



# WOMEN'S CENTER *at* UMBC

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2015–2016**

The Women's Center at UMBC advances gender equity from an intersectional feminist perspective through co-curricular programming, support services, and advocacy for marginalized individuals and communities. We prioritize critical social justice as our community value, with a deliberate focus on women, gender, anti-racism, and feminism.

*All are welcome as long as they respect women.  
Their experiences. Their stories. Their potential.*

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***"It means so much to me to know that someone here believes in me."***

***2015-16 Returning Women Student Scholar***

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**For the past 25 years, the Women’s Center has served as a key resource for UMBC women and other unrepresented populations seeking support and advocacy and for all individuals wishing to learn about and engage with women’s and gender issues. The Women’s Center seeks to provide a space and community for all UMBC members to be fully valued in the spirit of wholeness, respect, and social justice.**

## **Active Community Space**

The Women’s Center was an active community space and resources this year, with approximately 8,642 visits/contacts between July 2015 and June 2016. Due to budget and resource limitations, the Women’s Center reduced its hours of operation again this year and had to make some difficult choices about programming, including reducing Between Women meetings and putting Rebuilding Manhood on hiatus this spring which impacted our overall usage rates. Despite these challenges, our usage rates increased in many critical areas to include the use of the lactation room and community members seeking one-on-one support and/or crisis response with professional staff members. Women’s Center professional staff spent over 123 hours meeting with over 195 students, faculty, and staff throughout the year.

## **Social Justice Dialogues**

Critical Social Justice (CSJ), with its theme of Baltimore 365, also continues to provide a significant platform in demonstrating the Women’s Center is on the forefront of creating spaces for students, faculty, and staff to engage with social justice issues on campus. This was the first full year in which the Women’s Center operated our space with Brave Space Guidelines in an effort to create space that is both safe and brave in engaging in difficult dialogues, reflecting on discomforts, and finding peace in being one’s authentic self. The guidelines have been well received and the spirit of Brave Spaces has been replicated in various ways throughout other areas of campus.

## **Learning + Engagement**

As a unit of the Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the Women’s Center continues to provide a distinctive undergraduate education and contribute to the academic goals of the University. Through the Returning Women Students Scholars program, specialized discussion groups and workshops, and the third

annual year of CSJ, students gained greater awareness and education regarding women and gender issues that complemented their learning inside the classroom. Students frequently used the Center's space for studying alone or in groups and often took advantage of the available computer and lending library. Additionally, the Women's Center supported academic learning through internships in partnership with the Honors College, Gender + Women's Studies, and the Interdisciplinary program. This year the Women's Center created a co-curricular programming map (see pages 13-14) to help guide our goals in achieving critical student learning outcomes.

## Unique + Critical Services

The heart of the Women's Center offerings focuses on services to support the various identities that intersect with gender. Services and programming for non-traditional (returning) students, women of color, mothers, survivors of sexual violence, and the LGBTQ community continue to draw people into our space. The Women's Center was also proactive in creating community safe spaces throughout the year to provide dialogue and healing to community members impacted by local and national incidents of violence rooted in racism, anti-blackness, police brutality, and homophobia.

Our Women's Center and CSJ blogs which are linked to myUMBC have also become an instrumental tool in providing additional space to tell our stories and validate marginalized experiences. The Women's Center led the way in creating and facilitating events and programs for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Relationship Violence Awareness Month. Moreover, the Women's Center took our Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: Cultivating a Survivor Responsive Campus workshop on the road presenting to various classes and campus meetings. Through our commitment to serving various underrepresented or marginalized populations, the Center aims to support student retention and graduation.

# OUR NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

How did the Women's Center support the UMBC community this year?

