

Event Report

Feminism & The Humanities: Postgraduate Workshop & Networking Lunch

Grant Details

Funding was sought for this event in order to cater for the networking lunch component of this International Women's Day event. Without the granting of funding, the event would have merely consisted of a panel and would not have been as successful in terms of networking and building connections between students across the humanities. The networking lunch allowed participants to mingle, chat and continue the conversations that had been seeded during round-table discussion.

Event Details

The aim of this event was to provide a space for HDR students to both learn from the experiences of scholars who prioritise gender analysis in their work, and to discuss the role of women and feminism in the humanities. This event was scheduled to follow International Women's Day (IWD) in order to accommodate for participants' attendance at other ANU IWD events. Since ANU's graduate student organisation, PARSA, was not running an event to recognise the academic significance of International Women's Day within the post-graduate community, 'Feminism and the Humanities' addressed an important gap in this regard. It did so by combining panel addresses from interdisciplinary scholars across CASS (as our CAP representative was unfortunately unwell on the day), a roundtable discussion between the panellists and HDR students, and a networking lunch. It responded to a strong desire among HDR students within the humanities to engage with feminist scholars and feminism within their work. Furthermore, it provided diverse students a space to compare their discipline to others and voice their experiences of or concern regarding gendered issues within the humanities.

Date & Time:

Friday 13th March, 9.30am – 12.15pm, followed by networking lunch 12.30–2.00 pm, McDonald Room, Menzies Library.

Number of Participants:

We received over 25 RSVPs from across several humanities (including history, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, law and music). We had originally hoped (and budgeted for) an event for 30 participants so we were delighted with this number of RSVPs. Unfortunately this was the last event to be held in-person and on-campus before COVID restrictions were put in place. The impact of this was clear in the number of attendees. In the end final attendance numbered 18.

Academic Level:

All attendees were ANU internal doctoral students or internal invited speakers.

Invited Panellists:

The panellists we invited are all based across the humanities and social sciences at ANU. Confirmed speakers included Dr Blair Williams, a recent graduate from the PhD program in Political Science (CASS), Dr Karen Downing (History, CASS), who has been involved in the Gendered Excellence in the Social Sciences project, and Dr Joyce Wu from the Crawford School of Public Policy (CAP).

Outcomes

The panellists who presented on the day were articulate and provocative and the readings that they assigned provided great platforms for discussion. They encouraged the HDR students to consider questions of interdisciplinarity and being a woman in the academy. This was especially eye-opening for male attendees, all of whom were open and respectful in their interactions. However, one of our panellists, Dr Joyce Wu, was unwell and did not attend. While her absence gave participants extra question time with the other two panellists, the absence of her voice and direction certainly detracted from the overall success of the event.

In discussions prior to the event, it was clear that Dr Wu's perspective and experiences were fascinating and provided something different from Dr Downing and Dr Williams. Furthermore, she provided structure and maturity in her direction of conversation. Unfortunately her absence was noted by those who understandably expected to hear more diverse experiences, both personally and disciplinarily. As an organiser, I also acknowledge her ability to direct conversation was sorely missed during the broader discussion between panellists and the HDR students.

Despite Dr Wu's absence, the participants overwhelmingly commented on the success of the event. We sought to provide a space to create conversation between HDR students and some of the female academics who have been before them, and this was successfully achieved. We also aimed to bring together doctoral students from across the humanities (as we so often remain in our schools) and the success of this was represented by the disciplinary diversity of attendees, who came from over 6 different humanities departments.

The networking lunch that followed the formal elements of the event (panel discussion and round-table discussion) was attended by all participants. While no new sign-ups were gained for the Gender Institute, this was because all attendees are already part of the GI.

Advertising Material

An example of the advertising for the event can be found here:

<http://genderinstitute.anu.edu.au/feminism-humanities-postgraduate-workshop-networking->

[lunch](#). This link was forwarded to various humanities schools across the ANU, leading to several RSVPs from sociology, anthropology and others.