

ILLUSTRATION BY ERI GRIFFINI

WOMEN FACULTY FORUM ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

WFF was established in 2001 by senior women faculty during Yale's Tercentennial year to highlight the presence of women at the University and the accomplishments of Yale alumnae. Since its inception, and with the support of the President and Provost of Yale, WFF has evolved into an organization of women faculty who work together to:

- Foster gender equity throughout the University through policy initiatives and research
- Promote scholarship by women and on women and gender across all schools of the University
- Create mentoring and networking opportunities

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

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WFF Leadership



Naomi Rogers is Professor of the History of Medicine in the Section of the History of Medicine and the Program in the History of Science and Medicine at Yale University, with courtesy appointments in the History Department and the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program. She regularly teaches undergraduates, graduate students, and medical students. Her historical interests include gender and health; disease and public health; disability; medicine and film; and alternative medicine/CAM.

Her publications include *Dirt and Disease: Polio before FDR* (Rutgers, 1992), *An Alternative Path: The Making and Remaking of Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of*

Philadelphia (Rutgers, 1998) and *Polio Wars: Sister Kenny and the Golden Age of American Medicine* (Oxford, 2014). Her current book project examines critics of medical orthodoxy since 1945 (*Health Activism and the Humanization of American Medicine under contract with Oxford*).

Naomi is joined by chair elect **Reina Maruyama**, an Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy specializing in nuclear and particle astrophysics, in particular, in dark matter and neutrinos; **Nancy Ruther**, former Associate Director of The MacMillan Center and Lecturer in Political Science, serves as WFF's Senior Higher Education and Strategy Fellow. Much of her earlier research focused on how U.S. federal policy affects the international capacity of the U.S. higher education system. She is now turning her research interests to the interactions of globalization in the higher education system; and **Oana Capatina**, a graduate of Yale Divinity School, was this year's WFF Gender Equity and Policy Postgraduate Associate. Oana was succeeded by **October Mohr**, a graduate of Yale Divinity School and Berkeley Divinity School, whose research is at the intersection of transgender and gender non-conforming population health and religion/spirituality.

Note from the Chair:

COVID was the defining issue for my year as WFF President (2020-2021). All meetings suddenly took place online as we all worked from our kitchens (in Matt Jacobsen's memorable words) and, like most of Yale, our WFF office on Whitney Avenue was deserted. At a time when it was a challenge to try to maintain a sense of community cohesion, the events that WFF organized and co-sponsored became even more important. We had two wonderful discussions of women and art that drew audience members from as far as North Carolina and California. We also arranged a series of well attended events on professional leadership and on anti-bias strategies. The highlight of the year for me was the Elga Wasserman Courage, Clarity and Leadership Award ceremony in April 2021, a new WFF Award that honored its first recipient Stephanie Spangler. Zoom enabled us to host participants from around the world, including Yale's President and Provost, members of Elga's family, and former Provost Alison Richards who spoke from England. Everyone was smiling and joyful, not emotions you often see on Zoom.

WFF was an active participant in debates around issues that did not begin with COVID but were exacerbated by it. Gender and diversity equity were central goals throughout the year, and we sought to highlight inequalities worsened by working from home. Yale policies regarding childcare and caregiving was a particular focus. The Yale Childcare Consultative Committee (YCCC) was a newly created coalition drawn from diverse groups of the Yale community, including WFF, the FAS Senate, SWIM, the Working Women's Network, the Yale Postdoctoral Association, the Yale Black Postdoctoral Association, and local Yale Unions Local 34 and 35 UNITE HERE. To raise greater awareness across the Yale community we had regular meetings with members of Provost's Office, organized a WFF #kid-in twitter storm in October 2020 and a *Yale Daily News* guest editorial "Yale Needs Pandemic Plan for Working Parents" published in December. Among other changes, the Provost approved 30 more Crisis Care backup days, a satisfying victory but only a step toward affordable and accessible childcare facilities.

I am grateful to the WFF's extraordinarily skilled and indomitable team: Chair Elect (now Chair) Reina Maruyama, Higher Education Strategy Fellow Nancy Ruther, Graduate Fellows Katina Calakos, Chloe Chen-Kraus, Patrice Collins, Annabelle Hutchinson, Karina Lopez and Sourav Sinha, and especially WFF Postgraduate Associate Oana Capatina. This group gave me sustenance and energy.

Best,
Naomi Rogers
WFF Chair

Professor of History of Medicine, Section of the History of Medicine (YSM) and Program in the History of Science and Medicine (FAS)

Membership

The Yale Women Faculty Forum is the only university-wide organization advocating for gender equity across all departments and schools. Our current structure includes a Former Chair, Current Chair, Chair-Elect, and a steering committee composed of faculty from across the University. Our membership is open to all faculty ranks.

