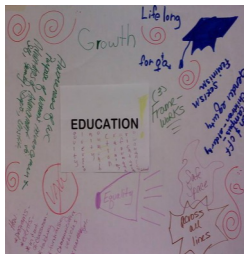




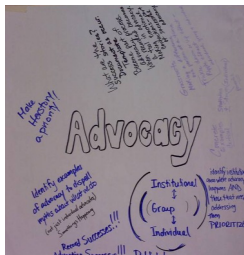
# VOICES

*WHERE ALL THE PIECES COME TOGETHER*

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



It's amazing what a week without significant snow and a 50 degree day can do. This January was unprecedented in snow, ice, school closings, and general weather related misery. But as with most things, given time... the weather changes, the snow and ice melt, and spirits are uplifted with thoughts of Spring, upcoming graduation, and for the University of Connecticut, the arrival of our first female President. We are very much looking forward to welcoming Dr. Susan Herbst to the UConn community.



We recognize that this is also a time for reflection and restraint, particularly as it relates to budgets and the economy, from the personal to the state and national level. But in many ways, the Women's Center's work of educating for climate change has always moved from the personal to the institutional. We've (and by we, I mean the full-time and student staff and our Advisory Board and Board committee members) have been working diligently to identify goals, themes, and priority areas to support a strategic and clear use of our resources. These resources include the financial support we garner from the University and from our donors, as well as the personnel and political support from the students, staff, and faculty who volunteer their time to the Center on our various projects and committees.



Our overall goals are in areas where we have seen recent success and where we know we have the potential to have a transformative impact on individuals, policies and procedures, and the institution. For the next year or so, we will be:

- Enhancing our structured educational programming on intersectionality;
- continuing our institutional advocacy through collaborations with a focus on changing current behaviors, bystander empowerment, and accountability, in order to develop an expanded network of advocates on campus;
- assessing our marketing and current educational programs to make sure they produce the outcomes of raising awareness about the Women's Center programs and services; about our advocacy role through capacity-building activities for other departments; and about bystander empowerment.
- creating and implementing a tiered approach for cultivating donors that will support our current and future programs, services, and goals.



As you read through this edition of *Voices*, we hope you will see the innovative ways in which we are working to bring our goals to life, as well as the opportunities for personal growth the Women's Center provides for those affiliated with us, both past and present. We appreciate the support we have received over the decades, and we pledge to honor that support by continuing to be the exciting, energy filled place that the UConn community knows and loves.

—**Kathleen Holgerson,**  
**February, 2011**

Inside this issue:	
Student Groups	2
Women Veterans	3
Past Alumna	4
Stuffed and Starved	6
Elect Her Campaign	7
NEDAW	7
Support the WC	8

# WANT TO BE A SOCIAL ACTIVIST? JOIN US!



*If you would like to be a part of the gender activist community, please consider joining one (or both!) of these student groups, Students United for Reproductive Justice (SURJ), or UConn-NOW (UConn's National Organization for Women Chapter). Here are some of the many events to look forward to this Spring from Michele Farber, president of SURJ, and Jackie Martone, president of UConn-Now.*

## UCnow.

UConn Chapter of the National Organization for Women

After a productive fall semester, UConn-NOW plans to keep up the momentum this spring. Currently, we are focused on following the *No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act*, a highly anti-woman bill that not only will take away a woman's right to choose, but also redefines what constitutes rape. UConn-NOW plans to raise awareness on campus about the significance of reproductive rights for everyone and how, right now, our rights are at stake.

We also feel that it is imperative to share the herstory of our fight for reproductive freedom to the UConn community. We plan to organize an event that will be visible throughout campus in memory of the women who have died because of an [illegal abortion](#). We have organized a silent protest and constructed graves that will be put throughout campus with the horrifying statistics of illegal abortions. These women were silenced because their right to choose was taken from them. We hope to raise awareness about the dangers of our past and how we cannot have history repeat itself.

