



# VOICES

*TOGETHERNESS, CHANGES, HAPPINESS, FEMINIST*

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As many of you know, March is Women’s Herstory Month, and I would like to take this opportunity to make visible some of our own herstory here on campus. We have a tradition at the Center of sharing with our new student staff the story of how the Center was established; the activism and advocacy work that students, staff, and faculty have engaged in during the decades since; and how our signature programs developed over time. This story telling is important to honor the work of those who came before us, and to help invite the students to consider how they are contributing to the on-going herstory of the Center.

In the beginning, the laundry list of issues around which the community was organizing included:

- discriminatory hiring practices towards women and minorities;
- equal access to athletic facilities and funds for athletic programs;
- non-sexist treatment from faculty and health center personnel;
- the establishment of a Women’s Studies program;
- equal hiring and promotion opportunities;
- space for child care facilities; and
- permanent and adequate facilities for the Women’s Center.

And on some of these, we clearly have made progress. We have nationally ranked, powerhouse Field Hockey and Women’s Basketball teams. We have a dedicated and collaborative staff who make up the Women’s Clinic in Student Health Services. Our Women’s Studies program is now the Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies program. And if you haven’t visited our space in the Student Union recently, we invite you to come check out our facilities. Although to be fair, I still, every once in a while, hear folks talk about missing the little brown house on Whitney Road...

However on some of these, we cannot cross them off the list just yet. While much of the overt discrimination of earlier decades has dissipated, the issue of implicit bias and microaggressions continue to surface. And the University continues to explore how best to meet the on-going needs for affordable and accessible childcare, particularly infant care. We have seen major policy and personnel developments around our response to gender-based violence on campus, including the launch of [sexualviolence.uconn.edu](http://sexualviolence.uconn.edu), the Reporting and Resources brochure, the hiring of Title IX investigators and the Assistant Dean of Students for Victim Services, and the development of the Special Victims Unit within the Police Department. And yet, we hear from students that the climate around these issues has not shifted as dramatically... that their experiences of violence continue in a climate of racialized and gendered violence that is normalized. Our peer educators continue to face resistance to their focus on prevention and the role of gender socialization as a root cause of violence.

As we celebrate Women’s Herstory Month, it is incumbent on us to remember the foundational events that paved the way for progress and today’s activism. As we recognized the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, I was struck by the concurrent news story about the shooting of yet another African-American male by a White police officer. As we celebrate the inclusion of a PSA on domestic violence during the Super Bowl, prosecutors decide not to pursue criminal charges against NASCAR driver Kurt Busch. Our challenge today is to figure out how to hold two truths at one time – much progress has been made, and for many their lives continue to be diminished by the sexist, racist, homophobic and xenophobic behaviors of others. Here at the Women’s Center, these truths can both see the light of day.

*- Kathleen Holgerson*

### Inside this issue:

Women’s Center Herstory	2
Kimberlé Crenshaw Comes to UConn	3
LunaFest	4
NWSA Conference	4
Meet Our New Staff!	5-8
New Staff Retreat	8
Elect Her	9
UConn Welcomes Shirin Ebadi	10
Letter from the Writing Intern	10
Spring 2015 Calendar	11
Letter From The Editor	12
Donate to the Women’s Center	13
Attention Women's Center Alums	13

## WOMEN'S CENTER HERSTORY

*In honor of Women's Herstory month, we would like to share a few highlights from the Herstory here, at the Women's Center of the University of Connecticut*

### The 70's

1972-73 Women's Center is established. It includes a library, counseling services, referral services, and rape crisis support and advocacy.

1975-76 Created 15 collectives serving needs of gay students, divorced women, rape survivors and black students.

1979-80 Chaired a Day of Metanoia after a brutal assault on campus. Rape Crisis Collective leaves the Women's Center to become a community rape crisis center serving the Northeast region.

### The 80's

1981-82 Rape Education Program established.

1986-87 Publication of CT Peer Project on Teen Pregnancy, Education, Attrition. Involvement with Project on Women and Technology and CT Women's Network.

1989-90 Publication of three research reports (Double Jeopardy - The Precarious Status of Women of Color, Child Care - Everyone's Concern, and Traditional Dreams in a Changing World: Balancing Work and Family).

### The 90's

1991-92 The 100th anniversary of women on the Storrs campus. The anniversary was celebrated by a year-long series of programs to commemorate the achievements of women, particularly those at the University of Connecticut, including the Outstanding Senior Women Academic Achievement Awards. The 100 Years of Women Scholarship is established.

1992-93 Establishment of Mandatory Orientation Training for all incoming students on sexual assault and acquaintance rape.

### The 2000's

2000-01 Awarded Department of Justice Grant to combat violence against women on the University campus.

