



SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER



Outside of the Classroom: Our students share their work

One of the objectives which the Women's and Gender Studies program at UNI is increasing its visibility on campus and in the community. Our students strive to achieve that while proceeding with their academic journey. Because off-campus academic involvement is instrumental to one's academic path, the WGS program works to help its students live up to that by providing them with the support needed. Thanks to the continuous support amongst faculty, staff and cohorts, some of our students were able to share their research and accomplishments with a wider range of audiences.

Hasina Jalal, a first year graduate student who comes to UNI from Afghanistan, presented her paper titled "How work is gendered and genders Afghan women" in the Non-profit Leadership Conference for which she came in second place. Hasina has also written two grant proposals for the Jalal Foundation and was awarded the grant for both.

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MINORS AND
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ADJUSTMENTS**

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 UNI Women's & Gender Studies

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OUR STUDENTS SHARE THEIR WORK (CONTINUED)

Melody Kosobucki, a first year graduate student from Minnesota, made bringing in Madonna Thunder Hawk possible thanks to her effort at putting the grant proposal together. Melody took a grant writing course in Fall 2019 and offered to have her final project be to write a grant enabling WGS to bring Madonna Thunder Hawk to UNI. She worked with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at UNI and WGS was awarded a grant from Humanities Iowa in late February 2020.

Similarly, Ahlam Laouar, a second year graduate student who comes from Algeria, has also presented a chapter from her thesis titled "Bleeding Cuts, Sealed Hymens, Magical Spells: How we Locked our Daughters against Patriarchy" in the National Association of African American Studies in Dallas. It was her first time presenting at a national conference in the U.S., she says: "Attending and presenting in NAAAS has brought me closer to that part in me that is passionate about academia."

Sara Naughton, a second year student from Pennsylvania wrote the featured "Speak Out" article for the UNI magazine *Uprising*. The article is on Universal Design and accessibility which is related to her research project. You can read the article featured in Issue 9 of *Uprising* here: <http://www.jointheuprisingmagazine.com/issue-9.html>

From Zambia comes our first year graduate student Phales Milimo who attended the UNI Day in Des Moines with the Center for Violence Prevention (CVP). Phales had the opportunity to showcase the work that CVP does in the State Capital together with the center's directors. She also had the chance to speak with Governor Reynolds and other key legislators about the impact CVP effects on PreK-16 education.

As we continue supporting our students to meet their goals, we aspire to influence others to pursue theirs as well. The Women's and Gender Studies program at UNI goes beyond providing students with scholarly experiences to helping them unearth their hidden talents.



From left to right: Melody Kosobucki, Ahlam Laouar, Sara Naughton, Phales Milimo

A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dr. Wendy Hoofnagle

Greetings!

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Women's and Gender Studies program at UNI! We are pleased to be able to share our successes and challenges with you and hope that the following accomplishments of our students and faculty provide at least a brief respite from the "new normal." Despite the significant changes that have occurred in all of our lives recently, I have hope for the future of WGS thanks to the great promise that these bright individuals demonstrate each day, and I hope that their stories inspire you as well. The energy and enthusiasm that they bring to the WGS community have truly sustained me during these difficult times!

We have all faced a variety of hurdles as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and I firmly believe that the empathy and engagement that WGS fosters is needed now more than ever. Before March, the program was vigorous and growing exponentially, with ambitious plans for the future. Although the challenges brought by the pandemic response have slowed this progress, we look forward to the coming academic year which will once again bring new opportunities as we welcome several new students from around the globe to share their unique perspectives as they also embrace new ideas and skills. Sometimes it is difficult for me to remember that real change must happen on the micro level to be effective and sustainable, but the lessons that these remarkable individuals teach me remind me that the world can, and will, embrace the ideals of social justice that have been the cornerstone of feminist activism and scholarship for generations, as a result of their passion and persistence.

WGS programs have overcome great obstacles in the past to become nurturing communities where many of us have found a place to call home. Perhaps more than any other academic program, they stand as a prime example of what we can achieve as a result of the free and open exchange of ideas combined with the application of interdisciplinary scholarship to real-world problems. As we move forward and continue to build on the important work of those who came before us, I am grateful for your continued support and welcome your ideas for continued growth and improvement.

