



ALPHADELPHIAN

2020-2021

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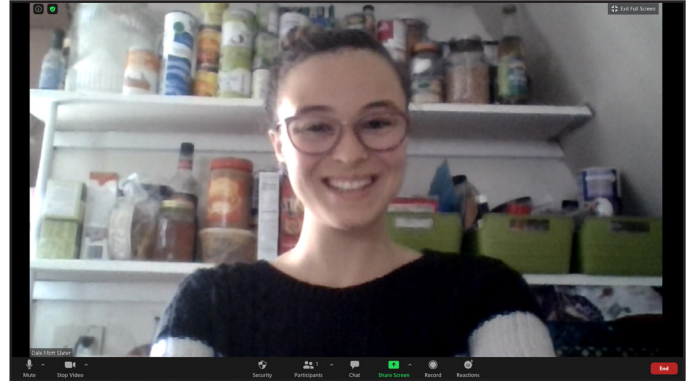
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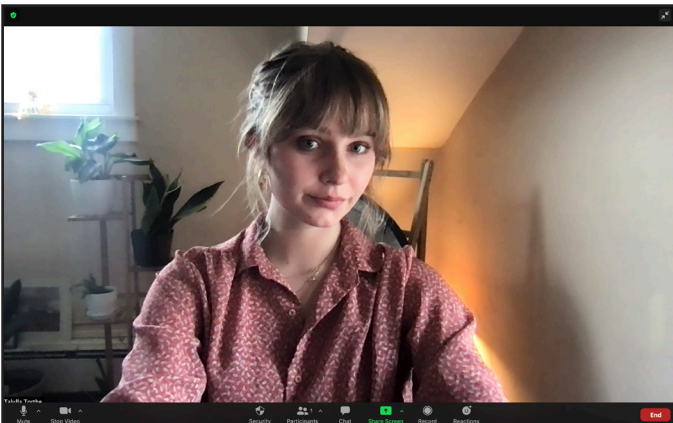
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T THE EDITORS

Talulla Torte (she/her) is a junior South African-French international student pursuing a Communication Studies major and a Film Studies minor. After college, she hopes to combine her passions for journalism and social justice, as well as her love of film, and use the skills she learned at Alfred to become a documentary filmmaker. Currently, she is the Editor-in-Chief of the AU student newspaper, the Fiat Lux. Talulla is also in the Women's Leadership Academy, which provides her with the opportunity to explore and develop her potential as a leader. Coming from South Africa, where gender-based violence plagues the nation, Talulla is extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the Women's and Gender Studies program at AU, and to have had the chance to contribute where she could. Working on the Alphasdelphian has given her the platform to combine all of her interests—from journalism and film to social justice and gender equality.



Dale Mott Slater (she/her) is a junior, a dog-lover, and a writing enthusiast. She dropped her major in art to build her own individually structured major, titled Sustainability and Food Systems Journalism, while keeping her minor in Entrepreneurship and Family Business. Armed with her education and a passion for food, she hopes to spend her career identifying problems with our food systems and working with communities to solve those issues, while heavily documenting and sharing the whole process. You can find Dale all around campus, working as a tutor in the Writing Center, running club meetings for Alfred Speech and Debate Society, or catching up with her cohort from the Women's Leadership Academy. Throughout her life, Dale hopes to empower (and feed!) those around her, regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, religion, heritage, or otherwise.



DIRECTOR UPDATE

From Cecilia Beach
(she/her)

dans had spent the past 25 years since the genocide against the Tutsis working toward peace and reconciliation under the guidance of a beloved president. COVID-19 sent us into lock-down, but it also brought communities together, as those who had enough donated food to those who were in need in every neighborhood.

What a difference when I returned home to a deeply divided nation, where mass shootings were commonplace, where police brutality against Black and brown people went unpunished, and where wearing a mask to protect the health and safety of one's neighbor was considered an infringement of personal freedom by many. A nation whose president bragged about sexually harassing women, mocked people with disabilities, made overtly racist comments with impunity, and pushed for legislation restricting the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

Once the semester began, the Women's and Gender Studies program became an important part of my community once again, helping to give me a sense of continuity after my extended absence. Continuity, but not stagnation.

Returning to the United States in late May 2020 after two years teaching yoga in Rwanda, I experienced a case of reverse culture shock. While one might imagine that being in lock-down in a developing nation during a pandemic with the airports and borders closed could have been somewhat traumatic, in fact, my experience at the beginning of the pandemic was quite peaceful—I was living in a yoga center after all—and safe. The Rwandan government had reacted immediately to contain the disease as soon as the first cases were discovered. Moreover, peace and safety were words that characterized life in Rwanda in general while I was living there. The Rwan-

I was struck by how much the program has changed since I was director of Women's Studies the first time nearly two decades ago, and yet, how strong our fundamental values such as justice, equity, respect, empowerment and solidarity have remained. A new generation of faculty and students have brought fresh ideas to the program, as well as a sense of urgency to confront difficult conversations around the intersections of gender, race and disability, among others.

