

Women's Resource Center



FY 06
Annual Report

A Division of Student Affairs

Annual Report July 2005 – June 2006

The Women's Resource Center (WRC), located in Pine Dale Hall, Suite 7136 of the Residence Halls, was established in 1970 to provide resources that help to create an educational atmosphere rich in visible role models and free of sexual bias and inequities where women can grow to their full potential. The Center offers cultural opportunities that further women's personal and professional development and promotes a broader understanding of the diverse experiences of all women. Central to our mission is the recognition that explorations of gender must take place in tandem with explorations of race, class, sexual orientation and other significant aspects of individual identity. The Center acts as a central coordinating agency for campus and community groups. The Center falls under the Division of Student Affairs and reports directly to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.

Program Goals for the Women's Resource Center

- To encourage empowerment and self-esteem in women
- To increase awareness of women's issues and opportunities
- To enable women to make personal choices regarding careers, lifestyles, reproductive rights and health issues
- To stop violence against women on campus
- To encourage positive, working relationships between men and women
- To promote projects which increase awareness on issues of sexism, racism, and heterosexism
- To form alliances with campus organizations committed to social justice
- To network with women's groups in the surrounding communities

Highlights of 2005 - 2006 include our Women's Health Series and production of Liberating Women in the fall and in the spring, a student-led production of The Vagina Monologues and our 6th Annual WRC Outstanding Women Awards in the spring. We worked closely with various departments on campus this year to collaborate on events.

- **Programming**

Fall Programming

Our fall semester was dedicated to issues of women's health, collaborating closely with the Office of Health Education. In September we focused on "The Red Zone" which is the first two months of college where first year students are more likely to be sexually assaulted. We dedicated our fall newsletter to facts about avoiding sexual violence, did a series of announcements about how to stay safe, and tabled in the campus center.

We ran a very successful women's health brown bag series offering a different talk each month. The workshops were Anxiety and Depression, Complimentary Medicine, Judy Norsigian (Executive Director of Our Bodies, Ourselves) and Body Image and Women of Color. We had over twenty participants at each session.

We co-sponsored the fifth annual Queer Comedy Night with Pride Alliance and CAB by bringing Kate Clinton to campus. There was a large crowd for this event.

In November we produced Liberating Women, the play written for the director's doctoral dissertation, which dealt with the backlash against reproductive rights. Over 140 people attended the two nights. We held auditions on campus and had students participate. English Dept. faculty helped lead post-show discussions with the audience. Our graduate intern, Shawn Edie, designed and built almost all of the costumes.

Spring Programming

We did a variety of programming in the spring, with no specific theme. For February, we tabled during Safer Sex Week with the Peer Health Educators, followed closely by a two-night production of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, directed by Laura Sullivan, a senior who did her experiential learning with us. This student-led, student-directed production was a success, raising almost two thousand dollars.

With the Frederick Douglass Unity House, we sponsored *The Rosa Parks Story* movie for Black History Month. Attendees felt the lack of people was because of our location.

For March we held two events for Women's History Month. Love Your Body Day, on March 1st, included a yoga class, information tabling, chair massages and free hot chocolate by Sodexo. This event was co-sponsored by the Office of Health Education. For our 6th Annual Outstanding Women Awards (re-named the Women's Resource Center's Outstanding Women Awards) and International Women's Day celebration, we worked closely with the International Student Center, the Labor Education Center and the Frederick Douglass Unity House to bring two international activist union women from the area to speak on union organizing. Awards were presented (three this year) to Dr. Jen Riley from Women's Studies and English, Carol Pimental from Internal Audit, and Diane Hitchcock from the Katie Brown Education Program, UMD/WRC alum.

In April, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we sponsored Rachel Griffin whose talk "Home Alone with Him" was about her experiences with sexual assault. This event had a low turnout, as well, probably because it was held on a Sunday night. This event was also co-sponsored with the Office of Health Education. On April 6th, we held the annual Women's Seder with CJC and Hillel. On April 18th, we sponsored Judith Arcana, former member of the Jane Collective who showed the movie *Jane: An Abortion Service* and read from her new book of poetry called What if Your Mother. This event was also poorly attended b/c of the Patriot's Day holiday. On April 23rd, we co-sponsored Hineini: Coming Out in a Jewish High School with Hillel, the CJC, and Pride Alliance.

