



Letter from the Director

October 2007

Welcome to the Fall 2007 BRC. The CRWG has had a very good start to the new academic year. The CRWG/CoE was awarded an NIH funded K12 educational grant for mentored scientists in women's health. This women's health research career development program, *Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health* (BIRCWH), is a collaborative effort among the UIC's National Center of Excellence in Women's Health (CoE), the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and UIC's six health colleges: the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Applied Health Sciences, and the School of Public Health. The overall purpose of the UIC BIRCWH program is to optimize the success of junior faculty in developing a substantive and sustained research program in women's health science (to learn more about the BIRCWH program, see page 7).

The CoE was also awarded a new grant from Office of Women's Health (DHHS) called *Advancing System Improvements to Support Targets for Healthy People 2010* (ASIST2010). This exciting new program is a collaborative effort of the CoE with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Cooper Institute and the Southern Seven Health Department to improve the cardiovascular health of women living in the 7 southernmost counties of Illinois. (see page 8 for further details on "The Southern Seven Women's Initiative for Cardiovascular Health".)

Our Women in Science and Engineering programs continue to flourish. The NSF ADVANCE grant (WISEST) provided start up funds for four new women faculty in the Earth and Environmental Sciences, Mathematics, Chemical Engineering, and Electrical and Computer Engineering departments in the Colleges of Engineering and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Additionally, five underrepresented minority women have begun their 2 year programs as Post Doctoral Associates for Academic Diversity (3 in Biological Sciences, 1 in Chemical Engineering and 1 in a joint program between Earth and Environmental Sciences and Biological Sciences). The WISE program welcomed 30 undergraduates to the WISE wing of the new James Stukel Towers. The WISE program also received funding from the Women's Bureau, US Department of Labor for a project to expand the workforce in the nanosciences.

These are just some highlights of the CRWG's many efforts. Read on to learn more about our many activities. We look forward to a year of collaboration and working to improve the lives of women and girls. Thank you for sharing in this effort.

Looking to the future with good health and hope,

Stacie Geller, Director
Center for Research on Women and Gender and
National Center of Excellence in Women's Health

Inside This Issue

Featured Researcher: Mrinalini (Meena) Rao	2
WISEST Post-Doc Program	3
What's Up With WISE?	4
Featured Community Partner: Neighborhood Technology Resource	6
CoE Updates (BIRCWH, ASIST 2010, BODYWORKS)	7
Featured Alumna Alefiyah Abid Lindo	9
Alice Dan Dissertation Award Winner Tarini Bedi	9
CRWG Staff	10

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
Center for Research on Women and Gender

Featured Researcher: Mrinalini (Meena) Rao

Our featured researcher is Mrinalini C. (Meena) Rao, Ph.D., Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Illinois and Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, in the College of Medicine, University of Illinois at Chicago. Prior to being appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs in July 2007, Dr. Rao has held the positions of Vice-Provost for Faculty Affairs, Executive Associate Dean for the Graduate College and Associate Dean for the Graduate College.

In her role as Vice President, Dr. Rao is the chief academic officer for the University. She is responsible for helping the President define and shape the strategic academic priorities and directions of the university, for providing advice on academic policy issues and supporting academic initiatives. On behalf of the President, Dr. Rao also chairs key University-wide committees and serves on the University Policy Council with the other vice presidents, chancellors and university officers.



Despite holding several senior administrative positions, Dr. Rao has maintained an active teaching and research career and laboratory and has published extensively. In her research Dr. Rao focuses on elucidating the molecular mechanisms underlying hormonal and neurotransmitter mediated regulation of physiological processes, in particular, those modulating ion transport across epithelial cells. The major emphasis is on the gastrointestinal tract, where such studies help elucidate the basis of diseases ranging from infectious diarrheas to inflammatory bowel disease and cystic fibrosis. As a faculty member in the College of Medicine, Dr. Rao has also advised several doctoral, medical and undergraduate students.

