THE 11th ANNUAL GENDER RESEARCH CONFERENCE

“Women and Poverty in the Global Economy”

Thursday March 15, 2012
9am-5:00m

The University Center:
Cardinal, Catamount, Dogwood, Multipurpose Room, Grand rooms A & B and UC Theatre.
Presented by Western Carolina University, and the Women’s Studies Minor.

9:00 Registration Table Opens

Grand Room A 9:30 – 10:45
Invited Address

The Role Of Women In The Fight Against Global Poverty
by
Derreck Kayongo

Kayongo's journey from child refugee to fearless visionary is filled with moments of inspiration (along with the benefits of good, old-fashioned sweat equity) that make him one of the most popular and authentic speakers on the circuit today. From Africa to Atlanta with nothing but a dream and tenacity, Kayongo beat the odds, earned an education, and has served in leadership roles in some of the world’s most respected NGOs since 1994. Today, he shares his vivacious spirit and invaluable experience in the areas entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, global health, social justice and professional engagement with audiences in both the corporate and not-for-profit worlds.

Derreck Kayongo's ability to motivate others to understand the role their work and skills can play in problem solving is one of the many reasons was as a 2011 CNN Hero finalist. Add to that the mantra of being a voice for the voiceless through his noble work of giving back, including dedicating his life to improving the lives of marginalized and vulnerable people across the globe: he has worked with the American Friends Service Committee as Program Director for the Southeast Peace Education program; joined Amnesty International as the Director of the Southeast Region; and currently serves as Senior Advocacy Coordinator for the Southeast region with CARE International.

In 2009, Kayongo and his wife Sarah embarked on a new journey pursuing their life-long passion of starting an NGO of their own. The Global Soap Project focuses on repurposing partially-used soap from hotels into new soap for needy populations, particularly in Africa. To date, The Global Soap Project has been able to donate 9,000 bars of soap to Swaziland, 5,000 bars to Kenya, 10,000 to Ghana, 1000 to Uganda and another 3,000 thousand to Haiti.
Title: How the 'Benefit of the Doubt' Argument against Anita Hill Bought Clarence Thomas's Seat on the U.S. Supreme Court

When Anita Hill came forward in October 1991, accusing U.S. Supreme Court nominee, Clarence Thomas, of sexual harassment, Congressmen accused Hill of insanity, being in love with Thomas, and lying. Hill testified that Thomas made sexually harassing remarks to her at the EEOC in the 1980s. With the Judiciary Committee's vote scheduled for October 15, 1991, the Bush White House cooked up a scheme taking advantage of the hearings' semi-legal nature. Utilizing transcripts from weekend media appearances by pro-Thomas members of Congress, this research shows how the Bush White House handlers used a "benefit of the doubt" legal argument to destroy the impact of Hill's testimony.

Presenters: Dr. Pamela Maize Harris, Assistant Professor of Communication, Communication Department, Western Carolina University and Stephen Yount, Communications Major

Title: "What Year IS this anyway? Priests, Politicians and the War on Women, 2012

This presentation will focus on recent sociopolitical issues that represent a real impact on women, especially women in poverty, but all women will feel the impact of changes that have already happened and those being proposed.

Presenters: Dr. Mary Jean Ronan Herzog, School of Teaching and Learning, and Dr. Mickey Randolph, Department of Psychology, College of Education and Allied Professions, Western Carolina University
**CATAMOUNT ROOM:**

*Title: The Serpent, Goddess and Women in the Bible.*

The serpent is one of the symbols used to represent Goddesses by those who worship them. Over time various symbols were used each with a distinct purpose. We explore how those symbols are represented in the Bible. We argue that the purpose of these images is not only to demonstrate evils but the evils of Goddess worship. In addition we examine how these images are related to women in the Bible and if their association is related to oppression of women.

Presenters: **Joy Cagle**, Philosophy and Religion, Women's Studies minor and **Dr. Marilyn Chamberlin**, Anthropology and Sociology and Director of Women's Studies Western Carolina University

**DOGWOOD ROOM**

*Title: Emerging Voices of Resilient Jamaican Women*

This paper uses the framework of risk and resilience in a qualitative study that examines the protective factors affecting the educational attainment of 26 Jamaican women in a graduate program in education. All of these women rose from poverty to become successful, success being defined as having attained graduate student status. The protective factors found in these women can be categorized under three broad umbrellas: strong personal identity traits such as self-efficacy; positive relationships that served as sources of support; and the ability to reframe barriers to success.

