



# VOICES

MAY 2018

## LETTER FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

By: Katie DePalma

As a self-defined feminist, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies major, and Newsletter Editor here at the Women's Center, I find that I am constantly exposed to feminist perspectives. I am also surrounded by people who are committed to social justice and gender equity work and are open to a variety of different outlooks and opinions. In many ways, this is extremely refreshing as I have found groups of people, who want to change the world for the better because they see the very real truth that gender equity is beneficial for all people, no matter how you identify. However I have also found that as empowering as it is to have found these people, when I step outside the walls of the Women's Center or the classroom not everyone feels as I do. As feminists who understand the dangers of sexism, hearing other people, men and women alike perpetuating sexism hurts. I have learned that it is important to not let the opinions of these individuals discourage you. Do not let their ignorance take away from your desire to change the world. Instead, call them out; teach others that sexism is wrong, that bigotry is wrong, and that feminism is not the antithesis of masculinity. Education is the key to change, and I implore you to consider that as you read through the May edition of *Voices*.



Photo One

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## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

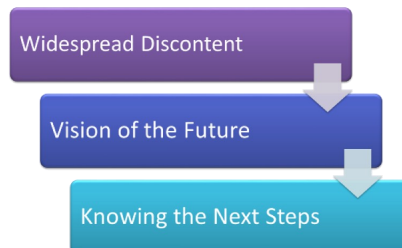
By: Kathleen Holgerson

Favorite, see, able, community, group, world, working, others, think, time, hope, really, feminism, many, also, continue. These are the words that stood out to me when looking at the Wordle based on the comments our seniors forwarded to Katie's questions for their spotlights.

I also just finished reading two articles that are interesting context for the students' sentiments. The first article was [\*Let's take our kids to work and teach them about inequality\*](#) by Vesna Jaksic Lowe. For many years, the Women's Center served as the primary organizer for the Take Our Daughters to Work Day on campus. We made a conscious choice to stop hosting these activities when the Ms. Foundation moved away from focusing on girls to include all children. Of course, we believe it is important for boys to be exposed to the workplace and to role models. We also believed that good stewardship of our resources required that we focus on programming in the service of promoting gender equity. After reading this article, it is clear that we still have much to do to address how gender matters in the workplace. This week, I met with a former VAWPPER, who also writes for *The Daily Campus*, to be interviewed for her article on paid family/medical leave. She asked what people can do to address this inequity. The words of our students mirror my response to her. We can educate ourselves on how different **groups** may experience disparate impacts, but impacts nonetheless. We can share our knowledge on the subject with as **many** people as possible. We can learn from and support those employers who have implemented programs that are **working**. We can take the **time** to contact relevant decision makers to encourage them to support efforts to address inequality in the workplace.

The second article was [\*How We Can Help Students Survive in an Age of Anxiety\*](#) by Brian Rosenberg, President of Macalester College. Reading this comes on the heels of a conversation at our April Advisory Board meeting about efforts on campus to both support free speech and promote a community free of racism, sexism, and other forms of bias and oppression. As you can read in this edition, we also hosted a talk by Dr. Emily Knox on the topic of trigger warnings. What stood out for me in Rosenberg's article was "We can stop being afraid... that we should try as a society to build our policies and our practices around hope rather than fear." Every Fall we share a framework for social change with the student staff, as follows:

(Continued on p. 3)



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Continued from page 2

This work is rooted in *hope*. It asks that we *see* the *community*, the *world* that we *really* want to live in. It depends on the notion that we are *able* to make the changes necessary to get there. It is sustained through our work with *others* and when we learn to *think* for ourselves.

At the Women's Center, as you will see in the various articles throughout, our commitment to *feminism* and to *continue* to promote gender equity doesn't stay within the walls of the Center, or even the boundaries of the campus. It transcends these and permeates all of the spaces and places that our alums move to and through. Happy graduation and best wishes to this year's Women's Center cohort.