Dr. Rao's association with the Center for Research on Women and Gender began in 2002 when we took the lead on the university's application for the NSF's (National Science Foundation) ADVANCE grant. The grant was not awarded to us in 2003 but because of the continued support from the Provost's office and the tireless work on the part of Dr. Rao and several others we were awarded the grant – Women in Science and Engineering System Transformation Initiative (WISEST) in 2006. The primary goal of this initiative is to increase the number, participation, and leadership status of women faculty—majority and minority—in the eleven science, and engineering and mathematics departments at UIC.

In conversations with Dr. Rao it was very apparent that her involvement with issues related to women and science goes back to her graduate school days at the University of Michigan where she was introduced to, and eventually became involved with, an organization called “Michigan Women in Science”. Dr. Rao feels that she has not personally experienced overt discrimination and bias because of her gender. She feels fortunate that throughout her career she has had wonderful mentors, both women and men

including Dr. Anita Payne who introduced her to “Michigan Women in Science”. In those days Michigan was at a very different place with respect to how it was supporting its women faculty and Dr. Rao feels it is wonderful to see her alma mater now at the forefront of institutional transformation efforts.

As a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Chicago, Dr. Rao had the opportunity to work with a rare individual—Dr. Michael Field. She never tires of telling the story of “sacrifice” that Dr. Field, a physician scientist, undertook on her behalf. When she had her first child, Dr. Field tried to get her a dedicated office (away from the radioactive laboratory where her office was located) so she could bring the baby in to nurse. Failing to convince the powers that be to identify such space, Dr. Field vacated his own office and spent the next three months like a nomad, finding “temporary” office space for himself. When Dr. Rao started her own laboratory she has in turn made this offer to all her graduate students and postdoctoral associates who needed it. Interestingly none of them were in a situation where they needed to avail themselves of the offer. However, Dr. Rao did go on a regular basis to a student's home to help her work on her thesis, while she was on mandatory bed rest during her pregnancy.

Despite her positive experiences, when she looks back now Dr. Rao picks up on small nuances of gender and race bias that she was not aware of back then. Nuances, that like many women, she put down as idiosyncrasies of her own personality. However, her work with WISEST and Office of Faculty Affairs have made her more aware of the subtle, and at times, not so subtle biases towards women and underrepresented minorities. Her goal is to help the university community understand and minimize these unconscious biases.

Dr. Rao, has successfully balanced her administrative and research careers along with her family life. She credits her ability to do that to the immense support from her husband Ralph Strohl, and to her kids who took their two career family in stride. Dr. Rao often says she is “lucky and charmed”. She had wonderful parents – both of whom stressed integrity, diligence and the importance of higher education as an essential step to being financially independent. She has an incredible role model in her sister and has encouraging in-laws who take pride in her achievements. She is grateful to all the “working” moms in her neighborhood who stay at home to raise their kids and volunteer innumerable hours in the school system as reading parents, as “parent escorts” for museum trips and as sounding boards for her children. Finally, Dr. Rao feels that a supportive work environment which makes her feel good about coming to work every day helps her immensely in balancing work and family.

When asked if she had any advice for others who may want to follow in her footsteps, Dr. Rao maintained that people should do work for which they have a passion and success will follow. She says, “You have to believe in what you do, enjoy doing it, be a good and patient listener and do it with integrity”.

WISEST Expands Diversity at UIC through Post Doctoral Initiative

In 2006, UIC became the only institution in Illinois to have ever received an ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation. This five-year grant supports UIC's Women in Science and Engineering System Transformation (WISEST) initiative, which has a goal of increasing the number, participation, and leadership status of women — majority and minority — in academic science and engineering through institutional transformation at UIC. The grant has allowed WISEST to develop programs to help address the serious challenge of encouraging women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines to pursue an academic career after they have received their doctoral degree. The "Post Doctoral Research Associates for Academic Diversity" program is one such pilot initiative designed to create a more welcoming environment for women scientists.

The two-year WISEST Post Doctoral program seeks to enhance the typical post doctoral research experience by:

- providing associates with strong mentoring and support that prepares them for a faculty position,
- supporting diverse talent to become faculty role models to inspire future scientists, and
- facilitating climate transformation at UIC so the University continues to be a competitive player in the recruitment and retention of diverse scientific talent in the years to come.

Five underrepresented minority women were hired in August 2007 through the Post Doctoral program. Three associates are working with the Biological Sciences department on research projects including the evaluation of behavioral mechanisms underlying the invasion success of the rusty crayfish in the Chicago area; investigation of the dispersal distribution curve of pollen and seeds; and a study of the role of soil macrofauna and earthworms in terrestrial carbon dynamics. The associate hired in Chemical Engineering is working on characterization of a novel platform for heterogenous catalysis. The fifth associate is working jointly with Biology and Earth and Environmental Sciences, and is comparing methane and nitrous oxide emissions from agricultural land and restored wetlands to emissions from waste water treatment plants.

To qualify for the post-doctoral associateship, potential candidates underwent a two-part application process. Part I reviewed eligibility for the associateship using reference letters and papers or abstracts, and verifying citizenship or permanent residency. Applications were reviewed by a committee and qualified candidates were invited to submit a Part II application that required each candidate to develop a 2-year research project in collaboration with a senior UIC STEM faculty member.

Each post doctoral associate has a team of advisors and mentors that support her through the program. The team includes:

1. the *research advisor* whose role is to assist the scholar in the planning and execution of their research,
2. the *mentor*, who is a senior faculty member who does not supervise the scholar's work but helps her navigate the system and assists her with working towards her individual career development goals,
3. the *WISEST facilitator* who is a senior faculty member and serves as a liaison between the academic department and WISEST, and
4. the *WISEST director* who monitors the ongoing success of the initiative as a whole and maintains communications with the post docs and advisory team throughout the two year period.

An important component of the program is the "Post Doctoral Institute for Career Development and Academic Diversity", created to develop the skill set required to be successful in an academic career using a comprehensive approach. To provide the associates with these skills a series of seminars have been planned covering critical career development topics including balancing work and life, managing a lab, grant and proposal writing, preparing for a faculty position search, presenting scientific research effectively, managing a lab and diverse talent, scientific writing techniques, and getting published. These seminars will be open to all women post doctoral scholars in the STEM fields at UIC.

WISEST has begun an evaluation of the Post Doctoral Associate program to assess the successful components of the program and to develop a model that can be disseminated locally and nationally.

To learn more about WISEST, visit the new WISEST website at <http://www.uicwisest.org>.

WISE Women in Science and Engineering

What's UP With WISE?

PRECOLLEGE ACTIVITIES

Sonya Kovalevsky High School Mathematics Day

On February 12, 2008, the WISE program will be hosting a Sonya Kovalevsky High School Mathematics Day for high school girls through a grant from the Association of Women in Mathematics. Sonya Kovalevsky High School Mathematics Days are sponsored by Elizabeth City State University and the National Security Agency and are intended to encourage young women to study math, to help girls transition between high school and college math, to assist the teachers of women mathematics students, and to encourage colleges and universities to collaborate with area high schools. WISE is currently seeking women who have studied mathematics to speak at the February 12 event. If interested, please contact Ruth Czarnecki at rczarneck@mindspring.com or 312-355-1490.

UIC Computer Science Department and WISE Team Up to Create LEGO Robotics Camp for Girls

by

Jisha Abubaker, UIC Department of Computer Science
Sarah Shirk & Tanisha Ross, Center for Research on Women and Gender

Hands on activities are essential to encouraging young girls develop their engineering and computer science skills, and LEGO Robotic kits are one way to engage girls in these fields at a young age. The UIC Computer Science Department and the WISE program pooled resources to offer two opportunities to program, design, and build a LEGO Robot to girls living in Chicago. This program was funded by Department of Computer Science Associate Professor Barbara DiEugenio's CAREER grant from the National Science Foundation as well as WISE program funds from the Caterpillar and Motorola Foundations.

Two events took place, a one-day pilot test in April and a five-day summer camp in July. Computer Science graduate student Jisha Abubaker and WISE graduate assistant Tanisha Ross served as program mentors. Girls ages 11 to 14 were invited from Girl Scout troops 302, 819, and 834 in the Bronzeville neighborhood as well as WISE community partner schools and science clubs.

