



MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# INTERSECTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR GENDER IN GLOBAL CONTEXT (GENCEN)



TWENTY

18

19

# 2018-2019 AT A GLANCE



**Pictured top:** Co-director Wenda Bauchspies and Community Board member Ethan Schmitt (Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan) at the 2019 GenCen Annual Reception. TimeFrame Photography

Sharing my current research with colleagues from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives was a very rewarding experience. I really appreciate the space created by the colloquia to engage in critical, thoughtful and stimulating discussion with peers, students and colleagues.

**-Sitara Thobani**



**Pictured above:** Sitara Thobani presents her research at the first 2018-2019 GenCen Colloquia in September: “Re-Presenting the Indian Dancer: Gender, Sexuality and the New Orientalism.”

Rhys Sirna

**Pictured right:** Stella Williams of NiWARD presents the NiWARD story during her Strategic Partnership Grant visit in April 2019.

Wenda Bauchspies



The GenCen and OIRC Fall Funding Workshop provided very useful information and resources for applying to international and domestic grants, while also providing an opportunity to connect with new partners that might be interested in integrating gender into their work.

**-Marisa Rinkus**



Faculty and graduate students discuss funding ideas at the October 2018 Fall Funding Workshop, co-hosted by OIRC. Rhys Sirna



**Pictured right:** Visiting scholar Sandra Harding presents “Deep Scientific Pluralism: A Latin American Feminist Standpoint” at the inaugural Abbott-Haskin Endowed Lectureship in February.

Presentation: Rebecca Cox  
Headshot courtesy of: [https://gseis.ucla.edu/media/image\\_normal4.jpg?x63302](https://gseis.ucla.edu/media/image_normal4.jpg?x63302)

# INTERSECTIONS



At the 2019 Graduation Celebration, co-director Stephanie Nawyn congratulates WGS major Megan Jursch.  [Emily Khan](#)

Working with GenCen to bring Sean Byrne, University of Manitoba, and Stella Williams, NiWARD, to MSU as part of a Canadian Studies Strategic Partnership was exciting and continues to raise many opportunities for thematic work together. Like GenCen's other initiatives and events (e.g. Gail Stern's keynote), our partnered activity was informative, engaging, and impactful.

-AnnMarie Schneider



## 2 2018-2019 AT A GLANCE

## 4 INSIDE GENCEN

Page 4: Co-Directors Message  
Page 6: GenCen Staffing Changes

## 10 FEATURE

Creating an Equitable University

## 16 TEACHING

Wearing LGBTQ+ History

## 18 FACULTY & STUDENT RESEARCH

Research with Global Impact

## 23 SUPPORTING THE GENCEN COMMUNITY

## 24 STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Expanding Minds, Exploring Careers,  
Adapting to Change

## 26 GENCEN ALUMNI

Page 26: Rebecca Meuninck  
Page 28: Karen Phillippi

## 30 GENCEN AWARDS

Page 30: GJEC Fellowships  
Page 31: Paper/Activism Awards  
Page 32: Inspirational Women of the Year

## 34 THANK YOU

### Contact

#### Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen)

Michigan State University  
206 International Center  
427 N. Shaw Lane  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
Phone: 517-353-5040  
Email: [gencen@msu.edu](mailto:gencen@msu.edu)

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MSUGenCen

# CULTIVATING INCLUSION IN 2018-2019

**It has been** an intense—yet amazing—year since we celebrated GenCen’s tenth anniversary with the publication of the first edition of *Intersections* magazine. *Intersections* allows us to look back at the year while also thinking about the future, and our role in MSU’s future. The 2018-2019 academic year was a rousing success with co-sponsored events across the entire campus; new faculty, students, and community members joining our networks; and the launching of new research projects addressing gender and sexuality. In the pages that follow you will find initiatives, new and old, that GenCen supported this year, from the formation of the Teaching and Learning for Institutional Transformation (TELLIT) Faculty Group, to our presentation at the MSU Academic Women’s Forum, and to our long-standing activities of supporting Strategic Partnership Grants for affiliated faculty and research funding for graduate students.

In February 2018, we hosted a conversation with our affiliated faculty to discuss changes on campus. One of the main take-aways from the conversation was the desire to create a university campus that reflected values of inclusivity, respect, and difference where

everyone could thrive. The question was raised: if a university took our feminism—defined any way you wish—seriously, what would that university that incorporated those feminist values look, feel, and be like? That question has been behind our choices, decisions, actions, and practices over the past year, and has guided our fostering, nurturing, and supporting of the transformations that need to happen at MSU.

We are especially pleased with our work supporting globally competent and culturally aware students during this past year. For undergraduate education, GenCen has been developing curriculum for and administering the Women’s and Gender Studies (WGS) and LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies programs, including the official launch of the GenCen Faculty Fellows program to staff our WS-coded courses. We continue to offer our three Education Abroad programs, in the UK, Amsterdam, and Malawi, and are expanding access to those programs through scholarships and cross-disciplinary courses. For graduate programs, we continue to administer the WGS; Gender, Justice, and Environmental Change (GJEC); and International Development (GSID) specializations. In Spring 2019, we reworked

the annual GJEC Field Trip to be a semester-long activity that supported graduate students in the GJEC methodology class. The students, along with their instructor, Lucero Radonic, and the GJEC Advisor, Rowenn Kalman, traveled to Flint for engaged learning with members of the Flint community. The Flint community was then invited to come to MSU to engage with the community here around a photo-voice exhibit.

We've also expanded our clearinghouse for global and diverse curricular resources, offered and administered internship programs both off- and on-campus, and recognized student scholarship and activities through various awards and scholarships. GenCen was also granted additional graduate fellowship funding by the Graduate School, effective this coming fall. This funding will match our GJEC Dissertation Fellowships, but for projects focused on WGS.

Our community continues to grow—in faculty, students, and non-MSU affiliates. In Fall 2018, we attended the new faculty/staff orientation to welcome new community members and discuss the various opportunities and resources GenCen offers. From this and other networking across campus, GenCen added 25 members to our affiliated faculty, bringing the total to over 300. Our student advisors for the 18-19 academic year attended more student resource fairs and orientations than in years prior, helping increase our enrollment in our specializations, major, and minors, as well as to increase campus-wide awareness of our programs. We also expanded our Community Board of organizations to include the Salus Center, the South Asian Women's Association of Greater Lansing, and VoteRunLead, as well as added new representatives for existing Community Board organizations.

We hosted 54 events and co-sponsored 57 events in the 2018-2019 academic year. In addition to the events highlighted throughout this edition of *Intersections*, we also hosted: a classroom discussion and community book talk with Supriya Vani, author of *Battling Injustice: The Stories of 16 Women Nobel Peace Laureates*; a brown bag luncheon with Norbert Steinhaus, MSU Global Engagement Speaker Series visitor who shared his experience with citizen participation and community partnerships; and our first Fall Funding Workshop with the Office for International Research Collaboration (OIRC), which focused on opportunities for funding gender and/or sexuality research.

On a more personal note, we are continually thankful to you, our community. You showed amazing support to GenCen during the 2018 Give Green Day. The funds that were raised are enabling us to provide scholarships to undergraduates engaged in community-based research internships. We also are grateful to the past and present nominators, nominees, committee members, and awardees of the Inspirational Woman of the Year Awards. In 2019, we re-visioned the Inspirational Woman of the Year Awards from three categories—all awarded to women or femme-identified MSU employees—to include a fourth category for someone working outside MSU. Without the amazing work in and around the community by the nominees and awardees—cultivating inclusive, empowered communities—and the dedication of the nominators and committee members, this award would not be possible.

We have a lot to live up to in the coming academic year of 2019-2020 and we look forward to the challenge with the support of students, faculty, and community members like you. ■



Wenda Bauchspies  
Co-Director for International  
Research and Engagement



Stephanie Nawyn  
Co-Director for Academic Programs,  
Outreach, and Engagement



The GenCen team at their 2019 Annual Reception. **Top row** (left to right): Stephanie Nawyn, Dessie Clark, Rebecca Cox, Gregory Frens. **Bottom row** (left to right): Naomi Kamitha, Rhys Sirna, Emily Khan, Rowenn Kalman, Wenda Bauchspies.

 TimeFrame Photography

# CHANGING **FACES & SPACES** AT GENCEN

At GenCen, we're no strangers to change. 2018-2019 has been full of surprises.

In September of 2018, our Associate Director of nine years, Amy Jamison, moved out of GenCen to step into a new role as the Co-Director for the Alliance for African Partnership. We miss her, but are grateful to still work closely with her through our shared commitment to gender equity in the African context. The search for a new Assistant Director for GenCen led to our hire of Rebecca Irvine (learn more about Rebecca on the next page).

Prior to Rebecca's hire, Rowenn Kalman—our GJEC and GSID advisor of two years—took on the responsibility of managing GenCen's Strategic Partnerships. This supported her move to focusing solely on her research and her teaching in Anthropology. We are grateful for her time and commitment to GenCen, and look forward to her continued contributions to GJEC curriculum.