Best wishes,

Wendy Marie Hoofnagle



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. VICTORIA DEFRANCISCO



One of WGS' most dedicated affiliate faculty members, Dr. Victoria DeFrancisco, is retiring from UNI! In the past 31 years that she has been on UNI's campus, she has contributed so much to the WGS program. She joined our advisory board her very first year in 1989 and has remained an active participant through the present. Victoria has always been someone who has stepped in and served our program whenever she has been asked. A fierce advocate for women's rights and our student's visibility, she has always maintained a relationship with our cohorts and then alumni, because it is that important to her.

Victoria has held a number of roles within WGS. While she has been a steadfast member on our advisory board, from 1994-1998 she was the Director for Undergraduate Students when there were two separate directors. In 1995, during her tenure as director, she was a UNI Representative at the United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations Conference on Women in Beijing, China. She also served as Interim WGS Director in both 2006 and 2016. Not only has she been a director, but she also has been on thesis and research committees and more recently was the Committee Chair for a student's research in 2015. During the spring of 2019, she stepped in and taught our Comparative Feminist Theory course where she became close with this year's graduating cohort. Other courses for WGS she has taught in the last decade include: Gender Issues in Communication, WGS Practicum, WGS Internship, and the WGS Comparative Feminist Theory. We have been truly blessed to have a caring affiliate faculty member dedicate so much of her time to our program.

Thanks to her tireless dedication, she was instrumental in organizing both the 20th and the 40th Anniversary of WGS at UNI. During our 40th Anniversary planning, she contacted many of her graduated alumni personally to see how they were doing and to invite them to the presentation and party. Due to her activism, her likability and true caring, we as a department received scholarship monies from one of our alumni for students who will travel outside of the US to do research.

On top of all she has done for WGS, Victoria's home department (Communication Studies) service is just as remarkable. Throughout her 31 years there, she held various leadership roles also as she was the Director of Graduate Studies from 1990-1994. Her home department is currently nominating her for Emeritus status when she retires. Additional honors she has received while on campus are listed in her recommendation letter.

"The merits of Dr. DeFrancisco's teaching, scholarship, and service have already been recognized by a number of awards, including the Iowa American Association of University Women Distinguished Faculty Award in 2002, UNI's Ross A. Nielsen Professional Service Award for Faculty in 2003, the Iowa Board of Regents Award for Faculty Excellence in 2004, the UNI Outstanding Graduate Faculty Teaching Award in 2011, and the UNI Diversity Matters Award in 2014. It is only fitting that this impressive list of awards be capped off with the awarding of emeritus status."

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. DEFRANCISCO (CONT.)

We asked Dr. DeFrancisco a couple of questions as she prepares to retire in June.

WGS: How have you seen the WGS program develop since your time as both director and interim director?

"It has changed greatly – grown-- in some important ways. One of the hallmarks of feminist theory is the openness that is encouraged for self-reflexivity and critical analysis. Through that, the WGS program here and around the country has acknowledged the previously limited focus on the concerns of primarily white educated women, and broadened its lenses to include more diverse voices and analyses of one's own privileges in the construction of academic theory and knowledge. At UNI, the title of the program was changed in 2006 from Women's Studies to Women's and Gender Studies to reflect this broadened scope; the focus of study is not just about those who identify as women, but about the social construct of gender and wide range of identities possible. And again, in 2015, the name of the undergraduate program was changed to make a stronger recognition that sexual orientation and identity are central to the analysis of gender, race, class, ethnicity, abilities and more. Sexuality, Women's and Gender Studies or SWAG, was born, and with it students with minors in the program. They saw an academic place to call home while also being encouraged to take on more intellectual challenges in their education.

The program has not changed in some other important ways. The UNI WGS program has maintained the tradition of offering extensive outreach programming campus-wide to help educate the campus and local community about issues of social justice and diversity, as well as to instill hearts for doing civic activism and to celebrate the humanities. It provides opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, see education from a highly interdisciplinary perspective, and bring a unique critical lens to their major areas of studies. It gives graduates a point of distinction; they have the necessary tools to build a more diverse, inclusive world. In 2000, graduate student Amymarie Mosier proposed teaching students strategies to help prevent gendered violence instead of focusing solely on helping victims after the abuse. She and Director Annette Lynch won a \$500,000 Department of Justice grant to found what has grown as the Center for Violence Prevention at UNI. The staff and interns there provide leadership in developing and presenting programs around the state and beyond on effective methods to include men and boys as a part of the solution to gendered violence prevention.

Another constant has been the strong students and faculty WGS attracts. Thanks largely to that proposal written by Dr. Martha Reineke, WGS has a graduate program that attracts an exceptionally knowledgeable and diverse student body, particularly Fullbright scholars and LGBTQ individuals. The students not only enhance their own knowledge and skills to bring back to their home countries and communities, but they enhance the educational environment for those of us who have the pleasure to study with them while at UNI.

