Women at Virginia Tech

Newsletter, Spring 2010

The Women's Center celebrates sixteen *sweet* years at VT!

On March 31st, 2010, we celebrated our "Sweet 16" Women's Center style! We hosted a dessert reception to recognize and say thank you to all of the friends, colleagues and partners who make our work possible each and every day. As we celebrated this important anniversary milestone, we remembered and honored the Women's Center's history on the Virginia Tech campus while also turning our attention to how we might work to create an even stronger and better tomorrow. As a Women's Center, we challenge ourselves every day to think critically about the issues that impact the lives of women and in celebration of sixteen *sweet* years, we engaged members of the Hokie community in doing the same.

The staff of the Women's Center at Virginia Tech

During the spring semester, we issued The Challenge: a call to each and every Hokie to do SIXTEEN things to increase their awareness of women's and gender issues, to educate others, and to make a difference for women and girls, locally and globally. The response was overwhelmingly positive. We have been moved and humbled by the individual actions, big and small, that have been undertaken to meet The Challenge. And we deeply appreciate all of those who engaged with The Challenge in support of our work. ***Thank you for all YOU do!!***

The Challenge Display
Actions undertaken by Hokies to improve the lives of women and girls

We asked individuals who met The Challenge to submit a list of the actions that they engaged in. We were also excited to hear from Hillel at Virginia Tech who undertook a "group challenge." Here are just some of the responses we received from everyone:

Organized volunteers for The Clothesline Project ▸ Participated in the mobile town hall ▸ Read the Presidential Proclamation on Women's History Month ▸ Discussed women's issues with men friends ▸ Had an inspiring conversation with a woman who left her abuser ▸ Worked in a Miami Women's Center over spring break ▸ Began the tradition of an orange on the Seder Plate for Passover, signifying lesbian, gay and women's awareness ▸ Encouraged my daughter to do something that doesn't conform to traditional gender roles ▸ Supported a woman-owned business ▸ Attended Women's Month programs ▸ Took time out just for myself and didn't feel guilty about it! ▸ Went to see a counselor for the first time after being raped at age 15 ▸ Donated money and needed items to the Women's Resource Center of the NRV ▸ Spoke to my sons about their role in fostering healthy marriages ▸ Decided to enter a male-dominated career ▸ Watched movies about women who have succeeded during difficult times ▸ Wrote a paper on women's issues in the military ▸ Visited The Many Faces of Feminism display ▸ Sent out Facebook invites for Women's Month events and for The Challenge

Celebrating "Sweet 16" Women's Center Style!

A Tribute to Patricia B. Hyer

Transformational Leader. Visionary. Tireless. Tenacious. Change Agent. Tempered Radical. Passionate. Extraordinary. Consummate Professional. Outstanding. Champion.

These are some of the words used by members of the Virginia Tech community to describe a one-of-a-kind woman and leader, Dr. Patricia B. Hyer.

At the March 31st dessert reception celebrating the Women's Center's anniversary, we seized the opportunity to recognize and honor Pat's leadership and legacy at Virginia Tech. While it was impossible to fully capture in an afternoon the breadth and depth of her impact at Virginia Tech during her 23 year tenure, we highlighted some of the significant ways in which Pat has improved work and life for all members of the university community. These included, among others, the founding of the Women's Center in 1994; the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the admission of women to Virginia Tech; her contributions as co-PI of the university's NSF ADVANCE grant; her tireless and enduring efforts to increase quality, affordable daycare in Blacksburg; and her dedication to issues of work/life through policy initiatives such as modified duties and stop-the-tenure clock, as well as a dual career assistance program.

Pat's exemplary leadership over the years earned her the first ever Virginia Tech Woman of the Year Award in 1995; the Outstanding Leader of the Year Award from the Academy of Leadership Excellence in 2002; the Virginia Tech Woman of the Decade Award in 2004; induction as an Association of Women in Science Fellow in 2007; and the University Change Agent Award from the Women in Engineering Program Advocates Network in 2009.

