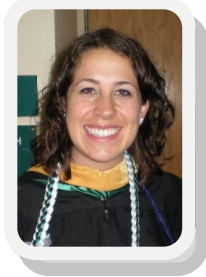




The UMBC Women's Center Newsletter: July 2011

Letter from the Acting Director: Jess Myers



Feminism: "Hearing your pain, struggle, and experience in another woman's voice and realizing that there's nothing wrong with you or with her."
- Shelby Knox

I recently attended the National Conference for College Women

Student Leaders held in College Park where I had the opportunity to hear Shelby Knox address a room of 500 women regarding her experience of grassroots organizing and feminism. It was here that I heard her definition above regarding what she believes feminism to be, mean, and exude. As I sat in my seat, I just kept nodding my head. Right on Shelby, right on.

The term "feminism" is so often a loaded word. In fact, I would say half of the 500 students at this conference did not identify as a feminist (The common phrase was, "I'm not a feminist, but..."). Indeed, the "F Word" can be a scary one that sends some people running for the hills... and sometimes, I don't blame them. The feminist movement, has by no means been perfect in its journey which has often been misguided by privileged identities and excluded many underrepresented folks. As someone who does not shy away from wearing my "this is what a feminist

looks like" almost every weekend to the gym (in hopes to get minds thinking during those early morning spin classes!), I too find myself exploring and creating what the word really means for me, most especially when I'm trying to break it down and make it accessible for others.

This is why I like Shelby's definition. It's a person to person connection—something I think we all thirst for in life. So when we're listening to another woman fight for sex-education in schools like Shelby did, feeling inspired to be a part of the SlutWalk marches taking place over the country to address victim blaming and rape culture, or simply listening to another woman's perspective, you are practicing feminism!

The stories of each person, which include all of their intersecting identities, are so important to listen to and honor. They are conscious raising, thought provoking, and serve to make a difference in the world. This is why I'm deeply proud to be a feminist and work in the Women's Center. I encourage you to think, create, and invent your own definition of feminism... and then share it with us in the Women's Center so we can continue to grow and learn from each other...



Special points of interest:

- ☺ **Happy 4th of July**
(have fun and be safe!)
- ☺ **Letters from the Director and Student Staff**
- ☺ **The 20th Anniversary Celebration Countdown has begun!!**
- ☺ **What are Slut Walks?**
- ☺ **Women's Center Fund-raiser—*Travel Mugs are In!!***
- ☺ **Ongoing and Upcoming Events...Please take our Returning Women survey: <http://www.misterpoll.com/polls/527081>**
- ☺ **Information about the Women's Center, the list serve, and newsletter submissions**
- ☺ **Shout Outs!**

July Thoughts from Mah Siddiqui: Women's Center Student Staff

This month marks my one year anniversary at the Women's Center. What a ride it has been! When I look back to the Women's Center one year ago and compare it to now, I am awed by not only the growth of the Center but also by my own growth through the Center.

I had never been to the Center before I started working there. I had this conception that the Women's Center is only there for women who need resources or need help. I stepped into the Women's Center when I needed help and I was embraced by love, family and support.

Yes, the Women's Center is there for support and resources but the Women's Center is also a family that is there for

you in your time of need. Furthermore, I have interacted with so many wonderful people and I have learned so much from them. I am now a senior at UMBC and from my time here, I realize that the Women's Center is one of the only places on campus where students, faculty and staff can interact and have conversations without academic or other boundaries and limitations.

I am also excited about the increase in our male visitors. I want to reach out to our men on campus and invite them to the Women's Center because the Center is a safe space for all students to express themselves as individuals.

I am so excited for the upcoming academic year. I look forward to meeting new people,

seeing new faces at the Center, and growing more in the shelter of the Women's Center. I encourage students to partake in the various events lined up for the Fall semester as well as the Women's Center 20th Anniversary celebrations throughout the year!