**FROM JULY 2015 THRU JUNE 2016...**

**8,642 VISITS**

visits to the Center and outside programs & outreach



**1-1 SUPPORT 126**



community members received 1-1 support from Women's Center staff

**\$56,000 SCHOLARSHIPS**

scholarship money awarded to 22 non-traditional students



**LACTATION ROOM 507**



times parents used our private lactation room

**153 PROGRAMS**

meetings, discussions, and events organized/facilitated by Women's Center staff



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR BUSY YEAR!**

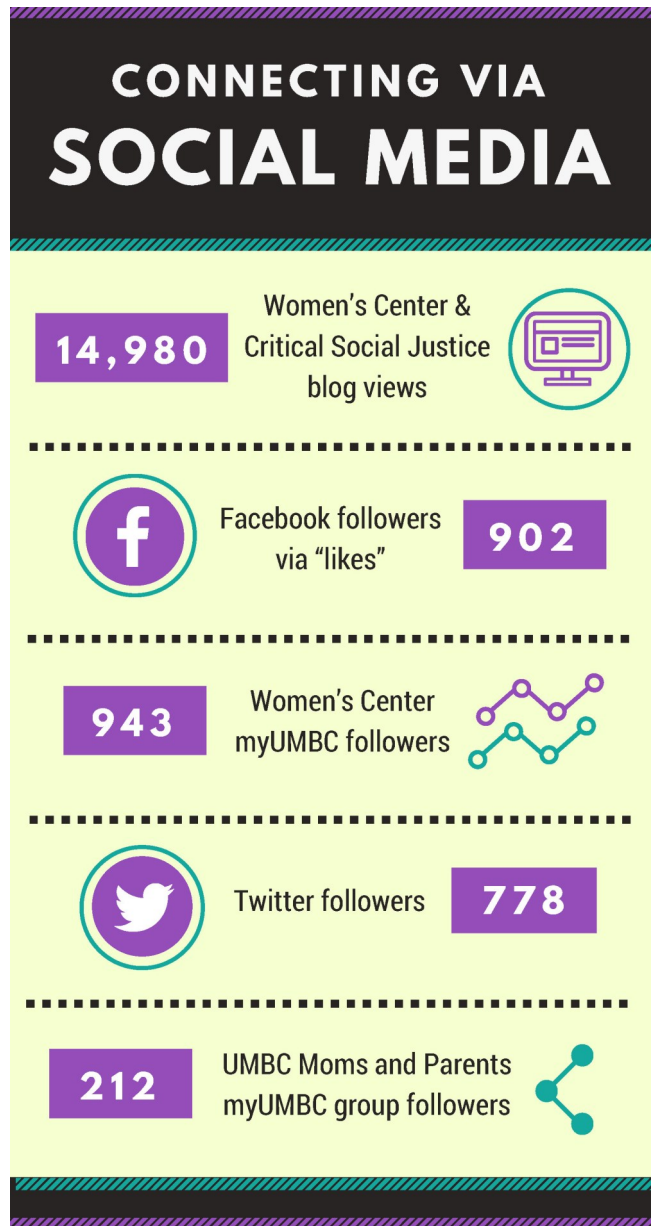
Continue for more details on our community space, programming, and outreach.

## Committed Staffing

A strong group of 7 student staff and interns assisted the two full-time professional staff in providing service to Women's Center community members throughout the year. With the guidance of professional staff, the student staff, interns, and volunteers demonstrated leadership and dedication by creating and/or facilitating meaningful programs and events throughout the year. Examples of student-driven and executed programming and events include: the fall and spring roundtable series, Vines, Rhymes, and Headlines (a CSJ event), Rebuilding Manhood curriculum updates, facilitation of identity-based discussion groups such as Between Women and Spectrum, and Self-Care Day. Student staff members were essential in the daily operation of the Center, provided critical connections to community members, and did outreach to their peers at campus fairs and tabling events. Student volunteers continue to be critical in helping large-scale events like Take Back the Night and Telling Our Stories Showcase.

