

2020-21 Unit Annual Report: Women's Center

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Description of Women's Center

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.

2020-2021 Impact Story

The Women's Center's impact story for 2020-2021 centers on finding virtual alternatives for healing and support. This past year has taken a toll on us as a community, there is no way around it. As a staff, COVID-19 sent us home and, in many ways, had us watching campus from the sidelines while simultaneously being all in; with and for our students. As the never-ending news cycle propelled the daily stories of racism, sexism, white supremacy, and domestic terrorism into our newsfeeds, we worked to name what was happening historically and in the current day, while creating spaces for students and the community to find support and solidarity. It has been an exhausting year, and we are still here.

The impact story for the Women's Center this year can be found in the stories we were trusted to share and the voices that have been lifted and centered. Examples of this work can be found in programs such as this year's Spring Exhibit, an annual partnership with the African American Cultural Center. [Viral* Blackness: a Zine and Exhibit](#) invited the community to share what Viral* meant for NC State Black students, faculty, staff, alum, and community members during the pandemic. Moving from an in-person gallery exhibit to a virtual zine, this year's exhibit allowed participants to engage and share their stories from a vulnerable and authentic place that reflected the "Fearless, Unapologetic,

Transformative, and Unwavering” ways that they imagined Viral* Blackness. This type of deeply personal work did not just stop there. [The Virtual Women* of Color Retreat](#) as well as The Collective (a support space for women of color curated in partnership with Prevention Services) continued to provide places of support and solidarity for women of color on campus. Throughout the year, sessions for both focused on creating virtual places of connection, where participants felt seen, found community, practiced care and uplifted joy. In community and partnership, the Center's work continued despite our distance.

Reimagining support, healing and visibility has taken many different forms this year as well. From the [Colors of Healing coloring book, designs by survivors for survivors](#) to another year of a [Virtual Take Back the Night](#), survivor support and advocacy might have looked a little different, but the intention and care was still there. Despite being home-based, the number of students who utilized our survivor support services remained consistent with years past. Requests for Survivor Fund distributions also more than doubled this year, in large part due to the economic impact of COVID and the resulting financial insecurity student survivors, in particular, faced. We are eternally grateful for the on-going financial support provided by faculty, staff, alumni and community partners who have helped make the Survivor Fund financially viable this year. Over the course of the past year, the Survivor Fund has received an influx of financial support, including a sizable donation which will endow the Fund in the future. As always, every dollar matters and the Women’s Center continues to focus on fundraising as a way to continue to support our programming and support efforts. You can learn more about giving opportunities at go.ncsu.edu/wcgiving

A year and a half ago, I am not sure any of us would have imagined Zoom as the place that we would spend the majority of our working hours. The Women’s Center staff have worked tirelessly to ensure those square boxes were seen as places of education, advocacy and support. Shifting prevention education online, choreographing hour-long YouTube premiere videos focused on gender, equity, and advocacy, and working in partnership to create support spaces with a focus on racial justice and community support; the virtual world has taken on an entirely different meaning this year. We are still here, we are tired, but we will continue to do what we can to support and advocate as the University moves forward.

Key Programs for 2020-2021

Accountability Project

This Fall, the Women’s Center launched the Accountability Project in partnership with Dr. Elizabeth Nelson from the Women and Gender Studies department and Angel Bowers from Prevention Services. The Accountability Project provides an opportunity for people who identify as white women to begin to deconstruct whiteness, understand their role in upholding systems of oppression, and the impacts these systems have had on them. Utilizing a story circle format with accompanying readings, participants worked

together in small discussion groups to unpack whiteness and work towards developing an anti-racist framework. Eight students participated in this 12-week cohort which met biweekly throughout the course of the semester. One participant shared the following about their experience in the cohort, “Just thank you for creating this space. This is something I've been looking for and I have those people in my life that would like to engage and talk with me about this anti-racist work but this has been the commitment I was hoping for! I loved meeting with people this semester too so thank you for all the work that went into creating this cohort. I WILL remember this!”

Black Trans Liberation Project

The Black Trans Liberation project began as a collaboration across the GLBT Center, Women’s Center, and the African American Cultural Center. What was intended to be a one-time panel discussion in the Spring of 2020 quickly grew into a multi-interview video project. Center staff and student scholars spent the last year reviewing interviews from over 15 faculty, staff, and community organizers who were asked to speak to the question, “What is our personal responsibility for Black trans liberation?” Utilizing qualitative research strategies, student scholars identified three key themes from the interviews and are helping to guide the creation of a 45-minute video teaching tool. Final edits are currently being made to the video and a discussion guide will be finalized this summer. The full video and discussion guide will be launched during the Fall 2021 semester.

Book Club

The Women’s Center held two 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.

Summer Book Club

Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng

During Summer 2020, the Women’s Center students and staff facilitated a six week reading of *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng. Sixty-eight students, faculty and staff registered to be part of this book club and approximately 40 individuals participated over the course of the six weeks. “Little Fires Everywhere explores the weight of secrets, the nature of art and identity, and the ferocious pull of motherhood--and the danger of believing that following the rules can avert disaster.” - *good reads*. Staff facilitators created a facilitation curriculum, complete with additional readings and resources to ensure that readers could take a deeper dive into discussions around racism, white supremacy, white feminism, and redlining, among many others.