Steering & Council

[Rene Almeling](#): Associate Professor of Sociology and, by courtesy, American Studies, Public Health, and Medicine

[Jasmina Besirevic-Regan](#): Assistant Dean for Graduate Education; Lecturer, Sociology and Ethics, Politics & Economics

[Kim Blenman](#): Associate Research Scientist, Medical Oncology

[Claire Bower](#): Chair 2017-2020; Professor of Linguistics

[Lynette Bowring](#): Assistant Professor Adjunct of Music History, Yale School of Music

[Jessica Brantley](#): Professor of English, Department Chair

[Susan Busch](#): Professor of Public Health (Health Policy) and Professor in the Institution for Social and Policy Studies

[Elisa Celis](#): Assistant Professor of Statistics & Data Science

[Marta Figlerowicz](#): Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and of English

[Dana Karwas](#): Lecturer in Architecture

[Paula Kavathas](#): Chair 2013-2017, Professor of Laboratory Medicine, of Immunobiology and of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology; Vice Chair of Diversity, Immunobiology; Institutional Leader, CIRTl Network

[Danya Keene](#): Associate Professor of Public Health (Social & Behavioral Sciences)

[Kelsey Martin](#): Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine (Hematology)

[Reina Maruyama](#): Incoming Chair 2020-2021, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy

[Beth McGuire](#): Professor in the Practice of Acting

[Mary Moschella](#): Roger J. Squire Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling

[Priyamvada Natarajan](#): Chair 2011-2014, Professor of Astronomy and Physics

[Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen](#): Assistant Dean and Professor of Architecture

[Judith Resnik](#): Chair 2001-2003 & Co-chair 2006-2008, Arthur Liman Professor of Law

[Naomi Rogers](#): Chair 2020-2021, Professor of History of Medicine and History

[Nancy Ruther](#): Senior Higher Education and Strategy Fellow, MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies (1988-2016)

[Cynthia Santos DeCure](#): Assistant Professor Adjunct of Acting

[Kim Shirkhani](#): Lecturer in English

[Nina Stachenfeld](#): Senior Research Scientist in Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences

[Meg Urry](#): Co-chair 2007-2008, Israel Munson Professor of Physics

[Laura Wexler](#): Co-chair 2008-2011, Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies & American Studies

[Amy Wrzesniewski](#): Michael H. Jordan Professor of Management

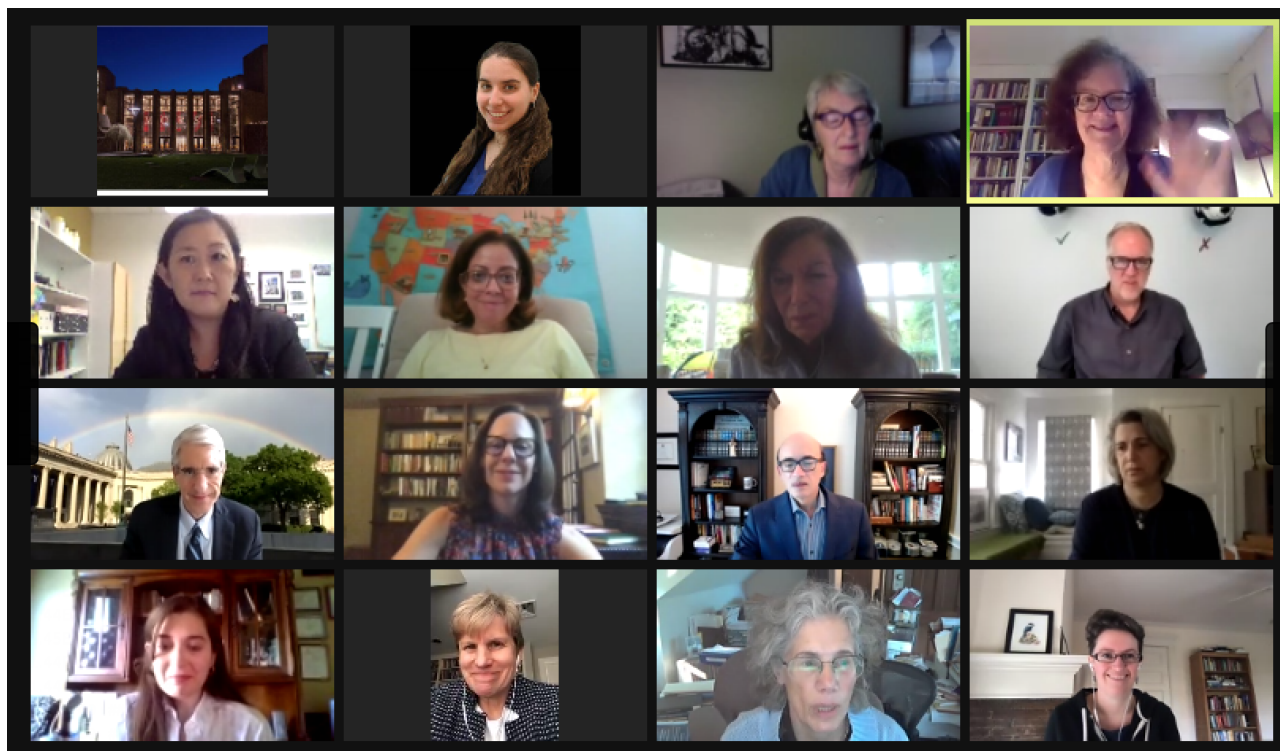
[Yuan Yao](#): Assistant Professor of Industrial Ecology and Sustainable Systems

