

## Reflecting with Gratitude and Pride

By: Kimmie Garner, WMST Program Assistant

When I arrived at Colgate in August 2011, I couldn't have even begun to imagine the dynamic, challenging, and inspiring discussions and activism that would take place in and expand beyond the Center for Women's Studies. I would like to take my final submission to the Newsletter to reflect on the Center's growth and express immense gratitude for the support I have received that makes the work we do so rich, intersectional, and powerful.

Over the past two years, average attendance at Tuesday Brown Bags has risen from an average of 74 attendees in Fall 2011 to 105 participants in Spring 2013. The Center now offers a feminist film series and hosts a biweekly "In the News" discussion group. Thanks to generous support from University Studies and the passionate, dedicated staff of the Habitat for Humanity Capital District Office in Troy, Meika and I co-led the Center's first gender-focused alternative spring break experience this semester. Five students of various class years participated in an intensive week of service-learning, visiting Planned Parenthood in Schenectady, serving breakfast at Unity House in Troy, and installing insulation and sheetrock in row houses currently being constructed in Troy.

I would like to thank Meika, Letta, Mary, current and former interns, our campus partners in ALANA, ALST, Athletics, the COVE, the Counseling Center, Dean of the College, EDUC, LGBTQ Initiatives, NCBI, the Network, OUS, Printing Services, Sustainability, the Shaw Wellness Institute, the Upstate Institute, and UNST for providing me with the support to be so innovative and creative in this position. The growth we've experienced has been made possible by your steady guidance and you've truly allowed me to implement programming that puts feminist theory into practice. Thank you for surrounding me with such a dynamic community to make this an incredible first job!

After working for the Upstate Institute this summer, I will head to Missoula, Montana with my partner to begin my Master's in Social Work program at the University of Montana. I will carry the spirit of feminist education and community-building I have absorbed from phenomenal students, staff, faculty, and community members like you with me there and always!

**Director:** Meika Loe

**Program Assistant:** Kimmie Garner

**Administrative Assistant:** Letta Palmer

**Interns:** Natalie George '13

Kelsey Gibb '13

Che Hatter '13

Christina Liu '13

Xavia Publius '13

Katie Rapp '13

Gloria Kebirungi '15

Stephanie Rameau '15



Interns visiting the Oneida Community Mansion

# Colgate

Center for Women's Studies

## Spring 2013 Newsletter

### From the Director:

As we prepare to graduate fourteen senior concentrators and honor eight Women's Studies interns, six of whom are seniors, I want to recognize their individual and collective leadership. This semester, our concentrators and interns have been involved in everything from innovative production and direction of feminist theater, to critical discussions of pornography, popular culture, body image, racism, and personal healing, to imagining new mentoring programs and health resources. It is exciting to see our seniors and interns modeling what it means to do feminism.

With such a large graduating class, this year was wonderful timing to host our *Feminisms Beyond Colgate Workshop and Celebration*. At this weekend event, Dr. Michelle Berger shared her data on women's studies concentrators across the country, the senior capstone students led a virtual feminist tour of campus, and it was truly inspiring to hear stories from our graduates who are now change agents in education, health care, nonprofits, publishing, and beyond.

I want to send out a hearty thank you to all faculty, staff, students, and community members who participated this semester in our Brown Bag series. Brown Bag lunch talks that broke all-time seating capacity records this semester include our first ever talk on feminist bioethics, wonderful discussions on LGBTQ families and identities, and provocative discussions on popular music, sports, and global feminisms.

Gratitude also goes to Kimmie Garner for two years of excellent programming and leadership. Kimmie's impact in the Center and on campus has been tremendous. Kimmie will head to Montana in the fall to pursue a graduate degree in social work. We will miss her cheery disposition and go-getter attitude! We wish her the best of luck in the next chapter.

All in all, our program is thriving – with classes and events busting at the seams. We are looking ahead to a busy and exciting fall, as we interview candidates for our globalization position and welcome a new Program Assistant and new (and familiar) student interns. Good news: we are on the list for a needed renovation of the Center to make room for our crowds. By the way, this time we are trying something new with our newsletter; all articles are written by students enrolled in Mary Simonson's *Introduction to Women's Studies* courses.

Thanks, all, for another wonderful semester of feminist community building and academic excellence.