Spring Book Club

Sing, Unburied, Sing by Jesmyn Ward

In Spring 2020, the Women's Center students and staff partnered with Prevention Services to facilitate eight discussion sessions focused on *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward. Twelve students, faculty and staff registered to participate in this book club, with each session averaging an attendance of five to eight registrants. *Sing, Unburied, Sing* depicts themes of family, racism in the modern era, childhood innocence, incarceration, and spirituality, as seen through the varying lenses of several characters throughout the book. The facilitators designed a weekly curriculum, with additional readings and resources, to ensure that participants could engage in deeper discussions about racism, family, incarceration, and substance use, and form connections to real world experiences.

Council on the Status of Women

The Council on the Status of Women (CSW) is a University Standing Committee that reports to the Provost. The Women's Center Director, Lisa LaBarbera-Mascote, serves as the resource person/advisor to this committee. During the 2020-2021 academic year, CSW created four advocacy working groups. The policy issues working group focused on the University's response to COVID-19 as well as beginning discussions surrounding pay equity. The professional development working group hosted monthly professional development opportunities open to the entire campus community. The campus climate working group began work on a proposal for a mentorship program for faculty and staff as well as worked to identify gaps and concerns with the University emergency alert (wolf alert) system.

The final working group planned the annual **Sisterhood Celebration** on February 22, 2021. This year's event was, of course, a bit different than the 35 previous events in that we could not gather together for a shared reception and dinner. Instead, the event was pre-recorded and shown via [YouTube Premiere](#). This year's theme, "Normal Never Was," utilized a quote by poet and activist Sonya Renee Taylor to set the tone and provide an opportunity for storytelling. Our keynote speakers were community members who were willing to share their stories from the last year and give a charge to the audience and University to truly dig deep and question what is "normal" and how we should not return back to the status quo pre-COVID. As Taylor says: "Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack." More than 360 individuals registered for this year's event and the video has received 677 views to date.

The Equity for Women Awards were also given out at the Sisterhood Celebration. This award is intended to recognize a student, faculty, and staff member at NC State for their work towards gender equity the previous year. Thirteen individuals were nominated this past year and four awards were given out. This year's award winners were: Jill Sexton

(Faculty), Women and Minority Engineering Program (Staff), Perusi Benson (Graduate Student) and Joanay Tann (Undergraduate Student).

Feminist Friday

Feminist Fridays are student-initiated 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.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, Feminist Friday shifted from a weekly to a bi-weekly schedule to account for the shift to a Zoom platform. Attendance varied from moderate numbers to high turnout (anywhere from 3 to 35 participants), depending on the time of the semester. Based on the information gathered from assessment data, the participants enjoyed the variety of topics offered this year, and were able to apply newly-gained information to their lives and advocacy. In addition, a number of first-time participants expressed interest in facilitating a discussion in the upcoming academic year. The virtual delivery of Feminist Fridays also allowed for higher attendance by faculty and staff members.

Topics covered this year include:

8/21	Feminist Friday Interest Session
9/4	Education Discrimination in our Nation
9/18	Fridging: Tropes in Pop Culture
10/2	Underbelly of Voting
10/16	<i>Rafiki</i> Film Discussion
10/30	Body Positivity vs Body Neutrality
1/22	Feminist Friday Planning Party
2/5	Ecofeminism
2/19	Viral* Blackness & Reclaiming Black Art
3/12	The Revolution On Us - Tattoos in the Workplace
3/26	Roller Skating Never Died!
4/9	Normalizing Menstruation

The Collective

The purpose of The Collective is to create a space for women of color at NC State to form a community, break silos and deepen relationships through facilitated dialogue centered on truth-telling and testimonios. The Collective welcomes cisgender and

transgender women as well as femmes and gender-nonconforming folk. Undergraduate and graduate students and campus-based professional women of color are invited to join as well. Throughout the academic year, The Collective was held virtually to comply with COVID-19 regulations, with each program averaging about 8-10 students and professional staff attendees. Here are a few words from the space:

"OMG!! I love The Collective!!! I have found new activities and ways to cope with being alive during this time. This Collective has been truly amazing and inspirational! ... It was fun to see other counselors and students together...."

Programs facilitated this year include:

9/10	WOC: One Thing We Gona Do is "Flourish"
9/24	Paint Night: Mental & Emotional Health
10/08	#WAP: Womxn of Colors' Sexuality on College Campuses
10/22	Insecure EP/ Watch & Discussion: WOC Relationships and Friendships
11/12	Semester Wrap Up!
2/11	Galentine's Day: Love Thy Self, Love Thy Sister
2/25	Body Beautiful
3/11	It's the Lyric for Me
3/25	The "S" Word
4/8	Don't Drop That Stitch
4/22	Tap In: Centering and Movement with Trap Yoga

Exhibit Opening (February 23, 2021)

The Women's Center, in partnership with the African American Cultural Center, curated an online exhibit for Black History and Women's Herstory Months, entitled, *Viral* Blackness: a zine*. Virtual submissions were open to NC State staff, faculty, and students, and surrounding community members to showcase and center the experiences of Black, African, and African American folk as they experienced the pandemic. The exhibit opened with a reception, featuring Dr. Yaba Blay, which garnered over 45 people in attendance. The exhibit, itself, featured the work of 14 participants including self-portraits, art, essays, poetry and photography. Two exhibit-related events were held: a Feminist Friday/What's on the Table event and a vision board creation. A virtual gallery experience was developed during the closure of the gallery and was launched during a presentation at the Gender and Equity Research Symposium. The site can be viewed at go.ncsu.edu/viralblackness. Because of the nature of the program, we did not do assessments in the traditional way, but participants for the event and other programs expressed that they "loved the zine," and thought it was a great way to bring together different kinds of artistic mediums into one exhibit project.