With the help of the LEGO Mindstorms kit, the girls learned about the use of robotics in daily life, how to design robots they could see and touch, as well as how to program their robots using a laptop computer. The girls went on to build and program their own robot called "UIC Apollo" that successfully moved within a marked circle pushing any cans in its path while playing music. They also had a chance to tour and interact with the robots at the UIC Vision and Robotics lab thanks to Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Associate Professor Milos Zefran. On the final day of summer camp the group visited the "Robots and Us" exhibit at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum.



Computer Science Graduate Student Jisha Abubaker explains how computer programming applies to the field of robotics.



Left to right: Jisha Abubaker (UIC Computer Science Graduate Student), Harriet Johnson (Girl Scout Troop Leader) and Barbara DiEugenio (Associate Professor in Computer Science, UIC College of Engineering) watch the girl scouts during their program testing of the LEGO Robot.



Girls Scouts from troops 302, 819 and 834 begin to design the LEGO Robot.

WISE Women in Science and Engineering

ON CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

WISE Wing

The fall semester started with a breakfast in the new WISE Wing. Now located in James Stukel Towers at Roosevelt and Halsted, the WISE Wing is home to thirty, mostly first-year, WISE students. The students are excited to live on campus and in a supportive all-WISE environment. We have a good mix of biological sciences, chemistry, neuroscience, engineering, and movement science students, to name a few majors, on the floor. This should lend itself to a diverse array of faculty visitors. Our first dinner was held on September 20th with a discussion about the science of scent. Students made their own candles that evening as well. The October dinner was attended Dr. Karen Troy, a professor from Movement Sciences. This is not a target department for WISE, but we welcome all women in STEM fields. (Dr. Troy has a Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering.) She spoke to the students in the Stukel Towers cafeteria about her career in engineering. If you would like visit the WISE Wing, please contact the WISE office.



WISE staff members relax after a morning of volunteering for Move-in Day 2007. We not only got to help students move in, but got a tour of the new Stukel Towers.

Mentoring Program

A handful of the WISE Wing students are also participating in our peer mentoring program, which is going strong with almost 40 mentoring pairs this year. Mentoring orientation facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Gordon, Director of the UIC Office of Women's Affairs took place on September 18th and 19th. On October 11th WISE mentoring pairs gathered to listen to UIC Alum Patricia Frank, Ph.D. Dr. Frank shared her experiences and "lessons learned" to the eager crowd, including discussing her career path and how success does not always follow a straight and narrow path. Students said they enjoyed the talk and really appreciated seeing a successful woman who balanced a career and family. Students still interested in the program should contact WISE GA Carly Wobig at wobigcs@uic.edu to see if a partner is available.



WISE Wing student, Jenny Bauer, moves into her new corner room has a wonderful view of the UIC neighborhood.

World of WISE Choices

Our monthly seminar series, *World of WISE Choices*, returns in October when WISE will host a panel on environmental science policy. Confirmed speakers include Melissa Simon an O.R.I.S.E. Associate with the Great Lakes National Program Office, Eleanor S. Kane, Aide to Commissioner Debra Shore at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and Joyce Coffee from the City of Chicago's Department of Environment. All three women have degrees in both science/engineering and policy. The panel will inform WISE students of the real world applications of their studies and will address many daily issues we contemplate including pollution in our lake, clean drinking water, and clean air. Mark your calendars for February 7th. That will be the date for our annual scholarship workshop with the Office of Special Scholarships. The exact time and location will be announced at a later date.

We've Moved!

We've moved! Our website can now be found at <http://www.uicwise.org>.

There is also one organizational calendar, press releases, and featured events. One other place to look at is our WISE Stars section. In this section we will highlight WISE students who have earned honors, awards, or made other news. If you know of a WISE Star, please let us know!



Outreach Director Sarah Shirk helps a student move into James Stukel Towers. Move-in Day is organized by the UIC Alumni Association.