Our undergraduate advisor of three years, Sara Bijani, left the GenCen for her dream job: union organizing for the Michigan Nurses Association. We were excited for her to have this opportunity, although she was sorely missed at end-of-year graduation events! Our long-term plan was to create a full-time advisor position for both undergraduate and graduate students, and with Rowenn and Sara's departures, we were able to move up that timeline. We have since

brought Patrick Arnold (see page 9 for more about Patrick) into the fold as our full-time advisor.

As if this wasn't enough change, Greg Frens—our Fiscal Officer of almost two years—retired (again) to work part-time for and travel with Delta Airlines. In April, Emily Khan took his place as GenCen's Fiscal Officer, in addition to her role as Office Manager.

In May, GenCen was fortunate and busy enough to be able to add Lucy Thompson as a Senior Research Fellow (learn more about Lucy on page 8).

As for our outgoing interns from 2018-2019: Rhys Sirna graduated over the summer with their double major in Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) and Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science. Rebecca Cox (WGS and Social Relations and Policy double major) left GenCen to pursue other internships for her senior year. As a CAL Citizen Scholar, MasterCard Scholar, and Honors College student, Naomi Kamitha (WGS and International Relations double major) also departed to focus on her senior year studies. GenCen welcomed our 2019-2020 interns (Aaron Applebey, Social Media and Events; Samantha Turner, Editorial; and Katie Paulot, Research) in August 2018.

Over the summer of 2019, we rearranged our office space to ensure fresh tea and coffee are readily available to all GenCen visitors. Stop by to meet our new staff, see our updated space, and write on our wall! ■



# REBECCA IRVINE

**In April 2019**, MSU’s International Studies & Programs welcomed Rebecca Shea Irvine to the Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen) as the new Assistant Director. In this role, Rebecca provides support and advocacy for gender and women’s studies across campus and internationally, particularly in relation to international research and engagement. Rebecca has already strengthened GenCen’s relationships with affiliated faculty and provided assistance on several grant applications, including Fulbright Fellowship applications.

Rebecca’s research interests span traditional disciplines but are broadly linked to the social and political inclusion of marginalized groups. Prior to joining GenCen, she was the Coordinator of the Conflict, Terrorism and Development Collaboratory at MSU.

She holds a BA in International Relations from James Madison College at MSU, an MA in Comparative Ethnic Conflict from Queen’s University Belfast and a PhD in Sociology and Social Policy from the same university. During her time at Queen’s University Belfast, Rebecca was a founding member of the Disability Research Network, and she maintains Visiting Research Fellow status. Rebecca has also served as a consultant for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Northern Irish government departments and agencies, Inclusion International and its subsidiary organizations, and various other international NGOs.

## Q&A WITH REBECCA

### What attracted you to the position at GenCen?

“I love bringing together people from different backgrounds to collaborate on issues of common concern. The opportunity to build networks of scholars interested in gender and sexuality on a global scale was one that I just couldn’t pass up.”

### What’s your favorite thing to talk about?

“I love strategizing with others about how to solve the world’s wicked problems.”

### If you were to have a career other than your current/planned one, what would it be?

“I’d open a community cooperative in Mozambique.”

### Pick a topic, and then make your “top 5” list.

“My top five books: *The Little Prince*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, and *Ambiguity of Evil*.”

### What is your biggest achievement to date - personal or professional?

“I led a campaign in Northern Ireland that encouraged the inclusion of Changing Places facilities (fully accessible disabled toilets) in public places. There are now 26 Changing Places facilities in Northern Ireland, making the community more accessible for people with profound and multiple disabilities, their families, and caregivers.”

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# LUCY THOMPSON

## Q&A WITH LUCY

### What attracted you to the position at GenCen?

“The unique community and the potential for dissent and feminist activism.”

### What do you hope to accomplish at GenCen?

“I hope to support the increased legitimacy and visibility of feminist research in the University, and contribute to gender justice within and beyond this space.”

### Pick a topic, and then make your “top 5” list.

“Things I like about Michigan (as a British person) in no particular order: Better Made Rainbow Chips, Miller’s Bar in Dearborn, my local neighborhood: (REO Town), the Mission Peninsula wineries, and the Detroit Institute of Art.”

### What’s your favorite joke?

“Where do mansplainers get their water? From a well, actually.”

### If you were to have a career other than your current/planned one, what would it be?

“I’d open an academic retreat in Northern Michigan.”

### Do you have any pets?

“I do! My cat, Rocky, traveled from the UK with me when I relocated to Michigan. She’s now known in our household as the Michigan Princess.”

**In May 2019**, International Studies and Programs welcomed Lucy Thompson as the Senior Research Fellow for the Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen). Lucy is a feminist psychologist who works in the fields of critical, social, community, and organizational psychology. Her main topics of interest include feminist perspectives on work and organizations, and institutional perspectives on identities, power, and trauma.

Lucy has been with GenCen since she began leading the Education Abroad program, “Gender, Sex, and Feminism in the UK,” in the summer of 2017, but now joins GenCen in an official capacity as Senior Research Fellow. In this position, Lucy works closely with GenCen’s Assistant Director, Rebecca Irvine, on grant applications and various gender and sexuality research projects. As of July, she’s helped submit five grants—in Nigeria, Syria, Haiti, the United Kingdom, and one of global focus—in addition to working on many other projects, such as planning our 2020 conference (Gender, Women’s Suffrage, and Political Power: Past, Present, and Future) to be co-hosted by the Department of History.

Lucy also works as an Assistant Professor for the Department of Psychology, where she has been employed since 2017. She earned her B.S. in Psychology from Leeds Metropolitan University in 2006, and her PhD in Organizational Psychology from Leeds Beckett University in 2014.



# PATRICK ARNOLD

**In August 2019**, the College of Arts and Letters and International Studies and Programs welcomed Patrick Arnold as the Advisor for the Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen). As the GenCen Advisor, Patrick advises both undergraduate and graduate students on their course of study, as well as coordinates student internships, assists in curriculum development, and teaches Women's and Gender Studies courses. His passion is to facilitate student success at every level of the college experience, helping students overcome barriers they face in the pursuit of their education and career.

Patrick comes to GenCen from the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK), where he served as the Learning Strategies program coordinator, chair, and lead instructor. At UNK, he also taught in the Women's and Gender Studies program. Central to Patrick's teaching methodology is a focus on discussion, multiple viewpoints, inclusivity, and respect. "I consider my courses successful only when my students have learned as much from one another as they have from me," Patrick said. "From my classes, students acquire transferable skills and tools like thinking intersectionally, which can be applied to everything from their other courses and future careers, to their efforts at making society a more equitable place for all people."

Patrick holds a BS in Philosophy and English from Northern Michigan University and an M.A. in Philosophy from the University of Michigan. ■

## Q&A WITH PATRICK

### What attracted you to the position at GenCen?

"More than anything, I love teaching, learning new things, fighting for a more just society, and advocating for student success—and it is a dream come true to do all of this at the GenCen."

### What's your favorite thing to talk about?

"I am fascinated by literally everything. I want to take every class at MSU and geek out about them with others. I also enjoy talking about new shows and podcasts. Currently, I am digging the ContraPoints YouTube channel, and the show *Black Mirror*."

### Fill in the blank: "I'd never admit it, but I secretly love \_\_\_\_\_."

"I can't help but love Taylor Swift—'You Need to Calm Down' in particular right now. And, I'd hate to admit how much time I spend looking at animal pictures and memes on reddit."

### What do you hope to accomplish at GenCen?

"I hope to help the program's amazing students change the world, and to constantly grow as a person!"

### If you could have any other career, what would it be?

"I would love to open a cat cafe and also be its vegan chef."

# CREATING AN EQUITABLE UNIVERSITY

This article stems from a paper written by GenCen for a special issue on feminist leadership for *Psychology of Women and Equalities Review*. It includes further elaboration of the activities of GenCen throughout the 2018-2019 academic year that reflects our daily commitment to engage feminist theory in our communities. The original submitted paper is entitled *Feminist Transformative Leadership from Inside the University* by Dessie Lee Clark, Wenda K. Bauchspies, and Stephanie J. Nawyn.

## Exemplifying Feminist Structure

At the end of the 20th century, the MSU Women's Studies Program and the Modern Literature Conference hosted a conference entitled "Re-visioning Knowledge and the Curriculum: Feminist Perspectives" in East Lansing. The goal of the conference was to use the work of feminist researchers and educators to explore next steps for integrating and advancing feminist knowledge and frameworks within disciplines and into teaching and researching. Now, 30 years later, the MSU Women's Studies Program is part of Center for Gender in Global Context (GenCen). However, questions about re-visioning knowledge and campus culture, and doing feminism are continuing to shape the every-day activities of GenCen and nudging us to think about what type of university we are creating today for tomorrow.

