

# Women's Studies Institute News

Newsletter of UTSA  
Women's Studies Institute  
Volume II, Summer 2005



Mary Agnes Rodriguez (left) and Patricia Castillo (right) were honored during the WSI Opening Reception, March 1, 2005.

## Women's History Month 2005 Leaves Lasting Impression

Patricia Trujillo, Women's History Month 2005 Chair

Women's History Month at UTSA is always an exciting and educational time on campus, and this year was no exception. Through generous collaborations with community organizations like the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, campus departments like Mexican American Studies and Bilingual and Bicultural Studies, and individual professors and students who hosted speakers and events, Women's Studies Institute was able to host over thirty-five events bringing to light the contributions of women in history and women who are making history. The program was brimming with many meaningful and remarkable events, which I regret, cannot all be detailed in one newsletter. From fiction readings and scholarly lectures to film screenings and workshops, all the events enriched our knowledge of women's contributions in history.

While I wish I had room to write about each event, I would like to highlight the opening reception for Women's History Month which took place at UTSA's Downtown Campus on March 1, 2005. As well as providing a formal commencement to the month, the reception was an opportunity to honor two women's achievements and contributions to Women's Studies Institute and to the San Antonio Community. Patricia Castillo, Executive Director of the Putting an End to Abuse through Community Efforts (P.E.A.C.E) Initiative, was honored as WSI's Women's Advocate of the Year for her work supporting and advocating for women, children, and men surviving family violence. Also honored was Mary Agnes Rodriguez, local San Antonio Westside artist, who collaborated with WSI to design the new WSI logo. **Continued on page 4**

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Director's Column.....	1
Women's History Month.....	1
UTSA Student Receives Ford Fellowship.....	2
Closer Look at New WSI Logo.....	2
Welcome to the Women's Resource Center.....	3
Women's Studies Major Proposed.....	3
Rojas Speaks for Women's History Month.....	4
Rockeymoore Offers Political Perspective.....	5
Sister Angela & Midwifery.....	5
Women's Fair 2005 .....	6
Campus and Community at Women's Fair.....	7
Feature Student: Amalia Puentes.....	8
Why Minor in Women's Studies?.....	8
Caravan for Justice in Juarez.....	9
Mujeres de Fuerza: Devon Mihesuah.....	11
Announcements.....	12



## Director's Column

Sonia Saldívar-Hull, WSI Executive Director

Finally, the academic year winds down and I can make time to reflect on another exciting and rewarding year at the Women's Studies Institute. In the brief two and a half years we have been in existence, the WSI continues our tripartite mission: to develop a women's studies curriculum, explore external grant opportunities for faculty whose research centers on women and gender, and collaborate with the multiple San Antonio women's communities.

This year our revamped Women and Gender Studies minor curriculum went into full effect. We now offer the minor track capstone course on Feminist Theories (WGS 4623) at least once a year. Dr. Marian Aitches continues to teach the Introduction to WGS (WGS 2013) every semester and the enrollment is consistently over 150 students a semester. Our special topics offerings this year included courses on Latinas in the US, Native American Women, US Women's History, and Gender and Art History. The university offered almost 20 other courses with substantial women and gender studies components that counted as electives for the minor. **Continued on page 10**

## WSI Graduate Student Awarded Prestigious Ford Fellowship

B. V. Olguín, Associate Professor of Literature



Patricia Trujillo, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of English, Classics and Philosophy, and the Assistant Director for the Women's Studies Institute, was awarded a prestigious Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship. This fellowship award is coordinated by the National Research Council in Washington, D.C., and winners are selected by a panel of nationally-distinguished faculty. The fellowship includes three years of Ph.D. funding for tuition and living expenses in addition to funds for institutional support.

Ms. Trujillo, a native of Española, New Mexico, is conducting research on the political turmoil surrounding the literary constructions of New Mexico. Her project is titled, "Surviving Spectacles: The Literature and Rhetoric of Community Performance in Northern New Mexico," and explores such noted authors as Sabine Ulibarri, Jim Sagel, Alicia Rodríguez Valdes, and Paula Gunn Allen. "Patricia's project is particularly unique," says Dr. Bill Mullen, Ph.D. Graduate Advisor of Record in the Department of English, Classics and Philosophy, "for its multi-racial and multi-media approach to understanding how certain constructions of New Mexico are laden with ideology."

Dr. Bernadette Andrea, Chair of the Department of English, Classics and Philosophy, adds that Ms. Trujillo's award represents "a major step forward for the department's Ph.D. program. Her achievement puts us on the map as a department of choice for the best scholars in US Latina/o Studies."

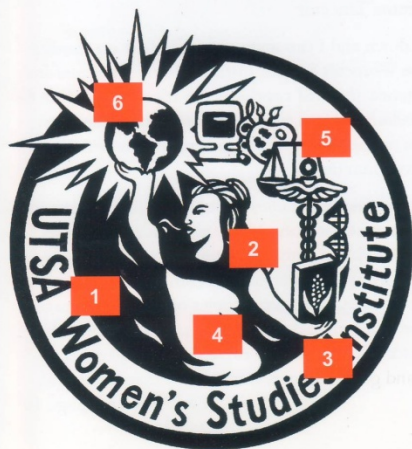
Ms. Trujillo's fellowship award represents yet another success for the Women's Studies Institute's Student Fellowship and Grant Writing Subcommittee, which worked in collaboration with the English, Classics and Philosophy Grant Writing Committee, and we look forward to future successes. †

## A Closer Look at the New WSI Logo

Patricia Trujillo, WSI Staff Writer

Anyone who saw the 2005 Women's History Month brochure or poster may have noticed a new addition to this year's publications – a new Women's Studies Institute logo. In Fall 2004, Dr. Saldivar-Hull and I had a conversation about ways in which we could continue to build a stronger identity on campus as a research institution, as well as source of support for faculty and students interested in Women's Studies. We both agreed that having a recognizable logo would help us do just this. We sat down and thought about some of the themes we would like the image to evoke: women in the academy, women in movement, various kinds of knowledge, various disciplines, choice, balance, and success. Once we identified our list, which was much, much longer than the one I've provided here, we sought out an artist. It was significant to us to find a woman artist from San Antonio who could help us develop the logo. Through some networking and a little serendipity, we were able to identify and retain the services of artist, Mary Agnes Rodriguez.