Presenter: **Dr. Sharon Dole**, Professor of Special Education, School of Teaching and Learning, Western Carolina University

**ROGERS ROOM:**

*Title: Hybrid representation: Embodied Pedagogical Agent Interface Design*

This research investigated the design of embodied pedagogical interface agents. The ultimate aim of the research is to provide design guidelines for pedagogical agents that go beyond the current "one size fits all" mentality to encompass issues of race and gender in a way that provides meaningful learning experiences for a greater number of persons. The purpose of the research was to examine self-construction of embodied pedagogical interface agents to identify issues of race, gender, and other design characteristics. Grounded Theory methodology was employed to provide insight into the design and creation of each participant's pedagogical interface agent.

Presenter: **Dr. Katherine R.B.Greysen**, Associate Dean, Graduate School and Research, Western Carolina University
POSTER SESSIONS
Grand Room 11:00 - 12:30

Title: Children and Poverty: Issues and Solutions

This presentation will review the current research literature on the most pertinent issues that impoverished children face as well as possible solutions to these problems.

Presenter: Jim Taylor, Psychology Major, WCU

Title: Gender and Tattoos

This study looks at the differences between men and women in their type of tattoo, location of tattoo and number of tattoos. Participants included 200 undergraduate students at WCU. Participants completed a demographic survey that identifies a variety of family, school, and personal information, in addition to specific details regarding their tattoo and the M5-336 a measure of five domains of personality. The five domains include: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. It is hypothesized that women who have tattoos will score higher on neuroticism than males with tattoos. This study has many implications for the kinds of personality traits men and women who get tattoos may have according to if and where they get them and may add to the growing body of literature on this generational phenomenon.

Presenters: Alyssa Gardner, David Chandler, Katie Salmon, Drs, Mickey Randolph and Candace Boan-Lenko Psychology majors and professors, WCU

Title: What is Sex? How Students in a Small Southern University Define Sex Compared to National Studies

Beginning with studies done by the Kinsey Institute in the 1990s several researchers have asked the question what it means to “have sex.” The current study expands the previous findings by focusing on college students in the south at a smaller university in the Bible Belt. Students answered questions about behaviors they consider constituting “having sex” and what behaviors constituted “having sex” if their partners participated in these activities with another person. Students were polled on eleven behaviors in a yes or no format. The behaviors ranged from deep kissing to vaginal intercourse. We also added sexual history to the analysis which is a new element not done in the previous studies. Another interesting demographic question asked of the participants was if they had ever cheated on a partner to test if sexual experience and fidelity history had an effect on what the person considered “sex.” The findings indicate that what is considered “having sex” varies for a number of variables. T-tests, ANOVAs and Chi Square tests were performed on the data to identify the influence of sex, age, history of fidelity, and history of sexual experience student’s definitions of what it means to have sex. In addition the results from this study were compared to past studies from other countries and larger universities to see if there are nationality and regional differences. Our study has many implications for the sexual health of college students and shows that some modification is needed in the sexual health services college campuses provide.
It also provides insight specifically to the college health center in what information they need to give to the students about sexual health and protection.

Presenters: Jessica Trapp, Alyssa Gardner, Jenna Cordrey and Dr. Marilyn Chamberlin
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Title: Gender and High School Dropouts: A Case Study

High school dropout, or early school withdrawal, is a complex problem that can result from factors in all life domains. This study examined various factors related to differences in self-reported reasons for prematurely withdrawing from school. One of the factors examined was gender. Specifically, this study looked at differences between males and females in terms of the frequency with which they drop out, the reasons given for dropping out, and the impact of being retained in grade on the likelihood of dropping out.

Presenters: Marquessa Chappell, School Psychology Graduate Student and Dr. Lori Unruh, Western Carolina University

Title: Gender differences in perceptions of potential romantic partners: Casual versus formal manner of speech.

Evolutionary theory predicts gender differences in mating strategies such that males should be attracted to cues pertaining to youth/fertility whereas women should be attracted to cues pertaining to status/resources. The present study tested whether the manner of speech style used in a personal ad (formal versus casual) would transmit this type of information to a potential mate. Participants (N = 96) read a randomly assigned personal ad and indicated their dating interest. As predicted, men were more responsive to the casual speech style whereas women preferred the formal speech style, but this effect only emerged for single participants.

Presenters: Leasha Nuhfer, Psychology Major and Dr. Erin Myers, Western Carolina University

Title: Can Children Really Become Transgender?

One of the developmental tasks children face as they mature is establishing a sense of identity – part if this is establishing a gender identity. For most children, gender identity is not an issue as most children will accept the sex category they are assigned - meaning girls will be stereotypical girls and boys with be stereotypical boys. Sometimes, this is not the case as with children who are transgendered. Children who are transgender are often questioned about their behavior, their expressed wishes to be the opposite sex and even professionals debate about this issue in terms of the appropriate course of action. This poster will examine the concept of transgender, the impact on a child who self labels transgendered, the process, and the issues they may face.

