

# forum: W/G/S Studies

## *Women's Studies and Sexuality Studies in Conversation*

FOR OVER A DECADE, the proliferation of donor funding and student enthusiasm for sexuality studies has spurred the creation of new programs and research centers across US and Canadian campuses. Many of these new sites have been established as distinct and separate from pre-existing women's studies units — at times in response to donor mandates and, at other times, to reflect intellectual/political leanings. More recently, however, several university administrations have attempted to fuse sexuality and/or LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) studies and women's studies units (along with other related units) in the name of cutting costs. In other settings, faculty have proposed consolidation in the interest of fostering intellectual synergies. Yet another context is that of newer women, gender, and sexuality studies units that incorporate a variety of impulses, but that are nonetheless under restructuring pressure to consolidate with other campus units.

Over the last year, Feminist Studies invited a cross-national conversation on these changes, foregrounding the question “whither feminisms?” What are the implications, as institutional homes mutate, for interdisciplinary and politically charged feminist work? What do separate institutional spaces for studying sexuality, gender, and women signal? What is gained and what is lost when consolidation occurs? In the resulting forum presented here, administrators, instructors, and scholars comment on the current place and future of women's studies and sexuality studies programs in the US and Canadian academies today.

The participants in this forum are all tenured faculty at research universities across the United States and Canada, with the majority of participants appointed (at least jointly) in women's studies; women's and gender studies; women's, gender, and

*sexuality studies; or sexuality studies programs. They reflect on program identities, the costs of institutionalization, and the possibility of transdisciplinarity as the goal of feminist scholarship and pedagogy. Some focus on the question of naming: Should “women’s studies” identity remain linked to feminism? How should programs make visible the significance of sexuality studies, queer studies, critical race studies, or postcolonial studies (and their respective theoretical bases) in such naming? Others take on the issue of resources: Are interdisciplinary program mergers the way to survive as programs in a fairly harsh economic climate? The long-standing question of “integration” or “separation” remains the main issue for some while only a subtext for others. All also engage to varying degrees the question of strategizing for survival. Some argue for stealthy approaches to administrators and students — not explicitly naming or claiming feminism but integrating a feminist politics into courses and programs in order to appear less “threatening” to administrators and students. Taken together, the forum reflects the multiple positions and dilemmas before us.*

Feminist Studies Collective

*Diving (Back) into the Wreck:  
Finding, Transforming, and Reimagining  
Women's Studies and Sexuality Studies  
in the Academy*

*Breanne Fahs*

We are, I am, you are / by cowardice or courage / the one who finds  
our way / back to this scene / carrying a knife, a camera / a book of  
myths / in which / our names do not appear.

—Adrienne Rich, “Diving into the Wreck”<sup>1</sup>

AS A SEXUALITY RESEARCHER who has traveled with a formal, institutional “women’s studies” label since the start of college—first as an undergraduate at Occidental College’s women’s studies/gender studies department (1997–2001), then as a graduate student in women’s studies at the University of Michigan (2001–2006), and now as a tenured professor of women and gender studies at Arizona State University (2006–present)—my formal ties to academic feminism owe much to the work of those who blazed that path for me. Scholars of my generation—those who have always seen women’s studies in the academy as possible and available—often forget the hard-won battles, challenges, and struggles that gave birth to women’s studies as a field of study. As we now embark on the challenge to decide where women’s studies and sexuality studies should reside within the academy—as separate fields, as joint programs, or as fields tied with ethnic studies and American studies—the privileges and dangers of this conversation deserve assessment.

While interviewing radical feminist Ti-Grace Atkinson several years ago, she advised caution about a formalized association between women's studies and sexuality studies.<sup>2</sup> She warned, aptly, that fusing women's studies and sexuality studies too closely could lead to the implicit pairing of women and their bodies (and men and their minds) that feminists had long fought to negate. We had been discussing some shifts at the university—the move from women's studies to gender studies and conversations about further collapsing women's studies into “something else”—and she expressed concern that, even though the political alliances between women, gender, and sexuality studies remained strong, the *linguistic* connection between the three would create political assumptions about women and bodies that could be difficult to shake. This advice hit particularly hard for me as a sexuality scholar in women's studies, as my entire career has incessantly fused sexuality, embodiment, radical feminism, and women's studies together.

The road to renaming, reclassifying, and regrouping women's studies and its allies is fraught with messiness, intellectual and ideological struggle, personal passions, and hard-earned political strategizing. With so many having a stake in this process, the priorities of administrators (concerned with cost-cutting, student retention, and numbers), chairs and directors (fighting to keep women's studies and its goals alive), faculty (struggling with pedagogical and political tensions, particularly about intersectionality, not to mention keeping their jobs), and students (wanting a recognizable, “legitimate,” and provocative course of study) too often stand at odds.<sup>3</sup> In my experience, at least four key areas in this debate provoke the most discussion, each of which I outline briefly here: (1) the politics of naming; (2) the intellectual risks and benefits of “ghetto” studies; (3) shifting definitions of “social justice” as an umbrella term; and (4) the continuing risks of institutionalizing radical, activist, or politically significant social movements.

Every college and university I have joined has had numerous discussions about name changes in women's studies. At Occidental College, a decision was made to link both women's studies and gender studies, while the University of Michigan (after a heated multi-month debate among faculty and graduate students in 2004) decided to retain the name “women's studies.” Arizona State University's Tempe

campus recently transitioned their women's studies program into the School of Social Transformation, while West campus (my current home) has embarked on a series of conversations about eliminating both women and gender studies and ethnic studies in favor of a larger social justice program, mostly in the name of "saving" the program from annihilation. (Are we acting, as Laura Briggs frames it in this issue, out of fear for our future or instead a "wild optimism" and a "contagious sense of freedom"?) Most women's studies students and faculty know these debates quite well; they follow us around, just as the fear of losing women's studies seems a constant threat hanging over our heads. Naming carries with it many interesting conversations about public presentation, personal identity, attraction to newer students, and even "hipness" and "freshness" along with placement within the university's mission (and money streams). The potential losses or gains from name changes are difficult to ascertain, as the context in which the name change occurs prohibits generalizations in this regard. For example, erasing the words "women" and "Latino/a" and "indigenous" at Arizona State may advance the (far Right) conservative aims of the state while also giving us the opportunity to act stealthily and strategically when they do not immediately recognize us as a fundamentally progressive program. Doing so at the University of Maryland, where, as Marilee Lindemann describes in this issue, women's studies is well funded and operating in a solidly blue state, may yield a different outcome altogether.