Rodriguez is a native of Westside San Antonio. Her prolific body of work has been exhibited in multiple shows and galleries, including the current traveling show, "Chicano Now!" Rodriguez is also known for the murals she has designed and painted on the Westside of San Antonio through the endeavors of such organizations as the San Anto Cultural Arts and the Community Leadership Institute. Rodriguez is a multi-media artist who paints, draws, and creates three-dimensional works. She collaborated with WSI over a four month period to generate the image that you see below. We hope that the image becomes commonly recognized on the UTSA campus and beyond as a symbol of WSI's dedication to women and gender-related studies on campus. Here's a closer look:



1. Background – The black and white background, reminiscent of a yin yang symbol, reflects the balance women must often strike between the various roles they encompass.
2. Image of Woman – We wanted the image to be as affirming of all women as possible. The features of the woman, including her size, her clothing, her facial features and her hair, were all discussed to produce a representation that kept inclusivity in mind.
3. Hands – One hand up and forward, and one hand down and reaching behind reminds us that while we are always working to move forward, we all have meaningful histories to build on. Also, it reminds us that there were women who came before us, reaching their metaphorical hand to lift us up, and we must remember to extend our hand out to support the next generation of Women's Studies scholars.
4. Huipil (Hand-woven shirt) – A representation of women's home knowledge that is particularly representative of UTSA's geographic proximity to the U.S./Mexico border.
5. Disciplines – Icons that represent the multi-disciplinary nature of Women's Studies
6. World – Symbolic of the goals women set for themselves; the image of the world also reminds us of the feminist tenet of activism, "Think globally, act locally." †

## Welcome to the Women's Resource Center

Elizabeth Stanczak, WRC Executive Director and Claudia Rodriguez, Program Coordinator



The Women's Resource Center, a UTSA program aimed at prevention and educational services that promote the well being of women students, staff, and faculty, was established three years ago. At that point, the WRC was housed at the Downtown campus. The most recent update regarding the WRC is that it has moved to the 1604 campus and is now under the auspices of Health and Counseling Services. As such, the center is currently undergoing a transformation phase. The newly appointed Coordinator of the WRC, Claudia Rodriguez, is working diligently with the Executive Director, Dr. Elizabeth Stanczak to generate funding and resources to get the program up and running for the fall 2005 semester. Along with generating sufficient funding, the WRC staff is also focusing on the planning and programming schedule for the upcoming year.

The WRC would like to continue with efforts to provide an equal opportunity for growth and development for all UTSA students, staff, and faculty. A significant part of this effort is to affirm and celebrate the differences of all students within the UTSA community. The WRC will ultimately serve as a catalyst for change and a primary source of information on issues pertinent to women. Currently, the WRC is providing resource referral and outreach services in collaboration with other UTSA departments like the Women's Studies Institute and UTSA Health Services. The WRC staff is in the planning phase of outlining and developing additional services for the fall 2005 semester. For example, the staff is focusing on the development of support groups and the establishment of an education resource library. The goal is to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning and problem solving. The WRC staff is also making plans to utilize a collaborative approach in order to successfully achieve designated goals. Since the WRC is currently in the early stages of strategic planning, some discussion has been generated with regard to collaborative opportunities with the Tomas Rivera Center and UTSA Career Services.

Continued on page 10

## Women's Studies Major Proposed

Amalia Puentes, WSI Staff Writer

UTSA Women's Studies Institute is submitting a proposal for a major track in Women's Studies. Dr. Sharon Navarro, chair of the WSI Curriculum Committee, noted that this is a significant opportunity for UTSA as there is not a university in South Texas that offers a Women's Studies major. UTSA is poised at the forefront for meeting the national need of education leadership in Women's Studies. Currently the Curriculum Committee is completing the final draft of the proposal. The WSI will submit the proposal and if approved, the major will be offered Fall 2006. The Bachelors of Arts Degree in Women's Studies would require a minimum of 120 semester credit hours, including core curriculum requirements, Women's Studies requirements, electives, and electives taken outside the area of Women's Studies.

WSI is committed to establishing a program that recognizes how the geographic location of South Texas can inform the continuing dialogue in Women's Studies by grounding women's issues in a global context through a critical examination of the U.S./Mexico border. According to the Curriculum Committee, this focus is significant because in "projected demographic changes in the Texas population and labor force" it is evident that "some of the most dramatic changes [in labor and] in the country are moving women and ethnic minorities from the margins to the center" and this necessitates "the development of alternative social and political systems to replace systems of inequality." The developing curriculum seeks to utilize geographic location as way to promote "college students' effective engagement in the process of social and political change, fueling and fueled by projected demographic and economic changes." ✦

### WSI Newsletter Summer 2005

**Editing and Layout**  
Patricia Trujillo

**Staff Writers and Photographers**  
Amalia Puentes  
Rebecca Rodriguez  
Patricia Trujillo  
Pamela Hagerty Williams

**Contributing Writers**  
Elizabeth Stanczak, Claudia Rodriguez, Carol Adams-Means, Jill Fleuriet, Melissa Honeycutt, Sarah Williams, Raquel Marquez, B.V. Olguin and Sonia Saldívar-Hull

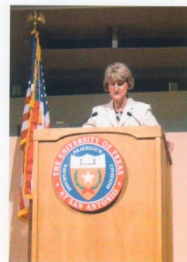
**WSI Administrative Associate**  
Carolyn Motley

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## Can We Talk?

