

**2019-20 Unit Annual Report: Women's Center**

**Submitted By:** *Angela Gay, Assistant Director, Janine Kossen, Associate Director, Lisa LaBarbera-Mascote, Director, Antoinette Norton, Administrative Support, Specialist, Chaniqua Simpson, Graduate Assistant, Carlyn Wright-Eakes, Prevention Education Coordinator*

**A. Introduction**

The NC State Women's Center is one of four campus community centers housed under the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED). The Women's Center directly serves all students at NC State while also serving as a resource, connection, and partner for faculty and staff at the institution. We take an intersectional approach to serving the campus community. Our practices are social constructivist in nature and rooted in social justice education and trauma-informed care.

**Impact Story - Womxn of Color Retreat**

A full story can be found via the Diversity Digest:  
[Womxn of Color Retreat: A Letter from Resilient Voices](#)

As an addendum to this Diversity Digest article, Juniper Nie, Retreat Participant and Women's Center Student Programming Intern shared the following additional reflections a semester later:

The Women of Color Retreat provided students like myself a space for critical consciousness, unity and spiritual support. It allowed me to connect with humanity, nature and the beauties that come with being a person of color, especially as a student of color who attends a predominately white institution (PWI). There is often a lack of acknowledgement of the successes, accomplishments, and the existence of students of color at PWIs such as NC State. The retreat looked at the styles of leadership through various lenses which allowed leadership to be analyzed through a subjective lens based on impact, experience and passion. This engagement aided in our creation of a critical consciousness within the group and created a connection among participants. This connection and bond lasted well past the retreat, and was brought back to campus, becoming part of our day-to-day routine and lives at NC State. The long-lasting impact of the retreat can be seen in how the participants recognize, actively listen, communicate and support one another still today, months after the retreat took place.

## **B. Programs and Initiatives**

### **Year Long Efforts**

#### **Book Clubs (Fall 2019 & Spring 2020)**

The Women's Center held four different book clubs throughout the course of the calendar year. Each small cohort provided an opportunity to bring together students, faculty and staff to engage in deeper dialogue around issues of equity and social justice. Below you will find details on each book read this year. (***University Strategic Goals 1, 3 & 5***)

#### **Born a Crime** by Trevor Noah

Summer of 2019 the Women's Center hosted a weekly reading of the University Common Read, *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah. Faculty, staff and students were broken into two reading groups based on the demand and interest in this book club. Over 24 individuals signed up to participate. Approximately 13 individuals consistently attended their assigned reading group. In *Born a Crime*, Trevor Noah talks about his life growing up in South Africa pre- and post-apartheid. Themes covered in this autobiography included racism, abuse and the strength that comes from faith and love. Participants were able to engage deeply in reflections on how these themes played out in South Africa, but also were able to draw parallels to struggles, injustice and oppression in the United States as well. The book club groups were facilitated by Lisa LaBarbera-Mascote and Janine Kossen.

#### **Proud** by Ibtihaj Muhammad

The Fall 2019 Women's Center Book Club was *Proud: My Fight for An Unlikely American Dream* by Ibtihaj Muhammad. The book club had 6-8 students, faculty, and staff who showed up on a weekly basis to read. Feedback from the book club reflected that participants felt the members were "respectful" and the interaction among the members and book helped to teach "a lot about diversity and inclusivity." *Proud* is Muhammad's memoir about her journey to be the first athlete to compete for Team USA in hijab. Muhammad is Black, Muslim-American and fencer. The book was conceptualized using general feminist theories and a person-centered perspective. The book club was facilitated by WGS undergraduate Intern, Brooke Suermann under advisement of Angela Gay.

#### **Poet X** by Elizabeth Acevedo

During Latinx Heritage Month, in partnership with Multicultural Student Affairs, the Women's Center held a book club for *Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo. The book club closed in time for the Latinx Heritage Month keynote sponsored by Multicultural Student Affairs. There were 10 student participants in the book club

who met bi-weekly on Thursday evenings. The themes of the book club were focused on the history, culture, and experiences of Latinx in education at the interstices of their culture, heritage, home lives, and body politics. The book was conceptualized from a LatCrit perspective focusing on testimonios through poetic devices and the formation of a community poem. The book club was co-facilitated by WGS undergraduate Intern, Brooke Suermann, Assistant Director (WC) Angela Gay and Assistant Director (MSA) Marcela Torres Cervantes.

### **The Body Is Not an Apology** by Sonya Renee Taylor

The Spring 2020 Book Club was focused on the book, *The Body is Not an Apology* by Sonya Renee Taylor, which was a part of the Womxn's HERstory Month celebration. The book club was facilitated by Women's Center Social Work Interns Ashley Tuttle and Samantha Quiel. Taylor's work forms the basis for a movement emerging from the belief that discrimination, social inequality and injustice are manifestations of our inability to make peace with the body, our own and others. *The Body is not an Apology* examines how information dissemination, personal and social transformation projects and community building fosters global, radical, unapologetic self-love that translates to radical human love and action in service toward a more inclusive, just, equitable and compassionate world. Taylor reminds us that "radical self-love demands that we see ourselves and others in the fullness of our complexities and intersections and that we work to create space for those intersections" (2018). 23 members of the campus community signed up to participate in this book club. Participants engaged weekly in both large and small group discussions which focused on the book's themes as well as the Unapologetic Inquires that Taylor provided. Book club members were also invited to a special meet and greet with Sonya Renee Taylor when she was on campus at the end of February.

### **Council on the Status of Women**

The Council on the Status of Women (CSW) is a University Standing Committee which reports to the Provost. Women's Center Director, Lisa LaBarbera-Mascote, serves as the resource person/advisor to this committee. During the 2019-2020 academic year the Council on the Status of Women broke their advocacy work out across four working groups. Those working groups and projects included a policy issues working group, which focused on continued advocacy for paid parental leave and an examination of lactation spaces on campus. A professional development working group which hosted three different opportunities for development open to the entire campus community. A campus climate working group, which collected resources regarding recruitment and retention of faculty and staff of color, mechanism to create support groups for underrepresented faculty and staff as well as creating campus wide training recommendations to help with campus climate, recruitment and retention.