The tribute program concluded with the presentation of a "Resolution to honor the contributions of Dr. Patricia B. Hyer" by Dr. Guy Sims on behalf of the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity for her "influential role in promoting the cause of diversity" at Virginia Tech.

The staff of the Women's Center wish Pat joy, health and peace in her retirement and are deeply grateful for all she has done, and will continue to do, for this community!

Pat had the courage and pragmatism to recognize that the personal, the political, and the professional cannot and should not be entirely separated. And she had the tenacity to fight for us, and win.

~ VT Faculty

Pat is an extraordinary person. Her passion for excellence, justice, and progress is matched by her ability to get things done through careful and patient attention to policy, practice, and action.

~ Provost McNamee

Mentors in Violence Prevention

Jen Underwood, Victim Services Outreach Coordinator, Women's Center

The VAWA grant (a partnership between the Women's Center, the Office of Student Conduct, and the Virginia Tech Police Department) has recently implemented a new violence against women prevention program. This national program, Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP), uses a bystander empowerment approach to preventing men's violence against women. Instead of looking at participants as victims or perpetrators, the curriculum focuses on teaching participants concrete skills they can use as bystanders to intervene in potentially abusive situations. Through interactive, small-group workshops, the program:

- Raises awareness about the level of men's verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse in our culture;
- Challenges thinking by countering mainstream messages about gender, sex, and violence;
- Opens dialogue by creating a safe environment for men and women to share their opinions and experiences; and
- Inspires leadership by empowering participants with concrete options to confront and interrupt violent situations involving peers (www.mvpnational.org).

A technical assistance grant through the United States Department of Justice allowed 30 professional staff and graduate students to be trained in facilitating the curriculum. An intensive three day train-the-trainer program, as well as ongoing technical assistance, has prepared these dedicated individuals to deliver prevention workshops to small groups of students, faculty, and staff. Fifteen workshops have been facilitated so far, reaching over 200 students.

If you are interested in scheduling an MVP presentation, please contact Jennifer Underwood at jwunder@vt.edu.

The VAWA grant team extends our sincere thanks to the individuals listed below for dedicating their time and efforts to preventing violence against women as MVP facilitators.

Jermaine Holmes – Athletics Department
Jon Jaudon – Athletics Department
Reyna Gilbert – Athletics Department
John Goad – Blacksburg Police Department
Mark Haynie – Blacksburg Police Department
Jenny Wagstaff – Campus Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center
Steve Clarke – Campus Alcohol Abuse Prevention Center
Jill Casten – Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention
Kelli Moran-Miller – Cook Counseling Center/Athletics Department
Jenny Sax – Cranwell International Center
Brandon Lamma – Residence Life/Fraternity and Sorority Life
Jeff Yacup – Residence Life/Fraternity and Sorority Life
Lis Ellis – Residence Life
Jen Milburn – Residence Life
Mary Beth Pulsifer – Women's Resource Center of NRV
Ennis McCrery – Graduate School
Laurie Fritsch – Office of Health Education
Byron Hughes – Office of Student Conduct
Meghan Weyrens Kuhn – Office of Student Conduct
Nanette Jimenez – Office of Student Conduct
Ali Cross – Recreational Sports
Ben Smith – Recreational Sports
Rick Ferraro – Division of Student Affairs
Adam Cantley – Fraternity and Sorority Life
Carrie Cox – Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets
Marshall Hamilton – Virginia Tech Police Dept.
Christine Dennis Smith – Women's Center
Jen Underwood – Women's Center
Sarah Kate Valatka – Women's Center
Laura Guilliams – Women's Resource Center of NRV

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International Women in Need Raises Awareness and Funds for Women in India

Kathy Lokale, Program Coordinator, Women's Center

During the spring 2010 semester, IWiN focused its fundraising and educational efforts on an organization in India called Samraksha (meaning "*self-protection*"). Our goal is to raise funds to assist Sneha Mahila Sangha, a group that empowers women trapped in sex work. This group was formed by a diverse collective of women in sex work who cross boundaries of ethnicity, language, and caste to join together to fight against the stigma, violence, and marginalization they face in society.