Fundraising

Over the past three years, the Women's Center has prioritized an extensive fundraising effort in order to raise the visibility of our [four giving funds](#), cultivate new and continuing donors, and strategically plan for future sustainability. To that end, we have developed

individual case statements for our funds, drafted talking points and social media messages, designed branded images, and worked closely with Advancement to elevate our funds to a broader donor base.

As part of these efforts, we participated in two annual Day of Giving campaigns this academic year. On September 16, 2020, we raised \$30,000 and on March 24, 2021, we raised \$4,500 for the work of the Women's Center. In addition to the two Days of Giving, we partnered with Advancement to host a dedicated Giving Tuesday campaign on December 1, 2020. The campaign included a short [video](#) promotion of the Survivor Fund, which Advancement disseminated to their fundraising database. In addition, the university's [Wolfpack Women in Philanthropy](#) group also teamed up with us to promote the Survivor Fund on Giving Tuesday. As a result of these two efforts, we raised nearly \$8,000 from 55 individual donors. In addition, a generous anonymous donor pledged to endow the Survivor Fund at \$125,000 over the next five years, allowing us to ensure the fund's long-term sustainability. **This endowment is especially important as we have doubled the amount of Survivor Funds allocated each year for the past three years. This academic year, for example, we disbursed over \$11,000 in Survivor Fund grants to 17 student survivors versus \$3,800 disbursed the previous year to nine student survivors.**

Virtual Gender & Equity Research Symposium (April 9, 2021)

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. Partnerships for this program included Biological Sciences, Women and Gender Studies, Study Abroad, the WOW Living and Learning Village, OIED Communications, NCSU Libraries.

Once again this year, the symposium was held in a virtual format due to COVID-19. The theme, "Becoming Change Agents in our Theory, Inquiry, and Practice," provided our community of scholars an opportunity to present their scholarly research through posters/lightning and oral presentations. Additionally, students had the ability to engage in student roundtables. More than 105 people registered and we hosted 18 researchers and scholars who presented their research addressing gender, intersectional identity, and equity in research. Four panelists spoke during a lunch panel focused on "Connecting Theory, Inquiry, and Practice." We also hosted two workshops (from the Women's Center and the AACC) and a morning grounding exercise to get the day started. Feedback from attendees included:

"It was a fun, interactive event! It never felt like a conference! I thought the speakers were wonderful and the event flowed nicely. Looking forward to the next event!"

"Just that it was absolutely amazing!! I am leaving the Symposium today with so much knowledge and awareness of intersectional studies and issues, and I loved

the supportive, warm community. I felt so safe and encouraged in presenting and sharing my research."

"Despite the virtual format, I didn't feel drained by this event. I liked the breaks scattered throughout, and the use of breakout rooms for more intimate conversations."

"I really enjoyed it and I feel like it is an important part of the university."

Love Your Body Day (October 14, 2020)

The Love Your Body Day Summit was created to teach participants how to challenge the ways in which society views bodies of varying shapes, sizes, genders, races, and backgrounds. Through the summit, we recognize the range of systems that affect our perception of our own bodies as well as other's bodies and how we can change those perceptions. Each year during the summit, we ask how we can cultivate the best version of ourselves so that we can be fully present in our communities. For the 2020 summit, we chose the theme, "How to Love Your Body when there are so Many Attacks Against It: The Three Pandemics." During the summit, we hosted sessions to explore how to navigate threats on ourselves such as COVID-19, violence on Black bodies, and dating violence. This theme was created to acknowledge what currently endangers our bodies and to remind us how we can take care of ourselves and others in revolutionary ways. The full day of sessions included a keynote address by Jett Okoye, MSW, LCSW, "Finding Stillness During Three Pandemics", a conversation on how to find safety in stillness despite the reality of threat. Subsequent sessions covered topics such as: Intersections of Identity, Violence, and Healing; Self Love During the Pandemics (Providing Space for Sexual Health & Wellbeing); Radical-Self Love: Healing from the Hurt of 2020, as well as meditation and mindfulness sessions. For this day-long event, 20-40 participants attended each of the seven sessions.

Virtual Women of Color Retreat (October 28, February 26, March 11, April 23, April 26)

This year, the Women of Color Retreat operated in a virtual format to support women of color who sought to challenge, explore, and nurture themselves authentically through self-exploration with other women of color. The virtual 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 Women of Color Retreat is to create a space where women 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.

This year, we partnered with The Collective, the GLBT Center, the African American Cultural Center, Multicultural Student Affairs, and Kappa Phi Lambda to sponsor and design five events:

Let's Talk: The Politics of "WOC" (October 28, 2020). This panel event was attended by 18 people, including students, staff, and community members. We had a total of three panelists from different racial and ethnic backgrounds: Korean American, Black multiracial (Indo-Afro Guyanese) immigrant, and Afro-Latinx. After a one hour panel, participants were allowed to have intimate group conversations with one of the panelists and each other. After the end of the program, we asked participants to do an assessment about how the program met their needs and expectations, with several responses noted below:

- "As an Asian American woman, I thought it was awesome that Gina was a panelist. I felt represented and heard. It made me feel accepted and that I had a place to speak at the table."
- "I was able to ask about generational issues and colorism that affects Asian and immigrant communities, and hearing from other people of color was so empowering and affirming. It was full of energy and very specific and to the point."
- "It gave me feels from last year's WOOCR and held the validation that needed after battling through this semester."
- "Talking about the intersectionality of being a WOC, and supporting each other in today's politics. How being a WOC is political, and not something we can hide, it's something that we have to embrace and use to our fullest extent to continue striving."

