

MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies

Thirty-four years after its establishment, the [MIT Program in Women's and Gender Studies \(WGS\)](#) continues to build on its success as an interdisciplinary undergraduate program, providing a community for students, faculty, and staff to participate in scholarly inquiry focusing on women, gender, and sexuality. Through teaching, research, and programming, WGS provides a structural framework specifically focused on examining and analyzing the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. WGS faculty members engage in cutting-edge research on a range of subjects related to historical and contemporary questions of gender and sexuality in the United States and across the globe. The mission of WGS is to educate undergraduates on the importance of gender equity and to promote critical thinking about the role of gender across disciplines, not only in the humanities, arts, and social sciences but in science, engineering, and technology as well. WGS also plays an important role at the Institute in organizing rich and stimulating programming to support women students and to facilitate examination and discussion of gender and women's issues among faculty, students, staff, and the broader MIT community. In these various aspects of its educational mission, whether through teaching, research, or programming, WGS seeks to support the Institute's efforts to promote community, equity, and inclusion while preparing students for an increasingly diverse workplace.

WGS can also play a pivotal role in helping the Institute develop strategies to deal with sexual assault and with gender and sex discrimination. With the increasing social and political focus on these issues, and on-campus sexual assault in particular, the involvement of WGS in dialogue and strategies for change is critical. As national attention has turned to matters of racial justice and activism, WGS has been involved in fostering discussion of and engagement with these issues and has conducted outreach to women students of color through programming and collaboration with the Institute Community and Equity Office (ICEO), the Office of Minority Education (OME), and the Office of Multicultural Programs (OMP).

Student outreach and development of courses that meet students' needs and interests have been ongoing goals for the program. Interest and enrollment in WGS subjects continued to be high this year, with 462 enrollees in the 30 subjects offered. During the year, WGS had 60 active concentrators, three minors, and two majors, the latter of whom both completed and presented WGS theses.

Another central objective for WGS as an interdisciplinary program is to serve as an important resource and support for faculty who have advanced knowledge of women's and gender studies within their areas of scholarship and who want to enrich their research by collaborating across disciplinary lines. The WGS Intellectual Forum, a monthly series in which faculty members share work in progress, brings the community together for interdisciplinary engagement on topics of shared concern and also allows for exchanges with outside guest presenters who bring new expertise and insights to the WGS intellectual community. This year's presentations included talks by WGS affiliates Nick Montfort (Comparative Media Studies/Writing [CMS/W]; "Gender and Computational Poetry"), Sasha Costanza-Chock (CMS/W; "#DesignJustice"), and

Joaquin Terrones (Literature), who read from his novel *Orison*. Martin Luther King Visiting Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown gave a presentation titled "Plantation Weddings and the Arc of Antebellum Desire." Finally, WGS hosted a joint presentation by two of the Institute's diversity predoctoral fellows. WGS fellow Nneka Dennie presented part of her dissertation, completed during her time at MIT, in a talk titled "From Abolition to Suffrage: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Black Feminist Nationalism." Anthropology fellow Kera Street presented "Everyday Purity: Black Evangelical Women and Living Right in a Digital Age," an excerpt from her dissertation.

WGS-sponsored conferences and symposia also serve as invaluable opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry and collaboration. The program organized three mini-conferences in the spring of 2018, as follows.

- Sonic/Scenes was a daylong symposium featuring several members of the Dark Room Race and Visual Culture Seminar: Kimberly Juanita Brown, Tara Bynum, Kaysha Corinealdi, Sonya Donaldson, Amah Edoh, K. Melchor Hall, Jasmine Elizabeth Johnson, Christina Knight, Vanessa Monique Liles, Patricia A. Lott, Bakirathi Mani, Kelli Moore, Jyoti Puri, Toby Sisson, Lyneise Williams, and Amanda Russhell Wallace. Keynote speakers were Roshini Kempadoo ("Running Interference: Imagining Narratives/Expanding Visualities") and Tina Campt ("Flow, Or the Visual Frequencies of Black Life"). The opening reception was held at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art.
- The spring McMillan-Stewart lecture was expanded to a two-day workshop, Feminist Interventions in Armenian Studies, Armenian Interventions in Feminist Studies, an unprecedented gathering of international scholars working to create a digital archive of Armenian feminists of the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries. This effort augments the book project of WGS faculty member Lerna Ekmekçioğlu (History) and Rescue Scholar Fund affiliate Melissa Bilal, *Feminism in Armenian: An Interpretive Anthology*. The workshop was supported by the Institute of International Education, the Armenian International Women's Association, the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Mirak Family Foundation, the Scholar Rescue Fund, and the MIT History Section. The panelists were scholars from 18 national and international universities.
- In conjunction with the Consortium for Graduate Studies in Gender, Culture, Women, and Sexuality (GCWS), WGS co-sponsored the half-day Higher Ed in the Era of #MeToo conference. The event included workshops and panel discussions from scholars at local universities, media outlets, law centers, and the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center.

