



# Sociologists for Women in Society

## Congratulations 2018 SWS Feminist Mentoring Award Winner

The 2018 Feminist Mentoring Award winner is Bandana Purkayastha.

The mentoring award was established in 1990 to honor an SWS Member who is an outstanding feminist mentor. While the word “mentoring” is commonly used to describe a faculty-student relationship, this award has shown the breadth of ways that feminists do mentoring. In establishing the award, SWS recognized that feminist mentoring is an important and concrete way to encourage feminist scholarship.

Bandana Purkayastha is a Professor of Sociology & Asian and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut (UConn). From 2013-2014, Bandana served as the President of Sociologists for Women in Society. Currently, Bandana is the American Sociological Association’s (ASA) national representative to the International Sociological Association (ISA) (2014-2018). Bandana’s current research interests focus on intersectionality, human rights, migration & migrants, and violence & peace, with a particular emphasis on challenging global knowledge hierarchies. Her work continues to bridge, synthesize, and create inclusive frames of scholarship and promote collaborative work among scholars in different parts of the world. Bandana has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles, books, and chapters on these subjects.

She has been recognized for her teaching, mentoring, research, and leadership through several university, state, and professional awards. Bandana has served in several editorial positions and on international expert committees including, most recently, on the World Health Organization’s initiative on female migrants and health. Bandana fulfills her role as an engaged professional through service and public engagement within her university, discipline, the State of Connecticut, and internationally.



Here are some highlights from some of Bandana’s nominators:

Anna Guevarra shares her appreciation for the multiple ways in which Bandana has counseled and guided her over the many years they have known each other. She also highlights how Bandana has always

been keenly aware of the politics surrounding the everyday realities that immigrant women of color face in the academy – and has always found ways to not only open up academic spaces, but also to advocate for faculty of color in multiple ways – ranging from supporting promotion cases, reviewing manuscripts in progress, to even supporting visa applications and recognizing what it means to navigate the U.S. academy as an immigrant and foreign scholar.

Chandra Waring highlights how her 12 years of experience working with Bandana has shown that she is truly dedicated to mentoring the next generation of critical thinkers. Chandra noted that back when Bandana was Director of Graduate Studies at UCONN, Bandana instituted a new program which included bimonthly information sessions with faculty members and graduate students regarding publications, grants/fellowship, the job market and other crucial information that graduate students need to be aware of.

Melanie Heath notes how impressed she is by Bandana's commitment to mentoring and supporting feminist junior scholars and students, particularly women of color scholars. Bandana has worked tirelessly over the years to make SWS a more inclusive space for students and scholars. Melanie describes Bandana as a strong feminist advocate who opens and provides spaces for feminist exchanges among scholars of different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Chaitanya Lakkimsetti comments on Bandana's mentoring by stating: "While there is significant interest in the field to be inclusive and encouraging diversity, much of this discussion tends to be abstract and often missing is the day to day support that faculty of color need to navigate their institution. Dr. Purkayastha does a lot of behind the scenes work such as reading manuscript drafts, advising on the tenure and promotion process as well as helping to network in the discipline. Her dedication to young junior scholars is unwavering and unprecedented."

Ranita Ray and Shweta Majumdar Adur felt compelled to say that Bandana has "The Midas Touch" when they examine the golden steak of success in her path. From the countless hours of labor and love poured into the cause, tempered by Bandana's indomitable spirit, unparalleled grit and an unwavering commitment to the discipline, the intuitions and the lives she has shaped now shine brighter. Among the ranks of academic luminaries a few are women, even fewer are women of color, but rarer are those who pave the way and open the doors for others to succeed. Ranita and Shweta both consider Bandana to be that rare gem and the embodiment of feminist mentoring.

Roseanne Mijru shares her four year experience being Bandana's international student advisee and mentee. As a transnational feminist scholar, she felt that Bandana understood her emotional, social, and academic challenges as a black international student. Roseanne describes Bandana as not only her adviser and mentor but also a friend, mother and family member who did what she could to make Roseanne's academic journey bearable. Roseanne even spent Thanksgiving with Bandana, even though she never celebrated it back in Kenya, because she felt as if Bandana was family. Roseanne points out Bandana's unique ability to advise students interested in diverse fields. Her self-introduction on her areas of interests always adds, "...and whichever direction my advisees take me." Bandana welcomes the challenge to go beyond her comfort zone to engage with literature and scholars in other fields. This open-mindedness, Roseanne brought up, is part of her self-definition of a scholar.

Anjana Narayan ends her nomination letter by sharing how thankful she is to Bandana for helping her to become the person and the academician she is today. Anjana finds herself constantly amazed by Bandana's seemingly endless capacity to nurture her students, build valuable networks and continuously motivate people to challenge traditional ways of thinking. Anjana credits Bandana as the cause of her learning the value of mentoring.

Please join us in celebrating with Bandana at the SWS Summer Meeting Awards Banquet on August 11, 2018 in Philadelphia, where Bandana will receive her award.