Chair’s Update

Diana Scully

I am very pleased to call your attention to the title change for this column which now is the Chair’s Update! By a unanimous vote of the VCU Board of Visitor’s last spring, the status of Women’s Studies changed from a program to the Department of Women’s Studies. This is an important step for a number of reasons. It makes Women’s Studies comparable to other undergraduate programs in the university and it will have a positive impact on the recruitment of students into the BA in Women’s Studies which was approved effective spring, 2007. Eventually, it also should mean that Women’s Studies can recruit faculty in single (as opposed to joint) appointments since Women’s Studies can now be a tenure home. In turn, this eventually should result in an increase in the number of courses Women’s Studies is able to offer.

Women’s Studies clearly is growing. This May, I will have the honor of bestowing degrees on a record 18 graduates at the Women’s Studies Diploma Ceremony on May 17 in the Commons Theater at 1:00 pm.

As you will read throughout this newsletter, it has been a banner year for international activities in Women’s Studies. The Department hosted an international scholar, Dr. Nadia El Kholy, as a Visiting Professor of Women’s Studies this spring. Nadia is Professor and Chair of the Department of English at Cairo University in Egypt (See Interview with Dr. Nadia El Kholy, p. 2). Students from a number of programs in the College benefited from her courses which included two sections of Arab Women’s Writers (See Arab Women Writers, p. 4) cross-listed with English and International Studies and one section of Women in Developing Countries cross-listed with International Studies. Nadia spent last spring as a Fulbright Scholar in the School of World Studies and it was my pleasure to welcome back a good colleague and friend.

Women’s Studies first International Experience Scholar, Shayne Thomas, spent the fall, 2007 semester in Bangkok, Thailand and educated the audience about the effects of issues. (See Living on a Landfill, p. 4) cross-listed with Asian Studies and one section of Women’s Studies/Asian Studies cross-listed with International Studies. Shayne dazzled a capacity audience of students and faculty with her impressive slide show, Living on a Landfill, which chronicled her insightful and lasting impressions of Thailand and educated the audience about the effects of development and globalization on a broad range of issues. (See Living on a Landfill, p. 2). This spring, Shayne dazzled a capacity audience of students and faculty with her impressive slide show, Living on a Landfill, which chronicled her insightful and lasting impressions of Thailand and educated the audience about the effects of development and globalization on a broad range of issues.

Women’s Studies has Heritage

Women’s Studies clearly is growing. This May, I will have the honor of bestowing degrees on a record 18 graduates at the Women’s Studies Diploma Ceremony on May 17 in the Commons Theater at 1:00 pm.

As you will read throughout this newsletter, it has been a banner year for international activities in Women’s Studies. The Department hosted an international scholar, Dr. Nadia El Kholy, as a Visiting Professor of Women’s Studies this spring. Nadia is Professor and Chair of the Department of English at Cairo University in Egypt (See Interview with Dr. Nadia El Kholy, p. 2). Students from a number of programs in the College benefited from her courses which included two sections of Arab Women’s Writers (See Arab Women Writers, p. 4) cross-listed with English and International Studies and one section of Women in Developing Countries cross-listed with International Studies. Nadia spent last spring as a Fulbright Scholar in the School of World Studies and it was my pleasure to welcome back a good colleague and friend.

Women’s Studies first International Experience Scholar, Shayne Thomas, spent the fall, 2007 semester in Bangkok, Thailand and educated the audience about the effects of issues. (See Living on a Landfill, p. 4) cross-listed with Asian Studies and one section of Women’s Studies/Asian Studies cross-listed with International Studies. Shayne dazzled a capacity audience of students and faculty with her impressive slide show, Living on a Landfill, which chronicled her insightful and lasting impressions of Thailand and educated the audience about the effects of development and globalization on a broad range of issues. (See Living on a Landfill, p. 2).

Eventually I began looking for study abroad programs in Thailand that dealt with anything remotely connected to the sex industry. The closest I came was a program through the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) based in Khon Kaen, Thailand. The CIEE Khon Kaen program focused on development and globalization and promised to look at a broad range of issues that fell under that umbrella. I assumed the program would, at least briefly, look at the sex industry because development in Thailand has resulted in jobs moving from rural areas to urban areas, thus forcing people to migrate to cities where many job opportunities exist in the sex industry. The only problem was the price of the CIEE program! Through the 2007 Women’s Studies International Experiences Scholarship and a scholarship from the Office of International Education, my dreams came true and I had the wonderful opportunity of spending fall 2007 studying abroad in Thailand with CIEE.