The Women's Center is Now on Facebook!!

Be sure to "Like" our page (look for us at *Women's Center at UMBC*) to make sure all the latest Women's Center updates and happenings find their way to your Facebook newsfeed!

20th anniversary Women's Center

100,000 Stories: Which One is Yours? | 2011 - 2012

This September commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the Women's Center. During my short time at UMBC, I have been impressed by the rich history of the Women's Center. From the diligent work of our founding sisters to the dedication of others to keep our doors open during the many transitions of the Center to the everyday activism and awareness of those blossoming within our space, our history is made possible by the 100,000 UMBC community members who have walked into our doors over the past 20 years. Rightly so, the theme of our 20th Anniversary is "100,000 Stories: Which One Is Yours?"

Keeping in mind the same tradition of our history being built by those in the UMBC community, we are looking to you in helping us mark this very special year. A call for programs and co-sponsorships was launched earlier this year in hopes to create a seamless, but diverse experience for faculty, staff, and students. As summer plan-



ning continues we are sending out another call of support and collaboration to ensure this year will truly be a campus-wide celebration. Please think about way you can incorporate our anniversary, theme, and logo into your existing programming. In turn, your program and event will be included in our 20th Anniversary calendar of events and publicity. If volunteering at 20th Anniversary events hosted by the Women's Center is a more feasible involvement from you, please know your participation will be greatly welcomed. Some of the events hosted by the Women's Center simply expand the scope of what our small, but mighty staff can handle.

Program proposal and volunteer forms can be found on the Women's Center website. Forms can be turned in to the Women's Center or be sent via email to jess.myers@umbc.edu.

We appreciate your efforts in making this anniversary the next great marker in our "her" story as we look back on what we were and look forward to what we will become. If you have any questions, please contact Jess Myers, the Acting Director of the Women's Center at x51605.

Thank you!

Jess Myers and The Women's Center Advisory Board 20th Anniversary Planning Committee

Current Calendar of Events:
Save the Date!!!!

September 14th:
 20th Anniversary Kick-Off Picnic

September 28th:
 Albin O. Kuhn Library Exhibit

March 14, 2012:
 20th Anniversary Lecture Event

April 4, 2012:
 Women in Technology: 2nd Annual Spring into Leadership Event

April 25, 2012: URCAD

TBA: The Korneman Lecture

On Going:
 Women's Center Travel Mug Fundraiser
 Collection of stories for our digital story telling documentary (if you want to be on the video, please contact Jess!)

Other exciting events and programs are in the works and will be announced in the upcoming months!

*Will your event be listed here?
 Contact Jess if you're interested!*

Current 20th Anniversary Celebration Co-Sponsors Include:

(and we're excited to be adding more in the upcoming months!)

Albin O. Kuhn Library, URCAD, UMBC's Office of Undergraduate Education



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 COMMISSION FOR
 WOMEN



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Mothers' Meetings

All mothers are welcome! Share a cup of tea and your stories/struggles, celebrations about one of life's greatest & most challenging experiences!

If anyone from this group is still wanting to meet over the summer, please contact Jess Myers at jess.myers@umbc.edu.

Looking for an awesome summer class?? Check it Out!

FYS 102N -Exploring Mixed Identities

Taught by: Dr. Jessica Guzmán-Rea

Summer Session II TuTh1:00 PM -4:10 PM

Meets a Social Science GEP and a 200-level Honors Seminar

http://www.umbc.edu/undergrad_ed/fys/documents/fys102N.pdf

Women's Center Coffee Mug Fundraiser!

Our mugs have arrived! Show your support to the center by purchasing a travel mug with our logo on it! Your purchase will help us raise funds that are much needed for the operation of the center.

This is a multipurpose fundraiser as each mug purchased will help the Women's Center with:

- 1) Donations: Donate much needed funds to the Women's Center
- 2) Sustainability: Help replace Women's Center paper cups with a more sustainable alternative!
- 3) Cost Savings: The Women's Center will spend less money on paper cups and more money on important programs!
- 4) PR: People will see your awesome mug and want to visit the Women's Center for anything from free coffee and tea to critical crisis response and referral!