## Continual Transformation

This year, the Women's Center at UMBC updated our mission statement, guiding principles, and leading priorities and developed student learning outcomes to guide our efforts. As our Center grows and changes to adapt to the evolution of UMBC and the ever-changing societal context in which we operate in, so too must our goals and social justice focus. Through the support of the Women's Center Advisory Board and several meetings with campus stakeholders, the Women's Center now operates under a mission statement that better captures the intersectional and feminist work we do as a campus-based women's center committed to student development, retention, and support for the entire campus community.



# BREAKING DOWN THE BUDGET



**\$4,320**

Saved by 4 internships

**\$1,132**

Saved via Work Study

**\$3,706**

Budgeted

**\$8,576**

Total spent

**\$4,870**

Over budget on student staff



**\$9,297**

Co-sponsorships

**\$570**

Donations

**\$1,237**

FY16 operating budget after Assistant Director re-classification

**\$23,321**

Actual operating expenses

**\$12,217**

Spent from carry forward

## BUDGET PRIORITIES



Signature Programs



Student Staff



Community Space



The Returning Women Students Networking Spectacular event hosted in April 2016. One of our most popular events!

## Financials

The Women's Center experienced an exceptional year of support from campus partners and external donors to help us in accomplishing both our programming goals and maintaining the daily operations of the Women's Center. With an operating budget of only \$1,237 (reduced from \$3,524 due to Assistant Director reclassification) and a student staff budget of \$3,706 the additional funding from carry-forward funds, grants, co-sponsorships, reservation fees, in-kind donations, and work study and for-credit internships is critical to the success of the Women's Center.

The Women's Center also ended the year with \$6020.51 in our USM Foundation account to help supplement programming and staffing needs. A crowd-sourcing campaign to support the Returning Women Students Programming continued from last year. An Amazon Wish List was also launched in an effort to encourage friends of the Center to consider donating in-kind donations, particularly books for our lending library.

A total of \$56,000 in scholarship funding was awarded to 22 returning women students.



**Women's Center Advisory Board 2015-16**

## Advisory Board Member Spotlight: Dr. Julie Murphy

In addition to launching our new mission (page 1), this year we also developed our guiding principles and identified our leading priorities.

### Women's Center Guiding Principles:

- ◇ We will encourage authentic dialogues among students, faculty, and staff to facilitate consciousness-raising, transformative learning, and self-determination.
- ◇ We will embody our commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and social justice in our operation, staffing, and programming.
- ◇ We will operate from a holistic and non-hierarchical anti-violence framework.
- ◇ We will challenge the barriers that reinforce inequity and oppression impacting our university and broader communities.
- ◇ We will cultivate women's empowerment, involvement, and leadership in all aspects of university life.

Serving on the WCAB has been incredibly rewarding - it has given me a new way to connect with staff and faculty who are committed to women's growth, development, and support.

In addition, I have learned a great deal about resources, events, and services available to students, which has significantly improved my effectiveness at both formal and informal aspects of my job. For example, I have so many resources and ideas to offer to students when they come to me for help and support.

A goal of the psychology major is to improve the cultural competence of our students, and my connection to the Women's Center has given me a vast number of ways to provide students with opportunities to expand their cultural competence and knowledge!