Keep an eye on what WISE is doing this year on our Flickr site! Add us as a contact and you'll always know when we post new photos <http://www.flickr.com/photos/uicwise>.



Community Partner Spotlight



Featured Community Partner: Neighborhood Technology Resource Center

The Neighborhood Technology Resource Center (NTRC) is a non-profit organization in Chicago with a mission of creating public spaces where new technology can be experienced and serve as a catalyst for individual and community capacity development. WISE is a proud sponsor of the NTRC's "Girls Empowerment Initiative" (GEI) at the Northwest Tower Apartments, a primarily Section 8 building in West Town, about 2 miles from the UIC campus.

The GEI targets girls ages 10 to 18 and is designed to be a female-only space under the supervision of an adult female mentor. The GEI seeks to empower young women through activities such as self-esteem building, career exploration, and college preparation. NTRC is also a GEM-SET club member, which provides girls an opportunity to engage in online mentoring activities in the fields of science, engineering, math, and technology.

With support from WISE, the GEI is implementing "Science Works", a project for girls in grades 3 through 7, that uses science fair kits to guide students through science experiments, including developing and testing a research hypothesis. Participating girls will complete their projects in a group setting and will convey their findings to an audience at the "Girls Night Out" science and career fair. The GEI strives to engage its participants in science for the long term, so that they see a career in science as a viable and appealing option. To this end, participants will also research careers related to their topics and present this information alongside their exhibits.

Women scientists are needed to speak at the "Girls Night Out" science fair on Thursday, November 29th at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in participating as a judge or speaker, please contact Sarah Shirk at GEM-SET@uic.edu or 312-413-1636 .



The Girls Empowerment Initiative received a UIC WISE Neighbors grant funded by Caterpillar Foundation and Motorola Foundation.



Members of the Girls Empowerment Initiative learn the scientific method as they prepare for the science fair.



COE Updates

UIC is Awarded the BIRCWH K12 Training Grant

In September, the UIC Center of Excellence in Women's Health received the *Building Interdisciplinary Research Careers in Women's Health* (BIRCWH) Award. This K12 grant from NIH provides funding for junior faculty to pursue research interests in women's health. This award is highly competitive and the first K12 ever received by UIC.

The program is led by Dr. Stacie Geller, Principal Investigator, CRWG/CoE and College of Medicine; Dr. Sarah Kilpatrick, Program Director and Co-Investigator, College of Medicine; and Dr. Tonda Hughes, Co-Investigator, College of Nursing. This leadership team will oversee the program with the goal of attracting innovative women's health scholars to UIC. The program plans to train eight junior faculty scholars over the five year grant period.

The main objectives of the BIRCWH program are to: (1) increase the number of investigators, particularly women and underrepresented minorities, in women's health research at UIC; (2) increase the breadth of institutional support for interdisciplinary women's health research and the resources available to scholars by building on existing strong institutional linkages with other research, training, and academic units on campus; (3) create a strong faculty mentoring and peer networking infrastructure, to enhance the success of junior scholars in developing women's health research programs; and (4) prepare scholars through training and mentoring to successfully compete for research funding and to become national leaders in interdisciplinary women's health research.

BIRCWH scholars will be chosen from junior faculty at UIC who have shown a past track record of interest and excellence in women's health research. Half of the scholars appointed over the five year time period must hold clinical doctorates. Scholars receive funding to buy out 75% of their time to focus on research and program related activities. All scholars must take part in the BIRCWH curriculum and meet regularly with a mentor to facilitate their growth into independent researchers. Currently, applications for the first round of scholars are under review, and will be introduced in the Spring newsletter.

Also, with the start of a new program it was necessary to hire new staff. Lynn Modla started on October 1, 2007 as the coordinator for the BIRCWH program. She has worked at the University for several years, most recently in the College of Nursing. We welcome Lynn and look forward to the contributions she will make to the CRWG/CoE.

For more information about the BIRCWH grant, please contact Lynn Modla at lynnm@uic.edu or 312-413-7817.