The Council as well as the Women's Center again supported and planned the annual **Sisterhood Dinner** on February 24, 2020. This year marked the 35th

Anniversary of the Sisterhood Dinner. The event's theme was, "Writing the Next Chapter". Originally called the Susan B. Anthony Dinner, the Sisterhood Dinner changed its name in 1999 to encompass all aspects of the achievements of women. The Women's Center leads the planning team for this event in collaboration with a subgroup of CSW members. This year's event program included a reading of Sonya Renee Taylor's poem "The Body is Not an Apology" by graduate students Shantoneeka Zorn, Rasheeda Fletcher, and undergraduate student James Daniels. Our keynote speaker for this year's event was Kendra Johnson, Executive Director for Equality NC. In addition, a special tribute was paid this year during the Dinner to the employees who helped make parental leave possible, and for the first time ever, the Chancellor was in attendance at this event. The Equity for Women Awards are also given out at the Sisterhood Dinner. This award is intended to recognize a student, faculty and staff member at NC State for their work towards gender equity the previous year. 22 individuals were nominated this past year and four awards were given out. This year's award winners were: Elizabeth Nelson (Faculty), Delisha Hinton (Staff), Kony Chatterjee (Graduate Student) and Jackie Lanning (Undergraduate student). Attendance at this year's Sisterhood dinner again came close to maxing out the Talley Ballrooms. We were able to sell 74 tables for the Sisterhood Dinner with 592 individuals in attendance. In addition, the Women's Center was able to raise \$3,062 towards programming from sales during the events Silent Auction. **(University Strategic Goals 2 & 4)**

### **Drop-in Counseling**

The Women's Center continued to host staff from the Counseling Center for Drop-in Counseling hours. Drop-in hours occurred from 2pm - 4pm every Monday in the Women's Center. Counselors utilized the lounge area in the Center to make themselves visible to students seeking support and then moved to unoccupied staff offices to hold private, confidential counseling sessions with students in need. **(University Strategic Goals 1)**

### **Exam Week Programming**

The Women's Center continued to offer programming and distress activities for students during both the Fall and Spring semester. During the Fall semester, offerings included massages, cookie decorating, painting opportunities and crafting. In addition, the Center was open until 9pm each day of finals week as a way to give students additional locations to study.

During the Spring Semester, due to Covid-19, exam week activities were digital. Graduate assistant, Chaniqua Simpson created a widely-shared Exam Week Self-Care Toolkit ([go.ncsu.edu/selflovetoolkit](http://go.ncsu.edu/selflovetoolkit)) and held three additional virtual activities including a movie night, an online space to draw/doodle and a journaling share back session for folks who engaged with the journaling prompts in the self-love toolkit. **(University Strategic Goals 1)**

## Feminist Fridays

Feminist Fridays are student initiated and facilitated conversations centered on topics of gender and equity. These hour-long facilitated conversations creatively incorporate a theoretical lens, and ask challenging questions. Feminist Fridays are meant to foster community, encourage authenticity, and embrace a multiplicity of truths. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for transformative learning through discussion and critical reflection, often provoking dissonance and attending to the intersections of one's micro or individual level characteristics and how they interact with macro level systemic issues. The variety of topics each semester reflects both the creativity and the passion of the community at the Women's Center. Each of the student-facilitated discussions opens the door to more intentional dialogue about gender, equity and social justice.

Attendance varied from moderate numbers to high turnout (anywhere from 3 to 35 participants); the time of the semester influenced the number of students who attended each session. Based on the information gathered from assessment data, there was an overwhelming indication that participants felt their voices were heard and enjoyed the conversations and topics. Many expressed interest in doing their own Feminist Friday and learned new theories to apply to their lives. (**University Strategic Goals 1 & 3**)

### Topics covered this year include:

9/6	Feminist Friday Planning Party
9/13	Going Against the Dynasty
9/27	Intergenerational Trauma and Relationships with Our Mothers
10/4	Tenemos Nuestros Ancestros (We Have Our Ancestors)
10/25	Data Bias
11/01	Feminism/Final Girl in Horror Movies
11/08	Colorism
11/15	Medical Disparities in Childbirth
11/22	Who is the Virgin Conversation about the Virgin Mary
1/17	Feminist Friday Interest Meeting
1/24	Feminist Friday Planning Party #1
1/31	I'll Be There for Who? Conversation about Friends
1/31	Feminist Friday Planning Party #2
2/7	Disney: The Past, Princesses, and Prejudices
2/14	Let's Talk about Love
2/28	Harry Potter & The Not So Magical World
2/28	Feminist Friday Planning Party #3
3/31	Astrology and Activism (via Zoom)
4/3	The History of Take Back the Night (via Zoom)
4/10	Gender and Autism (via Zoom)

## **From Theory to Praxis**

This is the second year that the Women's Center has held "From Theory to Praxis". This event is an on-going collaboration with the GLBT Center created to intentionally unpack different methods to bridge gaps between theoretical discussions and actionable change by emphasizing the authenticity and the truths that participants bring to conversations. Each event averaged 2-6 students. Program outcomes centered on engaging and familiarizing participants with the different theories examined during each event, creatively cultivating a sense of community through deconstructing difficult ideologies, becoming aware of the necessity in critiquing, and making accessible, challenging theoretical literature. This year's sessions focused on The Radical Potential of Queer Politics. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 3)**

## **The Masculinities Project**

The purpose of the Masculinities Project is to address issues of gender inequity by examining the links between historical patriarchal oppression and current systemic and institutional manifestations. Over eight sessions, students use both gender theory and personal narratives of real-life experiences to develop their own lens.

Following the 2019 pilot of The Masculinities Project, the Women's Center launched the second cohort in January of 2020. The 2020 cohort included nine participants, one student intern and two staff facilitators from the Women's Center and the Counseling Center. The cohort was scheduled to meet every other week for eight sessions, however they were only successful in meeting for three sessions in person. Two sessions were rescheduled due to inclement weather and the remaining sessions were cancelled in March due to COVID-19. The remainder of the sessions and the final project were unable to transition online because of the importance of group relationship building, in person reflections and conversation, and final creative portraiture project. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 3)**

## **Interpersonal Violence Advocacy Services**

Direct survivor support continued to be a rapidly increasing area of focus for the Women's Center. This Academic Year,<sup>1</sup> 92 students utilized our survivor advocacy services, a slight increase from our caseload of 89 students in AY 2018-2019. When breaking down this year by semester, however, a more vivid picture emerges. For example, during Fall Semester 2019 we saw a nearly 50% increase in students served compared to Fall Semester 2018, while in Spring Semester 2020 our case numbers leveled off. Due to COVID-19, many students had to relocate out of the area and thus may have declined to report new incidents or sought support from local resources rather than from the Women's Center. Another factor to consider is that in years past, more than 40% of all students initiated outreach to us through our walk-in services, which we

---

<sup>1</sup> For ease of reporting, we record cases for the Academic Year based on August 1-July 31 each year. As such, this report includes data up to the end of May 2020. It is possible that additional cases will be reported in the months of June and July 2020.

had to suspend during the pandemic. As a result, only 26% of students reached us this year through walk-in services. In addition, we typically receive several disclosures during April's Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) events, but many of those events were either canceled or moved online and therefore students might have been less likely to participate and/or disclose as a result. For those students who were already connected to the Women's Center pre-COVID, they typically continued utilizing our remote support services.

Of those students who received advocacy services from the Women's Center this past year, 36% of them sought support for sexual assault, 10% for domestic/dating violence, 10% for stalking, 9% for secondary survivor support, 7% for sexual harassment, and 7% for more than one type of interpersonal violence (IPV). Another 22% sought support for other reasons, including sexual exploitation, childhood abuse, mental health concerns related to trauma, as well as retriggered trauma. Thirty percent of those seeking support for "other" reasons were classified as unknown since not all students will disclose enough details for us to identify a specific type of IPV. Students were provided with support ranging from crisis intervention and emotional support to academic accommodations, safety planning, and accompaniment to counseling, medical care, police, legal services, Title IX investigation interviews, student conduct hearings, and/or court.