Discussions during WGST retreats and the various events discussed in the following pages of this newsletter helped me to understand the extent to which our society is in rapid transition, not only politically, but also socially, culturally, racially, and linguistically. And, while

those of us who have been at Alfred for a few decades hope that our younger colleagues and students will recognize the important accomplishments of our generation and of those who came before us, we in turn must remain open to exploring new paths in the field of Women's and Gender Studies today. I, for one, look forward to seeing where this collective journey takes us.



What is an Alphadelphian?

This is a snippet from the first ever Alphadelphian newsletter, sent out in 1997. This piece was written by Megan Allen.

You are probably wondering what in the world an Alphadelphian is; it certainly isn't a commonly heard word around campus. Back in the late 1800s, however, the word Alphadelphian was quite common in Alfred, since it was the name of a literary society for women on campus. The group was founded by Abigail Allen in 1846 at Alfred Academy, which

would later become Alfred University. According to Susan Strong in her doctoral dissertation, "The Most Natural Way in the World: Coeducation at Nineteenth Century Alfred University," the society was one of the first women's literary societies in the country. It was "a crucial forum for debate, development of self-confidence, and encouragement for women to take an active, public role in society." The Alphadelphian also "kept the issues of women's work and needs at the fore."

ROUNDTABLES

10.16

Setbacks and Resetting Roundtable

Professor Sandra Singer (she/her) opened up the talk with grim statistics that highlighted the injustices that women and people of color face in the healthcare industry, which was heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Former professor Karen Porter praised how quickly social scientists began collecting data on the impact of Covid-19. Professor Gary Ostrower went on to speak about the racial wealth gap in the United States. Singer then opened the floor to the audience. Anatacia Morris, clinical psychology major and president of Umoja, said, “When I came here, I didn’t realize how bad our education system was in the city.” She went on to say that coming to roundtables helps her understand that she is not alone in her experiences as a Black woman.

De-Valued Bodies Lecture

Author Ania Bula gave an informative lecture where she dove into the failings of the medical field, using her own story as an example. In direct conversation with the Roundtable held the month previous, she then talked about how COVID-19 offers solutions and perpetuates existing problems. To read about the entire talk, see page 11.

11.12

2.10

Radical Visibility Lecture

Guest speaker Sky Cubacub gave an inspired Riley Lecture about the intersectional discrimination that queer disabled people face every day, from the moment they wake up and try to find something to wear in their closet. To find out more, see page 15.

Let’s Talk Black Women’s Empowerment Roundtable

This event was focused on empowering Black women at AU. Leaders from groups all around campus joined to facilitate this discussion and promote the acceptance and success of Black women. For a full article written by Sister Circle’s founder, see page 14.

2.26

AND LECTURES

4.2

Fostering Diversity in the Classroom Roundtable

This discussion was predominantly run by the students of one of Dr. Szymanski's WGST classes, who focused on the title of the discussion and what it entailed, but also on the background information and future resources in relations to this topic. This doesn't just have to do with having a diverse classroom filled with various races, but it also has to do with creating a classroom filled with diverse perspectives. Because the presentation was created by the students, it provided a more authentic experience for those viewing and got the audience members focused and participating in the discussion.

Our World Runs Deep Lecture

To finish the WGST Riley Lectures for the 2020-2021 year, guest speaker Alice Sheppard was invited to talk about the intersectional discriminations she overcomes in her practice and life as a disabled, Black, female dancer. To read the full article, see page 21.

4.14

The Psychology of Passing Roundtable

WGST minor graduate Daniel Newton (he/him) hosted a roundtable that asked "What psychological factors determine the need for transgender people to pass for and conform to their gender identity?" as the finish to his senior project. The study tested whether internalized and externalized transphobia are the biggest motivators for transgender people to pass. An online survey was conducted on cisgender, transgender, and metagender participants. The results showed a marginally significant difference between transgender and metagender participants' internalized transphobia regarding passing, suggesting that transphobia may be the primary motivation for desires to pass.

4.25

BERGRE

On September 3, 2020, a panel of speakers presented vignettes on national and local topics related to the passing and ratification of the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote 100 years ago. Part of the annual Bergren Forum series, the presentation was delivered via an online Zoom session due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

Gary Ostrower (he/him) gave an overall introduction and then spoke about the history of women voting on a state-by-state basis, from New Jersey's decision in 1776 to allow women to vote (and then to revoke that right in 1803), to a 1911 California referendum that provided women the right to vote. About a dozen states granted suffrage to women before the 19th Amendment became law, and they did so for remarkably different reasons. His presentation was designed to illuminate the complexity of the topic.

Mallory Szymanski focused on the exclusion of voting rights for certain women and the roles black women suffragettes played to further the cause. Too often celebrations of the victory of

the 19th Amendment exclude the racism of white women in the movement and neglect the effective organizing Black women performed in segregated organizations. Focused on the Chicago-based Alpha Suffrage Club, her talk explored the ways in which Black women like Ida B. Wells conceived of voting rights as just one part of the pathway toward liberation. Many Black women would not receive access to the vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a right that remains contested still today.