[Anna Zayaruznaya](#): Associate Professor, Music Department

Events

WFF Annual Reception:

The Women Faculty Forum hosts an annual opening reception every fall. We held a virtual reception this year on September 15th to welcome new and returning faculty to an unprecedented year on campus. President Peter Salovey gave remarks about the future of gender equity at Yale, while Provost Scott Strobel spoke about the current childcare crisis and how it is impacting the very nature of faculty work at the University. Prof. Gary Desir, Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, discussed the university's diversity initiative, and Barbara Rockenbach spoke on her return to Yale as the University Librarian. Our guest speaker, Dean Nancy Brown of the Medical School, highlighted the ways in which we can become more proactive in preventing inequities and solidifying parity gains in faculty promotions.



Afterwards, the reception was divided into four “breakout rooms” or discussion panels:

- (1) a social meet and greet led by WFF Chair, Naomi Rogers;
- (2) a discussion about the gendered struggles of Covid-19 led by Professor Emma Zang;
- (3) a talk about the importance of approaching equity through an intersectional lens, with co-hosts Professor Cindy Crusto and WFF Chair-Elect, Reina Maruyama; and
- (4) a chat about how Covid-19 has transformed the now virtual “classroom” and traditional pedagogy hosted by Claire Bower.

In all four panels, faculty had the opportunity to hear from their colleagues about the pressing issues facing faculty, staff, and students at the University and nation-wide, and to discuss how the pandemic has made efforts to promote equity, diversity, and inclusivity all the more challenging.

Workshop Series with Laura Freebairn-Smith: Tools and Tricks for Thriving in the 'New Normal':

WFF launched a four-part, interactive workshop series with Laura Freebairn-Smith this fall called “Tools and Tricks for Thriving in the New Normal.” The series guided faculty and staff in developing new strategies to effectively manage the added time pressures of doing it all—teaching, advising, serving on academic committees, and conducting research—during the “new normal” of the Covid-19 pandemic.

<p>wff THE WOMEN FACULTY FORUM</p> <p>Presents a Four-Part Interactive Workshop Series with <u>Laura Freebairn-Smith</u></p>  <p>For more information, please visit our WFF website.</p>	<p>TOOLS AND TRICKS FOR THRIVING IN THE 'NEW NORMAL'</p> <p>1. Leading in Academia Mon Oct 19, 12:30-1:30 PM Register: https://bit.ly/30pkGJW Explore several paradoxical tensions inherent in academic leadership and life, and how to navigate them using critical leadership and management competencies.</p> <p>2. Difficult Conversations Mon Nov 2, 12:30-1:30 PM Register: https://bit.ly/3kUpDAf Learn how to decide whether to engage in difficult conversation in the first place, what stance to take when communicating, and when to consider the alternatives.</p> <p>3. Revisiting Time Management Wed Nov 11th, 12:30-1:30 PM Register: https://bit.ly/3mWsESr Discuss the evolution of time management through five stages and learn how to use the 'four questions and four choices' method for more effective time management.</p> <p>4. Building Teams-Getting from Ugh to Wow! Tues Nov 17th, 12:30-1:30 PM Register: https://bit.ly/33cPw8a Astute team leaders can recognize the seven phases of team development and help the team move through each phase at the appropriate speed and moment. Learn how to identify where your team is developmentally, and where each team member is, and discover how to manage and lead for each stage.</p>
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Laura Freebairn-Smith currently teaches leadership at Yale’s Drama School, and diversity and team building in the Executive MBA program at Yale’s School of Management. Prior to that, she served as Director of Yale’s Organizational Development and Learning Center, which she helped create. Her work and career have three major foci: leading the creation of organizational cultures; teaching and research on organizational development topics; and consulting on organizational development issues with a special emphasis on strategic planning and organizational redesign. Thumbnail sketches of the four workshops follow.

1. The first session, “Leading in Academia” was held on October 19, which explored several paradoxical tensions inherent in academic leadership and life, and how to navigate them using critical leadership and management competencies.
2. Navigating “Difficult Conversations” was the subject of the second session held on November 2. This workshop discussed how to decide whether to engage in challenging conversation in the first place, what stance to take when communicating, when to consider the alternatives, and what best practices maximize chances of a conversation going right and course-correcting those that go wrong.
3. The third session on November 11 focused on simple techniques to improve “Time Management.” The workshop offered methods to effectively manage time in order to achieve goals in the face of cultural pressures— the pressures to participate on committees, the pressures to produce a certain level of output, the pressures to sustain a certain type of personal success, and more— and to minimize the loss of productivity due to “time robbers.”
4. The fourth and final session on “Building Teams: Getting from Ugh! to Wow!” was held on November 17. The workshop aimed to explore the seven phases of team development, identify where the team is developmentally, discover how teams are organic, dynamic, entities with predictable stages, and improve management and leadership skills for each phase of development.