Eight percent of students who sought our support this year reached us through the *24/7 Sexual Assault Helpline*.<sup>2</sup> The Helpline (919-515-4444) provides on-call advocacy services for students who need after-hours resources, referrals, and/or accompaniment to campus or community resources, including police and sexual assault forensic exams. Calls to the line continue to be low, though requests to our companion advocate email (ncsuadvocate@ncsu.edu) are increasing. Due to multiple staff transitions across the university, there are relatively few staff who are currently able to take shifts on the phone. We continue to invite staff across various teams and departments to become advocates and we offer training at least twice a year to new advocates in order to reduce the workload of the three primary on-call advocates who currently staff the after-hours helpline. In addition, we have hired a new IPV Response Coordinator who will begin providing survivor advocacy and on-call services in July.

In addition to providing one-on-one support, we also continued to track and monitor cases, types of violence reported, resources provided, and referrals received in order to identify trends across cases. As a result, we have been able to be proactive in addressing systems-level change to tackle some of the recurring issues our student survivors are facing, including limited availability of timely forensic exams, lack of trauma-informed local law enforcement investigations and mental health referrals, as well as inconsistent processes across colleges for requesting academic accommodations. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 4)**

---

<sup>2</sup> The largest percentage of students we supported this year reached out to us directly by way of our walk-in services (26% this year vs 41% last year), followed by referrals from CARES, Title IX, and friends. Ten percent of students came to us this year through our programming efforts (disclosures during/after events).

## Interpersonal Violence Prevention

This year, the Women's Center continued deepening relationships with campus partners to expand the reach of IPV training and workshops to a broader array of community constituents. For example, we partnered with faculty from sociology, social work, counseling, and communications to deliver a total of eight workshops on IPV, reaching an estimated 200 students. Women's Center staff also conducted a workshop on IPV and healthy relationships, reaching 45 students in the Women in Science and Engineering Living & Learning Village. In addition, the Women's Center partnered with the Athletics Department for a variety of awareness events, tabling, and training for 140 incoming new and transfer student-athletes.

In addition to reaching new campus constituents through the above-mentioned trainings, the Women's Center also specifically targeted IPV service professionals with training on supporting survivors of color. Thirty service professionals attended, including NC State's Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), Title IX investigators, survivor advocates, law enforcement officers, Student Conduct officers, and Counseling Center staff. In addition, nearly 150 employees across the university, including all staff of Student Health Services, as well as Helpline Advocates, Transportation staff, and College of Education staff, received information and/or training on IPV, resources, the Safe at State website, and how to support students who might disclose to them.

The Women's Center also continued our longstanding history of training numerous student staff and leaders on IPV prevention and response over the course of the summer. As part of this process, we trained 287 Resident Advisors, Resident Directors, and Community Directors; 10 Fraternity and Sorority Life Community Resident Directors; 54 Orientation Leaders and Summer Start Mentors; 86 Living & Learning Village Mentors; and 23 Women's Center student workers and volunteers. These trainings included recognition of IPV and its impacts on student survivors, development of skills related to proper responses to IPV disclosures, and increased awareness of IPV-related supports and resources on and off campus. Additional training occurred during the Fall Semester, reaching 40 Inter-Residence Council members from across the residence halls.

In partnership with NC State Athletics, the Women's Center undertook a new initiative this academic year, featuring the nationally-recognized [Set The Expectation](#) campaign. The Women's Center worked with the Athletics administration to create language to promote the visit of Brenda Tracy, survivor, activist and founder of Set the Expectation. The Women's center provided support person availability during Ms. Tracy's speak-out for student-athletes, and led a community circle following the event for students to process the impact of her story. Following the event, the Women's Center and The Movement Peer Educators tabled at a Men's Soccer game to raise awareness, and created information to be distributed at the Set the Expectation football game, including the Sexual Assault Helpline number projected on the Jumbotron during the halftime talk, and supported various relationship-building efforts and collaborations

between the Movement Peer Educators and student-athletes (see The Movement Peer Educators for more details). The Women's Center also supported participants from two additional workshops requested by members of Fraternity and Sorority life to sign the "Set the Expectation Community Pledge."

The Women's Center also takes the lead on organizing and implementing the **Title IX New Student Orientation Sessions**. This past year 30 sessions of the IPV presentation were held during New Student Orientation during the Summer and Winter breaks. As part of this process, all first year, transfer, and Spring Connection students received training on how to identify IPV, apply basic bystander intervention skills, recognize and offer on- and off-campus support and resources for student survivors, and utilize the Safe at State website for reporting and resource referral. We connected with 6573 students through these orientation sessions. To support us in this process, we trained 12 Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) staff members who assisted in facilitating these sessions. Final assessments demonstrated that the IPV sessions were the highest-rated sessions of all New Student Orientation presentations delivered, with students stating they received useful information about: 1) IPV (99.4% of first year students and 98.3% of transfer students), 2) on- and off-campus resources (99.2% of first year students and 98.5% of transfer students), and 3) bystander intervention skills (98.4% of first year students and 98.3% of transfer students). **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 4)**

### **The Movement Peer Educators**

The Movement is a group of trained interpersonal violence prevention peer educators with the NC State Women's Center. The Movement seeks to end interpersonal violence at NC State through peer education, advocacy, and collaborative action in order to ensure a safe and equitable campus community.

During the 2019-2020 academic year, The Movement completed a transition from a recognized student group to paid student staff members with the NC State Women's Center. This transition served to create long-term sustainability, increased training capacity for student peer educators, and broader reach in the NC State community. As part of this transition, the Women's Center hired six Movement leaders (President, Vice President, Director of Events, Director of Outreach, Secretary, and Treasurer) who led the group through the transition. The Leadership Team along with the IPV Prevention Education Coordinator developed leadership team roles and responsibilities, facilitated weekly Monday night meetings, coordinated student-led continuing education presentations, and premiered The Movement's first segment around prevention education on IGTV. In addition, they created new social media content, updated workshop agreements, finalized a new logo design and new marketing graphics, and created standardized PowerPoints and facilitator guides to ensure consistency of workshops among facilitators.

In addition to these advancements, The Women's Center piloted our first facilitator training open to any current member of The Movement. In March 2020, 14 returning members received advanced training to become trained workshop facilitators.

Throughout the 2019-2020 year, The Movement workshop facilitators led 21 workshops, reaching approximately 244 people with information and practical skills related to consent, healthy relationships, sexual violence, stalking, bystander intervention, and supporting survivors. The total number of students trained decreased during this year due to 1) Capping workshop capacity at 25 participants to respond to space capacity of the Women's Center and to create a more interactive learning environment for participants, and 2) Upcoming pre-scheduled and requested workshops cancelled due to the University closure in response to COVID-19.

In addition to workshops, The Movement peer educators hosted awareness-raising events Like Fresh Check Day with University Wellness and Recreation at the beginning of the semester, and additional large scale awareness events during Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October), Stalking Awareness Month (January), and Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April). These events included in-person tabling activities in Talley Student Union, at an athletic game, and online via social media campaigns, reaching hundreds more students with critical IPV information. Peer educators were even featured on the [local news](#) to highlight critical information about stalking behaviors and resources during Stalking Awareness Month in January 2020.