WSI hosted the Fall 2004 Can We Talk? Women's Equality Day celebration. UTSA President Ricardo Romo (far right) welcomed the audience, and Lynn Hickey (right), UTSA Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, delivered the keynote address, "Have We Come a Long Way, Baby?" Sonia Saldívar-Hull and Carolyn Motley posed with another honored guest, Sue (left), a cast of the largest, most complete and best-preserved T. Rex ever found. ✦



# Celebrating Women's History Month

WSI News 4

Women's History Month was busy on the UTSA campus! WSI hosted over 35 events in March to celebrate Women's History Month. Please contact Carolyn Motley (carolyn.motley@utsa.edu, (210) 458-6277) to get on mailing list for 2006.



Blanca Rojas speaks to students in Dr. Marquez's "Latinas in US Society" course for film event.

## Rojas, Participant in Documentary, Facilitates WHM Film Screening

Raquel Marquez, Assistant Professor of Sociology

In, *The Forgotten Americans*, documentary filmmaker Hector Galan explores the reality of life in a *colonia*, the unincorporated neighborhoods located along the US/Mexico border. The film documents current third world conditions in these US neighborhoods including limited access to water and electricity, unsanitary conditions, and unpaved roads. We are informed in the film of the negative impact these conditions have upon the Latino families and their children who live in *colonias*, and we are reminded that these young children represent our society's future. Judge Briones states, "These children should be viewed as an asset, and in order to grow these assets, we need to invest in them."

A story-line throughout the film is the story of one such asset, Blanca Rojas. Growing up in a small and poor *colonia*, Blanca Rojas dreamed of going to college, but not just any college. She dreamed of attending an Ivy League school, and in the film we are graced with watching her graduate from Brown University. Ms. Rojas currently is working on her second Master's degree, and has plans to enter a Ph.D. program. As part of Women's History Month, Blanca joined UTSA students in viewing *The Forgotten Americans*, and led UTSA students in a discussion about the challenges that *colonia* children face in achieving a higher education. The students in "Latinas in US Society," Blanca, and other attendees engaged in a critical analysis of why children today continue to live in Third World conditions here in the state of Texas. ✦

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### Women's History Month Leaves Lasting Impression continued from page 1...

Patricia Trujillo, Women's History Month 2005 Chair

The event included a formal welcome by WSI executive director, Dr. Sonia Saldívar-Hull, a keynote address by Castillo, as well as a gallery show and presentation of Rodriguez's artwork. Nearly a hundred people from UTSA and the greater San Antonio community were in attendance for the event. Castillo's keynote address, which emphasized individual and community commitment to ending family violence, embraced the month's theme of *Testimonio: Celebrating our Stories* as a vantage point from which to remind audience members of the significance of "breaking the silence" to end family violence. Rodriguez's artwork provided a meaningful ambiance for Castillo's message as many of her portraits and featured murals take ending violence and women's empowerment on as central themes. In addition, the new WSI logo, designed by Rodriguez, was officially unveiled for the reception. (See page 2 for a closer look at our new logo.)

The reception allowed WSI an opportunity to ground the vision of Women's History Month 2005 in the honoring of two women who work locally to change women's lives with their accomplishments and continued commitment to serving their community. It was a meaningful opening to an extraordinary month! Thousands of students and community members attended the month of events, with audiences ranging from 20 – 350! The overall response was astounding with news coverage in several local newspapers including *The Current*, *Rumba*, *Paisano*, and the *San Antonio Express News*. Many thanks to everyone who made it happen especially Carolyn Motley and the Women's History Month Committee. ✦

## Rockeymoore Offers a New Perspective on Politics in the 21st Century

Carol Adams-Means, Instructor of Communications



(Left to Right) UTSA professors Carol Adams-Means (Communication), Fred Williams (Political Science), Dr. Maya Rocky Moore and media personality Cathy Clay-Little (WOAI, Express-News and African American Reflections).

San Antonio native, Dr. Maya Rocky Moore, offered a new perspective on politics in the 21st century during her presentation for the 2005 UTSA Women's History Month celebration. Dr. Rocky Moore, Vice President for Research and Programs at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation in Washington, D.C., provided audiences with a historic background on politics and civil rights in the 20th century then shifted her focus to the youth vote and upcoming policies on Capital Hill. She devoted a considerable portion of her presentation titled, "Strengthening Democracy: A Mandate for 21st Century America," to current legislation designed to reform the social security program and greater civic engagement by the American public. She suggests the public is limited in its ability to conduct independent inquiry into governmental decisions due to the concentration of media outlets that are managed by a limited number of media owners. She is concerned that fundamentals of democracy are in peril in the 21st century, noting that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is only 40 years old, yet Americans are becoming disenfranchised from the political process. Dr. Rocky Moore feels greater efforts must be made to engage youth in voting and political process. She has written a book titled, *The Political Action Handbook: A How to Guide for the Hip Hop Generation*, in an effort to help educate youth about politics.