2001-02 Helped organize the first Cultural Explosion and Love Your Body Day.

2002-03 Awarded the "Advancing the Status of Women" award from the Soroptimist International of Willimantic, CT and recognized at the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund's 15th Annual Awards Dinner. Hosted the 16th Annual Women's Health Conference with the School of Nursing.

2008 First screening of LUNAFEST, a fundraiser for the Women's Center and the Breast Cancer Fund.

2008 The Something's Happening Committee, an adhoc group looking at workplace civility issues, begins meeting.

2009 Metanoia 2009: Preventing Violence Against Women

2012 The Women's Center hosts a campus visit by Gloria Steinem in recognition of our 40th anniversary.



# KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW COMES TO UCONN

Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw is a Professor of Law at Columbia University and UCLA whose research lies in areas such as civil rights, race, racism, feminism, and representation and law. She is most known for coining the term “intersectionality,” or the theory that there are multiple, intersecting layers of oppression that perpetuate systems of power and privilege in American society. Intersectionality discourages one-dimensional approaches to social justice because they cannot account for the multi-faceted experiences of different people. Dr. Crenshaw discussed intersectionality and how society views oppression in her talk, “The Intersectional Paradigm: Race & Gender in Work, Life & Politics,” at the Dodd Center on March 5th.



Photo credit: Kathy Fischer

Women’s Center Intern, Sarah Walsh shares her reaction to Dr. Crenshaw’s lecture: “Dr. Crenshaw’s presentation was eye opening. For a student hearing the words intersectionality explained for the first time, it was clear and well explained. When we think about the systems that we have established to protect minorities, we find that they are often not perfect, that groups can slip through the cracks, and that in order to create equality across many different spectrums we have to look at each group and subgroup and mixed group individually and how they operate in the whole. We have to recognize that as much as we like to think the ‘American Dream’ is based on equality and merits, we must realize that this is not the reality. That if the system is broken, then we must work outside of it to create equal opportunity, whether that be affirmative action or busing services to integrate school districts, etc. Only when we have dismantled bias within the system can we take down those crutches.”

Brittany Carrier, Women’s Center student staff member, also attended Dr. Crenshaw’s lecture and felt that Professor Crenshaw being featured in Women’s Herstory Month was “immediately challenging the historical racism in feminist spaces.” There’s a history of our understanding of women and the obstacles of women being restricted to specifically white cis women.” She also was kind enough to share her personal reaction to the lecture: “I enjoyed it because she was very concrete, which is beneficial to student-activists because of the inaccessibility to academic language and understanding of social justice. Her focus on learning about lived experiences of those marginalized is a very important idea to internalize because we (white women) tend to believe our experiences are the only experiences that exist.”

Women’s Center Graduate Assistant, Huong Nguyen, shared her initial reaction to hearing Dr. Crenshaw speak: “I thought that hearing about her work leading up to coining the term ‘intersectionality’ and her research focusing on young black girls was really interesting. It was eye opening to hear about her research concerning young black girls within the school system, and the ‘no tolerance policy’ that is often placed on them and the implications of it, compared to other demographics of youth and how they’re treated within the school system. The rates of suspension among black girls in the school system are much higher compared to any other group. I thought that it was important to hear from Dr. Crenshaw that she coined intersectionality as a theory that was meant to encompass countless points of oppression that people experience on a daily basis.”



Photo credit: Kathy Fischer

Students walked away from Dr. Crenshaw’s lecture energized and inspired to continue striving for change and equality. Varun Khattar, co-facilitator of the Men’s Project at the Women’s Center, felt that “Kimberlé Crenshaw’s visit was a sheer blessing. She gave me hope that we, as students, can effect institutional change, and I can pursue a career as a scholar-activist. Recently, the personal barriers to success and societal barriers to equality and justice have seemed insurmountable. However, this lecture gave me the dose of inspiration and affirmation I needed to keep moving forward.” Lyn Alexander, Women’s Center assistant, was greatly impacted by Dr. Crenshaw’s lecture, and left feeling like “Kimberlé Crenshaw is the greatest living critical race scholar in my opinion.” She went on to say that “her influence on social analysis and justice cannot be underestimated. Her consciousness raising must not be held apart from her initial goals, however, and we need to bring critical race analysis back into the mainstream conversations about feminism and intersectionality.”

- Emily Cantor, Samantha Barrett

## LUNAFEST

LUNAFEST is a traveling film festival, which annually spotlights work by compelling and diverse women. LUNAFEST features eight films that are geared for, and about women, that are promised to make you laugh, tug at your heartstrings, and motivate you to make a difference in your community. With over 150 screenings each season, LUNAFEST has helped to raise over \$757,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund, and \$1,715,000 for nonprofit charities chosen by those who have hosted LUNAFEST for their areas. In the past, LUNAFEST at the University of Connecticut has elicited sponsorship from various local businesses and organizations. Mansfield OB/GYN has been a consistent Blue Moon sponsor over the years. UConn Dining Services has donated popcorn for the film screening for the past two years, and the League of Women Voters of Northeastern Connecticut was a Half Moon sponsor last year.

