

University of Connecticut Women's Center—35th Anniversary

Letter From the Director

Kathleen Holgerson

Thirty-five years. As we celebrate our 35th anniversary (see page 4 for more information), I have had the opportunity to look through old photo albums and newspaper clippings about the Women's Center and our programs and events over the years. I've reflected on how my own connection with the Center has evolved from a student volunteer in the 80's into the sisterhood of folks who have staffed the center over the years. And while the hairstyles and clothes may have changed through the decades, in many ways the issues have still remained. We no longer see "want-ads" for women's job and men's jobs, but many women experience the glass ceiling effect and/or the cumulative effect of pay inequity or time out of the workforce to accommodate child-rearing responsibilities. And the issues of violence against women, which include stalking and sexual harassment as part of the public discourse, are present in our community, as in communities across the country and across the world.

As anyone who has been associated with the Women's Center in recent years can tell you, we spend a good deal of time talking about our mission and retelling the "herstory"

of the Center. While many in the community know us for the programs we sponsor each semester—this Fall check out Courtney Martin and Ariel Levy, to name a couplewe think it's important to talk about our advocacy work on campus whenever we get the chance. Although our crisis intervention and support services are usually the thing that most students can identify with the Center, our ultimate goal, and the perspective that we foreground in our education on these issues, is prevention of violence against women. Similarly, we have been spending a good deal of time discussing what this campus, this community, would look like if we did achieve gender equity. encouraging everyone to think about how gender impacts our everyday experiences, and to reflect on the connection between feminism, as an identity and a theoretical perspective, and its roots in a commitment to dismantling sexism. Our conversations remind people that a discussion of power is integral to our understanding of sexism and the intersection with other forms of oppression, including racism and heterosexism. We hope that when folks proclaim "This is what a feminist looks like", that embedded in that declaration is a consistent examination of how gender shapes our lives and how we can do our part to eliminate sexism.

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"I'll Fly Away" Released at the UConn Co-op

Tess Bird

In what he called "his favorite bookstore," Wally Lamb launched the release of I'll Fly Away: Further Testimonies From the Women of York Prison a second collection of stories from the women of the York Correctional Institute. After a moving introduction by Betsy Cracco, coordinator of the Violence Against Women Prevention Program at the Women's Center, Wally Lamb read from his own introduction to the book before giving the main stage over to three women that accompanied him to read their stories and represent several women that could not attend because they (continued on page 5)

The mission of the 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 women who face additional challenges due to their race, nationality, class, sexual identity, religion, age, and physical or mental ability.

New Staff & Awards

Compiled by Tess Bird

The Women's Center is pleased to announce the addition of six new student staff members and five new interns for the fall semester. Coming from various academic disciplines and semesters, they are working on a variety of projects, from general work to working with the VAWPP.

Lindsay Blair, VAWPP Intern, is a graduate OF WORKING student in Higher Education and Student WOMEN

Affairs who wanted to complete her internship at a place where she would be able to help change the college environment.

Karyn Blanchard, Reception/Clerical Assistant, a third semester Nursing major, wanted to get involved with the community and so chose the Women's Center.

Katie Calkins, Marketing and Advertising Intern, who is majoring in

Psychology with a minor in Women's Studies, wanted a "bright and friendly" internship.

Justine Dunn, VAWPP Intern, wanted to intern with the VAWPP program after being a peer educator for the program last year. In her 8th semester, she is a Women's Studies major with a minor in Human Rights.

Christine Fitzsimons, Reception/Clerical Assistant is a 5th semester Finance and Business major with an interest in Women's Studies.

Victoria Flagg, Reception/Clerical Assistant, is in her first semester at UConn as a Women's Studies major and is thrilled that she is able to work at the Women's Center.

Mia Freedenfeld, Reception/Clerical Assistant, is interested in women's issues and consequently found herself majoring in Women's Studies and working at the Women's Center. She is in her 3rd semester.

Mike Hardej, Intern, is the coordinator of the "One Year From Now" election program. He is in his 7th semester, double majoring in

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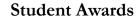
Women's Studies and Sociology.

