

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

ACADEMIC YEAR 2018–2019



Simmons
UNIVERSITY

The Gwen Ifill College
of Media, Arts,
and Humanities

I am proud to look back at a successful first year. Our collective task was to begin the work of building a college of media, arts, and humanities that could carry on the legacy of Gwen Ifill, a beloved alumna and American icon, while positioning ourselves to thrive in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the year, we reminded ourselves of Simmons' long history of fostering women's independence, its strengths at the thoughtful intersection of the liberal arts and preparation for work in the world, and the great gift of a namesake who stands as a model for how we hope all graduates do good work in the world and become leaders, no matter their profession. We also had necessary conversations about the work we have to do to become the most inclusive campus.

I am amazed at how much we built together: a new Mission Statement, Community Meetings, an inaugural faculty chair in Public Engagement, a Mentor-in-Residence program, two inaugural Ifill Scholarship recipients, and enhancements to student-driven media. Plus, we settled into a remodeled Communications wing and Dean's Suite, an inspiring Gwen Ifill Exhibit and Knight Foundation Board Room, and a new home for the Children's Literature "Book Nook." All along, we continued so much of what already made Ifill special, from annual lectures, departmental gatherings and traditions, art exhibits, children's literature institutes, student and faculty research, graduate colloquia, and excursions into Boston and beyond.

Every morning, I have the privilege of coming to campus and passing by the Gwen Ifill exhibit where I get to witness students and others meeting her, often for the first time, and thinking about what it means to forge a life of purpose. It means something that we place an African American woman's achievements at the center of the Simmons experience for all, across rank, identity, and role. And it means something that we are sending graduates into the world who are prepared to ask big questions, seek truth, and make a difference.

Brian Norman

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Norman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being more prominent than the last name "Norman".

Dean, The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
Simmons University

AS A PIONEERING BLACK WOMAN JOURNALIST, Gwen Ifill broke through barriers of prejudice and stands as a model of professional excellence and a purposeful life. **THE GWEN IFILL COLLEGE OF MEDIA, ARTS, AND HUMANITIES** aims to carry on that legacy for the next generations.

Our Mission:

We are a community of educators and learners guided by intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, and generosity of spirit.

We derive strength from our differences and pursue civic engagement through humanistic inquiry that values language, lived experience, artistic expression, and imagination.

We give voice to our stories, past and present, individual and global, told and untold, to influence a future whose questions have yet to be asked.

How will you, too, do the hard work of imagining a more just future?



88

Faculty

60.5 FTE, including cross-College appointments

Full-Time: 51

tenured: 33
tenure-track: 4
contract: 14

Part-Time: 37

proportional: 4
adjunct: 33

6

Professional Administrative Support Staff

44

Student Workers

General: 8
Digital Media: 26
Gallery: 5
Dean's Fellows: 5

The statistics and information included in this booklet were collected and compiled prior to June 19, 2019.

142

Degrees Granted

Graduate: 50

dual programs: 30

Undergraduate Majors: 92

multiple majors: 25
undergraduate minors: 48
multiple minors: 14

481

Students

Graduate: 199

dual programs: 118

Undergraduate Majors: 200

multiple majors: 48
undergraduate minors: 82
multiple minors: 15

14,941

Credit Hours

Graduate: 2,053
Undergraduate: 12,888

12,470

Alumnae/i

Graduate: 3,647
Undergraduate: 8,823

UNDERGRADUATE OFFERINGS

all areas offered as a BA and minor, unless otherwise noted

Africana Studies

Art

Arts Administration

Cinema and Media Studies
(minor only)

Communication *(BA only)*

concentrations in:

Graphic Design

Journalism

Media Arts

East Asian Studies

English

French

Gender History *(minor only)*

History

Music

Performing Arts *(COF minor)*

Philosophy

Public History *(minor only)*

Photography *(minor only)*

Public Relations and

Marketing

Communications *(joint BA)*

Radio *(minor only)*

Spanish

Web Design and Development *(joint BS)*

Women's and Gender Studies

PLAN

Undergraduate Program

PLAN Courses: 28
(BOS, LDR, LC)

Honors Courses: 2

Advisees: 444

GRADUATE OFFERINGS

Children's Literature

Children's Literature *(MA)*

Writing for Children *(MFA)*

dual with:

Library and Information Science *(MA/MS)*

Elementary Education *(MA/MAT)*

Writing for Children *(MA/MFA)*

Gender/Cultural Studies

Gender/Cultural Studies *(MA)*

dual with:

Public Policy *(MA/MPP)*

History

History *(MA)*

dual with:

Library and Information Science with

Concentration in Archives Management *(MA/MS)*

Secondary Education *(MA/MAT)*

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

In our first year, the Gwen Ifill College started a tradition of coming together once or twice per semester for conversations that matter. This year, conversations included:

- “Welcome and Inaugural Year: Who we are and where we’re going”
- “The Poet X: Live and Onstage,” Elizabeth Acevedo, inaugural Mentor-in-Residence
- “Remembering Gwen,” Nancy Ancrum, Mentor-in-Residence, in conversation with Rick Berke

MENTORS-IN-RESIDENCE

A signature program that invites to campus talented professionals who are achieving success in their fields and expanding the range of voices and perspectives in them. Mentors share their knowledge and help us foster the potential of our students so that they, too, may pursue lives of purpose.

