



# WOMEN'S STUDIES

MAY 2015 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 8

## INTRODUCING THE MA GRADUATES OF 2015



**Sarah Bratchell** is a full time art educator by day and a jewelry design revolutionary by night. She is the co-founder of a student-based organization in the Hamden Public School system called the HMS Allies, which fosters cultural awareness and community connections. She is the creator/owner of Bella Rev. Up-Cycled Jewelry and Treasures and co-founder of Haven Events, a grassroots woman-owned organization that produces multi faceted "Pop-Up" experiences around New Haven. She is also a spoken word poet, feminist, Hip-Hop head, and visual artist.

Bratchell has been working on her thesis, "The Revolutionary Image: A Visual Dialogue on Womanhood in the Black Power Movement and Beyond" with her advisor, Dr. Tricia Lin and second reader, Siobhan Carter-David.

**Lauren Chicowski** has a B.S. in Anthropology with minors in Women's Studies and Wellness from SCSU. She served with AmeriCorps for two years prior to working full-time with New Haven Public Schools as a recruitment specialist and business manager.



Chicowski's advice for new students is to explore interdisciplinary learning and to network with other departments. It will come in handy when students need a thesis advisor and reader. Furthermore, she advises to take advantage of counseling services, Buley librarians, the multicultural center and the SAGE center.

"Counseling and Assessment of Culturally Diverse Populations" in the School Counseling program was her favorite class. While her women's studies courses deeply analyze theory, this course provided applied knowledge for effective cross-cultural analysis. Her major highlight from the program was the feeling of accomplishment when she submitted the IRB application for her thesis.

The title of her thesis is "Youth Involvement in Extracurricular Activities: Perceptions of Stakeholders in a School-Based Leadership Program." It involves extensive surveys and focus groups with student participants, their parents and school staff. She has enjoyed working with her advisor and reader, Dr. Laura Bower-Phipps from SCSU, and Judy Puglisi, NHPS principal and supervisor from her school.

Chicowski is pursuing a doctorate in educational leadership after graduating from the Women's Studies Program. Her favorite quote is by Alice Paul: "When you put your hand to the plow, you can't put it down until you get to the end of the row."



**Freda Grant** was attracted to the WMS MA program because of her dedication to providing a voice and space for Black women from the inner city with backgrounds similar to hers.

Grant's thesis, "Let Me Break it Down for You Again: A Literary Analysis of Hip Hop Feminism within Urban Fiction," involves Hip Hop Feminism, Black Feminism, Black women in Black Liberation organizations, and Hip Hop. Her thesis team is comprised of Dr. Brandon Hutchinson and Dr. Siobhan Carter-David.

Her favorite courses were "Race, Class, and Gender," taught by Dr. Shirley Jackson, and "History of the African Diaspora," taught by Dr. Siobhan Carter-David. Grant's favorite experiences in the program were co-planning the New Haven Hip Hop Conference and meeting her Hip Hop Feminist sherons in Puerto Rico at the National Women's Studies Association Annual Conference in November 2014.

After graduation, Grant's full-time focus will be uplifting women of color through a philosophy she coined as "Hip Hop Feminist Baby Mama Perspective," spreading the good/hood word on her blog [www.somethinglyte.com](http://www.somethinglyte.com), and continuing to develop as a scholar and activist.

Her favorite quote is by Joan Morgan: "Feminism claimed me long before I claimed it. The foundation was laid by women who had little use for the word. I did not know that feminism is what you called it when black warrior women moved mountains and walked on water. Growing up in their company, I considered these things ordinary."

**Carol Huckaby** is a part-time professor in the Human Services and Psychology departments at Albertus Magnus College. Her past experience includes service as the Director of Programs for a statewide welfare to work program, Director of Education and Training at a statewide policy, advocacy organization specializing in women's behavioral health, and multicultural trainer for state and corporate organizations.



Women's Studies allowed Huckaby to understand and explore the plight of women throughout the world and how patriarchy has affected our lives. It also made her examine ways to improve the lives of other women regardless of their age, ethnicity, physical ability, and sexual orientation, etc. Her advice to students is to be prepared to learn experience and share your knowledge and to challenge the norms society assigns to gender.

Her thesis titled, "Welfare Reform and African American Women: The Role of Race, Class and Gender in Welfare Reform Policy," involves African American women in the welfare system. With the assistance of her advisor, Dr. Ilene Crawford, and reader, Dr. Virginia Metaxas, her thesis also explores alternatives to current policies and practices that could effectively remove biases and barriers and provide African American and other women of color with the resources to succeed.