(Continued on page 3)
Dr. Nadia El Kholy, Visiting Scholar in Women’s Studies

Perry Threlfall

Chatting with Dr. Nadia El Kholy is like taking a course in feminist cultural studies. I am struck by the lack of pretension with which she relates her accomplishments and inspired by the description of her life’s work.

The youngest of three children, Dr. El Kholy was born in Alexandria, Egypt and attended a private English school in Cairo and then Cairo University where she studied English Language and Literature, graduating with highest honors. In 1982, she earned an MA in Children’s Literature from The American University in Cairo. After completing her master’s degree, Dr. El Kholy was offered a joint supervision appointment to study towards a Ph.D. at Brasenose College, Oxford. Immediately appointed a ‘demonstrator’ and given a tenure track position at the University of Cairo where she is currently a professor and Chair of the Department of English. She is married with two children, a daughter and son, both in college.

Women achieving in higher education is not an exceptional phenomena from Dr. El Kholy’s viewpoint. “Women have achieved many rights in Egypt,” but feminism in Egypt is very different than in America” she notes. Women in Egypt do not view equality in the same way as women in the west and they are clear that they wish to work for equality within their own framework. Dr. El Kholy views the western feminist movement as very different but complimentary to its sister in the Arab world.

When asked about the traditional veiling of women in Islam, Dr. El Kholy responded that it was not required after the 1930’s. Her grandmother did not veil, nor did her mother. “It was part of the old Harem system. Women were never seen in public without a chaperone which, for upper class women, had to be a eunuch.” Dr. El Kholy explains that there was a return to the custom of veiling during the 1970’s as an expression of anti-western resistance. “It was sort of a response to the western ethnocentric imperialism that came with the Sadat regime. There was a rise in Fundamentalism during this time, so the Islamic garb was a response to that cultural shift” she explains. “However, I have never worn a veil.”

Although she has translated a great deal of English literature into Egyptian, she prefers to bring Egyptian literature to the English speaking world in order to promote Egyptian culture in the west. Her current work includes the rewriting of Egyptian Folktales in literary form in collaboration with Professor Jack Zipes at the University of Minnesota where she spent a very frigid semester working with him as a Fulbright Scholar. For her series of children’s stories entitled Kilma Kilma (Word by Word), Dr. El Kholy was awarded the Suzanne Mubarak Children’s Literature Award in 1999. Her dedication to literacy and early children’s literature is evident in her work since 1993 as a UNICEF Consultant for the Promotion of Children’s Literature in Egypt as well as her membership on a number of Egyptian and international boards dedicated to children’s literacy. Additionally, she has translated many classic children’s books including ‘Goodnight Moon.’

Dr. El Kholy’s interests include women writers, particularly British women writers, and Arab women warriors in the old epoch style Arab literature. She has translated ancient Arab texts into English and in doing so explored the topic of Arab women warriors during the crusades. In addition, Dr. El Kholy was chosen to translate some of the works of the Nobel Prize winning Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz for English release. Currently, Dr. El Kholy is the contributing editor of a Feminist Press series on Women Writing Africa. She is an editor and contributor to the volume on The Northern Region due for release this spring.

(Continued on page 6)
Living on a Landfill
And Other Experiences Studying Abroad in Thailand

Shayne Thomas

(Continued from page 1)

The program was unique because of its emphasis on active and experiential learning. Instead of sitting in stuffy classrooms, students had the opportunity to live in communities and engage with community members about their lives. We spent our time in many provinces in Isan (the northeast) learning first hand about how people are affected by things such as free trade agreements, HIV, dams, mines and chemical farming but, sadly, not the sex industry.

Our semester was divided into five units: urban, food, water, land, and movements and trends. In the urban unit, we stayed with families who were forced to move to the downtown area of Khon Kaen to look for better jobs. Our time was spent living in a slum (their preferred term) community that was dealing with the threat of forced evictions and in a community that lives and works at the city's landfill.

We lived with a farming community in Surin during the food unit and had the opportunity to meet with several groups working with local farmers to help them make the change from chemical to organic farming. In this community, we learned about the harms of chemical farming, the Green Revolution, and mono-cropping.