Erin Sullivan, Coordinator of the Graduate Women's Group, is a graduate student in Gifted Education and School Psychology.

Heather Swick, Statistician Assistant, is in her 3rd semester and is thinking of majoring in HDFS and Psychology. She is working on the Annual Report.

Hillary Traugh, Intern, is responsible for grant-writing and is majoring in Women's Studies with a minor in Agricultural Resources

and Economics.

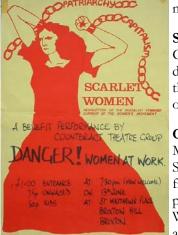


Beth Barbeau, Graphics Specialist, had two of her artworks chosen for the Art & Art History Department's Scholarship Show. She was also awarded the Kathleen Gibson McPeek Scholarship and the Liberty Bank Juried Prize.

Tess Bird, Newsletter Editor, was named a Babbidge Scholar for the 2006 year.

Shan Hu, Statistician, received an award from GE Capital Solutions where she worked to develop a structured risk model to forecast the distribution of delinquency and bad debts over time to better assess risk.

Chandra Waring, Volunteer, received the Multicultural Fellowship from the Graduate School and the Gloria Tantaquidgeon Award from the Women's Studies Program for a paper she wrote for her internship at the Women's Center. Gloria Tantaquidgeon was a Native American women who fought for the advancement of women of color.





Advisory Board Member Awards

Angie Beeman received the Society for the Study of Social Problems Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Scholarship which awards scholar activism and supports dissertation research.

Dr. Xaé Alicia Reyes received the 2007 President's Award for Leadership Community Involvement at the Connecticut Association of Latinos in Higher Education Annual Conference in June.

What's New in the Violence Against Women Prevention Program:

This is the sound of all of us

Betsy Cracco, VAWPP Coordinator

Summer 2007

Is it September already!? It was a busy summer as usual for the VAWPP program. With an excellent group of facilitators (see picture below), we conducted over 140 sessions for incoming first-year students to help them understand the concept of sexual consent. We had so many "ah-ha" moments and challenges this summer, but I will just share the words of one of our facilitators from her final evaluation: "being a part of this program has given me more hope for bettering people's lives. Sometimes the picture looks so grim, but as long as we keep working toward change, toward educating and enlightening, there is hope!" Deep appreciation is owed to all of our facilitators from VAWPP and Residence Life who helped make these sessions so vibrant!

In addition, this summer with the skillful, artistic, and conceptual collaboration of intern Elizabeth Barbeau (VAWPP since '05), we have worked on the "re-branding" of the Violence Against Women Prevention Program. Although that sounds awfully consumerist, our objective was to more clearly communicate to the public, in simple graphic format, a bit of what we are about. Our first project was the production of a moving video montage featuring VAWPP efforts last year, including the "What Will You Do?" campaign, the Clothesline Project, and Take Back the Night. Our theme was that one voice speaking out against violence, when joined with other voices, can make a pretty loud racket that is hard to ignore! We showed the video to the 30 new members of VAWPP during our first meeting, and among my favorite comments were, "I have chills," and "I'm psyched." This type of energy is just what we were hoping for.

We also have developed a new VAWPP logo, which you see below. The logo, which includes the symbol of the sturdy oak, helps us to illustrate a few core concepts of the program. These are:

- ★ we are a well established program with deep roots,
- → we stand strong in the face of adversity,
- → VAWPP is a growth-promoting program, for individuals and our community.



Through peer education and activism we hope to branch out across our community with messages about gender, equity and non-violence.

Finally, as Jesse Kohut (VAWPP '07) so eloquently shared with us (in tongue and cheek fashion of course) this week, "Every mighty oak was once a nut that stood its ground." Well said! We thank Beth for her thoughtful and beautiful contributions to the program.