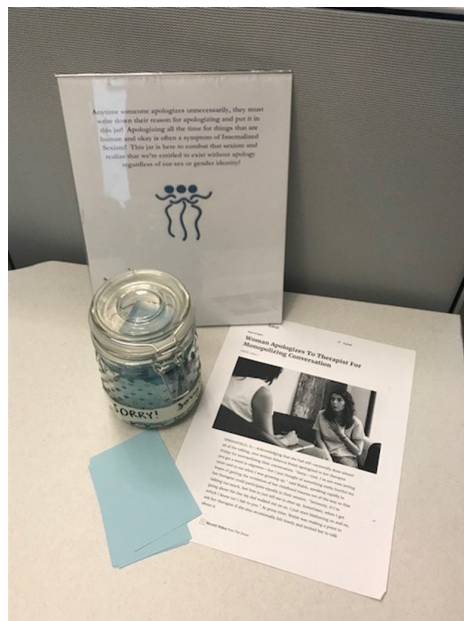
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From the Director's letter in the March edition:

"It starts as simply as the "I'm sorry" habit many women display. The tendency to apologize for everything – sometimes even apologizing for apologizing. I've often joked about setting up a jar for a quarter for every time someone at the Center offers an extraneous apology. I'm convinced we could build an entire wing on the building with the proceeds."

Update:

As a follow up to our conversations at the Center, the Women's Center student staff created their own version of the "sorry jar."



Courtesy of Kathleen Holgerson

## LUNAFEST

By: Katie DePalma



Photo Two

LUNAFEST is a traveling film festival that works to promote the work of women filmmakers. In the film industry, women's voices are not considered as important as those of their male counterparts. However, LUNAFEST is working to challenge this ideology. According to Kit Crawford, CLIF and Co Chief Visionary Officer, Luna Bar founder, and passionate LUNAFEST advocate, "It is about giving women the opportunity to tell their stories and opening the door for filmmakers who might not otherwise be given the chance to show their art." LUNAFEST holds screenings in more than 175 cities across the United States.

All proceeds from LUNAFEST are donated to charity. Chicken & Egg Pictures receives a portion of the proceeds, and the remaining proceeds are donated to the host organization, which is used by these organizations to promote and encourage the work of gender equity. The UConn Women's Center uses the proceeds they get from hosting LUNAFEST to support their equity based programming efforts and paying their student workers.

This is that first year that LUNAFEST has partnered with Chicken & Egg Pictures. Both organizations support the work and empowerment of women storytellers. Chicken & Egg Pictures is a nonprofit organization that provides mentorship and financial support for women filmmakers. Together, LUNAFEST and Chicken & Egg Pictures are working towards creating a world where men and women filmmakers have equal access to resources, and everyone's work is visible in mainstream society, regardless of gender.

This year the LUNAFEST film festival was held in late March in Oak Hall and supported by Mansfield OBGYN, which has consistently been a Blue Moon sponsor at the \$500 level. The 2018 films that were showcased this year are as follows, *Buttercup* by Megan Brotherton, *Girls Level Up* by Anne Edgar, *Toys* by Amanda Quaid, *Fanny Pack* by Uttera Singh, *Joy Joy Nails* by Joey Ally, *Yours Sincerely*, *Lois Weber* by Svetlana Cvetko, *Jesszilla* by Emily Sheskin, *Waiting for Hassana* by Ifunanya Maduka, and *Last Summer, In the Garden* by Bekky O'Neil. In total there were nine different short films featured in the festival that both focus on women and were created by women. (Continued on p. 5)

## LUNAFEST

Continued from page 4



Photo three from  
*Girls Level Up*



Photo Four  
from *Jesszilla*



Photo Five from  
*Buttercup*

According to the Women's Center, Outreach Committee Co-Chair, Steph Goebel, "You get to see stories about women you don't generally see in real life. For example, one of the films was a short documentary about a fourth grade girl who was a great boxer. This is a story that we don't hear about, and it shows that women are more than just the romantic counterparts to men. There is so much more to women than the way they are portrayed within the media. The really cool things about short films is that they are made by all different people, so the narratives of these women are all different; there are women of all different colors, and sexual orientations, and sizes."

This statement reflects the importance of LUNAFEST as an entity because it promotes the independence of women, the strength of women, and the need for sisterhood between women. LUNAFEST is ultimately working towards change and by supporting women filmmakers and their work, as well as donating money to women's organizations like our own Women's Center, they are creating a space where change can foster and take flight.



Photo Six

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

### **Alyssa Marini: Between Women Facilitator**

“After graduation I am going to graduate school to become a Social Worker. I am so grateful for the time I have spent at the Women’s Center. The people here have taught me to view the world using intersectionality and to lead with compassion. Plus, I never find myself short on metaphors! ‘Birdcage of oppression’ along with ‘planting seeds’ are now part of my daily vocabulary. Outside of UConn I will continue to educate and advocate for the elimination of gender-based violence and encourage an anti-racist feminist perspective. This can be done by leaning into difficult conversations, attending protests, recommending a good book with a feminist lens and in so many other ways! One of my favorite moments was attending Take Back the Night. On this night, the UConn community came together to provide support for victim/survivor empowerment and healing. It was amazing marching in a sea of candles and hearing people’s personal stories.”

