



## Women's History Month 2012

Living Intersectionalities: Tools for Resistance and Social Change

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**WSI Director,  
Dr. Sonia Saldívar Hull**

In the last ten years, the Women's Studies Institute has hosted close to 350 Women's History Month events.

## Director's Note

**Dr. Sonia Saldívar-Hull**

I am happy to welcome all Friends of Women's Studies, UTSA faculty, students, and staff to our new online Women's Studies Institute newsletter. While in the past we have circulated our newsletter in print form, this year we decided that we might reach our constituents as well as new readers by going digital.

While these pages are more of a retrospective of our work in the 2011-2012 academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of our plans for 2012-13. On October 15, 2012, the WSI

will host our annual Take Back the Night gathering, which is a national and international event that protests against the epidemic of sexual violence against women. We will gather under the Sombrilla at the Main campus at 6 pm to make posters and then march across the campus beginning at 7pm chanting women empowering slogans. Last year the group included a diverse group of students, faculty, staff, and even Dr. Betty Merchant, Dean of the College of

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Some of the students pose with their banners after the poetry reading.



## Take Back the Night! 2011

Magda García, UCSB Doctoral Student

Take Back the Night 2011 took place October 3rd at the UTSA Main Campus. Close to one hundred students, staff, and faculty attended the march. Chants, materials with which to make posters, and glow sticks were distributed prior to the march. The number of participants

has grown over the time the march has been held at UTSA. This year also marks the first time the march was covered by a local news channel, KENS 5.

A poetry reading followed the march. Jodi Ierien, an English undergraduate student, and Susana Ramírez, an

English Ph.D. student, participated in the reading. Ierien shared her original work, which reflects on her experience growing up in an abusive household. Ramírez, who volunteered with undocumented youth, shared their poetic expressions of their detainment and experience crossing into U.S.

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Education and Human Development. Following the march, we will regroup at the Sombrilla and listen to original poetry presented by UTSA students. On October 23rd, at 6 pm in the UC Retama Auditorium, the WSI will collaborate with the Deloitte Consulting Women's Initiative group, the UTSA Business School, and the Center for Students' Professional Development to screen the film [Miss Representation](#). The film examines how the media is complicit in the

erasure of women's presence and leadership in the arenas of power in the United States. Following the screening, a panel will elaborate on and critique the film and engage the audience in a discussion.

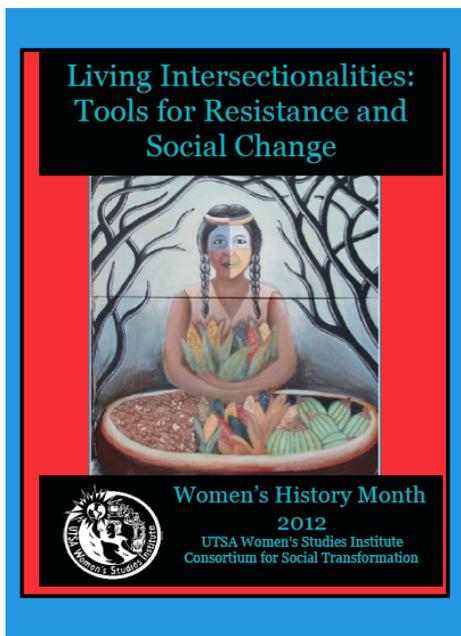
As well, we have begun plans to mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the WSI, through the leadership of President Ricardo Romo and then-Provost Guy Bailey. While UTSA had marked Women's History with week-long celebrations since 1986, in March 2003, the WSI

organized the first Women's History **Month** celebration. In those 10 years, we have hosted almost 350 events!

In these pages, we offer a glimpse of the *El Mundo Zurdo: International Conference on the Life and Works of Gloria E. Anzaldúa*, which we hosted with the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa on May 16-19, 2012 at the UTSA Downtown campus. We have begun planning for the next Anzaldúa conference, scheduled for November 2013.

