38 years since it commenced as a program offering a major and minor. Its course number over 100 today and cross with virtually every discipline; its faculty number 54. In spring 2011 we graduated 11 (count them) majors, and this fall we will welcome at least 60 students into two sections of Introduction to Women’s Studies. Whichever way you count its bits, the sum of Women’s Studies adds up over and over to one thing: strength in academic, intellectual, community reach and members. Put another way, Women’s Studies is good ecological balance, having a kind of “companion species” penchant for living long and well, even in tough economic times in higher education. (Indeed, some would argue Women’s Studies holds the key to surviving the economic roller coaster ride of recent times.)

And we are in good company. Across the nation, Hobart and William Smith numbered amongst about two dozen institutions in the late 1960s and early 1970s offering a major and/or minor in Women’s Studies. Now the nation boasts over 900 institutions and “an enrollment larger than any other interdisciplinary field.” Thirteen programs offer graduate degrees in the field, and hundreds of monographs along with “30 refereed graduate degrees in the field, and hundreds of monographs along with “30 refereed women’s studies journals” distinguish this academic area.

But what to count when one counts? How do nearly four decades of a program stack up when it comes to engaging in and with the questions of its age, with rousing intellectual curiosity, and with having the intellectual prescience to see both a distant horizon and curiosity, and with having the intellectual questions of its age, with rousing intellectual when it comes to engaging in and with the academic area.

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But what to count when one counts? How do nearly four decades of a program stack up when it comes to engaging in and with the questions of its age, with rousing intellectual curiosity, and with having the intellectual prescience to see both a distant horizon and the long road behind? Add to these questions of integrating gender at every level of diplomacy, development, and defense as proposed in Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton’s and Ambassador Melanne Verveer’s “The First Quadrennial Report”; the report moves gender into the foreground of “leading through civilian power” across government and non-government agencies. These questions and proposals are of the sort Women’s Studies grapples with time and time again – and they are ones we will seek to foreground at a Women’s Studies public forum to mark 40 years and counting in 2013.

This newsletter is one step toward building that broader interchange on Women’s Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. We invite you – faculty, staff, students, alumnae and alumni – to add your voices to Women’s Studies by letting us know what you are doing, writing, creating, reading, thinking, and challenging; what issues you think Women’s Studies needs to address and how Women’s Studies keeps time with issues today, locally and globally. So, there’s one more thing Women’s Studies counts on -- your voices!

Faculty Feature - Jessica Hayes-Conroy: Food, Health, Geography

The Women’s Studies Department welcomes Jessica Hayes-Conroy to HWS for a one-year position and she will most definitely be bringing a breath of fresh expertise to WMST having accomplished a joint PhD in Geography and Women’s Studies from Penn State. Here’s what she has to say: “I am really thrilled at the opportunity to join the Department of Women’s Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and especially at the chance to contribute to the department’s feminist health focus. In my courses, I hope to offer students a glimpse into the interconnected realms of feminist theory, health geography, and science and nature studies. I am particularly excited about connecting my courses to my own research interests on alternative food, nutrition, and social difference. I also hope to offer research methods and service-learning courses that can help women’s studies students to develop an effective feminist praxis surrounding issues of individual, community, and environmental health.” Welcome, professor!
We have experienced firsthand the difficulty of defining a communal feminism while simultaneously respecting the diverging beliefs we individually hold. Through this struggle, we have come further to understand how we are locked into a “cafeteria of patriarchy”, where feminism is on the menu, the choices are limited, and the issues reheated way too many times.

We propose that this “cafeteria” be understood as the cafeteria of patriarchal society that shapes our consciousness, institutions, histories, and our “choices.” We thus build on the idea of “cafeteria feminism” put forth by Merle Hoffman, suggesting that our choices are limited to the range of menu options, many of which claim to be feminist, yet fail to take full interest in the advancement of women’s rights and conditions. If the cafeteria is owned and managed by the patriarchal powers that be, we are constantly positioned to choose between changing the establishment or opening one of our own. But what would a “feminist cafeteria” even look like? And where would we begin? We set ourselves the task of reaching a consensus on key features of feminism’s definition. Here is what we have cooked up:

Feminism is a way of life. It is passionate and it is patriarchal’s kryptonite. Feminism is a movement that values the safety, respect, agency, and voice of all individuals. Feminism engages causes that concern equality, equity, reproductive rights, and social justice such as racial equality, LGBTQ rights, and economic justice. Fundamentally, feminism is the rejection of oppressive societal structures and institutions that support, and are supported by, hegemonic patriarchy. Its core values express some of these ideals:

- Feminists work to defeat structures of oppression, to lift up women of the world as fully equal and valuable political, moral, economic and just agents.
- Feminists reject ideals that serve further to exploit women as primarily driven by beauty standards or by desires to consume.
- Feminists must value a woman’s right to control her own body. This inherently includes the right to choose.

Intervention 1: Spotting the Con

Sexism as Masquerade

Several of the articles included in “The Conning of the Feminists” highlight the way “cafeteria feminism” exists in the world around us. For example, as the media seeks to render our voices and accomplishments invisible, so does the cohort of women (and men) in the political realm who seek to dismantle the work of feminists. In the recent political arena we have seen women drop the “f-bomb” without remaining true to widespread feminist ideals. This hyper-individualized practice of “iFeminism” is a function of patriarchal inclusion of feminism in a conservative political agenda. It is

(Continued on page 3)
acceptable in the cafeteria to claim to be a feminist if you refuse to see women as active players in their own lives. This is the “enlightened sexism” which claims feminist principles whilst, in the same breath, it rejects them.

In the article “The Rise of Enlightened Sexism,” Susan Douglas describes how women are conned into believing that feminism is no longer necessary. This is perpetuated by the images of “sexually empowered” women on reality TV shows such as The Bachelor or Girls Gone Wild as new, fun and flirtatious feminists - as well as those programs in which women are portrayed as successful, including Grey’s Anatomy or The Closer. Meanwhile, the limited roles available to women in the media are dictated by a larger conglomerate of male producers, executives, and directors who create the media, conning women into believing that their struggle for equality is over. Douglas’ argument has caused us to question how we may buy into “enlightened sexism” ourselves. Whether you prefer to watch the sharp-tongued lawyer or the bleach blonde bimbette on Sunday afternoon, these images are derived from the same source. Women are being fed junk food about how they are “liberated” and “equal,” but all it takes is a peek in the back kitchen to see the realities shaping the hegemonic menu. All too often we struggle to have our voices heard, only to be shot down because we are nothing more than a pretty face – or, in fact, because we are more than a pretty face. It is time we recognize the disparity between an individual woman’s experience as contrasted with women on TV, who are represented as both “Superwoman” and “slut.”

Arch Feminism?

Beyond the women depicted in TV shows that shift our focus away from the issues by encouraging us to believe that feminism’s work is done, icons such as Lady Gaga have recently been the center of feminist debate. While she seems to exercise control over her image and performance through her perceived deviance and the pushing of traditional boundaries, she is still subject to the same rules of the cafeteria as the rest of us. It is unclear whether Lady Gaga deliberately pushes social boundaries in a feminist way, or if we just interpret her actions as such. Regardless, she has distracted us from a feminism that is centered on the progress of all women. At the end of the day, Lady Gaga is a privileged, educated, wealthy, white woman who sparks conversation and profits from controversy. We do not mean to discount the value of Lady Gaga’s actions, but we do argue that discussion of feminism in the media should go deeper than an analysis of her wardrobe. The more our energies are devoted to discussing the social implications of her career, the less effort we focus toward lobbying for reproductive rights, child care support, the feminization of poverty, equal access to education, and health care, all of which would have material impact on the lives of women nationally and globally. In order to accomplish this, we must continuously question and be conscious of the way the terms “feminist” and “feminism” are applied. The “unconning” of the feminists requires focusing on issues that carry bona fide weight in women’s lives rather than being jaded by enlightened sexism.