The Women's Center hosted their 9th annual LUNAFEST Film Festival this past month. The films this year ranged from animation to live action and depict stories of love, determination, and activism. Some of LUNAFEST's featured films are "A Good Match" by Lyn Elliot, "Flor De Toloache" by Jenny Schweitzer, "Lady Parts" by Emily Fraser, and "Miss Todd" by Kristina Yee. There was also live performances by Spoken Word.

Kathy Fischer and Sarah Walsh worked hard at making this year's program a success. Apart from the actual films, there were LUNA Bars served at the door, as well as the chance to win great door prizes! Fifteen percent of the profits benefitted the Breast Cancer Fund, while eighty-five percent of the profits this year benefitted the Women's Center's Violence Against Women Prevention Program.



Photo credit: <http://www.sjwomansclub.org/lunafest.html>

- Sarah Walsh, Kathy Fischer, Samantha Barrett

## NWSA CONFERENCE

The Women's Center full-time staff presented a professional development workshop at the National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) Annual Conference "Feminist Transgressions," in November 2014. The session was titled, *A Strategy for Sustaining Women's Centers*. This session focused on how Women's Center staff can integrate an on-going commitment to professional development as a strategy for identifying priorities and parameters to guide our work, creating meaningful educational experiences for student staff, and engaging board members and volunteers in the implementation of programs.

I specifically spoke about the role of the Women's Center's Advisory Board and Committees and my experience on the Board as administrative staff. My first experience with the Board was prior to my employment at the Women's Center when I joined as a representative of the clerical staff on campus. The Women's Center is committed to having representation of faculty, staff, students, and community members on the Board, and I was excited to be part of a group that was all inclusive. It is important for all women at the University to see themselves in the work of the Center. This experience provides an opportunity to get involved, be mentored, build community, and experience personal and professional growth. It was empowering to be on this panel with my co-workers and demonstrate our work as a community of women; with each other and at the University. Just being on this panel was an example of breaking down hierarchy. The NWSA Conference is typically attended by faculty and women at the higher end of the hierarchy at educational institutions. As an administrative support person attending, as well as presenting, we demonstrated the value of all positions and the importance of having all voices represented.

- Carol Millette

## NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

*We are delighted to welcome a host of new staff here at the Women's Center!*

### **Banu Bayraktar**



"I'm from Smithtown on Long Island and am currently a first year student majoring in Geoscience and minoring in Wildlife Conservation at UConn."

#### *What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"I am currently employed as a student staff member at the Women's Center and mostly work at the front desk."

#### *Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied to work at the Women's Center because I wanted to be a more active member in the school and saw this job as an opportunity to work and be involved in something I am passionate about."

#### *What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I am looking forward to learning more about the topics/problems we address in the Women's Center and hopefully learn enough to start educating others on things like gender equity and feminism. I'm also looking forward to being surrounded with people who share the same views I do to engage in discussions about these topics."

### **Wafa Simpore**

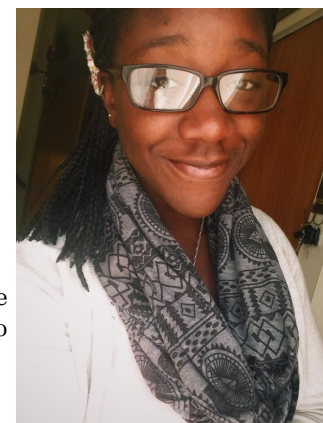
"I'm a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Major, Junior from Windsor, CT."

#### *What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

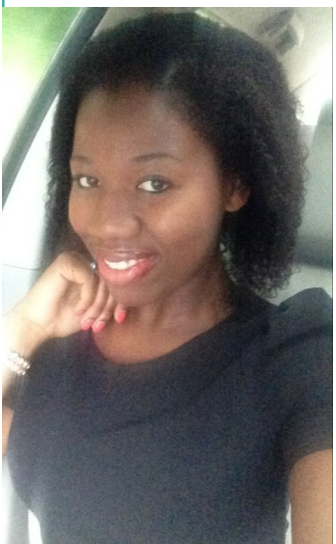
"I'm currently one of the independent study students with the Women's Center."

#### *Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I wanted to work with the Women's Center because I had valuable experiences in the Violence Against Women Prevention Program, and it sparked my interest to find my place to continue to make strides across the UConn campus."



### **Rebecca Exantus**



"I am a Junior, studying Biology at UConn. I am from Stamford, CT."