### Leading Priorities:

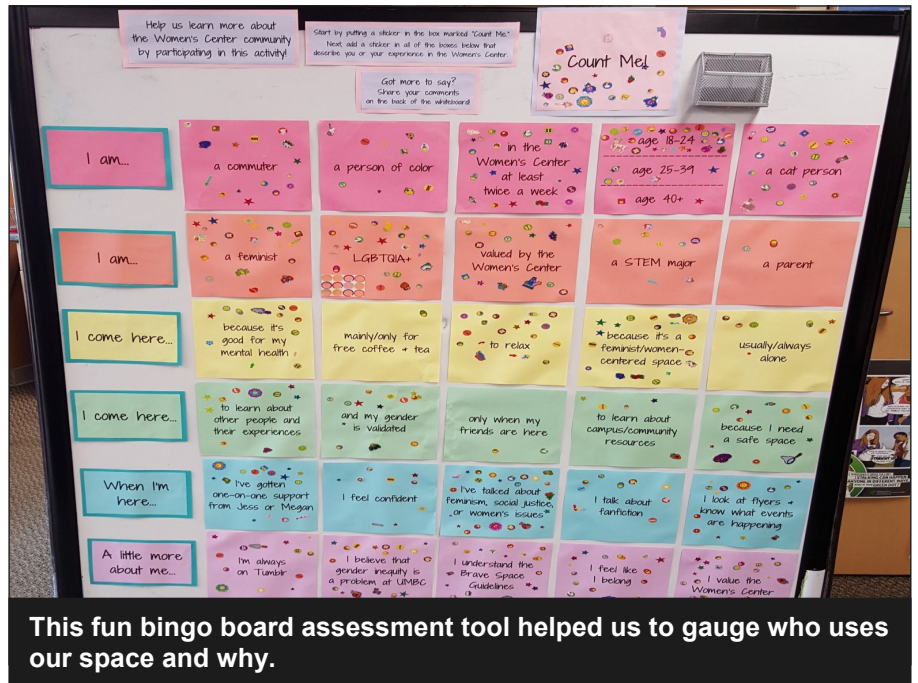
- ◇ Advance gender equity and an inclusive campus climate
- ◇ Support student success and community well-being for women and marginalized people
- ◇ Sustain and strengthen social justice education and engagement
- ◇ Cultivate a survivor-responsive campus as a means to address sexual violence

# Assessment Spotlight: Community Space

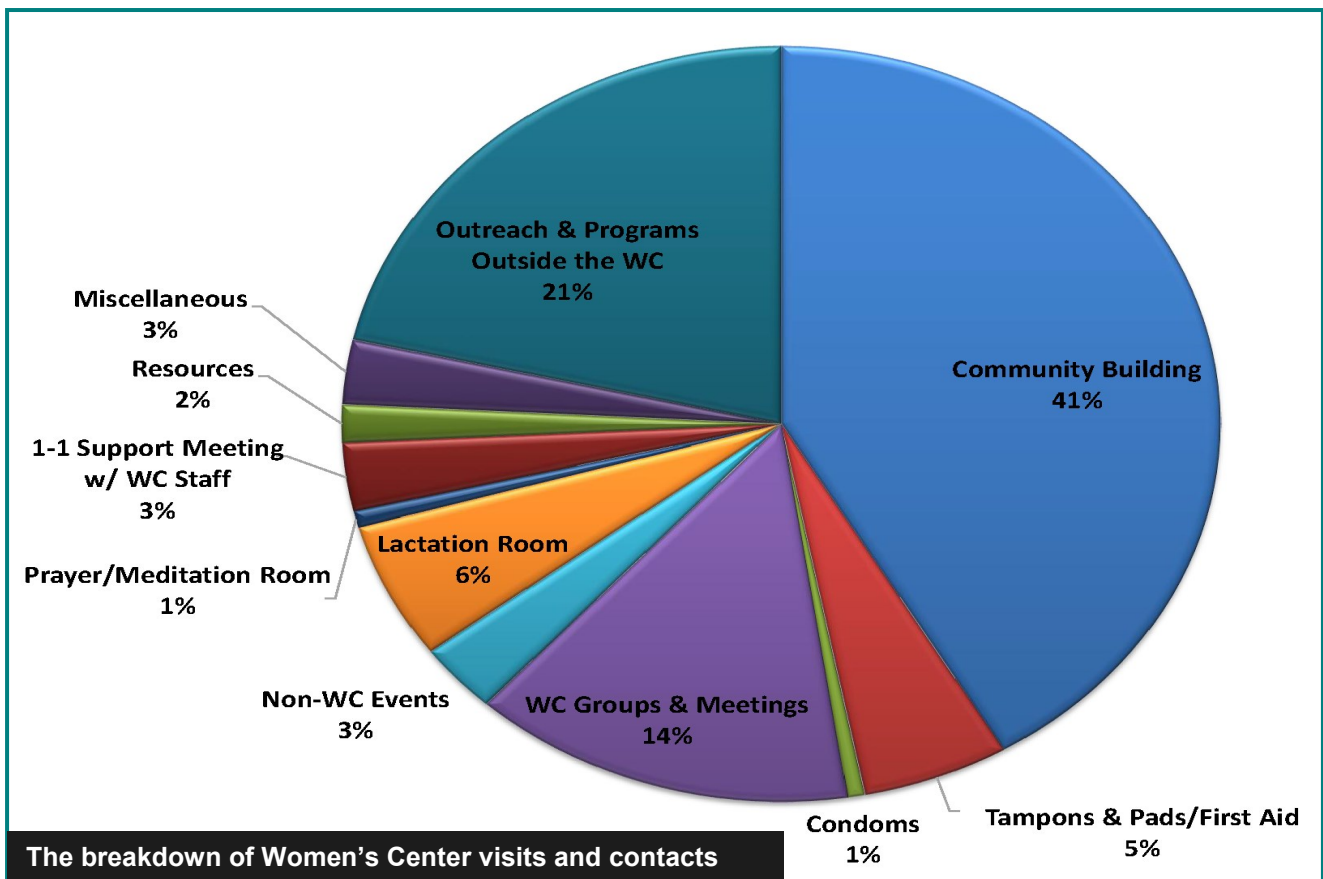
During the spring 2016 semester, three doctoral students from Psychology worked with the Women's Center on program evaluation, including one that aimed to assist the staff in understanding how and why students are using the Center space. Findings from the evaluation indicate that students use the space in a multitude of ways, including to do homework, study, socialize, relax, and as a way to fill a 'gap' in their day. They also describe using the Center as a mechanism for learning and intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Students expressed feelings of comfort and safety within the space due to its intentional focus on traditionally marginalized groups.