Breaking the Habit of Bias Workshop with Dr. Patricia Devine:



On January 28th, 2021, WFF sponsored a workshop on “Breaking the Habit of Bias” with Dr. Patricia Devine, Kenneth and Mamie Carl Professor of Psychology and the Director of the Prejudice and Intergroup Relations Lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The workshop raised awareness of why bias persists despite an individual’s rejection of prejudiced ideas. Tools to reduce implicit bias were presented with evidence for their effectiveness in

increasing faculty diversity. The event was co-sponsored by YSM Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Committee on the Status of Women in Medicine (SWIM), and Minority Organization for Retention and Expansion (MORE).

Over 200 members of the Yale community engaged in important discussions about evidence-based strategies to eliminate our unintentional biases when interviewing candidates for job applications, selecting applicants for admission, evaluating tenure and promotions, and making decisions that shape our local academic communities. Dr. Devine's tool-kit and action-oriented approach to recognizing and reducing implicit bias furthered conversations around the future of diversity, equity, and inclusion across Yale's campus.

A recording of Dr. Devine's workshop along with slides from her presentation can be found on the [WFF website](#). Dr. Devine’s research on the impact of bias training on increasing faculty diversity can also be found on the WFF webpage.

In Conversation with Tanya Marcuse and the Birthday Club:



In late October of 2020, WFF hosted an informal gathering over Zoom with Tanya Marcuse (MFA '90), the artist behind Yale Library's new exhibition, "[12 Portraits: Studies of Women at Yale](#)." The portraits featured in this exhibit were drawn from a larger series of photographs by [Tanya Marcuse](#) commissioned by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library as part of the university-wide 50 Women at Yale 150 celebration. WFF invited Tanya to chat about the inspiration behind her "12 Portraits" exhibit, her creative process, and how the SML installation relates to 50WAY150 and its efforts to increase the visibility of women's contributions, past, present, and future at Yale. 50WAY150 aimed "to showcase the depth of women's contributions to Yale and to the world, to celebrate women at the university, and to inspire thoughtful conversation about the future of women at Yale and in the larger society."



Tanya studied art history and studio art at Oberlin before earning her MFA from Yale. Her photographs have been featured at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the George Eastman Museum. She is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, and the MacDowell fellowship. Tanya currently teaches at Bard College.

In the spring term, WFF welcomed Tanya back to Yale's virtual campus to host a second discussion panel on "Art, Feminism, and Dialogue" in March. Tanya was joined by fellow colleagues of the [Birthday Club](#), an art collective of alumnae from Yale's MFA program, and Laura Wexler, Professor of WGSS and American Studies and a member of WFF's Steering & Council. Together, the panel shared their experiences working together

and sharing each other's artwork for over 30 years and discussed the power of peer mentorship and inclusive collaboration in uplifting women artists. A recording of the event is available on [WFF's website](#).

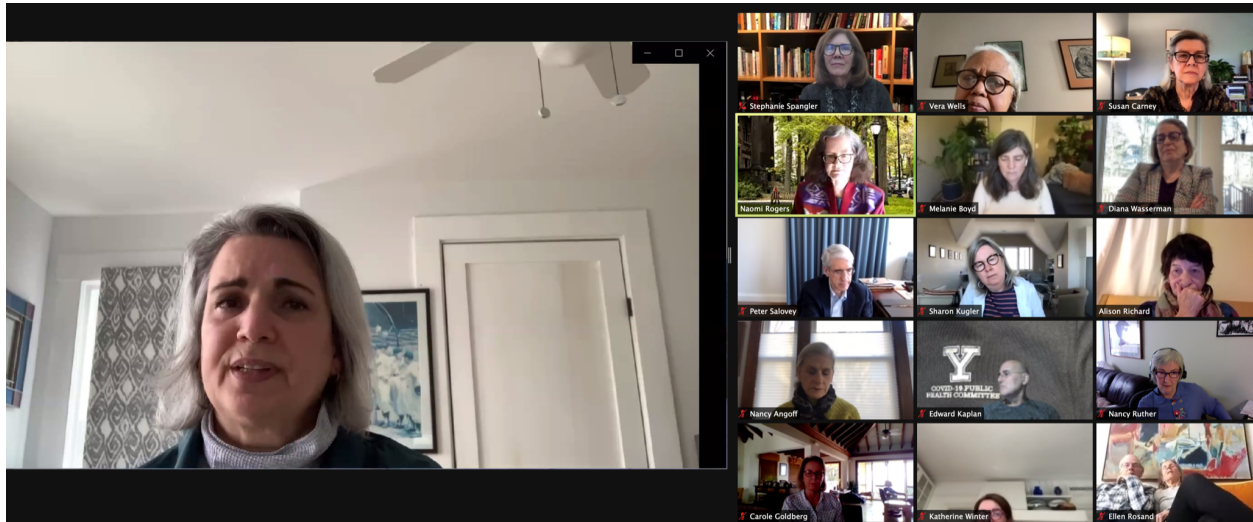
Wasserman Award:



In 2021, The Women Faculty Forum initiated the “Elga R. Wasserman Courage, Clarity, and Leadership Award,” a new award to honor a Yale woman every year who has demonstrated tremendous courage, clarity, and leadership in their community service. This award is named after Elga Ruth Wasserman, whose trailblazing career in the University’s administration and extraordinary advocacy on behalf of Yale women in the early years of coeducation continues to inspire future champions of gender equity and diversity in higher education.