Some questions I commonly hear: If we call a department "Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies," does that fuse identity groups together with a *subject*, or is sexuality also (solely?) an identity? Why prioritize sexuality over other obvious identities that link with women's studies? Are we further watering down women's studies or creating new spaces for intersectional identities? (Similar conversations have ensued about the risks and benefits of dismantling black studies in favor of ethnic studies — did we erase blackness or make the department more inclusive and comprehensive?) Adding *gender* to women's studies has made room for scholars to think more broadly about men, masculinities, trans and queer sexualities, and the non-essential qualities of the word "women." (It also gets conservative men off our backs for not "having a men's studies department too.") Adding *sexuality* to the mix makes an even more welcoming home

for gay feminist men to join the department, signaling formalized links between feminism and queer rights struggles. Politically, I have not encountered a single women's studies person who would argue against the intellectual linkages between women's studies, ethnic studies, and sexuality studies (although feminists have encountered resistance from some ethnic studies and sexuality studies scholars); we know intimately how fused these fields are in the "real world," yet naming these links invites different stories and risks into the mix. Briggs asserts in this issue that women's studies cannot exist without sexuality studies and vice versa. I would add the questions: Will women's studies evolve its way into the erasure of women altogether? Have feminists fought this long to have the word *women* disappear from visibility? Conversely, if women's studies continues its success—particularly in its work on intersectionality—won't we work our way out of a job because it has so many intuitive allies? Isn't women's studies necessarily "timing out" as an academic discipline in a positive way (even though sexism and patriarchy remain strong)?

Still, when sitting in meetings where administrators argue for the collapse of women, gender, sexuality, queer, ethnic, American, First Nations, indigenous (and so on) studies, I get nervous. If all of these programs and departments get taken out and "ghettoized" into one place, does that make the more traditional fields (especially the social and natural sciences) less critical of social identities and inequalities? For example, women's studies at the University of Michigan exists only within joint graduate programs (psychology, sociology, history, English); its presence serves as a necessary and important virus/gadfly that infects these (fixed, exclusive, traditional, masculine) fields with a strong feminist jolt. By creating a separate umbrella program for all critical fields together, might we lose the ability to challenge, inject, and disrupt fields that are not all that excited to welcome us to the party?

My ultimate position on the issue is that there is no universal answer for all conditions because *it depends on the political priorities of the university/college as a whole*. At liberal arts-focused Occidental College, the creation of the Critical Theory and Social Justice department—housing women's studies/gender studies, ethnic studies, American studies, sexuality and queer studies, and chunks of religious studies—works well because the entire college already had a strong commitment

to the success and visibility of these lines of study. The department expects students to become well versed in critical theory, social identity, queer and sexuality studies, and intersectionality; as a result, the college is producing an excellent undergraduate journal and has generated students who can enter multiple fields for graduate school *and* who have built institutionalized links between feminism and its allies. Whether other universities, public or private, have a similar commitment to helping these fields succeed—or whether they simply want them to stop pestering the traditional (high dollar) departments—is an absolutely pivotal factor in whether these hybrid departments can or will work. Public universities that do not adamantly defend the *necessity* of critical fields to grow and flourish will ensure their gradual marginalization and eventual extinction.

My hunch about the future of women's studies and sexuality studies is that both will increasingly find housing beneath a "social justice" umbrella. In theory, this is a fine way to proceed; in practice, it may transform the scholarly and political goals of women's studies in ways that deserve caution and careful assessment. Social justice often evokes the more literal definition of justice: legal, social, and political battles about underrepresented groups (certainly a priority for women's studies). At its most literal interpretation, it reads as "criminal justice" and leaves out other priorities for women's studies: sexuality, queer theory, embodiment, critical theory, postcolonial/post-structuralist criticism, textual and visual analysis, and interpersonal analysis, among others. Clearly defining social justice in a broad discursive manner (and transmitting those definitions into coursework and hiring decisions) could pose serious challenges if women's studies and sexuality studies become collapsed within a more narrow social justice framework. Tensions between social justice and social injustice may also be worth examining, just as psychology and public health have long had to negotiate the dual and sometimes competing languages of health and pathology. How might women's studies operate within a framework of *injustices* toward women and others? Further, how might women's studies and sexuality studies reconcile their vastly different interpretations of "good scholarship" (theory versus positivistic work) about injustice, particularly if sexuality studies continues to emulate public health and medical discourses? These questions only represent the start of this difficult conversation.

Finally, as we dive back into the wreck (and meditate on the loss of Adrienne Rich herself), let us consider the continuing risks of institutionalizing radical, activist, and politically significant social movements. Institutionalization is dangerous. It produces several outcomes that concern me for the future of women's studies and sexuality studies: first, it requires replication and spawning of similarity (for example, faculty producing graduate student replicas, creating a singular canon for women's studies and sexuality studies); second, it creates sometimes unpleasant links between those with and without political alliances to women's studies, with decision making often going to those who create financial gain for the university; and third, it creates the need for public relations (to distance women's studies from angry, hairy, lesbian stereotypes) and a clear shift away from activism as a valuable faculty and student contribution.

Consequently, this discussion "whither feminisms?" is far from benign or inconsequential; it speaks to the heart of what happens when our politics get appropriated, marketed, and sold to others (including ourselves). Let us ask: What kind of field do we want to be and what kinds of allies can we imagine? How can we resist the toxic effects of institutionalization while fighting to keep our status within the university? What kinds of scholars and citizens do we want to produce, and how can we do this without sanitizing and underselling the force of our political histories and stories? Finally, how can we best infect, upset, disarm, and undermine the closed-door traditions of the (white, masculine, heterosexual, capitalistic) university?

#### NOTES

1. Adrienne Rich, *Diving Into the Wreck: Poems 1971–1972* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 24.
2. For the full interview, see Breanne Fahs, "Ti-Grace Atkinson and the Legacy of Radical Feminism," *Feminist Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 561–90.
3. Catherine Orr and Diane Lichtenstein, "The Politics of Feminist Locations: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Studies," *NWSA Journal* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 2004): 1–17; Judith Stacey, "Is Academic Feminism an Oxymoron?" *Signs* 25, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 1189–94; Barrie Thorne, "A Telling Time for Women's Studies," *Signs* 25, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 1183–87.