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### **Alyssa Pingitore: Co-Facilitator for Greeks Against Sexual Assault (GASA)**

“After I graduate, I plan to get a job conducting clinical psychology/neuroscience research for a few years, then apply to PhD programs after that. Long-term, I would like to conduct research at a university and become a professor. Working at the Women’s Center for the past three years has shaped who I am as a person. I think being around so many wonderful and selfless people has taught me to be a more compassionate and patient person. I have been able to explore my own identities and discover what I am truly passionate about with the unwavering support of our little community. I will continue to promote feminism and gender equity beyond my time at UConn by supporting the women around me in the workplace, positively influencing my future students when I am a professor, and raising my children to be accepting and loving toward others and stand up for what is right. I will definitely stay involved in the feminist community in whatever way I can after I leave the Women’s Center. My best memories from working at the Women’s Center are always from the very first and last meetings of the year. Now that I have participated in quite a few fall staff retreats, I am always amazed to see how quickly a group of strangers become close friends and confidants because our little community is so welcoming and open. I also really love the last staff meeting of the academic year when we have a celebration of everything we have accomplished this year and send off the Seniors. It is heartwarming to hear all the kind words that the full-time staff and student staff have to say about the graduating seniors.”

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

### **Julia Wilson: VAWPP Ambassador**

“After I graduate I will be moving to Illinois to attend the University of Chicago. I will be a graduate student in the School of Social Administration. Working at the Women’s Center has changed my outlook on the world because it has given me a positive space to talk with individuals who believe in, and value social justice. The Women’s Center has shown me the power of what a dedicated group of students can have on campus, and the change that can result from that. I have also learned how to use my voice and stand up, confidently, for what I believe in. I will continue to promote feminism and gender equality outside of UConn hopefully through my career as a social worker! As a Women’s Gender and Sexuality Studies major, I sometimes wondered how I would apply my academic knowledge to the working world. After gaining experience working with gender-based issues at the Women’s Center, I hope to continue to do some similar work in the future. My best moment working at the Women’s Center was giving my last workshop. I am not naturally a confident public speaker, but as my last one ended I was able to see the difference between where I started and how far I have come. I have grown much more comfortable with speaking in front of a group of strangers and being able to educate and promote discussion about many different topics. I believe that I have become a strong and capable facilitator, and I am extremely grateful to the Women’s Center for that.”

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### **Asadie Walters: VAWPP Ambassador**

“After I graduate there will be work, fun, feminism and more work. Honestly, working at the Women’s Center has allowed me to see that the world is worse than I thought it was. However, this is a good thing because you have to know all that is wrong to begin to even think about fixing anything or working towards change. Working at the Women’s Center also gave me confirmation that I am not the only one who cares, and if I am not the only one who cares at UConn, when I go out into the ‘real world’ I will not be manifesting change on my own. I will continue promoting feminism by finding the ‘Women’s Center’ of my community and giving my time, knowledge and experience.”

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

### **Kristina Drollinger: VAWPP Ambassador**

“After graduation, I am starting grad school this fall at Washington University in St. Louis! I will be pursuing my Masters in Social Work with a concentration in Violence and Injury Prevention and a specialization in Sexual Health and Education. I think that the Women’s Center has encouraged me to be more self-aware and critical of the world around me. I am more responsible for my own education now, and I recognize that learning is an ongoing, lifelong process. When I initially got involved with the Women’s Center, I definitely was not as open to hearing the opinions of people who I disagree with. I think working for the Women’s Center has allowed me to become a more understanding and patient person as well. I also hope to get involved with the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center at Washington University. They have a few programs similar to what VAWPP does, so I would love to continue the work that I do now. I think my favorite moment working at the Women’s Center was seeing how successful the Sweats for Survivors clothing drive was this semester. I was really nervous that we were not going to receive any donations, so I was really happy to see the amount of clothes we were able to bring to the Sexual Assault Crisis Center of Eastern Connecticut. I think Take Back the Night this year is also going to be another favorite memory. The other Ambassadors and I have put a lot of work into this event, so I am excited to finally see everything come together.”