WFF was thrilled to present the inaugural Elga R. Wasserman Award to Dr. Stephanie Spangler, Clinical Professor of OB/GYN at the Medical School and the Vice Provost for Health Affairs and Academic Integrity and University Title IX Coordinator. Stephanie has been an invaluable leader in consolidating the University’s Covid-19 task force and strengthening the community’s spirit of cooperation during a time of immense grief and uncertainty. The award ceremony took place on April 7th and included a wonderful line-up of guest speakers: President Peter Salovey, Eve Hart Rice, Provost Scott Strobel, Cynthia Smith, Nina Stachenfeld, and Alison Richard - who each spoke about Stephanie's

inspirational leadership, invaluable wisdom, and deep-seated commitment to furthering the highest aspirations of the Yale community during this unprecedented year. Elga Wasserman's extended family and close friends were also present at the event, along with over 200 hundred members of the Yale community, to celebrate Elga Wasserman's career and legacy. A recording of the event is available on [WFF's website](#).



Advocacy & Research

Yale Childcare Consultative Committee:

The Yale Childcare Consultative Committee (YCCC) was created in response to Covid19's life and work-altering critical challenges to ALL caretakers and the need for creative, responsible action across all affected groups across the University. WFF's Chair and Chair-Elect, Naomi Rogers and Reina Maruyama, co-founded the group in the fall 2020 term along with FAS Senate chairs Matthew Jacobson and Valerie Horsley and Working Women's Network (WWN) Chairs Nandi Cummings and Stacey Bonet to discuss imaginative solutions to both the short-term, Covid-induced childcare crisis and long-term inequities of child care access and affordability on Yale's campus. YCCC is a coalition of existing Yale faculty and staff groups including Yale Women's Faculty Forum (WFF), the Yale FAS Senate, the Committee on the Status of Women in Medicine (SWIM), (WWN), Yale Postdoctoral Association (YPA), and Local 34 who are committed to promoting more support for working families at Yale. The pandemic has brought attention to the dire needs of better childcare and caregivers more widely across the Yale community. YCCC's goals are to identify key issues and advocate for effective institutional, family and individual actions and policies that Yale parents and those tending to others in their household have experienced through the pandemic and its aftermath.

To raise awareness and add a bit of humor where possible, the YCCC hosted a kid-in (a virtual "sit-in" on Twitter) from Monday, October 26th to Friday, October 30th to encourage Yale parents and caregivers to share images of their pandemic parenting experiences on social media with the hashtag #YaleKidIn. Over 20 caregivers from across all of Yale's schools and departments posted about the difficulties of juggling work and family during the pandemic. Photos and videos from the #YaleKidIn can be found on [WFF's \(@wff_yale\)](#) or the [Childcare Consultative Committee's \(@YaleCCC\)](#) Twitter pages.

With policy advocacy and action in mind in December, the YCCC published [an op-ed in the Yale Daily News](#) titled: "Yale Needs Pandemic Plan for Working Parents." The op-ed was published by the Chair of WFF Naomi Rogers (professor of history of medicine), the

Co-Chair of WWN Stacey Bonet (senior administrative assistant at the School of Public Health), and WFF Steering & Council member and YCCC lead researcher Rene Almeling (associate professor of sociology) Annabelle Hutchinson, a WFF fellow, aided the research for this piece. The full briefing, which includes interviews with Yale faculty and staff, montages from the #YaleKidIn, research and data on COVID's gendered impacts in higher education, and a call to action for comprehensive childcare policies at Yale, was shared with Yale's Presidential Office, Provost's Office, WorkLife, senior administrators, and all graduate and professional school Deans.

GPSS Advocacy Collaborative - Menstrual Hygiene Project:

In collaboration with the Graduate and Professional Student Senate advocacy team, WFF is working to implement a pilot project to provide menstrual hygiene products, [The Menstrual Hygiene Pilot Project](#), across Yale campuses. This project addresses the epidemic of period poverty among college students. As of June 2021, WFF and GPSS sought volunteers from across campus to survey the needs of different buildings.

Fellows:

In honor of the 50th and 150th anniversaries of coeducation, and the 125th anniversary of Ph.D. education, WFF & GSAS have launched the Gender and Diversity Fellowships in the 2019-2020 academic year for Yale graduate and professional school students.

The Fellowship supports students whose research intersects with the advancement of gender equity and diversity at Yale. We have sought out emerging scholars whose work or area of interest contributes to current issues and policies related to gender and diversity, with a preference to those interested in higher education dynamics but also with the intention to expand our community of scholars.

