ending to a wonderfully executed play. Smith's performance was well delivered with true grace.

The collective effort of this year's cast was something to be commended.





**Alyse Fram** is interning in the URI Athletic Department and is working directly with the Deputy Director of Athletics, Greg Burke, who provides

assignments to help achieve Alyse's goal of "focusing on women and girls today in sports." She worked on the Pink Out Committee, helping with the Pink Out basketball game and reception dinner while strategizing how to help the Gloria Gemma Foundation. Alyse is also involved in the Women's Softball Attendance Blowout. She plans to make flyers and meet at various schools to talk to girls about playing softball and encourage them to attend a URI softball game. She is helping with the Pre-planning of National Girls & Women in Sport Day 2010. Alyse wants to "reach out to young girls specifically to spark their ambition to get into sports for the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of it."



**Janelle St. John** is interning for Jo-Anne Stephens, the Associate Administrative of Retail Operation here at the University of Rhode Island. Janelle is

responsible for learning how to properly run and manage a large corporation and updating old policies regarding student employees. Janelle is analyzing the gender relationship to help create new policies regarding work place conduct. She is learning how to process products and new computer work. Through this internship Janelle hopes to learn a "working knowledge of new computer software and programs, better social skills in the work place, properly learning graphing and organizing data, and protecting student employees especially females."

**Jill Tomaino** is interning for the Arts and Living section of the *South County Independent* newspaper. Jill is working for editor, Doug Norris. Norris is planning on publishing a collection of articles on various aspects of black history in February, women's history in March, and environmental issues in April. Jill is compiling research for these issues including conducting interviews. She is also writing several articles herself. Jill's personal goals include expanding her writing skills, being challenged and growing as a writer, learning more about the art of journalism, and sharpening her people skills in the interviewing process.



**Kristina Moyet** is interning at the Women's Resource Center in Newport. Kristina's position at the resource center is a Teen and Community

Organizer, which supports the Director of Youth Violence Prevention and coordinates with two teen-driven community initiatives focused on the primary prevention of intimate partner violence. Kristina is coordinating weekly meetings of two teen organizations, assisting with the planning and implementing of three annual events and several monthly events, and coordinating capacity-building programs for teens as needed. Kristina's personal goals are to "create a portfolio which will include all activities and lesson plans at the Boys and Girls Club, gain experience-working with troubled teens, promote workshops, and training for teachers and students in rural communities about domestic violence, to create an environment filled with respect, learning, and open-mindedness."



**Danielle Oliva** is interning at the Elizabeth Buffum Chase House in Warwick. The EBC House is for women who have left their home due to an

abusive relationship. The goal of the EBC House is to protect women's privacy, to keep them safe, and to help women become independent. Danielle's position at the EBC House is a Resident Advocate. Danielle wants to be a "mentor for these women." Danielle is committed and sensitive towards issues surrounding domestic violence while being non-judgmental and open-minded. Danielle is assisting in residential activities, performing screenings and intakes, communicating with residents, and assisting residents in personal responsibilities with the ultimate goal of their gaining independence. "I want to push myself to the limit and go past the expectations of the internship" is the positive mindset Danielle has.



**Jillian Foley** is interning for the Rhode Island National Association of Women (RINOW). Her responsibilities include writing testimonies for each of the 16-20 bills

RINOW supports, writing policy position papers, and organizing all papers and testimonies so they can be more accessible for future use. Jill attends monthly board meetings and weekly conference calls with her supervisor to check in and provide updates on her progress. Jill is also attend-

ing several upcoming events, including lobby days, and lobby training days along with other events to be announced. Jill hopes to learn "how to write a testimony to support a legislative bill, and more about the legislative process and the effect citizens can have on lobbying." Jill is hoping this experience lets her see if policy and law interests her for future careers and studies.

**Caitlin Murphy** is interning for Child and Family of Rhode Island. Child and Family is a group home/DCYF (Dept. of Children, Youth and Families) care-



facility. Caitlin's objective is to "work with girls who have been placed in a residential setting by DCYF, and to help reunite them with their families." Her responsibilities include developing a positive relationship with the girls and helping aid their growth. Caitlin assists them in activities and homework. She has the opportunity to review individual files and histories of residents to get a better understanding of the people Child and Family serves. Caitlin hopes to gain experience in this type of work to see if it is something she might want to pursue in her future.



