

BOLDER VOICES

University of Colorado at Boulder

Greetings from the Director

Returning from the annual meeting of the chairs and directors of women and gender studies (WGST) programs in the southwest, I reflect on how fortunate we are at the University of Colorado at Boulder to enjoy the support we do from students, alumnae/i, faculty, staff, community members, and campus administrators. Almost a quarter of those attending this year's WGST chairs and directors meeting talked about their programs being identified for extraordinary cuts and even elimination as part of campus budget reduction exercises. With growing numbers of students taking courses in women and gender studies and evidence that these programs are important for retaining



students from virtually all at-risk populations on campus, these chairs and directors have had to prepare reports explaining why their programs should be retained. Most of them reported being assured privately that the programs would not in fact be abolished, but that they “had to be put on the list” – likely due to political pressures in their states.

Although our program has experienced budget cuts roughly proportionate to other Boulder academic departments, our value to the educational and research goals of the campus has not been questioned. Administrative support has remained constant – for which we are very grateful. This is a testimony to the program's accomplishments past and present and to the support of our friends and alums on and off campus.

In this newsletter, we particularly want to showcase the difference that our students and graduates are making in the world. To help us keep our voice coming to you in these tough economic times, please remember to send us your email addresses, since beginning in fall 2010, we will be moving to an all-electronic newsletter format. To support our current students and their educational accomplishments, we encourage contributions to our general program fund, so that we can send students to enriching activities ranging from training programs to prevent violence against women to participation in the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) conference, to be held in Denver this coming November. Much happiness and success to you all in 2010.

Anne Costain
Director and Professor

Spring 2010 Graduation

CU-Boulder Commencement

Friday, May 7th, 8:30 AM

Folsom Stadium

Women and Gender Studies Program Graduation Ceremony

Thursday, May 6th, 1:30 PM

Old Main Chapel



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Natalie will graduate in May while Dr. Rajgopal (see next page) has gone on to direct another women's studies program. What led them to our program, and what are their thoughts on feminism and the study of women and gender today?

Active in the performing arts during high school in Fort Collins, Colorado, Natalie was a cast member in *Until Someone Wakes Up*, a community theatre production to raise awareness of gender stereotypes and sexual violence. This experience inspired Natalie to get involved with these issues, but she was not



old enough at the time to volunteer as a counselor with the sponsoring organization, the local rape crisis center. When given the opportunity during her first semester at CU-Boulder in fall 2006, she signed up for the intensive training and became a hotline counselor for the Boulder organization Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA). She also began working at the campus Women's Resource Center (WRC) and has been dedicating her time to both organizations for the past four years. At the end of her sophomore year, she was hired as the WRC's volunteer coordinator and still holds this position, working 10-15 hours each week, planning and facilitating volunteer meetings, trainings, and events.

When it came time to declare her major area of study, Natalie had only taken one course in women and gender studies. She had been interested in astronomy and Asian studies but wasn't sure about pursuing them further. Having just been hired by the WRC, it seemed right to her for "all things in her life to work together," and a women and gender studies major seemed in line with her involvement in these two organizations. Before she began her academic studies in the program, she "hadn't focused on women in the larger society." Natalie says her classes have helped her "make sense of all the new information regarding race, gender, and nationality, and have improved her analytical skills in figuring out how the world works." She found herself realizing, "All these issues matter. How do they impact us, and what can we do to change them?"

Her hard work in the classroom and in service to the campus and greater community resulted in her winning the Jean Dubofsky Scholarship in Women and Gender Studies last spring. Asked about the impact this had, leading up

to her senior year, she says that receiving the scholarship was "affirming" of her studies. "Women's studies has an activist component, combining activism with academics. Being able to do both of those has been important to me."

