

WOMEN'S CENTER ANNUAL REPORT 2004-2005

Revised 6/20/05

The mission of the Women's Center is to educate, advocate, and provide support services for the achievement of women's equity at the University and within the community at large. Special attention is focused on, but not limited to, women who face additional challenges due to their race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sexual identity, religion, age, and physical or mental ability. This mission is accomplished through the major components of the Women's Center: Educational Programming/Cultural Events, Advocacy, Support Groups/Services, and the Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

This year we continued our focus on the professional development of both the full-time and student staff. As we had identified last year that our goals, as the full-time staff, were to increase communication; to balance our work styles so as to maximize our strengths and efficacy; and to explore how institutionalized oppression impacts us individually and collectively, we saw some improvements in these areas. We also initiated additional strategies which included regularly scheduled meetings between individual staff members and the addition of standing agenda items at our staff meetings of Advisory Board Subcommittee Updates, a Team Development Activity, and processing and reflecting on the question "How can we improve our relationships? What are our challenges around racism, classism, etc.?"

This year we had approximately 25 students on staff that were work-study, student labor, interns, or volunteers. We also served as a field placement site for two graduate students from the Higher Education and Student Affairs Program. The student staff is a diverse group of mostly undergraduate students representing a variety of majors and semester standing. Keeping in line with our understanding that one of the most significant impacts of our work can be seen in the growth and development of the students that work at the Center, we continued to make improvements this area. These enhancements included: collaborating with the other cultural centers to sponsor a retreat for the student staff of all of the centers; revising the Employee Self-Evaluation based on feedback from the students; and using the mandatory monthly staff meetings to provide professional development activities on the topics of women's herstory, women's centers, and feminism; white privilege; and sexual orientation.

At this year's Women's Center student staff retreat, we established two tracks of sessions, one for new student staff and one for returning students. Out of this year's retreat, we initiated a mentor program to enhance staff relations and make a more effective team in the Center. This program's goals include assisting the new/novice student staff member to feel more comfortable and acclimated in the new environment; providing opportunities for mentors and mentees to benefit from having each other as a resource; and encouraging students to take initiative around Center activities and responsibilities. In addition to the mentor program, our students took the initiative around recruiting more women of color to the student staff. Their activities included organizing a dinner at the Women's Center for all of the female staff from all of the cultural centers and hosting a "Bring a Friend" social night for the students of color who are currently working at the Center. These programs were created by students, for the students.

In addition to our staff, our Advisory Board continued to remain active through their work on the various sub-committees, including Diversity, Recruitment and Retention, Programming/Political Action, Strategic Planning, and the 100 Years of Women Scholarship. The

Board consists of students, staff, and faculty from a variety of disciplines, as well as racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, and gender identities.

Diversity – This committee distributed *The Resource Guide for Women of Color* in the Fall. The committee also held its sixth luncheon for women of color on campus and the keynote speaker was State Representative Evelyn Mantilla. The fifth annual Women of Color Recognition Reception was held on April 20, 2005. Deborah Muirhead, Professor of Art and Art History, and Bidya Ranjeet, Director of Student Support Services, received awards for their significant contributions to the University community.

Recruitment and Retention - This committee continued to make revisions to the mentor web site and began recruiting mentors and mentees. The committee also has continued working with OIR to develop a survey for faculty and staff to collect information about career ladders, professional development opportunities, and leadership opportunities for women. This survey will be distributed during the Fall 2005 semester and the Industrial Psychology Applications Center will oversee administering the survey and analyzing the data, with financial support coming from the Provost's Office.

Programming/Political Action – This committee focused its efforts on developing activities in the area of women's leadership. The committee is working on organizing a conference for middle school girls from the Windham area, which is tentatively scheduled for Fall 2006.

Strategic Planning – Since the Women's Center has been asked to complete a self-study this year, the Advisory Board tabled the strategic planning process until the self-study is completed. Instead, the committee has been serving in an advisory capacity on this project, which has included reviewing drafts of the self-study.

This year was again a year of accolades for the Women's Center. In April, two members of the student staff and of the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (our peer education program) were recognized at the Student Life Awards Ceremony:

Hilary Jones – Martha and Albert Cohen Scholarship for Enhancing Community;
Suzy Stockton - Spirer/Dueker Student Humanitarian Achievement Award; and
UConn V-Day Campaign – Program of the Year Award.

Also in April, Sasha Smith was recognized as one of the first recipients of the Gail Burns-Smith "Dare to Dream" Fund Award, which recognizes individuals who are pursuing work in the sexual assault prevention movement.