GenCen was created to be a service unit with a feminist structure housed within a larger organization that may or may not share its ethic of feminist leadership. GenCen has managed to capitalize on its feminist structure and placement within the university to attract over 300 affiliated faculty and academic staff to be part of its network. In addition, eight colleges outside of its home college (representing half of all academic colleges on campus) routinely partner with GenCen or engage in events with a gender or sexuality theme. We are proud of the support and commitment that all of these relationships represent and how they enable us to ensure a diversity of voices and perspectives in all aspects of GenCen's activities.

## Promoting Change Across Campus

GenCen is often approached to help organize or facilitate events related to gender and sexuality. In the last two years, as the failings and shortcomings of the University have come to light, GenCen has forged new and strengthened old collaborations across campus and in the community to spark and nurture change in campus culture, attitudes, and behaviors.

Kicking off a year of cultural change, GenCen partnered with the Firecracker Foundation—a

GenCen Community Board organization—and MSU Sexual Assault Program, to bring Ignacio G. Hutià Xeiti Rivera to Lansing for the Guatu Tour in September. Ignacio is an activist, educator, and sex(ual) healer of The Heal (Hidden Encounter, Altered Lives) Project. Ignacio spent the last year traveling from Baltimore to L.A. to facilitate the conversation for healthy understandings of sex, sexuality, and child sexual abuse.



Ignacio Rivera presenting "All of Me" at MSU's RCAH Theatre.  Emily Khan

On September 27, Ignacio lead two workshops for sexual assault survivors. The first of these, "...And Action," was an interactive workshop designed to create collective healing from sexual abuse, assault, and trauma using theater and visualization techniques for survivors of sexual assault in the MSU community. "...And Action" was followed by the "Sexy Survivor" workshop, which was open to survivors and their partners. The "Sexy Survivor" program was a skill and strategy sharing session for the survivors and their partners with discussions of how to navigate safe, empowering, and healthy sexual lives. The next evening, Ignacio presented "All of Me," a compilation of poetry, readings, skits, and storytelling spanning two decades of memories and transformations. The evening was rounded out with spoken-word presentations by local activists Rose Cooper, Suban Nur Cooley, and Ana Holguin. The "All of Me" event had one of the highest single-event turnouts for GenCen-hosted events in the 2018 calendar year, at 74 attendees. Ignacio also lead two workshops at the Firecracker Foundation on their final day in Lansing, September 29 entitled:

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## “2019 Closing Remarks” an excerpt

by Marie Alexandra R. Ibarra for the Gender Dialogues

Silence ebbed and flowed  
It leans in and nods  
Raises eyebrows at times  
But it remained sincere and attuned

Then, under one’s breath were whispers  
Exhaled in disappointment  
In frustration  
And clouded judgment  
When we read facts of events we never knew  
Of the racial stain in our history  
Of the pain carried by communities of Color and  
minoritized identities

It was the kind of whispers that never leave.  
The ones that remind you to check in—  
With yourself  
With the person next to you

It’s the whispers wrapped in empathy  
Of empowerment  
Of resistance

Whispers that “yearn to be spoken  
Made verbal  
And shared”

These whispers continued to evolve into Voices—  
Voices in Brave Spaces  
Where we gathered in caucus groups  
Where we listened and were made aware

This...this is where we shined  
This was where our privileges were checked  
Where our biases were exposed  
Where we cultivated courage,  
In community with one another

## About Marie

Marie earned her M.A. in Student Affairs Administration from MSU in Spring 2019. She participated in the Gender Dialogues to inform her practice as a student affairs practitioner in advocating with, rather than for, LGBTQIA+ students.



 *Katie Riddle*

“Healthy Sex(uality),” designed for teens, and “The Evolution of the Talk,” designed for their parents. Ignacio was a great beginning to the year as a role model, healer, and performer because of their compassion and commitment to assisting others through challenging moments.

In 2018, GenCen was awarded a Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant by the Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives (OI3). This grant’s objective was to produce the curriculum for a new program, the Gender Dialogues, in conjunction with OI3’s Race Dialogues program. The Gender Dialogues launched in spring 2019, and had four overarching goals. First was to engage students, particularly those who were unable to enroll in higher-level WS courses, with ideas of intersectional gender equity, in which gender relations are understood in the context of intersections with race, class, sexual orientation, nationality, and other axes of inequality. Second, the Dialogues sought to encourage the development of critical consciousness around gender oppression to help students understand their own identities and experiences vis-à-vis other people in their social worlds. The third goal was to support relationships with other learners to facilitate students’ development of critical thinking and listening skills, and to empower them to challenge gender oppression in their own social worlds, particularly in relation to other forms of oppression. Lastly with the completion of the Gender Dialogues, the intent was to provide faculty with pilot-tested Gender Dialogue materials that could be incorporated into their own teaching to improve inclusive learning across campus.



Thank you to Erin Graham and Ellen Moll, our Gender Dialogues curriculum developers, and to Soma Chaudhuri and NiCole Buchanan, who—along with Stephanie Nawyn—served as our Gender Dialogues Advisory Board.

## Taking a Feminist Standpoint

A feminist standpoint recognizes the social location of women (or another marginalized group) and incorporates and validates their experience of the world by using their first-person knowledge as a point of departure to understand power relations. As a feminist organization embedded in a larger un-feminist one, the GenCen as an organization chooses to take a feminist standpoint to challenge power structures in ways that other units on campus may or may not be able to do. There is an expectation on campus that the GenCen—a center known for its values of social justice, equity and inclusion—will provide an alternative perspective, support the challenging of oppressive statements, and strategize and facilitate for improvements in policies and culture. The GenCen is often called upon by the community to take on such roles by consulting on public statements, hosting conversations for institutional transformation, and instigating new events and approaches to challenge the status quo.

In fall 2018, one group of interdisciplinary, GenCen affiliated faculty and staff desired institutional change to begin from within the classrooms of MSU. This group, now known as Teaching and Learning for Institutional Transformation (TELLIT), was created as a response to the University's failures to adequately respond to and address gendered violence and sexual misconduct on campus. Its mission is to address institutional cultural transformation through teaching and learning. In December 2018, GenCen,

### TELLIT

During the 2019-2020 academic year, TELLIT hopes to focus on trauma-informed graduate student research; transformative classroom practices; professional development opportunities on teaching and learning specifically about creating survivor-centered, trauma-informed classroom spaces; traversing gender-based violence and sexual misconduct in STEM fields. Interested in learning more about TELLIT? Visit [msutellit.com](http://msutellit.com), or contact Andaluna Borcila ([borcila@msu.edu](mailto:borcila@msu.edu)); Anna Pegler-Gordon ([gordonap@](mailto:gordonap@)); Christina DeJong ([dejongc@](mailto:dejongc@)); or Sarah Prior ([priorsar@](mailto:priorsar@)).

TELLIT, and MSU's Prevention, Education, and Outreach Department (POE) hosted the "Gendered Violence and Transformative Teaching" interactive participatory workshop. The workshop was centered around three main issues: creating survivor-centered syllabus language, especially in dealing with issues of mandatory reporting; creating trauma-informed classroom spaces; and making classroom spaces empowering for students and faculty to create and sustain cultural change at MSU. The workshop was attended by faculty and staff from colleges and offices across campus.

### POE

In July of 2019, MSU and POE hosted the 2019 Big 10 Gender-Based Violence Annual Gathering, centered on the theme "Cultivating Visibility: Centering Marginalized Voices". The goal of the gathering was to bring together professionals who work in the Big 10 Conference to share ideas, network, and learn. POE sought to highlight voices and experiences that are too often overlooked when discussing gender-based violence.

In their continuing effort to nurture transformation at MSU, GenCen partnered with POE for the 2019 Spring It's On Us Week of Action. POE was born in 2018 from the work accomplished in the last ten years of the Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence (SARV) Prevention Program for first year students. The goal of POE is to improve quality of life by educating MSU community members on sexual assault and relationship violence; eliminating violence on campus; empowering staff, faculty, and students to become advocates for a non-violent community; and positively affect social change. It's On Us is a national movement to end sexual assault and activate large scale conversations on college campuses about the issue.

For the 2019 Spring Week of Action, GenCen and POE, along with support from the Colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Arts & Letters, Education, Engineering, Natural Science, and Social Science, brought Gail Stern to MSU to disrupt the narrative of rape culture and provide a perspective for weakening its normative power in everyday culture.

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## It's On Us Keynote: Gail Stern

Insert written by MSU Student Devon Harrison

Dr. Gail Stern, a quick-witted comedian and sexual assault educator of Catharsis Productions, joined forces with GenCen and POE during the It's On Us Spring Week of Action to bring her presentation *The Canary in the Coal Mine* to campus. The keynote presentations engaged students, faculty, and community members in a conversation about what certain types of humor signal about our culture. Stern utilized her academic and comedic background to thoughtfully explore how rape jokes not only indicate a problem within our society, but also influence how we think about sexual harassment and assault. Stern challenged the audience to think about how language is used to limit our ideas about who rape affects and how sexual assault is illegitimized through laughter.