Game Night (February 26, 2021) and "It's the Lyrics for Me Listening Party with The Collective (March 11, 2021). These events were informal and casual fun events for students to attend to relax and practice self-care.

I Am Not your Fetish: Conversation on the Fetishization of Women of Color (April 23, 2021). This event, held in partnership with Phi Kappa Lambda, was a continued conversation in response to the on-going anti-Asian sentiments and the violent hate crimes against Asian and Asian-American women that took place this year in Atlanta. Thirty-eight people attended this event. The event allowed students and staff to learn and talk together about the harm that fetishization causes women of color, and to look at emergent strategies on ways to use individual and collective power to support each other in solidarity. Participants enjoyed the conversation and felt like "a lot of good information was provided during the session."

End-of-Semester: DIY Herbal Workshop and Conversation (April 26, 2021). Our last event of the semester was a program and discussion on connecting various herbal practices of communities of color and creating items together to aid in self-care and body care. This workshop was attended by 30 people and we provided supplies for up to 35 persons. Participants were able to talk about their own experiences in herbs, learn more about herbs, oils, and other items, and talk about how white supremacy shows up in self-care practices. For example, we talked about how many of the items used during the workshop were found in colonized countries and have been resold/repackaged to folks as "luxury" items.

Participants expressed overwhelming gratitude for the program and wanted to see more programs such as this one, especially because it was accessible and included a hands-on portion, a speaker/workshop leader, and an opportunity to create items in community with people. Some feedback included:

- "This event exceeded my expectations. It was planned well and Lexus was very knowledgeable about herbs and the benefits of using them on your face/body."
- "I really needed to mindfully care for myself with all of the stress surrounding graduation and other stuff. It was amazing to hear from other women of color about their experiences with decolonizing their religious/spiritual practices, as it is something I really struggle to find other people to talk to about. I was very grateful to find like-minded people through this event, and to see people I haven't seen in a while!"
- "This was absolutely wonderful. I am so grateful for the experience. I know there is no way putting all these materials together was easy or stress-free, so thank you for doing it—and doing it so well! I really loved how clearly labeled everything was, and how I wasn't worried about using too much material and running out. I appreciate you all <3"
- "I experienced community, had fun and learned something that will allow me to continue to take care of me! This was relaxing and stress relieving!"

Women's Herstory Month

The theme for this year's virtual Women's Herstory Month was *Our Voices, Our Bodies, Our Stories: The Revolution Within Us*. Throughout the month of March, we explored the relationships between history and our personal experiences. We took a journey to explore how we are shaped by our environments (our homes, locations, communities, relationships, politics, and culture) and how we can use these experiences to understand our role in shaping change. We believe that the revolution, how we disrupt systemic oppression, is always within us, but we need to understand our histories to understand how we can bring our revolution to the forefront. As we root ourselves, our experiences, and the spaces we occupy, we have an opportunity to build a sustainable revolution. Highlighted programming throughout March included the following:

- **“An Emergent Conversation: Rest, Revolution, and Liberation”**
Keynote: This combined Women's Herstory Month and Black History Month keynote featuring Dr. Yaba Blay, Dr. Natalie Bullock Brown, and students Kali Fillhart and Joanay Tann. Our intention was to weave together discussions on the work of liberation and acting as sites for revolution as we learn to foreground our own joy and take action. Participants were asked to think about the ways that we may engage institutions of higher education as restful, revolutionary, and liberatory practices. In addition, participants had the opportunity to obtain a copy of Dr. Yaba Blay's new book, *One Drop*, which explores the extent to which historical definitions of race continue to shape contemporary racial

identities and lived experiences of racial difference. Sixty two individuals engaged with us in conversation and 40 were offered copies of the book.

- **Untangling our Roots:** Untangling our Roots was an interactive workshop that helped participants discover who they are, where they come from, and the reality of their upbringing. With the help of University Libraries staff, participants utilized resources such as the Racial Dot Map, Native-Land.ca, and campus databases to research and discuss how their environment and social context influences who they are, and how to pave their path to discovering the revolution within them. Six individuals participated in the workshop.
- **Exploiting Inequity: A Pandemic's Gendered and Racial Toll on the Women and Families in North Carolina:** Members of the North Carolina Council for Women Advisory Board joined the campus community via Zoom to share findings from their December 2020 report on the status of women and families in North Carolina. This report presented findings on health and safety, economy and education, and civic and political life for women in North Carolina within the specific context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty members of the campus community joined us for this discussion.
- **Honoring Ourselves as History:** In this journaling workshop, participants were tasked with thinking of themselves, individually and collectively, as a historical atlas in order to use their experiences as a map to a freer future. The workshop was facilitated by Erin Nae, and was attended by approximately 25 participants. Participants were guided through several writing prompts focused on addressing their place and purpose in the spaces they navigate, and were given the opportunity to share with the larger group. Additionally, participants were engaged in a discussion about the importance of taking time for themselves on a regular basis.