By May, Natalie will also complete the two-year INVST Community Leadership Program with 12 fellow CU-Boulder students who have taken classes and participated in two summer service-learning experiences (in the U.S. and in Mexico) as well as an internship and a community development project. For that project this semester, Natalie and other group members will be initiating and running a literature program for female inmates at the Boulder County jail. Natalie also participated in the women and gender studies student group WAGON for two semesters, and she runs (and was instrumental in creating) the WRC's biweekly gathering for knitting and conversation known as Bitchcraft.

Currently halfway through the Peace Corps application process and with graduation fast approaching, Natalie hopes by August to be working on a youth development project in Kazakhstan or Turkmenistan. She eventually would like to complete a master's in social work and join a nonprofit organization in social justice or community development. When asked about her outlook on the world from a gender perspective, she said she's *occasionally* cynical, knowing that in school she may be "sheltered" or "not out in the patriarchal world experiencing oppression." Does she call herself a feminist? She emphatically says, "Yes," but only as recently as last year when in light of injustices that exist she realized, "My identity as a woman mattered to me." Her positive experiences within the Women and Gender Studies Program and working at MESA and the WRC leave her with the assurance that "there are people who care about these issues, and there is hope for things to improve."

**For more information on these organizations,
please visit their websites:**

Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA)
www.movingtoendsexualassault.org

Women's Resource Center (WRC) at CU-Boulder
www.colorado.edu/womensresourcecenter

Dr. Shoba Sharad Rajgopal was one of the first students to receive the graduate certificate from our program (then Women's Studies) in 2001. Now an educator and scholar herself, she currently directs the Women's Studies minor in the Ethnic and Gender Studies Department at Westfield State College in Massachusetts. Perhaps the *typical* path of students to our program is one that is *not* typical. Dr. Rajgopal describes herself as a nontraditional student when she came to the United States for graduate school (at Kansas State University). Originally from the state of Kerala in southern India, she had already completed a master's degree and had been working in India as a broadcast journalist for some time and thought she was "too old to begin a career in academia." She found that, in the U.S., people started new careers all the time, and her prior experience gave her "an important perspective to look at media theory and especially how it developed in the Global North." After working with women in India and taking one women's studies course at KSU, she was intrigued but had no theoretical background in the field.

She entered the PhD program in media studies at CU-Boulder's School of Journalism and Mass Communication in 1997. While in graduate school, she noticed that "in many disciplines, race and gender were given very little space with hardly any engagement with feminist postcolonial or transnational theories. The western canon of white male theorists still appeared to reign supreme in the halls of academe." She began taking courses in women's studies, eventually earning the graduate certificate. To this day, she is proud to say that one of her key mentors at CU was Dr. Alison Jaggar. Dr. Rajgopal went on to teach in the Ethnic Studies Department at CU, at the invitation of then-Chair Dr. Evelyn Hu-Dehart, who was eager to incorporate international perspectives in the department. She also directed the SORCE program (Student Outreach Retention Center for Equity) at CU before joining the Women's Studies Program at Westfield State College in fall 2006 as its new coordinator.

As a scholar, Dr. Rajgopal specializes in transnational and postcolonial feminism with an additional specialty in film studies. She has an upcoming chapter "International Citizenry in the Age of Spectacle" in the book *Hollywood's Exploited* to be published by Palgrave. Dr. Rajgopal says

her position at Westfield State is "a demanding, fantastic job experience that has given me so many opportunities." She develops courses, brings faculty from other departments into the program to incorporate gender into their courses, teaches, recruits and advises students in the minor, and promotes student events in the larger community. When she asks her introductory women's studies class at the beginning of the semester how many of them identify as feminists, one out of 30 might say yes. Dr. Rajgopal uses this question as a springboard and is glad to see by the end of the semester that some students "have been transformed" through the readings and films they have encountered. She gives an example of one female student in her 20s, working as a police officer, who indicated that she "didn't believe in feminism, but in being a good wife and mother." Halfway into the course, this same student

wanted to become a women's studies minor and work with women's organizations, and she is now working to transform her police branch by taking on sexism and homophobia in the profession.