Stern highlighted the exclusive ways in which sexual assault and harassment are spoken about to broaden our ideas of what rape culture is and who it includes—addressing child abuse, heteronormativity, and men's experience within the conversation of assault. She then walked the audience through explicit ads, jokes, and movie scenes to unpack the punch lines about sexual assault. Stern also explained the prejudice norm theory, which outlines how humor is a veil that individuals use to cloak their prejudices. The contents of a joke are not critiqued as if they are a serious statement due to the underlying pretense that it is a joke. This is the deceptive way in which joking about sexual assault serves to normalize it. Per Stern, it is important to put a stop to rape jokes in order to reclaim a culture of bodily and personal autonomy. Stern encouraged the audience to “be the jerk that shuts down a joke at a party and stop rape.”



Sponsored by GenCen and the Prevention, Outreach, and Education Dept.

Co-sponsors: College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; College of Arts & Letters; College of Education; College of Engineering; College of Natural Science; College of Social Science



## Engaging Diverse Perspectives

One of the roles of a feminist organization is to be intentional about disrupting the homogeneity of experiences. One way that we do this is by encouraging individual's engagement with different thoughts, opinions, and perspectives from their own. Dialogue is critical to supporting and nurturing diversity, inclusion and innovation. It is necessary for creating a sustainable climate of care and the equality critical for feminist practice.

One of GenCen's major partnerships in the 2018-2019 academic year was with the Womxn of Color Initiatives (WOCI) at MSU. WOCI organizes events for womxn of color and their allies on the MSU campus and in the greater Lansing community, in order to create spaces of dialogue, engagement, and community. It creates safe spaces for students to be in conversation with each other and engage with womxn of color faculty, guest speakers, staff, and community members. Through WOCI and GenCen's collaboration, they were able to bring a Chicana/Dine artist, Nanibah Chacon, to MSU for five weeks in the fall. During her residency, Nanibah visited classes, met with Indigenous and Latinx elders in the community, hosted a risograph workshop, and created and completed a Mural in Old Town Lansing: "Maawed Mijim" (The One Who Provides).



Nanibah Chacon's mural: "Maawed Mijim" (The One Who Provides).

In spring 2019, WOCI hosted Mayra Santos Febres for a 5-day residency wherein she offered creative writing and risograph workshops, gave a public talk in collaboration with the MSU Broad Museum, and hosted an open-mic event at Reach Art Studio in Lansing. This event was a result of the GenCen Strategic Partnership Grant from March 2018 with Salon Literario Festival de la Palabra and the #ProyectoPalabrasPR MSU research team.

## WOCI

In spring 2019, WOCI was also invited to collaborate with the Capital City Film Festival. They hosted a track of three films by/featuring women of color filmmakers and actors. WOCI also partnered with Quinn Jiles, a Lansing-based artist and organizer who spearheads the Lansing Youth Video Program. Her free video enrichment program targets teens—ages fourteen to twenty—from Lansing and its surrounding communities.

As well as partnering with others at MSU to support diverse perspectives, GenCen also hosts a biennial lectureship series with the gracious funding of the Abbott-Haskin Endowment. The inaugural speaker for the Abbott-Haskin Endowed Lectureship in 2019 was Sandra Harding, Distinguished Professor from UCLA who has done groundbreaking work in feminist philosophy. Her newest book is “Objectivity and Diversity.” Harding’s lecture, “Deep Scientific Pluralism: A Latin American Feminist Standpoint,”



Sandra Harding, the 2019 Abbott Haskin Endowed Lectureship speaker.  Courtesy of: [https://gseis.ucla.edu/media/image\\_normal4.jpg?x63302](https://gseis.ucla.edu/media/image_normal4.jpg?x63302)

focused ways in which the research community can broaden the reach of academic work between Latin America and Euro-American cultures, and across global peripheries. Specifically, Harding highlighted an approach to cultural differences that embraced multiple “reals” to create new forms of global, comprehensive dialogues between those in the center and those in the periphery. This disruption of the characteristically familiar position of science as sole authority that originates from the center will open new spaces to explore questions about social inclusion in the production and use of knowledge, as well as create new pathways for knowledge production from diverse perspectives.

## Changing in 2019-2020

It’s been an amazing year at the GenCen full of visitors, new activities, and thought-provoking ideas and perspectives. We are grateful for the support and trust of the MSU community and local partners that have helped to make it a successful and satisfying year. The work of a feminist is ongoing, particularly as our university is in a self-reflective moment of change. We take seriously the importance of doing our feminist homework by using our “particulars to challenge the universal” (Ahmed 2017:10). In order to help prepare us for the upcoming year, GenCen hosted a workshop for the larger MSU community entitled “Imagining Our Future University: Life, Learning, and Governance” in August 2019. The workshop drew on design research methods that involved playful experimentation with design materials and techniques to imagine—or reimagine—MSU. These techniques were used to envision a university that values justice and equity, and provides opportunities for all of our community members to thrive. The workshop’s results will guide GenCen in questioning the un/known and picking one another up through activities and events during the next several years. Stay tuned as GenCen continues to grow and support the MSU community’s movement to increase social justice, equity and inclusion in our lives, community and world. ■

# WEARING LGBTQ+ HISTORY

Do T-shirts reveal local LGBTQ history?

Students enrolled in WS 492 in spring 2018 learned how T-shirts can reveal history with a project that provided an entrée into Michigan's LGBTQ past through the apparel that people once wore.

A version of the course, taught by GenCen affiliated faculty member Tim Retzloff, served as a capstone for GenCen's LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies minor. It included an assignment in which class members contacted donors to solicit T-shirts related to LGBTQ life and activism and seek the stories behind the garments. They often found that people felt a deep connection with their shirts.

One student talked for more than an hour by phone with MaxZine Weinstein, founder of Michigan's statewide LGBTQ newspaper *Between The Lines*. MaxZine, now a resident of Tennessee, has been involved with alternative queer theater and a group called the Radical Faeries.

Another student acquired a shirt from the first-ever Pride celebration in the Upper Peninsula. She had not previously known of any LGBTQ community in her hometown or her region of the state.

The class not only learned about local LGBTQ history first-hand, they helped gather artifacts that document and preserve that history. The T-shirts themselves have now found a home in MSU Libraries Special Collections. The data students collected will aid in cataloging the shirts and serve as an archival resource for future researchers.

A gift from activist Merrilee Melvin has already been put to use as part of "Invisible No More: LGBTQ+ Detroit," an exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum.

You can find photos of the shirts in the web gallery *Wearing Gay History* ([wearinggayhistory.com](http://wearinggayhistory.com)), created and curated by historian Eric Gonzaba, assistant professor at California State University at Fullerton and son of an MSU alumnus. ■



◀ **Left:** Participants in Michigan's first Pride celebration in 1972 silk screened and dyed shirts with a call to "Come Out," showing a new embrace of visibility during Gay Liberation.

**Right:** A shirt from the Grand Rapids youth group Windfire from 1988, inspired by medical scrubs, suggests how LGBTQ youth outreach offered healing and support for those who experienced bullying and family rejection. ▶





◀ **Left:** Footprints on a t-shirt produced in 1989 by the Michigan Organization for Human Rights for the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall riots highlight how activists battled AIDS and the Culture Wars in the late 1980s by marching on the state capitol.



**Right:** A keepsake shirt from Tiger Pride night at Comerica Park, an event sponsored by the Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce first held in 2015, demonstrated how queer life has become increasingly corporatized and mainstream. ▶



◀ **Left:** A tank top from Grand Rapids Together Pride in 1991 helps document how local LGBTQ events fostered community and activism in cities across Michigan.



**Right:** This shirt from the first-ever UP Rainbow Pride in 2017 shows how LGBTQ activism has reached the farthest reaches of Michigan. ▶



◀ **Left:** A shirt from the mid-1990s for QUP, the Queer Unity Project at the University of Michigan, shows how a new generation of LGBTQ college students sought to reclaim the word queer from its pejorative usage.



**Right:** GenCen intern Rhys Sirna models an OUT@MSU t-shirt distributed by the campus LGBT Resource Center to foster LGBTQ visibility and recognize LGBTQ identities. ▶



RESEARCH

# RESEARCH

## WITH GLOBAL IMPACT

**GenGen is committed** to supporting and promoting the impactful and diverse gender research of our 300+ affiliated faculty members and 150+ students. Both here in Michigan and across the globe, MSU scholars are undertaking research that raises awareness about gender and sexuality and related social issues, pushes the boundaries of gender scholarship, and makes a difference in lives and communities around the world.

## Including Gender and Sexuality in Identity Construction of Black Men

**Chezare Warren**, Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Teacher Education  
GenCen Affiliated Faculty Member  
GenCen Faculty Fellow, 2018-2020

Chezare Warren applied to the GenCen Faculty Fellows program in order to teach a women's and gender studies course, and to bring more of a focus on masculinities to GenCen's students. In Spring 2019, he taught the WS 202 (*Intro to Contemporary Feminisms*) course. Chezare presented his research, which is aimed at understanding how a single-sex high school supported their graduates' persistence to and through college, at a GenCen Colloquia that same semester.