In the water unit, we stayed with two different communities affected by the construction of two large dams: the Pak Mun Dam (used for electricity) and the Rasi Sali Dam (used for irrigation). We learned about villagers’ protests and research that warned the World Bank not to fund the construction of these dams. Despite research and the efforts of villagers, both dams were built. Living with families in these two communities, we learned how the dams had caused fish extinction and destroyed the river’s eco-system, as well as villagers’ livelihoods.

We stayed in Udon Thani during the land unit, a community where members have waged a ten year fight against a huge transnational corporation that intends to construct a potash mine. Realizing that the primary use for potash is in chemical fertilizers, the community went completely organic! During our home stays in this community we had the opportunity to meet with the Udon Thani Conservation Club, as well as the Iron Ladies, a group of community women who are responsible for organizing the mine protest.

The movements and trends unit was spent mostly in Bangkok but also in several other provinces in Thailand. We had the opportunity to meet with many great people and groups including: SWING, an organization in the red light district of Pat Pong that works with male and transgender sex workers; people living with HIV/AIDS; a community of self-sustainable Buddhists who are fighting against globalization; the first Thai woman to be ordained as a novice nun, Dhammananda Bhikkhuni; and the famous Thai social critic, Sulak Sivaraksa.

During the last three weeks of the semester we worked on small group projects in some of the communities we had visited. I spent my final project time working on a photo exhibit with a community that lives and works at the landfill in Khon Kaen. The people of Kam Bon Noi are scavengers; they sort through trash at the landfill for recyclables that can be sold at the city’s recycling center. Through their hard work, the life of the landfill has been extended by eight years so far. Unfortunately, scavengers make up part of Thailand’s large informal work sector and as such receive no protection or benefits, despite how much money they are saving the city.

In hopes of spreading awareness about the community and the important work they do, two other students and I worked with community members to develop a photo exhibit which was displayed at a human rights festival held at Khon Kaen University. The exhibit included profiles of each community member who contributed to the exhibit as well as descriptions of their photographs.*

The people I met, the communities I stayed with, and the stories I heard while in Thailand will always be with me. I feel so lucky to have had this experience that I want to share everything I learned with anyone who will listen! I am currently finishing my last semester at Virginia Commonwealth University and hope to return to Thailand as an intern with the CIEE program in Khon Kaen next year. My goal is to continue learning about community organizing and the fight to promote social justice and to use my degree in Women’s Studies to develop programs aimed at women and girls and sex workers.

For more about my experiences in Thailand, feel free to check out my blog at: www.livejournal.com/users/globalshayne.  

* The Kam Bon Noi Landfill Photo Exhibit will be on display at Ipanema Café, 917 W. Grace St., Richmond, VA from April 6 to May 1.
In modern Arab history, the most common role of the intellectual has been that of the rebel whose activism agitates for a revolutionary consciousness. For Arab women authors, the function of writing occupies center stage as a mission for which they hold themselves accountable. The meaning Arab women writers attach to the practice of their craft goes beyond mere delight in creating a work of the imagination, or the projection of their anger against injustice to a forceful commitment to change political and social reality. The role of the imagination and the creative process becomes instrumental in the development of the human consciousness.

Among Arab women writers, local variations account for their multi-faced vision and an artistic creativity of diverse modes. A medley of factors has a bearing on how they situate themselves, namely; the particulars of the social and physical environment of urban and rural contexts, the class dimension of individual personalities and the constituents of the intellectual formation. In a developing part of the world where illiteracy is still wide spread and the overwhelming majority of women are preoccupied with the harsh reality of daily living, it is necessary to mention that women writers in the Arab world do not represent all the segments of the society. Because educational opportunities are class-based, girls from lower-class families have significantly less access to proper schooling. Most writers come from a social background which has been able to provide the education and resources needed for intellectual pursuits.

Creative writing by Arab women is political, formed and informed by the socio-historical context; the material and social circumstances of the writer are written into her work. The writer emerges as the consciousness of the nation; a recorder of a collective underground reality and a scribe of its muted and unwritten history. Women's issues and the specificities of a woman writer’s vision are interlaced with the concerns of the collective. Individual plight is perceived in the broad national context that transcends personal angst. Their production reflects the broader engagement of women in the details of social and political lives of their countries. It proves beyond a shadow of doubt that women are not living on the margin of social and political events during the most difficult times in the history of the Arab world. Rather they are deeply engaged in discussing the destiny of their own people, and in addressing the details of their battles against oppression and injustice. Writing is used as a weapon that re-inscribes women in such ways that shatter and disrupt the patriarchal establishment's predetermined hierarchies while infusing these same discourses with more realistic representations.