Findings from the Sense of Community Index survey (completed by 41 students) showed that the Women's Center has been successful in providing an open, safe, and comfortable space for students

as well as cultivating an overall sense of community among those who visit the Center. One of our goals is to promote the Women's Center as an active space on campus, and so we continue to seek opportunities to increase student engagement in our space.



**This fun bingo board assessment tool helped us to gauge who uses our space and why.**



**The breakdown of Women's Center visits and contacts**

# Events, Programs, & Highlights

## Women + Leadership Class of 2016:

This new series was created in partnership with Student Life and Women Involved in Learning and Leadership to better market and showcase the experiences on campus dedicated to supporting women leaders. Specific events were created to build community and discuss the ways in which leadership is gendered.

## Skills-Based Workshops:

In an effort to better prepare and skill the UMBC community for engaging in a diverse and ever-changing world, the Women's Center created and offered two new workshops this semester:

Microaggressions 101 and Fundamentals of Activism. Microaggressions 101 was developed out of specific workshops offered to Res Life and Engineering TAs to address microaggressions more broadly. It was also adapted and presented to the Psychology Department GAs and faculty.



The Women + Leadership Class of 2016

*“When the survivors openly shared their stories it brought an insight of what these students were going through and I found that to be **brave and empowering.**”*

— Take Back the Night 2016 Participant

## Take Back the Night:

The annual Take Back the Night survivor speak out and march continues to be one of our most popular events, with over 230 UMBC community members attending this year's rally. During the survivor speak out, 16 students bravely shared their stories. 87% of respondents said that as a result of TBTN they felt more comfortable supporting a friend who has experienced sexual assault.

**77%** agreed that TBTN helped them gain a better understanding of consent



Students displaying their rally signs at Take Back the Night



## Community Safe Spaces:

These safe spaces began in response to the uprisings in Ferguson, Missouri and have continued in partnership with the Mosaic Center. These safe spaces provide intentional healing and supportive spaces for UMBC community members to process and share their thoughts, emotions, and reactions as they related to racism, institutionalized violence, anti-blackness, and homophobia.