"We do not live in an ideal world of social and economic equity and justice. So, many women who are widowed, or women who for various reasons are not married, or those who are married but their husbands are alcoholics and do not provide for the family, or those who take it upon themselves to educate their siblings and care for their parents, but have no skills to earn enough to do this, find that sex work, ironically, allows them to lead a life of dignity." said Dr. Sanghamitra Iyengar, executive director of Samraksha.

Many of these women practice sex work secretly, under the cover of another occupation like agricultural work, petty shop keeping, construction work etc. As women practicing sex work by themselves, they have no power and are fully exploited by the brokers, their clients and also their long term partners. They face violence, unsafe sex and constant threat to their life and dignity. Coming together and forming the organization has helped in many ways. Women who are prepared to reveal their identity as sex workers form the front of the organization. "After getting to know about Samraksha, I became a peer educator for the HIV prevention program. Initially I used to be scared, hesitant. I drew confidence from the other women, who were my peers and they began to trust me. Now we have Sneha Mahila Sangha. For all of the women, whether they are openly practicing sex work or not, through Sneha, we give them love, trust and an opportunity to come together."

Those who are not remain hidden, but still benefit from the resources, support, and education that Sneha provides. This includes access to information, products (condoms and contraceptives) and services (STI testing, HIV testing and referrals for treatment and counseling) that will protect them from HIV.

Over the course of the semester the IWiN education committee has given dozens of presentations across campus to educate the VT community about issues facing women trapped in sex work. Also, the IWIN fundraising committee participated in the International Street Fair and hosted a Zumbathon fundraising event at the Y Center. Our goal is to raise $2,000 dollars (converting to 96,000 Indian Rupees) to support one fellowship for 12 months which would help the fellow to devote time to institution building, traveling across the district and connect with members while receiving mentoring. The fellowship will help to stabilize this organization and allow it to keep to its core mission of supporting women trapped in sex work to live a life of health and dignity and ultimately, to find their way out of sex work, if and when they can.

"They are not " beneficiaries" dependent on the charity of others but earn their own living. This has brought women to believe that sex work is work like any other. They work and earn their livelihood and they are survivors in an unequal and unjust world." – *Dr. Sanghamitra Iyengar*

IWiN Progress Report

This spring IWiN hosted several fundraising and educational events in support of Samraksha. Thus far, the IWiN group has raised close to $700 to go towards our goal of $2,000 for the semester and will be continuing to work in the coming months to raise the rest of the funds.

Throughout the semester, the IWiN Education Committee gave presentations to over 15 classes and groups around campus in order to raise awareness about the Samraksha project and issues impacting sex workers in India. Students from the Fundraising Committee staffed a booth at the International Street Fair, where they sold iced chai tea, fabric buttons and bindis, as well as provided the community with information on the Samraska project. On Sunday, April 18th IWiN held their big ZUMBATHON fundraising event at the Y Center, which was attended by 40+ participants. Three Zumba instructors donated their time for this event and led the participants in a high energy, Latin fused dance workout.

IWiN wishes to thank Backstreets, TCBY, the Chocolate Spike, Sharkey's, Moe's, Mandy Mitchell, and Dr. Suchitra Samanta for their generous donations of door and raffle prizes, the Dhoom Machale group for their wonderful Bollywood performance, the YMCA at Virginia Tech and the Zumba instructors Mary Lynn Schwartz, Lindsay Moss, and Jackie Syverson for making the Zumbathon possible!

Please check the IWiN website (http://www.iwin.wc.vt.edu/index.html) in coming months for updates about new projects, making a donation, joining the group, and Bead for Life events in Fall '10!

IWiN
International Women in Need

IWiN at the International Street Fair, Downtown Blacksburg

ZUMBATHON 2010!!!