For the most part, the tradition of women's participation in, and contribution to, Arabic cultural discourse have for long remained on the edge of the literary stage. Writers have been relegated marginal and/ or subordinated positions. However, as the range and strength of this literature became undeniable, a process of incorporation has taken place in which the mainstream has acknowledged the value of these works and their writers. Thus, a major achievement of contemporary Arab women lies in bringing a marginalized existence into representation and putting into discourse the Arab female subjectivity.

Selected Bibliography
Abouzeid, Leila. Year of the Elephant. Austin, Texas: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, c1989.

From the Judy Chicago Heritage Panels (see next page)

In ancient Egypt, men and women were equal under the law. All landed property went through the female line and men and women worked side by side and were paid in proportion to their work.

North Africa, 850 BC- Dido: founder of Carthage
Egypt, 2420 BC- Hashop: Queen and Architect
Egypt, 1300 BC- Nefertiti: Prominent Ruler
Acrophal- Lillith: Mother of the Human Race
Hebrew 1500 BC- Zipporah: Medical Scholar

Dr. Deirdre Condit will be the Keynote speaker at the
Virginia NOW State Conference
“Sexism and Politics in 2008”
Saturday, May 17, 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Barcroft Community House,
800 S. Buchanan Street, Arlington 22204
The next time you come by the Department of Women’s Studies offices , take the time to enjoy the new Judy Chicago Heritage Panel posters that we recently installed along the hallway across from the conference room. The Heritage Panels are a part of ‘The Dinner Party,’ a larger art installation that can be found at the Brooklyn Museum within the Elizabeth A Sackler Center for Feminist Art. The posters are reproductions of the original seven hand-colored photo and text collages that portray the lives of 999 mythical and historical women. Feminist artist, Judy Chicago, with the help of a team of researchers, selected 999 women from prehistory to the 20th century, whose example impacted women’s history and the improvement of women’s conditions. The names are accompanied by biographical information, photographs of related art and artifacts, and images of many of the women. To contextualize the importance of their legacies, Chicago also included brief passages describing the circumstances against which women had to struggle for equity throughout history. Descriptions of a representative sample of panels follows. (For more information see, www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/home)

Panel 5: ‘By the Reformation, women’s education, formerly available through the Church, was ended when the convents were dissolved; women were barred from universities, the guilds, and the professions; women’s property and inheritance rights, slowly eroded over centuries, were totally eliminated; women’s role was restricted to domestic duties and women’s opportunities were more severely limited than in pre-Renaissance society.’

1573 Germany- Barbara Uttman: founder of lace industry
1660 Hungary- Susanna Lorantffy: Administrator, political and cultural leader
1731 England- Mary Astell: Writer and advocate of education for women
1731 United States- Catherine Greene: Inventor of the cotton gin

Panel 2: “In Athens, most women were sequestered, kept in ignorance and not permitted to participate in the golden age of democracy. Foreign women were exempted, and it was from their ranks that women of achievement emerged.”

300 B.C. Greece: Nocobule– historian and poet
1st C. BC Greece- Phile: magistrate
50 BC Greece- Telesilla: warrior and poet
540-510BC Greece- Theano: philosopher and mathematician

Panel 3: “In the Byzantine Empire, the position of women was higher than almost anywhere in Europe. In the year 400, Eudoxia was crowned Empress, and her portrait was sent throughout the Eastern Empire- a rare honor. But her visibility prompted the Western Church, less favorable to female power than the Byzantine, to protest that she had exceeded the ‘privileges of her sex.’

360-408 Byzantium- Olympia: Deaconess and religious organizer
401-460 Byzantium- Eudoxia: Ruler, Scholar and Medical woman
807 Germany- Gisela: Abbess and scholar

Panel 4: ‘….. Roman women were educated, particularly those who lived where Egyptian influence was strong. But they could exercise political influence only through men as they could not participate directly in politics. The fall of Rome brought invasions and warfare and women’s position became increasingly precarious. Many sought refuge in religious communities which preached that women were equal in the eyes of Christ.’