In addition to the Fellows, Oana Capatina served as WFF's Postgraduate Associate, a position dedicated to supporting the day-to-day running of WFF. This role is pivotal in enabling us to advance gender equity through scholarship, community building, and advocacy by sustaining solid operations including data collection, limited analyses, report writing, event organizing, communications, administration and facilitating collaboration with other campus organizations.



Chloe Chen-Kraus is an Alumni Fellow and Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology who studies primate ecology and conservation. Her work with WFF focused on beginning data analysis for "The View," the report WFF produces every five years on faculty demographics at Yale. This report will be published next academic year. Chloe has enjoyed learning Tableau as a tool for visualizing data as part of this project!

The 2017-2016 "The View" report can be found [here](#).



Katina Calakos is a doctoral candidate in the interdepartmental Neuroscience Program. Before attending Yale, she graduated from Barnard College at Columbia with a Bachelor of Science in Neuroscience and Behavior. During Katina's time with WFF, she synthesized biographical and research information from >300 women in science at Yale for presentation as an online exhibit in collaboration with university librarians. Access the exhibit [here](#).



Oana Capatina is an alumna of the Divinity School ('20 MAR) and has worked as WFF's Postgraduate Associate in Gender Equity and Policy since March 2020. While working for the WFF, she has collaborated with WFF's Chair and Chair-Elect, Ph.D. Fellows, and Steering & Council members to further the organization's advocacy and research goals. Her time at WFF has given her the opportunity to strategize ways to raise awareness of Covid-19's gendered impacts and discuss solutions to academia's leaky career pipeline alongside faculty, senior administrators, and graduate students from all over the University's many departments and disciplines. She especially enjoyed curating content for WFF's weekly newsletters and polishing her public-facing writing skills on WFF's research reports and social media channels. Oana is departing WFF and Yale University to pursue her doctorate in Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University, where she will continue studying Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic literature in the ancient Mediterranean.



Patrice Collins is a fellow of the Urban Ethnography Project and Comer School Development Program at Yale University. Before joining the doctoral program in Sociology, Patrice worked as a preschool teacher, early education lab instructor, family consumer science lecturer, and early childhood consultant in child development and social policy at the Yale Child Study Center. She is a recipient of the Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship and is currently working on an ethnographic project that examines the everyday life of families experiencing parental incarceration. During Patrice's time with WFF as a Gender and Diversity fellow, she furthered her research by working to systematically examine the social setting of a community-based family center, developing an understanding of the everyday life demands and social experiences of women and families with incarcerated love ones, and explored how parental arrest and incarceration impacts the social health of children and their families.



Annabelle Hutchinson is a PhD Candidate in Political Science. Her dissertation work focuses on gender, race, and class in the US. During her year working with WFF, Annabelle has advocated for the needs of Yale faculty and staff who juggle childcare and paid work. Through this process, she has learned how to better communicate research and data to non-academic audiences and gained an understanding of what it takes to turn information that we learn from academic research into institutional change.



Karina López is a 4th year PhD candidate in the Spanish and Portuguese department interested in 19th century abolitionist narratives written by people of color in Cuba and Brazil. This spring, in collaboration with Sourav Sinha, she has been working with Yale's Title IX reports so as to gain a clearer picture of the dynamics of sexual misconduct cases across the university. In her role at WFF, she has sharpened her data analysis skills, which she is grateful to have developed while also working alongside such a passionate and dedicated team.

As a PhD candidate in the Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program (INP), Katina Calakos (right) studies sex-specific brain mechanisms involved in drug use and addiction. She also directs the INP Peer Mentoring Program, and is working towards earning the Certificate of College Teaching Preparation. As a WFF gender equity research fellow, she helped synthesize faculty profiles for a collaborative library exhibit on women in science, devised action plans for accessible childcare, and engaged in weekly strategy sessions to tackle issues facing women faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic. "I have had great opportunities to engage in advocacy for women in academia," Calakos said, reflecting on her last four months with WFF. "I will apply the skills I have learned in my own endeavors moving forward."



Sourav Sinha is a PhD candidate in the economics department and evaluates policies that help alleviate labor market disparities across demographic groups. In particular, Sourav studies how information and its confidentiality play a crucial role in either sustaining or narrowing labor market disparities and how the success of policies rely heavily on people's behavioral differences. As a WFF fellow, Sourav has worked on designing data analyses and survey

strategies that help WFF advocate for more information on gender differences at Yale. Sourav has also worked alongside other fellows to analyze Title IX data and interpret a decade of changes in misconduct cases on campus. “It has been an absolute pleasure to work with such a supportive team,” Sourav spoke about his time at WFF, “and that has helped me align my data analysis skills with the goals and missions of this organization.”

Seed Grants and Poster Presentations:

Initiated in 2017, The Yale Women Faculty Forum initiated these “Seed Grants” to identify innovative ways to support the WFF mission by investing in the diverse work of faculty and student scholars at Yale. We aim to expand and encourage research in areas of gender study and build visibility for issues and policies relating to gender in higher education. These grants have supported more than 23 projects including the 11 in 2020-2021 academic year described below.