## *Whither Feminism in Higher Education in the Current Crisis?*

*Laura Briggs*

I WANT TO ARGUE, AGAINST ALL COMMON SENSE and a great deal of experience, that feminist scholars and administrators can have what they want and that the important question for how we conceptualize the relationship of queer and sexuality studies to women's studies should not be one of resources. I say this having been chair of a department at the University of Arizona that survived an effort to eliminate it, and I take very seriously the neoliberal discourse that has shrunk education budgets across the board—more sharply in K–12, but still quite acutely in higher education, especially public higher education. Even so, I want to argue that women's studies, ethnic studies, LGBTQ studies, and, to the extent it has been institutionalized in the US academy, postcolonial studies, are well equipped and well positioned to survive, and that the provocative and interesting intellectual questions about where sexuality and queer studies belong in relationship to women's studies, and what this all has to do with the politics of feminism, should be divorced from the resource questions. They don't belong together.

Myself, I am agnostic; I have seen sexuality studies productively separated from and nested within women's studies. At the University of Arizona, where I was for fifteen years, scholarship and activism thrive at the lively Institute for LGBT Studies, which is distinct from both the Gender and Women's Studies teaching unit, with its BA,

MA/JD, and PhD degrees, and the attached Southwest Institute for Research on Women. For reasons of history and personnel, these are configurations that made sense and captured our hopes and imagination. Neither name fixed limits on the horizon of our work; the University of Arizona's Women's Studies Department, as it was called until 2007, had as its mission statement "the feminist study of everything" and LGBT studies hosted the Sex, Race, and Globalization project. At the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where I am now, the recently renamed and departmentalized Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies has been growing, adding new people and courses in ways made possible by linking the two fields. Neither seems intrinsically better, nor was either move necessary for survival; they simply made sense, given the tools, resources, and opportunities at hand. I would argue that the most radical thing we can do is be pragmatic and even a little bored about the name-game; it is a strategy for garnering resources and even growing, nothing more—it doesn't describe our alliances, our politics, or the crucial issues that we will take up (some of which are just around the next corner, not yet visible from where we sit now). We are *in* universities, but not entirely *of* them—our hopes and aspirations for world-transforming knowledge, work, and activism extend well beyond them, and we lose when we think we are or ought to be described or confined by these spaces.

These are related to the questions that animate much of what is lively and provocative, still, about the exchange between Wendy Brown in "The Impossibility of Women's Studies" and Robyn Wiegman in her response, "The Possibility of Women's Studies."<sup>1</sup> Brown argues, and Wiegman agrees, that much of the source of excitement, renewal, and new knowledge in women's studies is coming from critical race theory, postcolonial studies, and queer theory, and I would concur with that. They arrive at different conclusions from there about the institutionalization of women's studies, with Brown arguing (wrongly, in my view) that we should refrain from further institutionalization and turn the project of feminist scholarship back to the disciplines, while Wiegman argues that this is precisely the kind of interdisciplinary knowledge production that women's studies exists for. Certainly, women's studies cannot continue productively without sexuality studies, and, certainly, sexuality studies is derived and derives from feminist scholarship. What that means about institutionalization, I

think, is essentially a local question, belonging to the particular configurations of individuals, majors, and university cultures. But I want to insist that these questions and horizons are hopeful, not conditioned by scarcity.

That is not to say that there is not a crisis in higher education; there is, and we need to respond to it. Its most grinding effects have been on students, not departments, and I want to give a nod to the incredible long-fought battles by student activists to turn back rising tuition fees: in Quebec, Wisconsin, Chile, Puerto Rico, and by Occupy Student Debt. However, there is a paradoxical dimension to this: as fees have gone up, more, not fewer, students from low-income families have been attending public university. That number stopped increasing in 2008 (which may be telling), but the rising tuition fees/rising financial aid model of the 1990s and early years after 2000 certainly drove a massive democratization of higher education. We don't really know why, and I am certain that there are many reasons. But one is clearly the growing perception of a bachelor's degree as a necessary prerequisite to virtually any career. There's another, darker dimension: as access to consumer credit has tightened for working- and middle-class people, student loans remain easy to come by and are being used by more and more people. The size of the Pell Grant program, which provides loans to low-income students, has more than doubled from 2008 to 2011, from \$16 billion to \$40 billion. I know, anecdotally, of a startling number of students who are using loans to support their parents and siblings. It may be that the massive increases in student indebtedness are not only keeping universities afloat, but another unacknowledged chunk of the economy as well.

The effects of the crisis in public higher education on the institutional well-being of programs such as ethnic studies, African American studies, and women's studies have been very uneven. Africana and women's studies programs at the University of South Florida and University of Nevada, Las Vegas, have found themselves repeatedly on the chopping block; others have been combined into single "difference" units, as at Arizona State University. To speak to the budget I know best, however, from 2007–2010 at the University of Arizona, the budgets of Gender and Women's Studies (GWS) and Mexican American Studies and Research Center (MARSC) stayed substantially

the same or even increased, LGBT Studies became an institute controlling resources that many departments would kill for, while the Political Science and History Departments shrank by 10 percent or more.<sup>2</sup> In addition, universities have committed considerable new programmatic resources to gender and ethnic studies units since the economic crisis began. Since 2007, four universities added PhD programs in gender, women's, and sexuality studies, and a much larger number have added masters' degrees. In short, there is no single, coherent narrative about what has happened to gender, sexuality, ethnic, and related interdisciplinary programs in the current recession.

A few years ago, as protests unfolded in Wisconsin and the Middle East, I had YouTube videos and Al Jazeera English streaming live into my classroom, something that, as a graduate student in Middle East studies reminded me, not everyone felt free to do. It is one of the best things for me about being a professor in women, gender, and sexuality studies—a sense that it matters to be relevant, that projects of critique, of liberation, of resistance to unjust forms of power, and of local and global connection are our business. Some of the reasons we have been successful in sustaining and even growing programs in the context of the recession and the broader crisis of higher education include that relevance, an embodiment of values that actually matter to a broad swath of academics, and good teaching. We have built new constituencies for universities that include local activists, communities of color, and new donors, providing a home for the hopes and aspirations of many of the new populations brought into the university in its growing democratization since World War II. We have done this through our programming, outreach, research, and courses. We have created new curriculum and research programs that respond to the current moment and these new populations. We have seeded our projects throughout the university, building faculty strength in gender, sexuality, and ethnic studies in diverse departments. We have forced open closed doors in administrative decision making, whether by entering administration ourselves—and I'll note that both Bidy Martin, president of Amherst College, and Drew Gilpin Faust, president of Harvard University, began their careers as women's studies professors—and by putting pressure on chancellors and deans and provosts through regular academic channels, such as the faculty

senate, or by doing things such as inviting community members and students to sit-ins about hiring, tenure, and program-founding/closing decisions.

