



VOICES

TOGETHERNESS, CHANGES, HAPPINESS, FEMINIST

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Kathleen Holgerson, Women's Center Director



Photo by Larry Druckenbrod

Welcome to the new academic year. We have a lot to catch you up on since our last edition of *Voices*. This summer was a time of many transitions for the Women's Center. On July 5th, we welcomed [Joelle Murchison](#) to the community as the new Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer. Joelle brings with her a great deal of experience in shaping diversity initiatives both in the public and private sectors. Early on, she shared with us that she was a peer educator around issues of

sexual violence on campus during her time at Brown University. As part of the establishment of her new office – the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, all of the cultural centers will now be reporting to Joelle. During this transition period, she has met with our student staff, members of the Something's Happening Committee, the Women in Math, Science and Engineering faculty group, and the Center's Advisory Board. We are looking forward to Joelle's leadership in moving forward the University's diversity agenda and our work around promoting gender equity.

At the end of July, Carol Millette, our Administrative Assistant, retired after over 30 years of service to the University. During her tenure at UConn, Carol worked in University Publications, Facilities, Career Services, and most recently - the Women's Center. Her professionalism and diligence are hallmarks of her work. Carol's most significant legacy will be the relationships she fostered, particularly with the students with whom she worked over the years. That was clear at the retirement celebration we hosted for her on July 7th. During her 30 years, Carol has cultivated many friendships – spanning the spectrum of folks who have also been on campus for decades to new employees. We had folks in attendance from so many offices across campus. Past students showed up, and some even brought their children. Union colleagues spoke of the significant impact Carol made in her various leadership roles. We are all better for having had the opportunity to work with Carol.

In August, we welcomed Ann Locicero as the new Secretary at the Center and Alex Dutral-Maeda as the new Higher Education and Student Affairs Graduate Assistant. Some of you may know Ann from her tenure in the Academic Center for Exploratory Students (ACES). Ann brings many years of experience working with students. Her enthusiasm for learning and interest in getting to know more about our work with students have been important in assisting with a smooth transition. Alex comes to us from UC-Boulder, where she worked at the Women's Resource Center. Her skills in design, program planning, and social justice organizing are a strong foundation for her development as a Student Affairs professional. Also, this Fall we have 39 students on staff – many of whom are new to the Center. You'll find their profiles are the bulk of this edition, much like they are the backbone of the Center's work. In addition to their stories, we hope you enjoy their reflections, musings, and artistic work.

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DONATIONS

Attention alumni/ae!

Your gift to the Women's Center through our [website](#) can support our General Fund or the 100 Years of Women Scholarship Fund. The Women's Center General Fund supports:

- Student participation in a variety of out of class academic experiences, such as regional and national conferences
- Networking and professional development opportunities to enhance the recruitment and retention of women of color staff and faculty
- Enhanced programming for supporting women in STEM fields
- Program development around issues of gender equity and social justice on campus



FALL 2016 CALENDAR



October

10th- The Clothesline Project

14th Survivors and supporters are encouraged to stop by the VAWPP Office (SU Room 419) Wednesday, October 5 through Friday, October 7, anytime between 11am-1pm, to create a t-shirt of their own in a private and safe environment the shirts will then be displayed on Fairfield Way. Monday - Friday, 11:30am-2pm each day, Fairfield Way

13th Presentation by Lissette Delgado-Cruzata, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor of Molecular Biology, Co-Director Program to Inspire Minority Undergraduates in Environmental Health Science Research (PrIMER), City University of New York, John Jay College
Co-sponsored with PRLACC
Lunch at 12pm Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)
Talk open to the community at 2pm-3:30pm, PRLACC

Fat Talk Free Week

17th- Get education. Get Involved. Make a difference!
21st Tabling Tuesday and Thursday, 11am-1pm, Student Union

Miss Representation - Film Screening and Discussion

18th This film explores the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence in America, and challenges the media's limited portrayal of what it means to be a powerful woman.
Tuesday, 6pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)