Becky Prophet focused on Alfred's leading suffragist, Abigail Allen, who was an advocate for reform, an educator, a staunch abolitionist, a firm believer in equal rights for all, and a determined leader in the fight for women's suffrage. Her approaches to life, education, and activism were shaped by reform movements of mid-19th century America. With her philosophy of the naturalness of "co-education" Abigail believed that women and men should be educated in the same curriculum in the same classrooms. This education was, as she stated, "radical, radical to the core."

WOMEN'S SUFF

N FORUM 9.3

Laurie Lounsberry Meehan (she/her) followed with an overview of the suffrage movement in Alfred and gave information on women's suffrage clubs and activity. The Alfred Sun newspaper published articles in support of the right for women to vote and the citizens formed civic organizations to further their interests in the cause. Most notable was the Allen Civic Club, named in honor of Jonathan and Abigail Allen. In a show of their dedication to the suffrage movement ten Alfred women voted illegally in 1887 and were subsequently arrested.

Tricia Debertolis (she/her) closed the session by discussing current student voting patterns and the ongoing voting registration process for University students. She explained that Alfred University participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), the only national study of college-student voting. It provides reports to participating colleges and universities which use them to support political learning and civic engagement, as well as to identify and address gaps in political and civic participation.



SUFFRAGE AT AU

PLAQUE UNVEILING

A plaque honoring Abigail Allen has been installed on AU campus, next to Carnegie Hall and right off of the sidewalk of Main Street. The plaque is a part of the National Votes for Women Trail, a collection of sites that together tell the story of suffrage for women of all ethnicities in the US that's organized by the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites. Funds for the plaque were donated by The William G. Pomeroy Foundation, who are working with the NCWHS to grow this trail. It currently has over 2,000 sites throughout the country, one of which is Alfred. Professor Becky Prophet and University Archivist Laurie Lounsberry Meehan worked together on this project, which will stand proud for historians and passers-by alike to enjoy. Both members of AU's Women's and Gender Studies program, Prophet and Meehan say they recognize Allen as a role model for current women

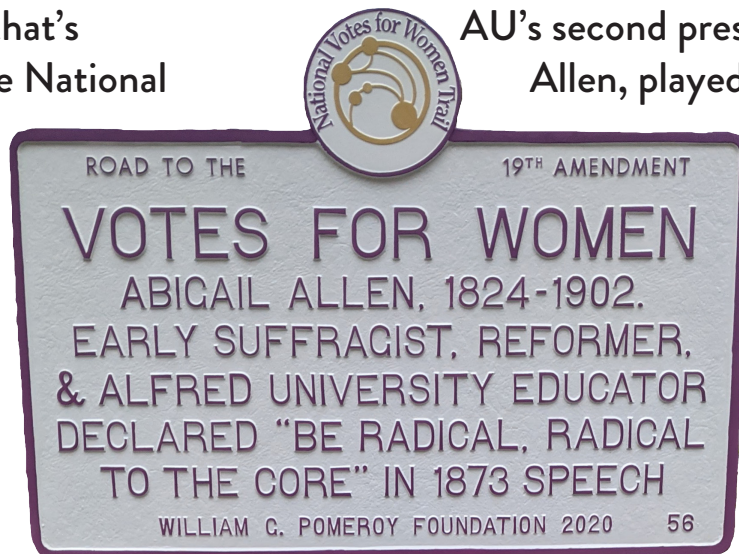
studying at AU. "She worked on so many fronts," Meehan says, "she was a mother of four children, she was Jonathan Allen's wife, she was a teacher and lecturer, she was deeply involved in so many of the major movements of her age."

Allen, who was the spouse of AU's second president, Jonathan Allen, played a crucial role in

supporting the university's commitment to co-education. Additionally, Allen was involved in other initia-

tives that drove the Progressive movement in the US during the 19th century.

Through her dedication to women's rights, Allen became a colleague and acquaintance of other leading suffragettes including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. In 1873, Allen gave a speech at the Women's Congress, held in New York City, where she commented that our country needs to "Be radical, radical to the core."



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AWARD RECIPIENT



Chase Angier

Each year this award is given to a faculty or staff member who follows in the footsteps of AU's founding mother, who improved the lives of women on campus and in the surrounding community.

Professor Chase Angier (she/her) has been awarded the Abigail Allen award for 2021. Angier is a professor of dance and the chair of the Performing Arts division at AU. She has taken an active role in fostering a diverse community at AU, using her position to bring in dancers from around the world to teach and speak with the students. In fact, Angier was responsible for organizing Riley Speaker Alice Sheppard this year. Her support

for and exploration of the experience of womanhood in her work as a dancer and as a professor has helped shape the way she interacts with her students and peers, and has made AU a better place.

When giving the award at the Honor's Convocation on April 23rd, Director Cecilia Beach said the following: "The work that Chase does in the dance program helps to build our woman students' self-esteem. Chase has succeeded in creating a safe space for our diverse student body, an empowering space for the full spectrum of gender, race, and ability... There is no doubt that Chase embodies the spirit of the Abigail Allen Award."