Fall 2007

With the leaves beginning to turn, we kicked off the Fall semester with thirty new peer educators, five VAWPP "returners," and one intern from the Higher Education and Student Affairs program, gathering for a day of bonding, visioning, and beginning the "roll up your sleeves work" of crafting new and engaging prevention workshops for our campus community. Given these unprecedented numbers we have moved to a team structure, with our experienced returning folks taking on the tasks of helping guide the teams. What a privilege to walk with these students as they cultivate their individual practices of feminist leadership. Our new workshops are listed below:

- 1. Power and Relationships: We invite students to examine the role of power in relationships and provide them with tools for assessing the health of their own connections. Through interactive, small group exercises, students are challenged to deliberate about the location of "everyday" experiences on the UConn campus along the continuum of violence.
- **2.** Living in the Dreamworld: Music videos, magazines, newspapers, television—we all consume these images everyday. This workshop invites students to critically examine what those sources are telling us about our own sexuality and the ways in which we view men and women. This session focuses on media literacy and utilizes the Media Education Foundation film *Dreamworlds 3*, just released in 2007.

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Summer Orientation Facilitators



VAWPP members doing a walking meditation focused on the year ahead. Change happens one step at a time!



VAWPP Members – solving problems together!

Director (continued from page 1)

We have several initiatives that will be a priority for us during the upcoming academic year, which include a collaboration with the Vice President for Student Affairs to create a comprehensive plan for addressing issues of violence against women on campus; a collaboration with the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Instruction to explore how gender impacts student engagement and student success; a collaboration with the Provost's Commission on the Status of Women to implement several programs to support leadership development opportunities for women; and finally, a collaboration with the other cultural centers to design and implement an assessment plan to examine the role of the centers in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and the impact of participation in experiences relative to diversity and multiculturalism by students who are affiliated with the cultural centers. We will keep you updated on the progress of these advocacy efforts in future newsletters.

This is the Sound of All of Us

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- **3.** The War Zone: This workshop engages students in an exploration of everyday behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment. Filmmaker Maggie Hadleigh-West takes us through the *War Zone* as she documents harassment she encounters on the streets of major cities. Facilitated discussion focuses on the climate on college campuses, and students' experiences of harassment. We also provide information about recent research on campus climate and sexual harassment as well as campus resources for support and response.
- **4.** *Tough Guise*: What does it mean to be a man? This film, narrated by Jackson Katz, explores the cultural ideals of masculinity and its connection with various forms of men's violence. Discussion will focus on the ways that men and women can work together to prevent interpersonal violence.

We are also busy preparing for an exciting semester of campus-wide educational programs. On September 18th we were fortunate to co-sponsor the release of I'll Fly Away the new collection of short stories by the women of York Correctional Institute and Wally Lamb. Proceeds from book sales will go to local domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, as well as to our own program. We encourage you to check out the Women's Center calendar to see the details of our other programming highlights this semester. Each program is thematically grounded in our objective of creating critical community dialogue, and an understanding that each one of us has the power to do something to work toward ending violence against women.

Finally, during our retreat this year, we spent some time focusing on the practice of waging peace, one small step at a time. We hope you'll consider walking with us this year as we venture forth to create a safer, more just community.



4

New Books in the Women's Center Library

Our library, located in room 417 on the fourth floor of the Student Union, has a variety of new books this semester. Some of them include:

Imagining Ourselves: Global Voices from a New Generation of Women by Isabel Allende

The Fire This Time: Young Activists in the New Feminism by Vivien Labaton

Privilege, Power, and Difference by Allan G. Johnson

Gender on Campus: Issues for College Women by Sharon Gmelch

Autobiography of a Blue-Eyed Devil: My Life and Times in a Racist, Imperialist Society by Inga Muscio

50 Ways to Support Lesbian and Gay Equality: The Complete Guide to Supporting Family, Friends, Neighbors or Yourself by Angela Watrous

Venus in the Dark: Blackness and Beauty in Popular Culture by Janell Hobson

Valiant Women in War and Exile: Thirty-Eight True Stories by Sally Hayton-Keeva

Wacky Chicks: Life Lessons from Fearlessly Inappropriate and Fabulously Eccentric Women by Simon Doonan

For a full list: http://www.womenscenter.uconn.edu/libres.htm#NewBooks or visit our library!