A terrific crowd getting their ZUMBA on!

My Sister's Keeper

Jody Thompson, Associate Director, MAOP

My Sister's Keeper is a networking group for female graduate students, faculty, and administrators of color. Throughout the school year, workshops are conducted to address the issues that women will face in graduate school or in their professional careers.

Topics that have been addressed in the past include grant writing, money management, negotiating salaries, and work/life balance. My Sister's Keeper is one of the programs sponsored by the Multicultural Academic Opportunities Program (MAOP).

On April 2, My Sister's Keeper sponsored a breakfast for women of color. The theme of the breakfast was "Navigating the Double Bind: Minority Women Maintaining an Authentic Self and Supporting Each Other in the Workplace."

After an opening activity, two panel sessions were conducted to address authenticity as a double minority in higher education and creating a community of support in the workplace. The panelists provided stories of their experiences and how they addressed situations. Attendees at the breakfast had several questions and comments for the panelists. Those in attendance at the breakfast learned that they shared very similar experiences in higher education.

My Sister's Keeper would like to thank the following faculty and administrators for serving on the panels: Ms. Bobbie Potter, Dr. Sheila Carter-Tod, Dr. Tonya Smith-Jackson, Ms. Brandy Faulkner, Dr. April Few-Demo, and Dr. Glenda Scales.

For more information regarding My Sister's Keeper, please contact MAOP at maop@vt.edu.

AdvanceVT Update

Peggy Layne, Project Director, AdvanceVT

AdvanceVT celebrates seven years at Virginia Tech with a lunch on May 5 reflecting on our accomplishments and looking forward to continued efforts to increase the success of women in academic careers. As funding from the National Science Foundation ends, the provost office, the graduate school, and the college deans are committed to ongoing programs to prepare women for academic careers, increase the representation of women in the faculty ranks, advance women into leadership roles, and improve the climate for all faculty on campus. During the academic year, AdvanceVT hosted seven graduate student seminars, six leadership lunches for women faculty, a welcome reception for women colleagues, and a series of mentoring workshops for all faculty. Four departments received mini-grants to address climate issues, and ten assistant professors received micro-grants to build their mentoring networks. AdvanceVT also hosted a series of workshops for associate professors preparing for promotion to professor. As we look to the future, AdvanceVT will continue to track the progress of women at Virginia Tech and offer programs to support the success of all faculty.

advanceVT

1st Annual Women's Month Alternative Spring Break Trip a Great Success!

Ayla Wilk, VT Student and YMCA Co-Trip Leader

With the help of Sandy Wirt and Jen Pollard (Director and Program Coordinator of YMCA Student Programs at Virginia Tech), Courtney Reijo (M.S. Candidate, Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation) and Ayla Wilk (B.A. student, Department of Chemistry) an all-women's YMCA Alternative Spring Break was launched this year in honor of Women's Month. The main objectives for this project were to explore contemporary women's issues in a hands-on way, learn how women who have suffered abuse can be healed and empowered, and to "take back the woods" in defiance of those who would claim that women are unsafe there or anywhere.

The co-leaders took five female students from different departments at Virginia Tech down to a small community in Northern Georgia where they spent two days working and socializing with the women of the Abba House – a faith based rehabilitation center that caters specifically to women and their children. The Abba House's mission focuses on re-empowering women to build healthy, loving relationships with themselves and the people around them. The VT women then spent four days hiking thirty miles of the famed Appalachian Trail – meeting other break groups and thru-hikers; climbing over steep, demanding terrain all while carrying everything for survival on their backs; sometimes enjoying beautiful weather and communion with nature, other times slogging through fog and rain and fighting to keep their spirits up.