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### **Chrystal Sparks: VAWPP Teaching Assistant**

“After I graduate, I plan to attend the UConn School of Social Work to earn my Master’s Degree. I hope to work in child protective services or serve in some fashion advocating for women’s rights. My work at the Women’s Center has given me so many tools to learn how to communicate with others in order to learn about their experiences. I have gained confidence in being able to ask questions and be an attentive listener. I now have a better understanding on how each individual is different and must be treated that way. These differences need to be respected and valued. I hope that I can be a better consumer in my own life and inspire others to do the same in theirs. My newfound resolution is to be more attentive and educated on the products that I am purchasing. I am working towards consuming products from companies that uphold the same values as myself and promote feminism and gender equality. I hope to lead by example so that others around me will be able to do the same. My best memory of working at the Women’s Center was getting to know everyone at the staff retreat in the fall and being able to connect with people.”



## SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

### **Ming Montgomery: Marketing Committee Co-Chair**

“After graduation I hope to be working in Marketing or Media Analytics. Working at the Women’s Center has allowed me to see many different perspectives and how much has been done for women, but also how much more there is to do. I understand a lot more about intersectionality, as well, and how it plays a role in each person's experience. I will continue to support and uplift women to the best of my ability and try to take everything I learned from the Women's Center and apply it to my life, relationships, and work. My favorite memory at the Center was getting to know all the other workers at the Women's Center. Everyone is so kind and knowledgeable, and I am so happy I got to learn and grow with them.”

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### **Kiana Akhundzadeh: Programming Committee Co-Chair**

“After graduation, the first thing I'm planning to do is go on vacation. I will be going to Thailand, Germany, Austria and France for a month. After that I will begin working and figure out what I want to study next. My position at the Women’s Center really helped me understand the importance of language. Even if the words we use don't come from a place of malice or ill-intent, they have more consequences than we want to believe. For instance, I have really begun watching my use of ‘you guys.’ I used to say it all of the time, until the Women's Center and the wonderful staff taught me what using it means. I have also begun to watch my frequent apologizing-before my time at the Center, I never realized how often I did it. The Center has made me infinitely more conscious of my actions and words. The fight is far from being over. Outside of UConn, I hope to continue to help educate others and be supportive in any way I can. Supporting movements and organizations on social media goes a long way, as well as being open and outspoken about my beliefs. I will not shy away from sharing my thoughts and what I have learned at the Center with others-hopefully, I can help them the way the Center has helped me. My favorite memory of the Women's Center was the last staff meeting of the fall semester. At the end, almost all of the student staff members participated in a Yankee swap. It was a moment where we were all there as friends, stealing gifts from another and sharing lots of laughs. I felt connected to everyone there, and left with a smile and a nice blanket that was stolen from me several times, but that I managed to steal back in the end.”

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

### Kavya Katugam: WISTEM Program Coordinator

“After graduation I will be attending graduate school as a University Graduate Fellow at Pennsylvania State University, pursuing a Ph.D. in Kinesiology, focusing on Musculoskeletal Biomechanics. Working at the Women’s Center as a whole has definitely increased my knowledge of feminism, discrimination, and oppression, and has helped me grow into a more well-rounded individual. WiSTEM, however, has made me more aware of the obstacles that women in the STEM fields face, and has helped me find a safe space and a group of like-minded women with whom I could grow and learn. At Pennsylvania State University, I will be assisting in the creation of a Women in STEM mentoring program, which will help undergraduate and graduate women in the STEM fields grow and improve their skill bases. Additionally, I will continue to be an advocate for equity and anti-racism feminism in my involvement at the graduate school. My favorite moment while working at the Women’s Center was probably near the end of the Fall semester. There were a group of student staff members all crammed into the student office, some sitting at desks and some on the floor, all working on their projects and responsibilities while chatting with one another. Everyone was so supportive and empowering, and I truly felt like we had created a safe space where we could all be ourselves. That was probably the moment when I realized how much the Women’s Center and my fellow staff members mean to me.”



Photo Seven



## OPEN MIC NIGHT: REFLECTIONS BY THE PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

By: Alexa Lugo and Kiana Akhundzadeh

On Monday, March 5th, the Programming Committee hosted an Open Mic Night entitled, "Finding Beauty in Our Differences: Exploring Inclusivity Through Feminism" at the Beanery of the Benton Museum from 6:00-8:00PM. The inspiration for this event first came from one of our committee members, Emily Girouard. We had a brainstorming session with all of our members regarding events they would like to see at the University of Connecticut. We wanted to know—what did they feel was necessary for our campus? Emily stepped up immediately and thought that an Open Mic Night hosted by the Women's Center would be an interesting and fun event.