## Women's History Month 2012

### Living Intersectionalities: Tools for Resistance and Social Change



As Co-Chair of this year's Women's History Month, I want to reflect on another successful program that was made possible by a collaborative effort from faculty, staff and students across colleges and disciplines. This year's theme, "Living Intersectionalities: Tools for Resistance and Social Change" was chosen because it reflected the topics discussed by invited speakers who thoughtfully engaged in talks dedicated to intersectional identities and cultures. In addition, the films, documentaries and performances also incorporated praxis-oriented discussions that provided their audience with tools for resistance and transformative social change.

At a time when area studies programs are under attack, it is significant that UTSA supports and provides a space in which to bring together a collective community that

can address pressing issues facing women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This year's program began with keynote speaker, Dr. Linda Sue Warner, an enrolled member of the Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma who currently serves as the "Special Assistant to the President on Tribal Affairs Northeastern Oklahoma College." She was named winner of the 2001 Indian Educator of the year award by the National Indian Education Association for her lifelong dedication to American Indian Education.

With over 30 years of teaching experience in public and BIA schools, Warner's talk addressed her primary research interest in "American Indian Ways of Knowing." She introduced the audience to the "Warner Model" or *Tahdooahnippah* that proposes American Indian Leadership be based on a core of spirituality. This indigenous model is characterized by a circle and comprises four primary modes of persuasion (i.e. The Elder, The Role Model, The Social Scientist, and The Author). She stated that the fifth mode embodied all the others, what she calls: "the one who speaks for us at all times." Thus, the difference between this model and non-Indigenous

#### Faculty Co-chair Retrospective Dr. Annette Portillo, UTSA English

models of leadership is that it is communal and there are no numerical scores assigned to any one component, but rather leadership is distributed within a community based on the accumulation of skills and experience.

Warner's talk echoed the important work of guest speaker, Rosemary Gibbons Mimbres Apache/Chicana, who spoke to students about her participation with the "Boarding School Healing Project." Before her talks, students screened the documentary she directed, "A Century of Genocide in the Americas: The Residential School Experience." This short but powerful documentary showed how Indian Residential Schools became a haven for institutionalized sexual abuse. Gibbons stated that the inspiration for the film came from the First Nations survivors who have taken legal action against the institutions that perpetuated this destructive cycle. She also noted that these are the very same institutions whose purpose and mandate was to "provide" for the well being of Native

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American children. Her documentary provided a historical look at how the systematic removal of First Nations children from their families and community not only made them easy targets for pedophiles, but also how these vile acts turned many of the victims into predators. Gibbons also spoke about the ongoing legacies of these institutions on indigenous communities today and how this film has been used as a tool for social change.

In keeping with this theme, that is, tools for resistance, social change and healing, speaker Misty Thomas, member of the Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska and a descendant of the Tlingit of Alaska, gave a talk about the ongoing violence against women on the reservation. Thomas, Director of Social Services at Santee was the 2011 Recipient of the Presidential Champions of Change Award. She discussed some of the causes and effects of domestic violence on women of color, and the work that is being done to educate women to resist victimization. She informed her audience that statistics reveal abuse rates for American Indian women are significantly higher



Audience members crowd around María Roselia Jiménez Pérez, Patricia Celerina Sánchez Santiago and translator Liliana Valenzuela after a panel during Women's History Month.

than rates for White women. And that domestic violence is generational and is passed down from parents to their children. One of Thomas' goals for the newly established shelter is to bring spirituality into the lives of the victims to regain some of the traditional teachings. She emphasized that historically the primary reasons for such abuse that occurs today is a result of colonization and the unfortunate internalization of colonialist practices that perpetuate violence against women. Her presentation showed how she seeks to incorporate traditional and non-traditional methods to combat domestic violence and assist with the healing process.

Overall, these speakers and the many others who participated in Women's History Month contributed to a much needed dialogue about pressing issues facing women and the multiple ways in which these scholar-activists continue the ongoing struggle for social justice.