Thanks for helping us in achieving our goals!.

Cost: \$10 each



The Women's Center Gets Some Summer TLC

Returning Women's Support Group

The Returning Women's Meeting is a Women's Center program designed to support women returning to college later in life (after the traditional age of 18-22). The meeting is an informal time for returning women to gather, share stories, struggles, and successes. Coming back to college later in life isn't easy. We, at the Women's Center, want to do what we can to support you. Campus resources will also be made available in order to help you reach your goals.

We need your feedback on how you would like this meeting time used next year. Please take this brief survey so we can hear your thoughts on when you want to meet and how you want the meeting time to look.

<http://www.misterpoll.com/polls/527081>

For more information, please contact: Jess Myers at jess.myers@umbc.edu.

"Slut Walk?!?!? What The Heck is That?!?!?"

The **hot** summer trend in feminist advocacy and grassroots action this is Slut Walks. Yes, you heard me right. When we have engaged in conversations around this new topic in the Women's Center, the ?s and !s come out in full force. Whatever are you talking about?!?! This is the Women's Center?!?! We don't say the S word?!?! But, this summer we have been... we've been using it a lot as we explore the meaning and pros and cons around this controversial topic that is getting people to talk freely and openly about rape culture, sexual assaults, victim blaming, and women's liberation.

For those of you who are new to the word, we wanted to throw it out there and get it into your world. We've compiled some links, articles, and common pros/cons themes for below.

What are your thoughts? Do you dig it? Are you outraged over its outrageousness? Or is the jury still out?

The 'down and dirty' back story:

- In January 2011, Police Constable Michael Sanguinetti had been giving a talk on health and safety to a group of students at Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto when he said the following: "You know, I think we're beating around the bush here. I've been told I'm not supposed to say this - however, women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized."
- Whoa... victim blaming! Survivors should never be blamed for their assaults! So naturally, some women in Toronto were not okay with these comments and wanted to address them in some very real way... which has been the Slut Walks.
- The name was chosen as a 2-fold purpose. The first was that it stemmed directly from the police officer's comment. It is to protest a culture that easily blames victims and is not more outraged when it comes to rape and sexual assault. The second being, to reclaim the word "slut." One of the organizers of the march is quoted as saying: "If 'slut' is thrown around at so many people day in and day out... We will take it and take it to mean someone who is in control of their sexuality."
- The event have similarities to the Take Back the Night rallies— often the rallies end with speakers and workshops on stopping sexual violence and calling on law enforcement agencies to not blame victims. The key difference between TBTN and Slut Walks typically are found in the events visuals, which can include signs and t-shirts saying "Slut" or "I love Sluts." Many event goers choose to wear lingerie, though event organizers are clear that doing so is not required to be a part of the march.



Some Pros:

- The marches have gotten more people have conversations about rape culture, rape, and sexual assault... and what needs to be done to put them to an end.
- It another form of grassroots activism ...SlutWalks have cropped up organically, in city after city, fueled by the raw emotional and political energy of young women

Some Cons:

- Some think the outrageous-ness of this isn't the right way to generate conversations. It has caused friction within the feminist movement (i.e. "it's buying into patriarchal consumerism view of sexuality"). Others simply do not feel slut is a redeemable word to be reclaimed.
- Others feel this is another event in the feminist movement that doesn't quite include everyone and all of their intersecting identities

Some Quotables:

- "Research shows a direct link between the victim-blaming in the media and sexual assault survivors failing to report their rapes. If victims know that they're going to be harassed and blamed in public, they think twice about going to the police." - Jessica Valenti
- Jessica Valenti's interview on Morning Joe: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/43292131#43292131>

Still Curious? Baltimore is hosting this event on Saturday, July 23rd @ 12noon. Location is TBD
For more information visit: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SlutWalk-Baltimore/188619711184661>

UMBC Women's Center

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This, That, and the Other...