Dr. Rocky Moore has extensive experience in government policy and Capital Hill; she has served as Chief-of-Staff to Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY), professional staff on the Social Security Subcommittee of the Ways and Means Committee, and legislative assistant to Congressman Mel Watt (D-NC). Dr. Rocky Moore has appeared on CNN, C-Span, Black Entertainment Television, XM Satellite and National Public Radio. She holds a master's degree and Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Policy from Purdue University. She obtained her bachelor's degree from Prairie View A & M University here in Texas. †

## Sister Angela Murdaugh, Founder of Holy Family Birth Center and Pioneer in Midwifery Movement

Jill Fleuriot, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

In "You Too Can See Your Dream Come True: Social Justice and Midwifery in the Lower Rio Grande Valley," Certified Nurse Midwife Sister Angela Murdaugh, founder of Holy Family Birth Center in Weslaco, Texas, captivated students, faculty, and community members alike with her passion: empowering women in their choices about pregnancy and birth. Sister Angela is renowned in midwifery circles for her ground-breaking work in natural birth centers and her outreach among medically underserved women in South Texas. Midwives and doctors alike credit her work with significantly reducing maternal and infant morbidity and mortality in Hidalgo County. As a Founding Mother in the American midwifery movement, Sister Angela's foundational belief is that unless medically indicated, birth should not be treated as a medical phenomenon but as a creative, spiritual, and above all, normal family event.



Sister Angela Murdaugh

In her talk at UTSA, Sister Angela emphasized the importance of knowledge, spirituality -- of any kind, and friends and family in a woman's decisions about pregnancy and birth. In particular, knowledge provides a woman with health care alternatives and improves her confidence in her body and pregnancy. Spiritual and emotional support creates a dynamic, positive psychosocial environment in which mother and baby are nurtured and strengthened. Throughout her talk, Sister Angela persuasively argued an alternative model of health care: the basic human right of compassionate and competent health care for everyone in an empathetic environment of respect for the woman as a whole person. UTSA students queried Sister Angela about her thoughts on increasing rates of elective Cesarean sections, choosing progressive obstetrical care providers, and bringing family and friends into prenatal and maternal care. After the talk, students continued the conversation with Sister Angela by sharing their personal stories that reinforced Sister Angela's messages of knowledge, empowerment, and social justice. †

# WOMEN'S

## Women's Fair 2005

Pamela Hagerty Williams, WSI Staff Writer



Information tables at the Women's Fair

One of the new, exciting events during Women's History Month was the first Women's Fair. The fair was held on March 10 in the Sombrilla at the 1604 campus from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Present at the fair were over 25 organizations, businesses, and campus departments that are either run by or geared towards women.

The fair opened with a welcome by Sandra Welch, Vice Provost for Academic Compliance & Institutional Research. The opening performer was Rita Vidaurri, an actress and musician who was extremely popular in Mexico, Central, and South American in the '40 and '50's. Vidaurri entertained with her strong vocals and a few jokes in between songs. Elizabeth Walsh, an English major, said "she was amazing! When she was singing it was as though I was in a smoky night club listening to some girl sing her heart out." Two brave students, Linda Winterbottom and Marissa Cardenas, read their creative writing pieces, while students visited informational tables.



San Anto conjunto legend, Rita Vidaurri graced the Women's Fair stage sharing music and stories

The rocking afternoon started with a performance by the San Antonio based band, Ledaswan. As time for the fair to close came near, the excitement in the Sombrilla was just beginning. The all-female band Girl in a Coma took the stage in one of their last San Antonio performances before going on a U.S. tour. Rebecca Rodriguez, an English M.A. student, was there to see Girl in a Coma. "They created such an energetic environment. It was a perfect way to start off Spring Break." The bands caught the attention of many students, who stopped to listen on their way to classes and mid-terms.

Patricia Trujillo, Women's History Month Committee Chair, says the idea of the fair came from brainstorming ideas on how to get more undergraduates involved with the Women's Studies Institute. "The concern was that most student involvement was on the 'extra-credit' level and we were trying to think of an event that would connect them with the work of women on-campus and in the greater San Antonio community," said Trujillo.

The fair was a success due in part to the hard work of the Women's Fair committee: Trujillo, Susan Colorado, Claudia Rodriguez, Ann Margaret Trujillo, Mary Johnson, and the WSI staff. Dr. Sonia Saldivar-Hull, the director of the Women's Studies Institute, found the fair an important tool in making the WSI better known. Dr. Saldivar-Hull said, "The women's fair was an opportunity for the WSI to make our services more visible to the general student population. It also offered the perfect forum for us to continue our commitment to the multiple women's organizations in San Antonio." +



Local San Antonio band, Girl in a Coma, rocked the JPL Sombrilla as part of the festivities



Members of WSI Staff and Women's Fair Committee gather to say "Cheese!"



The Women's Fair wouldn't have been a success without the help of our fabulous volunteers!

# Fair 2005

WSI News 7

## Campus and Community Organizations: Dedicated to Women's Lives

Rebecca Rodriguez, WSI Staff Writer

The Women's Studies Institute's purpose for hosting the Women's Fair was to provide the students of UTSA information about campus and community organizations committed to women or women's issues. Our mission was to make UTSA students aware that there are organizations in our community that they could get involved with, could provide them with important services, pay special attention to important women's issues, and/or celebrate women in any way.

Among the campus organizations present at the Women's Fair were: Career Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of Institutional Diversity, Campus Recreation, Health Services, and the Women's Resource Center. Grace Hernandez, Director of the Office of Institutional Diversity, said, "It was great participating in the Women's Fair! Lots of students came by our table to learn about the work of our office, pick up literature and play the jeopardy game we designed with fun facts about women's history and women at UTSA. It was wonderful to see all of the community and university programs represented at the fair and to realize the important role of women in all aspects of our university."