Along with teaching and research, programming is essential to the WGS mission. WGS regularly collaborates with other academic units, student groups, and offices across the Institute to create events on myriad topics, such as the history and current status of women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); gender equity; queer and transgender issues; racial inequality; global development and migration; medicine and health; harassment and violence prevention; and women's contributions to literature, arts, and the media. The goal of this programming is to foster crucial conversations on issues of gender, sexuality, diversity, inclusion, and equity while attracting students to WGS classes.

The program's commitment to the study of women, gender, and sexuality extends beyond MIT to reach the broader Cambridge and Boston-area communities. In AY2018, WGS continued to work with GCWS, which is currently based at MIT. Founded in 1992, GCWS consists of nine local universities (Boston College, Boston University, Brandeis University, Harvard University, MIT, Northeastern University, Simmons College, Tufts University, and the University of Massachusetts Boston) whose faculty members offer interdisciplinary, team-taught graduate courses. Professor Lerna Ekmekçioğlu served as the MIT representative to the GCWS board in AY2018.

The current goals of WGS are to foster diversity within the program, extend outreach and support to underrepresented students, inspire engagement and activism regarding social justice issues, strengthen collaborative and interdisciplinary research initiatives, build on the success of the Intellectual Forum and WGS-sponsored symposia to foster intellectual community across academic units at MIT, recruit new faculty affiliates, continue to update and reinvigorate the WGS curriculum in alignment with current directions in the broader field of women's and gender studies (with special attention to underdeveloped areas of the curriculum, such as gender and health, gender and public policy, gender and race/ethnicity, and gender and socioeconomic class), and continue to collaborate with other units and with student groups and offices such as OMP, OME, ICEO, LBGTQ Services, the Office of Graduate Education, Violence Prevention and Response, the MIT Libraries, the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center (PKG Center), D-Lab (Development Lab), and Global Education and Career Development (GECD). WGS undertook a number of activities in AY2018 to support these goals.

Personnel

AY2018 was the third year of Professor Helen Elaine Lee's three-year term as director of WGS. Professor Lee serves as chair of the OME Faculty Advisory Committee and chair of the Community Service Fund Board. She is also a member of the selection committee for the Martin Luther King (MLK) Visiting Professors and Scholars Program and the editorial board of the *MIT Faculty Newsletter*. In AY2018, she served as a faculty mentor for 2.S991 Designing the First Year Experience, as a diversity orientation facilitator for incoming freshmen, and as a member of the MindHandHeart Department Support Project. In terms of student-oriented events, she addressed the incoming first-year Interphase Edge students and the parents of incoming first-year minority students, served as host for visiting artist Tyehimba Jess, and presented a "lightning talk" during Campus Preview Weekend. In addition, she continued co-organizing (with lecturer Joaquin Terrones) a series of gatherings for queer and transgender students and faculty members of color initiated in AY2017. For the third consecutive year, Professor Lee organized a career panel of MIT black women alumnae for My Sister's Keeper (MSK); this organization, which she helped to found, is dedicated to supporting black women students, faculty, and staff at MIT. She was also involved in representing MIT in the broader community, served on the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Public Face of Science Initiative's Boston-Cambridge Public Engagement Working Group, spoke on a panel at the second annual Women of Color in the Academy conference, and participated in a series of community gatherings for that group after organizing the first such event at MIT.