There is a significant discourse emerging in the US about increasing the number of Black men teachers in order to decrease adverse schooling outcomes for Black boys. Additionally, single-sex schools for boys of color are becoming popular as an approach to improve the education experiences of Black boys. While both have the potential to significantly improve Black boys' schooling outcomes, they might also have some unintended consequences such as the reinforcement of dominant, oppressive notions of gender and sexuality.

At the high school where he taught, Chezare found that issues of manhood and masculinity were regularly shading the teachers' interactions with Black boys. His analysis found that the general tendency is for education to fail at "productively confronting gender performance and its relationship to these boys' emergent understandings of sexual identity during such a critical time of their gender, race, and sexual identity development."

"I was a Black boy who eventually became a Black man teacher who saw my work with Black boys as helping 'make' them into 'men,' not realizing I was likely reproducing problematic logics about gender and sexuality in my interactions with my Black male students," said Chezare. "I pursued this project to add more nuance to what we know about Black men teacher's interactions with Black (male) youth, and



Chezare presenting at his GenCen Colloquia, "Meeting Myself: Race-Gender Oppression and a Genre Study of Black Men Teachers' Interactions with Black Boys."

© Rebecca Cox

to offer a perspective through which the field can better imagine the centrality of these interactions to humanize Black boys in a school system established to sustain their persistent dehumanization."

Chezare determined that the Black men teachers give significantly more time to the young men's understanding of race growing up Black and male than they do gender. His research found that the Black boys formed substantive relationships with adult Black men teachers, who held considerable weight in their self-identities. "It is very likely these relationships did almost nothing to disrupt the school's cisheteropatriarchy [—a system of power based on the supremacy & dominance of cisheterosexual men through the exploitation & oppression of women and the LGBTQIA]. This story is one I think is really important for moving the field forward on the conversation of single-sex schools and the importance/value of Black men teachers for improving schooling outcomes for Black boys," commented Chezare.

As a GenCen Faculty Fellow, Chezare traveled to present this research at conferences around the US. "The Fellowship travel has proved my scholarship a broader audience as I continue to push scholars who conduct research on Black boys in education to more critically engage with both race and gender in our analyses of the factors that facilitate or impede their school success." Chezare plans to publish his research during the next year.

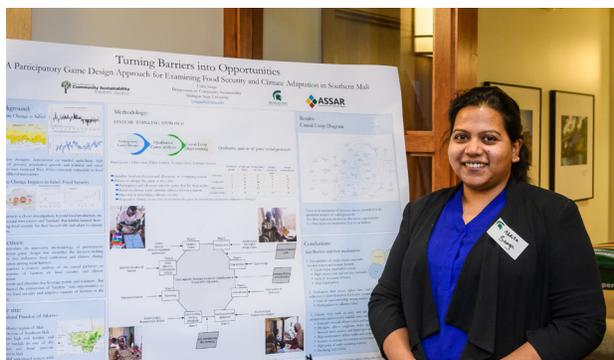
## Resiliency and Adaptation for the Future

**Udita Sanga**, Graduate Student  
*Dept. of Community Sustainability*  
*GJEC Dissertation Completion Fellowship Awardee*

For almost nine years, Udita Sanga has been working with research on the socio-economic impacts of climate change, agricultural adaptation, and food security. Prior to joining the Community Sustainability PhD program at MSU in Fall 2014, she worked in various research organizations on projects on food security and climate adaptation across South Asia. At MSU, she received the opportunity to work on a NSF-funded project which she states was a “transformative experience for me as a scholar, because I was introduced to the wonderful world of systems thinking and was able to learn social-environmental modeling skills. It was quite literally a large playroom where I was encouraged to think critically.”

This led Udita to explore the intersection of food security, climate change, and adaptation among rural agrarian populations in Mali as her dissertation project. She uses Mali as a case study to understand how climate change and the rise of extreme climate events, such as droughts, have changed the agricultural landscape in the region, and what the role of adaptation strategies in influencing food stability in the country will be in the future.

Udita’s dissertation research shows that the impact of the droughts between the 1960s-1980s was more severe than in the past. She found that if the current trajectory of droughts continue, there is likely to be



Udita presenting her GJEC Fellowship Research at the GenCen 2019 Annual Reception. © TimeFrame Photography

increased food insecurity where the previous forms of incremental adaptation will be insufficient to enable the system to recover. “In such cases, unless there is a transformative change in the system—where we challenge the status-quo of who adapts, how, and in what way,” said Udita, “the system will not be resilient to impending changes.” Additionally, her work highlights the importance of transformative changes in land ownership and credit availability to create policies and avenues for women’s increased autonomy and ownership of the land they work to provide sustainable food production and support a resilient future.

Unless there is a transformative change in the system where we challenge the status-quo of who adapts, how, and in what way, the system cannot be resilient to impending changes.

One of the biggest challenges Udita faced in completing her fieldwork was collecting data in a country where French is the national language and Bambara is the most prevalent local language. “While the idea of traveling to a country where I didn’t know the language was quite disorienting and scary initially,” Udita commented, “once I arrived in Mali, I received a lot of support from colleagues at ICRISAT-Mali, in particular Dr. Amadou Sidibe. Through him, I met a young scholar, Ms. Kadiatou Toure—who spoke French, Bambara, and English—and agreed to be my field assistant.”

Udita successfully completed her dissertation in May of 2019, with the help of a GJEC Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Currently, she is drafting manuscripts for three publications that represent her entire dissertation. She also plans to develop a policy brief for Mali based on the results of her dissertation, which she will share with colleagues at Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de recherche Appliquée in Katibougou for a wider circulation among policy makers in Mali.

## Collaboration in Action: 2018 Malawi Strategic Partnership Team

**Stephanie White**, International Research & Development Program Specialist  
*Dept. of Community Sustainability*  
*GenCen/GJEC Affiliated Faculty Member*  
*GenCen Strategic Partnership Grant Recipient*

**Annick Anctil**, Assistant Professor  
*Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering*  
*GenCen Strategic Partnership Grant Recipient*

**Zach Kaiser**, Assistant Professor  
*Dept. of Art, Art History, and Design*  
*GenCen Strategic Partnership Grant Recipient*

Stephanie White—after four years of other research activities in Lilongwe, Malawi—joined with Zach Kaiser and Annick Anctil to create a collaborative workshop regarding local food systems, food security, and food-based livelihoods in Lilongwe.

“I was introduced to Stephanie when I was teaching a class on design and food systems. My research is not traditionally on food systems. I’m an art professor, so it’s not necessarily my wheelhouse,” said Zach. Annick, as an MSU Global Engagement Scholar focused on Africa, met Stephanie at the OIRC and AAP funding workshop in 2018. “I chased Annick out of the event, actually,” laughed Stephanie. “The idea that she had this engineering experience was really appealing to me, because so much of what you see in the markets is a result of a lack of investment in infrastructure.” Annick added, “I would recommend for other faculty at MSU to work across disciplines like we did, and to be open-minded. I think it brings something way more interesting in terms of looking at a problem from a different angle.”

During Stephanie’s research in Lilongwe she worked with local food retailers, city officials, and faculty from Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR). She learned that issues with consumer safety and working conditions in the market were inhibiting development in the local food sector. Stephanie, Annick, and Zach designed a three-day workshop to engage with the people in the Lilongwe local food sector to define the places they see as needing improvement. “A lot of investments had been going toward more of a globalized food system,

or a global market,” said Stephanie. “We were really more interested in what kind of investments and support would be needed in a local context to support those markets that actually serve most of the people in Malawi.”

The workshop was designed to accomplish five goals:

- 1) review what has been learned from the previous four years’ research;
- 2) identify critical short- and long-term goals that will strengthen the sector;
- 3) identify ways to provide meaningful learning opportunities for MSU and LUANAR students;
- 4) consider innovative models for university, small business, and government collaboration; and,
- 5) imagine new interdisciplinary research spaces for MSU and LUANAR faculty.

To meet these goals, day one of the workshop facilitated trust among the participants. They were asked to think in groups about how the markets work from their perspective and then to create a systems map of the results. Days two and three were focused on conducting a SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) analysis.



Workshop participants during the systems mapping portion of day one. ©Annick Anctil

The trio is currently planning what their next steps will be. “We have a great foundation in place—built on trust and empirical evidence of what’s going on in these markets—to build something better,” stated Stephanie.

## Prevention Education: A Passion Turned into a Summer Internship

**Rhys Sirna**, Undergraduate Student  
*Women's and Gender Studies Major*  
*Community Engaged Research Scholarship Awardee*  
*GenCen Intern, 2018-2019*

Rhys Sirna started as an intern at GenCen in Spring 2018 because of their passion for feminism and LGBTQ+ issues. Rhys came to GenCen with no plans to add another program to their Interdisciplinary Studies in Social Science (IDS) major, and ended up graduating from MSU just over a year later with a double major in IDS and Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). "GenCen and the advising I received as a WGS student gave me the support I needed to graduate," said Rhys. "I really enjoyed being in my WGS classes, which were always inclusive, safe spaces that allowed me to learn about topics relevant to myself and my passions."