## Women's Center Roundtable Series:

The roundtable series offered each semester provides a critical lens on issues and various social identities as they intersect with gender. Through moderation from faculty, staff and student panel members, all UMBC community members are invited into important conversations related to gender, identity, and social justice. Fall discussion topics included: Critical Whiteness and White Womanhood, Talking to Kids about "isms," and Women and Sports. In the spring, the series was structured around the theme of mental health and event topics included: Black Trauma & Mental Health, Trans Identities & Mental Health, and (In)Visible Disabilities and Women.



Attendees at the Critical Whiteness & White Womanhood roundtable discussion in September.

**In addition to the events and programs above, the Women's Center continues to offer the following signature programs and events:**

The Clothesline Project, Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: Cultivating a Survivor-Responsive Campus Workshop, Telling Our Stories 2nd Annual Showcase, Returning Women Students Networking Spectacular, and Critical Social Justice (see page 12 for more details)

## Women's Center Accolades:

Women's Center professional staff members, Jess Myers and Megan Tagle Adams, both received national awards this year at the Women's Center's pre-conference at the National Women's Studies Association conference. Myers was awarded the Outstanding Achievement Award and Tagle Adams was awarded the Emerging Leader Award. The Women's Center's also was proud to be well represented at this year's Lavender Celebration. The Women's Center was nominated once again as an Allied Office of the Year and both professional staff members were nominated for staff honors. Student Staff member, Daniel Willey was nominated and awarded the Outstanding Service to the LGBTQ Community specifically for his work with Spectrum.



## Trainings, Workshops, + Presentations:

Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence: Cultivating a Survivor-Responsive Campus full-length and mini-workshops for approximately 145 faculty, staff, students throughout the year at various class sessions, department meetings, and advertised event workshops • Microaggressions workshops for Engineering TAs, Diversity Scholars, and Psychology Department's Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee Townhall Meeting • Gender + Women's Studies 100 class visits on the history of women's centers • Leading Orgs workshop workshop on campus-based activism • Rape Culture 101 presentation for UHS Peer Health Educators and

RVAP Advocates • Civic Engagement Class visit focused on campus-based activism movements • Résumé and Career-Building Workshop for Non-Traditional Women Students • Relationship Violence presentation and training to Counseling Center interns • Relationship Violence and Healthy Relationships presentation to FYS course • Get it Together: Fundamentals of Activism Workshop

## Women's Center Committee + Association Representation:

President's Commission for Women • Gender + Women's Studies Coordinating Committee • LGBTQ Climate Task Force • LGBTQ Faculty and Staff Association • Safe Zone Facilitators • Campus Childcare Task Force • UMBC Celebrates Diversity Planning Committee • National Conference for College Women Student Leaders Steering Committee • National Women's Studies Association's Women's Center committee's Anti-Racism/Anti-White Supremacy working group • Mid-Atlantic Women/Gender Centers Professional Network

### Student Staff Spotlight: Daniel Willey

*Daniel is a third year Gender and Women's Studies major and he has been a Women's Center student staff member since Fall 2014.*

Before I even started working here, the Women's Center was important to me. As a freshman who was beginning gender transition and had just moved from a small rural town to Baltimore, nothing in my life was familiar anymore. The Women's Center quickly became that familiar space for me. I made my first friends here. I met other queer and trans people here. It was amazing to me; I had never interacted with a group of people who came from so many places and were so happy to encourage and affirm me in whatever I wanted to do.



Activism has always been a part of who I am, but the Women's Center has given me a platform to work on and a community to care about. In this space, I get to put to work the skills and knowledge I've gained in the classroom. This is a place where I can push myself and ask, *What more can I be doing? What can I do differently? How can I do this better?* I get to push others and say, *We can do better. We can all do better.*

The Women's Center plays such a huge role in my life that I can't imagine what it would have been like if I never worked here. I do my best to embody the center, our mission, and the Brave Space Guidelines here and in other areas of my life. People notice, too. Faculty, staff, and students alike have recognized me on campus and know me as a resource. It's an amazing feeling to see how my work is impacting people in a real way.