“At a time when area studies programs are under attack, it is significant that UTSA supports and provides a space in which to bring together a collective community that can address pressing issues facing women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”



## Mujeres de su palabra and Girls' Eye-View Exhibit

Magda García, UCSB Doctoral Student

The Women's Studies Institute held *Mujeres de su palabra: Chicanas and Indigenous Women's Testimonios* and *Girls'-Eye View: Mobile Mural and Snapshots Exhibit* on March 8<sup>th</sup> as part of Women's History Month 2012. The two events, which took place at the UTSA Downtown campus, underscore the Women's Studies Institute's mission of

building transnational coalitions with indigenous women while also supporting local youth and the efforts of San Antonio community organizations.

*Mujeres de su palabra* featured indigenous activists and writers María Roselia Jiménez Pérez and

Patricia Celerina Sánchez, renowned

Chicana writer Sandra Cisneros, and prominent translator Liliana Valenzuela. Pérez and Sánchez previously participated in Cisneros' November 2011 Macondo-in-Oaxaca writing workshop. *Mujeres de*

*su palabra*, made possible in collaboration with Cisneros, allowed Pérez and Sánchez to share their work as writers and community activists with UTSA and the larger San Antonio community. Cisneros shared her own experience as a Chicana writer alongside Pérez and Sánchez with the goal of establishing transnational alliances between Chicanas and the indigenous community in Mexico. Of particular importance was recognizing similar struggles in both communities and sharing activism strategies.

*Girls'-Eye View*, organized by the Martinez Street Women's Center, featured the photography and

Young artists working on their mural with The Martinez Street Women's Center



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Lilibiana Valenzuela, Patricia Celerina Sánchez Santiago, Sandra Cisneros, María Roselia Jiménez Pérez and Sonia Saldívar-Hull

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mobile mural created by girls from San Antonio elementary and middle schools. In addition to exhibiting their work, the girls formed part of the *Mujeres de su palabra* audience and posed questions to Pérez, Sánchez, and Cisneros. After the event, the girls, accompanied by Pérez, Sánchez, and Cisneros, returned to the exhibit space for a small reception. The Women's Studies Institute plans to continue building and strengthening such coalitions.

## Dorothy Roberts Gives Talk on *Fatal Invention*

Dr. Norma Alarcón, Professor Emerita of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley

Though the Human Genome Project confirmed what some of us had always suspected, if not known, that human beings are not naturally divided by race, the emerging technological research driven by science is re-creating race as a biological category written in our genes.

It is this fundamental paradox [contradiction] that Roberts's work sets out to illuminate. How can a project that demonstrates that race does not naturally divide humanity end up producing racialized scientific work and in virtual consonance with the Corporate State's demographic census?

Her near exhaustive critical study of the uses, abuses, and manipulation of this emerging science covers the domains of biotechnology and reproduction, (psycho)pharmacology, the prison industrial complex, judicial and law enforcement policies, the racial ethnicization of diseases without attention to environmental and social causes. It is breathtaking. As she observes in her book, "The new science and technology of racial genetics threatens to steer America on a course of social



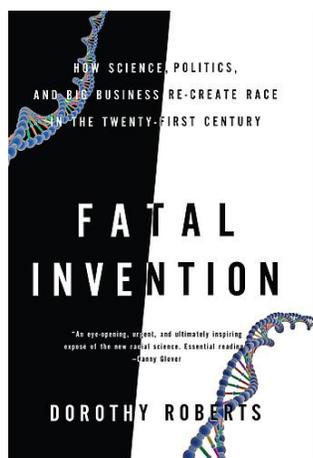
Dr. Dorothy Roberts, Northwestern University School of Law, at UTSA

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inhumanity that already has begun to dominate politics in this century." Race, as category, emerged as a biopolitical concept to structurally organize the population in white supremacist America and it is now reproducing the same structures with the legitimating power of science, albeit a racialized science.

