February 19, 2019 Guest Speaker:

Neeta Connally  
Professor, Biology Department  
Western Connecticut State University

Dr. Neeta Connally is a medical entomologist and Associate Professor in the Department of Biological & Environmental Sciences. Her research focuses upon backyard ecology and prevention of Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses in the northeastern United States. She holds a B.S. in Animal Biology from Louisiana Tech University, a Master of Science in Public Health from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, and a Ph.D. in entomology from the University of Rhode Island. Before coming to WCSU, Dr. Connally was an associate research scientist at the Connecticut Emerging Infections Program at Yale School of Public Health. Dr. Connally is an active researcher and, since joining the faculty at Western, has secured more than $2M in federal grant funding from agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She works with many community partners in the region, including Western Connecticut Health Network, Bedoukian Research, Western Connecticut Council of Governments, and state and local public health agencies. Her expertise is often sought for news and radio features, including for national magazines and NPR, and each summer she offers paid training opportunities for undergraduate students to work on Lyme disease prevention studies. Dr. Connally was the recipient of the 2014 CSU Board of Regents Research Award for WCSU and the 2015 Connecticut Campus Compact Community Engaged Scholars Award.

March 19, 2019 Guest Speaker:

Marcel Agüeros  
Associate Professor, Astronomy Department  
Columbia University

Dr. Marcel Agüeros received his B.A. in Astronomy from Columbia University before earning an M.Phil in Physics from the University of Cambridge (UK) and his Ph.D. in Astronomy from the University of Washington. Before joining the Columbia faculty, he was a National Science Foundation Astronomy and Astrophysics Postdoctoral Fellow in the Columbia Astrophysics Laboratory for four years. For two of those years, he was also the Associate Director of Columbia’s Bridge to the Ph.D. Program in the Natural Sciences, which he directed for a decade. Click here to view the Bridge Program website. Professor Agüeros’s interests lies in using new datasets and technologies to address classic questions in stellar astrophysics. For more information on Dr. Agüeros work and research, please click here to review.
Dr. Michelle Brown  
Dean, Macricosta School of Arts and Sciences  
Western Connecticut State University

Dean Brown earned a Ph.D. in English in 2008 from the University of Maryland at College Park and an M.A. in English and a B.S. in Communication and English at James Madison University. Her research and teaching has focused on African and post-colonial literatures, women's and gender studies, critical theory, LGBTQ literature, and creative writing. In June 2017, Dean Brown served as a university fellow for academic excellence at Shenandoah University. As a member of the senior academic leadership team, Dean Brown assisted the vice president for academic affairs in many areas including accreditation, strategic planning, and faculty and curriculum development. Dean Brown also administered the honor code and created and led a series of diversity initiatives. Dean Brown joined the Shenandoah University faculty in 2010, and served from 2014 to 2017 as English Department Chairperson. Prior to this role, Dean Brown developed and coordinated Core Quest, an initiative that centralized academic advising and increased retention for students who had not declared majors. Dean Brown also coordinated a college-wide assessment of oral and written communications needs and instruction for Arts and Sciences; which led to program reviews and revisions as part of a general education overhaul; and served as chairperson of the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate.