

WAWH Scholars & New Leaders Program 2022-23: Intersectionality, Collaboration, and Professionalism

Summary

The proposed WAWH Scholars & New Leaders Program: Intersectionality, Collaboration, and Professionalism will support 4-8 graduate student and early career historians in focused mentorship and career development activities in partnership with the UC Consortium on Women's, Gender and Sexualities Histories in the Americas.

The Western Association of Women Historians was unable to meet in 2020 due to the pandemic and has yet to fully recover its momentum for its annual in-person meeting. As a project inspired by the centennial of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, the University of California Consortium on Women's Gender and Sexualities Histories of the Americas is in some ways a child of the pandemic that now seeks a next phase of work through partnership. Given the geographical proximity and overlapping membership and leadership of these two organizations, they seek to collaborate in the interest of supporting the "covid cohorts" of women graduate students, new PhDs, and beginning assistant professors with their unique needs and challenges as they launch their careers as historians.

For over 50 years, the WAWH annual meeting has been a place where women historians give their first conference paper, meet their true mentor (as opposed to advisor), and where they connect with friends and colleagues who have been dispersed geographically. In some ways, the UC Consortium provided many of these functions for its participants during the pandemic: scholarly community, consistent intellectual mentorship, collaboration towards a substantial publication—mostly in the virtual realm. By combining the new wisdom of both of these organizations, our proposal seeks to invest in a next generation of women scholars and leaders whose futures in the profession seem more precarious than in the past.

Impact of COVID-19

The gendered impact of COVID-19 on women and families in the United States has been well documented. The pandemic's acute intersectional impacts, that is, on women and families of color, on newcomers to the U.S., and those in economically or environmentally fragile contexts are also firmly established.¹ The study of history faces an attrition of women. History classrooms are increasingly male-majority learning environments significantly lacking in diversity, despite the slight edge of women as the total population of college students.² These

¹ For just one reference in a burgeoning literature see Simisola Johnson, "Women Deserve Better: A Discussion on COVID-19 and the Gendered Organization in the New Economy," *Gender, Work, and Organization: Feminist Frontiers* (November 2021): 1-11. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1111/gwao.12785> (accessed 1 December 2021).

² "Has the Decline in History Majors Hit Bottom?" *AHA Perspectives on History*, 23 February 2021. <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/march-2021/has-the-decline-in-history-majors-hit-bottom-data-from-2018%E2%80%9319-show-lowest-number-since-1980> (accessed 1 December 2021). A survey at Portland State University in 2021 revealed that "in every case, it is found that History majors are

linked phenomena appear in the current membership profile of WAWH and this proposal is designed to meet and redirect some of these trends.

The WAWH currently faces the retirement and withdrawal of its founding cohort, a pattern that was already naturally trending in educational settings but that the pandemic and the digital torque of surviving it has hastened. On the other end of the age spectrum, younger scholars are even more enmeshed in digital and online life. Many teach and study at campuses faced with shrinking budgets and declining enrollments and the humanities. These emerging professionals confront a mismatch between the “outputs” cultivated in advanced history education (and typically centered in the in person annual meeting) with the demands of the post-pandemic landscape. In between these two cohorts is a “sandwich generation” tasked with reimagining mentorship and professionalization in a significantly changed and “virtual” environment. The need for digital skills, for sturdy collaborative relationships on and across campuses, and for nimble platforms for integrating historical thinking in teaching, media, public commemoration, and civic life in general have never been more acute.

After canceling our 2020 meeting, WAWH did hold a successful online meeting in April 2021 on the Nooks platform. However, much of the content was held over from 2020 and did not directly engage “coping with covid” or the many new pressures and opportunities for digital, collaborative, and multi-audience scholarship in history and the humanities. It was a very small gathering, with only a fraction of the 30+ panels and additional events that typically take place at our annual conference. In October a survey was sent out in order to get a better sense of issues among members. One of the strongest findings is the need for continued remote/virtual access to organizational activities (74% in favor). Most striking in the open comment section was the need for mentorship, freshly imagined.

“Connect young scholars with more experienced mentors.”

“Provide creative professional career options.”

“Offer resources that help early professionals...in ways that draw on their strengths [and] allow them to grow other skills.”

“Help students know that regardless of what they are doing to pay the bills, they approach that work as skilled historians.”

“For many students and scholars...travel budgets are shrinking or have disappeared completely.”

“Meeting people who allow us to think about collaboration and get something useful done could help.”

less diverse than all History students, and that the group of all History students is in turn less diverse than all PSU students.” In addition, graduate and undergraduate majors run at about the national numbers for gender imbalance: 56% male/male-identifying versus 44% female/female-identifying. Advisory Committee DEI Report 2021, History Department, Portland State University.