**Lisa Ariosto** is interning with the Rhode Island Association of Women (RINOW) as a legislative intern. Lisa's duties include

reading and collecting relevant bills that are introduced to the House and Senate on a daily basis, keeping track of bills that are relevant in the RINOW legislative agenda database, and doing daily status updates on bills. Lisa updates her direct contact at RINOW on the progress of the database as well as meeting with her to agree on priority bills. Lisa attends lobby training days and monthly board meetings. Lisa hopes that as an intern she will "learn more about what steps need to be taken on the legislative front to help women."

**Do you consider yourself a leader?**

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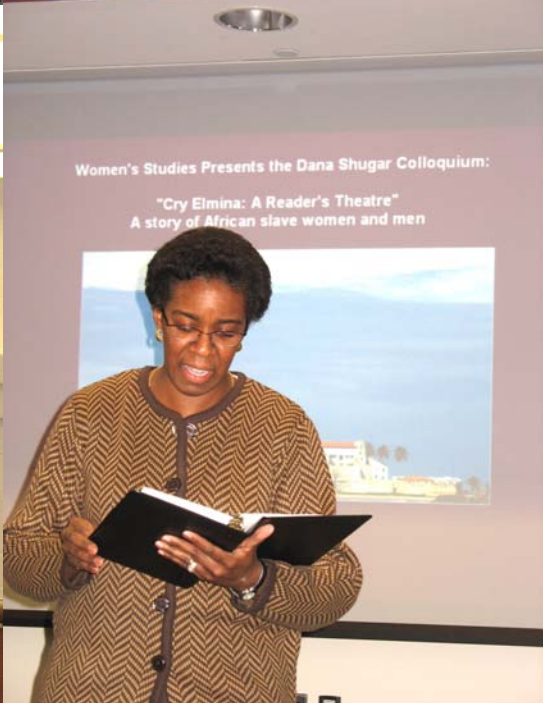
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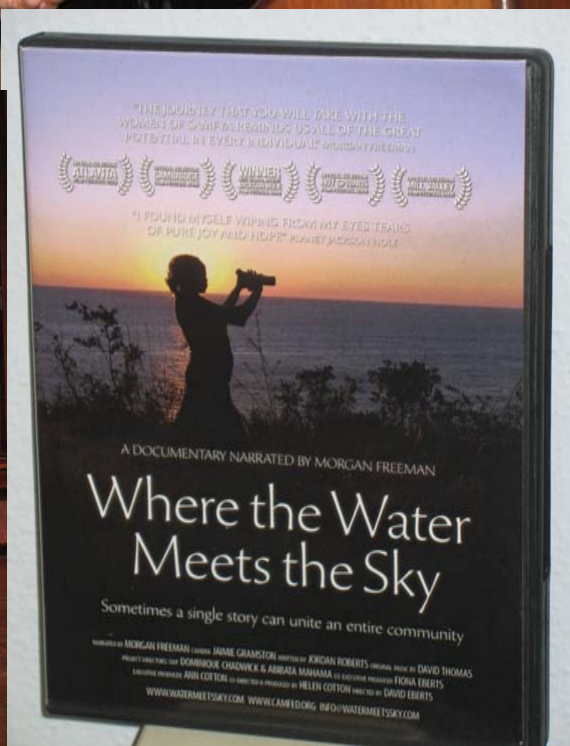
Dana Shugar Colloquia featured interdisciplinary faculty, Rob Widell and Vanessa Quainoo, who spoke about women and civil rights and the history of African slave women and men. Honors students and Gail Faris at left learn about civil rights in Birmingham.



Above: The Women's Studies Program won an NEA grant to develop online teaching skills. It was the first NEA grant to be won in RI since 2001. Here is the faculty at the first training, helped by Brett Rutherford, who is also on the Women's Studies faculty.