In the end they came out with new friendships, a renewed sense of strength and a deep appreciation for their own fortunes. One of the trip participants sums up her lessons learned as follows: "*I am very fortunate to have the life I have, to be able to do what I'm doing now (school) and all the little things too: food, freedom, etc. Everyone comes from different walks of life, but we're all still human, we're all people, we all have a story to share. That kind of similitude demands respect as do the people themselves.*"

Suggested reading for the group prior to the trip was Claudia Brenner's *Eight Bullets: One Woman's Story of Surviving Anti-Gay Violence*. The VT women's trip members informally dedicated their journey to Claudia Brenner, the author of the book, and to her late partner Rebecca Wight, the victim of homophobic violence that took place on the Appalachian Trail in 1989. The group also hiked in honor of all the women who have suffered from violence, have been robbed of their sense of empowerment and who are in the process of healing. They especially would like to recognize their new friends at the Abba House. In the words of one trip participant: *Our journey is a reflection of their journey, our strength only a fraction of theirs, and their healing is an inspiration to us.*"

For more information about this trip and additional resources go to:

The Abba House: http://www.abbahouse.com/ **Appalachian Trail**: http://www.appalachiantrail.org

YMCA Student Programs: http://www.vtymca.org/studentprograms.html

The Women's Center at Virginia Tech: www.womenscenter.vt.edu

Many thanks to Sandy and Jen at the YMCA and Kathy Lokale and Jessica Prince-Sanders at the Women's Center for helping to make our trip happen!

Project Esperanza

Stacy Boyer, Geography and Megan Byrne, OIRED/WID

A group of predominantly female Virginia Tech students and faculty spent their spring break in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, volunteering with Project Esperanza: http://www.esperanzameanshope.org/.

Project Esperanza works with Haitians living in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This project was created in 2005 as a student group by two female VT students, who are now alumni and have turned their student organization into a fully operating non-profit.

Although the main focus of the trip was to start an Internet center, the proceeds from which will fund a grassroots school in the community, the students spent much of their time working with and organizing the Haitian women within the Muñoz community. Interviews were conducted to learn more about their living situations, work opportunities and level of education to determine what efforts could be made to enhance sustainable livelihoods for women.

One of the projects was bracelet making. The students brought materials with them to teach many eager women how to make bracelets. Innovation came naturally to these women; they began collecting seeds and taught themselves to make "church bead" necklaces. The students purchased about 100 items from the women to bring back to Blacksburg to sell. Recently duplicated in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, this project seeks to create income earning activities as well for women living in tent communities in the aftermath of the earthquake. Both events gave women instant gratification for their work, the skills to continue while the students are not present and empowerment within the community. With Project Esperanza's help, the women will continue to make items to sell in the Internet center and for the VT students to sell in Blacksburg.

The non-profit side of Project Esperanza continues to do amazing things in the communities in which they work and currently seek additional donors to support their ongoing efforts. The VT student group plans to return soon to help further aid the Haitian women by bringing additional ideas and resources to broaden their job skills and opportunities.

Women's Clinic
Schiffert Health Center

SERVICES

Annual Exams
Birth Control Prescriptions
Breast Evaluations
Genital Bumps and Sores
Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine
Morning After Pills-Over the Counter
Pap Tests
Pregnancy Tests
Sexuality Issues
Sexually Transmitted Disease Tests
Vaginal Discharge Problems
Women's Health Issues In General

Did You Know? Birth Control is used for:

Acne
Anemia
Endometriosis
Menstrual cramps
Menstrual regularity
Ovarian Cyst Control
Pregnancy Prevention