A meta- and subtextual reading of Roberts's work allows us to discern the Master's tools for domination and subordination of "communities in captivity" [Joy James] and as Audre Lorde theorized, "the master's tools will never dismantle the Master's House." On the contrary these tools are reinforcing it. Roberts's brilliant critical exposure of these tools in her pathbreaking study was a boon to my seminar this spring at UTSA-- Empire & The Revolutionary Matrix: The Master's Tools will never Dismantle the Master's House.



## UTSA GLBTQ Organization Marks First Year of Queer and Trans Committee

Michael Lee Gardin, UTSA Doctoral Student

The 2011-2012 academic year marked the first year of a student-run initiative, the Queer and Trans Committee of GLBTQ of UTSA Student Organization. Since its inception, this committee has been dedicated to spreading and promoting visibility and information and the discussion of queer and trans\* people, identities, and related topics. John Poplawsky, GLBTQ president and Anthropology junior, says since its foundation the committee has been political. And one important role of the committee, Poplawsky says, has been "education on campus of sexual and gender minority issues."

Throughout the year, the Queer and Trans committee has held many events with various emphases. Poplawsky explains that the committee "hosted many different kinds of events, such as Queer Poetry Night, a Transgender Day of Remembrance Art Event, and general educational events free for the public." These educational events focused on introducing attendees to the very words queer and trans\* as well as spotlighting the identities with a roundtable discussion of students.

Among the events hosted: Queer Poetry Night, Transgender Day of Remembrance Art Show, and general educational workshops free to the public.

The committee was co-chaired by William Smith, a Fine Arts freshman and myself, an English Doctoral student. Smith explains that one effort was to appeal to the widest audience possible at the UTSA and in the San Antonio community. In doing so, all participants in the events were encouraged to be as open and brave as possible. Smith says the committee "accomplished a lot in our first year and their bright future ahead for it."

The creation of the committee, its success, and the interest exhibited in surrounding discussions demonstrate an important moment for the climate of UTSA, as the climate represents a move to give voice to and value the presence of underrepresented and marginalized identities.

## *En sus palabras:* Two Women's Studies 2012 Graduates Tell Their Stories



### **Linda Joyce Rasmussen**

I was born in 1946, a Celebration Baby (in celebration of the end of World War II and the return of my WW II veteran father). Yes, that means I am currently 65 years old, an example that it is never too late to learn something new. As a first-year Baby Boomer, given the name of Linda Joyce Rasmussen, I experienced employment and education discrimination. Along with thousands of other women and men, I worked and lobbied for an end to these practices. Although successful in real estate, I still wanted to know more about women's history and do more to promote women's successes, in all areas of our society. My first undergraduate degree is a BS in Psychology, from the University of Maryland, in Heidelberg, with a minor in Women's Studies. I am a proud feminist and activist, having worked for women's issues in five states, as well as in Europe among the American military community.

This BA in Women's Studies has helped me to gain acceptance into the MA program in Women's Studies, at Texas Woman's University. I am excited to begin that work in August 2012. This degree program has confirmed for me that I am an agent for change, for women, and I can continue to work for women. I thank the staff, instructors, students, and especially the Director of the Women's Studies Institute, Dr. Sonia Saldívar-Hull. My father died this past February 2012, at the age of 92, so, this degree is also for Dad.



### **Amanda Brooke ViVenizio**

My name is Amanda Brooke ViVenizio. I am Hispanic, I was born in Riverside, California but I grew up in El Paso, Texas. I'm 22 years old. Last summer I married my Italian husband who I met at UTSA. I transferred to UTSA in 2009. My first year at the university I was founding

president of the first multicultural sorority at UTSA. At the time I was pursuing a degree in interior design, when I found out about the Women's Studies program. I chose to change my degree because I realized I wasn't getting what I wanted out of my college experience, as far as academics. I was hungry to learn more about the world and the people around me and how I could help them. Through my Christian faith, I had learned so much about myself and life but I needed a degree that would give me the opportunity to integrate my academic studies with my faith and that ultimately I could use to help other people, especially young women. The Women's Studies program provided just that. Upon graduation I will spend my first year out of college as a missionary, reaching out to other college students. My degree in Women's Studies has opened my eyes to people and issues that I was ignorant of before. I am so grateful for what I have learned from the Women's Studies professors at UTSA.

This degree really has changed my life.



## 2012 WOMEN'S STUDIES SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Dr. Larissa Mercado-Lopez,  
UTSA Women's Studies Program

The Women's Studies Institute scholarship is a competitive scholarship that was created to award the academically rigorous and socially conscious work produced by UTSA students on women and women's issues.

Anna Billingsley, a Women's Studies major, was our undergraduate awardee. In her winning essay titled, "Creating A Compassionate Social Platform: The Path of Personal Transformation," she speaks

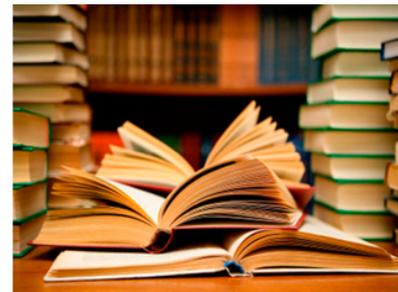
to the transformative power and political imperative of Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of new mestiza consciousness, writing, "the essence of the New Mestiza is to see one's identity from inside and outside of the collective shift within the feminine consciousness. To be able to create a self-made identity of broken parts and reclaim them as healed. The meaning of *conocimiento* is to withstand the fire of social and cultural dominance and come out of it seeing what lies beneath. I am part of the New Mestiza consciousness because I have named my own pain for the healing of others."

Roberta Hurtado, an English Doctoral student, was our graduate awardee. In addition to teaching in English, she was also an instructor for the Women's Studies program. In her paper, titled "Violent Effects: Puertorriqueñas, Domestic Violence, and the Artistry of Resistance," she explores recent theories of *testimonio*, and seeks to intervene by adapting and furthering the Latina Feminist Group's construction of "testimoniando." She explains how "testimoniando--as both an action and thing, and potentially an adjective as well as adverb--can be utilized by third space feminists to constitute a new discourse in which they can identify experiences of domestic violence as women of color in the United States."



**ROBERTA  
HURTADO**

**ANNA  
BILLINGSLEY**



Dr. Norma Cantú at the  
SSGA 2012 Luncheon

## SSGA Honors Chicana Scholar Dr. Norma E. Cantú

Magda García, UCSB Doctoral Student

Renowned Chicana feminist scholar Norma E. Cantú was recognized for her work as founder of the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa during El Mundo Zurdo 2012. Dr. Larissa Mercado-López, Dr. June Pedraza, and Dr. Cordi Barrera shared how Cantú's mentorship shaped their paths as they pursued doctoral degrees in English at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Cantú will be retiring from UTSA in August. She founded the SSGA in 2005 as a place for scholars, students, and community to come together with the intention of engaging in the continued study of Anzaldúa's

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intellectual and spiritual work. In addition to heading the SSGA planning committee over the course of three El Mundo Zurdo international conferences and continuing her research and writing, yielding works such as *Dancing across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos* and *Inside the Latin@ Experience: A Latin@ Studies Reader*, Cantú also continued her work as a mentor. Spring 2012 further bared testament to Cantú's mentorship dedication as three Chicanas received their doctoral degree in English.

In her honor, the SSGA will launch the Norma E. Cantú travel fund to assist community, students, activists, and scholars wishing to attend future El Mundo Zurdo conferences. If you are interested in contributing to the fund, please contact the Women's Studies Institute.