The next step for our brainstorming process was what we wanted this event to look like. There are a lot of avenues that were possible, and we wanted to ensure we sent the correct message. As a collective committee, we knew focusing on intersectional feminism was crucial. As two women of color who run the committee, we knew our experiences were not the same as anyone else's. Our experiences differed from one another, too. As a committee, we knew that focusing on the beauty of diversity was the most inclusive experience we could create—particularly on a majority white campus.

By hosting the Open Mic Night, we would all be promoting inclusivity in a comfortable setting through artistic expression. The event itself was very successful, with a variety of performers with different identities sharing a piece of themselves with everyone who attended. It was a beautiful night where no one felt left out—we were all beautiful, because we were different.



Photo Eight

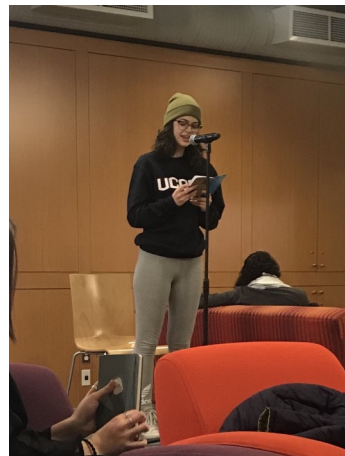


Photo Nine

## MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA

By: Katie DePalma

*MAKERS: Women Who Make America* is a three part documentary series that aired on PBS in 2013. The film as an entity details how the 2nd wave Women's Movement has revolutionized the world we live in. This is because before this movement women were inherently unequal within society. However, in the 1960s, women from around the United States came together to demand equal rights in both public and private spheres.

According to Women's Center Associate Director, Kathy Fischer, "*The MAKERS: Women Who Made America* documentary series is an excellent introduction to the critical 'herstory' that is largely absent from our primary and secondary educations."

The movement took hold of our nation and changed the way women are regarded as a gender; feminism was no longer a dirty word, instead it became a unifying force, something that all women have in common. It is important to acknowledge that this time period not only allowed women access to equal rights, it gave them a sense of empowerment and the ability to desire more for themselves. *MAKERS* details this movement from when it began in the 1950s and 1960s to where it is now by using real world video footage and interviewing trailblazing women, such as Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ellen DeGeneres and Oprah Winfrey and everyday women from a variety of different professions.

*MAKERS* is divided into three parts: *Part One: The Awakening*, *Part Two: Changing the World*, and *Part Three: Charting a New Course*. *Part One* describes the emergence of what came to be the Women's Movement. It partially focused on Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* that came out in 1963 because this book highlighted the misery housewives faced at the time due to their confinement to the home or low-paying, dead end jobs. This book gave these women visibility to both each other and to America at large and in many ways triggered a movement. However, this novel also had its shortcomings as it primarily focused on white middle class women and ignored the struggles of women of color and lesbian women.

*Part Two* focused on the seventies and the creation of birth control that allowed women sexual freedom. It also highlighted divorce rates as women rebelled against traditional gender roles, while some marriages became stronger as men embraced equality in their relationships. (Continued on p. 14)



Photo Ten

## MAKERS: WOMEN WHO MAKE AMERICA

Continued from page 13

*Part Three* discussed a new generation of women, who were struggling to balance personal autonomy and family life. This part also details the early 2000s and how feminism, and the movement as an entity, was once again under attack by conservatives who aimed to make abortion and contraceptive laws more restrictive.

We show this film at the Center because it is crucial to understand how the Women's Movement began and how hard so many women fought so that we could have opportunities that they did not have access to. It is also important to remember and acknowledge that the fight is not over, and we can learn from women that came before us.



Photo Eleven: Equal Rights Amendment supporters voice their disapproval of the 22-16 vote against the E.R.A. in the Florida Senate. June 21, 1982

"The Women's Center has always been committed to ensuring that the many contributions by women and the Women's Movement, which have shaped our country and our lives, are part of the work that we do. This includes acknowledging the shortcomings, learning from them, and committing to doing better as we move forward," comments Fischer.