Dis-Respectability with Dr. Brittney Cooper

19th Brittney Cooper is an Assistant Professor of Women's and Gender Studies and Africana studies at Rutgers University and is the co-founder of Crunk Feminist Collective.
Co-sponsored with WRAAP
Wednesday, 6pm, Student Union Theatre

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25th Iron Jawed Angels - Film Screening and Discussion

Iron Jawed Angels tells the remarkable and little-known story of a group of passionate and dynamic young women, led by Alice Paul (Hilary Swank) and her friend Lucy Burns (Frances O'Connor), who put their lives on the line to fight for American women's right to vote.
Tuesday, 6pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)

27th TEDxUConnWomen - Simulcast of TEDWomen

TED is hosting its 4th conference devoted to exploring the "power of women and girls to be creators and change-makers".
Thursday, 8:30am-6pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)

November

1st Gender Watch Party

A gathering to discuss the gender dynamics of the 2016 campaign season.
Tuesday, 6pm-8pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)

1st Leng Leng Chancey, Deputy Director, National Asian Pacific Women's Form

Co-sponsored with AsACC and Delta Phi Lambda
Tuesday, 7pm, Student Union Theatre

3rd No Le Digas a Nadie - Don't Tell Anyone - Film Screening and Discussion w/Angy Rivera

Co-Sponsored with PRLACC
Thursday, 6pm, Konover Auditorium

15th Start Smart Salary Negotiation

Start Smart is specifically designed to empower women college students about to enter the job market with the skills and confidence to successfully negotiate their salary and benefits packages. By learning strategies and practicing effective language, participants gain valuable skills they can use throughout their lives - well beyond their next negotiation.
Tuesday, 6pm-8pm, Women's Center Program Room (SU 421G)

EDITOR'S NOTE



Hello, I'm Kim Armstrong, Editor of the Women's Center newsletter, *Voices*. I joined the Women's Center this year in hopes of increasing awareness of intersectional feminism on campus. Personally, I define feminism as the pursuit of an end to gender essentialism, the idea that males and females should be held to different standards of behavior based on their preconceived abilities, characteristics and goals rather than who they are as individuals. While this affects women, men and those who identify outside the traditional gender binary differently, as a feminist I believe that people should be able to choose the life they want to live without facing societal consequences.

I hope to use my experience as a staff writer and designer for UConn's student newspaper, the *Daily Campus*, to encourage discussion of feminist issues and successes amongst students, staff and alumni/ae with this newsletter.



Live and Let Live

WRITING INTERN'S NOTE

My name is Katherine – or Kat, for short – and I am a feminist. I'm planning to graduate at the end of this year, my senior year, as a Journalism and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies double major. My position as a writing intern here at the Women's Center has managed to be a near-perfect intersection of my two areas of study: I get to hear the feminist views, passions, and stories of the individuals involved with the Women's Center and help to share their inspiring deeds through writing.

This is my first semester getting involved with the Women's Center, and I already regret not being involved since my first year. The staff I have come to get to know after a short time, and with help from orientation and the staff retreat, are so welcoming that the transition into the group felt seamless. It is hard to describe how refreshing it is to be surrounded by students who are passionate about the same issues that I am, who are eager to stimulate discussion about complex social issues and can contribute to that discussion with clear respect for others, even if they



disagree. In the hurricane of intolerance and hate that is battering our country, especially as the Presidential election approaches, the powerful, kind voices of my peers bring clarity and help me keep faith in humanity.

Following my enlightening first WGSS course, I have come to identify as a feminist proudly, which is something that not all of my good friends are comfortable with echoing. To me, feminism means viewing others with eyes

unclouded by preconceived notions, judgments based on physical appearance, ability, wealth, sexuality, or gender, with the knowledge that people who express themselves or live their lives differently from you are deserving of respect. Seeing how misunderstood and belittled feminism is by men and women alike is frustrating and disheartening, but I feel determined to spread my own understanding of feminism to the people in my life. I look forward to getting to know more people this semester, hearing their stories, and understanding better ways to spread support for feminism and the Women's Center.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF

Every year, the Women's Center welcomes a passionate group of new and returning students onto our staff. Here's a short introduction of our newest members.



Name: Alyssa Marini

Women's Center Position: Between Women Facilitator

Major and Year: Sociology and English major, Junior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I facilitate for Between Women - a confidential discussion group for women in the LGBTQ+ community. Our purpose is to provide support to queer women who are either struggling with discrimination, wish to communicate with other LGBTQ+ members, and/or build a stronger queer community on UConn's campus. I hope to see UConn become more aware of intersectionality with help from the cultural centers.



Name: Paola Pérez

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and Latino and Latin American Studies major, minoring in French and Francophone Studies, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I am working at the Women's Center to teach and create a difference in the community, particularly in the Latinx community, about gender equity and gender based violence. I hope that one day, rape culture is eradicated or decreases vastly on college campuses.



Name: Salonie Dave

Women's Center Position: Greeks Against Sexual Assault Facilitator

Major and Year: Physiology and Neurobiology major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I am working in the Women's Center because I want to be involved in all of the amazing contributions that the Women's Center makes towards UConn. I can truly see myself growing personally and professionally because of the way the Women's Center challenges its staff and the UConn community to think critically about various intersectional topics that impact our world and how we perceive others. At UConn, I would love to see more students going out of their comfort zone to gain some insight and learn something new about different cultures.



Name: Chrystal Sparks

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Psychology and Human Development and Family Studies major, Junior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I want to work at the Women's Center because I want to be part of the change to end sexual violence on college campuses. My goal is that my work in VAWPP will help open conversations on touchy subjects and invite my peers to learn about something that I feel is very important. I hope that we as a UConn community will join together in the battle against gender based violence.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF

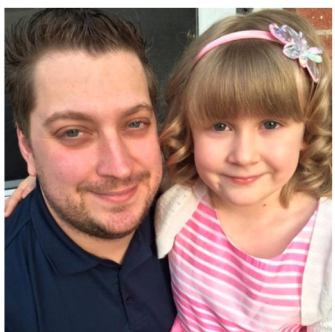


Name: Sylvia Wang

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Actuarial Science major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I got involved with the Women's Center because I feel like women are less empowered to make decisions compared to men, especially in the Asian community. I hope my work could raise awareness around this issue and let more people know that it is okay to say "no".

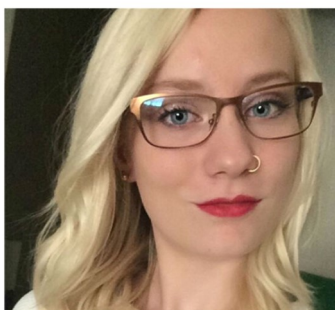


Name: Craig Mario Alejos

Women's Center Position: Men's Project Co-Facilitator

Major and Year: Human Development & Family Studies major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: The biggest reasons I wanted to work at the Women's Center are because as a single parent of a daughter, I want to do everything I can to make UConn a safer and more inviting place for her when she (hopefully) attends here (Class of 2030!). My two goals during my time here are to make sure that: 1. This year's Men's Project is the most amazing year ever and that we will change many minds and hearts through our hard work. 2. To set in motion one of the original goals of the Women's Center and start looking for ways we can support non-traditional students (specifically parents) at UConn with things like child care.



Name: Suze Cayer

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Physiology and Neurobiology major, Senior

Why I work at the Women's Center: As a victim-survivor of sexual violence and domestic violence, I want to empower myself and others to create a culture of respect, inclusion, and consent on our campus and hopefully the world. I love the Women's Center and VAWPP because we have such a wonderful community of support.