Her future plans are to continue to teach and make changes in her community to empower one woman/girl at a time. Her favorite quote is by Mahatma Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world." It is what it is, experience, learn, share and use situations and information you receive.

For the duration of her time as a Women's Studies MA student, **Melanie Lozada** worked as a graduate assistant in the Women's Studies program, staffing the office, and helping to organize a variety of events on campus, including the 64 Days of Nonviolence and the 2014 Women's Studies Conference. Of her time here, she is most appreciative of her work as a Graduate Assistant which allowed her to feel rooted in the program and created a supportive space to make mistakes and hone the skills and professionalism needed outside of academia. Her advice to new students would be to be present in every moment of your time as a MA student. She urges students to be present when reading, writing, in class, and while speaking with professors. It is so easy to constantly be looking ahead to what is next, but true happiness is being able to appreciate every word, every sentence, and every second of your work and time as a graduate student.



Lozada's thesis, "Deconstructing the Menstruation Taboo: The Creation and Reception of Menstrual Art," focuses on the significance of the creation of menstrual art which works to break down the societal taboo of the menstruating woman. Her thesis also ascribes the importance of art to affect social change. After the completion of her degree in May, she hopes to continue her education with a degree in Library and Information Science, focusing on youth/children's programming. She is interested in promoting her feminist perspective in the public library system, advocating for equality and justice through critical literacy among youth.

**Mary Mahan**, the fourth of five children, grew up living all over the world due to her father's military employment. She graduated high school in San Antonio, Texas, and received her undergraduate degree in English from the University of New Hampshire. Mahan spent the following decade and a half working in the textile arts; currently she is self-employed as a window treatment fabricator. She is married with one daughter and another on the way.

The pursuit of a creative life and the balance between the creative and analytic self is a lifelong quest that brought her to Women's Studies culminating in the completion of her Master's thesis.

Mahan's thesis, "Symbols of Transformation and Being: A Journey to Rebirth," is a creative piece that argues the importance of reclaiming a balanced way of life through knowing, recognizing, and incorporating the collective unconscious. Since the advent of modern civilization, the process of Western colonization and globalization has been rooted in unidimensional concepts of hierarchy, competition, and reason systematically ignoring and denigrating the creative, intuitive, instinctual, feminine, collective self. Through the creative exploration of archetypal symbols, specifically symbols of transformation, her thesis highlights an ancient thread of knowledge that connects all aspects of life—the personal and the communal, the past and the present. This recognition becomes a beacon for the transcendence to wellbeing. Her thesis advisor is Dr. Yi-Chun Tricia Lin, and her thesis reader, Dr. Rosalyn Amenta.

Her advice for new students is to pursue your passions in every class and in every assignment, and not to be afraid to step outside the box and be creative! Without passion and creativity, the oppression and frag

mentation endured in the world cannot be felt or overcome. Her favorite course in the WMS program was "Ecofeminism" because facing the painful and depressing state of our environmental and spiritual lives can free us for changing our individual behavior and ultimately, our community perspectives. Another course favorite of hers was "Global Women's Issues" because it drew the heartache and isolation felt by women across the whole world together into one screaming voice. The Women's Studies program at SCSU will always be remembered for its warm and welcoming embrace and courage to stand up to the injustices in the world.

Her future plans are to live mindfully and compassionately, and continue her quest for creative consciousness. Mahan's favorite quote is by Thich Nhat Han: "I recognize that there is garbage in me. I am going to transform this garbage into nourishing compost that can make love reappear."

**Cecilia Padmore's** success in college came from her mother, aunt, friends, and professors encouraging her to obtain a master's degree. Every morning, even in times when she wanted to give up or wondered about her direction, she wakes up and utters the following words in her head: "I am dedicated, motivated, and responsible for my own education." She is grateful and blessed to have experience this journey in this stage of her life.



Her advice for students is to take advantage of academic resources, pay close attention to time management, communicate with professors, but, most importantly, always take time for yourself.

Her favorite course at SCSU was HIS 599, "History and Culture of the African Diaspora." Previously she was not familiar with the content of the course, though history is a subject area that she finds most interesting. She says, "It is fascinating to learn the origins of Black cultures, traditions, and why different things happened."