Presenter: Katie Salmons, Psychology major, Western Carolina University
Title: **VENUS OF THE 21st CENTURY**

 Drawing inspiration from the Venus di Milo, a photo shoot featuring plus-size model (Katie Halchishick) who’s body was literally marked with the incisions necessary for her to attain Barbie’s body and America’s growing obsession with physical appearance, my model resembles Venus to juxtapose natural beauty with fabrication. She wears a flesh-toned, latex body suit outlined with numerous, but typical “procedural markings” of plastic surgery. Various body parts are wrapped in a tape measure and as she moves, the rubber rubs against itself and squeaks, giving observers an aural reminder that more modifications one makes, the less real one actually comes.

**Presenter:** Casey Weems, **Department:** Stage and Screen, Western Carolina University

Title: **Gender role conformity influences perceptions of political competence**

The present study examined perceptions of gender role conformity and political competence in six current female politicians. Participants (N = 252) were presented with photos and brief biographical information for each woman such as current position, political affiliation, marital status, and number of children (0 – 6). Participants were asked to provide ratings of political competence and attributes pertaining to gender role conformity (e.g., niceness, modesty). As predicted, gender role conformity was positively associated with perceptions of political competence. Conversely, violating gender expectations (e.g., not having children) was associated with more negative perceptions of political competence but only among Republicans.

**Presenters:** Dr. Erin M. Myers and Olivia Muse, Psychology Department, Western Carolina University

Title: **(Little) Women in Technology: First Grade Girls’ Responses and Interactions with Computers in the Context of Digital Storytelling**

This poster/presentation will share qualitative data from a research project involving first graders in the construction of digital stories. Girls in this setting demonstrate their fascination and proficiency with technology and challenge the stereotypical view that girls aren’t interested in or adept with computers. The presentation will share the girls’ comments, work samples, and photos working with technology. It will also locate the issue of girls in technology in the larger context of women's empowerment through access to education and participation in technology careers.

**Presenter:** Dr. Nancy Luke, Assistant Professor, Elementary Education and Digital Literacy, School of Teaching and Learning, College of Education and Allied Professions, Western Carolina University
Title: Drugs, Alcohol and the College Student

According to the previous research, males are more likely to experiment with drugs, including alcohol. One of the previous research articles found that females are becoming more prone to doing drugs as much as the males. Based off the previous research, the researchers proposed four research questions. The information found for their research was based upon data that was prior to the evaluation of the study. Researchers only found significant differences in gender. Significant gender differences were found in chewing tobacco and smoking tobacco, in which males dominated. Ecstasy was the only drug also as significant as the previous two drugs. Males also reported more drinking alcohol than females. In conclusion, the researchers would like to implement prevention program.

Presenters: Kenya Crocker, Kayla Skitztzi, Jena Cordrey, Dr. Mickey Randolph and Dr. Candace Boan-Lenzo, Department of Psychology, Western Carolina University

LUNCH 12:15 – 1:30 ILLUSIONS
Lunch is $10 per person

Address

"Position, Power and Pay among WCU Faculty Women"

Dr Mary Jean Ronan Herzog

PRESENTATIONS
2:05 - 3:20

CARDINALROOM

Title: Rural Women: A Global Perspective

In February, Jennie Ashlock of Sylva participated in the UN Commission on the Status of Women gathering in NYC. The conference, which annually hosts over 2,000 women from across the world, focused on global issues affecting rural women. Ms. Ashlock was one of 40 delegates attending through A.W.E. (Anglican Women’s Empowerment). A.W.E. also brought-over several women from Africa to share their stories of working with American organizations. Ms. Ashlock will share an overview of UN CSW, information and stories from the African delegates and opportunities for college students to get involved.

Presenter: Jennie Ashlock, Anglican Womens Empowerment
CATAMOUNT ROOM:

Title: "Sharing" Feminism: The Promise of Social Media for 21st Century Feminist Consciousness Raising

In a socio-historical moment in which most college students cringe at the label "feminist," can social media (Facebook, Twitter, Tumbler, etc.) be used to as a tool of feminist consciousness raising? How can social media subvert notions of feminism that rely on girl power as opposed to systematic challenges to gender inequality? How does one represent complex ideas in an artifact that can be shared via social media? In this session, students currently enrolled in Sociology 494 “Feminist Theory” explore these questions. They describe the process of crafting social media artifacts that reflect feminist ideas and sharing these artifacts online. Finally, we consider the possibilities and limitations of employing social media to transform gender inequality.