This year a member of our staff served as one of seven "experts" (or reviewers) nationally for the update of the *Standards for Women's Programs* of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Also, as part of our participation in the Family Violence Initiative of the School of Human Development and Family Studies, a member of our staff co-authored "Teaching about Psychological Abuse in Family Studies: A Psychoeducational and Preventive Approach", which is currently under review by *Marriage and Family Review*

The Women's Center also received some significant media coverage during the year. In October, *The New York Times* ran an article entitled "Colleges Are Joining Together To Deal With Sexual Assaults" which described the activities of the Center and our collaboration with the Connecticut

Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. Both *The Daily Campus* and *The Advance* covered the Violence Against Women Prevention Program and the activities we sponsored during Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Finally, the School of Engineering will be including a story about the program "Patently Female", presented by Ethlie Ann Vare and sponsored by the Women's Center, in the next edition of their news magazine, *Frontiers*.

EDUCATION

While we are still completing our participant totals for this year, we again saw significant numbers of participants in our programs. These programs included films, workshops, trainings, lectures, and a variety of cultural events for which the Women's Center was either the primary sponsor or a co-sponsor.

This year's theme for our programming was "Did You Know You Were Missing", to connect with a report from The National Council for Research on Women entitled *missing: INFORMATION ABOUT WOMEN'S LIVES*, which was released in late April of 2004.

The major programs of this year focused on women's rights as human rights and women authors. Speakers included:

Nancy Harvin - Program Consultant, The UNITY '04 VOTER EMPOWERMENT CAMPAIGN™, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

Margot Larson - author of *Jump Start Your Life: Choose your own lifestyle before someone chooses it for you* and business coach. Ms. Larson presented a special lecture before the 3rd Annual Celebrate Women Conference for UConn staff and faculty.

Susan Jane Gilman - author of *Kiss My Tiara* and most recently *hypocrite in a pouffy white dress: tales of growing up groovy and clueless*.

Randy Taguchi - Internet columnist in her native Japan, and author of *Outlet* and its sequels *Antenna* and *Mosaic*. We worked with the Japan Foundation to provide copies of the English translation of *Outlet* to the members of the Women's Book Club and the sIAAm! Book Club, prior to the author's visit to campus.

Ethlie Ann Vare - co-author of *Patently Female – From AZT to TV Dinners, Stories of Women Inventors and Their Breakthrough Ideas*. We worked with the School of Engineering to have students from the Women in Math and Science FYE class attend and join Ms. Vare for dinner after the program.

In addition to these programs, we sponsored the following new programs:

Discovering the Intuitive You Series - Facilitated by Dawna Martin, a healer of many modalities who thrives on helping people transform their lives through devoting time to the balance of their Body, Mind and Spirit, Being in the Now, and having fun. Sessions included: Increasing Your Intuition and Senses; Grounding 101; Shamanism: Your Inner Doorways; Manifestation Boxes; Introduction to Tarot; Auras & Chakras; and Space Clearing.

Investing in Ourselves - Offered as a lunch time series, sessions included Taking The Myth Out Of Becoming Debt-Free and Introduction to Investing.

The Heart of a Woman: A Mind, Body, Spirit Connection – This year we collaborated with the Celebrate Women Program at the Health Center to co-sponsor their 3rd annual conference. Guest speakers included Anthea Woodley, M.D., F.A.C.C., Director of Preventive Cardiology at Windham Hospital, Willimantic, CT; Carolyn Jacobs, Ph.D., Dean, Smith College School of Social Work, Northampton, MA; and Dorothy Martin-Neville, M.A., L.M.F.T., L.P.C., Founder and President of The Institute of Healing Arts and Sciences, LLC, West Hartford, CT. 175 participants joined us in October at La Renaissance in East Windsor for this event.

Women Faculty: Negotiating the Double Bind- This session was offered as one of the Fall 2004 Seminars sponsored by the Institute for Teaching and Learning. Nineteen faculty and staff members participated in the well-received session.

Women's Leadership Roundtable – Leadership: Striking a Balance – This program grew out of the Women's Philanthropy and Leadership Council, which has been an on-going collaboration between the Women's Center, The Foundation, and the Alumni Association. The program was held at the UConn School of Business SS&C Financial Accelerator in Downtown Hartford. Over fifty alumnae, staff, and friends of the University attended this inspirational program which was moderated by Linda Flaherty-Goldsmith and included the following panelists: Cheryl W. Grisè, President of Utility Group for Northeast Utilities; Dr. Marja M. Hurley, Professor in the Department of Medicine and Associate Dean & Director for Health Career Programs in the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine; Angela Rola, Director of the Asian American Cultural Center; and Barri Marks '69 former Hartford region chair of UConn's recently completed capital campaign. Based on the tremendously positive feedback, this event will be an on-going series, with one program planned for each semester.