Emily Neill completed her fourth year as WGS program manager. She continued to develop and refine WGS initiatives such as MSK and Hermanas Unidas, an organization

dedicated to supporting Latina students, faculty, and staff at MIT. Together with Professor Lee and program assistant Sophia Hasenfus, Neill helped establish outreach to queer communities of color on campus, connect with the Black Student Union (BSU) and the Black Women's Alliance (BWA) to co-sponsor and support their programming, develop a more robust alliance with the PKG Center in an effort to integrate activism and the work of local organizations into the WGS curriculum, and lay the groundwork for a developing connection with D-Lab's curriculum on women and development. Neill continued in her role as School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHASS) liaison to the Council on Staff Diversity and Inclusion and was also an active member of the Diversity Think Tank. She continued her work with the White Person's Accountability Group (WPAG) which was formed after many MIT diversity officers attended the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia in AY2016, and helped to sponsor and launch two new groups on campus that grew out of the work of the WPAG, seeking to expand its model and its outreach.

WGS was able to move part-time program assistant Sophia Hasenfus to full time in AY2018 with the support of the provost and the SHASS dean's office. Hasenfus assists with financials, programming, social media upkeep and output, and new outreach efforts. She also recruits and oversees the management of the WGS student workforce. The addition of Hasenfus as a full-time employee helped WGS fulfill its programming mission on campus while meeting the increased operational demands associated with an expanding slate of programming. As reported in AY2017, Hasenfus has been able to relieve the SHASS fiscal officers from handling daily financial tasks such as procurement card posting and Concur report approval. With the WGS increase in programming, including its three mini-conferences, as well as the addition of two visiting fellows in AY2018, WGS experienced a steep spike in travel management and related expenses. Hasenfus played the lead role in operations for all three conferences, the MSK Alumnae Career Panel, and all other visitors throughout the year. She negotiated and finalized the contract associated with writer Jennifer Finney Boylan's campus visit and played a central role in planning and executing the Women Take The Reel (WTTR) film festival. Additionally, she maintained the WGS website and has continued honing her graphic design skills in support of WGS course offerings and programming outreach.

WGS continued to employ an active group of lecturers this year. Karl Surkan took over the WGS thesis tutorial for the two program majors in addition to offering his newly designed WGS.181 Queer Cinema class and the annually offered WGS.111J/CMS.619J Gender and Media Studies. Brittany Charlton returned for a fourth year to teach her popular WGS.151 Gender, Health, and Society course. WGS hired a new lecturer, Elizabeth Janiak, to design and offer the new WGS.224 Race, Gender and Social Inequality: Reproductive Health Care in the United States course. Joaquin Terrones (who also teaches in Literature) offered WGS.245/21L.480 Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures, a new course commissioned by WGS, and also developed a new subject on HIV/AIDS in the United States to be offered in AY2019. In addition, lecturers Chivi Kapungu, Abha Sur, Sarah King, and Andrea Walsh continued to teach for WGS.

WGS hosted its third MLK Visiting Scholar, Kimberly Juanita Brown. Brown is an associate professor of English and Africana studies at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. WGS and Literature jointly invited Brown for AY2018. Her research engages the visual as a way to negotiate the parameters of race, gender, and belonging.

She taught a newly developed course, WGS.S10 Sex, Race, and the Visual, that explored gendered constructions of self-portraiture photography in the contemporary realm. Her contributions to WGS and the broader MIT community were immeasurable. She participated in events throughout the Institute, hosted a half-day conference, developed a popular WGS course, and consistently presented new work.

WGS hosted its third predoctoral diversity fellow, Nneka Dennie, in AY2018. She spent the year completing her dissertation, "From Abolition to Suffrage: Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Black Feminist Nationalism." Dennie's project dovetailed beautifully with the establishment and work of My Sister's Keeper as well as the work of Visiting Professor Brown. She successfully defended her dissertation in April and received her PhD from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She has accepted a position as visiting assistant professor of Africana studies at Davidson College.

In AY2019, WGS will host predoctoral diversity fellow Misty DeBarry, who is at Northwestern University. DeBarry will work to finish her dissertation, "Performance, Duration, and the Black Feminist Avant-garde," which examines the impact of avant-garde aesthetics taken up by black queer women and women of color in the United States as a means of survival from everyday forms of structural violence. Professor Diana Henderson (Literature) will serve as DeBarry's mentor.