Faux-feminism is not like tofu; it is not a healthier option for the individual, society, or environment than what normally frequents our tables. Refocusing our attention back to the issues that matter more than the length of Sarah Palin’s skirt-suit or Lady Gaga’s latest lyrics will remove faux-feminism from the patriarchal menu and maybe patrons will finally become upset enough with the “choices” they have been offered to start bringing a bagged lunch instead. Or perhaps a feminist café will open down the street and put Cafeteria Patriarchy out of business… it would probably be better for the environment, too. As we move forward, these are the choices that we have to make. Will a million small changes over time to the eatery, for example a new head chef or a vegan option, change the establishment? Or is what is broken unfixable and does the social cafeteria in which we live need to be rebuilt from the ground up? If so, how does one who only knows how Cafeteria Patriarchy operates run Café Fem in accordance with new and inherently different values? While this is the paradox that feminists now and have always faced, we know that something is amiss and we must take a stance and demand change. The first step is to direct emphasis and focus away from superficial distractions, such as the pattern of the china, towards issues and choices made by others which directly affect the physical health, emotional wellbeing, psychological and social unfettering of women as fully emancipated citizens and political actors.

Gloria Steinem to Visit Rochester, Syracuse

Sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Rochester/Syracuse, acclaimed feminist author and activist Gloria Steinem is slated to visit the area on November 15, 2011. Steinem will start the day in Rochester at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for a luncheon event and continue to Syracuse for a cocktail reception at the Genesee Grande Hotel that same evening. Gender discrimination is not a thing of the past. Ms. Steinem’s message of equality continues to resonate today. She will talk about the recent surge in anti-woman, anti-gay rhetoric and public policy; the political and social impact of complacency; and how to reclaim our rights.

For tickets and more information, please visit www.pprsr.org.

WMST Facts:

- Women’s Studies originated as an individual major, but its popularity rendered it a permanent fixture in the mid-1990s.
- HWS Women’s Studies students are able to study abroad in over 16 different countries.
When I woke up on the morning of July 16th, I had absolutely no idea what was in store for me at the Seneca Falls Convention Days - otherwise known as the 163rd anniversary of the Women’s Rights Convention - otherwise otherwise known as the day I trespassed at Harriet Tubman’s house with a Congresswoman and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s great-great granddaughter. NOW you’ll keep reading!

Professor Betty Bayer and I made the quick trip over to Seneca Falls that morning to see the rededication of the Wesleyan Chapel where it all “went down” in 1848; it has since served as a car dealership and later a laundromat, and has now been restored to its original state.

Speakers included Congressman Richard Hanna, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (“rhymes with bologna” - her words, not mine!), and Coline Jenkins - great-great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (“flaints”). Hanna’s words were refreshing as he affirmed his pro-choice politics and his intent to keep Women’s Rights at the forefront of his agenda. What a guy! Maloney stressed the extreme importance of passing an Equal Rights Amendment, first named “the Lurettia Mott Amendment” by Alice Paul, and reads: “Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” Maloney then continued: “It is somewhat astonishing - that in a nation founded on the bedrock ideal of equality, somehow those few words have proven to be so controversial that 88 years later, we’re still trying to get it ratified.” Amen, sister! Jenkins shared stories of her family’s continued activism and spoke of her childhood when she visited her grandmother’s house and would find the original copies of The Women’s Bible and other Cady-Stanton memorabilia were stored in the attic. Ok. My grandmother’s attic had some old dresses that are STILL waiting to come back in style.

Anyway, the speeches were so encouraging. It’s always great to know there are more feminists out there who are using their voices to create change.

After the speakers, we all trekked down the street to the Wesleyan Chapel for the ribbon-cutting (I know what you’re thinking…and yes, there were giant scissors), and a woman dressed as Elizabeth Cady Stanton (do you think that was weird for Coline Jenkins?) read the Declaration of Sentiments aloud. Joking aside, there is something incredibly haunting about hearing it read in the exact place it was first delivered. Everyone who attended was given a gold skeleton key to commemorate the Convention of 1848. The story goes that the women arrived at the doors of Wesleyan Chapel to find it locked, so Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s son climbed in through one of the back windows and unlocked the front door for everyone.