UConn-Now is also very excited to celebrate [Equal Pay Day](#). This year, we will celebrate on April 12, 2011. This date represents how far into the new year women had to work to reach the pay men earned in 2010. This year, we are paying particular attention to women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. We believe there are still many social and environmental factors at play here that keep the gender gap within STEM alive.

Please join us this spring and be a part of the conversation! Our meetings are Tuesday nights at 6pm in the Women's Center.



## S.U.R.J.

Students United  
For Reproductive Justice

SURJ hit the ground running this semester with a visit from UConn and Women's Center student staff alumna, Natalie Cullen. Natalie now works for the Working Families Organization, a group focused on improving the lives of middle and working class families. [Working](#)



*UC-Now and SURJ joined forces for a protest against Anti-Choice demonstrators at the 40-Days For Life protest.*

[Families](#) came to SURJ to discuss paid sick day legislation for Connecticut workers. Women are disproportionately affected by a lack of paid sick days because women are most likely to be caring for young children or elderly family members that would require them to miss work time.

SURJ members wrote letters, told stories about the obstacles of not having paid sick days, and learned what could change in Connecticut if businesses were required to provide paid time off. By supporting paid sick days, SURJ hopes to help ensure all women can support healthy families.

We also anticipate many more exciting events this spring. February 26<sup>th</sup>, members of SURJ plan to travel to New Haven to do lobby training with [ctEquality](#) and [Planned Parenthood](#). ctEquality is a coalition of more than 20 different organizations throughout the state who strive to achieve gender equality for all of Connecticut. During the training, members will learn how to talk to their legislators about adding gender identity and expression to the Connecticut non-discrimination policy. We are also beginning preparations for the annual [Reproductive Justice Conference](#) in Amherst, MA. This event is a favorite for group members, as there are panels, speakers, and activities where students all over the country can come together for productive, enriching conversation.

For more information, please come to our meetings, Thursday nights at 6pm in the Women's Center!



## WOMEN VETERANS: A NEED FOR SUPPORT

My name is Alicia Waring, and I am a senior at the University of Connecticut. I began working at the Women's Center in the summer of 2010 as a Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) facilitator. I am a Senior studying Psychology and Women's Studies. I am also a veteran.

Prior to working at the Women's Center, I served on active duty for three and a half years in the United States Air Force. I did not recognize the highly sexualized environment of the military until VAWPP provided me the tools to understand and define the problematic behavior of the male-dominated institution.

With this awareness came an affirmed sense of responsibility to my community. I wanted to provide UConn with the tools needed to start a conversation concerning the horrifying statistics around acquaintance rape. As a veteran, I felt a need to communicate with other women veterans and service members about our own unique experiences in the military.

With the help of Laura Hall, of the Veteran Benefit Office in Rocky Hill, CT, Paul Gaines, in Veterans' Resources at the Storrs campus, and the support of the Women's Center, I worked to promote the Women Veterans Reception (held in September 2010) to my surrounding community and peers at regional campuses. I was pleasantly surprised at the attendance rate for the first meeting, with six women veterans/service members.

Attendance alone gave me hope that we could form a Women Veterans Group. At the meeting, I questioned the women about what they would like to see at UConn geared towards veterans. I received copious positive feedback from the veterans, and what seemed unanimous was the need for a social support group due to our unique status as non-traditional students who also served in the Armed Forces. In addition, we were enthusiastic about the humanitarian aspect that veterans strongly believe is the foundation for any organization.

Last semester, with the holidays in mind, we organized both a clothing drive and a food drive to help those in need over the month of December. The clothing drive was specifically for the twelve homeless women veterans in the Rocky Hill area, to provide them winter clothing. The food drive was for the Gemma Moran United Way in New London offering canned and boxed food and beverages for the hungry. Both efforts were a great success!