We also supported the work of student staff, interns, and volunteers as they organized and/or participated in a variety of educational programs. Their activities included:

Oral Health – A student intern designed and implemented a curriculum for educating children and parents on the issue of oral health. She presented this module, for multiple sessions, at the Vernon Headstart Program, the Windham Headstart Program, and at the UConn Child Labs.

Dinner with a Dietician – A student intern organized this two-part series, which included “Bread Isn't a Swear Word” and “ Living the Veggie Lifestyle”.

What's the Connection? Women, Poverty, and Obesity – Another student organized this program, as part of her internship with us this Spring semester.

Color of Violence III: Stopping the War on Women of Color – The Women's Center partially funded the participation of one of our student staff, a graduate student from the School of Social Work, at this national conference. Her participation enabled her to bring back information that was useful in the discussions she facilitates for the students of color who are on staff.

In addition to these programs, we continued to offer our annual programs that included:

Eating Disorders Awareness - In October, we co-sponsored programming in recognition of the 7th Annual Love Your Body Day, a national day of action to speak out against ads and images of

women that are offensive, harmful, dangerous, and disrespectful. In February, our theme for the annual Eating Disorders Awareness Week was *Get Real: Unmask the Problem*. Activities included distributing informational pamphlets and other resources, *The Body Pride Fair*, a showing of *Real Women Have Curves*, *Coming Out of the Fridge – A Personal Look at Compulsive Eating*, and an audio performance and discussion of *The Good Body* by Eve Ensler.

Thursday Night at the Movies – This monthly series was established as an attempt to offer students, particularly first year students, an alternative to the typical Thursday night extra-curricular activities. We showed a variety of films, which included: *Step by Step: Building a Feminist Movement*; *Standing on My Sister's Shoulder*; and *Mai's America*, as well as a Spring series that explored the influence of the media.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month – Activities sponsored by the Violence Against Women Prevention Program included: *Thursdays in Black*; *Corazon Lastimado: Healing the Wounded Heart*; *the Clothesline Project*, and two interactive plays about relationships, presented by the nationally touring educational group Equalogy, Inc. and co-sponsored with the Domestic Violence Program of United Services, Inc. and the Department of Alcohol and Other Drugs Education and Services.

The Vagina Monologues – A collaboration with SUBOG and the UConn V-Day Campaign. As part of the national V-Day College Campaign, we organized the annual production of this play. In its fourth year, we held two performances with a total attendance of almost 700 and raised over \$7,500 for local programs that work to end violence against women.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month – This year's theme was *Sexual Assault Knows No Boundaries* and activities sponsored by the Violence Against Women Prevention Program included: a Visual Testimony Week with *Corazon Lastimado: Healing the Wounded Heart* and *the Clothesline Project*; *Denim Day*, which included an awareness campaign of myths related to sexual assault; *Take Back the Night* March, Rally and Coffeehouse; *the Day of Healing*; *The Men's March*, sponsored by the Men Against Violence Against Women Program; and *Shine the Light on Sexual Violence*.

Annual Outstanding Academic Achievement Awards Ceremony – We honored, in collaboration with the Provost's Commission on the Status of Women, the highest-ranking female graduating seniors from each of the University's schools and colleges. We also recognized the three recipients of the 100 Years of Women Scholarship, an incoming first year student and two undergraduate students, who have served as strong role models for young women in their home communities.

13th Annual Women's Advance Conference – After taking a hiatus last Spring to focus on our collaboration with the Celebrate Women Program at the Health Center, we brought back the annual Women's Advance Conference based on feedback from women on campus that this was an important event to them and a much-needed networking opportunity. This year's theme was *Real Women, Real Connections, Real Community*. The Planning Committee organized this conference as a forum for UConn women, across the range of positions, departments, and disciplines, to come together for professional development and networking. The goal of the conference is to enhance the workplace climate and to support the personal and professional growth of women staff and faculty. The 2005 program included the keynote, *A Conversation with Faith Middleton*; breakout sessions such as *Beyond "9 to 5": Opportunities for Growth and Fulfillment*; *Survival Skills for Support Staff*; *Preparing for Tenure*; *Sexism on Campus and Strategies for Change*;

Empowered Lives - Enrichment Through Cultural Competence Amongst Colleagues; Trying to Stay Sane...Oops, I Mean Healthy!; Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) – Understanding Your Personality and Psychological Type; and Successful Retirement Planning; and a closing panel of women staff, faculty, and the Chief of the Willimantic Police Department.