These forms of institutional activism are worth naming, because they are the resources we carry into the intensified form of crisis that we are currently experiencing. Universities are not being eliminated or even necessarily defunded; they are being reconfigured. To the extent that we see our institutional, intellectual, teaching, and local projects as valuable and worth scrapping for—and I very much do—then as much as possible we want to see this crisis as an opportunity to build them. The current crisis is a nightmare, but depending on our willingness to imagine and fight for outcomes that matter to us, the evidence thus far suggests that its long-term effects need not be bad for women's studies and our companion interdisciplines. Insofar as it is possible, we have to refuse to be bullied or frightened into accepting institutional forms that do not reflect our aspirations or our best thinking about what our departments and programs should look like. Let's have a robust debate about where sexuality studies goes in a feminist curriculum and institutionalization, but not out of anxiety about the future. The best thing we have to offer the university, our students, and the future of higher education is our wild optimism and contagious sense of freedom.

#### NOTES

1. Wendy Brown, "The Impossibility of Women's Studies," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 79–102; Robyn Wiegman, "The Possibility of Women's Studies," in *Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*, eds. Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Agatha Beins (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 40–60.
2. According to University of Arizona's internal budget figures from 2007–2010. GWS's budget shrank by 0.6 percent, while MARSC's budget has grown by 3 percent. These numbers include the faculty, RA, and adjunct salaries, plus operations as allocated as state funding, excluding one full professor who shifted her line between the two. It does not include private fundraising, indirect cost returns, or other private or grant monies, which also grew during this period.

## *Building (and Rebuilding) LGBT Studies at the University of Maryland*

*Marilee Lindemann*

The infrastructures of knowledge require physical space and durable organizational structures—offices, buildings, libraries, archives, departments, programs, centers, faculty lines, staff positions, and paychecks. We must work to accumulate more resources and build better bureaucracies.

—Gayle S. Rubin, “Geologies of Queer Studies”<sup>1</sup>

THIS ESSAY TELLS A STORY of academic institution building. In this case, the story is complex, ragged, and unfinished. I am a character in it. As I sit down to tell it, my role in the story is changing in ways that aren't yet clear or, truth be told, entirely comfortable to me. When I wrote a version of this tale five and a half years ago for a Modern Language Association roundtable on institutionalizing queer studies, it was much breezier and more assured. Change is always discomfiting, but I offer this story in the hope that others might learn something from the fifteen-plus years I've spent helping to build and then directing one of the few stand-alone programs in LGBT studies in the United States. I teach at the University of Maryland's flagship campus in College Park. In the 2013–2014 academic year, the program will give up its autonomy and merge with the women's studies department. Many details of the merger and concomitant restructuring of the program and the department are far from settled, which is what I mean when

I say this story is unfinished. Enough prologue, though. Let's get to the story.

The question of where programs should be housed and how they should be configured is partly a disciplinary question, but it is also and perhaps mostly an institutional one. In 1997, when my colleagues and I at Maryland first began developing a plan for what would become an undergraduate certificate program in LGBT studies, it made sense for us to aim to become a freestanding program rather than attach ourselves to a department. Maryland is a Research I university in a cobalt blue state. It has a long history of interdisciplinary, multicultural studies programs and a strong institutional commitment to diversity. We envisioned a program that would be an ally to and a collaborator with larger units on campus with similar or related interests in race, sex, and gender diversity, including the departments of African American studies, American studies, English, and women's studies.

The program was approved in 2002 and housed in the Office of Undergraduate Studies, and I became its first director. We got our autonomy, but the placement in undergraduate studies was always awkward and intended to be temporary: the expectation was that, once the program had established and proven itself, it would move into one of the academic colleges, most likely the College of Arts and Humanities. We ended up staying in undergraduate studies much longer than I imagined largely because of the support of a dean who helped us build a robust, high-profile program that, in addition to its curricular offerings, hosted a highly visible annual lecture series and participated in searches for new tenure-track faculty with primary expertise in the study of nonnormative genders and sexualities. Although their tenure homes were in other departments, these new faculty were expected to teach LGBT studies courses.

Nowadays, most academic consolidation schemes are top-down initiatives launched by deans eager to cut costs and create (alleged) efficiencies. Often it seems little consideration is given to the intellectual or disciplinary coherence of units cobbled together from on high. In this case, however, the idea of combining LGBT studies and women's studies came from LGBT studies, which was thriving in undergraduate studies but was also constrained. We had limited access to graduate students, had to prioritize undergraduate education, and faced considerable obstacles to future faculty hiring given the anomalousness

of being housed in a nonacademic division. By last year, we felt the time had come to get out of the incubator and into a more permanent home, although we knew the new domicile would have to be shared rather than private. (Even I couldn't argue with the claim that LGBT studies was too small to stand on its own in the College of Arts and Humanities.) Women's studies was open to the possibility of a merger and to some broader transformation of its identity and curriculum. Given the synergies of our teaching and research agendas and the history of collaboration between the two units, a merger seemed like a reasonable and perhaps mutually beneficial possibility. This merger is now in the works, with both units discussing the details of their combined administrative structure, curriculum, and budget.

As a longtime academic administrator, I like to describe myself as battle scarred yet stubbornly idealistic. I have spent more than a decade of my career doing what Gayle Rubin exhorts queer scholars to do in the interest of conserving and transmitting queer knowledges. "We must," Rubin says in the passage I have used as an epigraph, "work to accumulate more resources and build better bureaucracies." At the same time, I've kept in mind Roderick Ferguson's cautionary words about "administering sexuality" within the modern, corporate, market-oriented university. Ferguson is wise to point out the risks of succumbing to what he terms "the will to institutionality," of being seduced by the promises of visibility and permanence and ending up participating in processes of normalization that narrow the terms of visibility, marginalize queer lives and subcultures that don't conform to market or administrative models, and repress forms of agency, subjectivity, and political activity that are not, as he puts it, "beholden to bureaucratization."<sup>2</sup>

Ferguson's critique is apt and will resonate with feminist readers and institution builders as an echo of Audre Lorde's zinger about the master's tools never dismantling the master's house.<sup>3</sup> Those of us with an interest in building the fields of LGBT, queer, and feminist studies and the programs that will sustain them need to think carefully about the terms and the costs of our inclusion. We should worry about providing political cover for institutional failures to remedy material inequities among employees. (For example, for years my university had a program in LGBT studies but failed to provide domestic partner benefits for employees in same-sex relationships.)



We should remain skeptical and resist to the extent that we can the corrosive, bean-counting mentality that has taken over too much of our work lives. We should proceed cautiously and self-consciously to assure that the programs we seek to build reflect as much as possible our values, our commitments, and our political visions, but I remain optimistic that forms of queer agency can survive in these contexts and that the benefits of trying to find smart, creative, subversive ways to administer sexuality far outweigh the risks.

