In my previous research, a study of a multimillion dollar industry to train allied health care
careers in New York City, I have argued (in a chapter in a new collection called Affective
Turnings) the training industry illustrates the emergence of new forms of economic value. Such
value is based neither on concrete services and products, nor even on the management of
emotions, but on the production of affect. I use “affect” in the way Damasio (and Spinoza) does,
to refer to the nonconscious or noncognitive basis of action, an idea which is gaining traction
both in contemporary cultural studies (in the work of theorists such as Brian Massumi) but also
in economic sociology, most notably in Randall Collins’ theory of “emotional energy.” This
paper argues that an “affect economy” potentially changes intimate labor and our
conceptualization of it.

Currently, I am completing work on my first book (based on my dissertation), to be published
sometime in 2008 as part of the Cornell University Press series on the culture and politics of
health care work, edited by Suzanne Gordon. In it, I argue that training is an inadequate response
to problems facing the allied health care workforce (which in New York City is made up
overwhelmingly of women of color), including their working conditions, the lack of recognition
for the complexity of their labor, and the inequalities of the labor market.
This conference and the workshops would be invaluable in helping me effectively situate my work and future research at the juncture of caring labor, economic sociology, and cultural studies.