

GPN Events 2013

Hana Freymiller and Nicolas Zarazúa – Co-Chairs Mica Bumpus, Alison Fahey, and Kate Fritzsche – Steering Committee

In 2013, the Gender and Policy Network (GPN) at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University worked to raise awareness and offer a space for conversations about gender and policy issues among policy students and faculty. This year, GPN made a deliberate effort to expand GPN's focus by hosting several events pertaining to men's and women's issues in the U.S. We also expanded GPN's leadership structure--in addition to the two co-chairs, GPN benefited from an active steering committee comprised of three MPA2's. With each member in the leadership team focusing on different themes within gender policy, GPN was able to host a large number of events highlighting various topics.

March 27, 2013

“African-American Males: Fitting in or Frozen Out of the American Mainstream” with Hugh Price

Professor Hugh Price's class “Revitalization of American Cities” focuses on exploring policy issues related to economic development within America's urban centers. Professor Price served as president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League from July 1994 until April 2003.

Over 25 WWS graduate students attended this lunch-timer. During his talk, Prof. Price provided background information on the negative education and employment trends facing African-American males today, and offered his perspectives on potential policies and programs that could help reverse those trends. In the Q&A session, Prof. Price expanded on these perspectives and also shared his experiences as head of the National Urban League.

April 15, 2013

“EU Government Failure at Roma Inclusion: The Case of Romani Women” with Dr. Margareta Matache (lunch discussion)

Margareta Matache is a powerful voice of the Roma community. For the last 10 years, she has been a fierce advocate, speaking about the Roma plight in national and international contexts. From 2005-12, she was the Executive Director of Romani CRISS, an NGO that defends and promotes the rights of Roma. Matache spoke passionately about the plight of the Roma and the legal challenges they face in Europe. Students asked questions on topics ranging from the economic status of the Roma to potential civil society-led solutions. She answered eloquently, and Matache inspired students to think about how activists can lead the way on social change.

April 15, 2013

Film Screening of “MAKERS: Women Who Make America” with Executive Producers Betsy West and Peter Kunhardt

On April 15, GPN co-sponsored a discussion and screening of “MAKERS: Women Who Make America” with Executive Producers Betsy West and Peter Kunhardt. MAKERS is a three-hour

innovative and comprehensive documentary film about the evolution of the struggle for women's equality in the U.S. over the last half century. West and Kunhardt began the event by discussing their interests in the topic and personal desires to produce the film. The pair then gave a synopsis of MAKERS, highlighting key issues and stories from the film. The first hour of the film was shown to a full audience in Dodds Auditorium. After the film, West and Kunhardt took questions from the audience.

April 30, 2013

“Women, Power, and U.S. Politics: On the Rise or Falling Back?” with Dr. Nan Keohane and Liz Abzug

On April 30, GPN hosted a discussion on women's political leadership featuring Professors Nan Keohane of WWS and Liz Abzug of Barnard College. The event was entitled “Women, Power and U.S. Politics: On the Rise or Falling Back?”, and it attracted a full audience.

Professor Keohane spoke first, describing her experiences as President of Duke University and of Wellesley College. She recounted instances of sexism and her own move to feminism. When she was the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Wellesley College, she attended their meeting at the Somerset Club and was asked to use the service entrance because it was a men-only club. At the end of the first meeting, she asked whether previous women presidents of Wellesley had used the service entrance. The all-male Board said they had, and Keohane said that wouldn't work for her. The Board relocated for subsequent meetings.

Liz Abzug next spoke about her mother, Bella Abzug, who served three terms as a U.S. Representative representing New York City (1970-76). Liz started a leadership organization in her mother's memory, the Bella Abzug Leadership Institute (BALI). BALI mentors young women in high school, college, and now middle school, training them in the leadership skills that helped Bella Abzug become such an effective and admired leader.

Both Keohane and Abzug argued that women's political influence has not peaked unless we allow it to, and we can keep increasing women's leadership through “more flexible pathways to power,” according to Keohane. They credited their families for help: Keohane said she had been supported in all her leadership endeavors by her feminist husband, Professor Bob Keohane, and Abzug described her father as extremely supportive of her mother's political ambitions. But both seemed to agree that the onus shouldn't only be on women to continue to break down barriers and that there are structural issues that need to change as well. Keohane specifically argued for on-site child care and workplace flexibility whenever possible.

Abzug said she was “frustrated” with the current state of women in politics, but also said she was “hopeful,” saying women have “unfinished business” in “seizing the mantle of leadership.” Keohane reiterated the need for women role models in leadership; she credited Bella Abzug as one example of a powerful role model for leadership. Both speakers were flooded with questions about their lives, politics and elections, women's leadership at Princeton, men's role in feminism, and Bella Abzug's hats. The speakers were warmly received, and they spoke with great authority on and interest in the issues of women's political leadership.