Through my work and the wonderful people I am surrounded by every day, I have learned patience and mindfulness. I have pushed myself to learn new skills and step out of my comfort zone. I've also learned how to be kind to myself and value my needs. I've learned to value my skills and talents and really feel like I am good at something.

I am so thankful to the Women's Center and to Jess and Megan for helping me become my best self. I wouldn't be where I am without them and this experience will always be a significant moment in my life.



Dancing at the Women of Color Reception hosted by the Women of Color Coalition & The Returning Women Student Scholars cohort

## Women's Center Discussion-Based Programs

These programs exist to provide special attention and support to various identities that intersect with gender, such as race and sexual orientation. They complement academic learning, create consciousness-raising opportunities, and provide safe spaces to explore social justice and feminist issues.

*"I feel so confident in these spaces...It's hard to describe but I've opened up so much more about myself, more than ever and it feels liberating." - Between Women participant*

**Between Women** centers the experiences of women students who identify themselves on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. This structured, topic-based program discusses sexuality and sexual orientation with a focus on intersectionality and provides a safe space for women and feminine-identified students to share their feelings and experiences with other women. Favorite discussion topics include queer representation in pop culture, queer fashion, and sharing coming out stories at Milk, Cookies, and Coming Out Stories.

**Rebuilding Manhood** is an 11-week experience for men to explore manhood and gender in order to promote a healthy and multifaceted masculinity for oneself and throughout UMBC's campus community. Rebuilding Manhood creates a safe space for consciousness-raising and critical thinking related to gender, masculinity, intersecting identities, leadership, and various social issues. This program ran in the Women's Center for 3 years and concluded in the fall 2015 due to limited staffing and financial resources.

**Returning Women's Students Scholars Program and Community** is for women students over the age of 25 returning to college to complete their undergraduate degree and is a required experience for all Returning Women Student Scholars. The program includes orientations at the start of each semester, monthly workshops, and 1-1 meetings with professional staff each semester. All UMBC returning women students are invited to the monthly meetings and events which are often made available to students who could not be on campus via a livestreaming option.

**Spectrum** offers social space and support for UMBC community members who identify as trans\*, gender non-conforming, or those questioning their gender identity. Special meetings this year included a visit from a transgender activist who shared his experience of "being trans after college" and the annual clothing swap. This group is run in partnership with Student Life's LGBTQ Programming.

**Women of Color Coalition** provides a supportive space for increasing visibility, advocacy, and engagement for undergraduate and graduate women of color on campus. Each year the group also hosts a Women of Color reception and supports the Telling Our Stories Initiative which was launched through an AAUW grant in the spring of 2015 and continued at a smaller scale this year.

# Critical Social Justice: Baltimore 365



When the Women's Center and Mosaic Center were brainstorming themes for the 3rd annual CSJ, Baltimore was in the midst of an uprising. When this unrest occurred within the city, the UMBC community was preparing for the final week of classes and exams. For many, the Uprising seemed well removed from our campus, as a perceived sense of distance from the city believes the significance of the 'B' in UMBC. Aside from periodically checking the local news updates or receiving a swell of calls and messages from concerned relatives on Facebook, studying and campus night life went on as usual. For some students, the reality of a Baltimore in chaos mere miles away didn't sink in until they saw fires burning from the 7th floor of the library. Seeing the disparity between these two realities positioned the CSJ team to be intentional in picking Baltimore as the theme for the upcoming CSJ. The 365 was added because much like CSJ is a year-long campaign, our critical thinking, action, and care for Baltimore must happen all 365 days a year.