The Movement conducted outreach and accepted a new cohort of members at the beginning of both Fall and Spring semesters. A total of 22 new members completed the 12-hour training over six weeks at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters.

Goals for the 2020-2021 year include creating an alumni network, broadening partnerships on campus within Campus Community Centers, Athletics, Fraternity and Sorority Life, and first year students most at risk to experience IPV during the "Red Zone." (**University Strategic Goals 1 & 3**)

### **Social Media (and communication)**

The intention of our social media presence is to increase our visibility through more direct and intentional engagement with our followers/students. In addition, our followers, such as campus partners, were able to retweet our events. At the end of the 2019-2020 academic year, we saw an increase of followers on all platforms including: 1530 followers on Facebook, 1238 on Instagram (our most significant increase), and 627 on Twitter. This year we saw an increase in engagement from February thru March. We believe that was related to Covid-19 and the communities desire to get information and stay connected. The Women's Center also sends out a weekly newsletter highlighting upcoming events. This newsletter goes out to approximately 2930 individuals. Over the course of the year, we have a 52% open rate and a 3% click rate.

### **Volunteers**

This year, we increased volunteer engagement by offering more opportunities for

students, staff, and faculty to engage with the Women's Center. We started a volunteer newsletter that has over 400 subscribers. We had around 10-15 consistent and active volunteers working with our front desks, doing data entry, sorting library books, assisting with large events and tabling for the Women's Center.

### **Women of Welch (WOW)**

As the Women's Center is the campus partner for WOW, the NC State Women's Center Assistant Director, Angela Gay, continued to serve on the advisory board for the Women of Welch Living and Learning Village. Bri Elum served as the Community Director for the Triad and lead for the WOW Village and after her departure, Tiffany Chan served in the interim. Building on last year's work, the Women's Center and the Village Director worked to create and implement learning outcomes for the village in addition to an intentionally designed programming curriculum which synthesized the village's learning outcomes. The Women's Center also assisted in the planning and delivery of the WOW Retreats in August and January. There were a total of 23 students that participated in the Village this year. The Women's Center hosted the Women of Welch for workshops including two dinners and discussions. There were three presentations from the WOW Village for the 2020 Gender & Equity Research Symposium. Additionally, Assistant Director, Angela Gay, assisted with coordination for the WOW Spring Break Trip to Washington, DC. The WC Director, Lisa LaBarbera-Mascote attended the WOW Spring Break Trip. WOW members who presented in the vGERS 2020 were [highlighted in the Academic Affairs Newsletter and website as linked](#).

Based on limitedly available assessment data (available from WOW End of Year diorama presentations, informal assessment, and formal assessment) participants were able to articulate all of the learning outcomes of WOW as well as apply them to everyday situations and concepts learned in the classroom. Furthermore, they were able to identify and articulate the purpose of the Women's Center as an advisory member of the Women of Welch Learning Village. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 3, & 5)**

### **Womxn of Color Support Group (With Prevention Services)**

Under supervision of Assistant Director, the Women's Center, Counselor Education Intern Arielle Johnson co-created and co-lead a support group for Womxn of Color alongside Domonique Carter in Prevention Services. Participants in this group were provided a space to authentically and holistically discuss their individual experiences on campus. Through fellowship, discussion and shared experiences, participants worked to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, to cultivate a space to question and challenge ideas and develop tools to reflect on their internal voice, all while practicing vulnerability and working to support each other. The number of participants varied at each session with a maximum of 10 attendees in a session and a minimum of 2 attendees in a session. The space met bi-weekly in the Women's Center and then met virtually post COVID-19. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 3, & 5)**

## **One Time Programming Efforts and Partnerships**

### **Radical Joy Contra Tiempo (October 21, 2019)**

A partnership with NC State Live, this radical joy session was for students, staff, and faculty interested in engaging with the themes of radical joy, race, restorative justice, and the sacred feminine. The focus of the session was centered on re-telling our stories and "holding space" to hear each other's stories in ways that yield us power. It reclaims the dominant deficit-based narrative of people of color in this country as being underprivileged, voiceless, powerless, and victimized, and flips it on its head by embodying stories of joy collected from communities of color in South Los Angeles. There were seven participants who participated in the radical joy session. **(University Strategic Goals 5)**

### **Campus Community Center Training & Women's Center Specific Trainings**

August 19th - 20th the Women's Center in addition to all Campus Community Centers hosted day long training and leadership development workshops for the students of the campus community centers and their respective centers. Approximately twenty students attended the CCC training and seven students were in attendance for the women's center training. These development opportunities created space for students to cross-dialogue about the work for the CCC and their own hopes for leadership development and engagement.

### **Fall & Spring Open House and Welcome to the Women's Center programs (August 20th, 22nd and 28th 2019 & January 8th and 15th 2020)**

The Women's Center hosted Open House events in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Open House focused on awareness building regarding the programs, groups sponsored by the Women's Center and also provided students with an opportunity to learn about all the different ways to get involved. This year, the Student Programming Assistants coordinated both open house events. In addition to Open House this year, the Women's Center added 3 Welcome to the Women's Center events. During these events, Women's Center staff were available throughout the day in the Center Lounge (5210 Talley Student Union) to answer any questions folx might have about upcoming programs, specifically those that require applications. In addition, staff led multiple focused presentations to review upcoming programming, specifically those that had an application process. **(University Strategic Goal 1)**

### **Listening Parties:**

#### **Lizzo (August 23, 2019)**

The Women's Center continued with Listening Parties this year and in Fall 2019 partnered with the Women of Welch Living and Learning Village for a

listening party of the Lizzo focused on body politics and its intersection with race, class, and gender within higher education institutions. Themes addressed included, but not limited to, understanding intersectionality, systems of oppression, and interdisciplinary research that may address deconstructing beauty ideals; authentic living; revolutionary self-care; self-definition; and mental health. There were 65 people present with 57 people swiped in. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 3, & 5)**

### **The Masculinity Mixtape (January 10, 2020)**

In partnership with the Black Male Initiative and the GLBT Center, the Women's Center hosted 53 people for a listening of select artists for the discussion of the plurality of masculinity across race, class, and gender. The artists selected were Hozier, Young MA, and DaBaby. Post listening conversation included discussions of mental health, rape culture, substance use and abuse among student populations, and deconstructing the ways masculinity shows up in higher education institutions and society. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 3, & 5)**

### **Chocolate Festival (September 20, 2019)**

The Women's Center hosted the 17th annual Chocolate Festival combining breast cancer awareness and wellness with chocolate sampling and a silent auction. The event was part of Parents and Families Weekend and drew a crowd of over 1300 parents, students, faculty, and staff who enjoyed the chocolate samplings and learned about breast cancer. Seventeen chocolate vendors and seven health, wellness and student groups worked with over 100 volunteers to raise \$11,605 for Women's Center programs and the Kay Yow Breast Cancer Fund. Staff from the NC State Women's Center was able to make a \$3000 donation to the Kay Yow Cancer Fund this year. The Chocolate Festival is a campus tradition and is designated #39 on the "Top 54 Things to Do at NC State" list. **(University Strategic Goal 5)**

### **Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM, October 2019)**

The Women's Center raised awareness for domestic and dating violence throughout the month of October. This year, The Movement hosted 2 peer-led trainings focused on healthy relationships and supporting survivors, interacted with the campus community at a Halloween-themed DVAM tabling event focused on consent, and hosted [\*Escalation\*](#), a film-based discussion focused on identifying and understanding the unhealthy relationship behaviors depicted in the film.

