What an amazing year for BU WGS! Looking back on our accomplishments during this academic year, I feel incredibly proud and fortunate to be a part of our collective project of raising our program profile, both within Boston University and beyond.

This year, we launched our first official seminar series, centered on the theme, "Gendered Institutions, Sexual Cultures: Intersectional Interventions Across Disciplines." Our speakers came from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, including biological anthropology, sociology, political science, American Studies, law, and drama & dance studies. In addition to the seminar series, we co-sponsored a wide range of events, including feminist art exhibitions, film screenings, a student drag show fundraiser, a direct action workshop, the Eve Sedgwick Memorial lecture, a lecture from Angela Davis, and held our own LGBTQ+ safe zone training. In the upcoming year, we will be collaborating with the BU Gender & Sexuality Studies Faculty Group for our next seminar series, tentatively titled "Decolonizing Sex, Gender, and the Body."

We welcomed nine newly affiliated faculty from a broad swath of departments and research interests, graduated three graduate certificate students, and added almost a dozen new and newly cross-listed courses to our curriculum. Our faculty accomplishments are too numerous to recount in detail here - to choose just one example, BU Biology and WGS faculty Karen Warkentin was chosen to give the 2018 University Lecture, entitled "Diversity and Plasticity of Life," which brought in hundreds of attendees from across the university and the city. This year, our faculty were honored with multiple grants and fellowships, published many articles and books, were invited to speak at national and international conferences and events, and taught almost 1,000 students in WGS courses alone! For more on our faculty's accomplishments, see our Faculty Spotlight section on Page 16.

We also held our first feminist and queer research methods mini-conference for graduate students! We had 22 grad students in attendance, from across the university as well as from Harvard, UMass, and Northeastern. Our morning panel addressed the hows, what's, and whys of feminist/queer research practice; in the afternoon we held an advising workshop where each grad student got tailored dissertation project feedback from our experts, followed by a roundtable on methodological dilemmas with the visiting panelists as well as BU WGS faculty from the social sciences, natural sciences, and humanities, and finally by a lively reception at Fuller's Pub. The event was covered by The Daily Free Press and was supported by a wide swath of departments, programs, and deans. We hope to hold another such conference in the near future - our certificate students are eager for further training in specifically feminist and queer methodological strategies.

I’d like to conclude with my deepest thanks and appreciation for our WGS faculty and staff. Thank you to Gabby Newton (this year's winner of a CAS Outstanding Service Award!) for her many intellectual and administrative contributions to the program. Thanks also to our work student, Lauren Hagy, who helped design our website and promotional materials. Another thank you to Anthony Petro for serving as our Director of Graduate Studies, and an extra special thank you to our co-Directors of Undergraduate Studies and departing faculty members Barbara Gottfried and Diane Balser for their more than 20 years in the program. Their current and former students, collaborators, and colleagues turned out in truly impressive numbers to celebrate them at the WGS End of Year party, a testament to their legacy at Boston University. Finally, thank you to all of the WGS faculty who come to meetings and events, teach our courses, mentor our students, offer research expertise and raise the program's profile with their work, and bring diversity and richness of experience to our program. I look forward to another great year with you all, one that will no doubt produce another impressive roster of events and accomplishments!

Cati Connell
WGS Director
The BU-based UNESCO/UNITWIN Network on Gender, Culture & People-Centered Development proactively supports the work of academics at member universities and social activists in partner NGOs, promoting interdisciplinary and intersectional collaboration between continents. The Network is now a global partnership of 13 universities and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in India, West Africa and Greater Boston. Here are several 2018-19 highlights.

UNESCO/UNITWIN Affiliate Unbound Visual Arts (UVA) hosted its 3rd annual Women’s History Month exhibition at the Honan-Allston Library Art Gallery entitled "Peace in Her Time: Visionary Women Against War and Violence". Twenty artists were featured. WGS’s Dr. Brenda Gael McSweeney was exhibit Advisor. UVA’s Executive Director John Quatrone oversaw the exhibition and program (see unboundvisualarts.org), while Susan Janowsky was Curator. The exhibit was co-sponsored by BU’s WGS, also supported by the Gender and International Development Initiatives (GaDI) of Brandeis University’s Women’s Studies Research Center (WSRC).

In West Bengal India, our UNESCO/UNITWIN Founding Partner, Chandana Dey, works with Bolpur Manab Jamin (BMJ), a village-based organization of young people from diverse backgrounds with varying levels of education that focuses on food security and gender empowerment in ten villages populated by land-poor families. Still largely unexplored are domestic violence and sexual harassment. Chandana writes:

"The Me Too movement has given voice to many groups of urban women, especially from privileged backgrounds. I felt the need to air many issues flagged by Me Too with the BMJ team and find out how people living in a rural environment would respond. Some people even feel that unless the central problem of violence against women is addressed, other development goals cannot be met successfully. A Gender Sensitization Workshop, held in Shantiniketan in March 2019, was a first attempt at getting a small group of people together to discuss this central issue. I hope the workshop is the first in a series of informal, un-hierarchical discussions where everyone finds a voice, and where we might find ways to bring the issues into a wider forum."

A longer-term goal is a phase of village-level interactions.

More on the BU-based UNITWIN at: 
bu.edu/wgs/networks/unesco-unitwin-at-bu and unitwin.blogspot.com

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Publication Date: 06/2019