Project Esperanza Photo Gallery

Hillel's Spring Break Service Trip to Miami

Excerpt from the Hillel travel blog by Liana Farb & Amy Prager

After waking up much earlier than anyone should have to on spring break, we headed first to the Jewish Museum of Florida. We learned a lot about the history of Jews in Florida and how they had such a great impact on shaping Florida's history and making Miami one of the most populated Jewish areas in the world. After touring the museum we met with a local Jewish woman who, along with her husband, founded a Kosher food bank that has grown to feed hundreds of families in the area. Her speech about how just one person can make such a huge difference was really inspiring and made us all really excited to start our community service. For the rest of the afternoon we volunteered with Lotus, a women's shelter. The shelter places an emphasis on teaching the women to be independent once they leave the shelter by helping them with their resumes, helping them to find job interviews, and teaching them basic skills such as cooking. Just seeing how much of an impact the shelter had on these women, many of them with young children, and hearing about the two month waiting list just to be able to live there, really made us appreciate our own homes as well as all the opportunities that we have that these women may never get to experience. After dinner we went to the Jewish Federation of Greater Miami where we met Hillel groups from other universities that are in Miami doing community service over spring break. A panel of exceptional leaders talked to us about the importance of community service and how what we are doing has such an impact. One woman just got back from volunteering in Haiti two weeks ago and her stories of hope in such a devastated country were really touching. Today was just the beginning of our weeklong act of community service and already we can see the impact we are going to have on people's lives.

Back row: Angel Serna-Geitz, Jeff Kurtz, Liana Farb, Amanda Werner, Lori Drutz, Erin Wolpert, Susan Kurtz; Front Row: Shannon Bailey, Lauren Fialkow, Rachel Lamanna, Amy Prager, Rachael Kester

WLMP: Women's Leadership & Mentoring Program

Anna F. LoMascolo, Co-Director, Programming

In collaboration with senior administrators and faculty at Virginia Tech, the Women's Center sponsored the 3rd VT Women's Leadership and Mentoring Program (WLMP) during the 2009-10 academic year. The WLMP is designed to bring together a group of post-masters, new professionals with supervisory responsibilities in a series of sessions on topics related to professional development. Each session is taught by a senior administrator or faculty member and topics include management of personnel, budget, governance and institutional decision-making, supervision and mentoring, career development and other topics identified by members of the group. Organized sessions are supplemented by brown-bag opportunities to learn more about issues and topics identified by the group.

We extend our sincere thanks to the 2009-10 program faculty: Pat Burton, Employee Relations Manager, Human Resources; Maggie Sloane, Director of Conflict Resolution and Compliance, Human Resources; Ellen Plummer, Assistant Provost, Office of the Provost; Donna Cassell Ratcliffe, Director, Career Services; Ken Smith, Finance Officer, Office of the Provost; Tara Telfair, Director of Development Officer Training, University of Virginia; and Mekeisha Williams, Director, Organizational Development.

In the next couple of months, we will launch a program announcement and call for nominations for the 2010-11 Women's Leadership & Mentoring Program! We encourage you to nominate post-masters professionals who are aspiring higher education administrators and new to their role as supervisors. Self-nominations will also be welcome, provided the support of the supervisor/department is clearly indicated. There is a small fee for participation in the WLMP, which covers the cost of a textbook, binder of supplemental readings, and any additional materials necessary for the seminar. Directors and Department Heads are encouraged to sponsor nominees by using departmental funds to cover the costs.

Congratulations to the 2009-10 WLMP cohort and thank you for a terrific and enriching year. This year's program cohort includes: Kimberly Avis (Real Estate Mgt.), Catherine Chambers (Print Plant), Major Carrie Cox (Dept. of Military Affairs), Cecilia Crow (University Relations), Mary Beth Dunkenberger (VT Institute for Policy & Governance), Karen Gilbert (Office of Student Engagement), Cheryl Bailey Gittens (McNair Scholars Program), Katie Greenleaf (Residence Life), Lauren Harris (Fraternity & Sorority Life), Shelly Jobst (Outreach Program Development), Lauren Keister (Graduate School), Meghan Weyrens Kuhn (Office of Student Conduct), Lisa Mahaney (Continuing Ed Administration), Angela Marshall (Center for Organizational & Technical Development), Robin McCoy (Transportation & Campus Services), Karisa Moore (Office for Equity & Inclusion), Beth Osborne (Office for Equity & Inclusion), Carolyn Rader (Career Services), Dawn Stoneking (Continuing Education Administration), Jennifer Underwood (Women's Center), Catherine Webb (Introductory Biology Labs), and Jaime Williams (UUSA).

