

NORTH SHORE VISIONS

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FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

It has been quite a year with many changes and celebrations. We had a wonderful 30th anniversary celebration. Please see photos inside! Thank you to all who helped make it such a wonderful celebration and to all the fantastic alumni who came back to celebrate together. We look forward to future gatherings.

We are sad to say farewell to Laura Stolle Schmidt (story inside), and hope to welcome a new staff person

soon. We are very grateful for the support of Elisa Logan and Kathy Stewart who have helped us so much in the office during this time of transition. And we could not have done this without the amazing support, knowledge, abilities, and dedication of our wonderful student worker, Josie Wise. Josie was nominated for the Outstanding Student Employee this year and in our books, she is the winner!

Finally, our graduates. So hard to say goodbye to this

amazing group of young women whom it has been our honor to teach over the past four years. What a privilege it is to share this part of their lives with them. I wish you all had a chance to meet them and know what an inspiration they are. Their photos and thoughts about Women's Studies follow this. We will miss you all and wish you the very best. Please stay in touch!

-Beth Bartlett

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD	1
GRADUATES	2-5
AN HONOR AND A FAREWELL	6
30TH ANNIVERSARY	7

Congratulations to all the Women's Studies Graduates!

Top row from left to right:

Chelsea Davidson
Elsa Swenson
Lexie Generous
Carly Bjorgan
Mary Kitterman



Bottom row from left to right:

Erica Karrels
Rebecca Lester
Cooper Orth
Nicole Hackbarth
Emilie Urdahl
Anna Bertrang
Arielle Schnur

GRADUATES OF 2012

Dear Women's Studies,

Sometime during my first Intro to Women's Studies classes, I had that *Aha!* Moment that I hear so much about now, that moment that I wish every woman could have. The moment I'm talking about was when my brain clicked, and I realized I wasn't alone in thinking that some things in my life, our society and the world just didn't seem quite right. An overwhelming sense of purpose came about me, and I was eager to learn more about other ways of thinking that I hadn't been exposed to before. I learned that many women had shared the same experiences as I had, and they were talking about it openly. Any feelings I had previously possessed about feeling crazy, lost or misunderstood (especially when talking with me) were wiped away, and I received the validation I always needed to move toward becoming a strong woman and a person who could create change.

I am not the same person I was when I came to college nearly four years ago, and I've never felt more alive than I do now. Being a Women's Studies student has truly changed my life and given me a sense of purpose that is irreplaceable and priceless. So, now when someone asks me, "What are you doing to do with a Women's Studies degree?" I'll reply, "I have the strength to do anything."

Love,

Chelsea Davidson



What does Women's Studies mean to me?

Women's Studies is not just a major, it is a lifestyle. It is a community. The knowledge I have gained from Women's Studies is applicable anywhere women exist, and provides a focus within any other discipline. Through Women's Studies, I have gained a perspective of diversity, and an ability to talk to others despite differences. I can't express the love I have for WS, and all those I have met through WS. I have WS students, staff and the department as a whole to thank for the person I am today.

-Elsa Sweson



Love today. Adore each moment. Embrace the journey. Learn to let go. Anger can be useful. Anger can be detrimental. Expect Change. Encourage Change. Passion is all. Live for yourself. There is no singular truth, there may not be any truths. Above all, trust yourself and what you know.

-Arielle Schnur



Majoring in Women's Studies is probably the best decision I've made in my short 21 years of life. It has completely changed the way I look at myself, others and the world. Women's Studies has opened up a part of an intense journey and brought about change in myself in places unimaginable to most people. Women's Studies and feminism is just who I am. Women's Studies has taught me about love—for myself, my sisters and fellow journey members, other people's, the environment, the earth and everything in between. It has helped me to understand and appreciate the complexities in even the 'simplest' of things. It's opened my heart and mind to the interconnectedness of every being, creature, and thing in this planet. Majoring in WS has brought me a lifetime worth of knowledge, challenge and friendship—for that I truly thank you! Lot of love to you all!

-Lexie Generous



Women's Studies "Love Letter"

Women's Studies has changed my life. It has shown me a better way of understanding the challenges in my own life with my family and made me aware of other people and the complexity of their problems and what I can do to help. Women's Studies has helped me uncover the path of how I want to live my life and the change I want to make as I graduate and go forth into the world. As I go forward I am confident in my skills and ability because Women's Studies has not only shown me the true meaning of empathy and compassion, but has also given me the tools to live my life to the fullest in the years to come. In my four years of college I have changed and grown as a person more than I could have ever imagined, and I know I have Women's Studies to thank for my transformation.

