Dear Alumni,

It is with pleasure and pride that I offer you our third annual alumni newsletter. I always look forward to this time of year, when I can recount to you what’s been happening in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program (WGS).

We are pleased to report another wonderful year of rich and varied curricular and extracurricular programming. At our 14th Annual Symposium, nationally acclaimed body studies scholar Susan Bordo gave the keynote address, and students presented excellent papers, performances, and creative readings. One of our alums, Drew Anastasia (you may remember him as Angie), returned to Illinois State to deliver a public lecture about his transition from female to trans-man. Other speakers included Suzanne Obeler, Lynn Worsham, and Nancy Agabian. We also cosponsored a conference on gendered violence, “Where’s the Outrage?”

FLAME, our student feminist group, continues to showcase their committed energy. This year their Vagina Monologues production netted over $7,000 for the V-Day campaign to help women in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have endured mass rape as a weapon of war. In addition to the Clothesline Project, It Affects Me campaign, and Take Back the Night, FLAME also sponsored the Guerrilla Girls—bad girls of the art world.

On the curricular front, we launched new courses: Gender and Empire, Sociology of the Body, and Ancient Greek and Roman Women. This year we welcomed new faculty and said goodbye to Nathalie op de Beeck, Lucinda Beier, Jeanne Howard, Nancy Tolson, and Lynn Worsham. We also graduated the largest class of WGS minors ever. We wish all of them the best!

The most important ingredient of this newsletter is you. We love hearing from our alums and like it even better when they stop in for a visit. Drop us a line and let us know what you’re doing to make the world a better place.

For more details and pictures, read on . . . .

Sincerely,

Alison Bailey
### Consumer capitalism and the body

On April 3, 2009, Susan Bordo, author of *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, delivered the 2009 WGS Symposium keynote address, “Beyond Eating Disorders: Why We Need to Rethink Everything We Thought We Knew.” Illustrating her symposium lecture with images from popular culture and advertising, Bordo argued that consumer capitalism is much to blame for the disordered eating and distorted body images that have affected girls, women, and, to a lesser extent, boys and men. To sell products, she claims, media have successfully promoted a culture of indulgence and obsession. Bordo demonstrated how advertisers market adult fashion and sexuality to girls and women, seducing them into “needing” designer fashions and designer bodies. She suggests that it is time to reset our attitudes about the relationship between our bodies and our consumer habits. Bordo also presented her paper “What Did Anne Boleyn Look Like?” on April 1 to the Colloquium on Visual Culture.

### Vocal transitions

Women’s and Gender Studies alum and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee doctoral student Drew Anastasia ’06 visited campus on March 16–17, 2009, to talk to students about his experience transitioning from a woman to a trans-man. Anastasia gave his main talk, “Confessions of a Karaoke Junkie: How I Came to Narrate My Gender Transition by Losing My Voice,” to an enthusiastic audience of Illinois State students and faculty members. As a woman, Angie (Drew’s birth name) identified with the lesbian separatist movement, but as he transitioned, his identity gradually shifted to “genderqueer” and then to “trans.” He is still a radical feminist, and is dedicated to building coalitions and understanding among local communities of color, feminist communities, and queer communities.

### Alumni news

#### Debbie Armstrong '04

Debbie Armstrong ’04 was recently hired as information technology manager in Illinois State’s Office of the University Registrar.

#### Grace Foote Johns ’05

Grace Foote Johns ’05 received a WINGS Award at McLean County’s Annual Women of Distinction Awards ceremony. The $1,500 prize will help fund Grace’s Educational Administration and Foundations dissertation on gender equity and diversity in science career mentoring.

#### Rachel Spangler ’05

Rachel Spangler ’05 has published her second book, *Tails Merge* (Bold Strokes Books 2008), Writing and raising her son Jackson keep her busy.

#### Devona Mallory ’06

Devona Mallory ’06 is an assistant professor on the English, Mass Modern Languages, and Mass Communication Department faculty at Albany State University in Albany, Georgia.

#### Katelyn Wood ’07

Katelyn Wood ’07 completed her M.A. in rhetoric at the University of Texas at Austin this spring. Next fall, she is moving to the School of Theatre to start working toward her Ph.D. in performance studies.

#### Annulla Ahlman ’08

Annulla Ahlman ’08 is currently working as the educational outreach director for the Illinois Shakespeare Festival. This spring she directed the Women’s Project students in “Intersections: Sticks and stones may break my bones but my words will rise above you,” a spoken word performance based on the actors’ experiences with issues of gender, race, and substance abuse.

### Where’s the Outrage . . .

. . . about gender-based violence? This question was posed at the “Where’s the Outrage?” conference held on March 19, 2008. Mary Fabri, Psy.D., senior director of the Marjorie Kavler Center for Treatment of Torture Survivors, gave the keynote lecture on rape as a weapon of war and tool of torture. The presenters challenged their audience intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally to bear witness to the toll that such violence takes on individuals and communities. They also spoke about the positive work that groups are doing around the world to help survivors heal and to overturn the social and political forces that perpetuate this violence. WGS core faculty member Rebecca Saunders, who organized the event, discussed South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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