Some of the organizations from the San Antonio community present at the fair were: American Association of University Women, the Esperanza Center, the Martinez Street Women's Center, Milagros, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, the PEACE Initiative, The Rape Crisis Center for Children and Adults, Women's Super Fitness, the Women's Chamber of Commerce, the OLLU Center for Women, Women at the Well House, the Hispanic Women's Network of Texas, VOX (Planned Parenthood at UTSA), and the San Antonio Breast Cancer Foundation.

Representatives from each organization set up tables around the Sombriilla and handed out information in the form of brochures. They talked to students, answering questions about the services that their organizations provide. Additionally, many of the organizations gave students free gifts such as pencils, pens, candy, and sample products from their businesses. Two of the business organizations held a raffle.

The Women's Studies Institute would like to thank all of the organizations that participated in our event. We are pleased to say that we had representation from all kinds of social, political, health, safety, vocational, business, and educational organizations. Through the organizations' participation at the Women's Fair, we were able to introduce the students of UTSA to many available, valuable, and yet not often visible resources in our community and our own campus. ✦



Kathryn Bowden from UTSA's Health Services displays women's health info.



Entertainment was key to the success of the fair. Members of Girl in a Coma and Ledaswan are pictured above.



WSI Staff members, Pamela and Becky, take a moment from banner hanging for a photo.

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# ★ Student News

## WSI Featured Student: Amalia Puentes

Interview by Rebecca Rodriguez, WSI Staff Writer

Amalia Puentes, graduated in May from UTSA with a BBA in Management with an International Business concentration and a BA in Spanish.

**Rebecca: Where are you from originally and what brought you to UTSA?**

Amalia: I'm originally from Progreso, TX – a border town in the Rio Grande Valley. I came to UTSA to get away from the Valley and to learn about myself.

**Do you participate in any organizations here at UTSA? If so, what are they?**

I was a resident assistant at Chisholm Hall for two years. I have been an Alpha Kappa Psi, a business fraternity, member for four years, and I was the Vice-President of Students in Free Enterprise in the spring of 2005.

**How long have you worked at the WSI?**

I began working for WSI in the spring of 2003.

**What has it been like working at the WSI?**

It has been very empowering, especially as a minority woman. Working here has taught me to reflect about myself and where I stand. With so many inspiring speakers we bring through Women's History Month, I have learned to be more driven and to reach for my goals.

**So, would you say that working here has changed you?**

I believe that it has definitely changed me. Now, I don't feel intimidated by being a woman minority anywhere, because I know that all perspectives and all our work should be valued. By working here, I have learned that it takes courage and persistence to help other women, and to help other women have more of a sense of independence. I also learned that it takes a lot to run a women's institute because I see how hard Sonia Saldivar-Hull, WSI director, and Carolyn Motley, WSI administrator, work together, but they do so with a lot of enthusiasm.

**What will you do with the knowledge and experience you have gained from being a part of the WSI?**

I will definitely be a woman leader – leading and encouraging others to do so as well.

**What are your plans for the future, now that you have graduated?**

I'm starting my new career with Wells Fargo as a Personal Banker the first week of June. I plan to return to UTSA to obtain a master's degree in Business Administration.

Congratulations Amalia! All of us here at the WSI are very proud of you! We would like to thank you for all your hard work and contributions to the WSI. We would also like to wish you the best of luck and to let you know that you will be greatly missed. ✦



Amalia Puentes graduated in May 2005 and is starting a new career with Wells Fargo.

WSI News 8



Blanca Rosa Braswell-Tucker, WGS minor



Elizabeth Walsh, WGS minor

## Why Choose a Minor in Women and Gender Studies?

Pamela Hagerty Williams, WSI Staff Writer

As a UTSA graduate with a minor in Women and Gender Studies and a feminist scholar, I look forward to talking with students about the benefits of earning a WGS minor. I had the pleasure recently to speak with two current students minoring in WGS and asked them to share their thoughts on the advantages of receiving a minor in Women and Gender Studies.

I asked Blanca Rosa Braswell-Tucker and Elizabeth Walsh, both English majors, why they chose a minor in Women and Gender Studies. Braswell-Tucker said, "I am deeply passionate about my feminist convictions and welcome the opportunity to educate myself further on issues related to the subject." Walsh says the WGS minor gives her an advantage in her English classes. "The advantage of being a WGS minor is that I bring a feminist point of view to the classroom. I know that the teachers are listening to me, because I have something different to say."

Braswell-Tucker feels these classes are important in reaching everyone. "Considering that the vast majority of information that is out in the world was written by and for (usually white) men, I think that it is absolutely necessary to take classes that specifically address issues that affect 50% of the population in order to consider your education to be well rounded." What I find most advantageous about the WGS minor is that it provides the opportunity and space for emerging female leadership and new scholarship on women and gender. ✦

**Interested in earning a minor in Women and Gender Studies?**

Sign up for the introductory course, WGS 2013, and visit your advisor.



# ★ Student News

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Interview by Rebecca Rodriguez, WSI Staff Writer

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I began working for WSI in the spring of 2003.

**What has it been like working at the WSI?**

It has been very empowering, especially as a minority woman. Working here has taught me to reflect about myself and where I stand. With so many inspiring speakers we bring through Women's History Month, I have learned to be more driven and to reach for my goals.