-Erica Karrels

I am an accounting and Women's Studies double major in my fifth and final year in higher education at UMD. To some, these majors seem to be opposite one another and not relational, though I disagree. I would like to hold a career in an area that is rewarding and works to improve the lives of people, and I feel that business is an excellent way to accomplish such a task, especially as many non-profit organizations struggle to find adequate financial personnel. It is through my education cultivated within the enriched classrooms of the Women's Studies program that I have been inspired to pursue this career as I am seeing some of the complexities of institutions and the society in which we all reside.

Through hard work and dedication to reading, reflection, and discussion, I have completed courses within my Women's Studies major which I strongly believe have assisted in my growth as an individual and leader; through continuous encouragement and support to ask questions and to inquire as to why the world functions as it does and how the persons it holds interact with one another. Such classes have encouraged me to explore who I am and challenge how I see the world as well as how I see others who are differently identified from me.

I am committed to improvement and to service, to providing all that I can in the creation of a better future; and it is through these courses and interactions, these lessons and this literature, that I am finally able to contribute.

I LOVE YOU WOMEN'S STUDIES. THANK YOU FOR CHANGING MY LIFE AND OPENING MY EYES AND MY HEART.

Nicole Hackbarth



Women's Studies has been life changing. It has been a place where I can not only develop knowledge, awareness, and empathy, but a place where emotional and spiritual growth is nurtured. My time in this program has been challenging. We leave with walls broken down, our perspectives shaken up and altered, and we are encouraged to look inside ourselves for this process to begin. It can be dirty and dark, but ultimately, you leave with a strong sense of solidarity. This solidarity gives you a place of belonging, a sense of self, and the tools to continue to grow. This community validated who I was. I can't imagine not being part of this program. I would be lost without it. WS gave me a medium to flourish. WS is what's missing in the world. WS is something that is part of who I am and will be forever.

-Anna Bertrang



GRADUATES CONTINUED

Dearest Women's Studies,

I want to thank you for opening my eyes, turning the light on and adding fuel to my raging fire. You've changed my life and continue to change my life every day. Thank you for existing and the wonderful women and people who aid in your continuation. I will never part with you, please help me to check myself and others, see the good in the world but the pain as well. Thank you for loving me and letting me love myself.

Yours Forever,
Rebecca Lester



What has Women's Studies meant to me?

Women's Studies helped me find my voice. It helped me learn to be a better friend, partner, and daughter. It made me realize the importance of listening and that there is truth in everyone's perspective. Women's Studies helped me to understand that learning is a lifelong process.

-Emilie Urdahl

Love Letter to Women's Studies

Women's Studies completely changed my life. It shaped how I perceive and understand human relationships and how I understand myself as a woman. It created a strong sense of bonding with women I personally know and women all over the world. The Women's Studies department at UMD and everyone involved in it helped me discover who I am and who I want to be. I feel completely at home within this community and cannot imagine where I would be without it.

-Cooper Orth



Dear Women's Studies:

Throughout my college career you have given me the ability to look at the world in a new light. You have taught me to think critically and always ask the important questions. I have taken on new perspectives that I never thought possible. It has given me the hope I need to feel that I can make a difference, whether it is to change the world or change one person's world. My eyes have been permanently opened to the realities of the world I am about to step into.

Hugs and Kisses,
Mary Kitterman



Women's Studies was an opportunity to open my mind to all the cultures, people and experiences of the world. It has left me a more well-rounded and compassionate woman. I am truly thankful for all that Women's Studies has taught me and feel confident in my abilities to move forward in a successful future.

-Carly Bjorgan

WS 3800: FEMINIST ACTIVISM AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING HEAD TO THE CAPITOL

Students in the new Women's Studies course on feminist activism, along with faculty member, Beth Bartlett, and community members from Safe Haven, Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Mending the Sacred Hoop, and the Program to Aid Victims of Sexual Assault, boarded a bus and headed to St. Paul on March 6th for the Stop Violence Against Women's Action Day. We learned about pending legislation affecting the safety and rights of women, met with legislators, and attended the noon rally in the capitol rotunda. The highlight of the day for all was an impromptu meeting with DFL State Representative Karen Clark. She took time out of her busy schedule to meet with us, and inspired the students with her genuine interest and her commitment to feminism and social justice. Her parting words to the students were, "Women don't run for office unless they are asked, so I'm asking each of you now." There was much talk of that on the bus trip home, and since that time, at least half of these young women are thinking seriously about running for public office. Thank you, Rep. Clark, for your inspiring example!