Arts/Cultural Events - We worked with Campus Activities and the other cultural centers to hold the fifth Cultural Explosion, held during Husky WOW. We hosted a display using the trading cards from *Connecticut Women: Across the curriculum, Throughout the Year*, from the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, in addition to disseminating information about women's issues and events on campus. In the Spring, we co-sponsored the 6th annual International Women's Day Festival, along with SUBOG and the other cultural centers. Again, this year a committee of students from the cultural centers organized the day's events. They held the program in the newly reopened Student Union and the evening included performances by Anjana Narayan of The South Asian Tree, a belly dancer, and *HERvoices: From Sindh, Personal Testimonies of Women and Girls from the Sindh Province of Pakistan*.

Collaborations with Other University Departments – We collaborated with Career Services on a panel discussion, *Women in the Workforce*, which was held in March. We also established a working group with staff from the Center for Student Involvement and the Honors Program, which has been planning a mini-conference on the perspectives of women researchers, ethicists, and policy makers on the topic of stem cell research. This working group has organized a program for the Fall of 2005. We also met with UHC faculty regarding activities to educate young women about cancer and heart disease and Storrs-based staff and faculty about services available through the UHC. Finally, under the auspices of our work during Summer Orientation, we have been working with staff from the Department of Residential Life to develop a multi-faceted collaboration to educate students on issues of violence against women on campus.

Members of the Women's Center staff continued to speak to a number of classes and on-campus groups on issues of gender roles, diversity, sexual harassment, and issues of violence against women. Some examples of this year's engagements include the faculty in the School of Fine Arts, the staff in the Department of Residential Life, administrative hearing officers of judicial affairs, TA's in the Departments of History and Modern and Classical Languages, as well as those participating in the New TA Training sponsored by the Institute of Teaching and Learning, USG Senators, students in the School of Family Studies, School of Nursing, and the Women's Studies Program, as well as 18 sections of the FYE classes.

We also provided sexual harassment prevention workshops to corporate and community organizations, including the Eastern Connecticut Health Network and members of our staff presented at the New England Women's Centers' Day Conference in February. Additional off-campus collaborations include one of our staff writing a briefing paper on eating disorders for the Connecticut Women's Health Campaign and another staff member served on the planning committee for the 2005 National Women's Studies Association's Women's Center pre-conference, *Combating White Privilege: Doing Anti-Racist Work in Women's Centers*.

ADVOCACY

This year the Women's Center continued to focus our on-going advocacy efforts in three major areas: access to childcare; mentoring for staff and faculty; and enhancing the University's response to violence against women on campus. We also continued to address matters related to the Student Union renovations.

Childcare – The Women's Center's staff and Advisory Board members continued to work with UCPEA, AAUP, and AFCSME to follow-up on the Childcare Feasibility Study, which was conducted by Bright Horizons, Inc. This ad hoc coalition, Child Care Now, discussed strategies for keeping this on the University's agenda for facilities and funding priorities. Staff also continued to serve on the Provost's Childcare Implementation Committee, which included working with the Department of Human Resources to create a child care website; distributing a demand survey to faculty, staff, and students; creating a Work/Life Statement which was distributed by the Provost; and continuing to explore the possibility of drafting agreements with other local child care facilities.

Mentoring – The Diversity Committee of our Advisory Board continued to host the annual Women of Color luncheon and the annual Women of Color Recognition event. This committee also distributed *The Resource Guide for Women of Color*, which includes information about available on-campus and community-based resources. In addition, the Recruitment and Retention Committee continued to make revisions to the mentor web site and began recruiting mentors and mentees. The committee also is continued working with OIR to develop a survey for faculty and staff to collect information about career ladders, professional development opportunities, and leadership opportunities for women. The survey will be distributed during the Fall 2005 semester and the Industrial Psychology Applications Center will oversee administering survey and analyzing the data, with financial support coming from the Provost's Office.

Response to Violence Against Women on Campus – We continued several initiatives this year, under the auspices of the work on our Department of Justice's *Grant to Reduce Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus*. We received a no-cost extension to continue our work through December of 2004. These initiatives included:

Conducting training for Women's Studies faculty to identify and respond more effectively to students' disclosures - In collaboration with staff from WeCONNECT, Inc., the local rape crisis center, last year we implemented a three-hour curriculum to address identifying sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking, how to make appropriate referrals, and resources available on and off campus. We offered one session of the training, entitled "Effective Identification and Response to Violence Against Women" this Fall and three faculty members participated.