Working with her advisor and reader, Dr. Jane McGinn and Dr. Annette Madlock Gatison, her thesis concerns television reality shows and how it impacts women. It is titled, "Perceptions of Women Portrayed on Reality Television: A Descriptive Study." Television has become the source of the most broadly shared images and messages in history (Gerbner et al., 1986). Reality television is a media staple for the current generation. Reality programs including "The Bachelor," "Love & Hip Hop," and "The Real Housewives" are among the most watched programs in the United States (TV by the Numbers, 2015). The media's portrayals depict an unrealistic image of women and have cultivated a crooked and damaging public perception of women (Smith, 2011). This study, using a content analysis methodology, reviews and analyzes several episodes of the previously mentioned TV series. In each of the selected television series, examples of women's behaviors being negatively portrayed, stereotyped, and sensationalized were collected, categorized and analyzed. The results of the analysis provide a quantitative and qualitative description of the ways women are depicted on reality television and postulates implications for real young women in today's society.

Padmore's best memory from SCSU is working with students, chatting, and laughing. Her future plans are to work at a university where she can share her knowledge with other students to help them make a difference in their own lives. Also, possibilities of earning a PhD are foreseeable. Her favorite quote is by Michael Phelps: "There will be obstacles, there will be doubters, there will be mistakes, but with hard work, there are no limits."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

-Women's Studies Thesis Symposium Presentations: May 12th, 5-8pm in Engleman B 121 A&B

-Women's Studies Graduate Commencement Reception: May 14th, 11-1pm in Engleman B 121 A&B

-Calling for Editors for the WMS Newsletter 2015-2016. If interested, please contact the WMS office.

-WMS 350: Women's Health Conscious: 18-40 Instructor: Dr. Marian Evans, June 22-July 26; (MTWR); 3:15pm-5:15pm

-WMS 599: Ecofeminism: Women, Nature, Ecology and Spirituality Instructor: Dr. Rosalyn Amenta, June 22; July 6-8; 13-15; and 20-21 (MTW) 5pm-8:30pm and Saturday, July 11, 10am-5pm

-Contact the WMS office for more information on how to apply to be a graduate assistant for the 2015-2016 academic year. Applications are due June 30, 2015



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**Skyla Seamans** grew up in a small Vermont town, attended a liberal arts college in Massachusetts to study English and Journalism, and then found herself permanently residing in New Haven as part of the WMS program. Skyla is very excited to be obtaining her Master's Degree right around the time of having her first baby, moving across town, and starting a career. Seamans sees herself sticking with higher education or working with non-profits for women and children as a community organizer, domestic violence advocate, youth programmer, and so on. Seamans would also love to become a doula and birth coach.

Her favorite course at SCSU was Dr. Jackson's sociology class, "Race, Class, and Gender," because it showed how different systems of oppression are constantly intersecting and the ways these systems affect disadvantaged populations in our society. To her, this class was incredibly important, intriguing, and a must for all women's studies graduate students!

Her thesis, "The Privilege of Modern Midwifery: The Absence of Low-Income Women and Women of Color in the Home Birth Movement and Why It Matters," is on race and class disparities and representations within the homebirth midwifery movement in Connecticut and her thesis adviser is Dr. Cassi Meyerhoffer.

Seamans' favorite part of the WMS program is the community she became a part of. Skyla sees the connections, friendships, relationships and allies she made to be the most valuable piece of her experience at SCSU. She is also incredibly thankful to Dr. Ro Coforti and Ian Canning, who provided her with the opportunity to work as a graduate assistant during both her years within the program, and without them, would not have the professional experience and support that she desired as a soon-to-be graduate looking to start a career. To future WMS students, she advises to create one's own sense of community, take classes that challenge your perspectives on the world, and remember that it is the journey, not the end, that shapes who you are.

**Mobria Small**, consciously known as Assata Neteru, is a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a soldier, a graduate student and a lover of culture and history. She was born in Jamaica, West Indies and migrated to the Empire of America when she was 10.



Her advice for new students coming to Southern is to be patient and communicate with professors. "Create your experience and let it work for you. A step at a time and eventually you will see the ground from the top of the ladder."

As a commuting student, Small did not take advantage of the services on campus as she should have. The Veteran Service was a blessing for her after returning from duty. She encourages students to look into all that SCSU has to offer and take advantage of it.

