

## **Women's Center Annual Report to the Chancellor**

**May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

Chancellor Bailey, on behalf of Jarene Stanford, Chancellor's Advisory Board to the Women's Center Chair, it is my pleasure to summarize the activities of the Women's Center and the role of the Chancellor's Advisory Board to the Women's Center. Completing its 34th year in serving students, staff, faculty, and the Kansas City community, the Women's Center and your Advisory Board have witnessed a year of exciting growth, synergy, and collaboration both within the university and with the Kansas City Community. The Women's Center is proud to be a vital part of UMKC.

### **Staffing**

With the strong support of Associate Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs, Mel Tyler, the Women's Center maintains a director, an assistant director, an outreach representative, a violence prevention cocordinator, one graduate intern, and six work-study students. As director, I provide vision and direction for the Women's Center, as well as creating opportunities for increased funding and community collaborative events. The assistant director, Jill Dunlap, creates and executes the program calendar and subsequent events, such as Women on the Move, for UMKC students, faculty, and staff. In addition, she supervises all student staff, and serves as our fiscal officer. Maria Williams, the Women's Center outreach representative, works with student and community groups, as well as preparing for more involvement with the ReVisioning Women project, which comes to the Women's Center in June. Sarah McCoy-Harms is our Violence Prevntion Coordinator, and is funded by our VAWA Grant, awarded in Fall of 2005.

The Women's Center is fortunate to have had an amazing student staff during the 2005-2006 academic year. The student staff includes, Courtney McGuirk, Jane Webb, Victoria Pickering, Julie Coon, and Terre Myers.

Lisa Martin, who is finishing her Masters in Art History has done an outstanding job as our graduate intern. Lisa is an integral part of our staff, and her involvement with the planning of the 2006 Black Women Leaders conference was invaluable.

Without student staff to handle web site updates, database management and other important daily office functions, the Women's Center would not be nearly as successful as we are. Our student staff is truly the backbone of the Women's Center.

## **Space**

Our physical space in 105 Haag Hall is not only attractive, but serves as a comfortable place for students as well as community members to read, hold meetings, or use the computer. More than 1000 students came by or used the Women's Center during the 2004-2005 school year. We feel that our physical space, as well as programs and events, helps to ensure the success of students at UMKC.

With the lovely gift from Barbara Pendleton's estate, we were able to redecorate the Women's Center after ten years. We now have yellow and red hues, which match our lovely cherry woodwork in our library area.

With the of ReVisioning Women, and our VAWA Grant we have allocated 108A to Violence Prevention and small meeting space.. Maria Williams has moved from her office in 105 Haag Hall to her new office in 108A and a new office was created for Sarah McCoy-Harms in what we now call "The West Wing."

## **VAWA Grant**

In September of 2005 the Women's Center learned that it had been awarded a 200,000 dollar Federal Grant from the Department of Justice to work on violence prevention issues on campus. Partnering with both internal offices, such as the Campus Police, the Counseling Center, and Residential Life, and external partners, including Rose Brooks and MOCSA, funding from the grant will be directed in the following areas:

- Training campus administrators, campus security personnel and personnel serving on campus disciplinary or judicial boards to more effectively identify and respond to violent crimes against women on campus.
- Implementing and operating education programs for the prevention of violent crimes against women.
- Developing and implementing more effective campus policies, protocols, orders and services specifically devoted to prevent, identify, and respond to violent crimes against women on campus.
- Developing and strengthening victim service programs for the campus and improving delivery of those services.
- Supporting improved coordination among campus administrators, campus security personnel, and local law enforcement to reduce violent crimes against women on campus.

### Response Team Activities:

A new Violence and Prevention Response Team has been established which includes representatives from a number of UMKC campus entities who have a vested interest in these issues along with representation from the Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA) and Rose Brooks Center, an area domestic violence service provider. A central objective of the Response Team is to clarify and improve the University's policies and protocols related to sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking. We have already developed working definitions based on policies and definitions that have been adopted by other academic institutions, which will hopefully be officially adopted by UMKC in the near future. Through our discussions, we have established that in order to have a comprehensive set of policies and protocols regarding violence on campus, we must more clearly ascertain the specific needs of those policies.