Implementing the Volunteer Advocate Program – This service was created to fill gaps in our ability to provide a 24-hour advocacy response system, as identified by the Community Response Team (CRT). Again this Fall, we recruited and trained volunteers from the campus community to participate in the rotating on-call system that provides assistance to survivors who disclose to a CRT department when a professional staff member is not available, which is usually on nights and weekends. The curriculum for training Volunteer Advocates was completed in collaboration with the Campus Advocate, housed at the local sexual assault crisis service last year. Ten

volunteers completed the training, and the service continued through May 2005. We will be discussing the feasibility of continuing this service with the CRT departments.

Enhancing the Men Against Violence Against Women Program (MAVAW) to include issues of dating violence and stalking - We hired two student coordinators for the program this Fall, and one of the coordinators continued this Spring. The group was responsible for organizing the third annual Men's March Against Violence Against Women in April.

We continued to work with the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc. (CONNSACS) to establish and enhance Community Response Teams on 10 campuses throughout the state. Staff from the Center regularly attended the Connecticut Consortium for the Prevention of Sexual Assault to share information about programs on the UConn campus. Through the no-cost extension period, we also worked with CONNSACS to sponsor four half-day trainings for the Consortium members on *Understanding the Jeanne Clery Act & Title IX; Understanding and Investigating Stalking; What's Racism Got to Do With It? Making the Connection Between Anti-Racism and Anti-Violence Against Women Work on the College Campus; and Understanding Intimate Partner Violence*.

We also worked with the Dean of Students Office to develop training for hearing officers in sexual assault cases. We conducted the second of two three-hour sessions in October during which we focused on sanctioning decisions and case studies. Additionally, we continued working as part of the Community Response Team (CRT) to provide services to survivors of sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. Staff from the Center continued to maintain the collection of data on incident reporting and working on a document that includes information about the protocols for responding to disclosures of violence against women for all CRT departments.

This year we continued to train students as peer educators on issues of sexual assault, dating violence, sexual harassment, and images of women in the media. Students enrolled in Women's Studies 271 and 272, the training mechanism for the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP), learned information on issues of violence against women, facilitation skills, and working with participants from diverse communities. In addition to conducting sessions in the residence halls, 14% of the FYE classes, and local high schools, these students also facilitated a mandatory session for all incoming first year students during Summer Orientation. VAWPP also sponsored, in conjunction with several departments across campus, educational programs recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

SUPPORT GROUPS AND SERVICES

Support services at the Women's Center consist of:

- Crisis intervention - short-term individual counseling to anyone experiencing issues related to sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, or discrimination. Advocacy services may be a result of crisis counseling.
- Information and referrals - the Center maintains a database of legal, medical, counseling, childcare, and other social service and feminist resources. The database consists mostly of

providers from Northeast Connecticut, however services throughout Connecticut are also included.

- Discussion/support groups - these groups vary every semester. Some function as support groups, psycho-educational groups, or discussion groups. This year we continued to provide the Women's Book Club and Between Women. We also sponsored a Graduate Women's Group, and served as a host site for a Women and Spirituality group.

OUTREACH

The following are some of the new outreach activities conducted by staff, which are not included in our service or program attendance statistics:

Staffed a table at the Graduate Appreciation and Information Night, hosted by the Graduate Student Senate, as well as distributed Sexual Harassment Prevention brochures in the registration packets for this program;

Staffed a table at the New Faculty Orientation;

Staffed a table at "diversity fair" events sponsored by CA's in Northwest, Hilltop Suites, and McMahon;

Participated in the Scavenger Hunt sponsored by WHUS;

Served as a display location for the Lesbian Quilt, an art project of Queers United Against Discrimination (QUAD) to create community, raise awareness, and give voice to women who love women at UConn; and

Participated in an Information Session for the Women's Studies Program as an internship supervisor.

The following are annual outreach activities conducted by staff, which are not included in our service or program attendance statistics:

Staffed a table at International Nite 2004;

Staffed a table at the Employee Benefits Fair;

Staffed a booth at the Admissions Open House Resource Fairs;

Staffed a table at the Human Services Fair;

Staffed a table at all of the sessions during the Parent Orientation and Transfer Student Resource Fairs;

Staffed a table at the Student Job Fair; and

Staffed a table at the Student Health Fair.