Name: Matt Brush

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Human Rights major, Senior

Why I work at the Women's Center: I have been involved in many efforts on campus to increase diversity, foster community, and promote social justice, including working with the UConn Sexperts, the Men's Project, and interning for the WGSS program. I am currently working on a gender & sexual diversity workshop that is centered around being a better ally to the LGBT community and recognizing humanity in others. After I graduate, I hopes to pursue a career educating people about and advocating for the transgender community by sharing my own experiences as a trans person.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF

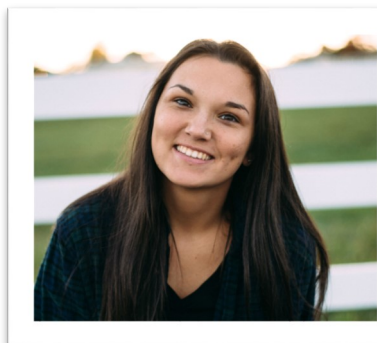


Name: Jessica Hong

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Pharmacy major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because I want to be a part of the change and the action behind making UConn a more safe, open, and accountable campus.



Name: Kristina Drollinger

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Human Rights major, Junior

Why I work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because gender inequity and gender-based violence are two incredibly prevalent and harmful social issues. I hope that one day UConn can be honest with itself--we are not adequately serving the needs of victim-survivors. We do not have enough resources on campus, mandated reporting is out of control (and reporting statistics are manipulated to say people feel comfortable reporting when this is not the case), and too much of UConn's response is reactionary. The Women's Center and other cultural centers are the backbone of this campus, and I want UConn to acknowledge this.



Name: Jillian Provost

Women's Center Position: Men's Project Co-Facilitator and VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Anthropology and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because I am passionate about addressing the social injustices related to gender; and despite what society often tells us, we have a long way to go in gender equity and inclusivity in our society. To be optimistic: I hope one day that people have the freedom to truly express themselves and live a fulfilling life. To be blunt: I hope to live in a community that has uprooted our current institutions and dismantled the patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism and other oppressive structures so that future generations can live in a world of love, sharing and communal living.



Name: Alex Dutro-Maeda

Women's Center Position: Graduate Assistant

Major and Year: Higher Education and Student Affairs, Graduate Student

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I want to dedicate my life to empowering students. The most meaningful way I can start that work is in creating safe and brave spaces, promoting feminist education and activism, and building community with the Women's Center!

MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Name: Annie Belanger

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Journalism and Political Science major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because I want to work to educate our community about gender based violence and provide support for those affected by it. I want to use my voice to make a difference at UConn to make it a safer and more inclusive place for all members of the community. I want to see students both at UConn and around the world get more involved in social activism.



Name: Santosh Srivatsa

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Student Administrative Specialist

Major and Year: Business Analytics and Project Management, Graduate Student

Why do you work at the Women's Center: Working at the Women's Center with an energetic, passionate and smart bunch of people trying their best to help prevent any kind of sexual violence against women has been an inspirational and fulfilling experience.



Name: Aiden Ford

Women's Center Position: Women in STEM Mentoring Program Coordinator

Major and Year: Physiology and Neurobiology and Neurodevelopment and Health major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: The Women's Center is a space on campus that actively seeks progress, and I work here both to learn how to pursue such change and to contribute to those movements. I want to help education and healthcare be made accessible to children in every community.



Name: Chris Stumper

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Computer Science major, Junior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I seek to not only educate the incoming UConn students on consent to help prevent sexual assault on and off campus, but also to get our community thinking more about gender and its role in everyday life.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Name: Cheyenne Rodriguez

Women's Center Position: Women's Center Assistant

Major and Year: Political Science major, Sophomore

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because I want to encourage others to live authentically in all aspects of their lives. I attended a VAWPP presentation and was attracted to the message and the work the Women's Center does.



Name: Banu Bayraktar

Women's Center Position: Women's Center Assistant

Major and Year: Geoscience and Geography major, Junior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because I'm a feminist who wants, or rather needs, to see a change in the way the world treats me and all women based on our gender. I love working here because I will not be judged by my peers for my "radical" views, and I want to contribute to a better and more feminist UConn.