**So, would you say that working here has changed you?**

I believe that it has definitely changed me. Now, I don't feel intimidated by being a woman minority anywhere, because I know that all perspectives and all our work should be valued. By working here, I have learned that it takes courage and persistence to help other women, and to help other women have more of a sense of independence. I also learned that it takes a lot to run a women's institute because I see how hard Sonia Saldivar-Hull, WSI director, and Carolyn Motley, WSI administrator, work together, but they do so with a lot of enthusiasm.

**What will you do with the knowledge and experience you have gained from being a part of the WSI?**

I will definitely be a woman leader – leading and encouraging others to do so as well.

**What are your plans for the future, now that you have graduated?**

I'm starting my new career with Wells Fargo as a Personal Banker the first week of June. I plan to return to UTSA to obtain a master's degree in Business Administration.

Congratulations Amalia! All of us here at the WSI are very proud of you! We would like to thank you for all your hard work and contributions to the WSI. We would also like to wish you the best of luck and to let you know that you will be greatly missed. ✦



Amalia Puentes graduated in May 2005 and is starting a new career with Wells Fargo.

WSI News 8



Blanca Rosa Braswell-Tucker, WGS minor



Elizabeth Walsh, WGS minor

## Why Choose a Minor in Women and Gender Studies?

Pamela Hagerty Williams, WSI Staff Writer

As a UTSA graduate with a minor in Women and Gender Studies and a feminist scholar, I look forward to talking with students about the benefits of earning a WGS minor. I had the pleasure recently to speak with two current students minoring in WGS and asked them to share their thoughts on the advantages of receiving a minor in Women and Gender Studies.

I asked Blanca Rosa Braswell-Tucker and Elizabeth Walsh, both English majors, why they chose a minor in Women and Gender Studies. Braswell-Tucker said, "I am deeply passionate about my feminist convictions and welcome the opportunity to educate myself further on issues related to the subject." Walsh says the WGS minor gives her an advantage in her English classes. "The advantage of being a WGS minor is that I bring a feminist point of view to the classroom. I know that the teachers are listening to me, because I have something different to say."

Braswell-Tucker feels these classes are important in reaching everyone. "Considering that the vast majority of information that is out in the world was written by and for (usually white) men, I think that it is absolutely necessary to take classes that specifically address issues that affect 50% of the population in order to consider your education to be well rounded." What I find most advantageous about the WGS minor is that it provides the opportunity and space for emerging female leadership and new scholarship on women and gender. ✦

**Interested in earning a minor in Women and Gender Studies?**

Sign up for the introductory course, WGS 2013, and visit your advisor.





Panelists: Patricia Castillo, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Soledad Aguilar (center front), Macrina Cárdenas de Alarcon, and Lucha Castro. Not pictured: Rosa María Peña

## Panel discusses crossborder impact of Juarez tragedies

Sarah Williams, Special feature writer, originally published in *Paisano* student newspaper November 11, 2004

"I remember Benita as being a very sad person, very quiet. She took us to most of the places where the maquiladores are. She even took us to where most of the bodies were found, including her own daughter.

"Most of the bodies were dumped in a place where people just throw their trash, as if the women themselves were trash." Artist Rosa Maria Pena's voice broke as she described the littered desert she saw during a visit to Ciudad Juarez. For over 11 years, hundreds of young women who work at the city's factories have been brutally raped, murdered, their bodies dismembered and thrown into the desert.

"It was very hard for Benita to be there. She even showed us the place where her daughter's body was found--in the weeds, in the mud, in the dirt." Pena, and four other women participated in a panel discussion at UTSA downtown on Friday, Oct 29. The discussion titled, "What's the Price of Free Trade: Gender and Violence on the U.S./Mexican Border" was organized by the UTSA Women's Studies Institute, in coordination with the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center. Dr. Alicia Gaspar de Alba, professor at UCLA, moderated the event. She was joined by representatives of the organizations MujerARTES, and the P.E.A.C.E. Initiatives.

The panelists, who are part of the Caravan for Justice in Juarez spoke about the conditions and violence toward women along the border of El Paso, Tex. and Ciudad Juarez, Mex. The estimated number of victims is close to 400, and the crimes are still occurring in this area. According to the panelists, there is a lack of information, as well as manipulation of facts due in part to the secrecy and silence of the government.

"We need to think about what happens to these women in a global context, with a global world view and how it affects us on this side of the border," said Patricia Castillo, executive director of the P.E.A.C.E. Initiative.

According to Gaspar de Alba, learning about and presenting information about these crimes is vital. "We must stop thinking of this as a Mexican problem, which is part of the reason there has been so much indifference and apathy about these crimes on this side of the border," she said.

Gaspar de Alba said the murders began in 1993 when NAFTA was signed and implemented. NAFTA was responsible for the explosion of the maquiladoras in Juarez. Hundreds of young women flocked to these factories daily to find work. When they arrived, they found themselves in an unwelcoming environment, where they were often exploited the minute they set foot in the factories. These women are sometimes referred to as "maquilocas," a derogatory term to describe young girls lured north to work, who become Americanized and lose touch with Mexican values. According to this thinking, because she may wear a short skirts or attend parties, for instance, these actions perpetuate the crimes.

"We are not far from Juarez. We need to think about how we re-victimize with our attitudes and with our ways of thinking in the culture we are coming up in. It's easier to be permissible and blame victims instead of holding authority accountable," said Castillo.

Castillo explained that there are an average of 87 calls per day for family violence here in San Antonio, and only 1 out of every 10 incidents is reported. "If we keep up the notion that when these things happen to us and we keep quiet because we are embarrassed or ashamed, then the injustices continue."