1st C. Rome- Sulpicia: Poet
1st C. Rome- Lydia: Businesswoman
399 A.D. Rome- Fabiola: Physician, religious founder and educator
2nd C. Rome- Caelia Macrina: Philanthropist
Dr. Nadia El Kholy, Visiting Scholar in Women’s Studies

(Continued from p. 2)

In 2007, Dr. El Kholy was again honored by receiving a coveted Fulbright Visiting Scholar Award and, when given a choice of universities, she chose the School of World Studies at VCU. “To be honest, after a semester in Minnesota, I was definitely looking for a place where the weather would be mild.” Dr. Diana Scully, Chair of VCU’s Department of Women’s Studies, was so impressed with Dr. El Kholy that she arranged for her to return in spring 2008 as a Visiting Scholar in Women’s Studies where she is teaching Arab Women Writers and Women and Developing Countries. “Nadia has made such an important contribution to the international focus of our undergraduate curriculum,” comments Dr. Scully. “She is a wonderful colleague and friend. Students and faculty alike have benefited from her scholarly presence at VCU. We will miss her when she leaves.”

Dr. El Kholy is struck by the autonomy that Americans, particularly VCU students, possess. “There is a great sense of individualism in the students here. In America, you are what you stand for. It is really impressive.” Also impressive is the lack of class-consciousness that she witnesses in the student body. She appreciates the fact that “every person is respected for who they are … there is a sense of freedom in the sense that you respect others space and each person is free within that space.” Some of the teaching obstacles that Dr. El Kholy has encountered stem from a lack of global knowledge on the part of American students. “There is a limited understanding of the inherent faith that is taken for granted in many cultures.” She fears that this can sometimes create a barrier to literary understanding for American students. Regarding her relationship with her American students she comments “the students have been very accepting of me and I believe they are trying hard to succeed academically – we are all learning from one another.”

Chair’s Update

(Continued from page 1)
development and globalization on the Thai people. Shayne’s final project, The Kam Bon Noi Landfill Photo Exhibit will be on display at Ipanema Café, 917 W. Grace St., Richmond, VA from April 6 to May 1, 2008.

The year was also filled with planning for this summer’s Study Abroad to Mundos de Mujeres/Women’s Worlds 2008, the 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, hosted by Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain with post-conference travel in Spain and Morocco (See Women’s Studies Students Study Abroad this Summer, p 6). The Study Abroad this year is all the more meaningful to me because the Women’s Studies International Experience Scholarship is making the trip possible for several students who otherwise might not have been able to participate.

This spring, Women’s Studies joined the Sociology Program in Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs and the Honors College as co-sponsors of a program featuring Michael S. Kimmel, an internationally recognized authority on men and masculinities. He is Director of the Center for the Study of Men and Masculinities at SUNY Stony Brook, a spokesperson for the National Organization for Men Against Sexism, and the author of several books including Against the Tide: Profeminist Men in the United States and Abroad. His talk, Mars and Venus, or Planet Earth: Women and men in the New Millennium, will take place on April 18 in Commons Theater.

Congratulations to all the students who received Women’s Studies awards this year for their amazing accomplishments: Audrey Blake, Shauna Fecher, Winter Foddrell, Leah Fremouw, Sarah Heisler and Elizabeth (Vashtae) Williams. Congratulations also to Perry Threlfall, the Women’s Studies Department Assistant this year. Perry will be leaving us in May to enter a Ph.D. program in Sociology at George Mason University. Best wishes to Perry, we all will miss her. Finally, I hope to see all the Women’s Studies majors, alumna, and alumni at the 7th Annual Women’s Studies Spring Potluck which honors and celebrates 2008 graduates that I again will host at my house on May 9.

CONSIDER A DOUBLE MAJOR

Did you know that you can add Women’s Studies as a second major by taking four additional courses (total of 30 credits) beyond the six courses (18 credits) required for a minor?

Go to http://www.has.vcu.edu/wst/major.htm for degree requirements
Again this year, Diana Scully and Co-Director, Angelina Overvold, will lead a group of enthusiastic students to **Mundos de Mujeres/Women's Worlds 2008** hosted by Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Madrid, Spain. This will mark the 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women which is held every three years in different locations. The two have lead two previous Study Abroad trips to Women’s Worlds in 2003 at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, with post-conference travel in Kenya, and in 2005 at Ewha Women’s University in Seoul, Korea with post-conference travel in Japan.