Fall 2020 Grant Recipients:



Vickie Wang

Medical Student, Medicine

Assessing LGBTQI+ Patients' Experiences in the Emergency Department: The aim of this study is to evaluate LGBTQI+ patients' overall perceptions of Yale emergency medicine physicians' comfort and competency in caring for LGBTQI+ patients. Vickie has begun doing open-ended interviews for this study and has found several negative and positive experience

patterns concerning patient care among patients that she has interviewed. Vickie is looking forward to interviewing more patients.

Rosie Aboody

PhD Candidate, Psychology

Women in male-dominated fields report being challenged more frequently than their male peers. In addition to making women feel unwelcome, do these questions also serve to devalue their credibility? In preliminary work, we find that they do: upon observing a student questioning a woman's testimony, adults infer that the student did not believe the woman. Worse, adults inferred that she must have actually been ignorant: later on, they did not want to learn from her. Without knowing anything about the student's credibility as a questioner, adults still inferred that the woman he questioned must have lacked knowledge. In a set of four experiments, we would like to better understand how adults infer a speaker's credibility in the face of questioning. And in two additional experiments, we would like to investigate the developmental origins of these judgments, revealing

whether they are learned over development or deeply ingrained. These results have important implications for women's advancement, particularly in male-dominated fields — and can highlight ways to prevent women's abilities from being unjustly (and sometimes even unknowingly!) devalued.

Marius Kothor

PhD Candidate, History

Bridging the Border: Women, Migration, and Trade in Ghana: The Nana Benz are powerful cultural icons in West Africa. Beginning in the 1950s, this group of women textile traders built a massive commercial fortune through the distribution of Dutch-wax textiles.

Although the women were based in Togo, the majority of them had extensive family and trade networks in Ghana. My dissertation examines how the Nana Benz's travels to Ghana in the mid-twentieth century shaped their political ideology and anti-colonial activism. If selected for a Women's Faculty Forum Seed grant, I would purchase a laptop and hire a research assistant based in Ghana to help me obtain archival documents about the Nana Benz in the national archives in Accra, Ghana. I have received nationally competitive fellowships to support my

research abroad. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, I am currently unable to travel to Ghana but the archives in the country remain open and safe to work in.

Once I am able to travel to Ghana in person, I will complete my archival research in the Public Archives and Records Administration (PRAAD) in the cities of Accra and Ho. I will also conduct in-depth interviews with the families and close associates of the Nana Benz. My native fluency in Ewe and the relationships I have developed with these families on previous research trips will allow me to successfully carry out this project. My fieldwork in Ghana will support the completion of my dissertation which aims to highlight the instrumental role the Nana Benz played in shaping the political history of West Africa.



Spring 2021 Seed Grant Recipients:

The majority of Spring 2021 Seed Grant projects are still in process. Therefore project descriptions in this section most often appear in the form of proposal abstracts.

Katie Ferguson (WISAY Talk)

Postdoctoral Associate, Neuroscience

Women in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Mathematics (STEM) remain vastly underrepresented in high-ranking faculty positions around the world. This hinders our ability to meaningfully impact the direction of science, and is a huge loss for the scientific community as a whole. To discuss strategies to counteract the lack of female representation in STEM, the Women in Science at Yale (WISAY) and the Women in Science at the Nencki Institute (WISaN) in Poland have joined together to host a discussion with Eileen Pollack

- one of the first two women to earn a Bachelors of Science from Physics Department at Yale, and the author of the book “The Only Woman in the Room: Why Science Is Still a Boys’ Club”. This event will provide an opportunity for scientists in Poland and at Yale to learn from Eileen Pollack’s research on the cultural, social, psychological, and institutional barriers confronting women in STEM, to brainstorm with allies on how to promote gender equity in STEM internationally, and to form new networks with scientists from another institution.

Special Guest: Prof. Eileen Pollack

Yale

Prof. Eileen Pollack is a major advocate for women in science, author of the New York Times Editor's Choice novel "The Only Woman in the Room: Why Science Is Still a Boys' Club", and one of the first women to graduate from Yale in Physics.







BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF FEMALE SCIENTISTS

International collaboration
Woman in Science at Yale & Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology, Poland

A prestigious, limited-audience Zoom event, will be attended by a select group of 500 Academics from leading American and Polish scientific institutions. A discussion with Prof. Pollack concludes with an international networking session.

Women in Science
at Nencki

SAVE THE DATE: MARCH 25th @ 1 PM EDT. Register [here](#).

Michelle Bell

Professor, School of the Environment

Many fields of science are still dominated by men, with differences by field. COVID-19 has caused unprecedented changes to scientific work (e.g., lack of access to laboratories, transition to online teaching) as well as the more general pandemic-related stressors such as childcare, elder care, and more. Many such responsibilities typically fall more heavily

on women than men (e.g., childcare), thus the pandemic may have exacerbated gender disparities in science. Several published works and anecdotal notes from journal editors highlight changes in the distribution of authors' genders during the pandemic. We propose a 2-pronged project to: 1) to analyze trends in gender of corresponding author for over 50 scientific journals, comparing pre-pandemic and pandemic periods, country, and scientific field, and 2) a survey of scientists on how the pandemic has impacted their work. Collectively, these findings will inform our understanding of how the pandemic has impacted gender disparities in science.