Over the years, I've come to rely on a strategy I facetiously termed *strategic corporatism* (in a nod to Gayatri Spivak's "strategic essentialism") to get what I have needed to keep my feisty little program running. I can wield the vocabulary of *excellence* as deftly as any of the university's marketing whizzes. When forced, I even drank the Kool-Aid of Learning Outcomes Assessment and produced a very un-queer plan for measuring students' proficiency in interpreting same-sex sexuality/eroticism as an aspect of literary/cultural expression. Suffice it to say there have been moments in my life as an administrator when Ferguson's question about the "contortions" sexuality suffers while "passing through institutional realms" has made me squirm in my ergonomically correct office chair.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, I can say that we have managed to build a first-class program in sexuality studies without doing lasting damage to our souls.

I am not, however, naive. I am deeply concerned as we move forward with the merger of LGBT and women's studies that we won't get the resources we need for the effort to be truly successful. I worry that even if we do get adequate funding, the move will result in a dilution of the commitment to scholarship on nonnormative sexualities and genders. I worry that the LGBT studies program will be harder to find on a huge campus whose academic bureaucracy students find baffling. I worry that gay male and trans students will feel less welcome in a department of women's studies than they felt in a freestanding program, given the histories of ambivalence toward men and bigotry toward trans folk within some feminist communities. Trans students know well the argument among some US second-wave feminists—most notoriously Janice Raymond in *The Transsexual Empire*—that transsexuality is a form of false consciousness.<sup>5</sup> They also know that to this day transwomen are denied entrance to lesbian feminist cultural spaces such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. In addition to tending

to the nuts and bolts of money, space, and curriculum modification, all of us involved in this change will need to work hard to educate the campus and the constituencies served by both LGBT and women's studies about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and what it will mean for those who passionately care about our fields and programs.

More than thirty years ago, in a graduate seminar on feminist theory at Rutgers, I expressed my frustration with the methodological immaturity of the field by saying I would have to have a baby so my daughter could enjoy the benefits of all our unfinished work. That pioneer of feminist institution building Catharine Stimpson fixed me in her formidable gaze and thundered in her formidable voice, "Don't have a baby—write a book!" By way of thanking Kate for her mentoring and her powerful example of building institutional frameworks that would support politically engaged research, scholarship, and teaching, I will close by exhorting all of us, with or without babies, to commit ourselves to the reproductive futurism of continuing to build queer and feminist studies. This battle-scarred yet stubbornly idealistic program administrator believes with all her heart that we owe it to those who came before us and those who will come after us to create the conditions for the writing of books and the teaching of courses that will slowly, piece by piece, bring the queer world of our dreams into being.

#### NOTES

1. Gayle S. Rubin, "Geologies of Queer Studies: It's Déjà Vu All Over Again," in her *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 355.
2. Roderick A. Ferguson, "Administering Sexuality; or, The Will to Institutionality," *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008): 168.
3. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in her *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (New York: Crossing Press, 1984), 110–13.
4. Ferguson, "Administering Sexuality," 158.
5. Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979). Raymond's feminist transphobia is discussed in a number of essays in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, but see especially Susan Stryker's "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, eds. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 4.

## *Feminism's Attachments*

*Ann Braithwaite and Catherine M. Orr*

There is no women's studies without feminism. Feminism is the theoretical and political foundation of women's studies.

—Bonnie Zimmerman<sup>1</sup>

ALTHOUGH BONNIE ZIMMERMAN'S CLAIM would seem to verge on the obvious for many in women's and gender studies (WGS), consider the following not-so-unusual scenarios:

- A colleague who teaches several WGS courses, serves on WGS program committees, and produces knowledge on topics such as Islam, marriage practices, and social movements through the lenses of race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation, emphatically refuses the label "feminist," preferring instead to position herself as "womanist."
- A colleague in WGS, whose current scholarship focuses on legal studies, disability studies, and social welfare policy, and a graduate student in WGS, whose dissertation is on a First Nations community center in a large urban setting, are both regularly challenged by their colleagues to explain what makes their work feminist, and thus WGS.

- Colleagues at a national meeting of the CWSA/ACÉF (the Canadian national association for WGS) openly worry that changing the name of the association to something that doesn't include the words "women," "gender," or "feminist" will mean a loss of visibility and perceived value for the work of the discipline of WGS.<sup>2</sup>

Taken together, these scenarios point to the need to rethink a number of assumptions that circulate around the questions of both this forum on "whither feminisms?" and in the field of WGS more generally about the assumed relationship between feminism and WGS. We want to argue—perhaps provocatively—for the possibilities opened up in interrogating the multiple attachments that the above scenarios make apparent. Of course, we are not alone in this provocation to rethink attachments to feminism.<sup>3</sup> But here, we contend that such attachments within WGS contexts both enable and delimit, produce and fail to produce, intellectual work that is up to the demands of the worlds we inhabit. Our focus, then, is on exploring some of the possible consequences of "letting go."

As the above scenarios demonstrate, there are any number of ways in which feminism and WGS are consistently sutured together, including that WGS and its practitioners are/must be feminist; that both WGS and feminism require a focus on "appropriate" subjects; that the appropriate subjects of WGS and feminism are women or gender; and that feminism is the (only?) means to analyze the range of topics included in WGS, even while the term itself is increasingly contested and now more typically referred to in the plural ("feminisms"). They demonstrate the ease with which WGS assumes that feminism is both necessary for and foundational to the field. And as the prompt for this forum points out, this foundational status is both intellectual and institutional: WGS is feminist, and without feminism, there is no intellectual project unique to WGS, *and* without WGS, there is no institutional space that is (unquestionably) feminist. Our concern is that these attachments to feminism are not benign, but rather shape how WGS can (and too often does) respond to the questions of this forum about the consequences of institutional consolidations and changes.

But the "whither feminisms?" question also reveals another meaning to this idea of attachment—that is, as a deeply held affective bond embedded in our individual disciplinary (and professional) identity

formations. Why do we—the practitioners of WGS—desire to maintain this connection so centrally in the first place? Is it that we wonder who we would be without feminism—even though the complexity, multiplicity, and indeed often contradictory understandings of this term can, and have, led to much disagreement about the sort of professional identity WGS should produce? There is no doubt that in interrogating the primacy of this attachment, we risk confrontation with the various fears, anxieties, and nostalgias—as well as the hopes—that fuel our passions for the intellectual, pedagogical, and institutional labor we do under the sign “WGS.” If our intellectual identities and disciplinary claims are tied to the unquestioned centrality of feminism, then challenging that attachment certainly seems risky.