For more information on the Women's Leadership and Mentoring Program, please contact Anna LoMascolo at alomasco@vt.edu.

The Virginia Network is holding its annual state conference at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center in Roanoke, Virginia on Friday, June 4, 2010. The conference theme is Leadership, Legacy, and Life. The conference features a panel of college presidents, breakout sessions on a wide range of topics and speakers and panelists from across the state. Full details are now available on at http://www.cpe.vt.edu/va-network/index.html.

The Women's Center will host a van to provide round-trip transportation from Blacksburg to Roanoke. If you are interested in carpooling with a group, contact Anna LoMascolo at alomasco@vt.edu to be added to the list!

Take Back the Night Rally and March

Susan Anderson, Womanspace

The twenty-first annual Take Back the Night Rally and March in Blacksburg was held on Thursday, March 25th. The purpose of this annual rally and candlelight march is to bring our community together to protest violence against women and to promote awareness of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that perpetuate this violence. Womanspace, which organizes this event, encourages everyone to take action to change our society -- a society in which women have reason to fear being out alone at night.

Once again due to inclement weather, rally participants gathered at the Wesley Foundation just off campus in downtown Blacksburg. Musicians from around the New River Valley drummed on the foundation's front porch, the beat shepherding attendees into the rain location. Over 450 students, faculty, staff, and community members filled the auditorium, where on-stage were displayed the Take Back the Night banner and Clothesline Project T-shirts.

The acappella group Soulstice opened the rally. Womanspace's Rosalie Wind facilitated the event, with Michael Duvall from Services for Students with Disabilities signing during the rally. Womanspace president Nicole Faut introduced guests, including the Co-Directors of the Women's Center, Christine Dennis Smith and Anna LoMascolo, Assistant Provost Ellen Plummer, Dean of Students Tom Brown, Virginia Tech Police Chief Wendell Flinchum, Blacksburg Vice Mayor Susan Anderson, Councilwoman Leslie Hager-Smith, and Councilwoman Cecile Newcomb. The audience heard a statement from Virginia Tech President Charles Steger and part of a resolution in support of Take Back the Night passed by Montgomery County Board of Supervisors.

Speakers included Susan Anderson, who shared information on the Clothesline Project, and Christine Dennis Smith, who discussed the Women's Center's challenge to complete sixteen actions to increase awareness of women's and gender issues. Also speaking were Ashley Tomisek of International Women in Need (IWIN) and Danielle Harris of STAND, the student-led division of the Genocide Intervention Network, and Neal King with the Women's and Gender Studies Program. Gary Bennett from the Athletics Department explained what men can do to stop violence against women. Pat Brown, Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, encouraged Virginia Tech to "invent a future free from violence." Following three incredible personal stories, including remarks and a poem by Morgan Harrington's mother, Gil Harrington, Womanspace's Jasmine Jones organized attendees to march. Participants were amazing—chanting enthusiastically through campus and downtown Blacksburg, wearing purple ribbons tied with a knot for every friend or family member who has been sexually assaulted, braving the damp weather, and returning to the Wesley Foundation for the closing celebration where organizers shared actions that participants can take to lessen violence against women, empowering those present to work for positive change.

Together we rallied and marched to Take Back the Night.

WOMEN'S MONTH March 2010

discover. celebrate. create.

Kathy Lokale, Program Coordinator, Women's Center

The Many Faces of Feminism on display in the CAIO office, downtown Blacksburg

HR Staff participates in 'Wear Purple Day' in support of The Challenge and in celebration of the Women's Center's sixteen sweet years at VT!