The title of her thesis is "To the Root We Go, Understanding My Sister Women: The Effects of Migration on Mother-Daughter Relationship in Jamaican Households." She writes this thesis for all the mothers of Jamaica under the guidance of her advisor, Dr. Brandon Hutchinson, and reader, Dr. Jane Barstow.

She offers these words from Marcus Garvey, "If you haven't confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life. With confidence, you have won even before you have started."

**Tiffany Trowbridge-Bernard** will be graduating with her MA in Women's Studies in Fall 2015. She is currently a graduate intern at the CCSU Women's Center. She holds a BA in Women's Studies from the University of Saint Josephs. Trowbridge-Bernard works full-time with teenage girls in a group home and uses her feminist perspective to teach them life skills to instill good judgment and confidence. She aspires to earn a PhD in Women's Studies and to use her knowledge to help eradicate domestic violence.



Her thesis, "Children of Violence," examines resilience-based therapeutic interventions with adolescents ages six to twelve who have witnessed IPV domestic violence in order to curtail the likelihood of perpetuating IPV or becoming victims of IPV, with the assistance of her advisor and reader, Dr. Joy Fopiano and Dr. Debra Risisky.

Her advice for students is to be confident in one's beliefs and aspirations and to take advantage of the 64 Days of Nonviolence Programs and the National Women's Studies Honor Society (Triota). Her favorite course in the program was Feminist Pedagogy because it helped her understand teaching feminism in a new perspective and allowed for individual creativity. Her best memory at SCSU was the SCSU WMS Conference in 2014 and the "Who Needs Feminism?" campaign she

started. Her future plans is to pursue a PhD in Women's Studies and book writing in the wilderness of Vermont.

**Bina Walker** has loved her time in New England, although she is excited to return to her hometown in Seattle, Washington. She holds a B.A. in Communication Studies, Economics, and Women's & Gender Studies, with a minor in Humanities, from Eastern Washington University (EWU). She and her husband, while attending graduate school in New Haven, have welcomed a new baby girl, and are anxiously awaiting family time and simply enjoying each other.



During her time at SCSU, she has made wonderful connections, made life-long WMS sisters, and friends. With the assistance of her advisor and reader, Dr. Michele Vancour, SCSU, and Dr. Kelley Cullen, EWU, her thesis examines college students' preferences for breastfeeding. Here, she measures students' knowledge, openness, exposure, and opinion toward breastfeeding in public. Her favorite course at SCSU was her "Maternal and Child Health" course with Dr. Michele Vancour because the content of the course was what she is most passionate about.

Working as a graduate assistant in the WMS office has also helped her to be a better person and make a difference in her community. The program has truly enhanced her activism in terms of raising awareness, activism online (via her Feminist Pedagogy class with Dr. Heidi Lockwood), and holding seminars to educate. Walker's favorite memory while at SCSU was speaking to different classes about her natural birth experience of delivering both her babies (Abigail and Adalynn) in the water at a birthing center. Walker encourages students to take classes from different degree programs, visit the WMS office often, present research at multiple conferences, always take care of yourself first, and know that everything will be okay when you sit down to actually do it.

Walker would like to thank her husband, parents, sister, daughters, Tricia, and Melanie for keeping her on her tracks and always encouraging her! She would also like to thank her advisor and reader and the many other professors who had an impact on her time here at SCSU. Her future plans include starting a church with her husband in Seattle, WA, pursuing a PhD in Public Health, continue to volunteer her time at orphanages, churches, and community centers, homeschool her children, paint, pursue her love for the outdoors with her girls, nieces and family, and learn the piano. Her favorite quote and what she lives by is "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" -Psalm 37:4.

**Xan Walker** is a lifelong New Havener and the youngest of three. She has two adult children, Keith Richard, and Cheri Rachel, and two granddaughters, Curiah (7), and Xanae (3). Aside from church, school, and family, Walker enjoys traveling, watching baseball and boxing. She loves the technology world, graphics, knitting, hula hooping, and dancing! She has been a line dance instructor for eight years. Walker also volunteers as a chess coach to youth in the S.P.O.R.T.S Academy program and participates in cycling, and 5K events that bring awareness to global issues such as mental health, domestic violence, autism, cancer, and others. This summer, she plans to volunteer at New Haven's Tower One/Tower East assisting in individual and group recreation.