Stacie Geller
Principal Investigator



Sarah Kilpatrick
Program Director &
Co-Investigator



Tonda Hughes
Co-Investigator



ASIST 2010

CoE Grant to Target Heart Health in Rural Women

The UIC CoE was recently awarded a 3-year grant from the Office on Women's Health, Department of Health and Human Services entitled, "Advancing System Improvements to Support Targets for Healthy People 2010" (ASIST2010). This grant program supports partnerships that are working to address cardiovascular disease, cancer, or diabetes using a gender-specific, population-based approach.

In collaboration with the Illinois Department of Public Health Office of Women's Health (IDPH OWH), the Southern Seven Health Department, and The Cooper Institute, the CoE developed the "Southern Seven Women's Initiative for Cardiovascular Health", or SSWICH. The goal of SSWICH is to improve the cardiovascular risk of adult women using multiple strategies:

- (1) The enhancement and expansion of "Heart Smart for Women", a theory-based educational program for women to increase physical activity and encourage healthier eating. Heart Smart for Women was developed by The Cooper Institute, a non-profit research and education center dedicated to advancing the understanding of the relationship between living habits and health. Heart Smart for Women is currently offered by IDPH OWH as a grant program for implementation by local health departments and community organizations.
- (2) The development of a peer education program for women who have completed Heart Smart for Women, where they will receive training and materials to disseminate health information in their networks.
- (3) The development and implementation of a community-based media campaign disseminating heart healthy messages to target women living in the region and members of their families.

The Southern Seven Health Department serves the counties of Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, and Union, located in the southernmost part of Illinois. The region is very rural, with a population of approximately 71,000 residents living over 2,003 square miles, in an area slightly larger than the state of Delaware. Heart disease mortality, morbidity, and risk factors are among the highest in Illinois in the southern seven counties. For example, Hardin County has the highest age-adjusted mortality rate in Illinois for heart disease; in 5 of the counties, over 1/3 of adults

have been told they have high blood pressure, compared to about 25% of all Illinois adults. Alexander County has the highest rate of diabetes (a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, particularly in women) in Illinois. Finally, Johnson County has the highest obesity rate in Illinois, with 70% of adults classified as overweight or obese, compared to 60% in Illinois overall. Due to the obvious need in their region, the Southern Seven Health Department has named heart disease as a top priority.

SSWICH involves a multi-faceted evaluation to understand the effectiveness of this innovative program and its potential for dissemination to other areas of the state. The CoE is excited about this collaborative initiative, and we are looking forward to the opportunity to address a critical health problem for women in Illinois. For more information about SSWICH, please contact Kris Zimmermann at kzimmer3@uic.edu.

BODYWORKS

BodyWorks Program Begins Second Year

The CoE has begun its second year of BodyWorks, with support from a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health. BodyWorks is a program developed by the DHHS Office on Women's Health that targets parents and caregivers of pre-teen and teen girls to encourage healthy eating and physical activity.

Last year, 32 parents and caregivers were served through UIC's BodyWorks program, in addition to their daughters, granddaughters, and sisters. The CoE partnered with Benton House, a settlement house in the Bridgeport neighborhood, Uplift Community School, a charter school in Uptown, and Young Women's Leadership Charter School, a girls' charter school on Chicago's south side.

This year, we plan to reach 135 parents and caregivers and their children by collaborating with organizations such as the Chicago Department of Public Health, the Logan Square Community Center, and the Girl Scouts.

In addition to expanding outreach, we have been awarded funding from the Office on Women's Health, Department of Health and Human Services, to conduct an evaluation of BodyWorks from the adolescent perspective. We will be conducting focus groups with the daughters, granddaughters, and sisters of BodyWorks participants in the coming months.

If you would like to learn more about BodyWorks, or if you have suggestions for outreach partners, please contact Sarah Shirk at sshirk1@uic.edu.

Featured Alumna: Alefiyah Abid Lindo

Alefiyah Abid Lindo graduated in 2004 with a Master of Social Work (MSW) from the UIC Jane Addams College of Social Work. During her masters program she worked as a graduate assistant at the Center for Research on Women and Gender. We recently spoke to Alefiyah to find out where her career path has led since graduation.

