Note From the Director

In fall 2013, Gender Studies Minor (GSM) is happy to have Dr. Archita Banik, Assistant Professor of Economics, as a board member.

In this issue, Keara Hozella’s interviews with Dr. Archita Banik and Lauren Lewis, the new Coordinator of Women’s Resource Center, convey the experiences, impressions, and visions of these two members of Bloomsburg University about their current positions.

On the GSM Student Research Presentation Day, November 5, five GSM students, Michelle Mattar, Anthropology Major, Venyamina McIvor, Psychology Major, Karli Miller, English Major, Katelyn Shoemaker, Anthropology Major, and Albra Wheeler, Communication Studies Major, presented their research projects to the campus community.

Students who are taking the core and elective courses of the minor are submitting essays for the Annual GSM Essay Competition. The winner will be awarded a prize at the Spring 2014 GSM Graduation Reception.

In spring 2013, ten students graduated with GSM. Presently, twenty-two students are enrolled in the minor.

In fall 2013, GSM continued its film series. Six French films, with themes related to gender and women’s issues, were screened for the students and faculty of Bloomsburg University and members of the Bloomsburg community.

Dr. Ferdâ Asya
Associate Professor of English
Director of Gender Studies Minor
My name is Katy Shoemaker and I will be graduating this semester. My major is Anthropology, with minors in Professional Writing and Gender Studies. I am deeply involved with the university and the community. I enjoy spending my time as a teaching assistant for the Anthropology Department and as a member of the honor society, Chi Alpha Epsilon (XAE), and Lambda Alpha (Anthropology Honor Society).

Throughout my time here in Bloomsburg, I have also enjoyed volunteering at the SPCA in Danville. I really love animals. I have three cats and I spend much of my spare time with them. I like reading and writing.

Currently, I am finishing my practicum by completing my research project on Women and Politics, entitled “Why Do Americans Fear a Woman Political Leader?” This past semester, I have presented my research at the PASSHE Women's Conference at Mansfield University, the GSM Student Research Presentation Day, and the PASSHE STEM Undergraduate Research Conference. My academic career has been mainly influenced by TRiO and the Anthropology Department.
Spotlight: Dr. Archita Banik, New Board Member

Q: How do you think the atmosphere of Bloomsburg (both the town and university) lends itself to the Gender Studies Minor (GSM) curriculum?

A: Well, I just arrived in Bloomsburg. I’ve been here for about three months. I am not in a position to comment on the atmosphere of the town, but it looks like there is a lot of interest among the students in the university in Gender Studies. The presentation, “Gender and Development in Cameroon,” by Justine Ayuk, a visiting scholar from Cameroon, was well attended, and students had quite a number of interesting questions, as some students had already done a study abroad program in Cameroon. So, they also had real life experiences to talk about. I am happy to see that students are eager to learn more about women’s issues in developing countries.
Q: The GSM in Bloomsburg University is a very active minor. I work very closely with the director, Dr. Asya. She is in constant contact with GSM students through the BOLT website. We have an annual essay competition, a student research presentation day, and a graduation reception for GSM students each semester. We also have a film series, occasional lectures, and visiting authors open to the campus, Bloomsburg, and surrounding communities. For instance in the last few years, the GSM partly sponsored the visits of award-winning authors, Achy Obejas and Anna Monardo, to Bloomsburg University. What are your views about these activities? How useful do you think these activities may be to your students?

A: I think the activities are well organized and very interesting. The foreign films and talks by authors and scholars will help students to have a worldwide view of different gender related issues all over the globe. These activities help them to develop their critical thinking and also make it interesting for them to pursue a minor in Gender Studies (GS). They will give them an exposure to the outside world. The GSM is a well organized and well put together program. I am happy and excited to be a part of this, and looking forward to seeing some of the films offered in the film series.

Q: How does Bloomsburg University differ from the universities you studied or taught before with regards to the curricular and extracurricular activities of the GSM?