Consequently, the next step we are working on is the development of a campus violence survey. We have crafted the proposed outcomes of this survey which include the following:

- Incidence rates of sexual offenses, dating and relationship violence, and stalking
  - both pre-UMKC and while at UMKC
  - where incidents are occurring (on/off campus)
- Awareness of resources, services and reporting procedures on campus
  - to whom incidents are being reported
  - reasons why incidents may go unreported
  - suggestions for improvement of policies and procedures on campus
- Perceptions of sexual offenses, domestic and relationship violence, and stalking, as well as attitudes towards these types of violence

We are working with the Institute for Human Development and Information Services in the development of the survey and we are hoping to have it available online in October 2006.

We are very grateful to have hired Sarah McCoy-Harms, who recently finished her Masters Degree in Women's Studies at Rutgers University.

### **Programs and Events**

#### **Fall 2005**

We started off the semester with a full slate of programs for women students, staff, faculty, and community members. The vision of the Women's Center's programming efforts revolve around the diverse student body at UMKC. The Women's Center offered programs for non-traditional students, traditional

students, and graduate students, as well as community members. Our programming mission is to foster women's success as individual women define success, and so we mixed practical application of "worldly success" with theoretical models for changing the world for women. We look to creating a better world for women through social justice programs, leadership events, and violence prevention.

We offered nineteen programs in the fall, with "Peace Tuesdays" and our UMKC Women's Leadership Institute at the apex of our fall programming. We began with "Don't Be Afraid . . . Be an Activist," to welcome students and help them find us on campus. We followed that event with Women's Equality Day posters and signs. We offered an Open House for Returning and Transitioning Women Students, and quickly began the first of three seminars called "Peace Tuesdays."

"Peace Tuesdays" comprised a series of three Tuesdays readings/discussions from *Stop the Next War Now!* From the women's activist group Code Pink. We looked at feminism as a counter-strategy to violence; we examined an article by Juana Alicia, a Hispanic feminist activist; and we concluded with Kavita N. Ramdas, the president and CEO of Global Fund for Women's article on global peace.

We joined the Kansas City Youth Political Summit and then sponsored a discussion of "Bisexuality 101: Beyond Something I tried in College".

We continued the fight against breast cancer in 2005 by sponsoring Lee National Denim Day at UMKC. Staff and faculty and students contributed five dollars to the Susan G. Komen Foundation and then wore jeans on Tuesday, Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. We collected \$800 contributions.

Our UMKC Women's Leadership Institute was held on Thursday and Friday, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. We were sponsored by the Women's Bureau and by WIN for KC. Thirty women completed the Institute and we received outstanding evaluations. Please see addendum A for the evaluation results.

We hosted the second annual Midwest National Women's Studies Association Meeting here at UMKC, and more than fifteen regional universities toured our campus and talked about issues that women face and what Women's Centers can do to address them.

We learned about the life of Agnes Smedley from guest author Ruth Price. Price spent fifteen years researching *The Lives of Agnes Smedley* and regaled an audience of more than eighty people at her lecture sponsored by the Women's Center, the English Department, Women's Studies, and the Edgar Snow Fund.

Finally, we wound up (or down!) with our “Women’s Revolutionary Knitting Circle.” Twelve women attended and learned to knit, just in time for the holidays, or came to share stories and knitting time with one another.

## **Spring 2006**

Spring saw the Women’s Center tackle another nineteen events, some of those in collaboration with the two student groups, Feminists United and The Student Chapter of the American Association of University Women.

We began, as many good things begin, with Chocolate. We hosted “Warm Up at the Women’s Center” on January 10<sup>th</sup>, and provided hot chocolate to returning students.

We then held our first “Volunteer at the Women’s Center” event for students, staff, and faculty, and had a good turnout with eight women who want to become more involved at the Women’s Center and subsequently joined our volunteer staff.

We hosted a series of discussions and viewings of *Sex and the City* to determine once and for all if the show does indeed promote or degrade women’s rights. (Okay, we didn’t decide, but we did have a good time.)

On Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, feminist art historian, Dr. Maria Elena Buszek discussed “Pin-Up Grrrls” and reexamined pin-ups from an often ignored feminist historical perspective. Also on hand were local artists, as well as UMKC student artists, who are remaking pin-ups and using art to talk about body image from a third-wave feminist perspective.