#### *What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"My position at the Women's Center is work study office assistant."

#### *Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied to the Women's Center because it is one of the main centers at UConn that helps you be proud of who you are, regardless of your gender or race."

#### *What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I am looking to gain more understanding of gender and equality through working at the Women's Center. I also hope to gain more confidence."

## NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

### Christina Andrzejewski

"I'm a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Major, Junior from Windsor CT."

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

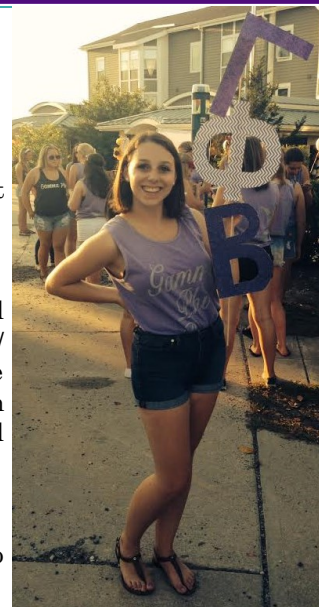
"My name is Tina Andrzejewski and I am a co-facilitator for Greeks Against Sexual Assault (GASA)."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied to be a part of GASA because I feel very strongly about actively strengthening and applying the four pillars of Greek life: Service, Scholarship, Leadership and Brotherhood/Sisterhood to issues relating to violence, discrimination and power. My aspiration is that the bonds created in GASA will generate positive societal change, and that members will be given the tools to act as models to educate members of various organizations, the rest of campus and those we surround ourselves with."

*What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I am most looking forward to working collaboratively with everyone involved in GASA to create a safe and active environment that strives for gender equity."



### Lori Carriere



"I am an A.B.D. graduate student in English. I am working on a creative fiction dissertation and am interested in twentieth and twenty-first century literature, women's and LGBTQ literature, and gender studies. I am also pursuing a graduate certificate in Feminist Studies and have previously worked as a co-facilitator for the Women Center's Violence Against Women Prevention Program. I am from Long Island and currently live in Vernon."

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"I will be co-facilitating the Men's Project, a sexual assault prevention program, with Varun Khattar."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I'm very interested in gendered violence education and prevention. I've also previously worked for the Women's Center and loved the environment. The Women's Center is truly a place where people are committed to practicing a feminism that is intersectional and inclusive."

### Jesus Abraham Morales Sanchez

"I was born in Mexico. I now live in New Haven, CT. I am a first year student, studying Chemical Engineering with a minor in Molecular and Cell Biology."

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"I am a Women's Center Student Assistant."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied to the Women's Center hoping to learn about issues that affect me and people around me while being part of something to solve them."

*What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I am looking forward to work with all members of the staff, and hopefully learn from everyone about how to be the change we wish to see in society."



## NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

### Haddiyah Ali



"I am a Freshman here at the University of Connecticut. I am an Africana Studies Major and a Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Minor on a Pre Law track. I am from Bloomfield, CT, and I attended a magnet high school in Hartford, CT."

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"My position here at the Women's Center is a receptionist, and I applied because I wanted to be challenged and feel rewarded by my work."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I wanted to work with the Women's Center because I had valuable experiences in the Violence Against Women Prevention Program, and it sparked my interest to find my place to continue to make strides across the UConn campus."

### Steven Lean

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"I am a co-facilitator for Greeks Against Sexual Assault (GASA) and a staff member for the Women's Center."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied for the co-facilitator position because I believe my experiences and passion in peer educating can help build the UConn community to be more aware of their surroundings with the knowledge of what it means to be sexually assaulted or harassed. The program started by the Women's Center gave me an opportunity to really get into the issues of race, ethnicity, gender, etc. to individuals interested in learning more on how to handle different situations with such a diverse community. While being part of the GASA program in Fall 2013, I learned and shared many experiences with the other participants and wanted to be a facilitator myself to educate others for futures to come."

*What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I look forward to working more closely with the Women's Center and the events planned for the semester as well. Although my time as an undergraduate might be cut short, there is still much I have left to offer and I hope to inspire/motivate others to do so to fight against gender inequality and social injustice."



### Emily Cantor



"I'm from Wolcott, CT. I'm a Junior English major with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies."

*What is your position here at the Women's Center?*

"I am the writing intern here at the Women's Center."

*Why did you apply to work at the Women's Center?*

"I applied for the position because I have always identified as a feminist, but really didn't have any idea what the Women's Center did on campus. I thought it would be a great way to not only meet new people but to finally get involved in something I'm interested in."

*What are you looking forward to most in your experience here?*

"I'm most looking forward to having stimulating discussions with the passionate people here!"

## NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

### Varun Khattar



“I am pursuing a Bachelors of Arts in Psychology, at the University of Connecticut. I also have an individualized major in Gender and Ethnic Studies. I expect to graduate in 2016. I am from South Windsor, CT.”

#### *What is your position here at the Women’s Center?*

“I co-facilitate the Men’s Project, a weekly training for men to discuss sexual violence prevention, privilege, masculinity, and gender socialization.”

#### *Why did you apply to work at the Women’s Center?*

“The Women’s Center and the Violence Against Women Prevention Program were instrumental in allowing me to develop a voice as a feminist and social justice advocate. I consider the space a second home and the staff as second family. I’ve seen too many loved ones affected by sexual violence and have suffered myself growing up in this ‘birdcage of oppression.’ I’m excited to have this opportunity to make this community a safer, more inclusive environment as an employee of the Women’s Center.”

## NEW STAFF RETREAT

The Women’s Center held its staff retreat on February 8th. New and old staff as well as members of VAWPP gathered together once again for food, discussion, and educational workshops. Below, Women’s Center student staff veteran, Brittany Carrier, shares her thoughts on the Center’s semi-annual retreats:

“The New Staff Retreat is always a bunch of fun. It’s the one time each semester that everyone is able to be together and get to know one another. We all work different hours, focus on different projects, and it makes it difficult for everyone to really know each other. Doing this type of social justice work can be daunting and overwhelming at times and a lot of the time, it seems practically pointless because there is just so much work to do. The biggest impact the retreat has for me is for re-energizing my hope. The Women’s Center is one of the few places where I don’t hear an overwhelming amount of rape jokes, comments dismissing race, and such. It’s a place where people come to grow and learn from one another. This is my third year being a part of the Center, which is great, but I sometimes struggle with envisioning new avenues of change — the New Staff Retreat is a great space to brainstorm and see new methods of social change.”

Brand new to the Women’s Center staff, Jesus Morales-Sanchez shared his candid reaction after attending this semester’s retreat: “It was a nice surprise to attend the staff retreat. I did not expect it to be such an enjoyable time. I met some pretty amazing people, and I wish we could do things like this more often. Not only did I have a good time, I also learned many things — from different issues that our society is struggling with, to how my personality affects the way a group works in a project. It was just a great experience.”

During this semester’s retreat we went over the Herstory of the Women’s Center, and talked about how to make the Women’s Center a safe and comfortable place for everyone to voice their opinions. There were team building exercises where we divided according to our work styles and proceeded to solve problems both within and outside of our groups. We also focused on the difference between gender equality and gender equity, and used that knowledge to come up with a vision of the future where gender equity is the norm. As we wrapped up our discussion, it was clear that the Women’s Center is as dedicated as ever to advocating for social justice and gender equity.

- Emily Cantor



## ELECT HER

UConn Senior, Political Science major and member of the Somers Board of Education Molly Rockett knows firsthand the value of this annual training: "Elect-Her is such an inherently empowering event: because even beyond just building and practicing skills, we talk about why our experiences as young women are valid and needed in the public arena."

The participants of the workshop, held in the Women's Center on February 13th, were welcomed by Dr. Melinda Rising from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Connecticut. This year's facilitator was former Women's Center intern and the current Program Manager for the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Campus Leadership Programs Department, Jessica Kelly.



Photo credit: University of Connecticut Women's Center

State Senator Mae Flexer was the keynote speaker. She discussed some of the challenges campaigning for State Senate, which was a different experience than campaigning for her previous position in the House seat. Senator Flexer was sworn-in to the Connecticut State Senate in January 2015. From 2008 to 2014, Mae served three terms in the Connecticut House of Representatives serving the 44th Assembly District towns of Killingly and Plainfield. Her experiences demonstrate that sexism continues to be a significant challenge, but one that can be overcome with support from networks and tenacity.

Danielle Bergmann, Commuter Senator and Stephanie Sponzo, Towers Senator from the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) discussed the process for running for a USG seat at UConn, and shared their experiences and perspectives in running for their positions and the work they have been able to do in these roles. They also shared USG's commitment to further diversifying their membership. While the number of women in elected positions in USG is impressive at UConn, with women making up 49% of the overall membership and 50% of the executive positions, they continue to strive to further diversify representation in regard to the racial/ethnic makeup.



Photo credit: University of Connecticut Women's Center

A recent [study](#) by Name It. Change It, a non-partisan media-monitoring and accountability project of The Women's Media Center and She Should Run, confirms what we know: that sexist media coverage has a significant impact on female candidates' campaign. It negatively impacts credibility and candidates have been advised not to respond. This study challenges that advice with its findings that legitimate third-party critiques of sexist coverage had a positive impact, which was even more significant if the candidate herself fought back.