A: I received my PhD from University of Connecticut. Gender Studies was not as prominent there as it is here at Bloomsburg University (BU). I think the curricular and especially the extracurricular activities of GSM are well planned and extremely interesting. They give students the opportunity to attend talks from visiting scholars, and they should definitely be continued in the future.

Q: Do you find a minor in GS satisfactory or do you think Bloomsburg University needs a major in GS?

A: Given the interest among the students, I definitely think that BU students can major in GS. Another option could also be a major in economics with a specialization in GS, or a major in economics with a minor in GS.
Q: What are the courses in your department that you can offer for GSM? Would you consider developing a new course and offering it for GSM as well?

A: I saw that currently “Labor Economics” is offered to GSM students. In the future, I would definitely like to offer a course that would be directed to GSM students.

In the next academic year, I would love to get a chance to teach a course, “International Health Economics,” in which I plan to include health and development related issues around the globe. I would also include topics that are specific to women’s issues all over the world by focusing more on developing countries in this course. For example, “How health and the nutrition of mothers affect children’s health and learning outcomes?” and “How women’s reproductive behavior and health affect women’s earning power?” There are some interesting questions related to women’s health and their learning capability that still need to be explored.

In the future, I would also be interested in offering a course specific to the GS minor or major. For example, I can offer “Women and Minorities in the Labor Market,” which would discuss and explore the issues specific to women and underrepresented ethnic groups. For example, gender discrimination in the labor market, and how marriage affects women’s earning ability. These are some interesting questions to be explored, and they will be directly relevant for anyone interested in GS.

Q: How does gender play into the health economics discussed in your dissertation?

A: My research is not directly related to gender. It is directed to adult women’s health in India. I have explored how socioeconomic status affects married women’s health in India in my dissertation. In particular, I examine how adult women’s self-perceived health status is associated with different socioeconomic factors, and I find that having a number of children is negatively associated with women’s health status, whereas education has a positive association. The results have important policy implications for a country like India. In India, the government should promote education of girls and also education on birth control among women in the reproductive age group.
On the GSM Student Research Presentation Day, November 5, 2013, five students minoring in Gender Studies presented their research projects. This event, which took place for the first time this semester, was well attended by students and faculty. Focusing on issues of gender, the research projects that the students presented had diverse perspectives.

Michelle Mattar
“Digging Deeper: Why Does Archaeology Continue to Struggle With Gender?”

The purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons for the field of archaeology to continue struggling with the topic of gender equality. When compared to the other sub-fields of anthropology, it is obvious that archaeology remains unsettled in the acceptance and acknowledgment of gender.

Venyamina McIvor
"Transmisogyny: the Assumptions We Make about Female Bodies, And How They Subjugate Our Sisterhood"

This project describes the vitriolic misogyny that transgendered women experience and how essentialist notions of gender have a caustic effect on the wellbeing of all women.

Karli Miller
"One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: The Progression of LGBTQ Rights in the World"

This project explores the progression of rights of LGBTQ people all over the world, including the most current events regarding law.

Katelyn Shoemaker
“Women in Politics”

This research focuses on the central question, if Americans are open and willing to elect a woman as president. The project looks into the gender gap in voting that exists in the United States and how that affects women’s ability based on gender to be elected to the executive office.

Albra Wheeler
"The Wonderbra: Oppression vs. Liberation in Capitalistic Patriarchal Society"

This project examines the rhetorical implications of the Wonderbra. The critique offers a polysemic reading of the bra through diverse feminist lenses. The project seeks to determine whether the Wonderbra functions rhetorically as a form of bondage to, or as a form of liberation from, a patriarchal society.

The presenters from left to right: Katelyn Shoemaker, Albra Wheeler, Venyamina McIvor, Michelle Mattar, and Karli Miller.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Ferdâ Asya.
Spotlight: Lauren Lewis, Coordinator of Women’s Resource Center

Q: Please explain a little about your background. How has this helped you prepare for your current position as Women’s Resource Center (WRC) Coordinator?