FALL

September 23, 2013

GPN Lunch-timer with Melody Barnes

Melody Barnes is the former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council and current CEO of Melody Barnes Solutions, LLC, a domestic strategy firm. As director of the Domestic Policy Council, Barnes provided strategic advice to President Obama and worked closely with members of the cabinet coordinating the domestic policy agenda across the administration. Under her leadership, innovative new policies, practices and partnerships were initiated to address significant national challenges, including education, healthcare, and the federal government's relationship with local governments and communities.

The GPN lunch-timer was held in Prospect House and about 15 Woodrow Wilson School graduate students were in attendance. Ms. Barnes shared her perspectives on current initiatives in place to work with minority males in achieving higher education and employment outcomes, the important role of faith-based communities in local policy, and she reflected on her leadership and career opportunities leading up to her current position as CEO of her own domestic strategy firm.

October 2, 2013

“Sex and the State: The Reality of Reproductive Rights in 2013” with Donna Crane

Donna Crane knows how to please a crowd. As the Policy Director for NARAL Pro-Choice America, she knows how to move legislation and move an audience to support a woman's right to choose. A proud and outspoken advocate for women's rights, she gave an inspiring talk on how to move legislation through a stalled Congress, the current progress on reproductive rights legislation, and how to find women's advocates in unexpected places. Over 50 students attended the talk, forcing the event from a smaller classroom to Bowl 2 to accommodate the overwhelming interest.

Crane fielded questions on issues ranging from the nuts-and-bolts of politics on the Hill to her perspective on the future of the pro-choice movement. The conversation spilled over the hour and a half allowed for the talk with students engaging in a lively debate with Crane in the hallway. It was a great way to kick off the GPN lunchtimer series for the 2013-14 academic year.

October 17, 2013

GPN Lunch-timer with Kavita Ramdas

Kavita Ramdas is the Ford Foundation's representative in India, covering India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Her regional work focuses on issues of equity, inclusion, economic fairness, freedom of expression, human rights, sexuality and reproductive health and rights, transparency and accountable governance, and sustainable development. Kavita also works to leverage relationships with government, civil society and the private sector to advance social justice. She spoke to GPN about her work with the foundation on gender issues in India in particular. She

discussed recent high-profile cases of rape on public transit in India, and the importance of raising a new generation of boys who think differently about how they interact with girls.

November 13, 2013

GPN Lunch-timer “Poverty is Worse for Children than Gestational Cocaine Exposure” with Dr. Hallam Hurt

Dr. Hurt, a neonatologist and professor of pediatrics at the Univ. of Pennsylvania's Medical School, spoke about a recently released study she led, looking at the effects of gestational cocaine exposure. The study followed a cohort of babies for over 20 years, from their time in utero to adulthood, ultimately finding that cocaine exposure was not associated with worse outcomes. Instead, poverty and a lack of enrichment in the home environment was the biggest determinant of lower IQ. Dr. Hurt emphasized the importance of a supportive and enriching home environment as key to children's cognitive development

An excerpt from an NPR interview with Dr. Hurt summarizes some of her presentation: “We evaluated our participants every six to 12 months, when they were young infants and children. What we found was that the cocaine exposed and the non-exposed didn't differ from each other on this evaluation - something we had fully anticipated. And we did additional evaluations, looking for differences in how the children played, were they creative, and then we looked at IQ tests. And over and over and over again, what we found was that the exposed and the non-exposed did not differ from each other, but they lagged behind on the standardized tests and were performing quite poorly. So over the years, it became increasingly clear that something bigger than gestational cocaine exposure was at play.”

November 16, 2013

“Women on Waves” with Rebecca Gomperts

Rebecca Gomperts, MPP '11, visited the Woodrow Wilson School on a Saturday afternoon to present about her pro-choice organization, Women on Waves, which provides abortions to women in countries where abortion access is limited. She discussed both Women on Waves' efforts to provide in-person abortions on a ship in international waters and to provide information and drugs for medical abortions from a distance. Since the ship is Dutch, once it is off the coast of the country, Dutch abortion laws apply so women are able to receive abortions. She discussed the types of protests that Women on Waves has received and the extraordinary efforts it has undertaken in order to preserve and extend abortion access.

February 9, 2014

Film Screening of “Fruitvale Station”

About 20 WWS graduate students attended this screening. The 2013 film depicts a fictionalized account of the last day in the life of Oscar Grant, a 22 year-old African American male who was shot and killed by a BART officer in Oakland, CA. In contrast to most media representations of African American males, “Fruitvale Station” portrays Oscar Grant as neither a thug nor a saint, just a man struggling to overcome personal and societal obstacles on the way to a better life for himself and his family. Grant's struggles with the criminal justice system and lack of employment opportunities represent similar trials many minority males face today.