The UC-WGSHA also experienced significant setbacks due to Covid-19. The organization was just finding its legs when the pandemic hit. The first two planning meetings, funded by a UCI Humanities Commons Grant, were held at UCI and UC Davis in winter 2018 and involved 40 faculty and graduate students representing 10 of the UC campuses. A day-long intellectual summit, “The Body and the Body Politic,” was held on November 2, 2018, at UCI and drew a lively audience of nearly a hundred people. For 2019-20, the Consortium received a grant from the UC Humanities Research Institute for a project called “Empire and Women’s Suffrage in the Americas” that approached the centennial celebration of the Nineteenth Amendment from a critical standpoint — one that recognized that this amendment did not in fact enfranchise all women in the U.S. and its territories. After meeting to hammer out details at UC Berkeley and UCSD, graduate students and faculty began work on the Empire Suffrage Syllabus, the results of which are now accessible as an open source project published by Alexander Street Press ([The Empire Suffrage Syllabus](#)). Unfortunately, a large symposium we planned to publicize this new resource had to be canceled. We also had to cancel book launches and other events that we had planned to help draw attention to the consortium and foster a higher level of engagement.

Like academics everywhere, WAWH members and Consortium participants suffered from a general sense of exhaustion that made it all but impossible to look beyond the immediate demands and engage in the extra effort required to maintain—and now reimagine--intellectual networks and professional networking. Although both organizations have retained a core constituency, both also lost ground and momentum as a result of the strains of the pandemic. In addition, the need for diversity, inclusiveness, and equity has moved to the center of many campuses and cultural organizations. To meet these complex demands, this proposal places intersectionality, collaboration, and professionalism into conversation throughout its activities.

Description of Project

Today there are two cohorts of women historians who do not know the WAWH and have never attended a meeting. We propose a “Scholars and Leaders Program” that will provide a year-long series of activities to participants. We want to incentivize and compensate younger scholars’ time and energy beyond their campuses. This project will “lean in” to the now fairly familiar remote/virtual environment in order to invest in and reward professional development and cultivate a sense of themselves as leaders in tough times. Attention to recruiting women of color and to practices and standpoints that decenter whiteness will be maintained throughout. Coordinating faculty and participants will set a shared, collaborative agenda through planning meetings and maintain a flexible and self-reflective practice as the year unfolds.

The participants will be offered mentorship, the opportunity for collaboration, digital skill acquisition, writing support, and community building. While some of this professional development work will involve outside experts, fundamentally the program is designed to support and update the tradition of women historians bonding with other women historians but under changed circumstances. It is the fostering of new and durable connections from within our own ranks that has been most threatened by the pandemic and are in most need of investment. The Program will involve setting a collaborative agenda with interested participants and the coordinating faculty. Deepening our reflective practice and finding new ways of sharing our

insights about intersectionality and practices of collaboration “after covid” will come from ourselves. The Program will engender and capture this learning and enable its dissemination.

Work Plan

Administering the Scholar and Leaders Program—coordination, communication, budget matters—will lie with WAWH president, executive director, and treasurer. The staffing of the events and activities of the Program will largely come from the leadership ranks of WAWH and the UC Consortium. These are assistant, associate, and full professors with significant combined experience as leaders on their campuses and in the profession more broadly. The day-long Digital Humanities training will involve at least two professionals from outside of our ranks who will provide the injection of expertise identified by the Program participants. The trainings will be documented (recorded) during the year, tracked and publicized in the WAWH quarterly newsletter, *The Networker* and culminate in a final WAWH Scholars & Leaders Program podcast (or other suitable digital communication).

When	What	How
Mar 2022	Circulate Call for Participants	
Apr 2022	Planning meeting	at WAWH Conference in Costa Mesa
May 2022	Setting a Collaborative & Intersectional Agenda	coordinating meeting(s) – virtual
Jun 2022	Launching a Collaborative & Intersectional Agenda	Mentorship Session A
Sep 2022	“Thinking about audiences for your work”	Writing Workshop #1
Nov 2022	Collaboration, Intersectionality, and Digital Humanities in History	Day-long event
Dec 2022	Professionalism + Intersectionality	Mentorship Session B
Jan 2023	“Your voice, multiple contexts”	Writing Workshop #2
Febr 2023	History Outside the Box/Book	Mentorship Session C
Mar 2023	TBD (based on participant needs)	Writing Workshop #3
Apr 2023	Scholars & Leaders Roundtable & Podcast Induction into WAWH Executive Committee Partnership planning meeting WAWH-UC/WGSHA	At WAWH Conference (location TBD)

Bios of Program Conveners

Ellen Hartigan O’Connor

PhD University of Michigan, 1996

Professor of History, UC Davis & Associate Dean for Graduate Students and Postdocs

Book: *The Ties that Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (2009)