In her thesis titled "In a Black Woman's World: Depression and Emotional Eating, she writes on awareness to silent problem crippling African American women. Walker examines how depression and emotional eating affects women of color in similar ways regardless of their age but tends to go unnoticed and often untreated. She has truly enjoyed working with her advisor and second reader, Dr. Doris Marino and Dr. Siobhan D. Carter-David.

Each course in WMS, she expresses, was enlightening and has helped her understand that it is one of the many pieces to the puzzle of global women's issues. Her advice for students is "never give up on your dreams or your goals even when it feels like you are traveling alone..." She urges everyone to be involved in workshops, conferences, and lectures. "Be a representation by your presence and let your voice be heard" she says.

Even though today she knows without a doubt the Women's Studies program is where she was meant to be, Walker clearly remembers, back in August 2012 at the Women's Studies meet-and-greet, the feeling of being clueless and wondering what on earth she was doing there.

She is truly thankful to her professors, classmates, family, and friends who supported her along the way making it possible for her to see the end of this journey.

After graduation, she looks forward to spending more time with her granddaughters and family, reading for pleasure, completing and starting writing projects, learning to play the guitar and the steel drum. She also plans to become more active in church and the community and looks forward to and embraces the opportunity to work in environments that will continue to inspire, encourage, and uplift sisterhood. Her favorite quote is "God can make something out of nothing."

**Julian Wilson**, a New Haven native, attended New Haven public schools and completed his undergraduate education in New Haven at SCSU. He is very involved in his communities working on political campaigns as well as working for social justice in the neighborhoods.



Wilson is currently working on his Master's thesis, "On Display: A Comparative Study on Race and Gender in Advertising," which looks into the ways both race and gender impact sexualization in advertising. The thesis focuses on print media, life-style magazines (*Essence Magazine*, *GQ Magazine*, *Glamour*, and *XXL*) in particular examines how the advertisements that appear in them differ in their depictions based upon differences in race and gender.

Some advice Wilson offers for incoming MA candidates would be to stick to subject matters that interest you. When writing long papers or working on big projects, make sure the subject is interesting.

## STUDENT OF THE MONTH

A WMS Grad Certificate student, **Shenée Simon** is a Richmond, VA native, currently resides in San Antonio, TX with her husband-Ronald and two amazing sons, Ronald (4) and Robert (1). Simon has actively decided to be a full time mother and to homeschool her oldest. Simon holds a BA in Women's Studies and a minor in Leadership Studies from the University of Richmond. She also holds a MA in Human Resource Management from Rollins College.



Simon has volunteered hours at National Coalition of Girls Schools, Classical Conversations Homeschooling Community, and US Army Family Readiness Group. Her community involvement and leadership extend to Virginia, her hometown, as well as the home to her alma mater, University of Richmond. She has the following affiliations and involvement: Outreach/Mission Coordinator-Discovery Church (2 mos.); Shepherds Promise (6 mos.); Leader-Family Readiness Group (1 yr.); Mayors City Academy (2008); National/Local Board Member NAAHR-National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (3 yrs.); National Board Member University of Richmond Alumni Board (3 yrs.); Founding Board Member Junior Achievement: Professional Connections (1 yr.); SHRM-Society of Resource Management; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Volunteer- Jobs Partnership of Florida (3 yrs.) Simon is a community development advocate and routinely seeks out creative means often through domestic and international partnerships to address needs where she lives, works and recreates.

Her research topic involves single-sex education & girls studies from the feminist perspective. The impact of the recent initiative of "Let Girls Learn" who are the global leaders in educating our girls.

Simon is blessed to enjoy her first loves, family and the community. She homeschools her two sons, is actively involved in the community serving the U.S. Army, American Association of University Women, University of Richmond Alumni Association-Regional Chapters, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and Classical Conversations community. She enjoys reading historical fictions, travelling, spending time with family, and French and Spanish culture and the Arts.

## IOTA IOTA IOTA



On May 6th, Triota inducted the following students: Kate Anderstrom, Elizabeth Brady, Lauren Chicoski, Amanda DiGioia, Jasmine Fenton, Nicole Lowman, Harcene Mbaya, Tenzin Cake Namdol, Betsy Nilan, Fabienne Riche, Alyne Rodrigues, and Lauren Todd

Introducing the 2015-2016 E-Board Members..

President: Dixie Wiafe  
Vice President: Lauren Todd  
Secretary: Kate Anderstrom

Treasurer: Betsy Nilan  
Mediator: Cake Turnip

Thank you to the past E-Board members of 2014-2015 for all of their hard work and dedication.