UTSA English Department Chair Dr. Bridget Drinka and Dr. Cantú with Spring 2012 Doctoral Graduates Margaret Cantú-Sanchez and Candace de León-Zepeda

## 2012 UTSA English Graduate Symposium Transformations: Gender and Engendering Change

Sophia Rivera, UTSA Doctoral Student



UTSA Doctoral Students Michael Lee Gardin, Elizabeth Cali, Sonia Valencia, and Magda García

On March 31, culminating a series of events for Women's History Month, the annual UTSA English Graduate Symposium took place at the downtown campus of UTSA. With the theme "Transformations: Gender and Engendering Change," the symposium brought to together an intergenerational plethora of scholars from across the state and country.

As a first-time participant in the renowned UTSA English Graduate Symposium, I quickly realized the importance and the truly deserved celebrity of the event. The Graduate Symposium in its entirety was awe-inspiring, as it was composed of a full day of diverse panels and a remarkable art exhibit that included

artwork by local San Antonio artists. Nevertheless, I must say that the plenary speakers, which included UTSA English Doctoral student Myrriah Gomez, Chicana scholar and community activist Dr. Antonia Castañeda, Dr. Norma E. Cantú, Professor of the English Department at UTSA and Dr. Sharon Navarro from the department of Political Science and Geography, truly motivated and inspired the people present, setting the tone for the rest of the day. I recall each of the panelist's unique interpretation of the conference theme, centered on transformation. For some of the plenary speakers engaging in transformation and engendering change within the academy

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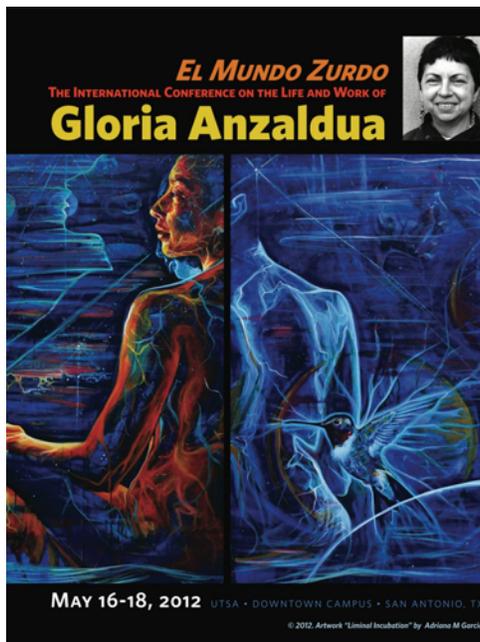
## WSI and SSGA Host Third International Anzaldúa Conference

*El Mundo Zurdo: The International Conference on the Life and Work of Gloria Anzaldúa*

Megan Sibbett, UTSA Doctoral Student, WSI Program Coordinator

Partnering with the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa (SSGA), the Women's Studies Institute hosted *El Mundo Zurdo: An International Conference on the life and Work of Gloria E. Anzaldúa* on May 16-19<sup>th</sup>. The conference began as a symposium in 2007 to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Borderlands*, and it quickly grew into international conferences in 2009, 2010, and 2012. Held every eighteen months, the conference brings students, scholars, and activists from around the world to engage in the topics associated with climates of inequality, taking up "the work that matters."

This year, in her opening remarks Dr. Norma Cantú stated "because inequalities persist, because the wounding violence of exclusion and subordination persists in all its insidious forms, Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* persists as inspiration and impels scholars and writers to write, artists to create, community activists to continue the struggle to bring about radical social change." The conference focused on transformations, and Dr. Nancy "Rusty" Barceló, President of Northern New Mexico College, gave the opening plenary, and Dr. Norma Alarcón, Professor Emerita of Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley, gave the closing plenary. Their talks, titled



Artwork for the conference program created by Adriana M. Garcia

respectively, "Beyond Borderlands: New Consciousness for Institutional Transformation" and "Anzaldúan Texutalities: The Coyolxauqui Imperative" demonstrated the enormous potential of ongoing Anzaldúan work and scholarship.

Carrying the tradition of previous years, attendees had the opportunity to travel with SSGA to South Texas Valley to visit the grave of Anzaldúa in Hargill, TX and participate in a program coordinated by students and scholars at the University of Texas Pan America (UTPA). This year, Dr. Aída Hurtado delivered a keynote titled "You Can Never Go Home Again, But You Can Always Return to The Valley."