Meika Loe

Volume 19

Issue 2

## The Male Pill

By: Hannah Derbyshire '14

In her Brown Bag on Tuesday, January 29th, Lisa Campo-Engelstein, Ph.D., discussed the reasons for why we need a male pill. She broke her talk up into 3 main points:

1) Women bear the burden of contraception in terms of finance and side effects. They are involved in almost 91% of all contraceptive use. When women choose to use contraception, they must visit a doctor, and most times they must get a prescription, both of which cost money. They also have to deal with so many side effects that cause discomfort and sometimes serious health problems. Men also only have two options—condoms or sterilization—so they are forced to use these, which are not as reliable or permanent. Otherwise, they are forced to trust their partners for contraception.



2) Because of historical shifts in legislation, contraception has fallen into the hands of women. And as Campo-Engelstein explained, this shift of responsibility toward women has created increased technology in the form of numerous contraception options for women and increased funding for women. The lack of education on andrology, the study of the male reproductive system, has also led to less advancement in terms of male contraception. This has created a perceived lack of interest and demand for male contraceptives, which has been proven through multiple studies not to be the case.

3) To create a successful form of contraception for men, multiple changes must be made. Ideology, technology, funding, and contraception and family planning. In order to be successful, there must be a positive change. Legislation and policies furthering and allowing paternal roles will also be beneficial to the success of such products and the idea of a shared responsibility, in general.

I thought that Campo-Engelstein's talk was fascinating. What really stuck out to me was the idea that ideology shapes technology. Until this Brown Bag topic was discussed, I had never even considered the idea of a male contraceptive. Without realizing it, I had believed that contraception was, without a doubt, my responsibility and my decision. While I like that the power of what choice of contraception lies in my hands, I believe, like Campo-Engelstein, that a lack of reversible and reliable contraceptive options for men is unfair. What if men wanted to share the power of contraception with us, women? Honestly, what could be better! I think that the pressure of using contraceptive methods perfectly can be difficult, and if that pressure is not shared, the responsibility falls to only one person. Not a happy responsibility in my opinion.

I think that the idea of a larger number of male contraceptive options is nothing but a positive. A shared responsibility for contraception is ideal and should be real! So let's fund, research, and test; let's create this magic pill for men!

### Vagina Monologues

A record setting \$2,763 was raised from the Vagina Monologues this year! Proceeds will go to Victims of Violence, Vera House, and the V-Day Campaign.

### One Billion Rising

Students perform protest art with a flash mob in conjunction with V-Day and the Vagina Monologues.



## Senior Spotlight

Every spring, we spotlight the senior interns at the Center for Women's Studies as they go out into the world beyond Colgate. This year, we asked them each to respond to the following question: How has feminism and your time at the Center changed you, and how will you take what you've learned here with you?

**Natalie George:** I have truly grown into a Feminist over the years and this was due to the Center allowing me to both discover and reaffirm my identity as not just a woman, but a person. I would have been lost without the guidance and support that I have received since my Intro to Women's Studies days (with Meika!). I am beyond grateful for all of the life lessons learned at the Center and FUN times that I have had with everyone. I hope to take all of that positivity and knowledge with me into the workforce and use my Feminist lens to approach every aspect of life!

**Kelsey Gibb:** As I prepare to graduate and begin reflecting on my time at Colgate, the importance of Women's Studies and feminism is undeniable. The Center for Women's Studies and the Women's Studies Program have become my home away from home at Colgate. This is where I came into my identity as a feminist. Women's Studies has helped me become the woman I am today and I am excited about bringing my feminist lens into my life after Colgate.

**Che Hatter:** In many ways, working at the Center has made me a stronger advocate for the issues that matter to me; being a feminist liaison to campus departments and organizations has taught me the importance of our perspective on society for many different intersections of identity. The Center will definitely always be my home at Colgate.

**Christina Liu:** There was a time in my life when my interaction with feminisms was contained within the walls of a classroom and the walls of the Center, but it soon became clear that this was not enough. Feminisms have spilled, they've cascaded, they've intruded into every relationship, project, conversation, decision that I have had since that Intro to WMST FSEM and I am so thankful that the Center has remained a stable home base for me to continually return to. The skills I have learned here have empowered me with a critical lens, an urgent desire for change, and the ability to remain active no matter where I go.

**Xavia Publius:** When I first came here I not only didn't identify as a feminist, but I was very, very problematic. My time here has changed my views on life fundamentally and irrevocably. The things I've learned and experienced and watched happen will always inflect how I view the world in the future, and has inspired in me a firm desire to make the world a better and safer place for everyone regardless of gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, etc.

**Katie Rapp:** I've identified as a feminist for a few years now (and subconsciously valued feminist ideals my entire life), but through my work at the Center for Women's Studies, I have taken some first steps into translating beliefs into action and making a direct impact on my local community through a feminist lens. Because of feminism, I have cultivated a deeper sense of self-confidence, ignited a passion for fostering equality and mutuality among genders and seek to create community through empathy and story sharing, a foundation that I know will be powerful as I continue to engage with feminist activism beyond Colgate.



