



## 2010 Dorothy Height Outstanding Women's Studies Graduate Awards



From left to right: Abigail Malick, her nominator, Leandra Preston; Dr. Santana, Director of Women's Studies; Deborah Bernacett, her nominator, Jeannina Perez; and Kevin Alvarez, his nominator, Micheal Freeman.

On May 7, 2010 the Women's Studies Program held the 2010 Dorothy Height Outstanding Women's Studies Graduate Awards Ceremony in the Fairwinds Alumni Center. Three awards

were given to students graduating in 2010 that had demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to gender equality and female empowerment.

The awardees were:

- Kevin Alvarez  
Political Science Major  
Women's Studies Minor
- Deborah Bernacett  
Sociology Major  
Women's Studies Minor
- Abigail Malick  
Sociology  
Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Track  
Women's Studies Minor

All the awardees were \$50 cash and a Women's Studies tote bag containing a composition notebook, a set of gel pens, and a 4gb jumpdrive.

Congratulations to all our Women's Studies graduates. We wish you success in all your endeavors.

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## All about Reciprocity: Women's Studies Service Learning as Activism

by Meredith Tweed

Women's Studies, as a discipline, must be deeply connected to activism as it connects our academics to our history and future. As a program, our Women's Studies strongest assets come from our ability to link the theories of women's lives to the actuality of their existence through service learning. I have read countless critical essays that ask the question: can service learning be activist? From my experience from a student in our Program to an Instructor, I learned the answer to this fundamental question: Yes, we make service learning activist.

I have seen service learning change lives. At its core, service learning allows for students to engage in hands-on micro level issues while allowing them to see, through experience, the way that systems work in macro ways. Women's Studies, and all the statistics, sometimes daunt students with an overwhelming feeling that there is too much to do, too many places to start, too many issues.

With service learning, however, students become empowered. In reflection journals, in class, and in their actions, I see the change and despite the long hours and sometimes mediocre reception from others, students learn that they can do something to make a new reality. One of the greatest aspects of service learning stems from its ability to foster responsibility and action in students. Service learning changes the landscape of a particular local issue by both helping the community partner and changing the perspective within students.

In my Introduction to Women's Studies class over summer 2009, my students worked on a vast number of projects ranging from a "roaring" women's chalk-walk to "red lipstick" t-shirt activism for SOAR to a supply and fundraising campaign for Animal Safe House of Brevard. Judine Tressler, a junior at UCF, decided after our first chapter on the negative portrayal of feminism in popular culture to create a design a chalk-walk on campus so that students could write, design, and draw positive definitions of womanhood. Her project both raises awareness of negative definitions of women and benefits the Young Women Leaders Program through its dollar donations for sidewalk sections. Her project stands as just one of the many I have seen in my three years as an instructor in WST at UCF.

Yet, each year I am still pleasantly surprised by the creativity of my students. I did not even know what a chalk-walk was until she raised the idea! That too, seems to be at the core of service learning and women's studies because students can use their own ideas and interests to educate others and change their communities, often in startling and unorthodox ways. In the end, our program gains strength through its students and through service-learning, allowing us all to think in ways, to use experience as a model for generating theory, and to foster reciprocity in an effort to learn about and work to change the lives of woman and girls.

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## 2009 National Women's Studies Association Conference

by Arielle Shwartz

Radical. Revolutionary. Empowering. Enlightening. Revitalizing. Inspiring. These are just some of the feelings used to describe a weekend that shook the very core of my being, to say the least. On November 12th-15th, individuals gathered in Atlanta, GA for the 2009 National Women's Studies Association Conference. This year's theme, "Difficult Dialogues," marked the 30th anniversary of the feminist-filled event. From cybergrrls to a discussion on heterogeneity, the presenters and their "poisons" varied across the board, beyond any type of intersectionality I have ever experienced.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Angela Davis, political activist, writer, professor, and feminist rock star, ignited our weekend by speaking in front of about 2500 individuals. Some of her speech recognized, but was certainly not limited to, the genocide of colonization, the hierarchy of women, transnational feminism, methodologies within feminist studies, abolition, our newly