WomenNC

For the past several years, the Women's Center has partnered with WomenNC, a local non-profit organization, to support two to three NC State students annually in the [CSW Leadership Training Program](#). This initiative is a prestigious year-long leadership development program that pairs selected university students from the Triangle with research mentors from RTI's Global Gender Center. With the guidance of their "femtors," scholars conduct independent research on a specific instance of gender inequality in North Carolina, identify policy solutions to address the issue, and advocate for their policy recommendations at the local and state level, as well as at the Women's Center's Gender and Equity Research Symposium and at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. The Women's Center works closely with OIED, the Office of Global Engagement, Student Leadership and Engagement, faculty from Women and Gender Studies, and the College Deans to promote the program, host an annual [info session](#), recruit applicants, provide funding to cover the cost of the program, and offer ongoing technical assistance and feedback to WomenNC.

Interpersonal Violence Advocacy and Services

This Academic Year,¹ 87 students utilized our survivor advocacy services, a slight decrease from our caseload of 100 students in AY 2019-2020. With six weeks remaining in this academic year, it is anticipated that we will come close to matching last year's caseload. That, in and of itself, is remarkable given the fact that this academic year we operated completely remotely due to COVID-19, whereas two-thirds of the previous academic year we held in-person services prior to the onset of the pandemic. Moreover, we tracked a corresponding increase in the uptake of our support services the longer the pandemic continued. For example, in Spring 2021, we supported double the number of survivors each month relative to Spring 2020 when COVID was just taking hold.

Of those students who received advocacy services from the Women's Center this past year, 34% of them sought support for sexual assault, 22% for domestic/dating violence, 11% for more than one type of interpersonal violence (IPV), 7% for stalking, 5% for secondary survivor support, and 4% for sexual harassment. Another 18% sought support for other reasons, including childhood sexual abuse, retriggered trauma, and threats of violence. Forty-seven 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.

While we have a robust system of supports available on-campus, there are some limitations that may prevent survivors from utilizing available services, including a student's enrollment status, conflict of interest policies for on-campus legal services, lack of forensic exam availability on-campus, and local law enforcement jurisdiction. In those cases, we must refer students to off-campus legal, medical, counseling, and law enforcement services. Many of these resources can often be overstretched and understaffed or ill-equipped to support college-age survivors, resulting in less availability and support for our students, not to mention transportation and financial challenges. These added layers of complexity, along with differences in trauma-informed training and practices, can be significant barriers to students utilizing off-campus resources.

IPV Prevention Education

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Each year, the Women's Center recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month during the Month of October. During October 2020, the Women's Center transitioned various programs to a virtual format.

¹ For ease of reporting, we record cases for the Academic Year based on July 1-June 30 each year. As such, this report includes data up to mid-May 2021.

Highlighted events included:

- **Expressive Arts Therapy:** This virtual program was a partnership between the Counseling Center and the Women's Center, and was open to NC State students who are self-identified survivors of interpersonal violence. During the event, student survivors reflected on their own personal journey and explored areas of struggle and resilience by creating written, visual art, or musical pieces to rewrite their personal narrative, using music from the Broadway hit *Hamilton* as a starting point.
- **Silent Witness:** While ordinarily a free-standing exhibit in Talley Student Union, this year, we hosted Silent Witness on Instagram Live. Each day for a week, the Movement Peer Educators went live with a Women's Center staff person to share the story of an individual life ended by domestic or dating violence homicide right here in North Carolina. In addition to personalizing these stories, the Instagram Live segments also highlighted on-campus resources to support students.
- **Colors of Healing (NEW!):** The Colors of Healing Coloring book was a new program designed to provide a supportive and uplifting experience for survivors during the isolation of the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff were invited to create their own unique coloring book designs which were then consolidated into a coloring book format which was printed and made available as a pdf to download from the website. Coloring books were also included in the Sexual Assault Awareness Month give-away bags described in the SAAM section.

Stalking Awareness Month

In January 2021, the Women's Center and the Movement Peer Educators highlighted the impacts of stalking through a day-long series of programs for Stalking Awareness Month. The focus of these workshops was to highlight online stalking behaviors that Women's Center staff noticed as trends this year during COVID-19. Programming aimed to provide resources for survivors of stalking, promote healing during this challenging year, and provide leadership opportunities to students to serve on panels, moderate panels, and facilitate interactive workshops. Forty-eight members of the community participated throughout the day, including presenters and moderators.

Three of the four workshops were recorded and uploaded to YouTube:

[Supporting Survivors: Women's Center Staff Panel](#)

[Supporting Survivors: Movement Peer Educators](#)

[Safety Planning: How to Respond to Stalking](#)

Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM)

Throughout the month, members of the Movement Peer Educators set up tables on campus (outdoors, masked and socially distanced), inviting students to attend virtual SAAM events and handing out special SAAM swag bags. Overall, we had 117 students

visit the tables and sign up for virtual events - many of these students were not previously connected with our work.