Participants truly enjoyed the straight talk of Christine Palm, the Communications Director at the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW). She discussed the importance of the message, keeping it simple and straightforward, as well as things to consider in delivering the message, both in content and body language. One participant noted, "[this] validated my anxieties and gave me strategies to overcome them."

"One of the biggest things I took away from ElectHer was to be authentic. Be authentic, for it is easier to be real than to pretend. If you don't know an answer, say you don't know. Always say what you know and know what you say. Don't be fake; it's harder work to pretend than to be honest." — Maman Cooper, student.

"Women face unique challenges in campaigning and messaging, so it was really great to get a chance to talk about those difficulties with other women, and get advice from experienced women with a background in communications," said Rockett.

Participants had an opportunity to create a brief "elevator" speech and engage with folks in the community on their issue and ask for their vote. The winners of the campaign simulation were presented prizes by Gloria Bent on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Northeastern Connecticut, which included two complimentary student memberships.

- Kathy Fischer

## UConn Welcomes Shirin Ebadi

The Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, WRAAP (Women's Center, Rainbow Center, African American Cultural Center, Asian American Cultural Center, Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center), as well as the Asian American Studies Institute co-sponsored the University of Connecticut's fourth annual PeaceJam conference. PeaceJam is a non-profit service learning program that features Nobel Peace Prize winners. Its focus promotes youth leadership development, community building, and positive change through nonviolent action.

This year, at UConn, PeaceJam featured the Honorable Shirin Ebadi of Iran. Shirin Ebadi is the first woman from the Islamic world to receive a Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. She was also Iran's first female judge. She put herself on the line by opening her own legal practice after being dismissed as a judge in 1979. Her work was focused on defending citizens who were being prosecuted by authorities. She was imprisoned for this work in 2000. Once released, Shirin Ebadi took up an interest in fundamental human rights, especially for women and children. She strived to advocate for the separation of religion and the state. After being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, she became one of the founding members of the Nobel Women's Initiative, which is a coalition of female Nobel Prize Laureates working together to connect, support, and empower women activists globally.



Photo credit: posterfortomorrow.org

The PeaceJam conference featuring Shirin Ebadi, took place at the University of Connecticut on March 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>!

- *Samantha Barrett*

## LETTER FROM THE WRITING INTERN

I wanted to work at the Women's Center because I know our society needs to change, and I want to be part of that change in any way I can. Everyone at the Center is working towards a future where gender equity has replaced discrimination, and I think that's a wonderful thing. But I also think that it's easy to get discouraged when society does its best to resist the changes we are trying to make. The future we want can seem so unattainable when even the mention of feminism can result in slurs such as "feminazi" or "man-hater." I know that at times it can be hard to stay optimistic, and so I'd like to share with you a story my great aunt once told me:

When she was a young woman, she went grocery shopping for mayonnaise. Upon reaching the correct aisle, she found a man standing behind a table, promoting a new kind of mayo. He asked her if she wished to purchase some. She declined, saying that she only ever bought one brand of mayo. He asked her why, and she told him she wasn't sure. She supposed it was because it was the brand her mother always bought, so it must have been the only brand worth buying. Realizing how flimsy her excuse was, she decided to purchase the new brand of mayonnaise.

This is how I like to view the world: full of people who haven't tried something new. Not because they don't want to, but because it has never crossed their minds that they should. Just like my aunt and her mayonnaise, there are people out there who are open to change, and the only thing holding them back is an outdated way of thinking. All they need is a little nudge in the right direction and they'll make that change, whether it's joining organizations, objecting to sexist language, or even something as small as Googling the definition of feminism. It's our job to provide that nudge, to be the mayonnaise salespeople and introduce others to our vision of the future.

I'm not saying that reaching our goal of a future with gender equity is going to be as easy as selling mayonnaise. It's going to be a whole lot tougher than that. There are definitely going to be people out there who aren't going to change their ways, no matter how hard we protest. But if you're ever feeling frustrated because someone refuses to listen, don't let it deter you. Just remember that there are plenty of people waiting in the next aisle, willing to hear what you have to say.