- 2019 UC Davis Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award
- UC Consortium on Women’s, Gender and Sexualities Histories in the Americas

Annelise Heinz

PhD Stanford, 2015

Assistant Professor of History, University of Oregon

Book: *Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture* (2021)

- “Reevaluating Teaching Evaluations,” *Inside Higher Ed*, 16 August 2016
- “Writing out of the Box,” *Teaching Commons* 3 February 2015
- “Jumpstarting the Writing Process,” *Teaching Commons* 15 May 2014

Lisa Materson

PhD, History, UCLA 2000

Associate Professor of History, UC Davis

Book: *For the Freedom of her Race: Black Women in Electoral Politics in Illinois, 1877-1932* (2009)

- Hartigan-O’Connor, Ellen, and Lisa G. Materson, Rebecca Plant, Judy Wu, Principal Investigators, “[#EmpireSuffrageSyllabus](#),” *Women and Social Movements*, 2021.
- Hartigan-O’Connor, E., and Lisa G. Materson, “The Nineteenth Amendment and the National Parks,” Cooperative Research and Training Grant with the National Parks Service, 2020-present.
- UC Consortium on Women’s, Gender and Sexualities Histories in the Americas.

Patricia A. Schechter

PhD Princeton, 1993

Professor of History, Portland State University

Book: *Ida B. Wells-Barnett and American Reform, 1880-1930* (2001)

- President, Western Association of Women Historians
- OAH Distinguished lecturer

Ula Y. Taylor

PhD UC Santa Barbara

Professor of African American Studies, University of California Berkeley

Book: *The Promise of Patriarchy: Women and The Nation of Islam* (2017)

- Immediate Past President, WAWH
- Distinguished Professor Teaching Award, UC Berkeley 2013
- Los Angeles Times Distinguished Fellow, Huntington Library (2021-22)

Jessica Weiss

PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 1994

Professor of History – California State University East Bay

- Director of Faculty Development
- Interim Co-Director, Student Center for Academic Achievement
- Book: *To Have and To Hold: Marriage, the Baby Boom and Social Change* (2000)

Judy Tzu-Chun Wu

PhD Stanford, 1998

Director of the Humanities Center

Professor of Asian American Studies

Chancellor's Fellow

University of California, Irvine

Book: *Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards: A Life of a War Time Celebrity* (2005)

- Chancellors Awards, 2019 & 2020 Excellence in Undergraduate Research Mentorship
- UC Consortium on Women's, Gender and Sexualities Histories in the Americas

Key WAWH Officers

Sarah Gold McBride, Executive Director

Visiting Lecturer, UC Berkeley

PhD History, UC Berkeley 2017

- 2011-2017 History Content Advisor, UC Berkeley-Social Science Project
- 2014-present Co-founder "The Teaching History Conference"
- 2013-2016 Co-founder History Graduate Student Pedagogy Group, UC Berkeley

Kate Flach, Treasurer

PhD University of California, San Diego, 2018

Lecturer, California State University, Long Branch

- Contributor, Women Also Know History
- "The 'Wonder Years' Remake Resurrects a 1970s Tactic to diversify TV Viewing" *The Washington Post* 1 October 2021
- "Thanks to Conservative Politicians and the media, the Education Wars echo the 1960s," *Anchorage Daily News* 20 November 2021

Budget Justification

As a first venture by WAWH into intensive professional development and leadership training, the budget here is entirely structured around stipends and honoraria for the participants, conveners, and administrators. The primary cost item is compensation for the Fellows who are the primary participants and beneficiaries of the Program. We feel strongly about the importance of these funds as an investment in the future of women in the profession. The point of the Program is the consolidation of human capital and the deepening of human connection in changed circumstances and largely enabled through extant computer and digital technologies. WAWH will be hiring a new executive director whose position will start 1 May 2022. We see this hire as part of the excitement in the Program as the grant will enable us to offer better compensation and a richer opportunity for the ED's engagement with Program conveners and with the Fellows as well. Recording technology and editing for the culminating podcast and other electronic deliverables will be provided by the WAWH's operating budget and costs are expected in the less than \$1,000 range.

Budget for participants (“Fellows”)

Workshop attendance \$500 x 3 sessions = 1,500

Mentorship session attendance \$500 x 3 sessions = 1,500

Day long communications training \$750

Full attendance per fellow = \$3,750 for the year x 6 participants \$22,500 (four grad students + 2 post-doc/asst profs)

TOTAL \$22,500

Budget for conveners

Honorarium for running workshops \$150 x 12 (two for each session) \$1,800

Budget for 2 experts to run day-long digital humanities and public communications training \$2,500 each X2 = \$5,000

TOTAL \$6,800.00

Roughly 10% to WAWH executive director and treasurer for additional labor and administration \$3,500

Grand total = \$32,800