Cecilia Aguilar was one of the victims of crime toward the women of Juarez, but she did not survive. According to her mother, Soledad Aguilar, who participated in the panel discussion, her daughter disappeared November 1995. She was on her way home from taking her daughter to the pediatrician. With her sad, contemplative voice, Aguilar relayed in Spanish the bitter reality of a crime that personally took the life of her own child. Her story stirred the emotions of the audience; the auditorium fell silent as Aguilar presented the story in order to educate others despite her grief.

It was in Juarez where Pena met up with Benita and others who, like Aguilar, battle daily for justice and an end to the violence. Pena spent time in Juarez with other members of MujerARTES to hear the stories of these women first-hand. The trip was one of their stops on the way to a conference in UCLA where Pena's art was to be displayed. She created an altar to commemorate the lives of the murdered women of Juarez and raise money for the families.

"When we were [in Juarez] I had a very strong feeling that someone didn't want us to be there--that we would find out too many things," said Pena. "After meeting these mothers, getting to know them, and going to the places where the bodies were found, I felt that my ceramic pieces for the altar for Dia de los Muertos did not do justice to the pain, the horror, the anguish that these women have felt. We should all be aware of these things going on in Ciudad Juarez--that no more women should be lost," Pena said.

She paused. And with quiet strength in her voice, emphatically added, "Ya no mas." +

✝ ¡Recuerdo  
las mujeres  
de Juarez!

**Welcome to the WRC, Continued from page 3...**

**Elizabeth Stanczak**, WRC Executive Director and **Claudia Rodriguez**, Program Coordinator



On-going collaboration will enable the WRC to extend a myriad of services linked to identifiable issues emerging from the female college experience. These services will encompass a series of psycho-educational classes likely to contribute to the knowledge base of the UTSA student community. Extensive outreach efforts will include, but are not limited to: eating disorders, body image awareness, relationship issues, self esteem, cultural competency, career exploration, sexuality and gender-based discussion. To stay consistent with the theme of creating an environment in which the diversity of women is affirmed, long-term goals will involve active participation in: Domestic Violence Awareness Month, National Eating Disorders Week, Women's History Month, Black History Month, and Hispanic Heritage Month. Educational and experiential events will continue to serve as the driving force behind the mission of the WRC: to introduce knowledge and awareness; promote the process of learning and to acquire further insight with regard to diversity in an ever changing world.

Enriching the campus community by building awareness and encouraging tolerance is paramount to the overall mission of the WRC. The center will continue to exist as a vital component within the UTSA system, ensuring access to information and services reflective of the needs of a growing and diverse community. More information about the WRC will be posted during the beginning of fall semester 2005. Please feel free to direct any inquiries to Claudia Rodriguez, LMSW, at 458-4140. ✦

**Director's Column continued from page 1...**

**Sonia Saldívar-Hull**, WSI Executive Director

The WSI curriculum committee chaired by Dr. Sharon Navarro will submit the proposal for a major in Women's Studies this summer, and if approved, we plan to have the major on the books for Fall 2006. Our vision for this major track that investigates women, gender, and sexuality is anchored by our commitment to diversity and interdisciplinarity. This year we welcomed faculty from such departments as Health and Kinesiology, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Art History, and Bilingual/Bicultural Studies, to name just a few disciplines, who come with expertise in women's studies and are eager to offer courses in the field.

One of my most rewarding projects has been the further development of the Women's Research unit of the WSI. In the past year, I have worked closely with Martha Medrano, MD, Director of the Hispanic Center of Excellence at the UTHSC. We have formalized a relationship that will implement inter-institutional collaboration between UTSA and the UTHSCSA. Our mission statement is: "to promote diversity and reduce health disparities through the education, research, and clinical care activities within our institutions and for all the communities we serve." The WSI intends to fully develop a partnership that will benefit from Dr. Medrano's efforts as Co-Director of the National Center of Excellence in Women's Health. I have organized meetings throughout the year for UTSA faculty whose research centers on women's health care and health issues, giving them the opportunity to participate in these urgent research collaborations. One of our current projects is a grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health for a National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities grant in Health Disparities Intervention Research. WSI affiliate faculty, Drs. Patricia Quijada, Albert Valadez, and Elizabeth de la Portilla have submitted their projects on Mexican American and Native American women for funding consideration. I invite faculty whose research focus is on women and gender to contact us so we can include you on our mailing list for future meetings.

Our community outreach programs continue to flourish. On August 26, 2004 we sponsored the biannual *Can We Talk...* event. *Can We Talk* is a coalition of over 50 women's organizations in San Antonio, including the American Association of University Women, San Antonio Women's Chamber of Commerce, American Society of Women Accountants, Association for Women Journalists, Bexar County Women's Bar Association, Esperanza, the League of Women Voters of San Antonio, Mexican American Business and Professional Women's Club, National Council of Negro Women, Network Power/Texas, and Planned Parenthood of San Antonio and South Central Texas. We welcomed our guests at the Institute of Texan Cultures as we celebrated Women's Equality Day, which commemorates the 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote. Our observance underscored women's continuing efforts toward full equity in the workplace, representation in government, and ultimately, the larger struggle for human rights and social justice. The keynote speaker was Lynn Hickey, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics at UTSA since 1999. The event was a resounding success with over 100 community women in attendance.