A: I completed my undergraduate studies at Bloomsburg University and I stayed here for my Master’s degree. I applied for a graduate assistantship and internship at the Women’s Resource Center in the second year of my master’s degree. Deb Barnes was the director of the Women’s Resource Center, and I knew her previously from the WISE group and the PASSHE Undergraduate Women’s Leadership Institute.

I started my work at the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) during the 2009 fall semester, and in the spring semester, I filled in for Deb Barnes in the interim, as she had retired. It was a nice and challenging opportunity to have a more direct role in the WRC. I brought my passion for working with women and empowering women from my assistantship and internship in New York City, where I lived for a few years while working with American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting. I moved home later to be closer to my family, and heard that the Director position at the WRC was open again. I think it is a challenge, but it’s a welcome one.

I want to empower women and help the campus at the same time. I don’t want to employ the techniques used before, since technology and the world in general have evolved so much over the past few years. I want to take the WRC in new directions.
Q: Who are some of the most influential women in your life?

A: Some of the most influential women in my life during my time at Bloomsburg University have been Kathy Kollar-Valovage, Deb Barnes, and Theresa Bloskey. Kathy Kollar-Valovage was an advisor for the Presidential Leadership Program, of which I became the president during my senior year. Kathy was a great mentor and leader for me, and she also helped me navigate through my own personal development.

Deb Barnes was in charge of the PASSHE Undergraduate Women’s Leadership Institute, which was a week-long conference that I attended as an undergraduate. I learned about the WRC through her and worked closely with her for a project that led to my internship. She had a passion for educating women, especially with empowerment, and promoting their self-esteem that was transferred to me.

Theresa Bloskey, who works in TRiO Student Support Services, was also involved in the PASSHE Undergraduate Women’s Leadership Institute and the Women’s Consortium on campus. She was always a voice for women. She always did what was right for the women on campus, no matter what. She fought to keep the WRC open and advocated for it, especially because she believed that the campus needed it desperately.

Q: What is your vision for the WRC?

A: I want to conduct an assessment of the women on Bloomsburg campus to gather information on what specifically the WRC can offer them, and what they want the WRC to provide. I want to begin a women’s support group as a place for female students to share concerns, issues, ideas, and discuss any topic in order to find out on which areas the WRC should focus. I want the Center to be a safe and comfortable place for women. I want to celebrate the achievements of women on campus and educate the entire campus on sexual assault awareness and other issues that impact women.
Q: Do you have plans about collaborating with other organizations on campus or in Bloomsburg?

A: The WRC will be collaborating with the L.G.B.T.A. Resource Center and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to form the Diversity and Inclusion Center. I’ll be teaming up with Matthew Barkus and Madelyn Rodriguez to reach a broader population of students. We want students to feel more connected and involved with all three of these organizations.

Q: Will you have a liaison with the Bloomsburg (town) Women's Resource Center?

A: Yes. I’ve met with Zabrina M. Finn, the executive director, and Christiana, her intern from the Marywood Social Work Program. We believe that an alliance is necessary, and the Bloomsburg University WRC will be open to the downtown WRC for any type of training, workshops, and support groups that they’d like to have. We want both Women’s Resource Centers to have a presence on campus and downtown.

Q: What kinds of services can the WRC provide? What do you advise for those wanting/need to visit the WRC?

A: Primarily, the WRC wants to be a resource to the entire campus community. We’ll do everything we can to point students to the right places to get the proper information. Our main purpose is to advise students and provide a welcoming and reassuring place to come. Any information or meeting at the WRC is completely confidential, and our staff is in the process of being fully trained now, from work-study students and interns to volunteers, so they can respond to any type of question a student may have. I’d also like to open the doors of the Women’s Resource Center to other campus organizations and women’s groups to have at their disposal. I want the WRC to be open to all interactions, including activities like movie nights or study groups.

Q: How can students or anyone on campus get involved with the WRC?

A: Interested students can visit our website, http://www.bloomu.edu/wrc, call us at 570-389-5283, or email me or the Center at stwomen.bloomu.edu or llewis@bloomu.edu.
Spring 2013 GSM Graduation Reception

The Gender Studies Minor Spring 2013 Graduation Reception was held on Friday, April 26, 2013.