SOS (Stop Over Stressing)

A Program at the WC by Katie Roy

As the coordinator of the Stop Over Stressing Program last semester, I am excited to be working on it again this Fall. In previous years the S.O.S. series was offered in an effort to bring people together at our facility to take a break from their stressful routines and reward their minds and bodies. Both Health Education and the Women's Center co-sponsored Atlantis Therapeutics massages, aromatherapy workshops, and guided meditation.

This year, we at the Women's Center were excited to expand the experience. We want our visitors to understand the importance of holistic activities and simple relaxation, especially for women. An informational handout will be provided about the activity being performed, as well as its connection to a more balanced, healthy lifestyle. There is great pressure in our society today to do as much as possible as efficiently as possible—again particularly on women. Many people have just accepted that PDA's, fast food, and books on tape are luxuries that allow for more time in life—not necessarily to do what is best for our mind and body.

So the Women's Center invites you to unwind, deconstruct the social expectations, and accept that every person deserves a relaxing moment in time to just be!

Come and *be* with us for our first S.O.S. event on October 2 at 6 pm: Massage by Atlantis Therapeutics.

- October 9th—Aromatherapy—6 pm—7:30
- October 16th—Massage—6 pm—7:30
- October 23rd—Guided Meditation—6 pm—7:30
- October 30th—Massage—6 pm—7:30

Katie Roy is a 3rd-year Nutritional Sciences major and a Human Rights minor.

Wally Lamb (continued from page 1)

were still incarcerated. From an amusing story about the "shoulder sisters" who are known for their stifled laughter and hence jumping shoulders, to a difficult to hear testimony of a lifetime of sexual violence and the consequent actions that brought the woman to prison, these women told stories from the heart. Approximately 250 people attended the event, crowding into the UConn Co-op and finding whatever seat they could or standing in the back to hear the testimonies.

Brought to the York Correctional Institute in 1999 after several suicides, Lamb began a process of facilitating expressive creative writing workshops, which produced two books of collected work thus far. Through several quotes from various women, Lamb noted the importance of addressing the violence against women and children, as it is often the root of what sets women on a path that leads to incarceration. Through a quote repeated by Lamb, one prisoner expressed the need for women to have proper counseling and care to break the cycle of violence that led them to prison in the first place. Programs like expressive writing workshops can be one step in this process.

Students in the VAWPP program and from the Women's Center grabbed chairs towards the front of the presentation with excitement. Betsy Cracco noted that it took two years for them to bring Lamb to campus.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of the book, I'll Fly Away will go to local domestic violence and sexual assault service providers, as well as to our own VAWPP program. Further copies of the book are available for purchase at the UConn Co-op.

Feminist Groups on Campus



UConn NOW

National Organization for Women

The National Organization for Women is a political activism group concerned with women's rights. For information on the UConn chapter, contact alison.berk@uconn.edu.

For more general information visit www.now.org.

NOW meets Thursdays @ 8 pm in the Women's Center.

VOX Voices for Planned Parenthood

Vox, the Latin word for *voice*, is a nationwide program to energize and mobilize the new generation of Pro-choice Americans. Vox aims to educate and inspire a new generation of young adults to advocate for reproductive freedom. UConn Vox works in partnership with Planned Parenthood of Connecticut to bring programs about sexual health and reproductive justice. To get involved email: Uconn Vox.org/vahoo.com or tomy.org/vahoo.com or tomy.or



UConn Triota Where Every Woman's Step Counts

Iota Iota Iota is a National Women's Studies Honors Society dedicated to promoting scholarship and excellence in Women's Studies. To join you need a 3.0 GPA or higher and 6 or more credits in Women's Studies.

For more information contact <u>tess.bird@uconn.edu</u>.

Groups at the Women's Center

Between Women

A discussion group for women who love women... or think they might. Come and discuss fun topics, movies and more with women who share your feelings and experiences. Every Wednesday, 8 pm, at the Women's Center.