The following recipe is from "The Women Suffrage Cookbook" edited by AU's Sean Robert Hilliard. Originally published in 1886 by Hattie A. Burr, this recipe is from Alice B. Stockham M. D.

CORALINE CAKE.

Half a cupful of sweet milk, half a cupful of rich cream, one cupful of sugar, one egg, two cupfuls of graham flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder. Bake in two tins.

When done split open with a sharp knife and fill in with raspberry or strawberry juice that has been thickened with cornstarch or gelatine. By using boiled custard for filling it will make what cooks call French pie.

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DE-VALUED BODIES

RILEY LECTURE

About the Speaker

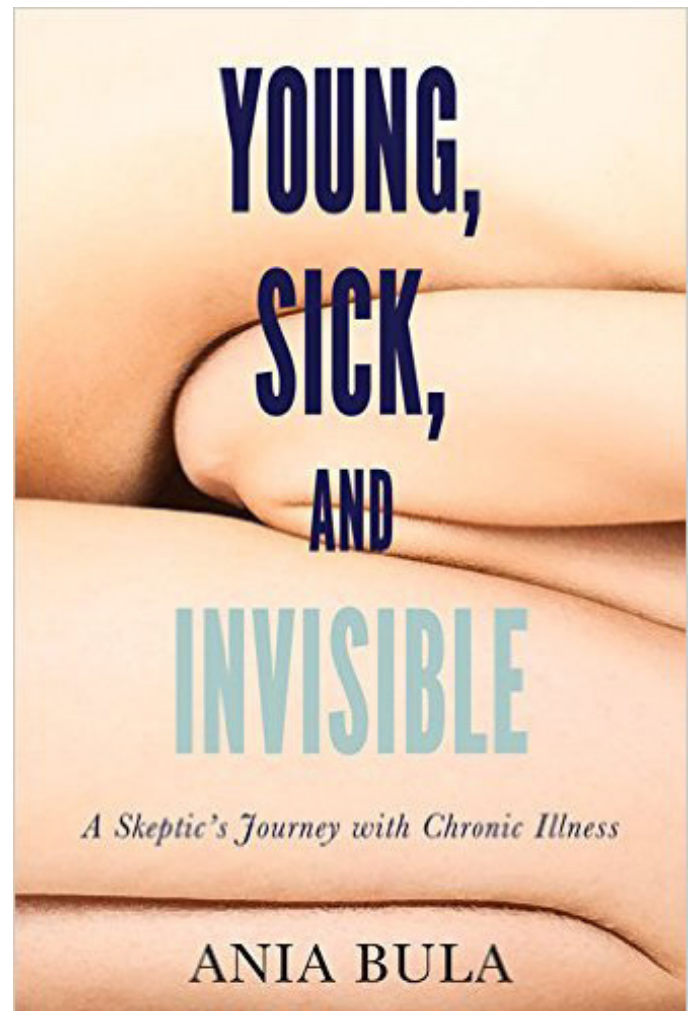
Diagnosed with a chronic illness at 18 while studying to be a doctor, Ania Bula found herself frequenting doctor's offices in a different way than she expected to be. But how she was received disillusioned her opinion of the medical field. This journey is outlined in her insightful book *Young, Sick, and Invisible*.

The Conversation

To kick off the Riley Lecture series this academic year, Canadian author Ania Bula was invited to give her talk, titled "De-Valued Bodies: Sexism and Ableism in COVID Times". Recent AU addition Meredith Field began the Zoom call by introducing the speaker, whom she discovered when looking for literature for a class she taught on disability this year.

Wanting to make sure that the entire group was caught up on her background and work, Bula began by sharing her own story. Her arthritis diagnosis was equal parts jarring and relieving, she explained, and offered only temporary

relief. In trying to get treatment, Bula dealt with doctors who dismissed her pain because of her weight; she was ignored when describing her immense pain because she's a woman, who are perceived in the medical field to be overly dramatic; she was yelled at by her doctor when they found out that she also had Crohn's disease, which inter



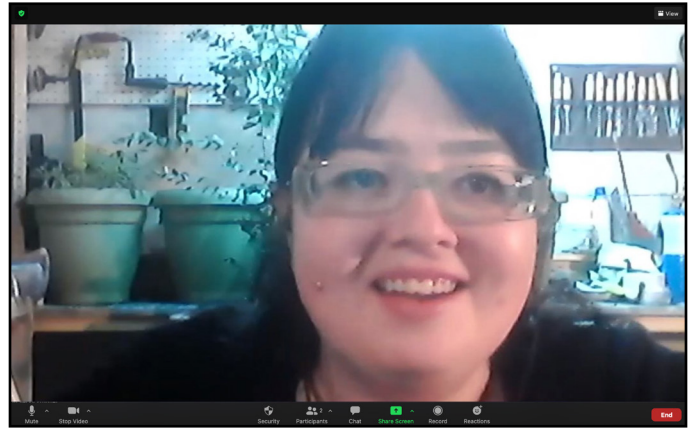
es WITH ANIA BULA

URE

ferred with her arthritis treatment, although she didn't know she had the condition; she met doctors who were unfamiliar with her illnesses but unwilling to admit it; and she was accused of pandering for drugs simply because she was familiar with her body.