While, *MAKERS* accurately depicts some elements of the Women's Movement, this work is not complete as there are still many aspects of feminism that this documentary series did not include. However, *MAKERS* has continued the work they started. According to Fischer, they did this by, "creating a season two to include many more voices and perspectives focused on specific fields that had historically been closed to women: business, comedy, Hollywood, politics, space and war. Additionally, while there is not a 'season three' to date, there is now a website, *MAKERS.com*, that continues to tell the important stories of pioneering women. You can find a compilation of over 4,500 original videos, hundreds of interviews, and the recent addition of podcasts."

By continuing the documentary series past the first season, *MAKERS* creates a space where more intersectional feminist voices and perspectives can be heard, which is crucial as all women regardless of race and ethnicity are vital in the fight for equity.

## TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

By: Asadie Walters, Kristina Drollinger,  
Mik Garvin, and Julia Wilson



Photo Twelve



Photo Thirteen



Photo Fourteen

On Wednesday, April 11th, the Violence Against Women Prevention Program hosted Take Back the Night; one of many events in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The event provides a space for victim-survivors to be in community with one another and seeks to raise awareness about gender-based violence. Hundreds of students, faculty, and staff gathered in the Student Union Ballroom to take part in a night of empowerment and healing that was felt throughout the room. The theme for the evening was "Together we can move mountains" which is a call to action that we must work together if we want to see change, but also a reminder to victim-survivors that healing is not linear; it can, and most often, looks like the peaks and valleys of a mountain, and that is okay.

The event was separated into four parts, each addressing a different need for victim-survivors and supporters. People from different backgrounds, social groups, communities, and fields of study came together to speak out about what they've learned and experienced in their various groups on campus.

During the first portion of the night, representatives from Revolution Against Rape (RAR), Greeks Against Sexual Assault (GASA), the Men's Project, and the Seminar on Rape Education and Awareness took the stage to share remarks ranging from calls to action and spoken word poetry to help express their experience in their respective groups, the campus community, and experience with gender-based violence. Student dance group, Praise Dance Ministry, and a-cappella group, Rubyfruit, performed songs that encompassed the themes of strength, healing, and the emotions victim/survivors may experience on their journey to healing. (Continued on p. 16)

## TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

Continued from page 15

Following remarks and performances, the event moved outdoors as students gathered to march around the University campus. Students carried candles and signs, while chanting together in solidarity. Students marched through campus, chanting things like "Whatever we wear, wherever we go. Yes means yes and no means no" to reiterate affirmative consent. Immediately following the march, a victim/survivor Speak Out was held to provide a safe and empowering space for those who wished to share. Victim-survivors took turns speaking on stage, sharing their stories about their experiences and raising awareness about the prevalence of gender-based violence. At the conclusion of the Speak Out, students were invited to attend a coffeehouse that took place in the Women's Center Program Room. This portion of the evening was intended to provide students with an opportunity to share in a smaller, more intimate setting, as well as a comfortable space to practice self-care and engage with others in the community.

After a cathartic night, we would like to thank the community who attended the event. We would like to give an additional thanks to those who shared, or who made a comfortable space for others to do so. We appreciate all of you.



Photo Sixteen, featuring Women's Center staff members, from left to right: Alyssa Pingitore, Jenny Giri, and Holly Labrecque



Photo Fifteen



## WISTEM PANEL

By: Kavya Katugam



Photo Seventeen, those pictured from left to right, Farzaneh Dehkord, Emmalyn Lecky, Connie Liu, Sonia Chavez, Sheida Nabavi, Kavya Katugam, and Emma Atkinson.

According to a report by the United States Department of Commerce, in 2015, women held 47% of all jobs in the U.S., but only held 24% of jobs in STEM fields. While the field of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) has been growing over time, the inequality has not changed.

Many universities have acknowledged the lack of women in STEM, and are assembling resources to support undergraduate and graduate women pursuing STEM related majors.

The University of Connecticut has learning communities, societies, mentoring programs, and sororities, all working towards supporting women in STEM and creating communities of like-minded women. One of such resources is the Women in STEM Mentoring Program, which runs out of the UConn Women's Center.

The Women in STEM Mentoring Program (WiSTEM) is a one-on-one mentoring program that aims to prepare first- and second-year students for a successful outcome in STEM at UConn. Through this program, first- and second-year mentees are matched with an upper-class mentor in the same or similar field of study. The mentors provide personal support, academic advice, and knowledge about career development. WiSTEM hopes to support its members by addressing possible obstacles they could face, including gateway courses, GPA recovery, social balance, access to research labs, and communication with professors. Ultimately, WiSTEM aims to enhance the role of women in STEM at UConn through discussion and education about women's issues, gender equity and stereotypes, and representation of women.