This year WGS nominated (in a joint effort with Literature spearheaded by Joaquin Terrones) an MLK visiting scholar for AY2019. WGS will host Lorgia García Peña, the Roy G. Clouse Associate Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Her research engages translocal identities and Afro-Latino/a subjects, taking into account the interrelationships among race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status to foreground the histories of Dominican women, Afro-Dominicans, and Dominican Americans. She is working on a digital humanities research project, Mind the Gap: Diaspora Archives in Italy and the United States, and she will engage MIT students who are members of Hermanas Unidas in her efforts. The project archives and disseminates the stories and histories of second-generation descendants of immigrants who identify as black, focusing on the Dominican populations in Boston and the United States and the Habesha (Eritrean and Ethiopian) population in Porta Venezia, Milan, Italy. It uses digital video, voice, and artistic technology to collect and preserve the experiences and oral histories of second-generation black Dominican and Habesha residents, employing a "trans-local approach" to study immigration and race. Peña will also present in the WGS Intellectual Forum series and serve as a liaison to Hermanas Unidas.

The WGS committee structure consists of the Steering Committee, the Programming Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Committee for the Louis Kampf Writing Prize in Women's and Gender Studies. In AY2018, committee memberships were as follows.

Steering Committee

Director: Helen Elaine Lee (CMS/W)

WGS program manager: Emily Neill (WGS)

Senior faculty representative: Ruth Perry (Literature)

Junior faculty representative: Caley Horan (History)

Lecturers' representative: Joaquin Terrones (Literature)

Graduate student representative: Emma Atherton (Linguistics and Philosophy)

Jennifer Greenleaf (WGS liaison, MIT Libraries)

Curriculum Committee

Helen Elaine Lee (CMS/W)

Diana Henderson (Literature)

Andrea Walsh (WGS and CMS/W)

Abha Sur (Science, Technology, and Society)

Kampf Prize Committee

Chair: Andrea Walsh (WGS and CMS/W)

Jennifer Greenleaf (MIT Libraries)

Helen Elaine Lee (CMS/W)

Research Activities

WGS faculty affiliates conduct research on a broad range of topics, extending from theories of justice and feminist philosophy to the anthropology of reproduction, French adoption policy, the implications of domestic deindustrialization and long-term unemployment, the politics of the production and consumption of food, women in Mongolian electoral politics, South Asian immigrant communities in the United States, gender and technology, Vladimir Putin and Russian masculinity, Taiwanese women politicians, the history of Turkish and Armenian feminism, and the changing cultural politics of nature and citizenship. Faculty affiliates continued to make active contributions to their individual disciplinary fields as well as to the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies. Their accomplishments and service are listed in the reports of their home departments.

The WGS Intellectual Forum provides an opportunity for faculty affiliates and visiting scholars, as well as the occasional outside colleague, to share research and present their work in progress. WGS hosted a very successful forum series in AY2018 featuring the work of Nick Montfort, Sasha Costanza-Chock, Joaquin Terrones, Kimberly Juanita Brown, Nneka Dennie, and Kera Street.

Teaching and Curriculum

WGS offers a range of undergraduate subjects, including many that are cross listed in other units: Anthropology, CMS/W, Global Studies and Languages (GSL), History, Linguistics and Philosophy, Literature, and the Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS). Students can concentrate and minor in women's and gender studies and can petition for an interdisciplinary major, either for a split degree with science or

engineering (21E/S) or as a full humanities degree (21). WGS offered nearly 30 subjects during AY2018, including WGS.101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies in both fall and spring, and enrolled a total of 462 students.

WGS subjects during AY2018 were as follows:

- WGS.101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
- WGS.109 Women and Global Activism in Media and Politics
- WGS.110 Sexual and Gender Identities
- WGS.111J/CMS.619J Gender and Media Studies
- WGS.125J/CMS.616J Games and Culture
- WGS.140/21L.504 Race and Identity in American Literature
- WGS.142 Narrative and Identity: Writing and Film by Contemporary Women of Color
- WGS.145J/21L.020J Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-between
- WGS.151 Gender, Health, and Society
- WGS.155 Global Sexualities
- WGS.172/21A111 For Love and Money: Rethinking the Family
- WGS.181 Queer Cinema
- WGS.190/21H.106/21L.008/21W.741 Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies
- WGS.222J/21H.381J Women and War
- WGS.224 Race, Gender and Social Inequality: Reproductive Health Care in the United States
- WGS.226/STS.023 Science, Gender and Social Inequality in the Developing World
- WGS.228 The Psychology of Sex and Gender
- WGS.229 Race, Culture and Gender in the U.S. and Beyond: A Psychological Perspective
- WGS.231J/21W.742J Writing About Race
- WGS.235/21G044 Classics of Chinese Literature in Translation
- WGS.236/21G.030 Introduction to East Asian Culture: From Zen to K-Pop
- WGS.240/21L.473 Jane Austen
- WGS.245/21L.480 Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures
- WGS.301J/24.237J Feminist Thought
- WGS.S10 History of Women in Science and Engineering
- WGS.S10 Sex, Race, and the Visual