passed healthcare bill, freedom, and challenging the assumption that the category "women" represents all women. Dr. Davis encouraged the audience to challenge the range of social categories and welcome new ideas, new formulations, and new vocabularies. Her speech ran over about an hour due to the swarm of individuals lined up across the stage patiently waiting for their questions to be answered. When I thought I couldn't get any "higher", she reinforced my passion for the academy, specifically Women's Studies, when she stated: "Remember to produce knowledge that makes a difference... change the world... defend your victories.... but the struggle isn't over. And your victories are never guaranteed. They are never won for eternity." This was only the first night. I was already aware of my political responsibilities; my responsibility to recreate a mass movement, develop strategies to encourage public discussion, and argue righteously. I was already aware of my responsibility to do whatever it takes to have my voice heard.

There were over 300 panels within a four-day period so I had to be selective in creating my conference schedule. There were more than a hundred conferences that resonated with me, but for the purposes of time, I will walk you through a few. To start, the panel entitled "Women's Centers as de facto LGBTQ Centers: Realities, Risks and Rewards" presented by Barbara Rinto from the University of Cincinnati and Rhonda Jackson from Miami University. The hour and fifteen minute discussion focused on the visibility of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community within Women's Centers. Women's Centers from around the nation questioned the diversity within their own centers, recognized the lack of space the LGBTQ community has within an academic arena, and made the necessary connections between homophobia and sexism. The question of the hour was: Do Women's Studies' programs and Women's Centers have a \*responsibility\* to provide LGBTQ individuals space?

Keeping with the theme of Women's Centers and shared spaces, Kathleen Holgerson and Barbara Ann Kulton led an Anti-Racism/White Privilege Workshop entitled "Strategies to Disrupt and Dismantle Racism and White Privilege in our Women's Centers and the NWSA Women's Center." The workshop examined anti-racism and white supremacy at the personal, systematic, and organizational level. The goal of the workshop was to question one's accountability, interrupt cultural norms and recognize that oppression is pervasive. One's positionality was a common denominator when figuring out ways to dismantle racism and white privilege by utilizing our own agencies. At the end of the conference they asked the audience to finish the sentence: I felt challenged \_\_\_\_\_. I eagerly raised my hand and stated: "I feel challenged to sit in a room and talk about levels of oppression and systematic birdcages (referring to Marilyn Frye) filled with white, privileged, highly educated women, who have access to an endless amount of resources, who have payed over \$100 to attend this conference, who are speaking from a place of privilege and not one person has recognized their own social status, class, and race." No one gave me an answer to why I was feeling uncomfortable, they just nodded in agreement. Moving right along. (However, I do want to recognize that the President of NWSA, Beverly Guy-Sheftall, author, activist, professor, and all around bad-ass, is the first woman of color to ever hold the position as President of NWSA.)

Last but not least, and maybe the highlight of my NWSA experience, was a paper entitled "From Cyborgs to Cybergrrrls: Redefining Girl Power Through Digital Literacy," written and presented by Leandra Preston (or "the gem" of UCF's Women's Studies as Dr. Santana so proudly refers to her). "From Cyborgs to Cybergrrrls" encourages girls to engage and construct technology as a tool to resist media that perpetuates negative social constructs which girls are expected to portray; i.e., within all aspects of their lives; from body image to self esteem to friendships and relationships. Preston, explained that our technologies are created within a patriarchal "boys club" which keeps girls marginalized and disengaged from this arena of cultural activity. Preston concluded that when girls take responsibility for their own productivity, learn digital languages and speak them, they can renegotiate these spaces and

understand that images are alterable; what we see in the media is \*not\* real, and girls, as a result, can counteract and reclaim these cyberspaces in a positive, empowering, feminist way.

The National Women's Studies Association Conference not only filled my head with knowledge, resistance, and determination, but also reignited the fire deep inside me-the one that compels me to get up every morning. Women's Studies is a place where one can find purpose, clarity, and a drive that makes an individual, not only want to change the injustices lingering throughout our world, but actually provides one with the tools to actively do so. The theme of the conference was "Difficult Dialogues" because these conversations are uncomfortable, challenging, important and necessary. NWSA just gave me one more reason to throw my fist in the air and march the path of resistance.

