

# Marie Lerma

## Women's Studies

### 2014 Outstanding Graduate



Marie Lerma is one of two Outstanding Women's Studies graduates of 2014, and the one we chose for the honor of representing Women's Studies at the College's event. Marie is a warm and immensely creative person, whose dedication to empowering under-represented groups gives her scholarship a personal and ethical drive.

Professors look forward to having Marie as a student because they know she will present interesting connections between topics, pose unique questions, and explore original ideas. Her ability to read and digest complex theoretical ideas and to see their interconnections is impressive. Her ability to communicate ideas orally and in writing is remarkable. Her inquisitiveness is exceptional. Marie shows a refreshing openness to explore education across the curriculum and willingness to take risks in stretching her academic muscles. Marie

graduates earning majors in both History and Women's Studies and minors in Chinese and Linguistics. She was going to pursue a 3<sup>rd</sup> minor in art, but Loretta stopped her.

Examples of the quality of her scholarship abound. Marie is a Ronald. E. McNair Scholar and in 2013-2014 Marie was Honorable Mention recipient of the prestigious CSU Sally Casanova Pre-Doctoral Scholar award. As an undergraduate she already has sought numerous opportunities to present her work in professional settings. In fall 2012 Marie presented her research "Fulfillment of Visionary Feminism? Non-Academic Usage of Feminism through the Internet" at the National Women's Studies Association annual conference in Oakland, CA. In spring of 2014 she presented her research project entitled "Navigating Citizenship: How Histories of Immigration affect Voting", at the McNair Scholars conference. Mentored by Professor Kensinger, in this project she explored how relationships of immigrant parents to the political world influenced their children's ideas about voting and political efficacy. The idea for the project was timely, and results were important.

Marie is also a highly valued campus leader. Her commitment to activism is an outgrowth of her academic interest in issues of social justice. She is President of Women's Alliance and has been the primary organizer for Take Back the Night events for several years. Marie served as editor for the newly reinstated P.O.W.E.R. Source, the newsletter for the Women's Studies Student Association. She has also held offices in P.O.W.E.R. (the Women's Studies Student Organization), and the Linguistics club. That Marie has so effectively combined a challenging academic schedule with a rich civic life is a tribute to her numerous capabilities, not the least of which is simple time management. Amazingly, Marie manages to keep a calm demeanor and a great sense of humor while juggling her demanding commitments. On top

of all this she is a co-producer of a series of blog podcasts providing hip commentaries on current books and films.

While Marie Lerma is a fully engaged and active student, she is also a fun person to be around. She has an instinctive sense of the best qualities of collegiality. She draws people toward her with her gentle, positive, presence; she genuinely makes people feel like they matter to her world.

Women's Studies is pleased to report that Marie's hard work at Fresno State has been rewarded. Marie has been accepted to the highly prestigious Ph.D. program in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the Ohio State University, where she has also been granted a full four-year assistantship. Women's Studies congratulates Marie on her success.