Name: Claire Chen

Women's Center Position: Women's Center Assistant

Major and Year: Marketing and Fashion Merchandising major, Sophomore

Why do you work at the Women's Center: I wanted to Women's Center because it has a different working environment and working process is also a learning process of my own identity as a woman. I want to see one day there is no discrimination based on race, gender, age or anything like that in the world. I hope everyone can be equal and happy.



Name: Christopher Raymond

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Human Rights and Management major, Senior

Why do you work at the Women's Center: This is my first year serving as a VAWPP peer facilitator, although I was previously involved with the Men's Project last spring. I hope to continue on to graduate school next year, focusing on the relationship between organized labor and the realization of workers' rights.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Name: Jessica Kraus

Women's Center Position: VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Major and Year: Physiology and Neurobiology major, Junior

Why do you work for the Women's Center: I work at the Women's Center because of the serious impact that the issues all women face has had on my life and the lives of my loved ones. I am working towards a world where I don't have to worry about others experiencing these negativities just because of their gender identities.

BETWEEN WOMEN



Alyssa Marini, Between Women Facilitator

Between Women is a confidential group for queer or questioning women. We discuss fun topics (like how the *L Word* is the bomb), watch queer movies, and we don't shy away from acknowledging the stereotypes, discrimination and adversity that the LGBTQ+ community faces. We have this group so that people feel less alone; to brainstorm ways to create a more accepting society; to break down stereotypes; and to create a safe space!

MEN'S PROJECT

Craig Alejos, Men's Project Co-Facilitator

The Men's Project is an eleven-week training that begins in February. The program is supported by the UConn Women's Center and the Asian American Cultural Center, whose staff serve as advisors and support for this initiative. The goal of the Men's Project is to train students whom identify as men to positively influence their peers by challenging social norms that promote gender-based violence; understanding their connection to survivors of gender-based violence; and role modeling effective bystander interventions. The weekly meetings will focus on topics related to gender socialization, masculinities, social justice and gender-based violence.

If you are interested or know of men who may be, please forward potential candidates' names and all known contact information to the Men's Project Facilitators, Jillian Provost & Craig Alejos, at mensproject@uconn.edu or call the Women's Center at (860) 486-4738 and ask for a Men's Project Facilitator.

"The most important things I took away from the Men's Project were how to become a better ally for marginalized groups and to be ok with being who I am, inside and out." ~ **Craig Alejos, Men's Project Co-Facilitator**

"This program has reshaped how I consider feminism to be and has absolutely given me even greater perspectives on gender and how it influences the lives of all within our society." ~ **Jillian Provost, Men's Project Co-Facilitator**

PROJECT SEMICOLON REFLECTS ON MENTAL HEALTH

Katherine Eastman, Women's Center Writing Intern

Mental health is a topic that doesn't often come up in everyday conversation, even between close friends, despite its importance in a college student's (or anyone's) day-to-day life. The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that one in four of young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 have a diagnosable mental illness. Within the university bubble of grades, studying, athletics, and expectations, it can be easy to forget to give oneself a pause to take a breath, check in with one's mental state, and practice self-care.

To help bring UConn students together around the topic of mental health and to show that Women's Center staff are taking a stand against mental health stigma, we hosted Project Semicolon on September 26.

Associate Director Kathy Fischer led the event and teamed up with staff from UConn's Counseling and Mental Health Services to make the most out of Suicide Prevention Week.

The semicolon, one of the less common punctuation marks, is used in writing to indicate a more pronounced pause than a comma. With this in mind, Project Semicolon uses the symbol "with the hope that people will use this as a visual reminder that when things are tough, taking a pause is a better than making a permanent decision towards a

temporary problem," according to its materials.

As time goes on, more and more people are recognizing the semicolon as a meaningful symbol that represents suicide prevention, mental health awareness, and breaking down stigma around mental health, Fischer said.