When asked about the study of women and gender and the state of feminism today and in the near future, Dr. Rajgopal says, "We are at an

exciting, defining moment. Globally, there are continuing attacks on women's rights, and there are renewed attacks on feminism in the U.S." She is offended by the term "post-feminism," which implies feminism is a movement "we don't need anymore," and equates it to saying "post-human rights." She believes that "feminists today should be less complacent, less defensive, and more confident and bold, taking on those who malign it with grace and a sense of humor, yes, through a different approach." From a transnational perspective, "changing the rhetoric of global sisterhood, acknowledging our differences, and transcending them" is one approach she describes. Dr. Rajgopal notes an "internationalizing" of the women's studies curriculum, where international issues are being incorporated throughout the course material rather than being taught as a "last chapter." She is currently developing a short-term study abroad course to take students to India to study women in modern organizations, and she hopes her students will enjoy a visit to campus by Gloria Steinem this semester!



Dr. Rajgopal (far right) with colleagues and students who performed in the play *For Colored Girls*

Alumnae/Alumni News

To share your updates in the next issue, please send them to wgst@colorado.edu.

INGRID ALONGI (1997) received a master's degree in women's studies in 2001 from San Diego State University. She now has a software engineering company called Quick Left (www.quickleft.com) in downtown Boulder that specializes in consulting for startups and builds internet-based software applications. She rediscovered her love for cycling with the opening of Boulder's indoor velodrome and began competing in track cycling. Last summer, she won several medals at the Masters Track National Championships in Colorado Springs. Follow her on Twitter @electromute.

JANELL BAUER (2009, graduate certificate) has taken a tenure-track assistant professor position in organizational communication at James Madison University in Virginia. She will begin her position in fall 2010.

KRISTINA SCHELBERT BROWN (1994) is currently an assistant professor of marriage and family therapy at the School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute in Springfield, Missouri. She is also a licensed marriage and family therapist in private practice at the Robert J. Murney Clinic specializing in women's health issues including endometriosis. Dr. Brown is married to fellow CU graduate Robert Tucker Brown (1994), and they have two children, a daughter, Taylor (13), and a son, Kyle (11).

STEFANIE CARROLL (1999), MNM, is the assistant director of the Metropolitan State College of Denver Office of Alumni Relations.

LAUREN GORENCE (2004) is currently getting her master's degree at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California to become a primary care physician assistant. She is a second year PA student right now. She hopes to specialize in women's health.

ANNEE KNIGHT (1998) is currently the exhibits manager at the Charles M. Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa, CA. She lives with her husband and two daughters in Petaluma, CA.

SARAH MCCALL (2007) is the major gifts officer at the Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund and Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C., the nation's leading organization that identifies, trains, and supports openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender candidates, campaign staff and officials. Sarah also serves on the executive committee of Women's Information Network (WIN), Washington's premiere, 1,200+ member professional and social networking organization for pro-choice, Democratic women, as the advisory council director. Follow her on Twitter @SarahM2036.

LAUREN MCCULLOCH (1998) has returned to Boulder to study law at CU after working abroad in international development and human rights. She hopes to continue her work for human rights through the legal profession.

LINDSAY MILLER (2007) is currently living in Boulder, CO and working as the Spanish bilingual nonviolence educator at Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence. SPAN is a social justice, human rights organization committed to ending violence against women, youth, and children, through support, advocacy, education, and community organizing. Lindsay also designs and sells her own jewelry, teaches dance classes, and leads wilderness courses.

DANIELLE PACIK (1995) attended law school at Franklin Pierce Law Center and now works as an assistant attorney general in the civil bureau at the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office.

KRISTIE SOARES (2009, graduate certificate) is pursuing a PhD in comparative literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is currently hard at work on her research on 20th century Cuban feminist writers.

