Feminist Resilience: Structures & Strategies for Troubled Times

Panelist & Moderator Biographies

Panel 1: Women’s Leadership on Climate, Energy, & Health

*Shalanda Baker, Northeastern University*, joined the Northeastern faculty in 2017. She works closely with colleagues in Northeastern’s Global Resilience Institute, linking it to the School of Law’s Center for Law, Innovation and Creativity (CLIC). Professor Baker served as an Air Force officer prior to her honorable discharge under the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” policy, and became a vocal advocate for repeal of the policy. Following her graduation from law school, she clerked for Justice Roderick Ireland of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Professor Baker completed a William H. Hastie Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin Law School, where she received her LLM. In 2016, she won a Fulbright award and spent a year in Mexico exploring energy reform, climate change and indigenous rights. Before joining Northeastern’s faculty, Professor Baker was an associate professor of law at the William S. Richardson School of Law, University of Hawai‘i, where she was the founding director of the Energy Justice Program.

*Stephanie DeCandia, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center and Northeastern University*, is the Director of Programs at the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC) where she provides oversight and strategic direction for survivor services programs. Stephanie is a statewide leader and mentor in the victim-services field providing support to newer advocates through the Massachusetts Victim Assistance Academy. She co-wrote the Massachusetts curriculum on police investigations used at the state’s training academy and has led numerous initiatives with campuses, researchers, legislators and others to advance survivors’ rights and experiences when seeking healing and justice. Stephanie is a part-time lecturer in the Human Services Program at Northeastern University. She is a 2013 Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly Top Women of Law honoree. In 2008, the Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance recognized her with its Community Advocate Award. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Providence College and a Juris Doctorate from Northeastern University School of Law. Prior to joining BARCC, she was the Victim Rights Law Center’s Supervising Staff Attorney. Stephanie began her legal work as the Staff Attorney for Aid to Incarcerated Mothers.

*Deon Haywood, Women With a Vision*, has worked as a human rights defender and advocate for Black women, working class and low-income women, and LGBTQ communities in the South for more than twenty-five years. As the Executive Director of WWAV, she led the organization after Hurricane Katrina in successfully changing the “crime against nature” statute being used to criminalize street-based sex work, thereby securing the removal of more than 800 people from the Louisiana sex offender registry. Through her relentless advocacy, she has grown WWAV into a leading voice on Black women and criminalization. For this work, she has been honored with numerous awards.
Laura McTighe, Dartmouth College, is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Society of Fellows at Dartmouth College and the Co-Founder and Associate Director of Front Porch Research Strategy in New Orleans. As an interdisciplinary scholar of religion, gender, race, and social movements, she studies the histories of struggle that fill our present and asks how practitioners use religion to organize and transform our world. Her research and teaching take shape through and are sustained by her twenty years of work in our nation’s movements to end AIDS and prisons. Her first book project, Fire Dreams, is a collaborative ethnography of activist persistence undertaken in partnership with the Black feminist leaders of WWAV after the organization’s headquarters were firebombed and destroyed in a still-uninvestigated arson attack. Her next project, “Moral Medicine,” is a historical ethnography of gendered punishment, which traces the continuities between nineteenth-century carceral imaginaries and our current era of mass criminalization.

Tania Rosario-Mendez, Taller Salud, is an artist, educator, public health specialist and women and girls’ rights activist, born and raised in Puerto Rico. She holds a B.A. in Humanities with a double major in Drama and History from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus and a Master in Public Health from the UPR’s Medical Sciences Campus. With over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector, she has a solid background integrating project management, cultural work, community organizing, popular education and human rights activism. She now leads the feminist organization Taller Salud as its Executive Director, focused on reducing health inequities, achieving gender equality, and preventing violence in the communities that suffer from greater social exclusion. Her goal is to build a Puerto Rico where there is health, peace, and economic development for all. Author of two books, several articles, and conference papers. Theatre director and teacher, community organizer, and cultural worker. Trained full-spectrum doula and a certified childbirth educator. Proud mother of a boy and a girl. She is immensely and fiercely happy to be alive.

Jennie C. Stephens, Northeastern University, is the Dean’s Professor of Sustainability Science and Policy and director of Northeastern’s School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs. She is also director of strategic research collaborations at the Global Resilience Institute and co-director of the MS in Environmental Science and Policy. Her research focuses on institutional and cultural innovation in the energy sector, including gender diversity and energy democracy, and technological optimism, and the “usability” of climate science in climate mitigation and adaptation. Professor Stephens is a 2015-2016 Leopold Leadership fellow, and her book Smart Grid (R)Evolution: Electric Power Struggles (Cambridge University Press, 2015) explores social and cultural debates about energy system change. Before Northeastern, Professor Stephens was on the faculty at the University of Vermont and Clark University. She earned her PhD at Caltech in environmental science & engineering and her BA at Harvard in environmental science & public policy.
Panel 2: Flipping the Script: Unpacking the Resilience of Patriarchy

*Moya Bailey, Northeastern University,* is an assistant professor in the department of Cultures, Societies, and Global Studies and the program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Northeastern University. Her work focuses on marginalized groups’ use of digital media to promote social justice as acts of self-affirmation and health promotion. She is interested in how race, gender, and sexuality are represented in media and medicine. She currently curates the #transformDH Tumblr initiative in Digital Humanities. She is also the digital alchemist for the Octavia E. Butler Legacy Network.