The Women’s Center supported our fabulous Feminist United Student Group and student president and vice-president, Victoria Pickering and Jane Webb, in a student Sex Fair. More than 625 students, including parents, came to learn more about safe sex, consensual relationships, and attend workshops by local and regional sex educators. Cosponsored with Residential Life, Student Health and Wellness, Planned Parenthood, and MOCSA.

### Women’s History Month: Women Building Communities and Dreams

March was a phenomenal month here at the Women’s Center. Highlights from the sixteen events on the UMKC Women’s Collaborative History Month calendar are below.

On March 1st we co-hosted with the Women's and Gender Studies Department, author Juanita Diaz—Cotto and a book signing of her book "Companeras: Latina Lesbians". "

Natasha Ria El-Scari opened her spoken word CD "Live at the Blue Room" here at the Women's Center. We celebrated her first CD release and star Natasha (also a UMKC staff star at CAD) signed the jacket of her CD. More than forty people attended.

The student chapter of AAUW hosted a panel on Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, titled "Your Body, Their Choice" Reproductive Rights in Missouri." Speaking on the pane were State Representative Beth Low, NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri Executive Director Pamela Sumners, and the former Dean of the Medical School, Dr. Harry Jonas." It was a good panel, excellent discussion, and fifty-five students, staff, faucly, and community members attended.

### April and May

April kept us busy with our first "Opening Minds, Opening Doors: Black Women Leaders Conference". Led by board member Olivia Dorsey, and comprised of a campus committee, and seed money given by Skillbuilder's Fund, the conference brought in national t.v. show host and known author Iyanla Vanzant for its keynote dinner reception on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. The all-day conference on Friday began with sessions on individual leadership paths, and then moved into community, regional, and global leadership. Among the presenters were Andrea Spears, Gwen Grant, Natasha Ria-El Scari, Sharon Saunders Brooks, Yolanda Via, Dr. Marjorie Fonza, and Dr. Reneer Shannon. Almost 300 women attended Thursday night's event, and one-hundred and fifty learned and networked at UMKC on Friday.

On Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, the Women's Center sponsored Take Back the Night, an annual event designed to unify women, men and children in an awareness of violence against women. We rallied and marched to the J.C. Nichols Fountain on the Plaza where Vicki Walker read a proclamation from the Mayor.

On Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, and Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, the Women's Center helped with the production of UMKC student Stacey Tolbert's play, *Not My Size*. The play looked with humor, satire, irony, and poignancy at the ways that women see their bodies in dressing rooms. Friday played to a sold-out crowd.

Finally, on Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, the Women's Center gave a portion of the ReVisioning Women Curriculum for a Mult-Media Art Installation in the Crossroads District titled "Womb Wisdom." The workshop on media literacy featured the ReVisoning Women art and asked workshop participants to rethink the effects of media on society.

## **Women's Collaborative**

Our latest collaborative effort, the Women Involved in Living and Leading (WILL) program creates an exciting learning community where students explore the complexity of women's lives in the 21st century. Programs, networking, and late-night impromptu discussions encourage residents to develop both strong leadership skills and interact in the Kansas City community. The WILL program at UMKC is based on a nationally recognized living learning community model and is sponsored at UMKC by the Women's Collaborative. Because of the unique collaboration, the WILL community combines cutting edge social justice events, community experiences, and dynamic classroom encounters to create a living-learning community that provides students with a tool kit to address the multiple issues in women's lives. This program kicked off in Fall 2005 with Sharese Yount as the Academic Assistant, and will continue this Fall with Christin \_\_\_\_\_ as the WILL community assistant.

## **Starr Symposium**

The 2005 Starr Symposium took place in the fall of 2005 and featured Jackson Katz, male anti-violence activist. The Starr Symposium took place on Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005 and was led this year by Women's Council Chair, Susan True, and Women's Center Co-Chair, Kristin Webster. The title was "Pump It Up: Men and Masculinity." We thank board members Ron Zoglin, Don Landes, and Jarene Stanford for serving on the Starr committees. The event was a huge success, and "sold-out" at 500 reservations. Participants received a free "Pump it Up" t-shirt, and a magnet with Katz's "10 Things Men Can do to Prevent Gender Violence."