FEATURED EVENTS

The Many Faces of Feminism

Pray the Devil Back to Hell

MUSE: A Celebration of Women in the Arts

Natural Woman

For Memories Sake

Students prepare for the annual Take Back the Night rally & march

Students pose with Korto, first runner up from the hit TV show Project Runway

VT student read shirts from The Clothesline Project, on display on the Drilfield

Women's Center students promote Women's Month 2010

Women's Month Dance Series participants learn International Folk Dance at the GLC

Women's and Gender Studies Conference Garners International Participation

Jean Elliott, College Communications Manager, University Relations

The inaugural "Gender, Bodies, and Technology" conference, sponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Program (WGS), attracted 130 scholars from 10 countries in disciplines from the humanities, social and natural sciences, visual and performing arts, engineering, and technology. The conference took place at the Hotel Roanoke from April 22-24.

"Performance art and new media, in addition to more traditional paper presentations, were used to explore how technologies, broadly defined, construct, reinforce and destabilize gendered bodies," said Barbara Ellen Smith, director of the Women's and Gender Studies program and sponsor of the conference. "An assemblage of people and technologies, we saw the conference itself as enacting the conference theme."

The conference had a long gestation. About three years ago, faculty and graduate students affiliated with WGS began meeting to discuss their research on topics ranging from anti-aging technologies to embodied performance. They sought to learn from one another's feminist scholarship, as well engage with others across Virginia Tech, known for its programs in engineering and other scientific fields, about matters of ethics, politics, equality and justice that are central to the nexus of gender, bodies and technology.

The conference included an opening plenary address by Alondra Nelson, associate professor of sociology at Columbia University and author of the forthcoming *Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Politics of Health and Race*, who spoke on "The Social Life of DNA;" and a luncheon keynote by Jennifer Terry, associate professor of women's studies at the University of California-Irvine and author of *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society*, who addressed *Woundscapes of the 21st Century: Gender, Technology, and the Figure of the Damaged Veteran.* The conference also featured the premiere of *fig.1*, a solo performance on aging and body image by Mark Evans Bryan featuring Sue Ott Rowlands, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech and founding artistic director of the Glacity Theatre Collective in Toledo and the Cleveland Women's Theatre Project. There were also two rooms set aside for art installations.

Over 30 faculty from Virginia Tech's College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, and the College of Engineering were involved as planners, presenters, or moderators. For more information about the conference or the Gender, Bodies and Technology initiative, contact WGS director Barbara Ellen Smith at smithbe@vt.edu.

Gender Matters Community Quilting Project

A project launched during Women's Month 2009 came to fruition to launch Women's Month 2010! Members of the Virginia Tech community designed quilt blocks to reflect their connection with last year's theme, "Gender Matters." The final product contains a collection of individual squares that represent the unique and diverse perspectives and experiences of the women who created them. Stitched together these individual squares form a beautiful quilt that celebrates sisterhood and community.

Special thanks to Maxine Lyons, Kathy Slusher, Jane Swan, Gloria Smith and Camelia Elliott, who spent countless hours piecing the quilt together.

(Pictured from left to right): Camelia Elliott, Jane Swan, Eileen Weigand, Anna LoMascolo, Kathy Lokale, Kathy Slusher, and Nicole Sanderlin

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Volunteers at the Women's Center have been very busy this year providing advocacy, peer education, mentoring, and programmatic support. This year the Center had 110 volunteers who logged 2,028 hours. New to the Volunteer Program this year is the Connections Team, a leadership group providing social and educational opportunities across the spectrum of volunteer teams at the Women's Center. Connections is comprised of a representative from each volunteer team who serves as a liaison between the Center and his or her "home" team. This group is charged with developing and implementing team-building programs that will serve to strengthen, support and build our community of volunteers!

The staff of the Women's Center wants to say THANK YOU to our incredible volunteers. We quite simply could not do what we do without your dedication, energy, creativity, and passion for making Virginia Tech the best it can be for all of our students! We wish the best of luck to our graduating seniors. We will miss you and expect you to keep in touch!!! For everyone else, here's wishing you a wonderful summer and we are eager to see you all in the fall.

Thank you for all you do!!

VirginiaTech
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