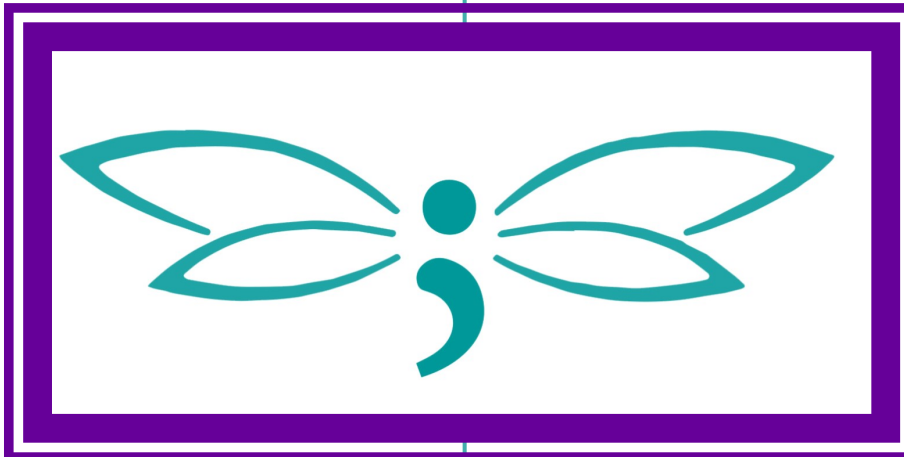
Students who stopped by painted rocks, or "hope stones," to keep on their desk or nightstands as a reminder that their mental health is important and worth taking a pause for. Visitors could also color in semicolon designs, and

received free temporary tattoos and t-shirts from the Suicide Prevention Committee.

"Attendance was awesome," Fischer said. "50 people came in an two-hour period, and we needed more room that we had – we were overflowing."

Fischer added that the staff saw faces they hadn't seen before, and they were able to engage people who may not generally be at the Women's Center. With the help of the event, Fischer hopes that people see that mental health issues impact more people than they might think, and that anyone looking for support is not alone.

Fischer also hinted that more fun and awareness-raising activities are coming this year!



THE CLOTHESLINE PROJECT

Kim Armstrong, Women's Center Newsletter Editor

The Clothesline Project brought a colorful display to Fairfield Way in order to bring awareness to the prevalence of gender-based violence on the University of Connecticut's campus. Throughout the week of Monday, Oct. 10, the Women's Center displayed t-shirts designed by survivors and secondary survivors of domestic violence in front of the Student Union. Student volunteers distributed fliers and offered passersby the opportunity to design their own paper t-shirts.



Photo by Kim Armstrong

THE MUSINGS OF A BLACK WOMAN WORKING FOR THE POLICE

Lesedi Graveline, UConn Student

Lesedi Graveline, a UConn Senior and double major in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and Human Rights, contributed the following piece reflecting on her WGSS internship at the University of Connecticut's Police Department this semester. This internship program has placed two interns at the Women's Center this semester, and as part of the curriculum, Lesedi shadowed Women's Center Writing Intern, Katherine Eastman.

If one year ago, someone were to tell me that I'd be interning at my University's Police Department, I would laugh in their face. I am a 21-year old African-American woman who is extremely dedicated to social justice; in fact, I plan to dedicate my entire life and career to it. The media has finally decided to shine some light on issues that have been happening in our country for decades. The issues of policing, police violence, racial profiling, gun violence and more broadly, systemic and institutional racism. I think it's important to note that systemic racism does not begin with policing, nor does it end with it.



The media has done a fantastic job at creating two sides: anti-cop/pro-black v. pro-cop/anti-black. Even though these beliefs are actually completely mutually exclusive, it's made it nearly impossible to be both pro-black and pro-cop, which is exactly where I fall. If Black Lives Matter, which they do in fact matter, and I am black, then it is automatically assumed that I am pro-black/anti-cop. This is the exact reason why I get this peculiar look from people when I tell them I am an intern at the University of Connecticut Police Department. This look that I'm a traitor or disloyal. It's only until after I've explained to them my reasoning that I get my "black card" back.