And yet, we want to argue that it is only in facing head-on this primary attachment that we can ask difficult but important questions about the limits it places on our ability to address the silences, invisibilities, and epistemic violences that WGS is otherwise supposed to expose and help remedy. For example, we might ask whether the unspoken concern of the question “whither feminisms?” is really a roundabout way to ask another longstanding question that continues to haunt this field—in name-change debates, in curriculum and cross-listing discussions, and throughout other disciplinary gate-keeping practices: “what about the women?” Does it, in other words, reflect an anxiety about the field’s purported political goals and the appropriate subjects and proper objects associated with those goals? If this is the case—and we think it is—how might this attachment to feminism as foundational to WGS drive current anxieties about the relationship between institutional consolidation and the intellectual (and desired political) work of WGS?

These questions are not hypothetical, at least for us, as we each confront these very anxieties—in ourselves and others—in reworking how our disciplinary identities are organized at our respective institutions (a small university in Canada; a small liberal arts college in the United States). Over the past year or so, we, both together and with our respective colleagues, have been working through the “whither feminisms?” question and practicing an exciting form of letting go. Instead of “Women’s Studies” at the University of Prince Edward Island, Braithwaite’s program is changing its name to “Diversity and Social Justice Studies.” Orr’s “Women’s and Gender Studies” program at Beloit

College is currently undergoing a re-visioning process where, as of this writing, the name getting the most support from students and faculty is “Critical Identity Studies.” In mentioning our current institutional projects, we are not advocating that all WGS programs follow our lead; indeed, as both Laura Briggs and Breanne Fahs also argue in this forum, the politics of program naming, curricular revisions, and institutional coalition building are always local and reflect a range of competing intellectual and institutional concerns. And there is no doubt that such name changes and organizational reconfigurations as we are proposing can have unintended consequences for the work we do in the changing university climate (to say nothing of the “devilish bargains” and “contortions” they can involve, as Marilee Lindemann notes). But we mention our own situations here nonetheless, as a way to illustrate other sets of possibilities for doing WGS work, other ways to pursue the passions that feminism opens up.

And so our challenge to the “whither feminisms?” question is: Why do we tend to regard the intellectual and institutional consolidations referenced in the question as existentially threatening, a priori, rather than even considering the possibilities such reorganizations might open up? Clearly, we do not want to simply acquiesce to the very real coercive moves to merge WGS with other units deemed less threatening, moves that often originate from conservative quarters dedicated to eliminating anything perceived as “feminist” (or leftist, or simply identity-based). There may indeed be many reasons to keep feminism at the center of, even foundational to, WGS. Or, likewise, there may be reasons to indeed let it “wither”—to evoke Sharra L. Vostral’s play on words—as the focus of WGS. But as is now obvious, we worry that such strong attachments as we’ve outlined here often leave too much unquestioned. The result is that our reactions become about maintaining—and policing—familiar boundaries rather than raising new questions about them. If we seek to bring about the visions that feminism has instilled in us—for more difference, more justice, more possibilities—we owe it to ourselves and those we seek to inspire to rethink all of our assumptions about its continued centrality to WGS.

## NOTES

1. Bonnie Zimmerman, "Beyond Dualisms: Some Thoughts about the Future of Women's Studies," in *Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*, eds. Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Agatha Beins (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 31–39.
2. The association did ultimately change its name and is now Women's and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes (WGSRF).
3. See Layli [Phillips] Maparyan, "Feminism," in *Rethinking Women's and Gender Studies*, eds. Catherine M. Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein (New York: Routledge, 2012), 17–33; Janet Halley, *Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Robyn Wiegman, "Dear Ian" [A Response to Janet Halley], *Duke Journal of Gender Law and Policy* 11, no. 7 (Spring 2004), 93–120.

*Whither or Wither Feminisms?*

*Sharra L. Vostral*

AS A FEMINIST SCHOLAR of science and technology, I often interrogate gendered metaphors found in the description of scientific processes. Although "whither" refers to "what place," I also think of its homophone "wither" to describe a plant, for instance, when it becomes dry and shriveled. It might seem unusual to use botanical metaphors in describing feminism in the institution of higher education, but it is a useful exercise. Fortunately, there have not been institutional pressures to disband gender and women's studies at my institution, and threats of administrative mergers have come and gone, but I am mindful of these developments that level stressors on departmental well-being.

At the University of Illinois, feminism has not withered, but whether or not it remains pertinent to students is another question. Feminism has propagated throughout the university, but the tangled growth of gender and queer studies reveals some of its shortcomings.

I currently hold a joint position as associate professor of gender and women's studies (GWS) and history, and I spent two and a half years serving as the chair of the GWS curriculum committee, charged with revising the undergraduate major, minor, the LGBT/Q (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/queer) minor, the graduate minor in GWS, as well as proposing the new queer studies graduate minor. This overhaul has been no small feat and has revealed synergies, cleavages, and the changing face of feminisms on the University of Illinois campus.

Courses on "women," it turns out, are prevalent. Across the humanities and social sciences, most departments have at least one or two (and sometimes more) courses with "women" in the title. I have sat on plenty of university-wide committees where the female chemists are committed to a woman-focused version of feminism and happily support "women" as a category. I call this the feminist-stolon approach; like strawberry plants that shoot out runners to propagate, the idea that women should be represented in positions of power, in course offerings, and as campus leaders is obvious. The propagation of feminism in terms of equality has been successful and, for the GWS department, perhaps too much so.

In the early days when the GWS program at Illinois was founded, the best way to ensure the availability of courses was to have them taught through long-standing, disciplinary-grounded departments. While this approach guaranteed course offerings and kept the program viable, it held serious shortcomings for future departmental independence and growth, especially for new faculty jointly appointed to GWS. In essence, the program outsourced so many classes to other departments that managed their scheduling, staffing, and enrollments, that GWS could neither control some of the required course offerings nor claim women as a unique subject of inquiry and research. This is rather ironic considering the important institutional politics of supporting such a program. The stolons dispersing course content about women stripped the department of gender and women's studies from an exclusive claim on the subject and other approaches, namely critiques of gender, took firm root.