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## An "easy A" changed her life: Kelly Thibert wins top UCF Service Learning Award

by Dr. Maria Santana

Kelly Thibert, a Molecular Microbiology UCF major with hopes of becoming a doctor one day is the spirit and head of NOW on campus. NOW, the National Organization for Women has more than 500,000 contributing members and more than 500 local and campus affiliates including UCF. As NOW President Kelly Thibert is a tireless activist for women's rights. As a true NOW member, Kelly believes in action for change. Her minor in Women's Studies reflects her commitment and passion for women's issues. Kelly's interest in Women's Studies started in High School after

taking a class for an "easy A" with her then history teacher Mrs. Burns. Since then Kelly has been active in organizations like the American Medical Student Association, Young Women's Leaders Program and TOMS Shoes Campus Club. She is also the president for Pre-Medical American Medical Student Association and National Organization for Women in campus. This month Kelly was honored with the top award for the Service Learning Showcase in campus for her planning of "Take Back the Night" This is Kelly's second year planning the event. "Take Back the Night" is an awareness crusade to stop violence against women with speeches, guests, and a march at dusk through campus. She started the planning as a Service Learning project and while doing it found a passion for action after learning the "theory" in the classroom. The Service Learning Award much like the Graduate and Undergraduate Research Showcases, invites students from UCF colleges to participate and learn about academic service-learning projects in various disciplines. The student poster presentations to scholarship judges and the general public reveal how their service project aligns with learning outcomes for the course. The top award gave Kelly a \$2,000.00 SGA scholarship. "The project hit home with a lot of people because it is an issue that affects anyone regardless of what they study" Kelly Theibert

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## VISTA

by Betsy Danieller

For the past thirty-five years the most common heard phrase asked of Americorps\*VISTAs is most likely "What's a VISTA?" It's often briefly explained as a domestic Peace Corps. However, VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a program designed specifically to fight poverty. Each person's job description is unique to their job site. VISTA members who work on college campus are members of a campus compact, which is a national coalition of more than 1,100 college and universities around the country dedicated to the promotion of community service,

civic engagement and service-learning in higher education.

Betsy Daniller, works as the Program Coordinator for the Service-Learning Department at UCF. Her role is to help to create new programs, head existing programs, advertise the service-learning certificate, participate in student events and work with faculty and community partners.

FL/CC VISTAs work with a VISTA Leader. In the state of Florida the VISTA leader is Kimberly Jaeger, her role is to be an "ambassador, facilitator, educator, mentor, liaison, resource generator and recruiter." She feels that "the most gratifying feeling that comes with being an Americorps\*VISTA is to know that today I helped someone find housing, food, health care, education, or any other resource that they need to survive and grow. And I get something in return too, in depth professional experience. There is filing or data entry here. We give a year up to make a true and sustainable difference.

Fighting poverty doesn't mean handing out your nickels to a poor person, it means taking the appropriate steps to eliminate its causes. That's what the 65000 VISTA members across the nation."

Other VISTAs not affiliated with FL/CC work to engage their communities with social issues. Jenn-Marie Grant "works in neighborhoods as a community connector. Being a VISTA gives me the opportunity to talk with members of my community about their gifts, skills, talents, concerns, and what they are willing to do to make their neighborhood a better place for everyone to live.

Patrick Burns is "the marketing assistant at ASAP (AIDS Service Association of Pinellas). Being a VISTA allows me to connect with a rainbow of people, and truly help them; the VISTA program has allowed me to grow as a person."

For more information on becoming an Americorps\*VISTA or any other Americorps programs go to <http://www.americorps.gov/>

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## Scholarship

### 2011 Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA) conference

The Women's Studies Institute at Georgia State University is pleased to announce that we will be hosting the 2011 Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA) conference.