After the dedication, I was walking with Betty and our friend Marilyn Tedeschi (President of Greater Rochester AAUW) when we were waved into ZuZu’s Café by none other than Congresswoman Maloney! We sat down and began talking about all sorts of feminist things when who walks in but Coline Jenkins! It was officially a feminist party - there were even buttons being given out by State Committeewoman Trudy Mason with the “well-behaved women...” quote. I was JUST about to be given my button when the rest of the group decided that I needed to sing “Bread and Roses” in order to be deemed worthy of the button. These second-wavers, I tell ya! After much protest on my end, I sang a few lines and finally received my button. Shortly after, it was decided that we should go see some of the area’s historic attractions. Next thing I knew, Congresswoman Maloney sprang up and said she would take care of it...20 minutes later she
Faculty Feature - Leah Shafer: Media Re-Mix

I’m an Assistant Professor in the Media and Society Program, I am on the Women’s Studies Steering Committee, and I am a feminist. My areas of study are: popular culture, digital media, and television and film studies. I was lucky to be raised by progressive parents in a cultural moment that vibrated with excitement and action around women’s liberation, gender equality, and reproductive rights. One of my favorite memories is of my best girl-friends and me testifying against parental consent laws for abortion in front of a State Senate Subcommittee when we were fifteen years old. I try to keep these early experiences alive in my role as a faculty member, because I know how important it is for younger women to have awesome role models who are actively involved in exciting, inclusive, forward-thinking work!

Having a feminist perspective is crucial when dealing with entertainment media, because cultural attitudes about gender and sexuality are typically regarded as static commonplaces by both media producers and media consumers, and the manipulation of gender norms in order to reinforce an unequal status quo is a typical and insidious practice of most major media outlets. It’s my job to teach people how to contextualize, critique, and remix representations of gender and sexuality that appear across media platforms. Students in my classes do this by situating media texts within their industrial, cultural, and social contexts, and by reading media for its biases, ideologies, and preoccupations. In short: we watch stuff and we analyze what it’s saying, what it’s doing, where it came from, and where it’s going. My course MDSC 203: History of Television is cross listed with WMST. In this class, students compare current trends and issues in television and television studies with historical examples of similar phenomena. The history of television is full of extraordinary women who were trailblazing industrial, artistic, and technological entrepreneurs. It is also a history of the representation of women in mass culture, and, as such, requires thoughtful and historically informed analysis.

Many of my out-of-the-classroom activities are also informed by my commitment to feminist issues. I am currently working with a recent William Smith graduate to edit an experimental documentary film about the Declaration of Sentiments, which I shot with the help of Studio Art Professor Christine Chin at a women’s studies conference in Seneca Falls last October. I have programmed a film series to accompany the Fisher Center Animation series, and I plan to do more film and video programming in the future. I love that Media and Society shares space in Demarest Hall with Women’s Studies: I am confident that our physical proximity will engender many fantastic future programs, plans, and agitations. Feel free to stop by and chat with me; I’m often in my office – Demarest 307.

Faculty Feature - Elizabeth Ramey: “Where Are the Women in Economics?”

Economics is the most popular major at HWS...but not for William Smith students, who make up only 26%. Nationwide, women are less likely than men to major in economics. They make up 37% of economics majors on average at liberal arts colleges nationwide. Even though the exact reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the field of economics are unclear, the gender bias in economics has been deeply entrenched for some time. The main actor in traditional economic theory is “rational economic man” who cares for nothing but the maximization of his own satisfaction and interacts with others only to buy and sell. No wonder students view economics as a “business oriented field that prioritizes math skills and emphasizes making money -- a combination that appears to be a turn-off for women, but not so much for men,” according to a recent study. Worldwide, women do more than half the total hours of work, but only about one third of that work is paid. If we define economic activity as only what has a price, then we are missing most of women’s labor, lives, and contributions.

Feminist Economics addresses these gender imbalances by highlighting differences in gender and examining the way that gender matters in the economy and in economic theory.

For example, knowing that single mothers make up a disproportionate number of the nation’s poor, or that women make up the vast majority of public sector employees, including teachers, means that we might look at the issue of public sector spending cuts in a new way, and perhaps not find it as surprising that the economic recovery has been kinder to men than to women. Economics is part of our daily lives, and economic thought can be applied to everything. It is about national welfare, social justice, and improving people’s lives – which is why I chose it for my graduate work at the University of Massachusetts. (No, I didn’t major in Economics as an undergraduate, either!) In addition to the Principles of Economics course at HWS, I teach courses on Feminist Economics, Political Economy, and Political Economy of Food and Agriculture. I am currently researching the role of women’s unpaid labor in the survival of family farms in the United States.