This is not to say that courses on gender are exclusive to GWS, either. English, history, and—depending upon which professor is teaching the course—sociology, communication, and ethnic studies programs at the university include some courses on gender. These classes are attuned to systems and structures of power in which gender is used as an analytical lens. In fact, with the influence of critical race studies and queer of color critique, both of whose antecedents lie in the civil rights movement and women of color feminism, the department of GWS is crucial to sustaining proactive, integrated, and rigorous approaches to gendered analyses. Therein lies a tension—at times generational and at times disciplinary—between courses that are less conversant with these approaches and focus on women and those that include masculinity, transgender, or queer studies, for example.

At the University of Illinois, it turns out that we happen to be at the epicenter for a queer revolution in education. The board of trustees approved the new queer studies graduate minor in spring of 2013, which, as far as we can tell, is the first in the country. Feminism has contributed to providing space for such inquiry but cannot take full credit. Queer approaches inherently defy an institutional reification, so how the courses take shape is sure to change. In this case, the administration was not asking for this type of consolidation; it was instead student driven. Graduate students specifically asked for the minor and sought this credential. Some even wanted a course moniker such as QUR for those same classes. In this case, the students pressured faculty to make administrative changes because they believed that the institutional recognition of their research interests would benefit their scholarly careers. Marilee Lindemann laments in this forum that we have crafted institutional certification from the “master’s tools,” yet at the same time I am delighted to think about where the next frontiers will move, because they always do.

A colleague whose work addresses LGBT issues wondered aloud to me what we lose by quietly dropping “women” from women’s studies and emphasizing gender instead. I understand her lament, but I have found that putting “women” or even “gender” in the course title sometimes deters enrollment, because students, speaking candidly, have told me so. Recently I have wondered whether a stealth model might work better in delivering critical gender studies to student populations in the sciences and business, especially for those turned off by

feminism yet perfectly amenable to its tenets. This subversive course could “pass” under the guise of a benign general education requirement and then lead students to see the benefits of gendered analysis. Does this masking sell feminism short, or rather provide tools to students that they did not even know they needed? Here, gendered analysis could be like the tongue orchid, a plant that looks and smells like a wasp, thus attracting wasps to do the work of dispersing its pollen.

Indeed, because of feminisms’ successes in populating courses across the curriculum about women, it is all the more important to celebrate and promote courses on gender and queer exactly because so few departments can do that work and do it well. One of my students commented in class that “transgender is where it is at,” and I take that sentiment very seriously. We must meet students where they are at with their interests and intellectual questions. Students in my US gender history class perked up when I diverged from a narrative march of women’s history and broached the subject of masculinities. They actually thanked me for legitimating this critique, and many of the men in the class confessed how boxed in they felt by limitations that contemporary masculinity placed on them. Many students understand feminism as a historical relic and see blatant acts of sexist inequality as things of the past. When they become deft in understanding systems of gender, race, power, and class, feminism takes on more meaning but they still are looking beyond it. Listening to students’ desires for transgender courses may in fact signal the withering of feminism because it does not entirely serve their needs. As campuses prepare for significant changes in digital pedagogy and cooperative learning, we must also embrace queer as a new model of diversity and synergistic energy.

Whither or wither feminisms? Yes, but also with new growth. The ideas of feminism, gendered analysis, and queer of color critique are seeds, catching rides on coats, flip flops, and socks, to sprout nearby and in new locales, but with firm roots in programs and department of women’s and gender studies.

## *Women's Studies and Sexuality Studies at HBCUs: The Audre Lorde Project at Spelman College*

*Erica Lorraine Williams*

A NATIONAL DISCUSSION ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES in women's studies and sexuality studies would be remiss if it did not consider the specificities of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States. Here, I highlight the efforts that the Women's Research and Resource Center and its Audre Lorde Project at Spelman College have made to foster critical discussions about LGBTQ scholarship, activism, and history at HBCUs. In particular, I reflect on the Audre Lorde Project's finding that in order for critical conversations around sexuality and queer studies to happen on HBCU campuses, there must first be an institutional and curricular commitment to black feminisms and black women's studies.

Over the last seven years, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, M. Jacqui Alexander, and their team have spearheaded the Audre Lorde Project, whose objective was to "increase public awareness and understanding about African American LGBTQ experiences; to explore the marginalization of racial issues in the LGBTQ movement and in gay and lesbian studies; and to create climates that acknowledge, value, and respect difference, especially within HBCUs, where profound silences continue to exist around gender and sexuality."<sup>1</sup> Named after the first out lesbian woman to speak at Spelman College, the Audre Lorde Project involved visits to eleven HBCU campuses to investigate the social climates for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff. Their visits helped

document homophobia on campuses: LGBTQ students experienced discrimination in the classroom, lived in fear of being ostracized, struggled with coming out on campus, and sometimes dropped out or transferred to other institutions. Simultaneously, Guy-Sheftall and Alexander made a fascinating, although perhaps unsurprising discovery: the HBCUs that had women's studies programs were more open and receptive than other institutions to having candid discussions about sexuality. They noticed that

students who had enrolled in women's studies courses . . . were more likely to be conscious of the politics and history of their campuses in relation to matters of gender and sexuality and as a result were more likely to view these matters not as private, individual concerns but as public, culturally constructed, and ultimately amenable to intervention.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, women's studies paved, and continues to pave, the way for sexuality studies. And given the reality that women's studies has not been widely institutionalized at HBCUs, LGBTQ studies as a result appears virtually non-existent.<sup>3</sup>

In the Audre Lorde Summit Resource Guide, Roderick Ferguson, Howard University alumnus and American studies scholar, argues that "a curricular interest in black feminism" must be institutionalized in order to transform HBCUs into spaces with an intellectual climate that could engage members of the black LGBTQ community. Black women's studies, Ferguson maintains, "was the first to incorporate examinations of queer sexuality into Black Studies," and "black feminism has had the longest engagement with the issue of black sexuality." If HBCUs are to embark on a project of institutional transformation to become more open and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff, they must first commit to "the insights of black feminism."<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the historical context of HBCUs can shed light on the resistance that many of these institutions have to both women's studies and LGBTQ studies. HBCUs have long been invested in producing ideal black intellectuals and educated women and men who could engage in what was commonly termed "racial uplift." For black women, this too readily meant adopting a politics of silence and respectability in order to counter wider prevailing racist discourses about black women's "excessive" sexuality. As Marybeth Gasman

points out, “during the early years of black colleges, black female students were sheltered by the administration; their lives were shaped by institutional policies designed to control their behavior.”<sup>5</sup> This policing of black women’s sexuality had significant implications for black queer people. As Matt Richardson argues,

the tradition of representing Black people as decent and moral historical agents has meant the erasure of the broad array of Black sexuality and gendered being in favor of a static heterosexual narrative. Far from being totally invisible, the “queer” is present in Black history as a threat to Black respectability.<sup>6</sup>