ALLISON STARK (2001) is the director of intermittent services for a large nonprofit that serves adults and children with developmental disabilities in Chicago. She received her master's degree from the University of Chicago and is currently working on a master's degree in nonprofit management. She married fellow CU alum Brodie Austin in 2004, and they welcomed Baird Stark Austin into the world in March 2009.

PETER E. C. WILSON (2006) is working on his MFA in new media from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. He is also working full-time as the lead designer for one of the larger tour companies in the city. The skills he learned while in the Women's Studies Program have become an inherent influence on his design aesthetic, and these skills are being employed to develop inclusive online user experiences.

In our next issue . . .

Profiles of alumna Kelly Orians (2008) and
alumnus Scott Wisor (2009, graduate certificate)

Spring scholarship recipients

May graduation report, and more!

What is WAGON?

The Women and Gender Studies Organization, or WAGON, is a program-affiliated student group that is “committed to bringing positive social change to our community, on and beyond the CU campus.” Members are undergraduate majors in women and gender studies, nominated by faculty for their strong academic performance and leadership potential. Students meet weekly as a group with the faculty advisor, working together in three main areas. They plan *academic events* such as speakers and “dinner and a movie” nights, with critical discussions of films containing themes of gender, race, and class. The group coordinates *philanthropic and activist events* each semester. In addition, the WAGON members have just completed the first issue of their own *newsletter*, with student articles focusing on sexual violence and rape (see link at right). With this publication, they hope to “spread a feminist voice” and “bring awareness to persisting feminist concerns.”



Spring 2010 WAGON members

L to R (front row): Kris Mayer, Manaslu Bista, Jillian Adams
(back row): Emily Williams, Sarah McCullar, Natalie Tsantes, Lindsey Tagen, Brittany Burton, Jonni Vonburg

Read WAGON's self-produced newsletter at:
www.colorado.edu/WomensStudies/wagon.html

I want to help create futures by supporting the educational experience of students enrolled in the Women and Gender Studies Program. Enclosed is my gift of: _____

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B2167

The Maria Rogers Oral History Program



Student-conducted interviews now available online

Were you a student in the fall 2003 class *Critical Thinking in Feminist Studies*? Are you a history buff or just interested in people's experiences or the history of Boulder County? The Maria Rogers Oral History Program, through the Boulder Public Library, has recorded, preserved, and made available 1,500 oral history interviews conducted over the past 30 years of long-time Boulder residents. These transcripts and recordings document daily life as well as major county issues and events.

We are pleased to share the exciting news that these engaging and informative interviews are now available online! This is important not only to the preservation of Boulder County history, but is also relevant to our program, as our alumnae/i contributed to the creation of two special collections of interviews. The women and gender studies students from the above-mentioned class, which focused on feminist oral history and was taught by now-retired Senior Instructor Anne Marie Pois, interviewed twenty-four activist women from four significant community organizations. These activists speak of their involvement in creating social change with the YWCA, the Boulder Valley Women's Health Center (now Women's Health), Moving to End Sexual Assault (MESA), and Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (SPAN). Others were involved in issues of peace and justice with various organizations. These interviews form the special collection "Activist Women in Boulder County." Another collection, "Voices of Black Women in Boulder County," is compiled from a women's studies class taught by Professor Polly McLean in 2001.

"To me, that's what we're all about at Boulder County Safehouse, showing women that you've got this opportunity to do with your life whatever is right for you to do." — Anita Mancinho

"In 1972, not only in Boulder but in the state of Colorado, there was a massive change in elected officials. . . . There was this optimism. Being a young female was very, very exciting." — Leslie Durgin

To access the oral histories online, go to:

<http://boulderlibrary.org/oralhistory>

For any technical considerations, choose the "Technical Help" menu button near the middle top of the page. In general, you need a fast internet connection with Flash installed on your computer to *listen* to the audio. Or you may simply read the transcripts. The audio controls are located in the lower left corner of the page, and the written transcript appears in the main page, allowing you to follow the transcript and listen at the same time.