## **Rivette Speaker Scholar**

The Rivette Speaker Scholar this year was Carolyn McKibben, speaking about her soon-to-be published book, *Of All the Gifts You Gave Me, the Important One is That I Belong. The Sicilians: Chain Migration, Gender, and the Construction of Identity in Monterey, California 1920-1999*. Board members Karen Vorst and Nancy Levit led this committee. McKibben gave her lecture on Thursday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> titled, "Beyond Cannery Row: Sicilian Women, Immigration, and Community in Monterey, CA 1915—99." More than 60 people attended the lecture and then visited with the author during a wine and cheese reception.

## **"Friends" of the Women's Center**

Our fundraising chair, Marie Whitmer, in conjunction with Jarene Stanford and the Women's Center Staff, in an effort to find a way for more people to support

and learn about the Women's Center have put together a "Friends of the Women's Center" group. The current working invitation is as follows: Become a "Friend" of the Women's Center and receive timely emails regarding our latest programs, current news about women's issues, our newsletter, and free admission to all of our events. Your \$25 donation helps us make the world a better place for women.

With Laurie McCormack and the Development Office, Marie Whitmer, Jarene Stanford, Mary Kay McPhee and others the Friends group has taken off with house parties this spring by Yvonne Jameson, Sue Hendon, the Marjorie Sirridge, Barbara Potts, Ardy Pearson, and with more to come. Currently, we have raised \$1,750.00 for the Women's Center.

### **Conclusion**

The academic year 2005-0 has been an undeniable success. We served more than 3,421 participants at our events, and helped countless students and community members and staff and faculty find resource help.

- We received approximately \$250,000 in grant monies.
- We hired the first full-time Violence Prevention Coordinator in UMKC History.
- We sponsored the first UMKC Black Women Leaders Conference.
- We served 3,524 students, staff, faculty and community members at programs and events.

This could not happen without the dedication of University Administrators, Associate Vice-Chancellor of Student Affairs Mel Tyler, our partners, Kim Huyett and Barbara Bonnekesen from the Women's Council and Women's and Gender Studies, respectively as well as many others.

It also could not happen with a fantastic staff, and I want to honor Jill Dunlap, Maria Williams, Lisa Martin, Victoria Pickering, and Jane Webb, as well as our graduating student staff for making this year our best ever.

For our marketing efforts, Wandra Green, UMKC Public Relations Specialist, and Bil Phelan and Marny Burke, graphic designers, have raised the bar for us in every way. Thank you!

Finally, I wish to thank Chair Jarene Stanford.. For her loyalty, her support, and most of all her passion to help make the world a better place for women, we honor Jarene Stanford.

## **Women's Center Collaborations in the 2005—2006 Academic Year**

### UMKC

Career Services  
Office of Minority and Student Affairs  
Center of Excellence in Women's Health  
Student Life  
Counseling, Health and Testing  
Office of Services for Students with Disabilities  
Residential Life  
Women's Council  
Women's and Gender Studies  
Women's Collaborative  
Center for the City  
Communiversity  
Black Studies  
BookMark Press  
Sue Shear Institute

### Student Organizations

The African American Student Union (TAASU)  
Queers and Allies (Q & A)  
Campus Greens  
Feminists United  
The Student Chapter of American Association of University Women  
Parents on Campus  
ASUM

### Community Organizations

WIN for KC  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Women's Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Labor  
Willow Productions  
Office of Women's Health, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
Greater Missouri Leadership Foundation  
Rose Brooks  
MOCSA  
Jewish Heritage Foundation  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Menorah Legacy Foundation  
The Eating Disorders Unit at Baptist-Trinity-Lutheran  
AAUW  
Hope House  
Kansas City Anti-Violence Project  
The Yarn Shop  
Missouri Women's Council

Planned Parenthood  
The Ali Kemp Educational Foundation  
Skillbuilder's Fund  
Lutheran Medical Center at HCA Community Hospital  
Ten-Ten Foundation  
Bill and Robin Carr Philanthropic Fund

Local Business Support

Theatre League, Inc.  
Governor Stumpy's Grill House  
The Cup and Saucer  
The Tivoli Cinema  
SRO Video  
It's a Beautiful Day  
Coffee Girls  
Muddy's  
The Crave Cafe  
Half-Priced Books  
First Watch  
Recycled Sounds  
Broadway Café  
Streetside Records and Tapes  
Prospero's  
Extracurious  
Fabu  
Waldo Bikes  
Early to Bed  
Wild Woman Designs  
Toys in Babeland  
It's Only Natural  
Goin' Round Gallery