I joined the WGS advisory board in 1989, my first year at UNI because I was looking for a home -- an intellectual, social-emotional home. I found it, and WGS is still that for me today."

WGS: What are you most looking forward to upon retirement?

"As you get older, you realize how much you have missed out by working so much. I hope for more free time to enjoy my family and friends, read for fun, help out in the community and travel."

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: DR. DEFRANCISCO (CONT.)

Photos of Dr. DeFrancisco through the years!



WGS Minor Graduates with Dr. DeFrancisco



AAUW Outstanding Scholarship Award Presented to Martha Reinike, Spring, 1998



Spring 2017 with WGS cohorts



Fall 2016 with Dr. MacGillivray



WGS 20th Anniversary Celebration



PROGRAMMING NEWS

SWAG (Sexuality, Women, and Gender) Forum

This spring, WGS finished off the 2019-2020 SWAG Forum series with fantastic presentations related to research of issues of sexuality, women, and gender. Dr. Jolene Zigarovich of the UNI English Department kicked off the semester in February with her presentation titled, "Drugged Rapes, Tactile Flesh, & 18th Century Fiction." In March, we welcomed Dr. Jayme Renfro of the UNI Political Science Department where she presented her research titled, "Jackie & Jill Robinson: Women and the Need to Be Better at Politics." Thank you to Dr. Renfro and Dr. Zigarovich for their contributions to this semester's SWAG Forum! Due to COVID-19 cancellations, unfortunately we were not able to host the April SWAG Forum, which typically features the winner of the WGS Outstanding Graduate Paper award. The award will be postponed until October. SWAG Forums present unique opportunities for the UNI community to learn about ongoing research and work from different academic fields, and we look forward to continuing with our monthly forums next semester. See you next year!



Sexual Assault Awareness Month Events

WGS was looking forward to hosting our annual Take Back the Night rally and march in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April). This year, we were also planning to provide survivor and educational resources and activities for National Rainn Day (April 14) for our campus community. Unfortunately, like many campus programs and events, these were cancelled due to Covid-19. Rest assured, Take Back the Night and other important events for Sexual Assault Awareness month will take place next April and we look forward to seeing you then!



UNI WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES PRESENTS

MARCH

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Visit csbs.uni.edu/womenstudies/events
for event listing & details



In celebration of Women's History Month, each March WGS takes the time to honor and celebrate the many achievements of women throughout time, both on our campus and across the globe. As part of the celebration, WGS organized and collaborated with several departments and student organizations on campus to organize educational and social programs. This year's Women's History Month also featured special events meant to recognize the centennial anniversary of the 19th Amendment! Here are some highlights of Women's History Month 2020:

- Warrior Women Screening with Madonna Thunder Hawk (WGS, UNI Geography, School of Applied Human Sciences, with assistance from David O'Shields and Humanities Iowa)
- Carrie Chapman Catt: Iowa PBS Documentary Screening & Panel Discussion (WGS, UNI Political Science, UNI History)
- A Rising Tide: The Final Victorious Wave of the Women's Suffrage Movement (UNI Political Science and American Democracy Project)
- Women in Red: Wikipedia Editathon (Rod Library, Northern Iowa Feminists)
- UNI History Lecture Series: Bodies that Argue: How Suffragists Constituted White Women's Citizenship During the 1919 Prison Special Tour (Dr. Palcsewski)

As you probably know, unfortunately many Women's History Month events and programs were not able to take place due to COVID-19 cancellations and closures. We appreciate the hard work put into these important programs, even if they did not take place. The Women's History Month keynote speaker, Gabby Rivera, was supposed to visit UNI on March 26th. This event will now take place in Spring 2021, so please keep an eye out for information related to this event!





PROGRAMMING NEWS (CONT.)

Warrior Women: Documentary Screening and Q+A with Filmmakers

This year we kicked off Women's History Month by welcoming Native American Activist Madonna Thunder Hawk and documentary filmmaker Elizabeth Castle to UNI for a screening of their award-winning film *Warrior Women*. The film follows Thunder Hawk, along with other Native American women, on their journey of activism at the forefront of Native issues. Following a screening of the documentary, Madonna Thunder Hawk and Elizabeth Castle answered questions from the audience about the film and their work together, which spans over a decade. This special event at UNI provided our students and community with an exceptional opportunity to meet a renowned activist and Native American icon and hear her inspiring story. You can watch the Q+A on our website here: <https://csbs.uni.edu/womenstudies/warrior-women-qa>

During their visit, some of our graduate students also enjoyed a sit-down lunch and conversation with Castle and Thunder Hawk prior to the event, where they were able to discuss activism, academic research, and other current events.