- *Emily Cantor*

# SPRING 2015 CALENDAR

## UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S CENTER SPRING 2015 CALENDAR



### FEBRUARY

- 14th GO RED FOR WOMEN CAMPAIGN**  
Stand together on February 14th by wearing red as a public symbol of support. Donations can be made on the Go Red For Women website. Remember to stop by the Women's Center in the Student Union, Room 421, to receive a free Go Red pin when you donate.
- 13th ELECT HER: CAMPUS WOMEN WIN TRAINING**  
Demystify the campaign process at this unique workshop that teaches college women the skills to run for campus-based elective office as well as office positions later in life. Programming facilitated by communication experts and women who currently hold office in Connecticut.  
Friday, 1:00-6:30pm @ Women's Center Program Room (Student Union 421G)
- 23rd DO THESE NORMS MAKE ME LOOK FAT?**  
Join Ali Houghou, National Chapter Manager of Project HEAL, for a one hour lecture discussing the experiences of overcoming both obesity and anorexia in a "health obsessed society."  
Co-sponsored with SHAPE.  
Monday, 6:00-7:00pm @ Student Union Theatre
- 24th A BIG FAT DETOX**  
It's toxic to talk down to yourself, so why do it? It's time to DETOX our minds! Join us in a session to deconstruct sources of insecurity and low self-esteem - a crucial step to building up self-love.  
Wednesday, 7:30pm @ Women's Center Program Room (Student Union 421G)
- 25th EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS PANEL**  
Join us for a panel discussion on topics including Eating Disorders 101, Athletics and Eating Disorders as well as Binge Eating Disorder.  
Co-sponsored with Active Minds.  
Monday, 6:00pm @ Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center

### MARCH - WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH

- 2nd REFLECTIONS UNHEARD: BLACK WOMEN IN CIVIL RIGHTS**  
Feature-length documentary screening detailing the story of black women's political marginalization.  
Monday, 6:00pm @ Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center
- 5th KIMBERLÉ CRENSHAW - THE INTERSECTIONALITY PARADIGM**  
Join us in a discussion about Intersectionality and the multidimensional dynamics of discrimination with UCLA and Columbia Professor of Law, Kimberlé Crenshaw.  
Co-sponsored by WRAAP, WGSS, the Africana Studies Institute & the Human Rights Institute  
Thursday, 4:00pm @ Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center
- 13th SOCIAL JUSTICE RETREAT**  
Join us and Nobel Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi to reflect on your activism experiences, address your activism fatigue and create visions for social change.  
Friday, 10:00-2:00pm @ Student Union Ballroom
- 13th WHERE POLICY MEETS HUMANITY: MAKING HUMAN RIGHTS REAL FOR EVERYONE**  
Join us as we dive into the discussion of achieving human rights for all of humanity with Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Shirin Ebadi.  
Co-sponsored with Thomas J Dodd Research Center, Community Outreach, SUBOG, Global Affairs, the Asian American Studies Institute, the Human Rights Institute, the Middle East Studies Program, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Office of Public Engagement, WRAAP, WGSS.  
Friday, 3:00pm @ Student Union Theatre
- 26th LIVE STREAM OF AAUW'S SOLVING THE EQUATION LAUNCH**  
Tune in for the live-stream discussion panel lead by Stanford researcher Londa Schlabinger as she discusses the AAUW's latest research on women in STEM.  
Thursday, 2:00-3:30pm @ Women's Center Program Room (Student Union 421G)

### 30th LUNAFEST - FIRST SCREENING

Join us at the traveling film festival centered around eight selected films by, for and about women. Laugh, cry and be apart of the discussion with films such as *Flor de Toloache* by Jenny Schwaitzer and *A Good Match* by Lyn Elliot. Lunafest, united by a common thread of exceptional storytelling, grants us the vision to make a difference in their community. For more information and to purchase tickets for this show, please visit <http://www.lunafest.org/storrs0330>  
Monday, 12:00pm @ Student Union Theatre

### APRIL - SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

- 2nd LUNAFEST - SECOND SCREENING**  
For more information and to purchase tickets for this show, please visit <http://www.lunafest.org/storrs0402>  
Thursday, 5:00pm @ Student Union Theatre
- 15th TAKE BACK THE NIGHT**  
An evening of empowerment and healing where survivors of sexual assault have an opportunity to share their stories with the campus community.  
Wednesday, 7:00pm @ Student Union Ballroom
- 15th UCONNENNT DAY**  
Join us for activities that promote the act of healthy consensual relationships in the greater campus community.  
Wednesday, 1:30-3:30pm @ Fairfield Way
- 20th-25th PROJECT UNBREAKABLE**  
Project Unbreakable is a photography project aiming to give a voice to survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, and child abuse by featuring photographs of survivors holding posters with quotes from their abusers.  
Monday - Saturday @ Homer Babbidge Library
- 28th JACKSON KATZ**  
Join us for a discussion on anti-sexist activism with one of America's leading social theorists and educators on the subject of sexism, Dr. Jackson Katz.  
Tuesday, 7:00pm @ Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center
- MAY**

- 8th ANNUAL OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS CEREMONY**  
Co-sponsored with the Provost's Office and the UConn Alumni Association.  
Friday, 4:00pm-6:00pm @ Great Hall, Alumni Center
- 12th UCONN WOMEN'S ADVANCE CONFERENCE**  
Watch for registration materials in the mail by early April.  
Tuesday, 8:30am-4:30pm @ Mansley's in South Windsor