Less than one year after starting at GenCen, Rhys was a part of the Give Green Day 2018 campaign that International Studies & Programs launched to support the GenCen Community Research Scholarship (CRS) fund. After learning more about the CRS Internship and its potential projects, Rhys applied for and received a CRS Internship: the Greeks Take the Lead project. Rhys was excited to receive the internship and the scholarship, saying: "Getting a scholarship really helped me out. I was able to focus on my final courses to graduate, intern at GenCen, and work on my project for Greeks Take the Lead without worrying about my finances."

Greeks Take the Lead is a collaborative project between the Department of Prevention, Outreach, and Education (POE) and the MSU Greek community. Prior to Rhys' internship, a range of data was collected to assess the risk of sexual assault. The data included "heat maps" of perceived risk in fraternity houses drawn by fraternity and sorority risk managers. Throughout the summer, Rhys analyzed this data and other research for POE to establish a baseline measure of climate to develop targeted prevention and education programs for MSU Greek Life.

While not a Greek student themselves, Rhys knew this was the GenCen Community Research Internship they wanted for their last summer at MSU. "I've worked in sexual assault and relationship violence education for the past three years," said Rhys. "It's something I feel really

strongly about, and I know there's always an opportunity to rework curriculum and programming for the better. I was really excited to work with POE on this project to help make MSU and the community a safer place."

I've worked in sexual assault and relationship violence education for the past three years. It's something I feel really strongly about, and I know there's always an opportunity to rework curriculum for the better.

Rhys hopes that their time spent on the Greeks Take the Lead project will help POE in making campus—and the surrounding areas—a safer space for all students. The research internship, in turn, helped Rhys decide on a preferred career path. "I'm hoping to work for something like GenCen, POE, or the LGBT Resource Center post-graduation, whether it's at a school or not. These centers have all had a significant, positive impact on my experience at MSU, and I'd like to help better the experiences of others in that same way." GenCen is rooting for you, Rhys! ■



Rhys at the GenCen 2019 Annual Reception.

 TimeFrame Photography

# SUPPORTING THE GENCEN COMMUNITY

**MSU students are** seeking opportunities to use their classroom learning to solve real-world problems. Local organizations—such as those on the GenCen Community Board—that are doing work on gender and sexual orientation equality need to collect and analyze data to solve problems, but do not always have the time and expertise to devote to applied research. Through the Community Research Scholarship Fund, the GenCen supports undergraduate students working with community organizations on collaborative research projects to solve real-world problems in the community. Research projects may include issues related to gender equity in the workplace, gender dynamics in schools, and gender-based violence.

Providing scholarships makes these research collaborations more accessible to students by providing financial support that few community-based organizations are able to provide. The GenCen Community Research Scholarship Fund enriches the student experience through experiential learning, the development of critical problem-solving skills to address the challenges facing society today, and by providing research resources to community partners.

The Community Research Scholarship Fund was launched as part of Give Green Day 2018. Our goal was to raise \$10,000 for the GenCen Community Research Scholarship Fund. With the help of 64 donors and project champions like you, we raised \$25,930 on Give Green Day—259% of our goal! Thank you from all of us here at GenCen.



**\$25,930 RAISED**  
**64 CHAMPIONS**  
**1 IMPACT**

CENTER FOR GENDER IN GLOBAL CONTEXT  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES & PROGRAMS

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Interested in supporting students via the GenCen Community Research Scholarship Fund? Visit <https://gencen.isp.msu.edu/give> to donate today. ■

# EXPANDING MINDS EXPLORING CAREERS ADAPTING TO CHANGE

## Andala Yakubu

Women's and Gender Studies Major  
WS491 Special Topics Course Student, Spring 2019

Andala Yakubu came to MSU as a MasterCard scholar from Ghana. She is passionate about women's empowerment and community development. As a dual major in Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies with a minor in Religious Studies, she is interested in advancing the social and economic empowerment of rural girls and young women.

In Spring 2019, Andala took the Women's Studies special topics course with Camelia Suleiman on Women's Voices in Arab World. "I came into the WS 491 class with little knowledge about gender relations in the Middle East. Honestly, all I 'knew' about the Middle East was that it was a place where women are second-class citizens and given out in marriage against their will," Andala said. "For a long time, I held these beliefs because of the sensationalism and exoticization with which the media addresses the issues of Middle Eastern women."

After a semester of readings, discussions, and learning activities focused on women in the Middle East, Andala and her classmates were able to broaden their understanding of women in another culture.

Andala explained, "I am fortunate that I took this class and I can now confidently say that I have learned a lot about Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine." The class also gave Andala the opportunity to engage with a Syrian woman in her community.



Andala Yakubu

Andala was particularly impacted by reading the stories of five female authors from the Middle East because they provided an insight into the role of women in their communities. She is happy to recommend reading about Huda Shaarawi's acts of charity and women's empowerment programs; Nawal Sadaawi's description of women patriots and nationalists who give up their lives for their countries; Fadwa Tuqan's narrative of women's liberation; Sahar Khalifeh's book of the Palestinians' struggle to affirm cultural and national identity; and al-Shaykh's metaphorical story of Zahra which reveals the aftermath of the 17-year old civil war in Lebanon on women and the community.

## Layla Brooks

Women's and Gender Studies Minor  
Malawi Education Abroad Participant, Summer 2019

Layla Brooks is a Political Science major with a dual minor in Women's and Gender Studies and African Studies, who plans to graduate in May 2020.

"It wasn't until just before classes started in Fall 2017 that I found myself enrolled at Michigan State University as a transfer student. My arrival at MSU wasn't something I had planned—cold Michigan winters were the very thing I had tried to leave behind, only to have to return after one year at a California university due to financial restraints. However, MSU is where I have been able to find my life's path. By the end of my junior year, I'd discovered my passion for Political Science, African Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies. My focal point of study has become African women in positions of political power. Throughout this field, I find the importance of empowerment of women of color on a global scale. My WGS Minor allows me to learn about the world with a focus on the roles that women play—and have the potential to play—once various institutional and social barriers are broken down.

"I enrolled in the Environment and NGOs: Internships in Malawi Education Abroad program because I believe there is true value in experiencing the world as it is. My goal during the program was to develop an improved world-view for myself. My wish for my future research stemming from my trip abroad



Layla outside a market in Malawi.  Grace Erickson



Layla and newly-elected Second Deputy Speaker of the Malawi Parliament, Aisha Adams.

is to broaden the academic field surrounding studies of African women, to show the world the larger role they play, and to empower and encourage those girls who are lacking representation in academia and beyond.

"This summer I had the privilege of working for the 50:50 Campaign through the NGO, Center for Civil Society Strengthening in Lilongwe, Malawi. While there, I was able to travel the country for parliamentary candidate interviews, observe the 50:50 Campaign's situation room during elections, conduct my own interviews, and work from the Campaign's incubator. Working for an organization that focuses on supporting women in government gave me an inside look on the struggles that women face when running for seats; the discrimination and harassment that women faced were documented by the organization, and from the interviews, I was able to hear their first-hand testimony on it.

"In addition to this, I was able to hear the words of those women who managed to retain their seats in government and see the effort that goes in to empowering women at all levels of life in Malawi. Seeing the inner-workings of a country fighting poverty alongside women's rights was dynamic and very beneficial to my understanding of the development process and the role women play in the world at large. The various organizations and committees which plan to further increase women's representation have set the stage for the future of women in Malawi and I am proud to have witnessed this in its process." ■

# REBECCA MEUNINCK

PhD, Anthropology, with a specialization in Gender, Justice, and Environmental Change (2017)



**Rebecca Meuninck**

Deputy Director and Environmental Health Strategic Team Leader at the Ecology Center, Inc.

**Environmental advocacy and** justice have been passions of Rebecca Mueninck's for as long as she can recall. During her undergraduate career at the University of Michigan, where she studied anthropology and environmental justice, Rebecca worked for several non-profits on environmental health and justice campaigns. After graduating from U of M and working full-time at the Ecology Center, Inc. for two years, she decided to pursue graduate studies at Michigan State University. MSU was her top-choice due to the available programs in environmental science and agriculture,

as well as the top-rated applied anthropology program. "From my early advocacy career I knew that I didn't just want to be the kind of anthropologist who focuses primarily on theoretical issues, but instead I wanted to fully engage in the communities where I worked and be able to advocate alongside my research partners to help address the environmental and social problems that they identified," said Rebecca.