All of this led Bula to the conclusion that, in society's eyes, her body didn't hold the same value as a fully able one. She explained how doctors will come into their jobs with internalized biases, which everyone has, but that their positions often do not actively challenge them to overcome. Instead, they suddenly "have the ability to do something about those biases", and they mistreat or ignore the people they're supposed to be helping. This is true for those who often are already particularly vulnerable, like the fat, queer, poor, and people of color. These societal and medical problems compound with bad experiences in the doctor's office to discourage individuals from getting medical treatment when they need it, making their problems worse and causing preventable suffering.

Finally, Bula brought to light how COVID-19 is playing into these situations, for better or worse. On the bright



side, almost all companies have transitioned to remote work, which individuals with disabilities have been seeking for decades. Often businesses would make excuses as to why office work simply could not be conducted from home, but now many of those excuses are useless, and will continue to be. On the grim side, we're seeing the question "Whose life should we prioritize?" asked and answered. Because of limited medical supply, medical professionals are being forced to distribute what they do have how they see fit, and already we've seen that those who are less able in any way are having their lives valued less.

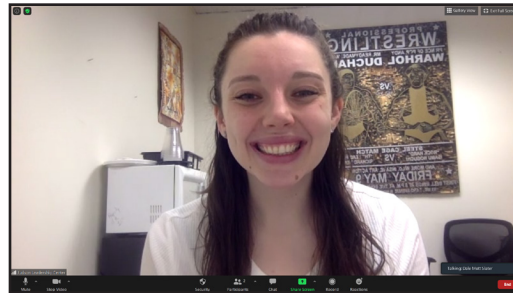
As dark and tangled as the situation is, Bula thinks it can be solved. Society's perceptions can be changed, she says, because they're artificial. By having conversations like these, hopefully we can continue to deconstruct the institutional biases that plague our lives. Bula says, "We can change this."

The Judson Leadership Center has been without, well, a leader this year. But that doesn't mean it's been inactive; Graduate student Shannon Marlatt (she/her) has taken the reigns of the JLC, hosting events and promoting projects as she finishes her studies in the College Student Development Program.

As the graduate assistant for the JLC, Marlatt spent last year shadowing Director Abby Griffith and helping the WLA cohort. This year, while the school looked for a replacement, Marlatt acted as the coordinator for the JLC. Through Dr. Kimberly Guyer, she managed the budget and put on programs open to the school, like Career Development Workshops and "Go with the Flow", a service-learning project that taught about and spread menstrual product equity at AU. She also supervis-

-ed work-study positions through the JLC, including a podcasting project by student Austin Aiken on leadership, which can be found on AU Connect.

Unfortunately, though, Marlatt can't do it all. There was no Women's Leadership Academy cohort this year. With no director, there was no



one to effectively oversee and teach the students, so the WLA was put on pause. But, applications for new members are being taken, with the optimistic view that next year the program will be able to continue as normal. The new director has not been chosen yet, but the search for them has begun and AU hopes to

fill the position this summer.

All things considered, Marlatt guesses that the JLC was running at half of its regular capacity this past year. Losing and being unable to replace a director, having to go partially online last year, and adhering to pandemic-related restrictions has put a serious damper on the JLC's ability to reach out and educate. What has been done was accomplished thanks to Marlatt, who planted her feet and stayed grounded through the turbulent year- a skill she hopes to teach to others as she says goodbye to AU and moves into her new career.

The cover artwork was made by graduating senior Kayleah Aldrich (she/her) who frequently paints female figures in her studio practice and was a dedicated and thoughtful student of the WLA.

JLC UPDATE

LET'S TALK BLACK WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

By Keshell Scipio (she/her)

To commence International Women History Month, a panel of young and courageous Black women from the AU campus met at the “Let’s Talk Black Women’s Empowerment Panel” on Friday, February 26th. Administered by Professor Cecilia Beach, this event included Megan Jones, Sadiya Young, Janiel Jones, Jessanette Alexander, Aniha Gillispie, and myself. An hour-long discussion on creating and fostering “safe spaces” on the AU campus empowered young Black women and other students.

A safe space is a physical space, group, or individual that one may go to to be their true selves. These spaces are necessary as they contribute to the well-being of the campus while providing no-judgment zones and welcoming atmospheres for students to empower one another.

This discussion continued with conversation of a few of the safe spaces that our panelists are part of on the AU campus. Specifically, how have those spaces empowered individuals and the community? One mentioned was Umoja, which is a collective for Black students to gather and voice their collective minds. Others were Moka Joka, the Institute for Cultural Unity, sports teams, and Sister Circle.

Sister Circle, which I co-founded, is a multicultural women’s organization that works toward finding outreach and opportunities for women of color. Our sisters work together to create their safe spaces on campus using workshops, events planning, and sisterhood building within this leadership organization. As a cultivator, we support, advocate, and empower multicultural women to prosper intellectually, emotionally, and physically. Participating in panel events such as this one ensures there will always be spaces for the younger generation to be heard and welcomed.