Newsletter Submissions: Do you have an event, organization, course, announcement, or other information that would be useful to the UMBC Women's Center community? If so, please send it to womens.center@umbc.edu so we can post it in next month's newsletter.

Women's Center Listserve: To learn about upcoming events, scholarships, and other opportunities from the Women's Center, please email us at womens.center@umbc.edu and we will add you to our listserve.

And please, visit us! We're located in The Commons, Suite 004 (right next to the Yum Shop). We have: a private lactation/mediation room, comfy couches, library, free coffee, tea, tampons/pads, condoms/dental dams. We're also here if you just need to talk... if you are going through a hard time, have something to celebrate, or need a hug, we are here :)

July 2011 Women's Center Shout Outs!

We would like to offer our "Shout Outs!" section to everyone in the UMBC Women's Center community. If you would like to send a Shout Out! To someone who has achieved something great, made a positive difference in your life, or just deserve a few kind words, email the UMBC Women's Center at womens.center@umbc.edu and we'll include them in our next month's newsletter.

- ◆ Janet McGlynn and Delana Gregg—Your PCW Award donation was posted to our account this month and it reminded us to give you a "formal" shout out for your wonderful and generous donation to the Women's Center. Thank you for helping us to continue providing resources and services to the Women's Center and UMBC community!
- ◆ Diane Lee and Andrea DeSantis—Thanks for your ongoing support as I transition into the acting director position. I truly appreciate it! - Jess
- ◆ Thank you to Andrew Wright and Stefanie Mavronis for taking the lead on helping the Women's Center with our 20th Anniversary digital story telling project. We're so excited to see the final product! Thanks to Anna Rubin for connecting us to these wonderful people!
- ◆ Magda Permut, Robert Deluty, Lisa MacFarlane, and GWST— Thanks so much for the book donations to help bring our library up-to-date!
- ◆ Delana Greg—Thanks for always checking in on me. It means so much. —Jess
- ◆ Mickey Arora— I'm excited about our programming plans this fall. I look forward to giving space to the UMBC community to discuss important issues that will hopefully inspire confidence and self-empowerment! - Jess
- ◆ Jill Dorsch, Kelly Fahey, Amy Appelt, and Jessica Hammond—Thanks for being so open to meeting with me and being excited about future collaborations with the Women's Center. Looking forward to it! - Jess
- ◆ Susan Martin and Katie Glasser—It was so great meeting with you to learn more about CWIT. I appreciated our conversation and look forward to creating a stronger partnership with you in the future.—Jess
- ◆ Mohsin Majid—Thank you for your help in giving our website a facelift and adding on a 20th anniversary link. So awesome! -Jess
- ◆ To all those working on the 20th Anniversary—Thank you for your continued support and energy. It's going to be a great birthday! - Jess
- ◆ Christy Wilson—Thank you so much for always going above and beyond in your Women's Center duties. Your spotlights and fliers are amazing and you always are so reliable. I couldn't make it through the summer without you! - Jess
- ◆ Mah—Thank you for holding down the "late shift" in the Center this summer. It's good knowing I can count on you to keep the Center open and available to the community! -Jess
- ◆ Eryl—The keeper of all Women's Center knowledge. Thank you for your outstanding memory that keeps the Center functioning and efficient. I appreciate having you by my side! - Jess
- ◆ Christy- love your creativity! Thank you for being an awesome friend :) - Mah
- ◆ Jon- Thank you for helping us around the center and being an awesome presence. Looking forward to some yummy Puerto Rican food for the potlucks to come ;) - Mah

Women's Center Book Club!

We're starting a Women's Center book club for the fall. If you're interested in joining us for a good read & discussion, please contact Jess and we'll put your name on the list!