After graduation Alefiyah applied her skills to working with residents of Chicago's low-income housing communities. Her role as a subcontractor for Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) was to implement clinical assessments and assist clients in overcoming barriers to employment. She also worked part-time at the Children's Memorial Hospital Pediatrics Uptown Clinic emergency room in a position that eventually expanded to full time work. Alefiyah continued to expand her clinical assessment experiences working on cases where abuse and/or neglect were suspected.

Asked how she handles working with difficult cases, her response was that her training gave her great insights on understanding her role as a social worker. She knows she "can't save the world" and she is accepting of the challenges each day may bring. In addition, she added that excellent supervision is essential to her excelling as a clinician. Difficult situations are shared with colleagues so that the best possible outcome can be achieved for the client. Eventually Alefiyah earned enough clinical hours to take the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) exam.

As a full time LCSW with Loyola University's Department of Nursing, Alefiyah's current placement is in a school based health center at Proviso East High School. Her experiences there have exposed her to a first hand understanding of major adolescent physical and mental health challenges including unintended pregnancies, STDs, and unhealthy relationships.

If you are a CRWG alumna and would like to share your news in an upcoming BRC newsletter, please contact Kris Zimmermann (kzimme3@uic.edu) or Manu Khare (mkharel@uic.edu), BRC co-editors.

Tarini Bedi Receives 2007 Alice Dan Dissertation Award

Congratulations to the 2007 Alice Dan Dissertation award winner Tarini Bedi, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology, who is researching "Piety, Violence and the Politics of Performance: Shiv Sena Women and the Feminine Subject in Maharashtra, India." The award will assist Ms. Bedi with travel, translation and transcription costs.

Ms. Bedi's dissertation advisor, Mark Liechty commented, "What is unique about Bedi's research is that it follows women from the Shiv Sena women's meetings out onto the streets and into homes as these same women live out their everyday lives. This allows Bedi to see if and how the public performances and narratives of militant religious nationalism are carried into, or influence, the everyday and personal practices of gender and class of these women."

Three honorable mention awards were also given to outstanding scholars with dissertations revealing the importance of gender-based research in their respective fields:

- Catherine Mintler, Department of English, "Fashioning Identity: Consumption, Performativity & Passing in the Modernist Novel"
- Jennifer Rupert, Department of English, "Oscillating Wildly: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Convulsive Identity in
- Emily LaBarbera Twarog, Department of History, "Beyond the Strike Kitchen: Working-Class Housewives, CIO Auxiliaries, and Citizenship, 1937-1955"

CRWG STAFF

**Congratulations to Veronica Arreola on being named
UIC's Woman of the Year 2007!**

The annual "Woman of the Year" award is sponsored by the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Women (CCSW). Established in 1992, this annual award honors a UIC woman who has consistently worked on women's issues beyond the call of duty and who is an exemplary role model. Veronica demonstrates her dedication to issues affecting women on campus, as the Director of UIC's WISE program, co-chair of the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Latinos Latina Network, and founder of UIC's Parent Network, as well as through volunteerism and service off campus (Chicago Abortion Fund, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood, and Women In Media & News).



CRWG Welcomes New Staff

We wish to welcome Lynn Modla, who was hired as the Program Coordinator for the BIRCWH grant. Lynn worked in the UIC College of Nursing for 5 years before accepting her position at CRWG. In her most recent position, Lynn worked with Dr. Carol Ferrans on a research study to understand delayed treatment in women with breast cancer.

We would also like to welcome our new Graduate Assistants:

The new WISE GAs are Carly Wobig (Urban Planning and Public Affairs) and Tashana Stoudamire (Urban Planning and Public Affairs). Marcella Schmidt (Chemical Engineering) was hired as the new GA for the WISEST initiative. Vanessa Ramirez (Public Health) is assisting with the BodyWorks program. Jackie de la Cruz (Public Health) was hired to work with the SSWICH program.

Finally, we would like to extend a "thank you" to Manya Khan, former WISE GA and graduate of the Policy Administration program in the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. Manya is currently working for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, DC.

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