WGS's ongoing curriculum development prioritizes subjects tailored to meet the needs of MIT students, including gender- and STEM-related subjects, as well as the global and comparative study of women and gender, with special attention given to the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. In response to student demand, WGS continued to offer two sections of WGS.101, a required course for all WGS concentrators, minors, and majors, enabling approximately 50 students per year to explore the field at the introductory level. Lecturer Joaquin Terrones developed and offered a new course, WGS.245/21L.480 Queer Literatures, that was fully enrolled and highly regarded. It will be offered again in AY2019, along with the new WGS.181 Queer Cinema course, which was developed by lecturer Karl Surkan in AY2017 and enrolled well during its second year. Also, Liz Janiak developed a new course on reproductive politics in the United States that did well in its first year and will be offered again in spring 2019. Both that course and WGS.151 Gender, Health, and Society offered public health approaches to humanities topics and were enthusiastically received; WGS.151 enrolls at capacity each term it is offered. In response to student enthusiasm for public health perspectives, WGS has developed a new class on HIV/AIDS in the United States that will be led by Terrones. Both WGS.228 The Psychology of Sex and Gender and WGS.229 Race, Culture and Gender in the U.S. and Beyond: A Psychological Perspective support the preparation of pre-health students for the new Medical College Admission Test requirements on gender/race analysis.

Highlights and Accomplishments

WGS programming addresses a wide spectrum of academic disciplines and issues related to the field of women's and gender studies and reflects the program's commitment to collaborative work with groups across the MIT campus and the Cambridge/Boston community. In AY2018, WGS collaborated with academic units such as Anthropology, CMS/W, GSL, GCWS, History, Literature, the Department of Political Science, the School of Architecture and Planning, and STS, as well as non-academic units such as OME, ICEO, OMP, GECD, the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education, Residential Life, LBGTQ Services and the Rainbow Lounge, MindHandHeart, and the Office of Religious Life. WGS also worked with and supported student groups including BWA, BSU, Mujeres Latinas, LBGTQ@MIT, Graduate Women at MIT, the Cheney Room, and Sloan Women at MIT. Programming highlights from AY2018 are outlined below.

My Sister's Keeper, established in fall 2015, is an organization of black women students, faculty members, and staff members that is based in WGS. It was initiated as a collaborative effort of Professor Lee, OME director DiOnetta Jones Crayton, OMP director La-Tarri Cauty, former counseling dean Ayida Mthembu, and former assistant dean for graduate education Eboney Hearn. It is governed by a board consisting of the founding members, WGS program manager Emily Neill and program assistant Sophia Hasenfus, GSL faculty member Amah Edoh, Suraiya Baluch (MIT Medical), JJ Jackson (Office of the Provost), Literature staff members Daria Johnson and Chloe Jones, and student members Jennifer Nwenyi and Nonye Chinonyelum.

MSK was established to foster community among MIT's black women and to support black women students with social, professional, and mentoring relationships. MSK hopes to provide emotional and psychological support, foster kinship and community, strengthen academic performance, and cultivate engagement in social, political, and

cultural matters beyond the classroom. Each year, MSK holds four core events to which all of its members are invited. In AY2018 MSK developed a new program, Spontaneous Sisters, to supplement its core events and provide ways for its members to gather casually and spontaneously to talk, get to know one another, and support each other at MIT. The program's members gathered for trips to museums, musical performances, and other cultural events.