During her first year at MSU, Rebecca learned of the Gender, Justice, and Environmental Change (GJEC) specialization from other grad students in the anthropology department that were enrolled in the specialization. Her classmates and her dissertation advisor, Laurie Medina, recommended the specialization because of her interest in the environment and justice. She decided to enroll in the GJEC specialization, as it was an opportunity to continue to hone her knowledge of environmental justice issues, while beginning to consider other factors, such as gender, in her dissertation research and future career. Her favorite class from the program was the second core course, Anthropology 859: GJEC Methods and Application. This course in particular helped her shape the questions for her dissertation research, which was focused on the impact of certification programs (e.g. fair trade, organic) on coffee farmers in Brazil. "I had not thought as carefully about the gendered dynamics of coffee production and how those certification systems might differentially impact men and women farmers," said Rebecca. "I used a feminist political ecology framework to look at the social, ecological, and economic impact of the system. By looking through a gendered lens I discovered that men and

women farmers had very different, yet very critical roles to play in the production of dual certified high quality coffee and that unmarried women farmers and widows often faced more financial hardship in their coffee production because they did not always have as much help in coffee production as married couples or even single men who often had the help of their mothers or other female relatives to care for their coffee on the drying patio where coffee cherries (the fruit that the coffee bean is in) are dried in the sun via a process called ‘natural coffee processing.’”

Rebecca was also a recipient of the GJEC Dissertation Research Fellowship during the 2009–2010 academic year. The GJEC Fellowship allowed her to complete the US-based phase of her dissertation research with coffee buyers and certifiers here after returning from her fieldwork in Brazil with coffee farmers and their cooperatives.

From my early advocacy career I knew that I didn't just want to be the kind of anthropologist who focuses primarily on theoretical issues, but instead I wanted to fully engage in the communities where I worked.

While the GJEC program had a significant impact on Rebecca's dissertation and career trajectory, she in turn had a great impact on the program. With the guidance of Anne Ferguson—former GenCen co-director—and Tracy Dobson, Rebecca developed GenCen's internship program for both undergraduate and graduate students, and served as the first Internship Coordinator for GenCen. The internship program is still an integral part of the services that GenCen offers to its students.

After completing her field work in Brazil, Rebecca rejoined the Ecology Center, Inc., as an environmental health organizer, eventually moving up to campaign director. Today, Rebecca serves as the Deputy Director for the Center, a role she has filled since 2014. She also leads the work of the Toxics and Sustainable Food teams of the Ecology Center, Inc.,



Rebecca at a protest, calling on Walgreens to remove products containing toxic chemicals from store shelves.

as the Environmental Health Strategic Team Leader. She uses many of the concepts and skills learned in the GJEC program in her career. “I’m keenly aware that environmental problems like exposure to toxic chemicals and climate change have disproportionate impacts on different groups of people,” she stated. “Specifically, women often have higher rates of exposure to certain toxic chemicals in consumer products like cosmetics and cleaning products. I pay close attention to the types of products that have toxic chemicals and look into whether or not women, people of color, or low income people may have more exposure to these hazards.” ■

# KAREN PHILLIPPI

BA, Anthropology, with a minor (thematic) in Women's Studies (1992)



**Karen Phillippi**  
Director at the Office of Global Michigan

**As a lifelong** Spartan fan and legacy student, Karen Phillippi decided to pursue her bachelor's degree at Michigan State University. "I probably shouldn't admit this, but MSU is the only school I applied to!" Karen laughed. "There wasn't anywhere else I wanted to be. Then, during Freshman orientation, I declared my major as Anthropology and never looked back."

With enough Advanced Placement credits from high school to add another program (either a major, minor, or thematic) to her degree plan, Karen was undecided on what to do. Through a connection with

Jayne Schuiteman—who is currently the Associate Director for the Prevention, Outreach, and Education Department—Karen learned of the Women's Studies thematic. At the time that Karen started at MSU in 1988, there was no official major or minor for what is now called Women's and Gender Studies; however, when she learned of the thematic through Schuiteman, she jumped at the chance to add it to her degree path.

Karen credits her experience in the Women's Studies thematic with guiding the course for her professional career. "I discovered a passion for the work that I do, and I've been able to use some of the lessons and information learned from my anthropology and women's studies programs with the work that I do now," Karen stated. The classes she took, and the faculty that taught them, made a world of difference for her. Karen said that she couldn't pick out one class as her favorite, but she did particularly enjoy a class called Birth in Four Cultures, which counted for both her thematic and her major. She also took class with Jayne Schuiteman, and she loved having Jayne as an instructor.

"I had to complete an internship for the WS thematic, and one of the opportunities was interning for then-U.S. Senator Don Riegle's office working on federal women's issues, and specifically International Parental Child Abduction," said Karen. "It sounded interesting to me, and the internship was in downtown Lansing. So, that's the internship I did during the last semester of my senior year. When I was finishing up the internship, my boss at the Senator's office asked me if I'd apply for the Immigration & State



Karen at the 2016 White House National Convening for Skilled Immigrant Integration. There were 20 organizations from around the country invited to participate in this first ever WH convening and Michigan was one of them. The State of Michigan team was comprised of **(from left to right)** Stephanie Beckhorn, Andrew Brisbo, Karen Phillippi, and Nick Payne.

Department specialist position, they had open. At the time, I didn't even know what immigration was – but I applied for and got the job. I started in July 1992 and have been in the immigration law field ever since. Because of the WS program, I ended up in a field that I love and have remained in for over 27 years!”

help grow Michigan's economy by retaining and attracting global talent to the state; promoting the skills, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit of Michigan's immigrant and refugee communities; and striving to create a more welcoming environment within the state.

I discovered a passion for the work that I do. Because of the WGS program, I ended up in a field that I love and have remained in for 27 years!

The modern Women's and Gender Studies major also requires an internship, and GenCen now offers internship coordination services for its students. The goal of the internship program is to give students hands-on experience in the workforce while utilizing their WGS coursework and knowledge.

Currently, Karen is the Director of the Office of Global Michigan. In this role, she is responsible for directing the overall activities of the Global Michigan programs including the state refugee services office and the Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) program. Global Michigan is responsible for supporting immigrant and refugee integration initiatives for the state. She is also responsible for implementing Global Michigan's mission to

“In my job, I partner with a number of organizations and individuals including the state-wide anti-human trafficking coordinator for the State of Michigan, and also organizations who have programs for victims of trauma or who have health and workforce programs designed specifically for immigrant and refugee women,” said Karen. “Global Michigan and its partners work with women from all around the world, and my MSU studies made me appreciate that cultural and religious differences are respected.”

# GJEC FELLOWSHIPS

MSU's Graduate School provides generous funding that allows the Gender, Justice, and Environmental Change (GJEC) program to offer annual fellowships. Below are the 2018-2019 funding recipients.

## Jelili "Gana" Adebisi

Dissertation Completion Fellowship

**MSU Department:** Community Sustainability, ESPP

**Graduation Date:** Spring 2019

**Research Interests:** Gender in Agriculture; Technology Adoption Decision-Making; Organic Farming

**Dissertation Title:** "A Livelihood and Systems-based Approach for Understanding Drivers of Adoption and Disadoption of Organic Farming in Ibadan, Nigeria"



## Matlhogonolo "Mattie" Kelepile

Dissertation Completion Fellowship

**MSU Department:** Geography

**Graduation Date:** Summer 2019

**Research Interests:** HIV treatment regimen adherence in Botswana; maternal health of those with HIV; weather as a barrier to treatment

**Dissertation Title:** "Antiretroviral (ART) and Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) Therapies Adherence In Greater Gaborone, Botswana: A Mixed Methods Health Geographic Study"



## Cynthia Balthazar

Dissertation Research Fellowship

**MSU Department:** Community Sustainability

**Graduation Date:** August 2019

**Research Interests:** Association and cooperative organization through a gendered lens; fostering sustainability

**Dissertation Title:** "Fair Trade, Gender and Sustainability in Rural Haiti: Finding meanings for 'success' in sustainability through a gendered lens"



## Udita Sanga

Dissertation Completion Fellowship

**MSU Department:** Community Sustainability

**Graduation Date:** Summer 2019

**Research Interests:** Socio-ecological resilience; systems science; decision-making under uncertainty; computational modeling

**Dissertation Title:** "Beyond Adaptation: Exploring transformative pathways to socio-ecological resilience in agricultural systems in Mali"



## Timothy Silberg

Dissertation Research Fellowship

**MSU Department:** Community Sustainability

**Graduation Date:** Winter 2019

**Research Interests:** Human-natural coupled systems; agroecology; technology adoption; system dynamics

**Dissertation Title:** "Modeling Parasitic Weed Emergence: The Case of Striga in Malawi"



Cynthia presenting her GJEC Fellowship Research at the GenCen 2019 Annual Reception. © TimeFrame Photography

# PAPERS & ACTIVISM

GenCen offers multiple student paper and activism awards. In 2018, we awarded the Rita S. Gallin (graduate paper), the Mary Anderson (undergraduate paper), and the Tracy Dobson Awards (undergraduate activism).