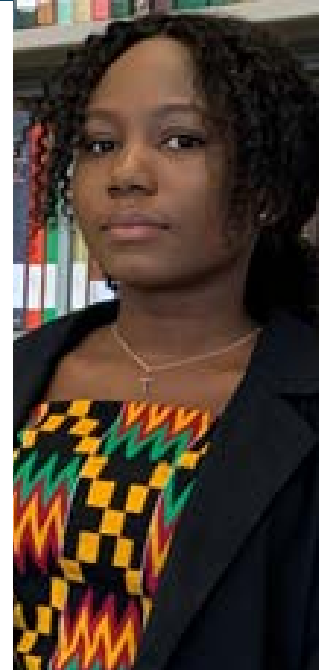
This event was made possible thanks to WGS, Department of Geography, School of Applied Human Sciences, and with assistance from David O'Shields and Humanities Iowa. We'd like to thank Melody Kosobucki, a WGS graduate student and Programming Assistant, who coordinated the grant application materials and submission for Humanities Iowa!



Meet our New Spring Semester Graduate Student!

Sedomda Kpikpitse
she/her/hers

Sedomda Kpikpitse is from Ghana. She holds a bachelor's degree in Renewable Natural Resource Management from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. Sedomda is passionate about women's health and safety especially women involved in agricultural activities in Ghana. Growing up she experienced how women in her country contribute largely to the economy through agricultural production yet little attention is given to them in terms of their health and well being. Sedomda is inspired by this and will be carrying out research intended to identify the health issues of women due to agricultural activities and seek for possible intervention from the government and other stakeholders to address issues of women's health due to agricultural activities. She is the co-founder of the AgWomen Development Network where she uses this platform to empower women through Advocacy, leadership, training, and Agribusiness for rural women to reach their full potential. She loves fashion and always uses her sense of fashion to promote clothing from her country.



“ I am interested in women's health due to agricultural activities because women's role and exposure do not only affect their reproductive health but other health issues such as physical injuries, and mental health. I intend to work closely with rural women especially by educating and seeking accessible healthcare for them to reduce their health risks. ”



Keep up with our cohorts on our social media accounts!



UNI Women's & Gender Studies



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Meet our SWAG Minors

Kelsey Cain

she/her/hers

Kelsey is a Sociology Major with a SWAG minor. She is in Junior standing and joins us from Hawkeye Community College where she completed her first year of college. Kelsey is an officer in both the Sociology and Northern Iowa Feminist Clubs on campus! Her future plans include becoming a professor!

☀️ Fun Fact: I am an only child!

“ I chose SWAG because women’s issues are not discussed in education nearly enough. I also wanted to learn more about how to discuss and learn about feminist issues in a more intersectional way. ”



Elle Boeding

she/her/hers



Elle is a Junior at UNI studying Political Communication and Philosophy. She is minoring in SWAG, and Politics and Law!

This year, Elle served as a Resident Assistant in Campbell Hall and the Vice President of Public Relations for Student Admissions Ambassadors. She is in her third year as a member of Summer Orientation Staff, is on the Student Conduct Board, and is the president of 50/50 in 2020 promoting public service for underrepresented individuals. Elle has been involved with students in a variety of ways. For the past three years, she has been an assistant to a student with a disability, helping them to perform daily tasks. Elle is also a member of Northern Iowa Feminists, and UNI Proud. This past year she served as a Senator in Northern Iowa Student Government. During her time in NISG, Elle served on three committees: External Relations, Government and Legislative Affairs, and Campus Relations. Additionally, Elle is a member of the Legislative Liaison Team advocating on behalf of student interests at the Iowa Legislature. In February, she was elected Student Body President, and is very excited to start her term on April 15th! Elle plans to go to graduate school for Student Affairs.

☀️ Fun Fact: I have been to 43 of the 50 states!