Highlighted events included:

- **Take Back the Night:** NC State's annual [Take Back the Night](#) is an event that reclaims the night and our campus for survivors of sexual assault. The Women's Center honors the strength, courage, and resiliency of NC State activists, advocates, and survivors who work to create a stronger and safer campus community. A virtual rally was held, featuring Tashana Flewwellin, President of the Movement Peer Educators, Juniper Nie, Vice President of the Movement Peer Educators, and Alexius Pearson, the IPV Response Coordinator who joined the Women's Center staff in summer 2020. The entire Take Back the Night broadcast is available on the Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity [YouTube channel](#).
- **Human Trafficking Workshop (NEW!):** This new workshop was designed to inform faculty, staff, and students about the dangers of human trafficking. Participants learned about warning signs, risk factors, and resources for survivors.
- **IPV in the South Asian Community:** In this workshop, participants were provided with information regarding domestic violence, relationship violence, and other forms of interpersonal violence, as well as specific barriers that survivors from South Asian Communities may face. Participants learned about the cycle of violence, recognizing patriarchy within cultural norms, the impact on South Asian survivors, and resources on and off campus for those impacted by IPV.
- **Denim Day:** This year, the Women's Center and the Movement Peer Educators hosted a social media campaign and a virtual Denim Day activism workshop which taught participants how to advocate for change in their communities locally and nationally.
- **Expressive Arts Therapy:** This virtual program was a partnership between the Counseling Center and the Women's Center, and was open to NC State students who are self-identified survivors of interpersonal violence. The workshop invited student survivors to reflect on the things they wish to let go of by focusing on the words of comfort, compassion, and support they needed to hear from themselves. Through written reflection, participants created visual art pieces utilizing a therapeutic practice known as torn paper transformation.

Faculty and Staff Training Program

Developing content for a Faculty and Staff training program was a major focus for the 2020-2021 year. During this year, we created learning outcomes, researched content, built an online curriculum facilitators' guide, slides, and evaluation/assessment forms for three major workshops. Each workshop was piloted at least once during the year, with various tweaks and edits made.

- IPV on a College Campus for Faculty and Staff
- Supporting Survivors for Faculty and Staff
- Building a Trauma-Informed Practice for Faculty and Staff

- IPV Prevention Education Overview (still in draft form, presented for the Gender Equity Research Symposium)

Sixty-two unique individuals participated in these trainings overall, with 54 faculty/staff attending one training, seven attending two trainings, and one person who attended all three training sessions.

In addition to piloting these workshops, we also began program planning for a cohort training model, with feedback from campus partners and constituents. The Pack Survivor Support Alliance (PSSA) will launch in the Fall of 2021 to provide ongoing training, support and community for faculty and staff.

The Movement Peer Educators

- **New Member Training:** New member training was postponed in Fall 2019 due to COVID as we did not have enough time to transition all of the training materials to a virtual format. In the Spring semester, however, 14 students completed six weeks (12 hours) of virtual training to join the Movement! New members received training on how to understand interpersonal violence, how to support survivors, the science and cycles of trauma, and the intersectional impacts of interpersonal violence.
- **Monday All Members Meetings:** The Movement facilitated 13 meetings each semester. All meetings were held virtually over Zoom. Meeting topics included planning for awareness months, team-building activities, and continuing education topics based on student-identified interests, including:
 - IPV and the Biden/Harris administration
 - IPV and COVID-19
 - Title IX changes (with guest speaker Dr. David Elrod, Associate Vice Provost for Equal Opportunity and Equity)
 - Sexually transmitted infections
 - Supporting students of color (with guest speaker Alexius Pearson, IPV Response Coordinator with the Women's Center)
 - Self care practices
 - IPV during the holidays
 - IPV and gun violence
 - Online safety (tiktok, only fans, dating apps, etc.)
 - Sex education/abstinence-only education and its impact on IPV
 - IPV in disabled communities
 - Carceral feminism
 - Tone policing

In the Fall semester, we started with about 12 members attending meetings. Attendance in our cohort programs declined as the year went on due to Zoom fatigue, time off due to Covid, a shift in focus to academics, etc.

- **Movement Facilitator Training:** The first facilitator training was held in March 2020 prior to the COVID shut down. Training was not held in Fall 2020 or Spring 2021 due to the switch to online workshops, a shortened semester, and time

constraints. Additional ad-hoc training was provided to facilitators through Zoom recordings and individual check-ins.

- **Movement Workshops:**
 - During the Fall semester, we transitioned three Movement Workshops into a virtual format and trained students to facilitate those workshops virtually. We also launched the “Movement Challenge” for the first time - a challenge for student groups and organizations to complete all three trainings in one semester. Trainings included Consent 101, Healthy Relationships, and Bystander Behavior 101. These introductory trainings provide groups with foundational knowledge in primary prevention strategies to prevent IPV from occurring. The Movement facilitated 26 workshops in total (nearly double the number of workshops facilitated during previous semesters). All total, the Movement trained 117 students in Consent, 103 in Healthy Relationships, and 74 in Bystander Behavior.
 - During the Spring semester, we worked closely with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL) to promote effective bystander intervention on and off campus. In these workshops, we explained the Bystander Effect, how to intervene using the “3 D’s” (directly intervening, distracting, and delegating), and worked through specific scenarios to practice intervening. Throughout the semester, the Movement facilitated 11 workshops, reaching over 400 participants through these virtual Zoom workshops.
- **Movement Leadership Team:** We hired five student leaders for the Leadership Team in the 2020-2021 year. We were able to hold retreats at the beginning of each semester for planning, but beyond that, it was difficult to connect with student leaders and find any regular meeting time where all Leadership Team members were able to be present.

New Student Orientation Online Modules

During Summer 2020, we collaborated with New Student Programs and the Equal Opportunity and Equity unit (EOE) to develop and pre-film a virtual training module that could be used remotely to train incoming students on IPV prevention and response as in-person training was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions. We had to re-film our segment in November 2020 for the Spring semester due to changes in Title IX regulations and university response. We were also able to incorporate speakers of multiple identities in the second filming, which we did not have time to coordinate for the first recording. Ninety-three hundred incoming first-year and transfer students viewed our online module in [Summer 2020](#) (for Fall admission) and 933 did so in [Spring 2021](#) (for Spring admission).