Jinghua Ge

Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Cell Biology

Testosterone is a hormone known as an androgen. It is often thought of as a “male” hormone, or androgen, produced in a woman's ovaries in small amounts. However, women also have testosterone in their bodies. Some of the functions served by testosterone in a woman's body include the growth, maintenance, and repair of her reproductive tissues and bone mass and the regulation of behavior. An imbalance of either too much or too little testosterone in the female body can have damaging effects on a woman's overall health and sex drive. Often, the symptoms of imbalanced testosterone in women are underdiagnosed or misdiagnosed. We propose the development of a nanoparticle-enhanced lateral flow assay device for the fast detection of testosterone in human blood samples. Novel lateral flow assays are suitable for measuring the relatively low concentration of an analyte in female samples. The goal of the project is to develop a simple, rapid, inexpensive, and sensitive device for onsite screening of female testosterone imbalance. This research is in the interest of women and helps bring more attention to female health.

Gemma Moore and Stephanie Getz (WISAY Talk)

Postdoctoral Associate, Neurosurgery

WISAYale is endeavoring to become more inclusive of gender minorities with the aim of fostering a more inclusive community. To do this, we would like to host an event celebrating both the experiences and work of a transgender-identifying scientist and demonstrate that WISAYale values the work of transgender community members.

Aniko Szucs and Marijeta Bozovic

Postdoctoral Associate (AS) and Assistant Professor (MB), Russian, East European, and Eurasian Program

2020 was a year of tragedy, political rage, and protest—across much of the world. On top of a devastating health crisis, opportunistic leaders in East Europe, among other areas of the world, used the COVID crisis to solidify power, implementing laws and regulations to constrain lives in line with conservative, populist ideologies. This project proposes a roundtable discussion and an accompanying online exhibition on contemporary feminist protest art and activism that challenge illiberal governments' anti-gender and anti-women ideologies and laws, and advocate for transnational alliances and feminist solidarities in, and after, the current pandemic conditions.

Jordan Katz,

Postdoctoral Associate, Program in Judaic Studies

Employed as midwives, wise women, or healers, female medical practitioners of various faiths disseminated medical knowledge and supplied information pertinent to religious and legal rulings in early modern Europe. While scholars have noted this role for Christian women, they have not studied the unique position of female Jewish healers with regard to municipal regulations, communal politics, medical knowledge, and legal consultations. This project examines the role and influence of Jewish midwives in early modern Western Europe, addressing their interactions with communal leaders, physicians, Christian medical practitioners, and bureaucrats. Exploring their medical influences, their engagement with administrative knowledge systems, and their intellectual status in the eyes of prominent male leaders, this project demonstrates that attention to the roles of Jewish midwives yields new understandings of the structures of knowledge and authority that undergirded early modern European society.

Changwook Ju

Ph.D. Student, Political Science

Why do commanders tolerate sexual violence by their soldiers? Intuitively, commander tolerance for military sexual violence (MSV) culminates in its persistence. However, existing explanations for MSV, preoccupied with soldiers' motives, mostly neglect the role of commander tolerance. I argue that, to understand MSV that recurs despite its

formal prohibition, scholars must specify the conditions under which commanders tolerate it.

I construct a theoretical framework for commander tolerance, incorporating various commanders (of different levels), offenders, and victims (civilians, enemies, and comrades), regardless of their gender and sexuality. This broad coverage recognizes female perpetrators and male—and homosexual—victims, paradoxically contributing to MSV prevention and gender integration in militaries; neglecting these cases imparts unsound expectations about masculinity to males and characterizes females as victims.

The framework's core theoretical proposal is that micro-level factors predispose individual commanders to tolerating MSV; meso-level factors socialize commanders against controlling MSV; and macro-level factors disincentivize commanders from prosecuting MSV. This proposal offers practical implications for military justice systems. Despite its focus on MSV, this article represents the first systematic cut at a general theory of commander tolerance for prohibited forms of violence.

Terika McCall

Postdoctoral Fellow, Yale Center for Medical Informatics

Approximately 1 in 5 Black American women experienced mental illness in the past year. Anxiety and depressive disorders are two of the most common mental health conditions. Historically, mental illness has been underreported in the Black community; therefore, the true burden may be significantly higher than reported prevalence estimates. Taking into consideration the aforementioned rate of mental illness and stressors caused or worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, we now have a potential mental health crisis within an already underserved community. The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the Black community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the rate of COVID-19 related hospitalizations and deaths are 4.7 and 2.1 times higher, respectively, among non-Hispanic Black persons than non-Hispanic White persons. The purpose of the study is to understand how the mental health of Black American women has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 20 Black women residing in the U.S. will be interviewed. Findings will help to inform the design of future studies and telemental health service and resource offerings. This project relates to the goals and mission of WFF by promoting scholarship by a woman on the mental health care needs of Black American women.



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