



INTERSECTIONAL WOMXN'S CENTER AT UWEC

WHY: Gender Equity through Inclusion and Representation

System-wide changes to the culture and climate of sexism, racism, and misogyny at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) are necessary for gender and racial justice. We believe that, although womxn are a majority on our campus, they are still institutionally marginalized and face gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence. For womxn students and faculty of color in particular, experiences of sexism and misogyny often intersect with those of racism and xenophobia. This evidences the need for an Intersectional Womxn's Center that represents and provides a supportive community space for the diverse population of womxn at UWEC.

Given that Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity is a "top priority" for UWEC, the goal of this project is consistent with UWEC's commitment "to creating a campus that is open, supportive and focused on dismantling racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia" (<https://www.uwec.edu/diversity/>). The project is also consistent with the mission of the university to create "an inclusive campus community that challenges students to develop their intellectual, personal, cultural, and social competencies" (<https://www.uwec.edu/acadaff/university-mission/>)

Why is the Center anti-racist and does it do decolonizing work? To fully understand and transform the power dynamics that marginalize womxn at UWEC, we must examine the role of racism in acts of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence. In the HOW section, we discuss some anti-racist and decolonizing gender content.

HOW:

- Programming based on educational and decolonizing gender content
 - producing educational, decolonizing gender content that is attuned to the intersections of sexism and misogyny with racism and other systems of oppression (e.g. xenophobia, ageism, transphobia, ableism, homophobia, classism).
 - producing programming that will relate the concepts and case studies of this educational content to the particular intersections affecting womxn of color at UWEC.

- Students exploring their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities through readings and conversations
- Students sharing their lived experiences at a predominantly white campus community
 - “Through the creation of a supportive community of womxn, students will have the ability to explore their racial, ethnic, and cultural identities, share lived experiences, and discuss what it means to be womxn of color in our predominantly white campus community” (Women’s Resource and Action Center, the University of Iowa).
- Organizing for a transformative campus experience
 - Build a cohort of students that have an intersectional understanding of systemic oppressions and a critical vocabulary to describe how these systems specifically affect womxn at UWEC.
 - Create a “critical mass” of students, faculty, and staff to help justify and assist in efforts to claim the physical space of an Intersectional Womxn’s Center at UWEC where continued, high-impact programming can continue once campus resumes in-person format.

WHAT: Creation of a safe place for community building: An Intersectional Womxn’s Center

Timeline

- **Fall 2020**
 1. Increase membership in the student group titled “Womxn Uniting and Fighting:Coalition to Fight Sexism and Misogyny at UWEC.”
 2. Develop social media webpages for our virtual Intersectional Womxn’s Center, which will be used to collectively envision and plan the opening of the physical Intersectional Womxn’s Center, in addition to promoting events/activities.
 3. Create bi-weekly discussions/conversations on important topics to decolonize our campus.
 4. Create a logo for the Center (see page 5 of this document for the logo for the Center)
 5. Work with the UWEC administration to identify a space for the Center.
- **Spring 2021**
 1. Create events and programming for Women’s History Month.
 2. Create bi-weekly discussions/conversations on important topics to decolonize our campus.
 3. Reach out to other student organizations, especially the groups representing students with marginalized identities.
 4. Develop a collaborative research project on the need for the Intersectional Womxn Center at UWEC that would include some ethnographic-type of research with interviews and focus groups, while at the same time develop a theoretical analysis of why such a space is necessary. Students will use the information for presentations in both academic (e.g. CERCA) and non-academic contexts.
- **Fall 2021**
 1. Opening of the brick and mortar Intersectional Womxn’s Center.

Why Intersectional?

Kimberlee Crenshaw's Youtube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akOe5-UsQ2o&t=313s>

Intersectionality in action:

<https://www.opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-tips-putting-intersectionality-practice>

Why the "X"?