Additional IPV Prevention Education Trainings by Request

- Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) diversity and inclusion and IPV roundtable requested by FSL in order to facilitate a supportive space for students to talk about IPV experiences and issues they are facing
- MGC Title IX presentation in partnership with EOE
- Training with Theta Tau fraternity in partnership with EOE in response to IPV issues (multiple meetings)
- Love your Body Day Presentation
- Bystander Behaviors for BSW class (Prof Mary Morris)
- Supporting Survivors for MSW class (Prof Mary Morris)
- GERS Presentation on Prevention Education Overview

IPV Prevention Best Practices Research

During the Spring of 2021 semester, we engaged an intern from the Women and Gender Studies program, Poppy Boze, in an independent research project focused on identifying best practices in IPV prevention education. Over the course of the semester, Poppy completed an extensive literature review and analyzed the 2019 campus climate survey responses to identify trends related to prevalence of IPV at NC State, likelihood of reporting as well as intervening as a bystander, and participants' experiences with seeking supportive services on-campus. Based on the LitReview and the campus climate data, Poppy identified gaps in our programming and outreach, and offered recommendations for how to address those gaps and mitigate barriers to support-seeking. As a culminating experience of the semester-long project, Poppy presented her research and findings to the Women's Center staff, Sexual Assault Helpline advocates, and to the Senior Director of the Campus Community Centers. The valuable research she completed will help us immensely in creating a strategy for IPV prevention and response across the university.

Impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 impacted every aspect of how we operated as a Center this year. We moved and transitioned all of our programs to virtual formats, put systems in place in hopes of avoiding Zoom bombings, worked to check in with students and campus partners on a consistent basis, created staff virtual coworking spaces and communication strategies, prepackaged and mailed supplies for hands-on programs, and yet didn't miss a beat on the opportunities and spaces that we were able to create for students. COVID-19 completely changed the way that we interfaced with the campus community and how we did business. Simple tasks like picking up a Survivor Fund check often turned into a multi-day, multi-person, multi-stop process while we simultaneously had an increase in requests. What could have taken a quick walk across campus now involved timing, mileage, waiting in cars, fear of exposure and frustration. Even asking a colleague a

simple question became a challenge. What would have been a quick walk down the hall turned into a Zoom meeting that was wedged into a day already full of Zoom meetings.

Not only did COVID alter how we prepared for programs and office operations, but it also impacted how students interacted with us. By the end of the year, we saw a significant drop-off in student attendance at meetings and programs. We also heard from students about impacts on their academics. Zoom fatigue is real and it showed up in how our students chose to engage. And yet through it all, staff continued to show up, show care, and do all that we could to be present with our students.

Having said that, our staff are tired, we are worn out, and we are depleted. This year, we asked our staff to continue to show up while they simultaneously managed multiple levels of trauma. We cared for the NC State community while also caring for family members, mourning the loss of family and friends, teaching children virtually, dealing with racial injustice, police brutality, interpersonal violence, mental health concerns, loneliness and isolation, and the list goes on. It has been too much...it is *still* too much. Burnout is real. Exhaustion is real. This year, our staff has held space for so many, but not for themselves. This issue will not go away and likely will only intensify as we roll very quickly into a year that is set to look like in-person years from the past. We have cared for so many this year, but who cares for us?

Impact on survivor support services

What has also been very clear throughout this pandemic is the profound impact it has had on student survivors. Four specific trends arose this year that can be directly traced to COVID-19: a reversal in semesterly support-seeking behavior, a shift in types of IPV reported, an increase in financial need, and an increase in calls and emails to the Helpline.

In a typical academic year, the first eight to ten weeks of the Fall semester are known as the "red zone" when the vast majority of reports come in for IPV, with cases leveling off in the Spring semester. However, this year, we experienced a complete reversal with numbers being much lower in the Fall and much higher in the Spring. For example, the number of new disclosures dropped off with the start of Fall 2020 due to the continued impact of COVID-19, including the closure of housing facilities shortly after the semester began. The Fall semester also ended several weeks early, resulting in a sharp decrease in support-seeking at the end of November and all throughout December. Those numbers steadily increased as Spring semester continued and brought us back to pre-COVID levels of reporting and support-seeking, ultimately resulting in a doubling of cases each month in Spring 2021 relative to Spring 2020.

We have also identified a marked shift in types of violence experienced during COVID-19, with a doubling of domestic/dating violence reports relative to last year. Students who sought support from us noted restrictions on their mobility, financial abuse and significant disruptions to financial well-being due to job losses, as well as the effect of compounded isolation as a result of domestic/dating violence on top of COVID-related

restrictions. With the transition of so much of one's daily life shifting to online platforms, we also recorded an increase in online harassment as well as reports of sexual assault committed by individuals using online dating apps. For example, there was a significant increase in stalking behaviors reported alongside other forms of IPV (e.g., students reported domestic/dating violence *and* stalking or sexual assault *and* stalking). As a result, safety planning became one of the top resources provided this year, with double the number of students receiving safety planning this year compared to past academic years.

COVID-19 also decimated the U.S. economy, which disproportionately impacted student survivors. Many survivors lost their jobs due to layoffs and business closures, resulting in multiple levels of insecurity: financial, housing, food, physical safety, and emotional well-being. As a result, for the third year in a row, applications to the Survivor Fund increased, highlighting how important emergency funding has been for survivors at NC State.