*Jessica Valenti, Author,* called one of the Top 100 Inspiring Women in the world, is a columnist for Medium and a feminist author. Her most recent book, *Sex Object: A Memoir,* was a New York Times bestseller. In 2004, Jessica founded the award winning blog Feministing.com, which *Columbia Journalism Review* called “head and shoulders above almost any writing on women’s issues in mainstream media.” Jessica’s articles have topped the most-read lists at The New York Times, The Atlantic, the Guardian, and The Washington Post. She's also written for Salon, Bitch, Ms. Magazine and The Toast. Jessica has been interviewed on The Colbert Report, profiled in The New York Times magazine, and is a widely-sought after speaker. She has a Masters degree in Gender Studies from Rutgers University and lives in Brooklyn with her husband and daughter.

*Suzanna Walters, Northeastern University,* is professor and director of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies and professor of sociology at Northeastern University and is the editor-in-chief of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society.* Her work centers on questions of gender, feminist theory and politics, sexuality, and popular culture and she is a frequent commentator on these issues for the media. She is the author of numerous books including, most recently, *The Tolerance Trap: How God, Genes, and Good Intentions are Sabotaging Gay Equality.* She is currently working on a book examining the state of both feminist theory and politics in an era of “call-out feminism” and intense social media attention. In 2004, Walters founded the first in the nation Ph.D. program in gender studies at Indiana University, where she was a professor of gender studies and held positions in sociology and communication and culture. Previously, Walters was professor of sociology and director of women’s studies at Georgetown University.
Panel 3: Imagining (Real) Feminist Resilience

**DiDi Delgado, Black Lives Matter Global Network/The DiDi Delgado Experience, LLC**, is a writer, activist, freelance journalist and poet. She is currently Head of Operations at S.O.U.P (The Society Of Urban Poetry), a collective of artists and musicians whose mission statement is to help shed light on the diversity amongst creative individuals and groups across gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, faith, ability, age, and aims to bridge the gaps between these intersectionalities. She facilitates writing workshops at the Haley House and the Dudley Café in Dudley Square. Currently an organizer of Black Lives Matter Cambridge, she has served on the leadership team for the ACLU's BCPA Committee, and the Boston Branch of the NAACP's Young Adult Committee. Most recently, she launched #DoneForDiDi– a community container for radical philanthropy. DiDi is constantly on the front lines blazing pathways, creating channels and fostering connections in support of other activists. She is the recipient of the 2015 Jack Powers Stone Soup Savor award, which is awarded annually to one poet that serves the Boston and Cambridge communities as a mentor while consistently providing distinguished contributions to the art of poetry. DiDi has participated in Michael Rothenberg's 100,000 Poets for Change, worked with Boston’s Poet Laureate and others for the 2015 Mayor's Poetry and Prose program, and performed for various venues such as: Boston Center for Arts, Boston City Hall, Emerson College, and Boston City Councilor At Large Ayanna Pressley’s Jump Into Peace initiative. Deeply passionate about both her local and global community, she believes that poetry and activism go hand in hand.

**Leigh Gilmore, Wellesley College**, is Distinguished Visiting Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies at Wellesley College and the author of *Tainted Witness: Why We Doubt What Women Say About Their Lives* (Columbia 2017), *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony* (Cornell 2001), *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women’s Self-Representation* (Cornell 1994), and, with Elizabeth Marshall, co-author of *Witnessing Girlhood: Toward an Intersectional Tradition of Life Writing* (Fordham 2019). Her articles on autobiographical literature, testimony, and trauma appear in numerous scholarly journals and edited collections. She held the Dorothy Cruikshank Backstrand Chair of Women's and Gender Studies at Scripps College and was Professor of English at Ohio State University. She has held visiting appointments at UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, Northeastern University, Harvard Divinity School, and Brown University. She writes for *The Conversation* and *Cognoscenti* and is currently writing a book on the #MeToo movement.

**L.A. Kauffman, Longtime Organizer and Author**, has been a grassroots organizer and movement journalist for more than 35 years. She was the mobilizing coordinator for some of the largest protests in U.S. history -- the massive Iraq antiwar protests of 2003 and 2004 -- and has played a leading role in a wide array of direct-action campaigns and movements. She is the author of *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism* (Verso Books, 2017) and *How to Read a Protest: The Art of Organizing and Resistance* (University of California Press, 2018) and writes for *The Guardian*, *n+1*, *Waging Nonviolence*, and numerous other outlets. Most recently
she was the lead editor of the "UnPresidented" future-fiction edition of The Washington Post, which predicts Donald Trump fleeing the White House after a multiracial, women-led nonviolent uprising.

Lori Hope Lefkovitz, Northeastern University, Ruderman Professor and Director of the Jewish Studies Program and Director of the Humanities Center, is the author of In Scripture: The First Stories of Jewish Sexual Identity (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), which was named a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in the category of Women’s Studies. Her awards include a Fulbright professorship at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, an academic fellowship at the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis, a Woodrow Wilson dissertation fellowship in the Women’s Studies Division, and a Golda Meir post-doctoral fellowship at Hebrew University. She was the founding director of Kolot, the Center for Jewish Women’s and Gender Studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and is the founding executive editor of the website ritualwell.org. Professor Lefkovitz holds a BA from Brandeis University and an MA and PhD from Brown University. Her books include: Shaping Losses: Cultural Memory and the Holocaust (with Julia Epstein), Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary Representation, and The Character of Beauty in the Victorian Novel.