Here's my reasoning:

After going through different stages of frustration, disbelief, skepticism, hopelessness, heartache and other overwhelming feelings, I finally decided that the only way to effectively change things was to start from within. Simply scrutinizing police officers for being police officers didn't seem like enough or very fair. So I chose to use my family connections in law enforcement to get this internship. Although I am only halfway through this semester-long experience, I have been able to have conversations with multiple police personnel about some of the issues I mentioned before. From captains to background investigators and dispatchers to detectives, I've spoken with a wide range of people who work in the Public Safety Division here at UConn.



Image from the Hartford Courant

There are two commonalities they all have. The first being that they are extremely careful with the words they choose when telling me their views on the current climate around police violence. It's almost as if they are trying to be "politically correct" around me, which leads me to thinking about the discomfort that surrounds conversations about race, especially police brutality. I think this is part of the problem. People (mostly white people) are simply not willing to talk about such heavy and controversial topics. The second being they do not see police brutality as a "personal" problem because they are not directly effected by it. The majority of the people I interact with on a daily basis are white. Police brutality is only something they hear about on the news and read about online. It's not happening in their backyards or to their family members or to the people of the same race/community. It's this distant thought that they have

the privilege of putting off and only talking about when they feel like it. It's also not happening here on campus (at least that we know of), so they only see this as a "national issue", not one here at UConn. I cannot be sure if I receive these reactions because I am black, but in my experience, my entire life is a reflection of my race. I can only hope that my

physical presence here at the department can initiate any and all conversations about these topics, whether that's because I'm blatantly asking questions or because I'm a black intern at a police department.

I am not trying to attack the department I work for or tell you all their secrets. I am simply trying to understand why all of this is happening. Why do officers get so defensive and politically correct when talking about these issues? Why do they (white people) get uncomfortable? Why are all white police officers suddenly considered racist? Why are all black men suddenly criminals? What rules are the police officers required to follow? Does the media have specific intentions when telling us stories on the news? Why is the Black Lives Matter movement being called 'terrorism'? Why do I get a peculiar look when I tell people (black people) that I'm interning for my University's Police Department? Why are black men and women being killed by our law enforcement and going unpunished? Why are police officers being killed? Who is making the decisions in these cases? Why does it feel like black America is at war with the rest of America? The most important question that I am going to spend my life answering is: what can I do? First and foremost, I am going to listen, which is what I suggest that we all do. My dad always told me that you simply cannot solve a problem without understanding the question.

IT'S ON US RECEPTION SUPPORTS STUDENT VOICES

Suzanne Cayer, VAWPP Peer Facilitator

On Tuesday, October 4th, I had the honor of attending a reception hosted by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden in honor of activists in the It's On Us Campaign. The event coincided with the observation of Domestic Violence Awareness Month and the 22-year anniversary of the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act, which Biden authored while serving on the U.S. Senate.

I was in attendance along with over twenty other students serving on the Student Advisory Committee for the It's On Us Campaign. Others in attendance were: Kirsten Gillibrand (D), a U.S. Senator from New York; Tina Tchen, Assistant to President Barack Obama; Tina Tchen, Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama and Executive Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls; Andrea Pino, a student activist from UNC-Chapel Hill, who was in *The Hunting Ground*; and three students who won the "It's On Us Courage Award" for being active bystanders.

During the reception, Vice President Biden made a speech, in which he discussed his motivation to prevent gender-based violence. No one in his personal life had ever experienced gender-based violence, which he stated was a surprise to everyone he worked with in passing the Violence against Women Act in 1994. His father, Joe Biden Sr., had taught him and his brothers that hitting a woman was the cardinal sin, and it was their duty to intervene. He stated that by being a passive bystander, by watching something happen without intervening, one becomes an accomplice to the crime.

Biden has taken it upon himself to prevent violence against women, using his power as a U.S. Senator from Delaware, and as Vice President of the United States. During his speech, he stated that he began It's On Us in response to statistics and student activism, which showed that violence against women wasn't decreasing for young women. President Obama and Vice President Biden started "It's On Us" in September 2014.