- Elizabeth Acevedo, poet and author, hosted by Children’s Literature and Africana Studies
- Yolanda Coentro, nonprofit leader, hosted by Art and Music, Communications and Humanities 370
- Sneha Shrestha, artist, hosted by the Trustman Gallery and Women’s and Gender Studies
- Nancy Ancrum, journalist, hosted by Communications and Humanities 370
- Lisa Mullins, journalist, hosted by Communications and Simmons Radio

INTERNSHIPS & MENTORSHIPS

Internships help students prepare for post-Simmons success. This year, 85 students participated in internship or mentorship courses that helped connect workplace learning and academic coursework, with the time and community to reflect on their futures as professionals.

Placements

- Appel Farm Arts and Music Center
- Barefoot Books
- Boston Ballet
- Candlewick Press
- Cervena Barva Press
- Charlesbridge Books
- Children’s Hospital, Gender Management Service Department
- De Gruyter
- French-American Chamber of Commerce, New England
- Gibson House Museum
- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
- Let’s Get Ready
- Media Source/Horn Book
- NewTV Community Channel
- Office of Communications & External Relations, Harvard Medical School
- Old North Church
- Philips Brooks House
- Porter Square Books
- Seth Moulton’s District Office

DEAN'S FELLOWS

Dean's Fellowships provide high-quality, educational opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students to participate in academic life by pursuing projects that advance the work of academic departments, programs, or units. This year, host departments and programs included:

- Children's Literature
- Communications and Media Labs
- Communications and *CommWorks*
- Gender/Cultural Studies
- Multimedia Storytelling
- Women's and Gender Studies

POOLE AWARD

Alden Pool Faculty Mentor Award is presented to a faculty member in the Gwen Ifill College who has provided exceptional mentorship of students during their time at Simmons and in their future careers. The award is named in honor of Professor Alden Poole (Department of Communications, 1955–1986), a formative mentor in the life of Gwen Ifill '77, '93HD.

Selection based on alumnae/i nomination.

Inaugural recipient: Cathie Mercier, Children's Literature

HIGHLIGHTS FROM DEPARTMENT LIFE

Bread and Roses

The Women's and Gender Studies Department hosts an annual Bread and Roses meal, which commemorates the anniversary of a 1912 strike by Lawrence mill workers, most of them immigrant women, demanding not only fair wages ("bread") but also "roses" for a satisfying life. This year featured a keynote by Professor Laura Prieto.

CommWorks

The Communications Department hosts *CommWorks*, an annual celebration that showcases student work across the department and serves as an exhibit of the portfolios of graduating seniors—graphic design, videos, writing, multimedia storytelling, web sites, app design, animation, digital images, and more. The event also reveals the annual issue of *CommTracks*.

The "Book Nook"

The heart of the Children's Literature Department is its "Book Nook" featuring nearly 5,000 children's and young adult books published that year. This year, the Book Nook moved to the Main College Building and was opened to all Ifill graduate students. A highlight was hosting a launch party for class of 2014 alumna Bré McDaniel's *Hands Up!*, a celebration of Black joy and resilience.



Kaylin Wu, Vignettes Under Two Suns 2 of 3, mixed media collage

Student Art Exhibits

Each year, the Trustman Art Gallery hosts student art exhibitions to provide students in studio arts classes an opportunity to display their coursework in a professional setting. Selected works are purchased by President Drinan and donated to the Simmons University Student Art Collection for display by the President's office. This year, the Gwen Ifill College Dean's Office also began purchasing and displaying student work. Additionally, the Department of Art and Music hosts the Hall Gallery on the 4th floor of the MCB featuring a rotating exhibition of student artwork.

Robert Gay Lecture

The English Department hosts an annual lecture inviting some of the most exciting thinkers in the field of literary studies. This year featured Aliyyah I. Abdur-Rahman (Brown University) on "The Aesthetics of Regard: Theorizing New Millennial Black Feminist Art Praxis."