This semester, we have decided to align ourselves with other groups, not only to offer assistance and support to veterans and family members, but to raise the level of our visibility on campus. We have combined forces with the Allied Health Sciences Club to create Valentine's Day cards for a nursing home in Tolland and plan to aid Community Outreach in their Community Outreach Day that is fast approaching. While the Women Veterans Group operates as a subset of the Veteran Student Organization, the goals for the group this semester are to identify more women veterans/service members and reach out to them, and increase overall veteran engagement with the VSO. We hope that this unified approach will lead to a more solidified group.

Our primary focus is undoubtedly the well-being of women veterans. Our aim is to distinguish what resources are needed and provide those to the veterans who desire support. At a University this size, many of us can become invisible; we want to ensure that our voices are being heard. Lastly, our group welcomes any and all women veterans/service members. We are eager to expand our group and involve much more of the UConn Community with the hope that support for us continues to flourish. Our meetings are held the second Friday of the month at 12:30pm in the Veteran House on Storrs Rd. If you or someone you know is a veteran, please join us!

**—Alicia Waring**  
**Women's Center Student Staff**

Please visit UConn Today's video, "[In Their Honor](#)" to watch an interview with UConn veterans, including Alicia.



*Please visit us at the Veteran's House, located on 195, to learn more about the support services offered to the Veteran's community.*

## FROM THE PAST TO PRESENT: ONE WOMEN'S CENTER ALUMNA SHARES HER STORY

*I had the opportunity to interview a Women's Center Alumna, Sasha Smith. Sasha worked at the Women's Center for six years before graduating UConn in 2005. She currently works as the Assistant Director at the Center for Women at Emory University. She also serves as Board President for SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, one of the major forces in the Reproductive Justice Movement in Georgia. This past November, Sasha received the inaugural Emerging Leader Award from the National Women's Studies Association's Women's Center Council. I was very impressed with all Sasha had to share with me. As a student staff member myself, it's exciting to look ahead at the opportunities that wait outside the Women's Center walls... but it's also nice to know that some things never change.*



*Today Sasha Smith is the Assistant Director at the Center for Women at Emory University.*

***When were you working for the Women's Center and what were your responsibilities as a student staff member?***

I started working at the Center as a student administrative assistant. I remember working at the student area desk answering the phone and taking messages after Carol Millette had trained us. I soon got involved with the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) which led me to help plan Take Back the Night and bring the Clothesline Project to UConn. The part about my job I enjoyed the most is going to speak to different groups on campus and talk about violence against women issues. I also enjoyed the mentorship that we received working at the Center and learning from the older students about social justice issues and how they are all interconnected. I also was involved in the summer orientation programs for the Women's Center. We had to do a presentation for all first year students, and that's when I learned about the first 6 weeks being the most crucial time

***"I met the best friends of my life working at the Center, and I will always remember how we learned how we could change the world together."***

for students to learn about sexual assault. I also remember doing anything and everything that was asked of me, whether we were working on a mailing, the library, or participating in the Advisory Board as a student representative. I also remember informally recruiting other student workers for the Center and advocating or promoting our events all the time.

***What particular memory (funny, insightful, inspiring) do you have involving the Women's Center that has helped shape your Herstory?***

Oh my goodness, there are so many memories. In terms of funny, inspiring, and insightful the Center has influenced my life in so many ways. I met the best friends of my life working at the Center, and I will always remember how we learned how we could change the world together. It's an experience I will never be able to replace. To this day, my friends and I talk about our time at the Center and how it has shaped our careers, values and friendships. The Women's Center was our second home. I spent more time there than in my dorm room!

I remember in particular the student staff retreats, where the entire community of Women's Center student staff members would come together to discuss, question, and advocate about many social oppressions facing us. It's here that I learned the fundamentals of white privilege, gender violence, and social justice theories. Because I now work at Emory's Women's Center, almost everything I've learned at the Women's Center is now useful to everything that I do every day.

***What types of things did you learn from the Women's Center?***

I learned how to communicate, how to put on an event from beginning to end, and how to work with people who have political or social differences. I also learned strategic planning skills, and how to think critically.