Ten seniors were congratulated on their graduation and received the green Gender Studies Minor cords. These seniors were Brianna Albertini, Emily Fredericks, Eowna Young Harrison, Sara Huff, Kristen Lang, Hannah Long, Olivia Miller, Casey Simms, Angelica Waltman, and Heather Yoder.

The reception was attended by the students, faculty, and board members of the Gender Studies Minor.

GSM Essay Competition

Established in 2011, the GSM Essay Competition is held annually and open to all students taking GSM courses. In the 2012-2013 academic year, the winner was Hannah Long, who graduated with a double major in Communication Studies and Psychology and a double minor in Gender Studies and Philosophy. Her essay, “What’s the Buzz About? Reclaiming Female Sexuality through the Vibrator,” investigates the liberating function of the vibrator for women. Initially developed as a treatment for the condition of hysteria, the vibrator has changed the way that women’s pleasure is viewed and achieved. Because of this liberating aspect, the vibrator serves as a device for sexual freedom as well as a call for discussions on social and ideological realms of female sexuality.

Hannah Long, GSM Essay Competition Winner.
Photo courtesy of Dr. Ferdâ Asya.
Faculty Accomplishments


Students in Dr. Christina Francis’s Feminist Reading of Culture class traveled to New York City on Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2013 to visit the New York Public Library exhibit, entitled “The ABC of It: Why Children’s Books Matter,” as part of their exploration of fairy tales and gender representation this semester. The students attended a performance of the newly adapted Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *Cinderella* on Broadway.

Dr. Christina Francis’s Feminist Reading of Culture class in New York City.
Photo courtesy of bloomu.edu.

GSM Gazette prepared and compiled by Keara Hozella, the GSM Work-Study Student.

Hozella is a junior English major with a minor in Gender Studies. This is her second semester working for Dr. Asya and the GSM. She’d like to thank Dr. Asya for the work experience. She would also like to thank the GSM students for their compassion.

Photo courtesy of Keara Hozella.
The purpose of the Gender Studies Minor (GSM), which offers cross-listed courses in sixteen departments across Bloomsburg campus, is the study of social, cultural, and historical constructions of gender and its intersections with other constructions such as race, class, nation, and sexuality.

The program investigates gender relationships and inequalities in a variety of societal contexts and strives to provide co-curricular experiences to enhance the Gender Studies Minor curriculum and raise awareness about issues of gender. Eighteen credit hours are required to complete this minor program.

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Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania is committed to affirmative action by way of providing equal educational and employment opportunities for all persons without regard to race, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status.

Spring 2014 GSM Courses

ARTHSTRY 360.01 Women, Art and Society
Nogin Chung

BIOLOGY 230.01 A.B.C.D Human Sexuality
Thomas Klinger

COMMSTUD 309.01.02 Gender Issues in Communication
David Heineman

COMMSTUD 309.03 Gender Issues in Communication
Ruth Beerman

If you are planning to take COMMSTUD 309 Gender Issues in Communication, which will be offered (two sections) in fall 2014 and (three sections) in spring 2014, please complete a blue request form at the Department of Communication Studies. The department is willing to waive the prerequisite of Interpersonal Communications for Gender Studies minors.

ENGLISH 152.05 Literature and Society
Girls Gone Wild: The Fallen Women and The Femme Fatale in American Literature and Film
Mark Decker

EXERSCI 288.01.02 Women in Sport
Kelly VanGorden

NURSING 240.01 Contemporary Women’s Health
Sue Beck and Devon Manney

PHIL 408.01 Feminist Philosophy
Wendy Lee

POLISCI 492.01 Seminar in Government and Politics
Gender Issues in Sustainable Development
Diana Zoelle

POLISCI 492.02 Seminar in Government and Politics
Power, Rap Music, and Urban America
Lavar Pope

PSYCH 350.01.02 Psychology of Sex and Gender
George Chavez

SOC 231.01.02 Marriage and Family
Mallary Allen

Please refer to the GSM website, for courses and information.

bloomu.edu/gs