As for spelling of womxn, the University of Iowa uses the "womxn" spelling for a program of theirs: <https://wrac.uiowa.edu/programs-and-services/womxn-of-colour-network/>

According to this article, the term, "Womyn" was created for women in the feminist movement who wanted to avoid male dominance in the suffix "-men" As years went by, the term that is most commonly used today is "Womxn" which is similar to "Womyn" but the emphasis on the "x" makes it more inclusive towards people who do not identify with the gender binary

(https://www.iowastatedaily.com/news/iowa-state-university-ames-community-women-womxn-womyn-language-usage-feminism-andra-castle/article_91c5eaaa-3e3e-11ea-a852-ff869213c3e1.html),

Spring 2021 Events/Activities

April 28, 2021

Presentation by Dr. Melinda Brennan entitled: "Stakes of Intersectionality: Advocacy, Coalition, & Equity."

Talk description: Intersectionality is a critical lens, a mode of thinking that requires action and encourages supportive work across difference. This talk hopes to spark a dialogue about gender, race, working across difference, together, as community members with a shared purpose in a dedicated space.

March 30, 2021

A Conversation with Dr. Dorothy Chan on the killing of six Asian American women in Atlanta and the hate against Asians and Asian Americans in the United States.

March 16, 2021, 5pm: Unpack It

The Unpack Series Womxn Uniting and Fighting, a coalition against sexism and misogyny at UWEC in partnership with UAC will be hosting in regards of the creation of an Intersectional Womxn's Center, to replace the former Women's center that no longer exists. Along with discussing gender violence and discrimination on campus and the current climate students are predominantly facing. The link to the event <https://fb.me/e/3jD5M7kEV> will have some more additional information. If you are comfortable please share with any students you feel would be interested in this event.

March 2021 - Spectator Interview: A Seat at the Table

https://www.spectatornews.com/student-life/2021/03/a-seat-at-the-table-4/?fbclid=IwAR3K_LJFvs0aFnBazJnF6rZgTENCXYsGBiPKVuY9Qg_krMFMc0TyURRvax8

Tuesday, March 2, 7-8pm: Conversation with members of African Students Association (ASA), Black Student Alliance (BSA) and Michael Thomas, Student Services Coordinator at OMA and co-advisor of BSA

Tuesday, February 16, 7-8pm: Conversation with Gabriela Calderon (UW-LaCrosse WGSS alumna), Siiri Koski (UW-LaCrosse WGSS alumna), Emily Voykin (UW-Parkside, WGSS student), and Dr. Stephanie Rytlahti, Director of the UW System Women's and Gender Consortium.

Fall 2020 Events/Activities

Tuesday, November 24, 2020, 7-8pm: A Conversation with Dr. Heather Ann Moody
Dr. Heather Ann Moody discussed the following question: What does the Land Recognition Acknowledgment mean for UW-Eau Claire? How can we put into practice the land recognition statement?

Reading: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, "Colonizing Knowledges," *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 1999: 58-77.

Tuesday, November 11, 2020, 7-8pm: A Roundtable discussion with Dr. Silviana Amethyst, Dr. Ari Anand, Dr Gloria Howerton
The discussion focused on leadership and activism.

Thursday, October 22, 2020, 7-8pm: A Conversation with Dr. Dorothy Chan
Professor Chan discussed why and how she founded the Honey Literary magazine, an anti-racist, queer-friendly, intersectional feminist literary magazine.

Thursday, October 8, 2020, 7-8pm: A conversation with Dr. Jonathan Rylander (from English)
Professor Rylander will discuss pages 17-39 in particular, as these speak most specifically to gender identity. Here is the link:
https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/butler-undoing_gender.pdf

Thursday, September 24, 2020, 7-8pm: A Conversation with Dr. Kong Pheng Pha (from WGSS)
During the conversation, Dr. Pha will focus on the following:

1. What is Intersectionality?
2. How can one put Intersectionality into action in the context of an Intersectional Womxn's Center?
3. How would an Intersectional Womxn's Center help decolonize UWEC?

Here is a useful reading he suggested for our conversation: <https://www.opportunityagenda.org/explore/resources-publications/ten-tips-putting-intersectionality-practice>