***And that prepared you for what you do now?***

Definitely. I'm now the Assistant Director at the Center for Women at Emory. I wouldn't have been qualified for this job had it not been for working at the UConn Women's Center for six years. The Center taught me how to be good person in a world that has a lot of things to still work out. I supervise the students staff members at Emory and try to be a great mentor to them, like I received at UConn. I was a better worker because of the staff at the Women's Center.

Today, I don't only work at Emory, but I advise three student groups, and I'm actively involved in the National Women's Studies Association where I sometime still get the opportunity to connect with the UConn Women's Center. Kathleen and I are currently on the Anti-Racism/White Privilege Working Group for the NWSA WCC together.

***It seems like things almost came full circle.***

Well it's great to be colleagues with folks who are mentors. It's still a learning opportunity, and it creates a safe space to learn as a young woman of color.

***Has your relationship with members of the UConn Women's Center staff changed at all since you graduated?***

I think the staff at the Women's Center has become more than just coworkers; they are my friends and a outlet of support. My sister Tiana Angelique Notice was killed in Connecticut two years ago. Following her death, my family started a [foundation](#) in her honor, The Tiana Angelique Notice Memorial Foundation. Kathleen has been able to serve on the board of our foundation and has been very supportive of our different initiatives.

***Thanks, Sasha. One last question... do you have any advice for current student staff members at the Women's Center?***

If I was to give advice to students working at the Women's Center, I would tell them to make sure they complete all their tasks and ask why they are doing it so they can learn more about the back end of how things works. I would also encourage students to get involved in other cultural centers and work more together with those students who are truly allies.

I think it is crucial to be truly engaged while working at the Women's Center. It's not a job where you are working just putting in your hours to get a paycheck or a bullet point on your resume; it's a once in a lifetime opportunity to be immersed in a true learning/working environment where your voice is encouraged to be heard and where your thoughts are always taken into consideration.

I would encourage young women to spread their wings and try as many new things as possible and not to classify themselves or put themselves in a box. Hang out with a variety of people and learn new things always. The Women's Center is a great place to explore new opportunities and meet an incredibly diverse group of folks who might just turn into your lifelong friends. Don't miss that opportunity.



*Sasha Smith (far left) in 2003 at VAWPP's major spring event, Take Back the Night. She is pictured with other Women Center student staff and friends.*

—*Interview by Kerri Brown  
Newsletter Editor*

## STUFFED AND STARVED: RAJ PATEL SPEAKS TO THE DEMOCRACY DIALOGUE



Raj Patel visited UConn last fall for a deliberative dialogue on the global food crisis.

What began as a discussion between two individuals around civic engagement has grown into a collaborative, annual effort to raise the level of discourse around democracy and our roles as citizens in it. The Women's Center's Coalition for Political Empowerment committee and Community Outreach partnered to demystify political processes and our government, to provide opportunities for students to become educated on various topics and issues impacting our democracy, and to become empowered to get involved and take action.

This year, with the support and contributions of many departments, we were fortunate to be able to bring 100 participants together for deliberative dialogue and a sit down dinner with Dr. Raj Patel about food security. Dr. Patel is a pro-democracy activist, scholar, and author of *Stuffed and Starved* and *The Value of Nothing*. He joined us to discuss food rights, the global food crisis, and the intersecting impact on so many aspects of society today.

The root cause of hunger isn't that there is a shortage of food, as there is more than enough food on earth today to feed everyone 1 ½ times over. The reason people are going hungry is not because of a shortage of food, but because of poverty, which disproportionately impacts women.

***"The reason people are going hungry is not because of a shortage of food, but because of poverty, which disproportionately impacts women."***

Some estimates identify women as 70 percent of the world's poor. "Poverty implications are widespread for women, leaving many without even basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Being poor can also mean they have little protection from violence and have no role in decision making."<sup>2</sup>

For those of us "non-economists," it was refreshing to hear Dr. Patel provide practical, accessible language and tangible examples to make his points in his lecture. It was a reminder of how important language is to understanding complex issues and imparting knowledge, which empowers citizens to take action.