In addition, we partnered with the GLBT Center to provide a workshop on IPV in the GLBT Community, and joined the Counseling Center in co-hosting expressive arts therapy focused on gardening for survivor healing. In collaboration with the Masculinities Project and The Movement peer educators, we also hosted a Lunch and Learn where participants listened to a Reckonings podcast episode on how a survivor

and her perpetrator found justice through campus prevention education programming and a restorative justice process. Following the podcast, participants engaged in a guided discussion around masculinity, sexual violence, and shifting culture through education. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 4)**

### **Womxn of Color Retreat (October 9-13, 2019)**

The Womxn of Color Retreat was open to undergraduate and graduate students who self-identified as Womxn of Color and who sought to challenge, explore, and nurture themselves authentically through self-exploration with other Womxn of Color. The Womxn of Color Retreat serves to create a community focused on finding meaning, healing, support, and trust with the purpose of all participants moving towards actualization by focusing on the inner parts of the self. Furthermore, the broad goal of the Womxn of Color Retreat is to create a space where Womxn of Color can express themselves, explore their multiple realities and intersecting identities in addition to discovering and critically examining the intricacies of power, leadership, solidarity, sisterhood, and scholarship. The retreat has 4 learning outcomes

This year, 44 individuals registered to attend and 41 who attended, including five field facilitators, two student logistic interns, one counselor, one on-site coordinator, and one graduate assistant. The WOCR utilized a pre-written curriculum delivered by field facilitators, coordinator, and student logistics interns. The retreat was held at the Franklinton Center in Whitakers, NC.

At the end of the retreat participants were asked to respond briefly to the prompt “as a result of attending the Womxn of Color Retreat, I am.” These are their responses: *“Aware and motivated. Muthafuckin’ motivated. Redeemed. Understood. Lighter. I have power. Hopeful. Resilient. I am more powerful. More in love. I will make an effort. Aware. Confident. A better listener. Empowered. Community. Empowered. Powerful. I have let go. I am inspired. Ready. Proud. Accepted. Inspired. Secure. I am encouraged. Powerful. I do belong. Lively. Heard.”* **(University Strategic Goals 1, 2, 4 & 5)**

### **Love Your Body Day Summit (October 18, 2019)**

Supported by the National Organization for Women, National Love Your Body Day brings attention to beauty myths and stereotypes that have been ingrained into dominant media and dialogue. To take this a step further, the Women’s Center organized a Love Your Body Day Summit. In collaboration with our campus partners including the GLBT Center, Multicultural Student Affairs, Women and Gender Studies, the Oaks Scholars Program, NPHC, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences we hosted a day long summit from 9:30am - 6:30pm concluding with keynote by Natalie Bullock Brown. The LYBD Summit was designed to shift the narrative around body positivity to be more inclusive, decolonized, and intentional. The theme “Revolutionizing All Bodies: Finding Space in Institutions Not Made for You.” Overall, the day focused on creating a culture of accountability in how we think about and care for our bodies as well as the bodies of others across race, gender, and other socially constructed identities.

Using the conceptual framework of the Women's Center each workshop brought forth a number of ways to engage in practices that bring about healthier ways of living, finding joy, speaking out around injustice, and decolonizing the negative beliefs inscribed on people, their bodies, and their way of existing in the world. There were approximately 144 people engaging in the workshops throughout the day. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 2, 4 & 5)**

### **Exhibition (February 11, 2020 - March 21, 2020)**

The Women's Center, in partnership with the African American Cultural Center, curated an exhibit for Black History & Womxn's HERstory month, entitled, Existence as Resistance: The Magic in Blackness. Other partnerships included NCSU Libraries for WolfTales and the GLBT Center for post opening discussions and workshops. The exhibit was open to NC State faculty, staff, students, and surrounding community members to showcase and center the experiences of Black, African, and African American faculty, staff, and students at NC State through an afrofuturistic perspective. The exhibit opened with a reception garnering over 160 people in attendance. The exhibit itself featured the work of 32 participants and the photography of Jacqueline Perry of the OIED Communications team. A pop-up gallery of the exhibit was shown at the 2020 Sisterhood Dinner. Engagement with the exhibit was halted and unable to be measured due to unexpected closure of the gallery due to COVID-19. One exhibit workshop was held with the Counseling Center. A virtual gallery experience was developed during the closure of the gallery and was launched during a presentation at vGERS 2020. The site can be viewed at [go.ncsu.edu/blackfutures](https://go.ncsu.edu/blackfutures). **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 5)**

### **Women's HERstory Month**

The theme for this year's Women's Herstory Month was: *Our Voices, Our Bodies, Our Stories: Strategies for Radical Self-Love*. The Women's Center set out a calendar of events for the month and also solicited programs from the campus community. 8 programs were submitted by offices and departments across NC State for addition in the WHM calendar. Programs were highlighted in the Women's Center newsletter, added to Facebook as events, and shown as additions to the calendar on the Women's Center website.

The keynote speaker for Womxn's Herstory month was Sonya Renee Taylor, author of *The Body is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love*. Taylor's visit marked the beginning of Womxn's Herstory Month on February 25th and 26th. Taylor engaged 25 campus student leaders in a workshop, did a meet and greet with the Spring semester book club, and a keynote talk. There were around 30 people in attendance for the book club meet and greet and around 250 people at the keynote speech. After the speech, Taylor signed copies of her book for guests.

Due to COVID-19 and Spring Break occurring right before we began socially isolating, many of our programs that were scheduled/advertised for the month were

cancelled/postponed/or went digital. The Women's Center was able to focus some of our on-going programming, specifically Feminist Friday sessions in recognition of Women's HERstory month. The Feminist Friday topic in March was "Astrology, Activism, and Self-Actualization: Using the Stars to Connect with our Radical Self-Love." This Feminist Friday was done via Zoom. Other Women's Center Women's HERstory Month programming included Tunnel Painting for International Women's Day on March 3rd (#EachforEqual). **(University Strategic Goals 1& 3)**

### **ASB Guatemala: Gender Issues (March 7 - 14, 2020)**

The Women's Center's annual Alternative Service Break (ASB) trip to Guatemala was hosted again this year by our local partner, CEDEPCA. Eleven students (including one student leader) and a faculty advisor, the Associate Director of the Women's Center, made the trip this year. The group celebrated International Women's Day on March 8th by passing out flyers about womxn's rights and then joining Guatemalan activists in a march through the capital in support of a gender-equitable and socially-just world without violence. Throughout the rest of the week, participants met with local and Indigenous womxn's rights groups to learn more about their experiences in overcoming trauma and adversity while leading their local communities in healing and recovery.

