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## Director's Chair

Greetings to newsletter readers! We have had a lot going on this year in the WGS program. On March 18, Professor of Feminist Studies [Karen Barad](#), of the University of California at Santa Cruz, delivered the annual WGS lecture. Professor Barad is a physicist, and her engaging talk on productive “dis/continuity” and queerness as the undoing of identity was titled “When Time is Out of Joint: Material Entanglements, Temporal Diffractions, and Re-memberings.” We had good attendance for the event, and a stimulating discussion after the lecture.

Also in March, five students and faculty again attended the [Feminist Theory Workshop at Duke University](#), and SMU was again named an institutional co-sponsor. As was the case with last year's Feminist Theory Workshop, our attendees returned from Duke energized by the exchange of ideas at this gathering of the Feminist Studies community.

We have also had much to do in WGS related to the shift to the new [University Curriculum](#) for undergraduates. This change has required us to retool our core WGS courses to incorporate team-teaching, and the challenge of making the transition has brought us together and prompted many fruitful conversations about our teaching interests and goals. We are committed to maintaining the focus of the program on core issues in Women's and Gender Studies, and we believe that ours is an ideal program for the university's new emphasis on interdisciplinarity. Our field has always drawn from a variety of disciplines, and now we his gath

in the Feminist Theory Workshop.

This year that I have been interim director of Women's and Gender Studies, I have enjoyed working with everyone associated with the program, and I have been inspired by the passion of WGS colleagues and students. I would like to give a special thanks to the former director Beth Newman, graduate assistant Jessica Lott, undergraduate work-study student Hannah Beltrán, and finally to Joci Caldwell-Ryan, who is the heart of this program and keeps it running. Many thanks to all newsletter readers for your support for Women's and Gender Studies!

Sincerely,

Denise DuPont

## Women at the Forefront: SMU Dedman School of Law joins WGS Certificate Program

Jessica Dixon Weaver

The SMU Dedman School of Law is excited to be a part of the Women and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate Program. Assistant Professor Jessica Dixon Weaver is the liaison for law students interested in registering for the certificate program. Assistant Professor Cheryl Nelson Butler teaches Critical Race Theory in the spring, which is one of the edited writing classes available for students in WGS certificate program. Professor Butler's scholarship utilizes feminist legal theory, critical race theory, and legal history as tools to explore the intersection of race and gender in the legal response to sexual exploitation. This fall she was invited to speak at the 2015 UCLA School of Law Symposium, "[Examining the Roots of Human Trafficking and Exploitation.](#)" Professor Butler was on a panel with highly esteemed UCLA Law Professor Cheryl Harris that explored the "Historical, Social, and Legal Dimensions of Exploitation, Prostitution & Slavery."

It has been a banner year for the women at the SMU Dedman School of Law! Dean Jennifer Collins is celebrating the completion of her first year as the first female Dean of SMU Dedman School of Law. She has secured a variety of gifts that will enhance the academic reputation of the law school, including the \$1.5M Jack Knox Chair in the Rights and Protection of Children and a \$3.125 million gift to launch the Tsai Center for Law, Science and Innovation.

Ellen G. Solender, Professor Emerita and one of the first female SMU law professors, donated an historic gift of \$2,000,000 for the Ellen Solender Endowed Chair in Women and the Law.

In other thrilling news, the [Judge Elmo B. Hunter Legal Center for Victims of Crimes Against Women](#) will be welcoming its new director, Natalie Nanasi in the fall of 2015. Natalie is currently a Practitioner-in-Residence and Director of the Domestic Violence Clinic at American University Washington School of Law. The Hunter Legal Center will provide legal services for victims of domestic violence and exploitation in the sex industry. Also opening in the fall of 2015 is the [VanSickle Family Law Clinic](#), which will provide legal assistance for low-income North Texas residents in matters such as divorce, annulment, paternity actions, custody and visitation, child and spousal support.

There have been several female professors who have been recognized for their scholarship, teaching, and service. Professor Beth Thornburg was voted a "Peruna Prof" by law students this year in recognition of her outstanding



*Prof. Cheryl Nelson Butler  
at the UCLA School of  
Law Symposium*

Assistant Professor Jessica Dixon Weaver received the 2015 Faculty Appreciation Award from SMU Women in

# WGS Minors Make a Difference

## Scholarship and Award Winners



**Katie Bandera, '15**

Religious Studies, Anthropology,  
Human Rights

Ann Early Award



**Shelbi Smith, '15**

Human Rights

Betty Maynard Scholar



**Audrey Gill, '15**

Statistics

Betty Maynard Scholar



**Alex Day, '15**

English, Psychology

Betty Maynard Scholar



**Erica Renstrom, '15**

Sociology, Psychology

Betty Maynard Scholar





Women's and Gender Studies Network  
Southern Methodist University  
P.O. Box 750227  
Dallas, TX 75275-0227

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P.O. Box 750227, Dallas 75275

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