A study released this February found that among new physicians entering the workforce, women earned almost $17,000 a year less than their male counterparts – no matter which specialty they picked. -Carolyn Maloney
The Curriculum

Today’s curriculum in Women’s Studies reflects the program’s efforts to combine structure (core courses) with more open-ended and flexible student-driven design (student-built area of concentration). Currently, the major is composed of 10 courses, four of which are required core courses: introduction, feminist theory, feminist research and senior seminar. Six additional courses are to be selected based on a student’s focal area, and they are to reach across academic disciplines and divisions.

Part of the strength of this program has come from its periodic review of its curricular components. Last year the program began a more systematic drive (student-built area of concentration). Currently, the major is composed of 10 courses, four of which are required core courses: introduction, feminist theory, feminist research and senior seminar. Six additional courses are to be selected based on a student’s focal area, and they are to reach across academic disciplines and divisions.

The consensus was this: our Women’s Studies majors are all graduating with a degree about which they are passionate - but many agreed that they had “gotten away” with skipping over an area of academia that would have helped them gain a more comprehensive view of the field of Women’s Studies.

After hearing the voices of both students and faculty, the Department is taking steps toward adding courses to the Major requirement (it’s currently at 10 total – some majors have 14!), and revising exactly what those requirements are. Many students felt a course in Statistics would make them a more marketable job candidate, and almost all agreed that integrating an Internship component into the curriculum would be an excellent addition to the Women’s Studies Major.

Program Researcher Merrill Amos ’11 has been working on researching internship organizations and building an expansive Resource List featuring feminist organizations, research resources, local attractions/groups, journals/publications and more! The full list is available on the Women’s Studies website: hws.edu/academics/ws.

Stay tuned for updates!

Where Are They Now and What Are They Up To?

Julia Hoyle is spending an academic year in Senegal, teaching young international students. After that, she plans to return to the Finger Lakes area and learn the art of winemaking and continue her travels to France for further study.

Merrill Amos is planning a cross-country tour coinciding with her move to Los Angeles to pursue a career as a singer/songwriter and will be recording her second album this Fall. Her music can be found on iTunes and via her website www.merrillamos.com.

Want to Stay Involved with Women’s Studies?

Great! There are a few ways to do so:

Stay in touch on our Facebook page
Write the program at bayer@hws.edu
Make a gift to Women’s Studies at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. Please remember to specify Women’s Studies in your donation (and you may add “at the discretion of the chair”).

Several ways to make your gift:

Mail - A check may be sent to:
The Annual Fund
615 S. Main Street
Geneva, NY 14456
Phone - (877) HWS-GIFT

We’ve spoken a lot about the 2011 Senior Seminar... so what are some of the women doing now?!

Constitution Days

(Continued from page 4)

returned with a van being driven by a park ranger and we all piled in. There was one too few seats, however, so I got quite comfortable sitting on the ladies’ laps in the back row.

We arrived at Harriet Tubman’s house in Auburn to discover that the park had already closed. What does a gaggle of feminists do in this situation...? They open the gate and go in anyway! My favorite thing about going to these places - legally or otherwise - is to be among such history. It’s inspiring! After walking around a bit, someone finally came out of the visitor’s center and when they realized we had a congresswoman with us they started being quite nice. After our “official” tour, we all piled back into the van and headed back to Seneca Falls. From there Betty Bayer and I drove back to Geneva, spending most of the car ride recapping (and verifying) what had just happened. I won’t soon forget that day...and I sure as hell am going to wear that button EVERYWHERE.

Rebecca Perkins has received a Fulbright Teaching Assistant Grant teaching English in Russia. She plans to continue her research on Russian women in addition to her Fulbright position and will carry her experiences and passion with her to graduate school upon return to the US.

Samantha Tripoli is spending one year in Seattle, WA with Americorps at the YWCA. She will be serving as the Women’s Health Outreach Coordinator.