*"We'd have so much empowerment if we would listen to the stories and learn from them and learn about our longevity and connectivity and what those women did, versus what we're doing. We need that for inspiration, we need it to keep going."
— Jerilyn DeCoteau*

The interviews are listed by name and number in the far left column. To find the interviews conducted by our former students, choose "Special Collections" at the far top right, which will cause the special collections listing to be displayed in the far left dark blue column. Choose "Activist Women in Boulder County" to see a list of interviews conducted by the students from Anne Marie Pois' class in fall 2003. Select "Voices of Black Women in Boulder County" for Polly McLean's class. If you spend time browsing any of the collections or just listen to an individual interview, you'll find fascinating stories told by the people who lived them.

The inclusion of our former students' efforts in this digital archive was made possible by a grant from CU-Boulder's Service Learning Program and funding from the Boulder Public Library Foundation. Anne Marie Pois (pois@colorado.edu) continues her work in oral history, and we thank her for the update on this project.

In Memoriam

TRANSITO "TITO" EDUARDO TORRES

December 22, 1986 – December 3, 2009



It is with great sadness that we share the loss of our student, friend, and classmate Transito "Tito" Torres. Yet it is with joy that we remember such a compassionate, dedicated, and genuine individual. He touched each of our lives and continues to inspire us.

Tito was born in El Salvador and came to the United States at age three, growing up in East Palo Alto, California, a community rife with economic hardship. Life was not always easy for Tito and his family, but Tito took the opportunity to attend East Palo Alto Academy, a public charter school associated with Stanford University, and he graduated in the top 10% of his class. When Tito came to CU-Boulder in the fall of 2005, he was the first in his family to attend college. In addition to his studies, he fought for social justice in his everyday life and worked tirelessly as an activist with many campus organizations, including the Women's Resource Center and the GLBT Resource Center. Tito chose to major in women and gender studies and was a member of our student organization WAGON and the former student advisory board WGSTAB. Tito also served as a resident advisor, enjoyed playing soccer and ultimate frisbee, and loved science fiction movies.

We remember Tito as someone who always appreciated the beauty in every person. He was a true ambassador for the Women and Gender Studies Program, a gifted and passionate writer, and someone who "walked the walk" for all that he believed in. We will remember his ever-present smile that lit up the room each time he entered. At the May graduation ceremony, Tito's family will proudly accept his degree from the University of Colorado, as we celebrate the difference Tito made and the impact he had on our CU community.

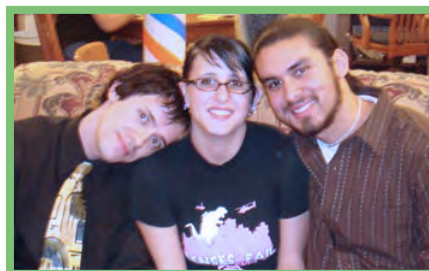
BRAVE
INSPIRING
INVOLVED

ACTIVIST

FEMINIST



Tito with fellow student Kelly Orians



Peter Wilson, Gina Calo, and Tito



BROTHER

FRIEND

University of Colorado at Boulder
Women and Gender Studies Program
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Boulder, CO 80309-0246

Save Paper!

To receive this newsletter by email and in **full color**, please notify us at wgst@colorado.edu.

Bolder Voices

Women and Gender Studies Program Newsletter

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Anne Costain

Faculty

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Alison Jaggard, Deepti Misri, Celeste Montoya

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Women and Gender Studies Speaker Series
Global Studies on Gender and Sexuality

NUBILE INDIAN / MOBILE INDIAN

Marriage, Migration and Memory in the Indian Empire

by **Dr. Shefali Chandra**

Assistant Professor of History and International and Area Studies
at Washington University in St. Louis

Thursday, April 15th, 2010, 4pm
*Helen Carpenter Reading Room
Gates Woodruff Cottage*

For more events sponsored by our program and by other campus organizations, visit our event listing:

www.colorado.edu/WomensStudies/Events.html