During daily reflection activities, the ASB team explored traditional understandings of masculinity, femininity, and non-binary gendered identities, the role of gender in contemporary society, how gender influences the daily lives of Guatemalans, and how activists use their voice to create change through an examination of current and historical social justice movements across the globe. These issues were closely analyzed within the Guatemalan context, but the team also considered how these same themes manifest themselves in the U.S., particularly around the role of U.S. intervention during the Guatemalan civil war as well as in the ongoing crisis at the U.S. border. Significant emphasis was placed on the learning aspect of educating ourselves in the historical, cultural, and political dynamics of gender issues and bringing that newfound knowledge back to share with others to help elicit change. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic escalating rapidly during this time, the group was able to complete the trip and return home safely, just 48 hours before Guatemala closed its borders. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 5)**

### **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April 2020)**

Throughout the month of April, the Women's Center furthered the national conversation surrounding sexual assault prevention through its programs and trainings. While all in-person programming was cancelled, including various Movement peer educator workshops, and a Supporting Survivors Training for Faculty and Staff, the Women's Center was able to transition some SAAM programming to a virtual format.

The Women's Center hosted "Interpersonal and Sexual Violence in the GLBT Community" via zoom, a two-hour workshop open to NC State undergraduates, graduate students, staff, faculty and alumni as well as interested members of the local

community. The workshop, which was attended by 35 individuals, is designed to help participants understand the ways that interpersonal and sexual violence are experienced by members of the GLBT community, reasons why GLBT people are less likely to report, and ways to support GLBT survivors.

In addition, we were able to transition “Survivor Expressive Arts Therapy: Creating our Way into Resilience” to a virtual zoom event. This program is an ongoing partnership with the Counseling Center open to self-identified survivors of IPV. During this event, Counseling Center staff led students in a trauma-informed event to create written or visual pieces focused on resilience and healing. Participation was limited to 10 students.

### **The Clothesline Project**

Adapted from the national campaign, NC State’s Clothesline Project gives primary and secondary survivors of interpersonal violence a space to speak and heal through artwork. Previously, students, faculty, and staff could drop into one of the four campus community centers during designated weeks throughout the month to create a t-shirt. In addition, nearly 60 t-shirts were displayed in the Talley Student Union Atrium, as well as in each of the four campus community centers, the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and Student Involvement. Due to COVID-19 and the closure of campus, the Women’s Center moved the Clothesline Project to a virtual format. Members of the campus community were able to design a t-shirt (various formats were used including digital graphic design and artwork drawn by hand and documented by photography) and each design was submitted to the Women Center’s. Designs were then shared with the larger community via social media through an Instagram post and Instagram story as well as on Facebook. While this format did not allow visitors to Talley Student Union to experience the exhibit, the online component created greater outreach to Women’s Center social media followers and received additional views, likes and shares which helps to raise awareness about Women’s Center resources and other campus resources related to sexual assault. The virtual platform also reached beyond the Women’s Center’s followers thanks to reporting in the [Technician](#).

### **Take Back the Night (April 8, 2020)**

Take Back the Night is an annual event on campus, which serves as both a primary and tertiary prevention effort focused on awareness-raising about sexual assault as well as campus and community resources. It is generally comprised of three main components: 1) a rally where students and staff speak about the importance of sexual assault prevention and have the opportunity to visit resource tables staffed by campus and community partners, 2) a march around campus to visibly demonstrate the community’s collective voice and action, and 3) a survivor speak-out to create a space for survivors to connect and heal.

Due to COVID-19, the rally portion was moved to an online format while the march and survivor speak-out were cancelled. The online rally focused on honoring the

strength, courage, and resiliency of NC State activists, advocates and survivors. The Rally, facilitated via zoom, highlighted a [video](#) documenting the [history of Take Back the Night](#) by graduate student Samantha Aamot; a keynote focused on resilience of survivors of color and ways to move forward during this challenging time by Dr. Stephanie Helms-Pickett, Associate Vice Provost of OIED; and a panel of NC State student leaders from The Movement on leadership and self-care during COVID-19. The rally ended with an overview of how to access resources from campus and community partners including the Women’s Center support services, the NC State Counseling Center, NC State GLBT Center, Student Legal Services, the Office of Student Conduct, Office of Equal Opportunity and Equity, and InterAct. The rally was attended by approximately 50 participants. **(University Strategic Goals 1 & 4)**

### **Gender & Equity Research Symposium (April 9, 2020)**

The Gender & Equity Research Symposium was created to spotlight research that promotes a more equitable and justice-oriented society. The symposium, an initiative of the Women’s Center, catalyzes the interdisciplinary nature of gender and equity work at NC State University by engaging in the model of thinking and doing, thus putting social justice research into action. The symposium is intended to provide our community of scholars an opportunity to present their scholarly research. Participants submitted proposals for posters and oral presentations. Additionally, students had the ability to engage in student roundtables. All presentations were selected by a blind review by the planning committee, excluding the AD for the Women’s Center. The focus of all presentations was to address gender, intersectional identity, and equity in research. The symposium moved to a virtual format due to COVID-19. The theme for vGERS 2020 was “Amplifying the Value of Lived Experience in Scholarship.” Partnerships for this program included Biological Sciences, Women and Gender Studies, Study Abroad, the WOW Living and Learning Village, OIED Communications, WomenNC, NCSU Libraries, and the IRB Office. There were over 225 people registered and hosted 63 researchers and scholars who presented their research. **(University Strategic Goals 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)**

## **C. DATA**

### **Women’s Center in the News**

The Women’s Center was highlighted or quoted in multiple campus community outlets this year. Below you will find links to *Technician*, *Nubian Message*, and *Diversity Digest* articles, as well as a local news piece, that related to the work of the Women’s Center for the 2019-2020 academic year.

- August 16, 2019: [Attend Community Centers Open House](#)
- August 16, 2019: [Favorite NC State Event Returns: Chocolate Festival](#)
- August 26, 2019: [Lizzo Brings Body Discussions to Women’s Center](#)
- August 30, 2019: [Women’s Center Steps Forward with Engagement](#)

