To: The USC GSS Community

From: Karen Tongson, Chair of GSS

Date: August 13, 2021

Subject: New Director of the Center for Feminist Research

Dear GSS Community,

With the start of the fall semester approaching, I’m writing with exciting updates about the Center for Feminist Research (CFR).

I’m pleased to announce that as of August 1, 2021, Professor Zakiyyah Iman Jackson (English, with a forthcoming joint appointment in Gender and Sexuality Studies), has assumed the role of Director of the Center for Feminist Research. Professor Jackson is the author of *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*, which won multiple awards in 2021, including the Lambda Literary Award for LGBTQ Studies, and the ACLA Levin Prize for outstanding first book in Comparative Literature. Her research engages African diasporic literature and visual culture through the interdisciplinary confluence of gender and sexuality studies, literary theory, science and technology studies, and philosophical discourse.

In Professor Jackson’s words:

> CFR will work in partnership with Gender and Sexuality Studies to create research opportunities for the study of race, gender, sexuality, coloniality, and feminism. Our seminars, workshops, conferences, and informal gatherings will bring together scholars, students, artists, musicians, filmmakers, and members of the greater Los Angeles community who share interests and concerns about the operations of systemic oppression, managed depletion, and modalities of enclosure that structure, imbricate, and materialize bodies, neighborhoods, societies, and worlds.

In the coming year, keep an eye out for monthly invited guests who will be sharing emergent approaches to the study of coloniality, antiblackness, and aesthetics; trans history and/or artmaking; racialization and the history of the ideas of ‘woman’ and ‘feminism.’”CFR will also continue to support the graduate student-led, research and writing collective, Multidisciplinary Intersectional Approaches to the Study of
Violence and Trauma, established by our previous director, Professor Ange-Marie Hancock Alfaro.

On that note, we also want to offer our tremendous and enduring gratitude to Professor Hancock Alfaro, who concluded her three-year term as director on August 1. In that brief period of time, Professor Hancock Alfaro expanded the research dimensions of CFR’s activities, and hosted an International Intersectionality Conference in 2019. Major figures who approach intersectionality from disparate perspectives and fields, including Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw who coined the concept, came together for sessions on research methods, as well as cross-generational practices and knowledge production.

She also welcomed Professor Anita Hill to USC for a community-wide conversation about social movements, sexual justice and harassment awareness in 2018, and co-organized with Professor Jane Junn in Political Science and International Relations, an online event commemorating the Nineteenth Amendment in 2020. Furthermore, Professor Hancock Alfaro focused CFR’s attention for the first time on gathering shareable data on gender research, while increasing support for doctoral students through the revival of the Tedesco Scholarship (now awarded annually). She also establishing a Gendered Sexual Violence Writing Group in 2020-21. Both of these important mechanisms of support, which underscore why Professor Hancock Alfaro was awarded the Provost’s Graduate Mentoring Award, will continue to be among CFR’s ongoing commitments moving forward.

Please join me in congratulating and thanking both of these extraordinary scholars for their service to CFR and GSS. We are grateful for the dynamism each of them continues to bring to GSS/CFR and our campus community more broadly.

Sincerely,

Chair, Gender & Sexuality Studies
Professor of Gender & Sexuality Studies, English, and American Studies & Ethnicity
Director, Consortium for Gender, Sexuality, Race and Popular Culture