## Meatsuit Realness

By: Ally Latta '13

On Thursday, February 7th in the Center for Women's Studies, Xavia Publius discussed hir analysis of FOX's hit show *Glee* in a Brown Bag about hir thesis, entitled "Meatsuit Realness: Vocality, Gender, Sexuality and Cyborgs in *Glee*." While many Colgate students were previously familiar with the popular television show, it is likely that few had ever thought about the show in the way that Xavia does. Xavia analyzed *Glee* from an interesting and unusual perspective: ze attempted to highlight the show's creation of a "queer space" through the manipulation of gender roles and voice-editing software (such as Autotune). Ze argued that *Glee* toys with the idea of cyborgs (which ze describes as beings that are not fully human because they are inherently too perfect or are somewhat robotic), thereby allowing the show to create a queer space in which characters are able to create non-traditional identities. The presence of "cyborg-like-characters" allows *Glee* to explore sexuality in a way that often challenges the normative heterosexual stereotypes that exist in society, allowing non-heterosexual or non-gender-normative viewers to connect with the show in interesting ways. Overall, I found this Brown Bag to be quite enlightening and interesting. Xavia clearly did a lot of thorough research on the topic, and hir presentation definitely showed this fact. However, as someone who was not previously familiar with many of the terms and concepts that Xavia used in hir analysis of *Glee*, I felt that Xavia's discussion and analysis was at times over my head. Perhaps if ze had had more time to explain all of hir analytic terms, then the presentation would have been a bit easier to follow for an amateur like myself. That being said, this Brown Bag was eye opening and it definitely challenged traditional conceptions of gender and sexuality in FOX's hit television series.



## The Vagina Monologues

By: Sarah Chandler '16



By the time audience members left the Colgate University performances of *The Vagina Monologues* on February 14th-16th, they were much more comfortable with the word vagina. And, ultimately, all the better for it.

A celebration of the female experience, the *Monologues* focused on the various experiences of women as compiled through personal interviews. Each monologue, which was performed by different actors, touched on topics such as love, sex, rape, and orgasm. In turns, joyous (such as the account of a woman finally finding a partner who appreciates her distinct beauty), funny (one monologue is based off of a 6 year old's opinion of her vagina), angry (the monologue "My Angry Vagina" focused on the grooming and discomfort the vagina is subjected to in today's society), devastating (such as the monologue about the fate of Bosnian women in rape camps), and empowering (one scene was about the miracle of watching a baby be born), the *Monologues* sought to capture the essence of what it means to be a woman in today's world. Staged in the Palace Theater against a backdrop of twinkling lights in the shape of a clitoris, beautiful tissue-paper vagina flowers, and filled to bursting with all different members of the Colgate community, the performance was an attempt to give voice to a generation of women coping with their womanhood and sexuality.

It succeeded. But more than that, it brought the entire audience together. Only during the best of performances can the differences of an audience—including age, gender, ethnicity, and sexual preference—melt away. It is during these occasions that such different people can come together and laugh and agree and relate to what is being discussed. After the show, everyone in the audience seemed to leave the theater feeling a little more aware, a little more empowered, a little happier to be a woman, to love a woman, to have a vagina, or to know someone who does.