Lastly, it's important to note that 43% of students who sought our support this year reached us through the 24/7 Sexual Assault Helpline (919-515-4444) and our companion advocate email (ncsuadvocate@ncsu.edu). The Helpline 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. Given the fact that we were operating completely remotely and had no in-person walk-in services this year, this represents a five-fold increase over the prior academic year. Thanks to strategic marketing campaigns via online platforms, our services gained more visibility and more traction. At the same time, however, a notable number of students who had reached out for support via our Helpline declined to meet with us once we explained our mandatory reporting obligations.

Future Goals and Endeavors

30th Anniversary

As the Women's Center prepares to celebrate our 30th Anniversary during the 2021-2022 academic year, we are planning for multiple activities which will hopefully meet the following four goals:

- Goal 1: Tell our story
 - Share broadly the history of where we came from and the story of where we are now.
- Goal 2: Focus on stewardship
 - Introduce our community to the financial ways in which they can support our work and cultivate relationships that will enhance our financial solvency in the long term.
- Goal 3: Celebrate our success

- Have fun and acknowledge all the work that has gone into the last 30 years!
- Goal 4: Chart our Future
 - Take a step back and evaluate our work and where we are going. What should the next 30 years of the Women’s Center look like?

We hope to meet these goals through a number of different activities that are reflective, celebratory, and focused on looking towards the future.

IPV Prevention Education

As we continue to expand and deepen our IPV prevention work in the coming year, we hope to achieve the following goals:

- Goal 1: Launch the Pack Survivor Support Alliance (PSSA)
 - Train 40-60 faculty and staff in three IPV workshops designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills to create trauma-informed classrooms and workplaces.
- Goal 2: Continue the “Movement Challenge”
 - Provide three foundational workshops - Consent, Healthy Relationships, and Bystander Behavior - for incoming first year students in residence halls.
- Goal 3: Develop additional 201 workshops
 - Create new workshop offerings focused more on identity groups and conversation for deeper comprehension and application.
- Goal 4: Deepen existing partnerships with the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and Athletics
 - Continue to explore additional opportunities to expand prevention training offerings for Greek organizations and student-athletes.

Additional Resources

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* and *Diversity Digest* articles that related to the work of the Women’s Center for the 2020-2021 academic year.

- June 1, 2020: [Campus Community Centers: Response to Racial Violence](#)
- June 10, 2020: [Women’s Center points to “Little Fires Everywhere” for summer book club](#)
- July 2, 2020: [Women’s Center Welcomes New IPV Response Coordinator](#)
- July 13, 2020: [Title IX town hall addresses policy changes, protections, resources under new regulation](#)
- July 16, 2020: [Student Government responds to national Title IX legislation,](#)

[represents student interest](#)

- August 12, 2020: [How to report sexual misconduct, resources for students](#)
- September 30, 2020: [Campus experts encourage students to learn about consent, dating app safety](#)
- October 2, 2020: [Love Your Body Day: Discuss Navigating Three Pandemics and Healing](#)
- October 4, 2020: [Trainings for the Campus Community on IPV](#)
- October 4, 2020: [Take a Stand Against Domestic Violence](#)
- October 16, 2020: [Campus Community Centers Continue Support Virtually](#)
- October 29, 2020: [Women's Center creates original coloring book in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#)
- October 29, 2020: [Annual Sisterhood Event Seeks Video Speaker Submissions](#)
- November 11, 2020: [Women's Center incorporates zine into their yearly spring exhibit, amplifying Black voices](#)
- November 12, 2020: [Womxn of Color Retreat Goes Virtual](#)
- November 12, 2020: [Nominations Open for Equity for Women Awards](#)
- November 12, 2020: [Tips for Self-Care during Finals Week](#)
- January 14, 2021: [Gender and Equity Research Symposium Calls for Proposals](#)
- January 20, 2021: ['Sing, Unburied, Sing' is novel of choice for Women's Center spring book club](#)
- January 29, 2021: [Stalking Awareness Takes Focus in the Women's Center](#)
- February 11, 2021: [It's More than Just Stigma: Systemic Barriers to Eating Disorder Treatment](#)
- February 11, 2021: [Women's Herstory Month: The Revolution Within Us](#)
- February 12, 2021: [Viral* as in: Fearless, Unapologetic, Transformative, Unwavering](#)
- February 12, 2021: [Join Us for the Virtual Sisterhood Celebration](#)
- February 17, 2021: [Online dating: a marvel of modern society or a major hit to self esteem?](#)
- February 26, 2021: [Making Women's Herstory Month more Inclusive of Trans People](#)
- February 26, 2021: [An Emergent Conversation: Rest, Revolution and Liberation](#)
- February 26, 2021: [Sisterhood Celebration Provides Reflections on "Normal Never Was"](#)
- March 11, 2021: [Day of Giving Profile: Kali Fillhart, '21](#)
- March 24, 2021: [Women's Center hosts month of events for Women's HERstory Month](#)
- March 25, 2021: [Sexual Assault Awareness Month: How Can We Help Those at Risk?](#)
- March 26, 2021: [Join Us for the Virtual Gender and Equity Research Symposium](#)
- April 10, 2021: [What Is Denim Day, Where Did It Start?](#)
- April 15, 2021: [Learn about the Clothesline Project & Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#)
- April 22, 2021: [Did You Miss Take Back the Night? Watch Now.](#)
- May 9, 2021: [Trauma and Returning to "Normal" Life After COVID-19](#)