This group of panelists and audience members brought forth so many fantastic conversation points and topics. It should be noted that AU and the community may need to work on a few things, specifically the connection within these communities. Alfred is way too tight-knit that students at AU and Alfred State aren’t knowledgeable of what is going on in the residential community and the other school. Having a place like Allegany county represent and reflect on the wide range of communities and people that live here is what the community as a whole needs. I hope that Alfred can surprise students who may not be from this rural area by showing them that this can be their safe space. Thank you to everyone that attended this event that showcased the leaders and game-changers of AU campus, and to the wonderful speakers that voiced their minds.

Check Your Herstory

1. Which woman owns the Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres?

- Kim Pegula
- Letitia James
- Linda Cohn
- Abbe Raven

2. Who refused to give up their bus seat 9 months before Rosa Parks?

- Kathleen Cleaver
- Barbara Easley
- Elaine Brown
- Claudette Colvin

3. In what year did Women's History Month begin?

- 1985
- 1987
- 1990
- 2000

4. Who of the following is an AU alumni and a retired Navy seal?

- Kristen Stewart
- Kristen Beck
- Kristen Wiig
- Kristen Bell

5. What is Winona LaDuke known for?

- Vice President Candidate
- Environmental Activist
- Founding Honor the Earth
- Founding White Earth Land Recovery Project

ANSWERS:

1. Kim Pegula 2. Claudette Colvin
3. 1987 4. Kristen Beck
5. All of the Above

About the Speaker

After being confronted with an unknown stomach disorder at 21, Sky Cubacub (they/them) went through a rebirth. Already in art school and interested in fashion design, they took a lingerie class that launched them into their career as a designer for queer and disabled individuals. They found that people with disabilities often couldn't find clothes to match their needs, or the clothes were lacking style. Similarly, queer individuals, and especially transgender folks, couldn't find binders or styles that weren't medical and bland. So they found a sewing machine and chain link and got to work.

The Conversation

Sky Cubacub is creating an intersectional safe space for queer folks and those with disabilities, they told an AU audience February 10 on Zoom.

Cubacub is the founder of the clothing line "Rebirth Garments" which they describe as, "gender non-conforming wearables and accessories centering non-binary, trans, disabled and mad



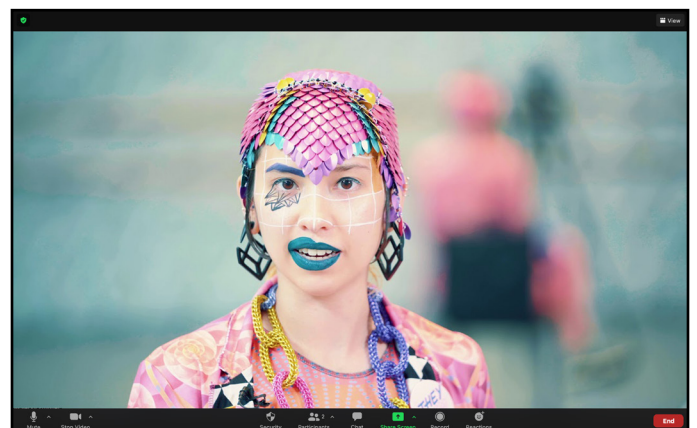
RADICAL VISIBILITY RILEY LECTURE

queers of all sizes and ages.” The audience consisted of about forty participants, most of which were faculty. Cucacub, who is Chicago-based, led the February 2021 Women’s and Gender Studies Riley Lecture by speaking about their manifesto “Radical Visibility: a Queer and Disabled Dress Reform Movement” that is based on queer individuals and disabled folks flaunting their bodies through the use of bright colors, exuberant fabrics, and innovative designs, and so highlighting the parts of them that society typically shuns. “By disabled folks, for disabled folks,” as Cucacub put it.

Cucacub started the lecture by playing a video of one of their performances, where queer and disabled folks danced on a dancefloor while dressed in Rebirth Garments. They went on to speak about the origin of their brand, which initially started when they made spandex pants for themselves. Afterwards, they made lingerie for genderfluid folks and genderqueer people, which soon became the foundation of Rebirth

Garments. Now, the company combines a clothing line for disabled folks and a lingerie line for genderfluid folks. In their creations, Cucacub aspires to create someone’s dream outfit. This usually starts with a consultation, which Cucacub showed a clip of during the lecture. During these consultations, Cucacub will usually ask their client about what they like about their bodies and how they want to feel in their clothes. Then, they’ll get to creating.

Cucacub’s creations are the epitome of intersectionality, a safe space where genderqueer and disabled meet. It is their mission to take up space in every kind of way as a marginalized identity.



FACULTY UPDATES



In the fall, Becky Prophet (she/her) was delighted to teach “Women in Theatre,” a course that had not been taught for several years. As in most of her courses, Prophet gave students options: What plays or films should be part of the syllabus? Is the syllabus arranged by chronology of women as writers, performers, designers, and directors or is it best arranged by topics? The class seemed to prefer the latter. This arrangement also led to the development of collaborative projects which could be created and presented remotely.