Monthly WiSTEM meetings aim to support students in areas where they feel support is lacking. This past year, meeting topics included goal setting, professional development, research involvement, and feedback/evaluation. Monthly meetings act as a time for mentor-mentee pairs to interact with other WiSTEM members, creating a larger community of women who can support one another through their experiences in STEM. (Continued on p. 18)

## WiSTEM PANEL

Continued from page 17

In addition to its undergraduate efforts, WiSTEM works with pre-collegiate students through several outreach efforts. In 2017, WiSTEM participants volunteered their time to run STEM activities for Kids and UConn Bridging Education, a mentoring program that targets middle school students from underprivileged areas. Approximately 100 students participated in activities that educated students on topics like cell division, electricity, and conductivity.

On Saturday, April 14th, several members from WiSTEM, along with graduate students and University faculty, sat on a panel to share with potential incoming students their experiences as women in STEM fields during Admitted Students Open House day. The panel members represented a mix of fields and consisted of WiSTEM members Emmalyn Lecky (Psychology and Biology), Connie Liu (Molecular and Cellular Biology), and Emma Atkinson (Biomedical Engineering); graduate students Sonia Chavez (Polymer Science) and Farzaneh Dehkord (Environmental Engineering); and Professor Sheida Nabavi (Computer Science and Engineering). The panel was moderated by WiSTEM coordinator Kavya Katugam (Biomedical Engineering). Panelists answered several pre-determined questions before opening it up to answer audience-generated questions. Topics of discussion included the transition to college, University efforts to support new students, time-management and balance, and general advice for incoming women. Audience members greatly appreciated the information they received.



Photo Eighteen

## UConn Gives

By: Alex Dutro-Maeda

In April, UConn planned its first ever giving event. In 36 hours, from midnight of April 4th to noon on April 5th, UConn departments, offices, and programs rallied supporters to show their financial support for the University. In total, the University raised \$260,000.

The Women's Center was one of 39 groups who participated in UConn Gives. Our success in UConn Gives was due in no small part to the outreach efforts of our alums, who went online to share what the Women's Center meant to them in their time at UConn. With their incredible support, we raised \$462 from 20 donors, making UConn Gives one of our most successful single-event fundraisers. The gifts we received will make a big difference in our efforts to promote gender equity at UConn. We use these gifts to put on events like the Women's Advance Conference, develop programs like this semester's Open Mic Night and Trigger Warnings speaker, and hire and support our student staff.

Thank you to everyone who participated for your support and generosity, and thank you all for being a part of our Women's Center community!



Photo Nineteen: featuring Women's Center staff members, from left to right: Alyssa Pingitore, Craig Alejos, Steph Goebel, and Chrystal Sparks

**2018 OUTSTANDING SENIOR WOMEN ACADEMIC  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS AND  
100 YEARS OF WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

Award	Name	School/College
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Sara Katherine Bonaiuto	School of Law
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Elizabeth Eileen Charash	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Alyssa Condon	College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Lauren Dulieu	School of Dental Medicine
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Erin Emonds	School of Pharmacy
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Trisha-Ann Hawthorn -Noble	School of Social Work
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Jessica LaRosa	Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Samantha Guinevere Lee	School of Medicine
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Rajeshwari Majumdar	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Olivia Messina	School of Fine Arts
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Tatianna A Montalvo	Neag School of Education
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Jacqueline Santos	School of Nursing
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Lindsey Soderstrom	School of Business
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Alyssa Elinor Tacchi	School of Engineering
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Kaylee Thurlow	College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Award	Amanda L. Zaleski	Graduate School
100 Years of Women Scholarship	Angelica Idrovo Castillo	
100 Years of Women Scholarship	Pamela Murac	
100 Years of Women Scholarship	Anusha Nagella	

## TRIGGER WARNINGS

By: Katie DePalma



Photo Twenty

On Monday, April 23rd the UConn Women's Center and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) welcomed Emily Knox, Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Knox recently edited the book *Trigger Warnings: History, Theory, Context*, which examined trigger warnings. Trigger warnings are designed to alert readers or viewers that the content they are about to encounter may "trigger" unexpectedly strong reactions from individuals who have previously experienced trauma.

According to Knox's website, "With 'triggered' as Google's most searched word of 2016, trigger warnings have become a prevalent yet controversial concept in American higher education and society."