ALUMNI CHAIR IN PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Laura Prieto, Professor, History and Women's and Gender Studies (2019-2022)

GRANT: HUMANITIES RESEARCH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

Professor Laura Prieto, Council of Independent Colleges, to support student research on the immigrant history of Boston's West End, in collaboration with University Archives, Simmons Community Engagement, and the Boston City Archives.

TRUSTMAN GALLERY

The Trustman Art Gallery is a professional art gallery that participates in the Boston art scene by featuring the work of artists in Boston and beyond. This year, under the direction of Interim Director Helen Popinchalk, exhibits included:

- Julia Shepley: *Linger & Shift* with Poetry by Audrey Henderson
- Vaughn Sills: *True Poems Flee*
- Nancy L. Greco: *Recurrence*
- Caitlin & Nicole Duennebieer: *Love Superior, a Death Supreme*
- IMAGINE (AKA Sneha Shrestha): *Golden Equinox*
- Brian Butler: *Show Drawn: 10 Years of Drawing Concerts*

SERVICE LEARNING

- 6 service-learning courses

FACULTY RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

In the Gwen Ifill College, faculty are not only committed teachers, they are also active scholars, artists, and citizens.

Sabbaticals

- Heather Hole, Art and Music
- Colleen Kiely, Art and Music
- Sarah Leonard, History
- Bob White, Communications

Milestones

- Megan Lambert, Children's Literature, 10 years
- Sarah Leonard, History, 15 years
- Renée Bergland, English, 20 years
- Gregory Slowik, Art and Music, 25 years
- Margaret Hanni, Art and Music, 23 years, retiring

Promotions

- Diane Grossman, Mockler Chair in Principled Leadership, Professor, Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies
- Suzanne Leonard, Professor, English
- Dawna Thomas, Professor, Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies (affiliated with Africana Studies)

Faculty Publications/Exhibits

34 Publications

48 Presentations

11 Exhibits

6 Grants and Fellowships

INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

There were a total of nine collaborations across eight departments and among three colleges, including:

- Suzanne Leonard, English & Saher Selod, Sociology: "Student Outing to Niceties Play at Huntington"
- Kelly Hager, English and Women's and Gender Studies & Audrey Golden, English: "Wayétu Moore reading and Q&A"
- Cathie Mercier, Children's Literature & Gary Bailey, Social Work: "Through an Activist Lens"
- Stephen Ortega, History & Renée Bergland, English: "Security and Insecurity in the Post-9/11 World: A Conversation with Arundhati Roy"
- Audrey Golden, English & Franny Sullivan, History: "Black Odyssey in Boston: A Theater Outing"
- Kelly Hager, English and Women's and Gender Studies & Steve Berry, History: "Alum Mentors for HUM 370"
- Judith Aronson, Communications & Michael Berger, Chemistry: "From the Critique of Language to the Critique of Images and Media" (*lecture by Michael Renner*)
- Laura Prieto, History and Women's and Gender Studies & Kelly Hager, English and Women's and Gender Studies: "Transnational Feminism and Women's Liberation Theater: A Conversation with Kath Kenny"
- Kelly Hager, English and Women's and Gender Studies & Cathryn Mercier, Children's Literature: "Mixtapes as a Means of Literary Analysis"

STUDENT RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Gwen Ifill College faculty are committed to mentoring student-driven work and independent learning.

3 SURPASS Fellowships

3 SURE Fellowships

28 Graduate Theses

4 Graduate Student Professional Development Grants

UG Research Symposium

There were a total of 25 Ifill student participants across six departments.

8 Poster Sessions

1 Student Keynote

11 Panel Discussions

Class Exhibits from Communications
210, 240, 248, 340

Graduate Research Presentations

- Gender/Cultural Studies Colloquium
- History Fall and Spring Symposia
- Children's Literature Thesis Presentation

Student Art Exhibit

The annual student show: *Simmons Universe: We Make Art!* presented drawings, paintings, color studies, screen prints, photographs, and mixed media works by 109 students in 10 classes. This exhibition was held in the Trustman Gallery from January 22–February 1, 2019 with an opening reception on January 31, 2019.

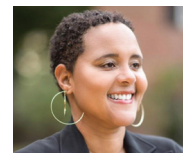
This spring, the Art and Music Department hosted its inaugural Spring Showcase in concert with the Undergraduate Symposium. *Creative Landscape: Spring Studio Showcase* exhibited work by 76 students in eight classes. Photographs, drawings, paintings, color studies, and collages were on view in the Hall Gallery on the fourth floor of the MCB from April 22–26, 2019.