Graduate Women's Group

Are you a female graduate student? Just a little busy? Wish you were in better shape but not sure how to fit health and fitness into your life? Join the Graduate Women's Group at the UConn Women's Center for a lunch/seminar on improving your health, fitness, and nutrition during this busy time in your life? Lunch will be provided. For more information contact Erin Sullivan at ees04003@gmail.com.

Stronger

A support and discussion group for UConn Women
"What is a healthy relationship?"
"How do I 'get strong' after an abusive relationship?"
"How do I heal from sexual assault or abuse?"

For more information and to register, contact Betsy Cracco at the Women's Center at 486-4738 or elizabeth.cracco@uconn.edu.

The South Asian Tree (TSAT)

Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka. Do you identify with one of the countries listed above either through self or family? If so, come join in on dialogues of balancing South Asian heritage with North American ideologies and the implications it has on day to day experiences including life at UConn. Facilitated by Bandana Purkayastha, Bidya Ranjeet, and Shanthi Rao. For more information contact Bidya Ranjeet at 6-4040.

University of Connecticut Women's Center

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Women's Center Events

September—October 2007

For more information on events and co-sponsors, please visit the Women's Center website: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu

September

27th Thursday Night At The Movies—The Shape of Water—Thursday, 7 pm, Women's Center The Shape of Water is a feature documentary that tells the stories of powerful, imaginative and visionary women confronting the destructive development of the Third World with new cultures and a passion for change. By interweaving images, words, and the actions of the characters The Shape of Water offers fresh and nuanced insights into the lives of women in the Third World.

October

1-5th

Clothesline Project—Daily, 11 am to 3 pm, Fairfield Way (Rain location: S.U. Lobby) The Clothesline Project is a traveling visual display of t-shirts made by survivors and secondary survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. The t-shirts hang side-by-side on a clothesline to break the silence surrounding this violence, in an effort to provide healing for survivors and to educate the public. The Clothesline Project at UConn will be displayed by the Women's Center We invite survivors and on Fairfield Way. secondary survivors of violence, as well as advocates against gendered violence, to break the silence by coming to create their own t-shirt. All

6th Cultural Explosion and Street Fair—Saturday, 11 am—2 pm, Fairfield Way

moving display.

Come and share the diversity at UConn! Co-sponsored with the African American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, Department of International Services & Programs, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center, Rainbow Center and the Department of Student Activities.

community members are invited to view this

The Red Flag Campaign—Campus Wide 8-26th A campus wide public awareness campaign designed to address dating violence and promote the prevention of dating violence on campuses.



10th Dreamworlds III Film Screening-7 pm, SU

> Dreamworlds III examines the stories contemporary music videos tell about girls and women, and encourages viewers to consider how these narratives shape individual and cultural attitudes about sexuality.

17th PERFECT GIRLS, STARVING DAUGHTERS: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body with Courtney Martin—Wednesday, 7 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center Filled with information from both experts and interviews, Courtney E. Martin's Perfect Girls, Starving Daughters: The Frightening New Normalcy of Hating Your Body is a wake-up call to women of all ages and races to recognize the epidemic of eating disorders. Courtney Martin argues that women must commit themselves to developing new attitudes about their bodies and redirect the negative energy in order to become re-engaged with life. Book signing immediately following.

23rd Josie Ashton-Activism is Local, Working to End Violence Against Women in Your Community—Tuesday, 2:30 pm, Women's Center, 4:00 pm, PRLACC Stunned by the murder of Gladys Ricart who was

killed on her wedding day by a jealous ex-boyfriend, Ms. Ashton trekked 1,300 miles from New York to Florida in a wedding gown to raise awareness about dating and domestic violence.

25thThursday Night at the Movies-Running in High Heels—Thursday, 7 pm, Women's Center Running in High Heels follows the last months of the campaign of Emily Csendes, the 29-year old that ran for State Senate in New York's 29th Interspersed with Emily's story are interviews with notable women from the left and right of the American political spectrum as they try to explain how women are the majority of the population at 52% but are underrepresented in government and politics.

Followed by a panel discussion and Q & A.

Women's Center Pledge Form

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