## Spring 2013 Brown Bag Series

<a href="#">How Our Work Forwards MLK's Teachings: Voices from the Past and Present</a>	1/22
Gabby Cortes '13 (LASO), Denny Gonzalez '13 (Brothers), Anneliese Gretsche '13 (ARC), Courtney Jackson '13 (SORT), and Yellow Shabazz '13 (BSU)	
<a href="#">Contraceptive Justice: Why We Need a Male Pill</a>	1/29
Lisa Campo-Engelstein	
<a href="#">Celebrating National Girls and Women in Sports Day</a>	2/5
<b>Co-sponsored with Athletics</b>	
Vicky Chun, Ann-Marie Guglieri, Chelsea Jones, Cammie Kirby '16, and Natalie Siedhof '13	
<a href="#">Meatsuit Realness: Vocality, Gender, Sexuality, and Cyborgs in Glee</a>	2/7
<b>Co-sponsored with LGBTQ Program</b>	
Xavia Publius '13	
<a href="#">Vaginas Against Violence</a>	2/12
Drea Finley '13, Melissa Gamez '14, and Christina Liu '13	
<a href="#">Colgate's Bias-Related Incident Policy</a>	2/19
<b>Co-sponsored with the Office of the Dean of the College</b>	
Lyn Rugg and Kim Taylor	
<a href="#">Can You Listen to Pop Music and Still Be a Feminist?</a>	2/26
Mary Simonson	
<a href="#">Where is the Love?: Finding and Making Community in Academe</a>	2/28
<b>Co-sponsored with OUS</b>	
Dominique Hill '02 and Durrell Callier	
<a href="#">Global Feminisms: Austria, Costa Rica, Denmark, Peru, Rwanda</a>	3/5
Ulla Grapard, Anna Rios, Susan Thomson, and Tessa Wegener	
<a href="#">Inverting the Narrative: Complicating Gender, Development, and Education</a>	3/7
<b>Co-sponsored with EDUC</b>	
Students of EDUC 303	
<a href="#">Senior Concentrators Speak Out: Part I</a>	3/19
<a href="#">Senior Concentrators Speak Out: Part II</a>	3/21
<a href="#">LGBTQ Families and Reproduction</a> ( <i>Did not film due to technical issues</i> )	3/26
<b>Co-sponsored with LGBTQ Initiatives</b>	
Jenn Lutman, Sean Massey, Providence Ryan '16, and Claudia Stallman	
<a href="#">The Naked Truth of Homosexuality in the Caribbean</a>	3/28
<b>Co-sponsored with ALST</b>	
Marilyn Hernandez-Stopp '14, Andrew Hoadley '13, Ayisha McHugh '16, Asabi Rawlins '16, and Racquel Waite '14	
<a href="#">Pornography, Positive Sexuality, and Feminism</a>	4/2
<b>Co-sponsored with the Office of the Dean of the College and Shaw Wellness Institute</b>	
Center for Women's Studies Interns	
<a href="#">Women Working and Parenting By Choice</a>	4/9
<b>Co-sponsored with Colgate Women in Business (CWIB)</b>	
Dena Bodian, Liz Bodian, Regina Conti, and Carly Keller '13	
<a href="#">Supporting Survivors: Oneida's Victims of Violence Program</a> ( <i>Recording withheld by request</i> )	4/16
<b>Co-sponsored with the Counseling Center, the Network, and Shaw Wellness Institute</b>	
Val Brogan, Emily Khazaee, and Joanne Smith	
<a href="#">Women in the Outdoors</a>	4/23
<b>Co-sponsored with Outdoor Education</b>	
Fran Hodgins '13, Ellen Kraly, Shan Shan Mai '13, and Courtney Savage	
<a href="#">Journeys of a Feminist Anthropologist in India</a>	4/30
<b>Cosponsored with ASIA, CORE CI, and SOAN</b>	
Sarah Lamb	

### Take Back the Night

Members of the Colgate community comfort each other as they march across campus protesting the culture of sexual assault.



## Faculty Spotlight: Professor Susan Thomson

### Why do you identify as a feminist?

I have not always historically identified as a feminist, but since coming to the United States, issues of feminism have become more salient. There are so many rights in the U.S that women haven't yet gained so I think I've become more politicized since coming to the U.S. But I do identify as a feminist because I believe in the bundle of social justice rights that all gender expressions, all races, all creeds are equal. I really dislike the system in the United States and I find the sharp divisions in society so remarkable.



### What is the focus of your research?

My research has a clear gender dimension because I work with refugee girls from Somalia, the Congo, Ethiopia, and in Nairobi, Kenya. The girls I work with are between fourteen and nineteen years of age and they are all fleeing from different forms of violence. The girls from Congo, for example, are fleeing open physical conflict, forced marriage, and endemic rape, amongst other things. In Somalia, they are fleeing because of latent violence because Somalia has been in open war for about twenty years. In Ethiopia, they are fleeing either religious persecution or cultural traditions like forced marriage. In my work with these girls, I am looking at ways in which they reconstitute their livelihoods and how they care for themselves living in the conditions which they do. I'm trying to understand their problem solving and the alliances and enemies that they have to figure out their agency. This work is part of a broader project that I ultimately hope to bring to Upstate New York because there are many refugee communities from Africa in Syracuse and in Utica. I'm just beginning to do that work now, but in the past, my work has focused on socioeconomic inequalities in Rwanda and the way in which peasants fight back or resist the genocide reconstruction policies of the government.