According to Guy-Sheftall, the politics of respectability is still incredibly strong today on HBCU campuses. As she puts it, “there is a notion that black college students must conform to conventional gender norms in order to succeed in the working world . . . in the absence of an official dress code, there is a lot of policing of dress, particularly when it comes to institutional rituals.”<sup>7</sup>

To be sure, the Audre Lorde Project has established the Spelman College Women’s Research and Resource Center “as a major site for the exploration of Black LGBTQ issues in the academy.” Phase one of the project focused on outreach at Spelman and within the Atlanta University Center and included “student-driven activities designed to raise awareness, combat homophobia and heterosexism, and promote more inclusive environments.”<sup>8</sup> Layli [Phillips] Maparyan, Spelman alumna and womanist scholar, established an LGBTQ scholarship and offered Spelman’s first course on black queer studies. During this phase, Audre Lorde’s papers were processed and publicly unveiled, and an edited volume of Lorde’s unpublished writings was completed.<sup>9</sup>

The second phase of the project featured a symposium on the life and work of Lorde in September 2008 and culminated with the remarkable Audre Lorde HBCU Summit in April 2011. Spelman president Beverly Daniel Tatum noted in her opening remarks that Spelman was founded “by two women who lived, themselves, in life-long partnership.”<sup>10</sup> The diverse speakers—many of whom were LGBT alumni of HBCUs—offered critical insights and suggestions about the path that HBCUs must take in order to be more inclusive of LGBT community members.<sup>11</sup> One speaker lamented the difficulty

of transforming HBCUs due to the fact that many HBCUs are small, conservative, and president-centered. Another speaker observed the continuing erasure of black transgender people. Yet another speaker used archival sources to recuperate LGBT history by discussing Lucy Diggs Slowe, the first Dean of Women at Howard University, who was in a semi-public, long-term relationship with Mary Burrell.

There are many obstacles that institutions must overcome if they are to become more inclusive spaces, particularly, as Guy-Sheftall observes, the “heteronormative rituals and traditions that go unchallenged at HBCUs.” As she also pointedly notes, “the [Christian] religious affiliation of many HBCUs creates a more conservative climate around gender and sexuality issues.” Another obstacle is the anxiety that institutions have about alumni withdrawing financial support. Finally, Guy-Sheftall pointed to a major obstacle when she said,

We don’t have loud, consistent messaging around gender and sexuality inclusivity on our campuses. We have very few convocations or public forums where out queer people are speaking. There are a small number of out queer faculty on HBCU campuses, and few queer studies courses in the curriculum.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, it seems that the key to institutional transformation at HBCUs—and other campuses—is a curricular commitment to, consistency in messaging about, and visibility of the LGBT community. Ultimately, black feminisms and black women’s studies are integral to this process of institutional transformation.

#### NOTES

1. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, “Breaking the Silence at Spelman College and Beyond,” *Diversity and Democracy* 15, no. 1 (2012), <http://www.diversityweb.org/DiversityDemocracy/vol15no1/guy-sheftall.cfm>. The team consisted of Beverly Guy-Sheftall, who founded the Women’s Research and Resource Center in 1981, M. Jacqui Alexander (Cosby chair at Spelman 2008–2009), Aaron Wells (Hampton University alumnus and part-time research coordinator), and Spelman alumna Taryn Crenshaw.
2. WRRC, “Facilitating Campus Climates of Pluralism, Inclusivity, and Progressive Change at HBCUs,” *Summit Resource Guide* (Atlanta, GA: Women’s Research and Resource Center, 2011), 21.
3. *Ibid.*, 17. Out of roughly 106 HBCUs, only a handful have women’s studies programs. Spelman College was the first HBCU to implement a women’s

studies minor in 1981 and the first to have a women's studies major in 1996. Clark Atlanta University was the first to establish a graduate degree program in Africana Women's Studies in 1982, and Howard University has a graduate degree certificate in women's studies. Bennett College has a program in Africana Women's Studies, in which students can choose AWS as a major track within an interdisciplinary studies major in the Department of History, Philosophy, Religion, and Interdisciplinary Studies. Fisk University, Delaware State University, Chicago State University, Medgar Evers College, Xavier University of Louisiana, and Morgan State University all offer minors in women and gender studies. There may be more women's studies programs and majors developing in the pipeline at HBCUs.

4. *Ibid.*, 55, 69, 70.
5. Marybeth Gasman, "Swept under the Rug? A Historiography of Gender and Black Colleges," *American Educational Research Journal* 44, no. 4 (2007): 778. See also Leisa Meyer, "'Strange Love': Searching for Sexual Subjectivities in Black Print Popular Culture during the 1950s," *Feminist Studies* 38, no. 3 (2012): 625–50; and Jennifer Nash, "Theorizing Pleasures: New Directions in Black Feminist Studies," *Feminist Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 507–15.
6. Matt Richardson, "No More Secrets, No More Lies: African American History and Compulsory Heterosexuality," *Journal of Women's History* 15, no. 3 (2003): 64.
7. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, conversation with the author, April 23, 2013.
8. The Atlanta University Center includes Spelman College, Morehouse College, Clark Atlanta University, and Morehouse School of Medicine. WRRRC, "Facilitating Campus Climates," 11, 9.
9. Former Spelman College president Johnnetta Betsch Cole played an integral role in convincing Audre Lorde to donate all of her written works that were not already at the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn, New York, to Spelman. Three years after Lorde's death in 1992, her papers were brought to the Spelman Archives. For more information, see Cole's essay "Audre Lorde: My Shero, My Teacher, My Sister Friend," in *I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde*, eds. Rudolph P. Byrd and Johnnetta Betsch Cole (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
10. Anare Holmes, "Spelman Hosts Historic Summit on Black LGBT Students," *Georgia Voice*, May 13, 2011, <http://www.thegavoice.com/news/atlanta-news/2629-selman-hosts-historic-summit-on-black-lgbt-students>. Other scholarly sources that document this relationship are Candace Marie Jenkins, *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007) and Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbian Lives Have Done for America—A History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).
11. The following institutions participated in the summit: Bennett College for Women, Morehouse College; Philander Smith College; and Howard, Clark Atlanta, Dillard, Fisk, North Carolina Central, and Morgan

State universities. The Summit Resource Guide documents the history of LGBTQ activism on HBCU campuses. Howard University was the first HBCU to have an LGBTQ organization in 1980. Currently, 26 out of 103 HBCUs have LGBTQ student organizations.

12. Guy-Sheftall, conversation with the author, April 23, 2013.