Photo credits Jody Lisberger

International Women's Day Screening of "Where the Water Meets the Sky," and Read/Write Event with Jan Clausen and Jane Lazarre celebrated women's voices, empowerment, and storytelling.





## Obama Signs Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act Into Law

By Danielle Henderson

In one of his first presidential actions, President Barack Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 into law on January 29. Lilly Ledbetter worked for the Goodyear Tire Company for 21 years. In March 1998, as she inched towards an early retirement, she began inquiring about possible sexual discrimination at the company.

Ledbetter filed formal charges in July 1998; though she started at the same salary, by the time she retired in November 1998 Ledbetter was earning between \$559—1,509 per month less than her male counterparts, losing more than \$200,000 in salary and pension during her tenure.

Goodyear was unable to cite justifiable reasons for denying Ledbetter consequential raises over the years.

It would take a decade, but Ledbetter would eventually fuel a nationwide change in the way people regard fair pay.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act applies to anyone who is the victim of

pay discrimination based on gender, race, or age, but women will surely feel its effects on a larger scale. At the time of this writing, women still earn 77 cents for every dollar men earn, with women of color earning even less.

The signing of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will resonate with most professional women, since they are more likely to see the disparity in salaries.

When I asked Professor Lynne Derbyshire, Chair of Communications, how she felt about the signing of the law, she said, “On that day I wished everyone I saw (including my class) a Happy Lilly Ledbetter Day! I also told my class the history of her lawsuit.”

Speaking about the Lilly Ledbetter Act, President Obama made clear his far-reaching commitment to equal pay: “Equal pay is by no means just a women’s issue—it’s a family issue.

“It’s about parents who find themselves with less money for tuition and child care; couples who wind up with less to retire on; households where one breadwinner is paid less than she deserves; that’s the difference between affording the mortgage—or not; between keeping the heat on, or paying the doctor bills—or not.



Photo taken from The Washington Times Web site

“And in this economy, when so many folks are already working harder for less and struggling to get by, the last thing they can afford is losing part of each month’s paycheck to simple and plain discrimination.”

Obama went on to say that “signing this bill today is to send a clear message: that making our economy work means making sure it works for everybody; that there are no second-class citizens in our workplaces; and that it’s not just unfair and illegal, it’s bad for business to pay somebody less because of their gender or their age or their race or their ethnicity, religion or disability; and that justice isn’t about some abstract legal theory, or footnote in a casebook.”

## Obama Lifts ‘Global Gag Rule’

By Kara Lafferty

On January 25, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the executive order to lift the ban on federal funding for international groups that promote or perform abortions. The order was signed the day after the 36th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme court ruling, which legalized abortions in all of the states. The welfare of women abroad is at the forefront of this issue.

Obama issued a memorandum rescinding the Mexico City Policy, also known as the “global gag rule,” because it prohibits taxpayers’ funding for groups that counsel on abortions or perform them.

The reaction to his signing the order is predictably mixed. Pro-choice groups celebrated his decision. Pro-life groups continue to fight against these policies. Others question if the funding will be abused.

Obama discussed the restrictions and said, “For the past eight years, they have undermined efforts to promote safe and effective voluntary family planning in developing countries and for these reasons, it is right for us to rescind this policy and restore critical efforts to protect and empower women and promote

global economic development.”

According to Fox News, the policy was first instituted by President Ronald Reagan in 1984 and continued by President George H.W. Bush. The policy was reversed by President Bill Clinton in 1993, and re-instated by President George W. Bush in 2001.

The restrictions barred the United States Agency for International Development from providing money to any international nongovernmental organization that “performs or actively promotes abortion as a method of family planning” in foreign countries, and covered a wide range of activities, including providing advice, counseling or information regarding abortion.

The restrictions did not apply to counseling for abortions in the case of rape, incest, or danger to the life of the pregnant woman, according to *The New York Times*. With the ban being reversed, many are hoping there will be fewer unwanted pregnancies because international agencies will be able to teach women about contraceptives.