WS MINOR AICHA COOPER CHOSEN TO BE COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Congratulations to WS minor, Aicha Cooper, who has been chosen to be the 2012 Student Commencement speaker. Students were nominated and auditioned by CLA department heads, who were moved beyond words by Aicha's speech. Aicha says that she is quite humbled to have been nominated, let alone chosen. Her hope is to leave students inspired, uplifted, and encouraged. She says that we all have stories, and we need to use them to learn and to inspire others around us. Aicha's own story is one that includes living through war in Liberia, and coming to this country as a refugee when she was young. Since then, she has done much to help her family and others. She has given her time and energy to those who have lived through and continue to live with the impact of war and dislocation. To this end, she founded a nonprofit organization to assist orphans and underprivileged children in Liberia through education, poverty reduction, and youth empowerment. She also served as a mentor to high school girls through the Liberian Women's Initiative of Minnesota, and as an HIV/AIDS advisor through the African Wellness Program. She has also been active in intercultural activities on campus, first through her founding of the Diversity Student Club at Normandale Community College, then as the Diversity Student Intern of the Minnesota State Colleges and University system, and finally, in her serving as an intern for the Women's Resource and Action Center on the UMD campus. Aicha says she has learned so much on this campus about diversity, social injustice, cultural competence, and respect. She hopes to take these values and skills and share them with others. She plans to continue to work in the area of international and intercultural justice after graduation. Congratulations, Aicha!



You will find an excerpt of Aicha's speech on the UMD CLA website: www.d.umn.edu/cia.

WS MAJOR LEXIE GENEROUS HONORED WITH SIEUR DU LUTH AWARD

Congratulations to WS major and graduating senior Lexie Generous, who was chosen to receive the 2012 Sieur du Luth Award for “those who have provided exemplary service of three years or more to an organization, the University, and community.” Lexie has certainly done this and more. On campus, Lexie has been a student leader in the Multicultural Center, and has served as an intern for the Women’s Resource and Action Center and an organizer of the many V-Day UMD events for the past three years. More recently Lexie been one of the founders of the UMD Women’s Studies Club and a member of Trans*formation, which provides support for transgender students. Their particular em-

phasis has been to support transgender students through the name change process and insure that their correct name is on their diploma. Lexie also was a Welcome Week Student Orientation Leader. In the community, Lexie has served as a legal advocacy intern for the Lake Superior Family Justice Center, an advocate for Safehaven Shelter for Battered Women, and as a sexual assault advocate and the on-campus advocacy coordinator for the Program to Aid Victims of Sexual Assault. These are only a few of the many ways that Lexie has dedicated herself to service on campus and the community.

Lexie says these are all things she feels that she was called to do. She is fueled by

her passion to serve and by listening to women and their stories of resilience. When asked her advice for future generations of student activists, she replied “never back down, have good support systems, always make connections, and don’t be afraid to call yourself a feminist.”

Following graduation, Lexie plans to move to the Twin Cities and pursue an MSW, with a minor in Women and Public Policy. She is very interested in influencing administration and policy decisions, and is thinking seriously of running for public office. We all hope you do, Lexie! Congratulations on a well-deserved honor!



FAREWELL TO LAURA STOLLE SCHMIDT

We were sad to say goodbye to our wonderful and beloved administrative assistant, Laura, who has been with us for six years and been our wise and supportive friend. Laura has moved to Baltimore to be with her partner and family, and to pursue her education and new vocational adventures. We wish you a fond farewell, Laura!

30TH ANNIVERSARY



UMD DEPARTMENT OF
WOMEN'S STUDIES

494 Humanities Building
1201 Ordean Court
Duluth, MN 55812

Phone: 218-726-7953
Fax: 218-726-7651
E-mail: ws@d.umn.edu
Web: www.d.umn.edu/ws
Facebook: University of Minnesota Duluth
Women's Studies Department



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UMD WS ONLINE

Women's Studies now has a group on Facebook where we can post events, have discussions, share photos, and stay in touch with alumnae and friends of the department. Find us under groups at **"University of Minnesota Duluth Women's Studies Department"**

Check out our website at www.d.umn.edu/ws Especially note our new calendar for UMD and local community events during the school year. Also find this newsletter in color and many back issues.