SAVE THE DATES: March 24-26, 2011.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Julia Sudbury, ed. *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex*

Lisa Duggan, author of *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*

CFP:

Structural Adjustments: Queering Privatization, Framing Disaster

Hosted by the Women's Studies Institute Georgia State University, College of Arts & Sciences  
Recent devastation in Haiti and Chile, and their resonances with the breached levees in New Orleans, urge and remind us to put these events in context. Crumbled edifices, flooded and

abandoned neighborhoods, and sensationalized images of the newly displaced surrounded by piles of rubble speak less to the physical weaknesses of buildings and more to the bankruptcy of social institutions that determine which populations and communities will be most impacted. As with official narratives of war and militarization (cast as “just” or “necessary”), or development and democracy (cast as “progress” or “inclusion”), the recourse to the framework of “natural disasters” overlooks the realities of systemic inequalities, and their gendered, sexualized, racialized, and classed dimensions.

This theme sheds light on such issues as the structural adjustment programs that have devastated indebted economies, the impact on buildings of these (un)natural disasters, and the shifting spaces resulting from gentrification and privatization. SEWSA 2011 will bring together scholars interested in asking how feminist, womanist, and queer modes of analysis can intervene in these narratives and open up possibilities for revisioning alternatives.

Possible topics and themes include:

- disaster capitalism and the “shock doctrine” - appropriating and fabricating disasters in order to institute neoliberal reform
- climate change and environmental justice
- neocolonialism, the legacy of structural adjustment policies, and refugees of the global economy
- the impact of militarization on the lives of women and girls
- deterritorialization, displacement, and gentrification
- the masculinization of public policy
- strategies of resistance and social change (World and U.S. Social Forums; prison abolition work; reproductive justice activism)
- affective relationalities and responses to trauma
- spirituality and spiritual activism
- comparative structures of confinement (prisons - domestic, international, and military; mental institutions; the militarization of borders; the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories)
- the sexism and racism of rescue narratives
- imaginative geographies - toward new spatial possibilities
- queering structural inequalities
- the role of the visual - media representations as technologies of power

Abstract submissions are due by November 1, 2010

For more information, please visit: [bit.ly/sewsa2011](http://bit.ly/sewsa2011) or

<http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwsi/conference.html>

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**The Women's Center and Women's Studies at Lehigh University  
invite proposal, paper, and poster submissions for:  
Feminism in Practice Conference 2010: Reflection, Action, Change**

Saturday, November 6

Lehigh University

This one-day conference, held at Lehigh University, seeks to bring together professionals, academics, activists, and individuals interested in exploring how, when, and why feminism exists as a practical part of our lives. The theme for this year underscores the necessary act of critical reflection before, during, and after we act, for without participating in both of these steps, change becomes bereft of reason. In an American context that pundits, academics, and social critics have defined as seriously lacking “critical thought,” the 2010 Conference will offer all attendees the opportunity to explore and engage in these notions of loss of critical inquiry.

We invite submissions for roundtable or panel discussions, research and/or poster presentations, and scholarly papers. Submissions for this conference may be practically, creatively, or theoretically based.

Suggested topics may include:

- Feminism and Politics/Political Feminism
- Activism
- Community organizing
- Critical reflection
- Blogs
- Feminism and Pedagogy
- Mothering and parenting
- Women in STEM Fields
- Feminism and higher education
- Non-profits work

Please submit proposals of no more than 750 words to [infemcon@lehigh.edu](mailto:infemcon@lehigh.edu) by September 10, 2010. Other inquiries may be directed to Rita Jones ([rmj207@lehigh.edu](mailto:rmj207@lehigh.edu)) or Jackie Krasas ([jk205@lehigh.edu](mailto:jk205@lehigh.edu)).

Registration fee is \$10, which includes pre-conference hors d'oeuvres (Friday, November 5) and breakfast and lunch during the conference.

Best, Rita Jones

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## **The Florida School of Holistic Living is pleased to announce our 2010 Summer and Fall Internship positions have been announced.**

We are accepting applications beginning immediately. The timeline of these positions are flexible based on a qualified desiring candidate, and thus applications are accepted on a rolling basis as positions are open. Positions are unpaid but college credit is available. To learn more, please visit our [idealist.org](http://idealist.org) postings as listed below, or contact our office for more information.