The conference theme this year is “Equality: No Utopia” and, according to conference organizers, will focus on three concepts: “New Frontiers, Dares and Advancements,” in order to address a wide range of themes, issues and disciplines that ought to be taken into account for a better understanding of the present world. “Women’s Worlds 2008 will set the ground for a multifaceted and constructive analysis and will provide an optimistic outlook on all the issues that affect women and have to do with feminist enterprises today.” Over 70 internationally known feminist thinkers and activists have been invited to speak including, among others, from the US, Charlotte Bunch, Sandra Harding, Michael Kimmel, Lourdes Benaria, and Maria Lugonas. VCU students can expect to meet and mingle with women from many nations and return home with a new appreciation of the achievements and issues of importance that bind us together but also separate us based on economic, cultural, political and religious conditions in our home country. For complete conference information see www.mmww.org.

Like previous Women’s Studies Study Abroad trips, the group will travel after the conference visiting Toledo, Segovia, Seville, Malaga, Costa Del Sol and Granada. An additional day will be spent traveling through the Strait of Gibraltar to Tangier in northern Morocco.

---

**Women’s Studies International Experience Scholarship Eligibility Criteria**

Scholarships are limited to VCU Women’s Studies majors (preferred) or minors. Preference will be given to students with 60 completed credit hours including at least 12 completed credit hours in Women’s Studies at the time of application.

- Applicants must have at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA at the time of application.
- Scholarships are awarded principally on the basis of merit to students who can demonstrate financial need. Proof of financial need can be established by a FAFSA on file but other forms of documentation may be acceptable.
- Students who have demonstrated leadership either in the University or the community at large are preferred.
- Preference will be given to Study Abroad experiences related to the study of women or associated issues that will have a direct impact on the recipient’s future career goals.
- All Study Abroad plans must carry academic credit and be approved (prior to application) and coordinated through the VCU Office of International Education www.vcu.edu/oie.

---

*From the Judy Chicago Heritage Panels (see page 5)*

**Juana de la Cruz- Scholar**, Writer, Linguist, Advocate of Women’s Education, and Religious figure

Born in a farmhouse, de la Cruz taught herself to read and began writing verse very early. She became famous for her erudition and her poetry and despite continual harassment of her intellectual accomplishments, pursued her studies. Even after she entered a convent she was rebuked by church officials who forbade her to read. An early feminist, de la Cruz is an example of a woman who defied the State, the Church and convention in an effort to realize her genius.
The Women's Leadership Forum (WLF) was started in the Spring of 2006. Founded by former VOX President Sara Duke, the WLF has developed an impressive mission of promoting women’s leadership in economic and political activism, business, entrepreneurship and higher education for VCU students. The VCU WLF explores such topics as leadership styles, breaking the glass ceiling, balancing career, family and other roles, women’s entrepreneurship, and prioritizing women's health by hosting accomplished guest speakers and presenters, skills workshops, and providing networking opportunities.

The WLF is currently looking for interested faculty and students to keep the leadership going for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Amendment is an annual fall student publication funded by student activity fees. Amendment promotes social change through artistic expression and social thought. In addition to accepting submissions from people who identify as feminist/womanist and/or LGBTQ, Amendment is intended to be a forum for all the diverse voices of the VCU community. It is with best intentions that the editors publish the works of sociopolitical minorities to provide a forum for voices often silenced. Amendment accepts submissions year-round and offers workshops for fresh and new writers and editors. Writers of fiction, poetry, creative and critical essays, other genres and creators of printable visual art are encouraged to submit.

For more information, please visit the website: www.studentorg.vcu.edu/amendment. If you are interested in learning more about the organization, please contact Kara Elam at s2kelam@vcu.edu

Women in Science (WIS), founded in spring 2006, has a mission of providing support, networking and programming to VCU women interested in science and medicine. Since its inception, WIS has grown to over 75 active members on the MCV Campus and 40 members on the Monroe Park Campus. Spring programming has been particularly active, including workshops on:

- Career Choices for graduate students
- Graduate School Choices for undergraduate students
- Career Preparation in the Biosciences
- Choosing a Post Doctoral Position.

Women in Science has teamed with the Greater Richmond Chapter of the Girl Scouts of America to host a Girl Scout Science Day on Saturday, April 14, 2007. Approximately 100 Richmond area middle and high school students will tour the MCV Campus, complete basic science experiments under the supervision of VCU graduate students, and attend a poster session on various careers in the sciences; each girl will receive a badge for their efforts.