Presenter: Dr. Heather Laine Talley, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Department of Anthropology & Sociology, Western Carolina University and Feminist Theory Students

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM:

Title: Mutualism: Toward a Humane Valuing of the Feminine

Although we have been assured that women have gained complete equality with men, the statistics, news and case studies still show that women suffer from gender inequities. In this paper, I examine the historical origins and problems of feminism and offer a plan for an alternative social movement: mutualism. I will conclude by examining some aspects of Christian feminism and some recent men’s movements: Founding Fathers (secular), Promise Keepers (religious), and The ManKind Project (somewhere in between). I conclude by suggesting that only a movement toward a revolutionary, mutual respect between men and women can answer the woman question.

Presenter: Dr. Constance W. Foss, Department: Intensive English, International Programs, Western Carolina University

DOGWOOD ROOM

Title: Mass sexual abuse and homicide of young women in Ciudad Juarez

In this research to be presented as part of the Gender Conference, it will be researching the mass sexual abuse and homicide of young women in Ciudad Juarez, the city located in Chihuahua, Mexico. Throughout in depth examinations of the situation, it will attempt to shed light on the connection between the homicides and situations of poverty in Juarez, as well as the current drug problem facing most of Mexico. Furthermore, the research will be looking closer at the ways in which similar problems are occurring in other parts of the country, while also questioning why this is such a major problem in Juarez, particularly. Hopefully, this analysis of the situation will point to better solutions to the murders and their underlying causes.

Presenter: Madison Hodgson, Department of English, Western Carolina University
Title: When Being Latina Matters: An Autoethnography and Theory Construction

Within the first few seconds of being “called back” in a medical encounter, a patient is often bombarded by people checking their vitals, asking medical related question, and poking and prodding them with instruments that often seem odd and misshaped. Good medical care depends on a patient being perceived as a person of who deserves fair and equal treatment. In this autoethnography, I consider what it means to be a Latina patient and its effects on my own personal medical health outcomes. I explore how negative my experiences can be when I go to doctor’s offices on my own but how bringing a health advocate (for example my white, middle class mother) can counter my Latina status and positively affect my health outcome for the better. I use this experience to ask how patients with devalued statuses might use health advocates (that appear normative by societal standards) to counter their own devalued status to improve their health outcomes.

Presenter: Eliana Clarke, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Western Carolina University

Title: Hidden Dimensions of Sorority Life: Cultural Dimensions of Mental Illness?

This paper examines the proposal of a new model of the social construction of mental illness. The current model of the social construction of mental illness suggests that those who engage in deviant behavior are labeled mentally ill by society in order to explain and understand likely social interactions with that individual. This newly proposed model suggests that many people are labeled mentally ill because they follow social norms. In other words, it is not deviant behavior that contributes to the label, but rather the intense pressure placed upon the individual to follow social norms. Although this phenomenon can be applied across nearly all social contexts, this paper specifically analyzes the model as it applies to young adult women in sororities.

Presenter: Ashlee Shemery, Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Western Carolina University
CATAMOUNT ROOM

Title: Women and Children in Poverty in Western North Carolina

An overview of poverty in Western North Carolina followed by an explanation of the programs and services offered by agencies such as DSS to address poverty and include demographic and statistical information for women in Western North Carolina.

Presenters: Rebecca Green, Social Worker, Jackson County Department of Social Services and Dana Tucker, MSW, Social Worker, Fairview Elementary School

DOGWOOD ROOM

Title: One Man Away From Welfare

Gloria Steinem famously said, "Most women are one man away from welfare". Come explore this statement as it affects each of our own lives, and the lives of those affected by domestic violence. This talk gives the facts about real women in Jackson County, as well as empowers students and women alike in their look to the future.

Presenter: Jennifer Dirkes, OutREACH Coordinator, Now closed Reach of Jackson, Inc.

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM:

Title: The First Lady “Pet Projects” and Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria

This paper examines the First Lady “pet project” phenomenon in Nigeria since 1999 when the country re-introduced democratic governance and its role in poverty alleviation and empowerment of women. Cutting across the confines of ethnicity, political affiliation and religion, the First Lady “pet projects” remain one of the most potent approaches adopted by women to create political and economic agency within Nigeria’s patriarchal democracy. I examine the merits and demerits of First Lady “pet project” within the seemingly intractable problems of democratic governance and the challenges of nation-building in Africa’s most populous country.

Presenter: Dr. Saheed Aderinto, Assistant Professor of History Department, Western Carolina University