Emily Ruff  
Director of Education  
Florida School of Holistic Living (501c3)  
407-595-3731  
[info@holisticlivingschool.org](mailto:info@holisticlivingschool.org)

Summer and Fall Internship Positions

- **Program Assistant**
- **Grant Writing and Management**

- Graphic Design
  - Special Events
  - Outreach
  - New Media
  - Video Production
  - Garden Coordinator
  - Recycling Development
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## Rhizomes Special Issue Call for Papers

*Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*,... a peer-reviewed online journal, invites submissions for its thematic issue, "Becoming-Girl." Deleuze articulates the notion of becoming as existing through multiplicity and alliances, a process that does not have a beginning or end, but is always in-progress; becoming is, much like girlhood, intermezzo. Deleuze claims that "Girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes." Girls' identities, interactions and relationships, particularly in cyber-contexts, are rhizomatic, complex, bordering the virtual and reality in their multiple becomings.

The purpose of this special issue is to explore how girls negotiate identity and practice resistance rhizomatically. We are particularly interested in how identity negotiations operate in digital cultures, such as social networks (Facebook, MySpace), virtual realities (Second Life), and activist cultural productions by girls, such as 'zines, blogs, instant message communication, and mobile phone texting. We are interested in multiple approaches, genres, and media that consider these issues, including mediums that resist categorization.

Proposals might address the following questions:

- How can girls resist fixed identity constructs through digital mediums?
- How do girls engage digital spaces to negotiate identity and the process of becoming?
- How do such spaces foster connectedness rather than isolated action(s) for girls who resist dominant cultural messages about girlhood?
- What are the everyday embodied conditions of girls' lives as constructed/experienced through new technologies and communication networks?
- How is gender and femininity experienced in the virtual medium?
- What are the possibilities of the so-called networked body or the body online?
- How might girls' rhizomatic online identity constructions and alliances challenge or disrupt (or reinforce) traditional social interactions?

As a full text online periodical, *Rhizomes* emphasizes multimedia to foster imaginative work that challenges typical critical forms. While submissions need not necessarily include developed multimedia, authors are encouraged to consider how their work might be enhanced by elements specific to the online medium. For additional information and submission guidelines, please visit the journal's website: [www.rhizomes.net](http://www.rhizomes.net). Research involving girls directly (rather than only theoretically) must have IRB approval. Inquiries or abstracts welcomed any time; deadline for completed essays or multimodal works, August 1, 2010

Direct submissions and inquiries to Leandra Preston at [goleandra@gmail.com](mailto:goleandra@gmail.com).

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## Faculty Applause

Dr. Maria Santana, Director of Women's Studies

- Presented paper entitled "Her Sexy Stilettos Offer a Women's Point of View to

Reggaeton: Ivy Queen and Latin Urban Music" for the 12th Annual Sarah Lawrence College History Conference, The Message is in the Music: Hip Hop Feminism, Riot Grrrl and Latina Music, March 6, 2010.

Leandra Preston

- Named Editor for a Special Issue of the peer-reviewed electronic journal Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge titled "Becoming-Girl." She conceived and proposed the issue as a springboard for UCF Women's Studies' own future electronic journal focusing on girls and Girls Studies. The Rhizomes' issue should be available by late 2010 or early 2011.
- Nominated for a Spirit of Philanthropy "Community Hero" award hosted by Health First in Brevard County and was named one of the top ten community activists in Brevard.
- Had two papers accepted for presentation at conferences in 2010. She will present "From Cyborgs to Cybergrrls: Redefining Girl Power through Technology and Media" at the Reimagining Girlhood: Communities, Identities, Self-Portrayals conference which will take place October 22-24, 2010 at the State University of New York College at Cortland. She will also present a paper as part of a panel she proposed titled (Re)Envisioning Men in Feminism at the National Women's Studies Association 2010 conference in Denver, Colorado November 11-13, 2010.

Dr. Stacey Malaret

- Has served in many leadership position roles with the Junior League of Greater Orlando (JLGO). The JLGO is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. She currently serves as a nominating committee member.

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## Student Success Corner

Kevin Alvarez

- "Where has the Revolution Gone? Gender & Politics in Contemporary Nicaragua." Received an Undergraduate Research Grant by the Office of Undergraduate Research for \$500. This money was used for travel to Nicaragua to conduct interviews with political party officials, leaders of women's/feminist organizations, labor representatives, government representatives, and average Nicaraguans to create an accurate depiction of women's contemporary situation in Nicaragua. March 2010.

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