We are also in the final planning stages for the Chicana Indigena Leadership Institute: *Juntas*, scheduled for July 13, 2005. The institute will be a one-day conference for girls between the ages of 9-12, in the JOVEN summer camp, to come to the UTSA campus and participate in workshops with renowned artist, Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez and English doctoral student and Ford Fellow, Patricia Trujillo. Organizers Susan Colorado-Burt and Patricia Quijada envision this event as an opportunity to introduce young women to the UTSA environment and a future as university students to which they can aspire. In addition to the many activities planned for the day, the young women will go away with a book bag with the Institute's logo designed by Deborah Kuetzpalin Vasquez featuring her Chicana superhero: Citlali. We will also present them with a book written by a Chicana or Indigena and with school supplies. We envision *Juntas* as a pilot program and anticipate making it a regular function.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the work of the various committees that made Women's History Month a resounding success and the WSI staff, Carolyn Motley, and our graduate and undergraduate research assistants for their unwavering support and creative energy. I especially want to recognize Patricia Trujillo for functioning as the WSI Assistant Director this year.

I invite you to visit our web site: [www.utsa.edu/wsi](http://www.utsa.edu/wsi). ✦



WSI hosted Dr. Mihesuah's visit at UTSA as one of the kick-off events for Women's History Month 2005, speaking to a crowd of over one hundred people.

## Devon Mihesuah Speaks on Indigenous Women's Issues During Spring Lecture

Melissa Honeycutt, UTSA Student, English, Senior

On Wednesday, March 2, 2005, the Women's Studies Institute featured a lecture by Devon Abbott Mihesuah titled, "The Responsibilities of Indigenous Women in the Academy," in the Laurel Room of the University Center. Mihesuah is a writer, editor, teacher, and a "powerful activist for indigenous causes" says senior lecturer in the History Department, Dr. Marian Aitches.

Devon Abbott Mihesuah is member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and is a historian by training. She received her Ph.D. in American History from TCU in 1989, and was professor of American Indian History in NAU's history department for ten years. She is now professor of Applied Indigenous Studies, serves as award winning Editor of the *American Indian Quarterly* and edits University of Nebraska Press's book series, "Contemporary Indigenous Issues."

Mihesuah states that indigenous peoples are faced with the difficulties of racism, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and poverty. Native Americans also have difficulties finding funding for healthcare, elderly care, and for language programs within the different tribes. These problems are made worse by the tendency of some Native men to "refuse to support Native women," seen "prevalent[ly] in the academy" says Mihesuah.

"We are in privileged positions as academics and must use that position to create and sustain marginalized programs," says Mihesuah. Such a program is the Women's Studies Institute at UTSA. Mihesuah says that academics who are teaching "methodologies from many disciplines benefit students," however, "faculty are evaluated and not given tenure because the writing and research they do is not 'department specific.'" Also, Mihesuah says, "people must begin to profile and celebrate those faculty who encourage courses that are marginalized."

Dr. Aitches says that "it is absolutely essential for activists like Mihesuah to speak to UTSA students because women are socialized to be silent or 'nice' regarding controversial topics, and it's good for them to hear a strong woman who is unafraid to speak truth to power. Having acclaimed authors like Mihesuah come from other universities is helpful, too, because students feel very directly connected to the larger intellectual world."

The responsibility of indigenous women in the academy says Mihesuah "is to use resources and skills available when we teach students and faculty about women's repression and empowerment" because "women's issues and indigenous issues are similar. Both deal with marginalization, sexism, discrimination, and struggle."

"The presentation was very empowering, not just to indigenous women, but to all women. I thought that Dr. Mihesuah's message was applicable to other aspects of life as well" says Wendy Perry, Senior English student.

Patricia Trujillo, the Assistant Director of the Women's Studies Institute, said that Dr. Mihesuah's "visit to UTSA allowed students to interact with one of the leading scholars in Native Studies. The audience was privy to information that may not be found in a book and students could ask questions for clarification. If students are interested in Native Studies, the lecture provided an opportunity for them to speak with one of the experts in the field."

"The voices that are loudest may be the ones in charge, but they are not the most important" says Mihesuah. Political action and organization can be effective in getting "courses of study approved that effect peoples lives today" Mihesuah says. Mihesuah spoke about the fear of retaliation for speaking out by saying "many people read your words, sometimes they agree, sometimes they don't, but the point is that they are thinking about what you said."♦

# Announcements

Women's Studies Institute  
Welcome Reception

New women faculty and  
2005-2006 WSI scholarship recipients  
will be recognized

September 8, 2005  
3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
Mesquite Room, 2.01.24  
UTSA University Center

And remember to check  
out our newly updated  
web page for WSI  
information!

[www.utsa.edu/wsi](http://www.utsa.edu/wsi)

## Get your tote on!

Becky  
Rodriguez, a  
WSI Research  
Assistant,  
shows off her  
tote! But don't  
hate her  
because she  
has a beautiful  
bag - you can  
have one too!



For an \$8.00 donation, you can be stylin' with the 2005 Women's History Month tote bag featuring the new WSI logo designed by Mary Agnes Rodriguez. The bags measure 14.5" h, 13.5" w, and 3.5" d. They are black with a white logo. The unconventional tote has a single carry strap that adjusts up to 24" for multiple carrying options and has zippered side pockets to secure cell phones and other valuables. They are sure to go fast, and quantities are limited. Drop by the Women's Studies Institute (MS 3.01.14) to pick up your very own snazzy tote!

**Interested in earning a minor in  
Women and Gender Studies?**



Sign up for the introductory course,  
WGS 2013, and visit your advisor.

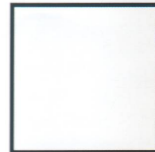
Drop by WSI for additional information!

[carolyn.motley@utsa.edu](mailto:carolyn.motley@utsa.edu) (210) 458-6277



**UTSA  
Women's Studies  
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Summer 2005 Newsletter