



# Gender, Work & Organization Conference

28-30 June 2023 | Stellenbosch | South Africa

GENDER, WORK & ORGANIZATION



Stellenbosch Business School

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## Gender, Work and Organization

13th International Interdisciplinary Conference

28-30 June 2023, Stellenbosch, South Africa

### Conference theme

*Marginalized gender identities - how can intellectual activism transform work and organization?*

## CALL FOR COLLABORATIVE EVENTS

### COLLABORATIVE EVENT TITLE:

Feminist Activism in the Academy

### COLLABORATIVE EVENT COLLABORATORS:

Prof Amanda Gouws, SARChI Chair in Gender Politics, Stellenbosch University

Ms Ijeoma Opara, PhD student and feminist activist

[www.usb.ac.za/usb\\_events/gender-work-organization](http://www.usb.ac.za/usb_events/gender-work-organization)

International conference of 500+ people. Linked to the prestigious Gender, Work and Organization journal.



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GWO 2023



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## Event purpose/goals and objectives

Feminist activism takes into consideration the intersectionality of women's/ LGBTIQ and transgender identities and frame strategies around lived experiences. In the context of neo-liberal management of tertiary institutions, globally, that attempts to manage universities through impersonal rules, distant management and achievement models that undermine the collegial model of universities, activism is often the only way to pushback against this form of management. Moreover, feminist intellectual activism engages standpoint theory (being aware of how you are located in the institution) and reflexivity (reflection of your own experiences and those of others). This often involve intellectual activism changing the curriculum, developing policy around sexual harassment and rape culture on campuses and tackling male hierarchies. Being a feminist change agent is stressful and often leads to clashes with management and male colleagues. This can take a psychological toll, but it can also make a difference that is very rewarding. The experiences of an older generation of feminists are different from a younger generation. For this reason, the event will be an intergenerational presentation with a feminist activist of an older generation (Amanda Gouws) and one of a younger generation (Ijeoma Opara) that is just starting her PhD journey.

Amanda Gouws been a feminist activist in higher education and civil society for over 30 years. Her activism centres around women's representation in organizational committees, changing policies that discriminate against women and the development of policies dealing with sexual harassment and gender based violence. She has written about theorizing from the South and the reluctance of Northern feminist scholars engaging the work of Southern feminist scholars. Her activism is also related to oversight over government and in this regard she has worked as a Commissioner for the South African Commission for Gender Equality from 2012 to 2014.

Ijeoma Opara studied International Studies at Stellenbosch University from 2013 to 2016, during which she received her political awakening during #OpenStellenbosch student activist movement in the student protests of 2015 (also called the Fallist Movement). Alongside this, she played a role in the creation of the Intersectional Feminists of Open Stellenbosch, which aimed to address the lack of feminist rhetoric within activist spaces. After completing her Masters in International Relations at the University of Cape Town, she continued to write pieces on issues relating to migration, identity, belonging and feminist politics. She is currently a PhD student under the auspices of the SARChI in Gender Politics with Amanda Gouws, where her current project looks at unpacking the slay queen archetype through the lens of postfeminist identity in post-Apartheid South Africa. In this session we want to draw on lived experience to talk about responsible feminist activism in the academy, how to decide which battles to fight (because we cannot fight all of them all of the time), how to create allies in an institution and how to grow solidarity without which activism is very difficult, as well as the psychological toll that feminist activism may take on activists.

## Event purpose/goals and objectives

- Understanding lived experience in the academy - understanding the institution vs. the individual
- What is feminist intellectual activism?
- How do we aim our activism - creating strategic feminist intervention
- How to decide which battles to fight - engendering institutional transformation
- Finding allies and building solidarity
- Dealing with psychological trauma - the politics of care and how we cultivate safe spaces for activists
- What to do to prevent burnout - tools and methods to ensuring collective wellness

This event will be interactive with presentations by both presenters, question and answer engagement, group discussions, feedback sessions and a summation of lessons learnt. Participants who want to attend this event should be interested in activism, wanting to be change agents and wanting to change institutional cultures that are hostile to women (related to their intersectional markers of identity such as race, class, disability and sexuality etc), and members of LGBTIQ and transgender communities.