The conference also hosted creative events and art installations. *Noche de cultura*, was a special event that highlighted the work of local and national poets, musicians, and actors. *Transformations: Entre Cuerpo* was an art show, curated by Anel I. Flores with an installation portion by Magda Garcia, included the work of several artists such as Adriana M. Garcia, Verónica Castillo, Celeste De Luna, Liliana Wilson, Fabiola Ochoa Torralba, and Esmeralda Baltazar. In addition to these special events, the conference hosted 23 panel sessions over the course of two days.

Also significant to this years conference, organizers streamed sessions live through web links for those unable to make it to the conference, exemplifying the foundational politics of *El Mundo Zurdo*: community, solidarity, accessibility, and outreach. We look forward to the next Anzaldúa conference in November 2013, and The Women's Studies Institute would like to thank the organizers for all their dedicated work, namely Norma Alarcón, Alejandra Barrientos, Norma E. Cantú, Antonia Castañeda, Anel I. Flores, Magda Garcia, Christina Gutiérrez, Margarita Higareda, Larissa Mercado-López, Keta Miranda, Carolyn Motley, Elvia Niebla, Elsa C. Ruis, Sonia Saldívar-Hull, Glenda Shaffer, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz, and Megan Wallace. Thank you also to the many volunteers who helped make the *El Mundo Zurdo* a brilliant success.

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necessarily means that our research and intellectual pursuits are to be grounded in scholarly activism. For others, and myself their words felt akin to a call to action for continuing to do work that matters, to re-write and write the histories of marginalized peoples and communities in spite of the danger of erasure. However, it is for this very threat of erasure, and as Myriah Gomez pointed out, and addresses in her own crucial scholarship, the removal of certain histories that has already taken place, that dialogue on scholar-activism and transformation continue to happen so that our scholarly work might also “engender change.” The urgent conversation incited, genuinely communicated the necessity of

transformation as a means of effecting change, within and outside of the academy.

The overall organizing of the symposium, the wonderful panels featured, and the presence of scholars who have done and continue to do scholarly and activist work sincerely reflected the theme of “Transformations: Gender and Engendering Change.” The successfulness of the symposium would definitely not have been possible without the dedicated work of the English Graduate Symposium Planning Committee. Therefore, a special thank you and congratulations to Doctoral students Liz Cali, Michael Lee Gardin, Andrew Hoag, Allegra Castro and the volunteers who helped to make the event memorable.

## WSI Newsletter Update

We are happy to announce that we are officially switching to electronic newsletters. Our goal is to reach as many scholars, activists, students, and community members interested in the work of the Women’s Studies Institute.

We encourage our newsletter subscribers to send us calls for papers, book publication announcements, and information on student and community events.

Please feel free to contact us if there is any material you believe should be included in future newsletters.

Gracias!

The UTSA Women’s Studies Institute

Carolyn Motley,  
WSI Administrator  
carolyn.motley@utsa.edu  
210.458.6277  
Women’s Studies Institute  
The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Room: MS 3.01.14  
One UTSA Circle  
San Antonio, Texas 78249



Michael Lee Gardin and Megan Wallace at the 2012 Women’s Festival

# TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!

Join us!

**Monday, October 15, 2012**

**Meet under the Sombrilla**

**Poster-making begins at 6:00 pm**

**March begins at 7:00 pm**

Be part of an international initiative to help women take back the night and stop violence against women!

REFRESHMENTS · GLOW STICKS · MUSIC · POETRY

Supported by the Women's Resource Center  
For more info contact: [megan.sibbett@utsa.edu](mailto:megan.sibbett@utsa.edu)

Be sure to check out our exciting upcoming events on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/UTSAWSI>



## The Women's Studies Institute

The University of Texas at San Antonio

One UTSA Circle

San Antonio, 78249

PLACE  
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