To reframe the issue, Patel posed the following to the audience, "The question is: why are there global markets of food at all?" No one could come up with a simple answer. Then he asked, "If economics is about choices, who gets to make them?" This question echoes through the Women's Center community daily, with "economics" being interchangeable with so many other systemic oppressions. It comes down to power: who has it and who doesn't.

Raj ended his presentation by quoting the motto from the international movement of peasants organization Via Campesino: "Food sovereignty is about an end to all forms of violence against women."

Many principles of democracy require a certain amount of active and informed citizens. With continued support, the Democracy Dialogue committee will further work to provide the tools for action to the university community, with the goal of fostering individuals who identify themselves as having the knowledge and capacity to make a difference, and take responsibility for being part of the solution to a variety of social problems.

For more information on Dr. Patel and food sovereignty, visit <http://rajpatel.org/>

—Kathy Fischer  
Associate Director Women's Center

1. Sponsored by: Women's Center, Human Rights Initiative, Office of Community Outreach, Student Activities, Rainbow Center, Dining Services, Asian American Studies Institute, UConn Libraries, The Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, American Studies Program, Humanities Institute, Honors Program, Leadership Legacy, Human Rights Institute, Month of Kindness, Ecohouse Learning Community, UConn P.I.R.G., India Studies, Public Health Learning Community, and Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts

2. [http://www.unifem.org/gender\\_issues/women\\_poverty\\_economics/](http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_poverty_economics/) - 2/3/11

## COALITION FOR POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: PREPARE FOR ELECT HER CAMPAIGN

# ELECT HER



*UConn Women Win*

We are pleased to announce that the University of Connecticut was once again selected to host *Elect Her: Campus Women Win*, a unique campus-based program that teaches women how to run for campus-based elective office. The program, which is a collaboration between the American Association of University Women and Running Start, will return to nine of the original program sites and will debut at 11 new campuses in 2011. This expansion enables *Elect Her: Campus Women Win* to reach nearly every region in the nation, from Duke University in the South to the University of Wyoming in the West.

Currently, women hold just 17 percent of the seats in Congress and 24 percent of the seats in state legislatures. *Elect Her: Campus Women Win* is training a whole new generation of college women for running for office later in life.

This training opens up the idea of running for campus office to young women and urges them to harness the power they have to make the change they want to see. "One major thing that I learned is the fact that every woman has the chance to make a difference if she just puts herself out there and goes for it," said Amy Holland a participant of UConn's 2010 Elect Her program.

The *UConn Elect Her: Campus Women Win Training* is scheduled for 10:30a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on February 26th, 2011, at the Student Union Ballroom on the University of Connecticut Storrs campus. Secretary of the State Denise Merrill will be our keynote speaker. For questions about UConn's training session, please contact: Kathy Fischer, Associate Director, Women's Center: 860/486-4738, [kathy.fischer@uconn.edu](mailto:kathy.fischer@uconn.edu)

For more about *Elect Her: Campus Women Win*, please visit: <http://www.aauw.org/learn/LeadershipPrograms/electHer.cfm>

## NATIONAL EATING DISORDER AWARENESS WEEK

This year for National Eating Disorders Awareness Week (NEDAW) the Women's Center, UConn SHAPE, and Active Minds are all collaborating to get a multi-perspective view on both body image and eating disorders in our culture. We are tabling Monday through Friday (2/21-2/25) in the Student Union from 11a.m.-2p.m., with interactive activities promoting knowledge about eating disorders. Tuesday, 2/22, we will have a panel entitled: *Body Image Across Cultures and Identities* from 5:30-7pm in SU Room 304A. Jessica Bihuniak (RD) will join us and discuss the differences between fad dieting and a healthy lifestyle on Wednesday, 2/25, from 6-7pm in the Women's Center.