- September 10, 2019: [Women's Center Book Club Empowers Women, Promotes Community](#)
- September 13, 2019: [Did You Know NC State has Lactation Spaces? Take the Survey](#)
- September 13, 2019: [Student Athletes Lead Effort Against Sexual Violence](#)
- September 24, 2019: [Administrators Defend Proposed Student Fee Increases at Town Hall](#)
- September 27, 2019: [On #SetTheExpectation...What Now?](#)
- October 11, 2019: [Reflections on the Silent Witness Project](#)
- October 14, 2019: [Women's Center Hosts 2019 Love Your Body Day Summit](#)
- October 24, 2019: [Eligible UNC System Employees to Receive Paid Parental Leave for the First Time](#)
- November 7, 2019: [Community Centers Educate about "Revolutionizing All Bodies"](#)
- November 7, 2019: [Womxn of Color Retreat: A Letter from Resilient Voices](#)
- November 8, 2019: [Film Screening Draws Attention to Dating Violence](#)
- November 19, 2019: [Women's Center Hosts Afrofuturistic Photoshoot to Celebrate Blackness](#)
- January 10, 2020: [Paid Parental Leave Becomes Reality After Four-Year Effort](#)
- January 21, 2020: [NC State Students, Survivors Raise Awareness about Stalking on Campus as Cases Rise \(ABC11\)](#)
- January 24, 2020: [Stalking Awareness Workshop Educates the Community](#)
- February 7, 2020: [Sonya Renee Taylor to Keynote Womxn's HERstory Month](#)
- February 19, 2020: [Women's Center Opens Gallery with Afrofuturistic Focus](#)
- February 21, 2020: [Art Gallery Exhibit Opens with "Magical" Evening](#)
- February 21, 2020: [Equity for Women Award Nominees Announced](#)
- February 21, 2020: [Designate for Diversity on Day of Giving](#)
- February 27, 2020: [Women's Center Displays Black Excellence Through Art](#)
- March 6, 2020: [New Options to Support Diversity on Day of Giving](#)
- March 6, 2020: [It's Womxn's HERstory Month -- Celebrate with Us](#)
- March 6, 2020: [Sonya Renee Taylor Promotes Radical Self-Love](#)
- March 20, 2020: [Interview with Evelyn Reiman, Molly Hays Glander Fund Co-Founder](#)
- April 3, 2020: [Register for the Virtual Gender and Equity Research Symposium](#)
- April 3, 2020: [Tracing the History of Take Back the Night at NC State](#)
- April 9, 2020: [Gender & Equity Research Symposium Goes Online](#)
- April 17, 2020: [COVID-19's Unique Impacts on Survivors of Interpersonal Violence](#)
- April 17, 2020: [A Survivor Toolkit for Navigating the COVID-19 Crisis](#)
- May 1, 2020: [NC State Pioneer Rhonda Sutton: Serving, Advocating, Leading](#)
- May 6, 2020: [Clothesline Project Shared Virtually to Spread Interpersonal Violence Awareness](#)
- May 28, 2020: [Women's, GLBT, African American Cultural Center Discuss Ups and Downs of an Online Community](#)

## Combined Swipe Card / Attendance Data

Annually the Women's Center works to take account of the students, faculty and staff who are attending our programs. While we did not collect data at every single event this past year, we were able to gain information from the following programs: 16 Movement Workshops, 7 Feminist Fridays, 2 Open House Events, 1 Volunteer Orientation, 2 Listening Parties, and 6 Individual Events

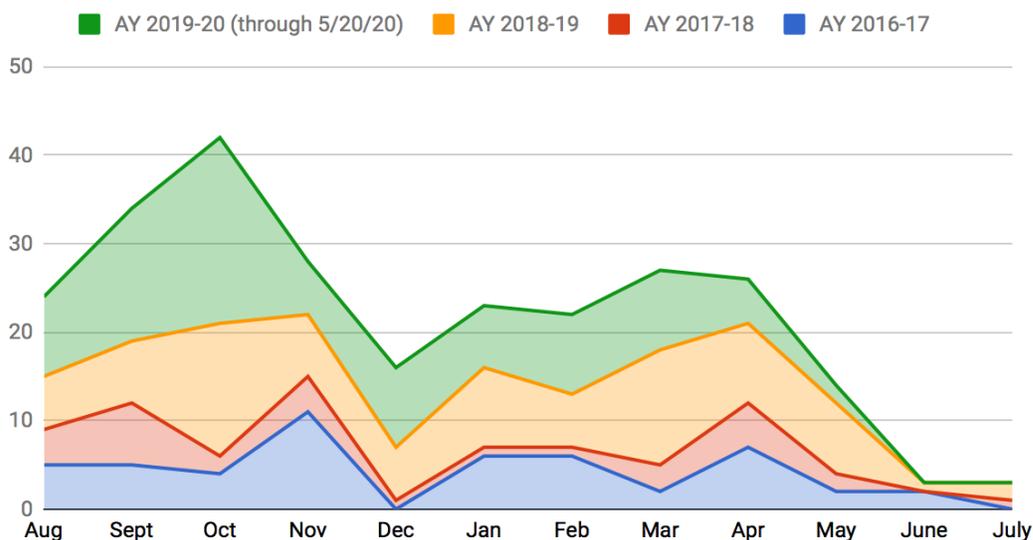
The chart below provides a demographic breakdown of those who attended these programs and gives a general idea of who comes to Women's Center events, and what campus groups are not being represented in attendance.

<b>WC Combined Swipe Data Report</b>			
<i>Total Attendance: 425</i>			
<b>Gender</b>	Male	61	14%
	Female	364	86%
	All	425	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		All	%
	African American	82	19.3%
	Asian	62	14.6%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4	0.9%
	American Indian/Native Alaskan	2	0.5%
	White	232	54.6%
	Hispanic	35	8.2%
	Nspec	8	1.9%
	All	425	
<i>This total will likely be higher than the total due to multiple ethnicities.</i>			
<b>Class Standing</b>		All	%
	Freshman	91	21.4%
	Sophomore	124	29.2%
	Junior	102	24.0%
	Senior	86	20.2%
	Graduate	14	3.3%
	Other	8	1.9%
All	425		
<b>College</b>		All	%
	CALS	31	7.3%
	Education	14	3.3%
	Other	22	5.2%
	CHASS	115	27.1%
	Natural Resources	23	5.4%
	Engineering	71	16.7%
	Management	20	4.7%
	Vet Medicine	0	0.0%
	Sciences	65	15.3%
	Design	6	1.4%
	Textiles	29	6.8%
University College	29	6.8%	
All	425		
<b>Age</b>	Under 18	1	0.2%
	18	84	19.8%
	19	171	40.2%
	20	86	20.2%
	21	51	12.0%
	22-25	26	6.1%
	26+	6	1.4%

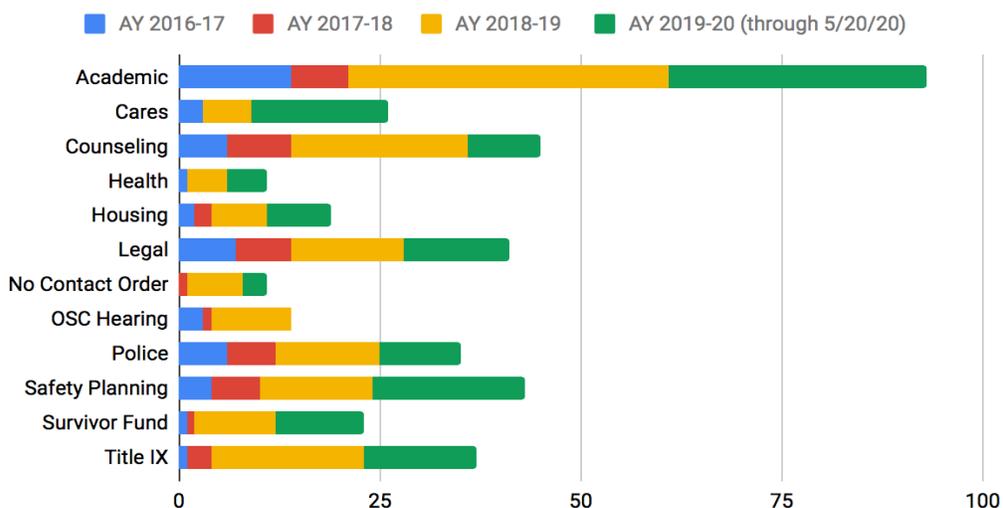
## Interpersonal Violence Data Points

Janine Kossen has been working to organize data regarding the students that we connect with for support around Interpersonal Violence. This data is meant to help inform our practice as well as help identify trends in the NC State Community. Janine shares this data with the Women’s Center staff on a monthly basis. Some of the data of interest for this report can be found below. (all information listed is aggregated and cannot be linked to any one individual that accesses our services)