### ONGOING GROUPS

#### STRONGER

Stronger is a confidential support and discussion group for UConn students who are victim-survivors of sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking. For more information and to register, please contact Maddie Barron ([maddie.barron@uconn.edu](mailto:maddie.barron@uconn.edu)) or Kit Maclean ([katharine.maclean@uconn.edu](mailto:katharine.maclean@uconn.edu)). They can also be reached at CMHS at 860-486-4705.  
Wednesdays, 5-6:30pm @ Women's Center Program Room (Student Union 421G)

#### BETWEEN WOMEN

A discussion group for women who love women or think that they might. Come and discuss fun topics, movies and more with women who share your feelings and experiences.  
Thursdays, 6:00-8:00pm @ Women's Center Program Room (Student Union 421G)

For details, updates and more information on our events, visit us at <http://womenscenter.uconn.edu/> and find out more!

University of Connecticut Women's Center  
Student Union, 4th Floor, Room 421  
2170 Hillside Road, Unit 3118, Storrs, CT 06269-3118  
Tel: 860-486-1104 Email: [Womenscenter@uconn.edu](mailto:Womenscenter@uconn.edu)

Location is wheelchair accessible.  
Additional accommodations available upon request.  
For more information contact the Women's Center  
at 860-486-4738

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we welcome Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw to our campus for Women's Herstory Month, I think it's fitting that I talk a bit about intersectionality for this edition of *Voices*. Recently, biracial actress Zendaya Coleman graced the Oscars rocking luxurious locs and became the butt of a horribly distasteful comment made by Guiliana Rancic of "Fashion Police" on E!. The cohost of the popular show stated that Zendaya's hair probably smelled like "patchouli oil... or maybe weed." However, just a couple weeks ago, Kylie Jenner sported dreads on Instagram, and Rancic's opinion was they were "chic" and "edgy." Why is it that the same hairstyle on women of two different races elicited different intonations from Rancic? There have been countless times when women of colors' cultural aesthetic have been "borrowed" by white women with mass approval — countless times when white women are commended with "starting a trend" or being "edgy" when imitating women of colors' aesthetic. There are a range of things that women of color have been doing for years, unnoticed until a white woman does it and deems it "trendy." Why is that women of color get criticized, while white women get celebrated for doing the same thing?

Rancic apologized for her comment, stating that her words didn't come from a place of racism. However, I think it's important to recognize the presence of microaggressions in her comment as well as in everyday conversation. Rancic stated that she did not intend to offend anyone with her comment, however, she still used a microaggression, and anyone who felt offended by what she said is validated in their feelings. Microaggressions, defined by [Psychology Today](#), are "the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership." Most of us have probably been guilty of using a microaggression or two at one point in time, but we must begin to pay more attention to the rude stereotypes and prejudices we perpetuate in our speech -- and encourage our peers to do the same.

If you remain unclear to exactly what a microaggression might sound like, here is a link with a handful of examples that people hear on a daily basis:

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/hnigatu/racial-microaggressions-you-hear-on-a-daily-basis#.sm4ze3aOo>

I notice that student staff at the Women's Center tend to focus a lot of attention on how what we say may come off to other people, and are comfortable checking each other. During our training, we are taught how to use more inclusive language, and learn how important it is to phrase our words correctly whether it be in a professional or casual setting --- overall we are given insight on how to be nice people, all the time. I find it extremely valuable to be a part of a community of practice such as this, where we can digest what has happened with Rancic's comment and figure out how we can begin to challenge the way people speak on a smaller scale. I encourage anyone who is reading this to do the same.

- Samantha Barrett



**SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S CENTER**  
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SHARE THIS

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 to the University's priorities of innovation, leadership, global engagement, and diversity. While we are proud of our successes, we need your help to support and enhance this work.

**ATTENTION**

**WOMEN'S CENTER ALUMS:**

We need your help! Please consider taking on a volunteer role to reach out to former Women's Center students. Many alums do not know that they can donate directly to the Women's Center. We need help spreading the word in order to continue to fund effective, cutting edge programs at the University of Connecticut. The volunteer role consists of calling and emailing fellow alums! Training will be provided, and time commitment is manageable.

For further information, please contact Lynn Santiago-Calling (UConn, Class of 1998) via phone or text at (617) 875-3313, or via email at [lynn\\_calling@hotmail.com](mailto:lynn_calling@hotmail.com) (please use the subject line "Women's Center Volunteer").

Thank you in advance!

***"What should I do after an assault?"***

**24/7 Resources**

- UConn Police Department: 860-486-4800
- Student Health Services Advice Nurse: 860-486-4700
- CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services: 888-999-5545
- Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline: 888-774-2900

[sexualviolence.uconn.edu](http://sexualviolence.uconn.edu)

*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 through Thursday;  
 8am-5pm on Fridays