IFILL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Ifill scholarship program seeks to carry on Gwen Ifill's legacy by helping to turn the next generation's potential into excellence. Ifill scholarships support continuing students who demonstrate exceptional promise in the classroom and who are from under-represented groups, have financial need, and are pursuing a degree in any academic program in Ifill College. This year's recipients were:



Alexandra Bohanan '19
Arts Administration

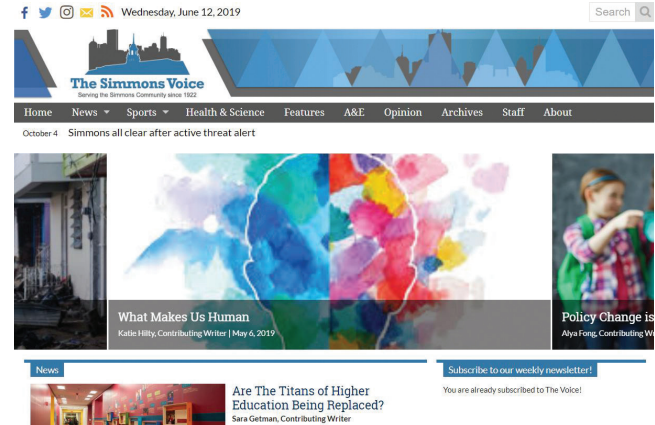


Priscilla Wiltshire-Bland '20
Communications and Africana Studies

STUDENT-DRIVEN MEDIA AND PRODUCTIONS

In the Gwen Ifill College, we believe in student-driven media as a means of carrying on Gwen Ifill's legacy and preparing the next generation to foster an informed and creative public. This year, a faculty task force made plans for a new Student-Driven Media Advisory Board to enhance, professionalize, and coordinate our efforts, thanks in part to a generous bequest. Current productions include:

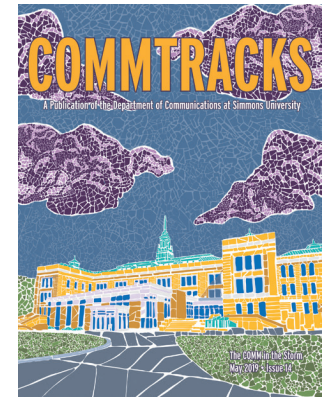
- *CommTracks*, annual communications magazine, annual theme: "The Comm in the Storm"
- *Sidelines*, literary magazine, annual launch: guest artist Sneha Shrestha & guest poet Amanda Lou Doster
- *Simmons Radio*, award-winning station
- *The Voice*, student newspaper
- Studio 5, faculty-facilitated professional communications studio
 - Back on My Feet Boston
 - Harvard Medical School's Family Van
 - Beth Israel
 - MissionSafe
 - Boston Children's Hospital
 - Mount Pleasant Home
 - Daily Table
 - Project Place
 - Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
 - Simmons Advancement
 - Simmons Health and Wellness
 - The Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities
 - This Star Won't Go Out
 - Toxics Action Center



Website: simmonsvoice.com



Sidelines cover art:
Erin Buck, "Cycle"



CommTracks cover design:
Alex Bohanan
CommTracks title typography:
Kelsey Klaczyk, based off Barlow
Condensed by Jeremy Tribby

REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

Student

"I consider Dr. Theresa Perry in the Department of Africana Studies to be my mentor. I've learned so much from her and the more I learn, the more I realize how much I don't know... In the Department of Communications, students not only learn the technical skills of each course, but are encouraged to stretch themselves, try their best, take risks and take charge of their own destinies. The lessons we're learning are helping us become leaders who will be well-equipped to impart the knowledge we've been given."

—Priscilla Wiltshire-Bland '20, Africana Studies and Communications student, Ifill Scholarship recipient

Alumnae/i

"I look to Gwen as an icon of what is possible. That through all the hardships I have and will face as a Black woman operating in a society that wasn't built for me, I can do anything I set my mind to. A strong conviction and the ability to produce quality work will get me far."

—Alexandra Bohanan '19, Arts Administration alumna, Ifill Scholarship recipient

Faculty

"If this has been the year of institutional restructuring and building our foundation as the Gwen Ifill College of Media, Arts, and Humanities, it seems fitting that Year Two would be the Year of the Student, the year in which we re-invigorate and renew our already strong commitment to our students."

—Eduardo Febles, Modern Languages and Literatures and Franny Sullivan, History, members of the Ifill Mission Statement faculty task force

Friend

"Everyone I encountered at the Gwen Ifill College was warm and welcoming, even staffers and students I simply passed in the hallways.

The students, of course, were the highlight—sharp and curious and questioning. Gwen left a most solid foundation upon which to build."

—Nancy Ancrum, Editorial Board Editor at the Miami Herald, Gwen Ifill College Mentor-in-Residence, Friend of Gwen Ifill

**Whose stories can you tell?
Whose voices are not being
heard? Who gets to decide
which stories and voices get
ignored? And what are you
willing to do about it?**

—Gwen Ifill



Hands graphic: Studio 5