“ Feminist issues were originally what drew me to politics and activism, and I came into college knowing that I wanted to take classes about social justice issues, but I wasn't sure how. After talking with a previous Sexuality, Women and Gender studies student, they encouraged me to take the introductory class and I fell in love! My classes for my SWAG minor have been some of my favorites during my time at UNI. They push me to think more broadly, look at issues from different perspectives, confront my own privileges, and examine my identities. Having a SWAG minor has assisted me greatly in my ability to serve others, engage in discussions regarding social justice, and advocate for others. ”

WGS Adjusts to COVID-19

The Coronavirus or Covid-19 pandemic during the Spring of 2020 has caused many countries to shut down with a great cost to lives, economic stability and mental stability. How has it affected UNI? UNI has had to adjust in this spring of chaos just as everyone else has. Here is a chronicle of our experience.

UNI's Incident Command System (ICS) administrative group, an integrated management system intended to protect the health and safety of the university made recommendations that were approved by the university regarding events on campus. Here is a list of all changes UNI has gone through spring semester 2020.

January 31, 2020 – March 2, 2020 – Travel restrictions to China, South Korea, and Italy

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 – UNI's preparations to date and UNI COVID-19 Webpage creation

March 5-6, 2020 – Board of Regents recommends moratorium on all international travel, recalls students, faculty and staff from any country that the CDC designates a Level 3, Summer Study Abroad Programs officially cancelled

Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – First COVID-19 positive patient in Iowa, Board of Regents has asked the three Regent Institutions to move towards the ability to deliver instruction virtually

Wednesday, March 11, 2020 – UNI temporarily shifts to exclusive online courses after Spring Break through April 3rd, student support services and facilities remain open

Thursday, March 12, 2020 – Campus gatherings are cancelled through April 6th if more than 25 are expected to be in attendance

Friday, March 13, 2020 – UNI Athletics cancels all athletics through the remaining Academic Year

Saturday, March 14, 2020 – Governor Reynolds implemented a moratorium on all non-essential travel by state employees, this includes domestic travel as well as international travel

Monday, March 16, 2020 – UNI announces closure of facilities including: Maucker Student Union, Rod Library, Wellness/Rec Center. GBPAC has postponed some performances. Employees are to implement social-distancing techniques in workspaces

Tuesday, March 17, 2020 – Governor Reynolds issues a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency, Gallagher Bluedorn and UNItix box offices close

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 – Board of Regents declare a Regents State of Emergency, UNI encourages employees to work remotely, online courses extended through remainder of spring semester and summer, Spring 2020 Commencement is cancelled, Student Health Clinic is moving to telehealth appointments only, WGS cancels SWAG Forum for April

Thursday, March 19, 2020 – Students are asked to move out of dorms

Tuesday, March 24, 2020 – Research activity is restricted, no person to person contact, out-of-state Spring Break travelers are REQUIRED to self-quarantine for 14 days, prepare to help students with technology issues, outdoor WiFi access on campus, academic buildings on campus open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m

Monday, March 30, 2020 – U-Bill credits: Dorms: 39.17% , Dining: 43.12%, Lab fees: 44.3%, Rec fee: 43.2%, Parking permit: prorated, there are course grading extensions and UNI is working on a virtual commencement

Wednesday, April 8, 2020 – #UNITogether UNI-Foundation.org to help students in need, campus buildings will be closed for deep cleaning, employees are to continue to work from home

Thursday, April 16, 2020 – University confirms first case of COVID-19

Friday, April 17, 2020 – WGS establishes a weekly Zoom Happy Hour for students and staff in the department to socialize and stay connected

Friday, April 24, 2020 – CARES Act Fund for Students directly assists our students with expenses such as food, housing, course materials, technology, child care, healthcare and other related costs incurred after our campus shifted to remote coursework due to COVID-19



A photo of students and staff during a Friday Zoom Happy Hour



AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Let's congratulate our Spring 2020 award winners!

Agathon Fellowship

This fellowship supports students, (graduate and/or undergraduate) who have demonstrated a strong commitment to, and have had active roles in, supporting the LGBTQ+ community.

The 2020 Agathon Fellowship Award winner is **Melody Kosobucki!** Congrats, Melody!

Francis L. Webster Scholarship

The Francis L. Webster Scholarship seeks to support any declared WGS graduate student or Sexuality, Women and Gender (SWAG) minor who has completed or is completing at least six hours of Women's and Gender Studies required courses, and who will not graduate before December 2020. Congratulations to the Francis L. Webster 2020 awardee, **Katelyn Brockmeyer!**

Outstanding Graduate Paper Award

Due to Covid-19 cancellations, the Outstanding Graduate Paper Award has been postponed until October 2020, so that the winner can still present their research at a SWAG Forum.

NOTABLES & QUOTABLES