CSJ: Baltimore 365 created space and learning opportunities to consider the ways participants could cultivate deep and lasting commitments to Baltimore City while also framing an understanding within the context of larger national movements and ongoing struggles against systemic racism and injustice. Signature events included kicking off the week with Baltimore 101 led by Dr. Jodi-Kelber Kaye from the Honors College as a means to ground the community in the historic and structural issues surrounding the injustices Baltimore City residents. The keynote event, "Baltimore in Action: Always Rising" featured a panel of prominent Baltimore activists to include Rev. Dr. Heber Brown, Dr. Marisela B. Gomez, Tawanda Jones, Jacqueline Robarge, and Kwame Jones with moderation from Marc Steiner. A walking tour of a Baltimore led by Dr. Kate Drabinski allowed the UMBC community to not only talk about Baltimore but to interact and be within the city while learning about both its historic and current issues related to structural racism and poverty. Other events throughout the week included a dialogue on Baltimore LGBTQ youth homelessness led by Maryland Delegate Mary Washington; a multi-media exhibit and panel called Vines, Rhymes, & Headlines: Telling the Story of



Baltimore; an interfaith dialogue featuring Baltimore faith leaders; and a roundtable about how to talk to kids about "isms."

The feedback for Critical Social Justice: Baltimore 365 was overwhelmingly positive. Assessment indicated that the events supported participants in increasing their understanding of the social justice issues facing Baltimore, social justice in general, and strategies to engage in activism work. commitment to Baltimore.

## Women's Center Student Learning Outcomes Map

		Community Lounge	Programs & Events		Identity-Based Groups			Staff & Interns	1-1 Support & Crisis Response
			Roundtables	SA/RV*	CSJ†	RM#	RW§		
<b>Women's Center Student Learning Outcomes</b>									
1	Reaffirm feelings of campus-based engagement, belonging, and empowerment	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	1-3
2	Engage in critical thinking and dialogue about issues related to feminism, social justice, and social identities	0-1	1-3	1	3	1-3	1	4	
3	Identify campus and community resources relevant to the discussion or event topic	1	1	3	2	1	2	4	1-4
4	Discuss strategies and skills for maintaining healthy lifestyles related to various social identities	1	2	4		2	3	3	1-3
5	Practice applicable skills in professionalism, critical thinking, leadership, teamwork, and program planning and implementation				2		2	4	
<b>UMBC Functional Competencies</b>									
1	Oral & Written Communication	1	1			2	2	2	3
2	Scientific & Quantitative Reasoning								
3	Critical Analysis & Reasoning		2	1	2-3	2	1	2	3
4	Technological Competency								2
5	Informational Literacy		1	2	3	2	2	2	3

<b>Key:</b>	Students engaging with the Women's Center in this capacity ...	
	Do not focus on this outcome	
	Gain fundamental knowledge and skills in this outcome	1
	Practice and build their learning in this outcome	2
	Complicate and refine their learning in this outcome	3
	Demonstrate mastery of this learning outcome	4

\* Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence centered programs and events

† Critical Social Justice

# Rebuilding Manhood

§ Returning Women Students

## Women's Center Priorities Map

Women's Center Priorities		Community Lounge	Programs & Events			Identity Groups			Staff & Interns	1-1 Support & Crisis Response	Advocacy & Service Committee Work
			Roundtables	SA/RV*	CSJ†	RM#	RW§	Other			
1	Advance gender equity and an inclusive campus climate	2	1	3	1	3	3	2	3	3	
2	Support student success and community well-being for women and marginalized people	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	
3	Sustain and strengthen social justice education and engagement	1	3	1	3	1	1	1	3	2-3	
4	Cultivate a survivor-responsive campus	1-2		3		2			3	2	

<b>Key:</b> This Women's Center program, resource, or service...	Does not focus on this priority	
	Indirectly advances this priority	1
	Directly advances this priority	2
	Extensively focuses on this priority	3

\* Sexual Assault & Relationship Violence centered programs and events

† Critical Social Justice

# Rebuilding Manhood

§ Returning Women Students

(updated January 2016)