Prophet’s largest project of the year was working on collecting materials and facilitating the creation of a theatre production *Unbound: A Loose-Leaf*

Theatre Project on Racial and Social Justice. The script was collaboratively finalized by a committed group. In addition, since the piece would be live-streamed on Zoom, Designer Maureen Weiss and Technical Director Zachary Hamm learned and then taught a number of faculty and students how to create a live production on Zoom, with all actors and crew in separate spaces. Their achievements and aid to the entire production were astounding and of immeasurable benefit to the production and to live theater performance in a pandemic.



Dr. Rob Reginio (he/him) taught a course on James Joyce and Virginia Woolf during the Fall 2020 semester as part of the WGST Program. The course read both pioneering modernists from a gender studies perspective. But first, during the initial two weeks of online meetings, Dr. Reginio and his students talked about—and tried to situate themselves in relation to—the summer of protests against racial injustice and the global pandemic. Sharing personal stories and connecting those stories to the historical narratives taking shape on a daily basis around them, the class tightly

bonded into a group dedicated to thinking about justice, precarity, community, and, of course, their academic work. In this case that work was to read Joyce's wholesale re-envisioning of the novel in English: *Ulysses*. After scaling the heights of Joyce's novel, the students persevered through Woolf's challenging, brilliant series of novels. Changing narrative style completely in each book, the students concluded with provocative questions that shed new light on their own lives: What does it mean to be an embodied presence, a subject whose body is subjected to dominant narratives of sex and gender that fail to account for the experience as a desiring, vulnerable embodied person? Dr. Reginio has yet to see a group of students flourish so powerfully in such a challenging environment; he remains grateful for these students and their courageous stand to remain radical to the core even when the world around them seemed to spin around them in a disquieting flux.



Dr. Mallory Szymanski (she/they) taught the WGST 100 course, "Women and Gender in Society." In COVID-19 times, this involved a cohort of dedicat-

WGST Courses Offered

Fall 2020

Gender and Leadership

Abigail Griffith

Social Welfare Institutions

Karen Porter

**Gender and Identity in
Medieval and Renaissance Art**

Jennifer Lyons

Parenting Seminar

Louis Jack Lichtman

Sociology of Families

Karen Porter

Human Sexuality

Bethany C. Johnson

Sex, Power, and Politics

Mallory R. Szymanski

**Major Figures: Woolf and
Joyce**

Robert J. Reginio

Spring 2021

**Women and Gender
in Society**

Mallory R. Szymanski

**Gender and Identity in
Medieval and Renaissance Art**

Jennifer Lyons

Parenting Seminar

Louis Jack Lichtman

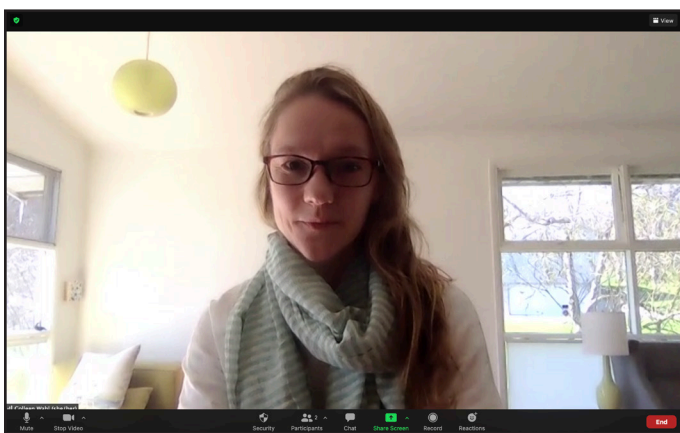
Psychology of Gender

Bethany C. Johnson

Scribbling Women

Melissa Ryan

ed students who navigated the course skillfully via Zoom, including a student-run Roundtable. She co-founded the Africana studies program with Dr. Brian Saltsman and hosted the first annual Eliza Durant Africana Studies Speaker series. She served as assistant producer for the podcast *Sexing History*, presented research at the Far West Popular Culture History conference, and published “Unjust Laws and the Movement for Black Lives,” in *Clio and the Contemporary*. Dr. Szymanski contributed to a Bergren Forum panel on the history of Black women’s organizing for suffrage. Finally, she co-facilitated campus-wide reading groups which brought together students, staff, and faculty in conversations about racism, antiracism, and community-building. Though the challenges were significant, this year was marked by pedagogical innovation, learning, even more patience, and compassion for one another.



Colleen Wahl (she/her) has been collaborating with Aida Curtis for the past five years on the connections between boxing and attachment theory.