The importance of a multi-perspective view on eating disorders

is necessary to show that it is not merely a food issue; there are many factors that go along with



disordered eating and that problems with body image span across all cultures and identities. Research shows that body image is a major determinant of whether or not someone develops an eating

disorder. Therefore, our programs reflect a preventative approach.

During NEDAW we hope that people will be engaged by the topics and discussions, as well as recognize the diversity of body image and disordered eating. This issue permeates every aspect of our society, and no one is immune to feeling the pressures of cultural expectations on body image. The main ideas of NEDAW this year is to promote positive body image, increase awareness of the unspoken norms that are ingrained into our culture, and for individuals to decide what is beautiful and healthy to them.

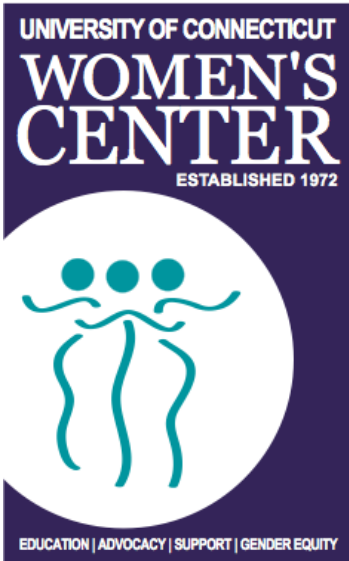
—*Nicole Scrivano*  
Women's Center  
Student Staff



# SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S CENTER

## EDUCATION . ADVOCACY . SUPPORT . GENDER EQUITY

The University Of Connecticut's Women's Center is committed to our work with students, staff, and faculty in an effort to promote gender equity on campus. Our efforts are spread widely throughout the University Community and support all aspects of the University's mission of teaching, research, and service. We are a key contributor, along with our colleagues at the other cultural centers and the corresponding academic institutes, to the University's priorities of supporting an engaged undergraduate experience, enhancing the institution's research portfolio, and increasing the diversity of our community. While we are proud of our successes, we need your help to support and enhance this work.



With your help, we can continue our advocacy work at this institution. Your financial support also allows us to provide financial support to:

- students engaged in scholarship and activism around issues of gender equity and social justice on campus to attend national conferences;
- the recipients of the 100 Years of Women Scholarship, who are recognized for their demonstrated commitment to women's issues through service to their community or school and their high academic performance;
- host our annual Women of Color luncheon and awards ceremony, which serve to create networking opportunities for women who are underrepresented on campus and to recognize the recipients of the Women of Color Award for their distinguished service and contributions to the University of Connecticut, as well as their commitment to enhancing quality of life for and/or service as a role model for Women of Color; and
- support our continued work to educate our community to help prevent and eliminate sexual assault, dating violence, stalking and sexual harassment on campus through our Violence Against Women Prevention Program.

For more information on ways to give please visit our giving page at

<http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/support/give.php>

Or, visit the [UConn Foundation's giving site](#) and select "other" under Purpose and include one of the following designations under Other Purpose:

Women's Center: #20447

100 Years of Women Scholarship: #30231

### Need Help Now?



contact the  
**Community Response Team**

Domestic Violence Program,  
United Services, Inc  
(860) 456-9476 - Willimantic Area

Sexual Assault Crisis Services of  
Eastern Connecticut  
456-2789

Women's Center  
(860) 486-4738

Student Health Services  
(860) 486-4700

University Police  
911 or (860) 486-4500 (for routine calls)



# VOICES

*Where all the pieces come together.*

*We welcome you to visit UConn's Women's Center!*

We are located at:

**Student Union, Room 421**

**2110 Hillside Road, Unit 3118**

**Storrs, Connecticut 06269-3118**

(860) 486-4738

[www.womenscenter.uconn.edu](http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu)

Hours: 8am-9pm, Monday thru Thursday, 8am-5pm Fridays