



Dear NWSA Comrades in Feminist Study and Struggle,

We are writing to share news and updates related to our Association leadership. After three years of service, our Executive Director, Dr. Kristian Contreras, will be transitioning from her role at the close of June; her time as our Executive Director concludes on June 30th, 2026.

Dr. Contreras joined the NWSA leadership team in July 2023 during a tumultuous season of instability and uncertainty for our Association. As a number of our members may recall, our Governing Council led two failed searches for an Executive Director and were operating with imperfect resources and infrastructure. Throughout her time, Dr. Contreras modeled a deep commitment to stabilizing and strengthening the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA); she has successfully established more stability across our organization by streamlining processes, saving the organization substantial annual fees, being an extraordinary staff supervisor, and filling key gaps as the organization evolves from a conference into a fully operational entity. Dr. Contreras consistently applied her Black feminist vision to expand the bounds of what an academic association *can* be and *should* do in —a true model of feminist leadership and thought partnership.

While it is impossible to list every intervention made, every expansion imagined, every relation tended or restored, and every innovation crafted, there are notable items that we'd be remiss not to recognize publicly.

- Due to Dr. Contreras’s executive expertise, the NWSA is once again recognized (at the federal and state level) as a 501(c)(3) in good legal standing—a status we have not held since 2019.
- She successfully stewarded the Association through a multi-year audit and managed a steady decrease in our operational expenses by an average 15% per year.
- She stewarded the launch of our new website and member platform; allowing for revitalized community space for our Constituency Groups and active members.
- Dr. Contreras retrieved our archival materials and reestablished our relationship with the University of Maryland Libraries.
- She developed a Board Handbook and Governance Training in support of our Governing Council.
- Dr. Contreras (re)established and chaired our Access & Inclusion Committee and implemented disability justice interventions in our conference program design.
- The NWSA Resource Library is a passion project rooted in her belief that NWSA can offer more resources, support, and programming to our community.
- She served as an accessible and engaged thought partner with a number of NWSA members, often calling members as a direct line of support.

Alongside developing relationships that amplify the work of feminist creatives and movement workers, Dr. Contreras has built bridges of collaboration with organizations such as the National Women’s Law Center, the American Association of University Professors Center for the Defense of Academic

Freedom, PEN America, the American Council of Learned Societies, and with feminist organizations local to our annual conference sites.

Over these three years, the Association has been anchored by a two-person staff; despite person-power and fiscal deficits, she maximized every resource, showing remarkable efficiency, creativity, and care. A skillful practitioner of what an education in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies prepares one to do as a creative, caring, and collective-minded professional scholar-practitioner, her departure is an incalculable loss to the Association. Please join us in thanking Dr. Contreras for her labor, care, vision, and commitment to NWSA; we encourage kind words and outreach to our office (nationaloffice@nwsa.org). We are certain that she will flourish in whichever new role she chooses to pursue and look forward to watching her thrive.

MOVING FORWARD

In the coming week, we will provide updates to the membership regarding next steps within our leadership team. Like many organizations committed to building a just and liberated future, we are facing extreme external pressures and financial challenges that demand careful assessment. In this sense, we are moving with much thought, care, and intention towards a more sustainable NWSA during a time of escalating attacks at the federal and state level. As we reflect on our most recent commitments to "[Reconnect, Repair, Restore](#)" (2024-2025 Strategic Plan) and the "[Invitation Toward a Collective Orientation](#)" (2026-2027 Strategic Plan), the Governing Council remains focused on actualizing a path forward that includes the ideas and perspectives of our members.

We ask for your patience, engagement, and support as we reconfigure our leadership roles, duties, and priorities while simultaneously navigating the increasing external pressures of the Trump-Vance administration that destabilize our programs, services, and operations. We especially ask for your understanding and grace for our reduced National Office. With the departure of Dr. Contreras, our Operations and Infrastructure Manager, Courtney Carroll, will continue her leadership in facilitating the daily and conference related operations. Our two-person team performed at levels expected of a five person staff despite our lack of resources; we cannot acknowledge the accomplishments of Dr. Contreras without honoring Courtney's expertise and continued support of the NWSA community. Therefore, we expressly ask for your patience as we shift towards a singularly staffed National Office. NWSA will soon publish our leadership plan and continued commitments to our membership and community—including details on forthcoming opportunities to discuss this leadership transition. On [Tuesday July 7th at 10 AM PT/1 PM ET](#), members and community stakeholders are welcome to attend a virtual meeting with President Pabón and members of our Governing Council. As she presents the Governing Council's plans and pivots in moving forward, we invite your questions and presence as we strive to strengthen our Association and field.

In Solidarity,

[NWSA Governing Council](#)