The pair co-presented “Let’s meet and punch each other for a while: Boxing as a conscious channeling of power” at the International Somatic Educator and Therapist Association Conference hosted by the Pacifica Graduate Institute. The presentation contended that boxing is a valuable somatic practice and important for the somatic field to consider. Based on movements often perceived as aggressive and violent, boxing often gets excluded from the movement forms commonly pursued and valued by somatic educators and therapists. Curtis and Wahl’s explorations of boxing have led them to reconsider this assumption. Boxing’s compression patterns teach the boxer to sense their tissues, the contact and rhythmic movements help the nervous system process heightened sympathetic arousal states, the expression of aggression connects to our resilience, and ultimately boxing is a physical manifestation of developmental attachment and security processes.

The artwork on the back was made by Amanda Rivers (she/them) and was featured in an exhibition in Turner Gallery titled “constructing [GENDER] identity” that curated work from all mediums that spoke about gender in some way. The title of the work is “I am not yours”.

ST RETREAT

In January director Cecilia Beach hosted an online ‘retreat’ for any and all AU individuals that were involved with the WGST program. But don’t let the name fool you; this meeting was a productive conversation about how the program can remain relevant and increase inclusivity.

The twenty participants were primarily female faculty, whose disciplines ranged from WGST to engineering. The focus was on change, and on keeping up with changing times. Attendees were divided into small breakout rooms to discuss how the field of WGST has shifted in the past few years, and how well AU was keeping up with it. Overall, the faculty admitted that AU’s program has been slow to adjust to newer ways of feminist thinking, and that the program had become “bland and conventional” because of it. This was in large part, it was theorized, because the majority of the faculty are second-wave feminists, a movement that prioritized the plight of white women and overlooked women of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community. In short, the faculty have struggled to shift their ways of thinking to include the needs of these groups, which much of modern feminism is embracing.

Many of the breakout groups also felt that AU simply didn’t have the resources to support the kind of WGST program that the staff wanted to see. They were underfunded and overworked, making it hard to seriously consider many of the more inclusive projects being brainstormed. These issues were addressed in the second round of breakout rooms, where participants were asked to come up with a plan for the program, including priorities and required resources. There was unanimous agreement that WGST at AU needs more funding, and that the workload needed to be better distributed among the staff to ward off burn-outs. Prioritizing the education and safety of transgender students was brought up more than once, and the question “Who gets to talk?” was posed.

The gathering was deemed a success, even if it was a small one. The WGST faculty are thinking about these complex issues, and about their complex solutions. Hopefully, we’ll see some of the ideas put forth come to fruition sooner than later.

OUR WORLD RUN WITH ALICE SHE



About the Speaker

Alice Sheppard (she/her) is a dancer and choreographer, and Artistic Director of ensemble Kinetic Light. She has won the Bessie Award for choreography, a prestigious honor in the dance community. As a disabled Black woman, she challenges conventional perceptions, and does so intentionally.

The Conversation

The Riley Lectures are the pinnacle of the annual WGST speaker series at AU. The fund was set up in 1996 by

sisters Pamela, Patricia, and Melissa Riley to honor their parents Charles and Elizabeth, who were AU graduates in the 30s. Each year different speakers are invited to share their ideas with the students and professors of Alfred.

Dancer, author, and speaker Alice Sheppard drew more than 175 listeners to her lecture this year, including the Riley sisters. Her talk “Our World Runs Deep: Intersectional Disability Aesthetics and Culture” opened the world of disability and dance to everyone there, inviting them on a journey to better understanding.

Sheppard began the talk by asking audience members to recall the last time they saw a disabled person in the media. Then she told them to cast out those common perceptions, as they’re often wrong. The beginning of the talk confronted these issues and supplied definitions, so that the discussion later would not be hindered. Ableism, racism, and intersectionality were all brought up

SHEPPARD

and challenged: Sheppard argued that our society places worth on the functionality of bodies and minds, and punishes those who are not productive enough; She explained that having to confront racism distracts people from simply being; And she pointed out the multitude of challenges that being both disabled and Black imposed on her.

From this struggle, a new field of creatives has been growing. Intersectional Disability Arts are creative works that are made by and prominently feature disabled people, that are accessible, and that acknowledge intersectionality. Dancers in this work cast aside the notion that disabled dancers can “only dance for therapy”, and simply exist in an art form that often ignores or tokenizes them. As an example of work in this area, Sheppard screened clippings from “Decent”, a piece where her and

Laurel Lawson (she/her) dance on a series of ramps in reckless abandon.

This feeling of reckless joy and speed was displayed again when Sheppard shared a story of dancing through city streets, encouraged by her new wheelchair to chase down happiness at delightful speeds. This “union of body and chair” is one that’s deeply important to Sheppard, especially as an individual whose life’s work is centered around movement. She pushed us to question who was designing and fitting wheelchairs, and why them? Then she praised her newest dance chair, designed by Lawson and Paul Schulte, with its “sexy” design and light weight. This chair was the inspiration for the next work she screened, “Revel in Your Body”, which featured her and Lawson dancing on the ground, stairs, and while flying through the air, and which left many in the audience with a lingering taste of freedom.

As the talk drew to a close and the chat box was opened for questions and comments, it was flooded with praise for Sheppard and her work. The Riley sisters agreed and shared that their mother would have undoubtedly loved the talk, and to have seen Sheppard perform.



RILEY LECTURE



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