## Selena Huapilla-Perez

Tracy Dobson Award

**Major:** Interdisciplinary Humanities, with minors in Chicano/Latino Studies & Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL)

**Graduation Date:** Spring 2019

**Areas of Activism:** Educational needs of underserved/underrepresented communities; mental health & emotional well-being of Students of Color

**Career Goals:** I aspire to work within the field of Education at the Federal level where I can impact students at the local, state, and national levels. I want to add representation of Latinxs in Education. Now that I've graduated I will be moving to Denver, Colorado to work with Denver Public Schools, the largest district in Colorado, and the fastest-growing district in the nation. I'm excited to expand my efforts in making Education equitable for underserved/underrepresented communities!



resources in their work. I believe that having insight into the complex work involved in bringing about gendered social change in one context will help me be more sensitive and thoughtful in my future work with an NGO. I would like to be coalition-minded and to work toward establishing relationships with organizations like the ones I observed in Zanzibar.



Selena and Jonathan after accepting their awards at the GenCen 2019 Annual Reception. [@TimeFrame Photography](#)

## Jessica Ott

Rita S. Gallin Award

**MSU Department:** Anthropology

**Expected Graduation Date:** 2020

**Paper Title:** "You have to decide to believe or not to believe:"

Women's rights activism and Islamic jurisprudence in Zanzibar"

**Career Goals:** I would like to work for an international NGO with an emphasis on public health and gender when I finish my PhD. In my dissertation research, I gained in-depth insight into how Zanzibari women's rights activists channel their own linguistic, cultural, and historical



## Jonathan Walkotten

Mary Anderson Award

**Major:** Social Relations and Policy and Women's and Gender Studies, with a minor in LGBTQ and Sexuality Studies

**Expected Graduation Date:** Spring 2020

**Paper Title:** "Expanding PrEP: Mitigating LGBTQ+ Health Disparities"

**Career Goals:** I hope to pursue a Master's in Public Policy, focusing on health policy analysis and initiatives with specific attention to LGBTQ health disparities and access to affirming healthcare. I am anticipating completing an honors thesis over the next year focused on identity-based healthcare delivery, and the limitations of existing healthcare delivery models when distributing care to trans, queer, and non-binary subjects.



# INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN OF THE YEAR

The Inspirational Woman of the Year Award highlights women or femme-identified individuals who demonstrate integrity, leadership, quality performance, integrative and inclusive action, and influence on-campus and in the greater Lansing/global community. It serves as an opportunity to inspire the dreams of other women and provide accessible role models for all. The goals of the award are to honor the impact women have on- and off-campus, lift one another up as a community, and inspire a culture of high performance at MSU.

Previously the awards, created by the Women's Resource Center in 2014, were only awarded to MSU employees. In 2019—recognizing that the impact of women's inspirational work reaches far beyond the walls of MSU, and through the collaborative relationships that the GenCen has with the Greater Lansing community—we introduced the Greater Lansing Inspirational Woman of the Year Award. In 2020, we are excited to further expand this category into the Mid-Michigan Culture of Empowerment and Mid-Michigan Community Engagement awards.

## Yomaira Figueroa

MSU Culture of Empowerment

**Award Category:** Culture of Empowerment

**MSU Department:** English

**Bio:** Yomaira C. Figueroa is Assistant Professor of Afro-Diaspora Studies in the department of English at MSU. Written through the lens of decoloniality, women of color feminisms, and feminist philosophy, her research examines the textual, historical, and political relations between diasporic Afro-Puerto Rican, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Dominican, and Equatoguinean poetics. A scholar and organizer, she is a founder of the MSU Womxn of Color Initiative and of the collaborative hurricane recovery project #ProyectoPalabrasPR.

**Favorite Inspirational Quote:** “Solidarity comes from the inability to tolerate the affront to our own integrity of passive or active collaboration in the oppression of others, and from the deep recognition that, like it or not, our liberation is bound up with that of every other being on the planet, and that politically, spiritually, in our heart of hearts we know anything else is unaffordable.” -*Aurora Levins Morales*



Yomaira Figueroa discusses her work with graduate students.  Courtesy of: <http://www.cal.msu.edu/news/inspiring-first-generation-students-through-literature>

## Rocío Quispe-Agnoli

MSU Professional Achievement

**MSU Department:** Romance and Classical Studies/  
Hispanic Cultural Studies

**Bio:** A native from Perú, Rocío Quispe-Agnoli (Ph.D. Brown University) is Professor of Hispanic Studies since 2000. Her research topics include: race and ethnicity, gender, visual studies, and cognition and representation in Latin America with an emphasis on the colonial period (1500-1800). In 2013, the Peruvian government recognized Rocío as the “Successful Peruvian Woman in the USA,” and she also received the TUMI Award granted by the Peruvian community in the USA.

**Favorite Inspirational Quote:** “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.” -*Maya Angelou*

## Tashmica Torok

Greater Lansing

**Organization:** The Firecracker Foundation

**Bio:** Tashmica Torok is a survivor activist working to end child sexual abuse. As the executive director of The Firecracker Foundation, she incites riots of generosity and advocates for the healing of children and families. Tashmica is a storyteller, kitchen witch, mother of three, and wife to a talented tile installer.

**Favorite Inspirational Quote:** “Metamorphosis is naturally destructive.” -*Danielle LaPorte*

## Terah Venzant Chambers

MSU Community Engagement

**MSU Department:** Educational Administration

**Bio:** Terah Venzant Chambers is a professor of K-12 educational administration whose research interests include post-Brown K-12 education policy and urban education leadership. Specifically, she is interested in the ways within-school segregative policies influence African American and Latinx students’ academic achievement and school engagement. Terah is President of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), has been an associate editor for several journals, and currently serves on the editorial boards of AERJ, JRLE, and Urban Education. Terah also serves as Secretary of the East Lansing Board of Education and volunteers at Sparrow hospital holding medically-fragile babies in the NICU.

**Favorite Inspirational Quote:** “We’ve got a responsibility to live up to the legacy of those who came before us by doing all that we can to help those who come after us.” -*First Lady Michelle Obama*



**Left to right:** Terah Venzant Chambers, Tashmica Torok, and Rocío Quispe-Agnoli at the GenCen 2019 Annual Reception.

 TimeFrame Photography

# THANK YOU

## GENCEN STAFF SUMMER 2019

### Co-Directors

Wenda Bauchspies  
Stephanie Nawyn

### Assistant Director

Rebecca Irvine

### Office Manager

Emily Khan

### GPID Editor

Dessie Clark

### Student Advisor

Patrick Arnold

### Senior Research Fellow

Lucy Thompson

### Intern

Rhys Sirna

*Thank you also to Sara Bijani, Rebecca Cox, Gregory Frens, Amy Jamison, and Rowenn Kalman, for your work at GenCen during Fall 2018 - Spring 2019!*



## COMMUNITY BOARD FALL 2018 - SUMMER 2019

*GenCen would like to thank our Community Board. The board is a valuable part of GenCen's mission and we are excited to continue our collaboration moving into the future.*

Alternatives for Girls

Capital Area Response Effort (CARE)

Capital Area Sexual Assault Response Team (CASART)

Child and Family Charities

Equality Michigan

Firecracker Foundation

GLUNA (Greater Lansing Chapter of the United Nations Association of the USA)

Ingham County Women's Commission

Lansing Area AIDS Network

Lansing Association for Human Rights

Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence (MCEDSV)

Michigan Women's Commission (MI Department of Civil Rights)

Michigan WomenForward

MSU Safe Place

NorthWest Initiative

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan

Salus Center

SIREN/Eaton Shelter (Charlotte, MI)

South Asian Women's Association of Greater Lansing

South Lansing Community Development Association

VoteRunLead

Women's Center of Greater Lansing

## INTERSECTIONS STAFF 2018 - 2019

### GenCen

Wenda Bauchspies  
Rebecca Irvine  
Emily Khan  
Stephanie Nawyn  
Samantha Turner

### International Studies & Programs

Earlene Ling  
Rachel Warner

*Save the Date!*

*Inspirational  
Woman of the  
Year Award  
Reception*

Join us in honoring the 2020 awardees at the Inspirational Woman of the Year Award Reception! The reception will be on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at the Wharton Center.

*Details and tickets:*  
[gencen.msu.edu/iwoty](http://gencen.msu.edu/iwoty)



[gencen.msu.edu/give](http://gencen.msu.edu/give)

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**Pictured left:** Co-director Stephanie Nawyn with four graduating WGS Majors at the CAL graduation on May 5, 2019. From left to right: Rhys Sirna, Victoria Chapman, Alannah Henry, and Madeline Van Eck.

**Pictured right:** WGS Majors that were in Aminda Smith's WS 492 during Spring 2019 take a selfie at the CAL Graduation to send to their professor. From left to right: Alannah Henry, Madeline Van Eck, Rhys Sirna, and Sydney Winter.  Sydney Winter



**SAVE THE DATE**  
Inspirational Woman  
of the Year Award  
Reception  
Wednesday, March 18  
5:30PM - 7:30PM