

# The Kirkland Project News

FOR THE STUDY OF GENDER, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

HAMILTON COLLEGE

## Special Kirkland Project 2003 – 2004 Program

# Technology, Science and Democracy

**O**ur series was designed to raise questions such as the following: Who has access to technology? Who benefits from it, and who does not? How can we use technology to work for social justice? How does technology challenge traditional concepts of privacy, freedom, etc.?

Our first guest, Dr. Vandana Shiva, addressed a large crowd in the Chapel with her lecture, "Alternatives to Globalization and War." Vandana Shiva is a physicist, ecologist, activist, author of numerous books, and winner of the prestigious Right Livelihood Award, known as "the alternative Nobel Prize," in 1993.

Members of the Hamilton faculty considered our topic at our annual Opening Panel and Reception. Stuart Hirshfield (Computer Science), Carl Rubino (Classics), and Bonnie Urciuoli (Anthropology) spoke, with Martine Guyot-Bender (French), moderator, and Vivyan Adair (Women's Studies), respondent.

Another panel discussed "Building Communities Across the Digital Divide." Panelists were Mary Bernadine Dias HC '98 (Robotics Institute, Carnegie Mellon), on the use of robotics to build communities; David Hakken (Anthropology, SUNYIT), Open Source computing in the North Atlantic and Nusantara; Ellen McDermott, a founding partner of BusyInternet, Ghana; and Marianne Petit (Interactive Telecommunications Program, NYU), a master teacher, multimedia artist and consultant.

Author Dick Teresi guest lectured on "Whose Science?" Challenging the received wisdom, Dick Teresi traces the origins of contemporary science back to non-European cultures.

Rachel P. Maines engaged our audience with her lecture, "Vibrators and Viagra: The Double Standard." She discussed a forgotten chapter in late 19th- and early 20th-century medical history, when an assortment of women's maladies was commonly diagnosed by male doctors as "hysteria" or "pelvic hyperemia" — congestion of the genitalia.

We ended the fall term with a festival of films illustrating popular fears of science and technology.

Our first guest of the spring term was Alex Matthiessen, executive director of the environmentalist group Riverkeeper, speaking about "The Truth About Our Nuclear Neighbor: Indian Point and the Hudson River."

In February, we invited two guests to look at the U. S. penal system with us. Joy James, activist and writer, is a political theorist and Professor of Africana Studies at Brown University. Susan Rosenberg, a human and prisoner rights activist, teaches at CUNY's John Jay College of Criminal Justice. We screened *Through the Wire* (1990) and James and Rosenberg led a provocative panel, "Democracy and Captivity: Human Rights, Technology and the 'Science of Incarceration.'"

Sandra Harding, who is a leader in feminist philosophy of science and Professor of Education and Women's Studies at UCLA, spoke about "Science and Technology Studies in a Postcolonial World: Recent Issues."

In partnership with the Emerson Gallery we sponsored the exhibit "Suzanne Anker: Origins and Futures." Suzanne Anker is a visual artist and theoretician working with genetic imagery. Anker visited campus and led a gallery tour and talk.

Finally, Nalo Hopkinson read from her work and led a writing workshop. Hopkinson's award-winning science fiction is written from a feminist perspective and informed by the author's Afro-Caribbean roots.

It was exciting to work with many departments and programs to develop these lectures, exhibits and panels. Co-sponsors were the departments of Africana Studies, Biology, Comparative Literature, English, Environmental Studies, Philosophy, and Women's Studies; Levitt Public Affairs Center; Faculty for Women's Concerns; Office of the Dean of Faculty; and the Emerson Gallery.

*Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, Comparative Literature and the Kirkland Project*

# Student Cultures Conference: “Let’s Talk About Sex” at Hamilton

The third annual Kirkland Project Conference was held on March 6<sup>th</sup> in the Red Pit. This year our focus was on “Student Cultures,” and the subtitle was “Let’s Talk About Sex’ at Hamilton.” We wanted to create a space where students and faculty could talk frankly about sex as it intersects with gender, race, class, and sexual orientation in a larger theoretical framework and within the Hamilton community. Our goal was to come up with some concrete recommendations on how to improve the campus climate. The conference turned out to be a great success!

We began the morning with presentations from the Kirkland Project Research Associates. Mark Castro ‘05, Haley Reimbold ‘06, Brian Tilley ‘05, and Nesa Wasarhaley ‘04 all gave very informative talks about where they were in their various research projects. Marsha Joachim ‘06 also presented research that she has been doing in collaboration with several other students and professors on the social and academic experiences of students of color in the Hamilton community.

Professor Shelley Haley and two of her students, Lizzie Fazio ‘04 and Janeen Knight ‘05, followed with a presentation entitled “In Someone Else’s Eyes: The Hyper-(In)visibility of Black Women’s Sexuality.” The panelists addressed the issue of black women’s sexuality within a theoretical framework and from personal standpoints.

Our large panel on the issue of “Sex and Sexuality: Theory and Practice” was intended to bring out some issues related to the Hamilton campus in a theoretical context and more directly;

it was a resounding success. All the panelists were well informed on their topics and offered great information. The discussion that followed was lively and thought provoking.

At lunch the conversations continued with a roundtable discussion on the *Vagina Monologues* led by Professor Kristina Boylan from SUNY-IT and students from both Hamilton and SUNY-IT who had been involved in the *Monologues* at their respective schools. It was interesting to see the contrast between how the play was received at Hamilton, where it has been performed for the past four years, and at SUNY-IT, where this was the first performance.

After lunch we had a small yet enthusiastic group return for Dean Marc David’s “Sex and Gender” activity. We were asked questions about the atmosphere on campus, and to consider ways in which different sexual identities and gender identities were privileged or not privileged. This gave way to some really amazing discussion and brainstorming to address some of the problems we had identified on campus. Suggestions included working with the Health Center and the Dean of Students to provide free rape kits to students and better access to emergency contraceptives on the weekends; working with the Harassment Grievance Board to create a more student friendly policy and method of dealing with harassment and assault on campus; and working with the Sexual Assault Center to create a proposal for improving the campus climate. We also have agreed to form a coalition of concerned students and faculty members to try to address these problems and continue working for positive change on campus.

Laura Crandall ‘04

## CNY Consortium Initiative

This year the Kirkland Project has begun working toward a consortium of upstate colleges with social justice centers somewhat like our own. First, the Director went to Hobart and William Smith Colleges to visit their Fisher Center. Then, we invited the directors of four centers from Hobart

and William Smith, Colgate, Utica College and Ithaca College to join us for a luncheon meeting on campus. As a result of a spring meeting, we plan to organize a collaborative leadership session for students committed to social justice and to invite the consortium “members” to present at our spring 2005 conference of faculty/student work.