"It's On Us" seeks to reframe the conversation surrounding sexual assault in a way that inspires everyone to see it as their responsibility to do something to prevent it. Additionally, Vice President Biden stated that he is planning on devoting the rest of his life to violence prevention and is excited for opportunities to do so once he leaves the White House. To see an elected official be so passionate about violence prevention and supporting survivors was incredibly inspiring.

Our voices as students and our stories as survivors are important and powerful tools for creating real change. Not only can students be the champions of change today, we will be the future lawmakers, doctors, therapists, and teachers of tomorrow; it is our duty to make the world a better place.



Image from It's On Us

POETRY AND ART

Frontier and Future

This is our time on earth.
What are we doing with it?

caught in the
amber of tradition

POETRY AND ART

Matthew Brush, VAWPP Peer Facilitator

Perhaps the most dangerous reasoning for continuing patterns of behavior is "we've always done things this way". We often feel comfort in tradition, in knowing the ways of things, but the future always holds uncertainty. With such a divide between what we know to be and what will be, it becomes vital that we focus on the here and now in an effort to utilize our time here to the fullest extent.

Comfortable Confessions

Intellectually agreed upon
I once came out to my friend
In the mid-morning darkness
Where colloquial catches cloaks
Clocking the time onto my card
I am still a slave
With a new owner I dance
The pain away conceiving
Coincidences at birth born
Bounding anew a spring
Always asking astonished

The stories told today
Were the ones held at bay
And came rushing in the sea tide
Waiting patiently at my side
Sighing stressfully relieving
Relinquished I soar
Flying in the air where upside down
And right side up are realities I spiral into
Knowing it doesn't matter
So put it in the cake batter
Mix it all up for sup'r
Or for the birthdays that Fall in time.

Poetry by Castella Copeland

Butterfly Blood

Beauty was a beast
At a strange type of feast
Where honey conjured money
Thick as the mucus of
And for the sunny sonny;

Of vibrant and bright meaning
Of being the sightseeing scene
In the light of the dark of the night
I am the gray area best seen as
The malaria within mosquitoes
Biting bitter bones blood

Try not to catch the suds
Joking around washing
Wax window's wings
I hear a bird sing
Outside while I am inside
The glass area waiting
Validation confides in realization
I am a gray area

The toe shoe in invisible to most
Unless you live on the coast
And can boast about the toast
Half plain or half burnt
Let's make a toast to
Reaping the bread n
Give me the husk
Skiing down at dusk
Dusting daunting doing down

We all begin to frown
At the sound of blood
Flying away with a bud
Of ears drop tears
I am your worst fears.

Mixed Tricks

The box of cereal on sale today
The ethereal mail sets sail at bay
To win the game of life you must
Cook the bread and give me the husk
To sit on the throne that's won not earned
To fight the burned and never learned
How to wear masks of love
To fly like the dove
Full of deceitful lies
Is that your new alibi?
Promise to break all of your vows
And keep the kill of all your cows
Twitching Twins Teeter Totter
Far away in a distant fairytale
Hearing the song of a whale
Or was it more like a wail
Wandering by destiny's shooting star
A wisp of smoke from the cigar
Decently deciding descending decisions
My plan in my head shatters me
For my heart to break free and see
The very thing I'm afraid of
The dark for what it's made of
And sets conditions for my sleep
No I do not count the sheep
For I prefer to weep
At the angels starring above me
Whispering you love me
In a dream of death
I wake up to take a deep breath

ART AND POETRY

Matthew Brush, VAWPP Peer Facilitator

It happens often that the way others see us is not how we see ourselves. Throughout our lives we come into and create new identities for ourselves, though often it takes a great deal of time before we are ready to share them with the world. We are all becoming, experiencing our becomings, and trying to be seen as we see ourselves. This piece beckons readers to take the time to see others as they are, and to look past what we think we know based on bodies and appearances.



Alyssa Marini

A water color inspired by Pinterest art.