In the fall, MSK hosted a welcome back BBQ and co-sponsored the MIT Reads fall book selection, *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. With the MIT Libraries, MSK hosted a panel discussion, "Gender, Race and Place: Perspectives on Adichie's *Americanah*." Panelists were MLK Visiting Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown, predoctoral fellow Nneka Dennie, GSL assistant professor Amah Edoh, and Professor Lee. In the spring, the MSK Embracing Opportunities & Challenges: Our Recent Graduates career panel featured five recent MIT black women graduates. MSK collaborated with the African, Black, American, Caribbean Employee Resource Group to bring award-winning local artist Ekua Holmes for her presentation "This Little Light." MSK wrapped up the year with an end-of-term celebration in which music, Ethiopian food, and books by black women authors were provided. MSK had a very successful third year, and WGS is working to plan its activities for AY2019.

WGS brought scholar and activist Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor of Princeton University to campus in September 2017. Author of *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, Taylor spoke on "Race, Class and #BlackLivesMatter in the Trump Era" to a packed audience composed of members of the MIT and Boston-area communities.

The biannual McMillan-Stewart Lecture Series on Women in the Developing World continued to attract attention and attendance across and beyond the Institute. Suad Joseph, distinguished research professor of anthropology and gender, sexuality, and women's studies at the University of California, Davis, delivered the fall lecture, "State of the Arab Family and the Family of the Arab State." Her talk was followed by a faculty dinner with colleagues from neighboring universities. She lectured in Professor Lerna Ekmekçioğlu's Women and War class during her visit. In the spring, as described above, the McMillan-Stewart lecture was expanded to a two-day workshop, Feminist Interventions in Armenian Studies, Armenian Interventions in Feminist Studies.

WGS partnered with GCWS to produce Boston's ninth annual Women Take the Reel Film Festival, held during Women's History Month. Films were screened throughout the month of March at the 10 participating academic institutions, with screenings followed by discussions with film directors and producers, film protagonists, and/or faculty members. This year WGS was able to screen politically relevant films by women at the List Visual Arts Center's Bartos Theatre. The opening film at MIT was *Kiki*, which profiles several young LGBT people of color participating in contemporary ball culture. The film's director and co-writer, Sara Jordeno, led a discussion following the film. The second film in the series was the documentary *Birthright: A War Story*, which tells the stories of women who are directly affected by aggressive anti-choice efforts regarding reproductive health care. Co-executive producer and writer Luchina Fischer led an impassioned discussion after the screening. The final film, *Step*, canceled due to a snow closing, was rescheduled and shown during the MIT Day of Action in April. MLK

Visiting Professor Kimberly Juanita Brown discussed the documentary, which chronicles the trials and triumphs of a group of high school senior girls on a step team in Baltimore.

The WTTR film festival has been an important way for WGS to bring pertinent and difficult material to the campus in a setting that allows for open discussion and dialogue while providing exposure for women directors who are often ignored by the larger film industry. On average, each screening draws 50 to 75 people from across MIT and other participating schools, and the festival is highly anticipated by the communities that have come to rely on its screenings to expose them to new filmmakers and provide dialogues about challenging issues.

In addition to WTTR, WGS sponsored a fall film series titled Organizing Women with five films, including *Clean In* and *Pride*. The series was co-sponsored by Radius and the MIT Women's League and organized by Professor Ruth Perry (Literature).

In the fall, WGS co-sponsored (with MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning and the School of Architecture and Planning) an interdisciplinary lecture addressing a proposed shift to make multi-stall bathrooms on campus accessible to people of all genders, ages, sizes, and abilities. The lecture, "From Stud to Stalled!: Social Equity and Public Space," featured architect Joel Sanders and trans rights lawyer Shiona Heru.

In February, WGS brought writer Jennifer Finney Boylan to the campus for a reading of her work; the event was co-sponsored by ICEO, the MIT Libraries, the School of Architecture and Planning, and Sloan Student Life. A novelist, memoirist, columnist, and short story writer, Boylan is also a nationally known advocate for civil rights whose 2003 memoir, *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*, was the first bestselling work by a transgender American.

During a visit to the campus in March, Stanford University historian Estelle Freedman, whose work focuses on US women's history and feminist studies, provided a historical context for the #MeToo movement in her lecture "Sexual Violence and Citizenship: Rape Reform in American History."

WGS worked with the SHASS dean's office, Literature, CMS/W, and the Center for Art, Science and Technology to host a daylong visit by poet Tyehimba Jess in April. He met with students taking classes in creative writing and poetry for a classroom Q&A session and luncheon and gave a reading of his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Olio*, to a packed and enthusiastic audience.

WGS co-sponsored the half-day GCWS Higher Ed in the Era of #MeToo symposium and the daylong Sonic/Scenes symposium discussed earlier.