Planned Parenthood supports Obama’s policy. “For eight long years, the global gag rule has been used by the Bush administration to play politics with the lives of poor women across the world,” said Gill Greer of the International Planned Parenthood Federation in

London. Obama’s decision to lift the ban is seen as a first step to many other changes regarding sex education and family planning abroad and in America.

According to *The Washington Post*, the president of Planned Parenthood of America, Cecile Richards, said, “We look forward to working with President Obama on common-sense policies such as reversing Bush’s Health and Human Services midnight rule [on Providers’ right to refuse to provide health care], funding comprehensive sex education to keep our teens healthy, and increasing access to affordable family planning that help prevent unintended and teen pregnancies and lead to healthy outcomes for women.”

The lift on the ban has infuriated many pro-life organizations. According to *The New York Times*, abortion opponents condemned Friday’s order, calling it an unnecessarily divisive way for a president preaching unity to start his administration.

“President Obama will be remembered forever not just as a smart, savvy, gifted and eloquent leader — but as the Abortion President,” Representative Christopher H. Smith, Republican of New Jersey and co-chairman of the House Bipartisan Pro-Life Caucus, said in a written statement.



<b>WMS 150 1000</b> Intro to Women's Studies T/Th 9:00-12:45 p.m. Davis Hall 109 Agata Stepien	<b>WMS 300 TBA</b>	Sex and Gender in Ancient Civilization (Online) Vincent Petronio	Family Interaction T/Th 5:00-8:45 Quinn Hall 209 Elizabeth Johnson
<b>WMS 150 2000</b> Intro to Women's Studies MTWTH 10:00-11:45 a.m. Swan 202 Eva Jones	<b>WMS 301</b> Women's Professional Devel- opment and Leadership (Online) Jenn Brandt	<b>WMS 360</b> Men and Masculinities (Online) Keith Labelle	<b>PSY/ SOC 430 1000</b> Intimate Relationships MW 6:00-9:45 CCE Alana Bibeau
<b>WMS 150 3000</b> Intro to Women's Studies (Online) Keith Labelle	<b>WMS 315</b> Intro to Feminist Theories and Methodologies (Online) Theresa DeFrancis	<b>WMS 370</b> Sex Trafficking (Online) Donna Hughes	<b>PSY/ SCO 430 2000</b> Intimate Relationships MTWTH 10:00-11:45 Chafee 271 Rosaria Pisa
<b>WMS 150 3100</b> Intro to Women's Studies (Online) Jennifer Moio	<b>WMS 325</b> International Womer's Issues (Online) Donna Hughes	Interdisciplinary Courses	<b>PSY 466</b> Child Sexual Abuse MW 6:00-9:45 CCE Richard Solomon
<b>WMS 150 3200</b> Intro to Women's Studies (Online) Jeanette Riley	<b>WMS 350 1000</b> Women in Film MW 6:00-9:45 p.m. Swan Hall 207 Jenn Brandt	<b>APG 310</b> Belize study abroad Amie Limon	<b>PSY 480 1000</b> Psychology of Women MTWTH 12:00-1:45 White Hall 204 Margaret Rogers
<b>WMS 150 3300</b> Intro to Women's Studies (Online) Kristen Quinlan	<b>WMS 350 3000</b> Native American Women (Online) Alexia Kosmider	<b>COM 322</b> Gender and Communication (Online) Kathleen Torrens	<b>PSY 480 2000</b> Psychology of Women (Online) Mailee Kue
<b>WMS 150 7000</b> Intro to Women's Studies MTWTH 10:00-11:45 a.m. Swan Hall Room 203 Janet Hagen	<b>WMS 350 3200</b> Contemporary International Women's Fiction (Online) Heather Johnson	<b>ENG 260</b> Women and Literature MTWTH 10:00-11:45 Swan 305 Alexia Kosmider	<b>SOC 212</b> Families in Society MTWTH 8:00-9:45 White Hall 206 Helen Mederer
	<b>WMS 350 3300</b>	<b>HDF 230</b> Marriage and Family Relation- ships (Online) Jermone Adams	
		<b>HDF 430</b>	

## Women's Studies Program

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