Due to this, a conversation has began amongst scholars and in the world of academia as trigger warnings become more well known. This conversation has partially emerged due to the many University professors, who began reporting that their students were requesting trigger warnings before taking part in certain course content. "One of the things that Dr. Knox brought up in her talk is what she considers a shared responsibility when it comes to trigger warnings. An instructor may make students aware of some of the difficult content that is included in a course, but it is up to the student to decide if this is something that may be too disturbing to engage with. She provided herself as an example explaining that she does **not** like horror movies. If she learned that a film course she was considering focused on that genre, she would seek out another option, as she would not be able to sleep," comments Women's Center Associate Director, Kathy Fischer.

The talk encompassed themes from the book and provided a comprehensive overview of the history of trigger warnings and when it is appropriate to use them. At the Center, having speakers, like Dr. Emily Knox, who offer new perspectives on how to view the world through a more open, intersectional lense is crucial to the work we do here.

According to co-facilitator of the Men's Project, Craig Alejos, "This talk is important because bringing a more direct definition of what trigger warnings are was very helpful. At the end of the talk, Knox said that it is unfortunate that trigger warnings are often politicized and linked with the liberal agenda, but the whole point of trigger warnings is to take care of yourself by using them."

## TED TALKS WE RECOMMEND

### *THE URGENCY OF INTERSECTIONALITY*

By: Katie DePalma

The Ted Talk, *The Urgency of Intersectionality*, is extremely powerful. Kimberlé Crenshaw began the Ted Talk by telling the audience to sit down when they did not recognize a name that she read aloud. Crenshaw read the names of five to ten Black men, all who had died due to police brutality, and slowly audience members sat down. Once everyone had sat down, Crenshaw said that she was going to read off another list of names and for everyone to once again sit back down when they did not recognize a name. Audience members sat down much quicker for this set of names and the only difference between the first and second set of names, was gender. This is because violence and police brutality against women and girls goes unnoticed by society. Women of color are specifically targeted because they are subordinated within society as they are not men, who are the dominant gender, and they are also not white, which is the dominant skin color.

Crenshaw used this example to highlight the main crux of her talk, which was intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as multiple oppressions or privileges. An example of this is an African American woman with a high socioeconomic status. This woman would be oppressed due to her gender and her race, but privileged by her class status. Here at the Center, we use intersectionality as a framework for understanding sexism, racism, and how the inequality is perpetuated within society.

Overall, Crenshaw's presentation of intersectionality was very eloquent, understandable and constructive. This is because she acknowledged why it would be difficult for people to understand how black women are marginalized as there is no exact definition of how being black or a woman is very different from being black and a women. Acknowledging that very simple truth makes people much more willing to try to understand because police brutality against African American women is not well publicized. However, Crenshaw emphasizes that even though they haven't been previously acknowledged does not mean that they can not be remembered now. (Continued on p. 23)



Photo Twenty-one

## TED TALKS WE RECOMMEND

### *GET COMFORTABLE WITH BEING UNCOMFORTABLE*

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Another Ted Talk that complements Kimberlé Crenshaw's *The Urgency of Intersectionality* is one that the entire Women's Center student and full time staff watched during one of our bi-weekly staff meetings. This Ted Talk is titled, *Get comfortable with being uncomfortable* and it is given by author, speaker, and digital strategist, Luvvie Ajayi.

Ajayi uses the idea of a domino theory throughout her talk. She discusses how social movements have begun because one individual was brave enough to be the first person to speak up. Ajayi specifically highlights the #metoo movement, which has made sexual assault visible and has shown sexual assault as a systematic, societally ingrained problem. "And then so many people have been the domino when they talk about how they've been assaulted by powerful men. And it's made millions of women join in and say, 'Me Too.' So, a shout-out to Tarana Burke for igniting that movement." This statement highlights how one person can ignite a movement; how one person can be the domino that falls by speaking out and stepping up.

Throughout the talk, Ajayi used the domino theory in relation to her own life. She specifically discussed how she has faced difficult situations, where she was not sure if she should speak up and counter systematic oppression even when it directly affects her. This is because she, like many of us, are afraid of what they could loss by opposing those who hold power over us. However, ultimately Ajayi choose to speak up and challenge unequal ideology because, as she said "her silence serves no one."

Overall, this Ted Talk is a call to action for all that watch it. It reflects personal empowerment and the ability to stand up and no longer sit idly by while inequality continues to be perpetuated. Here at the Center we support advocacy and personal accountability , which is why we think ideas presented in talks like this are so important to watch.



Photo Twenty-two

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