WGS presented its annual Kampf Writing Prize to two students this year. Daniel Guberek, a junior from Bogota, Colombia, and Miami who is majoring in physics, received a prize for his short story "Houses in Motion." Jae Hyun Kim, a senior from Seoul, Korea, majoring in materials science and engineering and minoring in literature, was presented a prize for her essay "Situating Cassy Within Stowe's Feminist Ideology."

Administrative Initiatives

Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Initiatives

In AY2018, WGS continued to develop its new initiatives, My Sister's Keeper and Hermanas Unidas; MLK Visiting Scholar Lorgia García Peña will serve as the faculty mentor for Hermanas Unidas during AY2019. In addition, WGS participated in the MLK Visiting Professors and Scholars Program by hosting Kimberly Juanita Brown, sponsored predoctoral diversity fellow Nneka Dennie, and successfully applied to sponsor an AY2019 predoctoral diversity fellow, Misty DeBarry. WGS worked with many student groups, other units, MIT organizations, and members of the community beyond MIT on issues related to equity, inclusion, and diversity. In response to student requests, WGS also continued its outreach and programming for queer and trans communities.

Issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity are inextricable and foundational aspects of the WGS curriculum. Analysis of the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and other identity categories is fundamental to the approach of WGS subjects. Examples of such courses during AY18 include WGS.109 Women and Global Activism in Media and Politics; WGS.140 Race and Identity in American Literature; WGS.155 Global Sexualities; WGS.190 Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies; WGS.224 Race, Gender, and Social Inequality: Reproductive Health Care in the United States; WGS.225 The Science of Race, Sex, and Gender; WGS.229 Race, Culture, and Gender in the U.S. and Beyond: A Psychological Perspective; WGS.231 Writing About Race; and WGS.S10 Sex, Race, and the Visual.

Reenvisioning and Reorganization

In AY2016, WGS began working to become more inclusive and to strengthen and broaden its community. It reached out to underrepresented communities and both expanded and diversified its programming. In addition, it revamped its physical space to accommodate its community of students, lecturers, faculty members, and administrative staff members. WGS created a workspace for lecturers who do not have their own offices and created a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive place to attract students and build community. Also, WGS redesigned its website to reflect these new priorities, to be consonant with the current state of the discipline, and to better reflect faculty research, curriculum, programming, and other endeavors. Program assistant Sophia Hasenfus has helped to establish and expand WGS's social media presence and to reach across the Institute to draw diverse students, faculty, and staff to the unique programming offered by WGS. WGS looks forward to continuing and fine-tuning these efforts in the coming year.

Finances and Funding

In addition to its base budget, WGS receives support from the SHASS dean's office for classes, conferences, and other programming and also benefits from programming co-sponsorship with various units across MIT (as noted above). Another source of funding has been the Geneviève McMillan-Reba Stewart Professorship in the Study of Women in the Developing World and the McMillan-Stewart Lecture Series on Women in the Developing World, established in 1996 and endowed by Geneviève McMillan, a passionate believer in equal justice and opportunity. The McMillan-Stewart Chair is

held by WGS affiliate professor Lerna Ekmekçioğlu, who teaches two WGS courses (WGS.222J/21H.381J Women and War and WGS.220 Women in the Middle East and North Africa) and has organized a new graduate-level theory course on gender with Elizabeth Wood, WGS affiliate and interim director (for AY2019). As chair, she organizes the McMillan-Stewart Lecture Series.

WGS looks forward to continuing to work with the SHASS development office to identify potential donors and to help make the Capital Campaign a success. WGS received an important five-year commitment from the SHASS dean's office, starting in AY2018, for an additional two subjects per year so that it can develop new course offerings based on student interest and demand without having to drop other popular offerings. WGS has developed two new subjects for AY2019, one focusing on HIV/AIDS in the United States and one addressing art history through the lens of gender.

WGS continues to advocate that the Cheney Room be reconfigured to provide event and classroom space over which WGS would have priority, in order to support more inclusive WGS programming. Finally, while WGS has been able to rework its physical space to accommodate its community members, it continues to lack storage space and looks forward to the return of the other half of the conference room (which is currently library space) after the renovation of Building 14.

Helen Elaine Lee

Director

Professor, MIT Comparative Media Studies/Writing