### How do you incorporate a feminist lens and the concept of intersecting identities into your classroom?

Incorporating a feminist lens is part of the bundle of activism that I have. I incorporate a feminist lens in highlighting difference and bringing in work that I disagree with a lot and by trying to draw students out into conversation. I try to promote active listening. I run my courses in an elliptical sense, so they are sort of overlapping on each other all the time. I really like for students to take risks and express themselves. Finding voice is part of a feminist approach and I work to create that rapport with students with what I would call rigorous humor. I build a dynamic in the classroom where all opinions are valuable. In being a feminist, you start where the students are and not where you want them to be and I think that it is important to do this. There is a lot of diversity of opinion in my classroom and we encourage that in PCON. I think that plurality of ideas is really central and is a feminist approach.

### Can you tell us a little about the course you will teach next semester: "Gender in Peace and Conflict"?

Gender in Peace and Conflict is a theory course that is cross-listed with WMST. It is an interdisciplinary course that covers the ranges of ways in which women are active, either as combatants or perpetrators in conflict, the ways they are supposedly victimized, and the ways that women take the lead to resist and practice nonviolence and promote peace. It starts with the traditional PCON "the world is on fire" business and then it ends with some optimistic ways in which we can feed into these social movements that women are so good at producing, reinforcing, bringing to light. I will teach from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, political science, and history, as well as a novel on the civil war in Lebanon.

## Feminisms Beyond Colgate

By: Mel Grover-Schwartz '14

On Sunday, March 17th, Colgate's Center for Women's Studies hosted its first feminist careers conference, a daylong series of workshops and seminars entitled *Feminisms Beyond Colgate Workshop and Celebration*. The event, which included alumni and current students and enthusiasts of the Women's Studies program, focused on integrating feminism into the workplace. Discussing everything from how feminist activism can be translated onto a resume to the ways in which professors have incorporated feminism into not necessarily feminist-oriented curriculums, the conference sought to explore and explain and promote the utility of obtaining a Women's Studies degree.

The seminar began with a keynote lecture by Associate Professor of Women's Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill, Michele Berger, who recently published a book that traces the professional successes of over nine hundred Women's Studies college graduates. Berger's speech offered comforting reassurance and refreshing insight to current Colgate students and recent grads, following feminist-minded professionals that have thrived in corporate business management, medicine, law, and other male-dominated career fields that aren't overtly feminist-friendly.

That being said, the alumni themselves offered their own personal testaments to the efficacy of a Women's Studies education. This crowd, which contained graduate students at Columbia University and a former program director now teaching professionally, among others, boasted about their feminist educations, attributing their commitments to activism and independence to their academic career. These graduates also testified to the practical side of Women's Studies, thanking Colgate's program for strengthening their writing and communication skills, which are often malnourished under a more technical degree.

While students, professors, and alumni ranged in their involvement with the Center for Women's Studies itself, everyone present at the meeting maintained a deep-seated affection, connection, and commitment to their own feminist ideals, and were encouraged to share their experiences and opinions on how to integrate feminism into every part of their professional and post-graduate life. The seminar ultimately confirmed that Women's Studies graduates are passionate, and that we are interested in holding onto these passions and advocating for them, acting as lifelong "ambassadors" and feminist mentors that will, in our own nuanced way, help to educate and improve the world.



## Sheryl Sandberg

By: Kayla Ponturo '14



On Friday, April 5th at 5:00 pm Sheryl Sandberg, the COO of Facebook, came to Colgate to discuss her new book, *Lean In*. She addressed a large audience at Cotterell Court about the main point of her book. Sandberg structured her discussion by asking people to stand up if they have ever spoken aloud the desire to be the President, CEO, or a leader in their career. She framed the rest of her talk by providing the audience with three reasons why they did not stand up and how those reasons relate to the message of her book.

Sandberg was very charismatic and engaging. She told stories from her book to back up her ideas, as well as make herself more relatable. She came across as kind and got a few laughs. Sandberg described the leadership ambition gap between women and men. She claimed that our single most important career decision was picking the right partner. She explained her non-profit organization and referred to [www.leanin.org](http://www.leanin.org). Sandberg concluded with the point that the best way to stop oppression of women is by getting more women in positions of leadership.

Sandberg followed up her short talk with a Question and Answer session. The audience wanted to know about applying her strategy to women at various ages, how to be aggressive but also find a husband, and how the *Lean In* message can be applied to various socio-economic backgrounds. Sandberg answered all of the questions, but I believe audience members were left wanting more. Her answers were not complete and sometimes didn't even address the main issue of the question at all.

The reaction of the audience was split. Some girls left feeling empowered, others left feeling frustrated. There was even a point when the girl sitting next to me said, "I'm not really feeling this feminist angle." Sandberg has an appealing message, especially for the Colgate community. Yet, many people in the audience still felt underwhelmed and expected more.