- **Ongoing Projects**

For the second year in a row, Alden Daley continued to update our website with the help of Jordan Cote. Both men are CIS majors and have great ideas about how to keep the website up-to-date and organized.

For the second year in a row, we have taken on graduate interns from Bridgewater State's Counseling and Higher Ed program. In the fall, Shawn Edie did his internship with us and in the spring Ann Silverberg did. Both interns worked closely with the staff, running staff meetings and developing workshops for them. Ann also served on the sexual misconduct committee. For the summer, Leah Lomeland did her internship helping with the orientation program we ran. Leah oversaw the facilitators and helped organize them to lead discussions with the first year students.

- **Committees**

Affirmative Action Committee:

I was appointed to the Affirmative Action Committee by the ESU. The committee did not meet this year.

Committee for Women:

The CFW met only once or twice in the spring. A new chair was elected in the spring.

Women's Studies Steering Committee:

I was a one-year member of the WMS Executive Board. Our major work this year was developing the curriculum and proposal for a WMS major.

AFSCME:

Kim Sylvia continues to serve on the e-board of AFSCME and is currently on their negotiations committee.

ESU, E-Board:

I serve as Third Vice President of the ESU, for the seventh year. I attend monthly e-board meetings, bi-monthly membership meetings, and attended the Faculty Federation banquet. I also served on the negotiations committee (our contract was up June 30, 2004). We began negotiations in May '05 and settled (finally) at the end of February '06. I was elected to the Faculty Federation E-Board for FY06, and served on the ad-hoc committee looking at FMLA and maternity/paternity leave policies.

Title IX:

The Title IX committee did not meet this year, for the fifth year in a row.

Orientation:

I was involved with many aspects of new student orientation summer of 2006. I revised skits on dating violence and sexual assault that had been used formerly at Longwood University. OL's were cast in the skits. One was on dating violence, the second was on sexual misconduct and harassment, and the third was on acquaintance rape and the last on sexual assault. The new students were broken into groups after the skits to talk with facilitators about what they had just seen. We were split as to whether it was better to have the groups' co-ed or by single gender.

Divisional Committees:

I served on the University Appellate Board member for Judicial Affairs, but never had to meet. I also chaired the Sexual Assault Misconduct Policy Sub-Committee. We are working to develop a strong sexual assault policy for the campus, based on concerns related to protocol and safety. We completed the search for the Chief of Police in the fall. I volunteered to serve on the Search & Screen for the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, as an ESU representative.

- **Concerns**

Visibility

While many students, staff and faculty love the space we are now in, we are still far removed from the main campus and hope to be included in future redesigns of space near or in the Campus Center.

We have lost a significant population of commuter students who did many activist projects at the WRC. Faculty are reluctant to travel here for programs and would be more likely to do so if we were closer to academic buildings.

The Ring Road signs are small and difficult to read.

We still feel that access is an issue. Many feel it is an issue of safety for center staff. For example, if a person calls to be let in, we have to physically leave the center and let the person in. In a worst-case scenario, this “visitor” could potentially push through, risking not only the safety of center staff, but also that of resident students living in the building. Students taking classes in the building have to be given temporary card access. The solution would be our own door or a buzzer system with a video where the center staff person could see the visitor.

We have asked each year for updated and visible signage for walkers and drivers. The survey completed by an activist group in a WMS class, four years ago, stated that commuter students, especially, have no idea where we are located. If we are to be available to all students, staff and faculty on campus, external signage is of the utmost importance. And interestingly, some people comment that they see our event advertising constantly while others feel we are not visible at all.

- **Experiential Learning Projects/Graduate Interns**

We had two experiential learning students in the spring, Jackie McManus and Laura Sullivan. Jackie worked as a peer health educator liaison, as so many of our events were co-sponsored with the Office of Health Education. Laura, as mentioned above, directed The Vagina Monologues and was an event planner for sexual assault awareness month.

- **Goals for the Future**

We hope to move forward on the development of an Assistant Director who will work half time on WRC programming and half time as the university GLBT liaison. We are planning a Women’s Leadership Seminar under our theme for the semester “Super Women of Tomorrow.”

Respectfully Submitted,
In Sisterhood and Hopes for World Peace & Justice,

Juli Parker,
Director & Affiliate Faculty, Women’s Studies