### Support Seeking by Month, by Year



### Resources Provided, by Year



## **OIED Pilot Assessment model**

The Women's Center was able to submit 3 programs as part of this Pilot Assessment model. Submissions were made for the Womxn of Color Retreat, The Movement Facilitator Training and Feminist Friday. Detailed information can be found below.

### The Womxn of Color Retreat:

#### **Learning Outcomes included:**

- Participants will be able to assess their own agency.
- Participants will be better able to interrogate institutions.
- Participants will learn to transform critical engagement in ways that uncover and create change.
- Participants will be better able to articulate how knowledge is produced.

**Domain of Learning:** Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual

**Level of Learning:** Cultural

**Dimension(s) of identity:** Race, Socioeconomic Status, Religion, National Origin, Body Shape/Size, First Generation, Immigration/Documentation Status, Faculty, Staff, Students, (Undergraduate), Survivors of Interpersonal Violence, Students (Graduate), Sexual Orientation, Gender

**Who the program / initiative was designed for:** Undergraduate and Graduate students

**Core Area:** Recruitment, Retention and Graduation, Mentoring and Leadership Development

### The Movement Facilitator Training

#### **Learning Outcomes included:**

- Participants will understand core components of IPV, peer education and prevention education
- Participants will be knowledgeable of resources on campus
- Participants will effectively interrupt and inform status as a Responsible Employee

- Participants will be familiar with key components of adult learning
- Participants will be introduced to workshop facilitation best practices
- Participants will practice effective public speaking
- Participants will be familiar with The Movement Workshop content and processes
- Participants will develop tools to respond to challenging situations

**Domain of Learning:** Physical, Spiritual

**Level of Learning:** Interpersonal

**Dimension(s) of identity:** Survivors of Interpersonal Violence, Students (Undergraduate), Students (Graduate)

**Who the program / initiative was designed for:** Undergraduate and Graduate Students

**Core Area:** Mentoring and Leadership Development, Institutional/Student/Faculty/Staff Excellence

### Feminist Friday

**Learning Outcomes included:**

- Participants will acquire knowledge about critical and feminist theories.
- Participants will be able to articulate issues affecting social justice.
- Participants will be able to link systems of oppression with the intersections of their own identities.
- Facilitators and/or participants will gain the ability to foster community through facilitated dialogue.

**Domain of Learning:** Intellectual, Comprehend, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual

**Level of Learning:** Communal

**Dimension(s) of identity:** Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Socioeconomic Status, Religion, National Origin, Body Shape/Size, Political Affiliation, Survivors of Interpersonal Violence, Ableism, Students (Undergraduate), Students (Graduate)

**Who the program / initiative was designed for:** Undergraduate and Graduate students

**Core Area:** Campus Culture and Climate, Mentoring and Leadership Development, Institutional/Student/Faculty/Staff Excellence

## **D. Impact of COVID-19**

COVID-19 and our inevitable shift off-campus occurred right in the middle of Womxn's Herstory month and as we were making final arrangements for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the Gender and Equity Research Symposium, both of which occur in April. After some maneuvering, we were able to convert the following programs/events and services to an online format:

- Counseling Drop-In Hours
- Feminist Friday
- Take Back the Night
- The Clothesline Project
- Gender and Equity Research Symposium
- Womxn of Color Support Space
- Finals Week Destress Events

Staff and students made a very quick pivot to not only follow through on some of our signature events, but also to reach out and directly support students. While the transition was not always easy, something that we did learn in all of our virtual transition was that, when internet access was not an issue, an online program format allowed for increased access to programs for not only members of the campus community but also the great triangle community as well. We saw a marked increase in participation for events such as the Gender and Equity Research Symposium specifically from those at other campuses within the UNC System and the local area. Needless to say, the virtual Women's Center did not have the same feel the second half of the Spring that it does during your typical academic year. Students and staff alike missed the ability to drop in and hang out with each other and the staff. We know that our physical space does create a point of connection and security for many students. As a team we will be working to figure out how to continue to make those connections for students as we move into the Fall semester.

Something that has been very clear through this pandemic is the profound impact it has had on student survivors and those who have been sent home to unsafe homes. We've have been able to identify a marked shift in types of violence experienced during COVID-19, with a decrease in sexual assault reports and a tripling of domestic/dating violence reports. In addition, due to the fact that most activity moved online during

COVID-19, we received more reports of stalking and online harassment, as well as reports of financial abuse related to the pandemic.

These trends, especially those associated with COVID-19, prompted us to shift services to remote platforms, which required more in-depth safety planning to ensure students were able to access supports when and where they felt safe to do so. In addition, shifting to remote support required us to build in more time before and after accompaniment to Title IX and law enforcement interviews in order to process survivors' experiences during those interviews as well as address and mitigate heightened levels of generalized anxiety, PTSD, and retriggering events associated with social isolation. To raise awareness of the impact of COVID-19 on survivors, we published two articles in the *Diversity Digest* (on [impacts](#) and [tools for survivors](#)) and launched a social media campaign centered on these impacts. A secondary goal of these efforts was to raise critical funds for the Survivor Fund, which saw an unprecedented 37% increase in applications this year. Forty-four percent of all Survivor Fund disbursements during AY 2019-2020 were allocated during the pandemic, highlighting how important emergency funding has been for survivors at NC State.

## **E. Future Goals and Endeavors**

Currently the Women's Center staff is working hard to envision a Fall and Spring semester with the looming questions of how COVID-19 will continue to impact our work. We are diving into program planning knowing that a quick pivot might be needed and that a continued virtual format is likely in our foreseeable future. In addition, we are preparing to bring on a new staff member during a pandemic when none of us know for sure what operating will look like.

Future goals and endeavors for us right now includes:

- Getting the pulse on what our students need, and how much they can really engage with virtually
- Determining how to create community in a way that will likely be heavily virtual
- Providing ongoing support and advocacy for survivors, especially with changes to Title IX that are about to go into effect.
- Developing a sustainable fundraising strategy for the Survivor Fund
- Drafting a three-, five- and ten-year strategy and implementation plan for IPV prevention education across the NC State campus community.
- Continuing to provide support, connection, and a framework for womxn of color at NC State to find community and thrive
- Beginning (and continuing) to providing space for intentional conversations around whiteness, white supremacy, racism and masculinity on campus