If you are interested in learning more about the organization, please contact Kara Elam at s2kelam@vcu.edu

Queer Action (QA) is dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and questioning (LGBTQI) activism at VCU and in Richmond. QA is unique in its specific commitment and acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of queer liberation to other liberation struggles including those of women, racial minorities, immigrants, and the poor. QA, now four years old, has brought numerous speakers and workshops to campus this year, including:

Queer Action meets weekly on Thursdays at 8:30pm in the Student Commons. Those interested in QA can contact Bonnie Gabel queeraction@vcu.edu

Voices of Planned Parenthood on Campus (VCU VOX), in its third year at VCU, has worked tirelessly on numerous woman-centered goals this year. Under the leadership of Laura XXX in the fall semester, and new President Leah Fremouw in spring, VOX programs have spanned a wide-range of reproduction-related areas, including:

VOX meets at 6:30pm on alternate Thursdays in the Student Commons. For information, contact Leah Fremouw at leahfremouw@yahoo.com.
Outstanding Senior Women's Studies Award

Elizabeth (Vashtae) Williams
As my final semester comes to a close, I find myself eager to apply what I have learned as a graduate of the Women's Studies Department at VCU. My studies here have given me more than abstract knowledge about inequalities based on gender, class, and race. They have also illustrated tools and strategies for working within a community in a manner and with a purpose that creates a better environment for long term social change. I leave VCU with the courage and knowledge to address issues specific to my role as a woman in society, especially in regards to women and health. In the next few years, I plan to continue to work with local grassroots movements in my community in Richmond that allow women access to proper or alternative health care and mental health services. In the future I hope to continue my personal education through working abroad within communities with a similar focus. All the while, I will take what I have learned at VCU to develop practical strategies for creating social justice for women.

Sarah K. Heisler
I'm planning to graduate in May 2009 with dual degrees in Women's Studies and English. Being a part of the Women's Studies department at VCU has given me so many opportunities, including the chance to travel to Spain this summer for the 10th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, Women's Worlds 2008 conference! I feel that I've gotten an invaluable education from both my professors and peers; we all share a passion and drive for feminist action in and outside the classroom. Ideally, I would like to write for a feminist magazine, like Bust or Bitch: Feminist Response to Pop Culture.

Leah A. Fremouw
While pursuing my Women's Studies Degree I decided that I want to be proactive on women's issues in my professional life. To do this I will be obtaining my Masters in Public Administration at the VCU Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs and from there I will go on to law school.

Women’s Studies Black History in the Making Award

Winter C. Foddrell
Receiving a Women's Studies Degree is a symbol of triumph and redemption for me. My mother inspired me to seek a degree in Women’s Studies while opposition from my father provoked me to be a feminist. I have never been more proud nor felt more empowered to call myself a FEMINIST! There are numerous things I would love to do and plan to do with my degree. I have talked about collaborating with my mother on starting a non-profit organization or battered-women’s shelter back home. For now, I plan to attend Graduate School after graduation for creative writing.

Women's Studies International Experience Scholarship Recipients

Shauna F. Fecher
When I got accepted to the study abroad in Spain, it was bitter sweet. I was thrilled to have been accepted into the program, but I was in no position to be able to finance the trip. I went to Dr. Scully’s office to talk to her about the possibility of withdrawing my application due to lack of funding and she informed me that I had been awarded the Women's Studies International Scholarship. This scholarship has helped me tremendously in paying for the trip. Now I can go back to being excited about visiting Spain and Morocco this summer, something I wouldn’t have been able to do without this scholarship.

Audrey M. Blake
As I came back to school at the age of 44 and am now 52, being awarded the Women’s Studies International Scholarship says to me personally that hard work pays off. I came back to school to learn, English my primary major has been personally rewarding, but it was not until I took my first Women’s Studies class that I found a purpose for my Education. Because of the Women’s Studies International Scholarship I will now have the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the status of all women, Globally. After graduation I hope to pursue a career which will put this knowledge to use for myself and all the women of the world.
BECOME A FRIEND OF WOMEN’S STUDIES

Name________________________________________
Address______________________________________
_____________________________________________
Phone_______________________
Email_______________________

☐ I would like to make a contribution of $ _____
to the Women’s Studies Program

Please make checks payable to: VCU
Indicate Women’s Studies in the memo section

Send to: Diana Scully
Dept. of Women’s Studies
VCU, Box 843060
Richmond, VA 23284-3060