



**2016 - 2017**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

WOMEN'S CENTER  
**25**  
 at UMBC







## DEAR FRIENDS + ALLIES,

When my journey working in the Women's Center began in 2011, I was immediately thrown into planning for the Center's 20th anniversary celebrations. In addition to getting acclimated to our space and community, I was also digging through the rich archives documenting how and why the Women's Center came to be. Immersing myself into our history helped me to understand the Women's Center's purpose and identity in order to better guide us toward the future. How refreshing it was to go through that process again as we recognized yet another milestone this year—our 25th anniversary!

Each year, we face our share of successes and challenges, and this year was no exception. As we celebrated our 25th "birthday," we saw an outpouring of support from current UMBC community members, as well as from former staff and alumni. However, these joyful times were also tempered by moments of grief and sadness. Our LGBTQ community members were deeply shaken by the loss of a beloved UMBC staff member, and only weeks later our country watched what was for many a disappointing and even devastating outcome to the presidential election and the chance for the country's first woman president. In the same room where we'd recently celebrated 25 years of the Women's Center's growth into a critical space and resource at UMBC, we also came together to grieve and cry. Through these highs and lows, I witnessed the power of community, the necessity of women-centered spaces, and the deep desire to prioritize critical social justice.

Overall, this was a busy year for the Women's Center, and I'm excited to share some of the highlights in our annual report. Here's to our next 25 years and beyond!

**Jess Myers**  
**Director**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*"The Women's Center is a place and a space. A place where I can relax, study, eat and engage in conversation. A space that I can be myself, express my feelings, and explore who I am to myself and others. **When I think about how I have grown in the past four years, I think about the Women's Center.** The Women's Center is the epitome of inclusiveness and social advancement."*

— UMBC student

For the past 25 years, the Women's Center has served as a critical resource for UMBC women and other marginalized populations seeking support and advocacy, as well as 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.



*“This place is a ball of energy  
and whenever I am down  
and need that kick —  
I know where to go!”*

— UMBC student



# 1. active community space

The Women's Center was an active community space and resource this year, with approximately **10,296** visits/contacts between July 2016 and June 2017. We saw a large increase in visits to our lounge for community building, even during what have usually been slower months of the year for us. Our usage rates increased again this year in many critical areas to include the use of the lactation room (**610** visits) and and outreach outside of the Center (**997** contacts).



# 2016-2017 TRACKING NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

**445**  
SUPPORT

**5,969**

COMMUNITY  
BUILDING

**534**  
TAMPONS,  
PADS, +  
CONDOMS

**997**  
OUTREACH

**610**  
LACTATION

**2,335**  
PROGRAMS

**36**  
PRAYER +  
MEDITATION



**10,296**

COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED





*"I wouldn't be who I am today without the Women's Center. When I needed someone to talk to this was the first place I thought of. This is my safe space."*

— UMBC alum





# 3. social justice dialogues

The Women's Center is committed to embodying an intersectional feminist approach in our daily support and programming, and social justice is a key aspect of our work. Critical Social Justice (CSJ) continues to provide a significant platform for us to create spaces for students, faculty, and staff to engage with social justice issues on campus. CSJ keynote speaker Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha spoke powerfully to this year's theme of Home in her lecture titled, "Body/ Land/ Home: Disability Justice, Healing Justice and Femme of Color Brilliance." Our monthly roundtable events explored a multitude of issues, including beauty myths, queer coding, fatness, politics, and activism. For the first time in several years, the Women's Center hosted a keynote lecture for Women's History Month on International Women's Day, which featured renowned human rights activist Loretta Ross.

We continue to use our Brave Space Guidelines in an effort to create space that is both safe and brave in engaging in difficult dialogues, reflecting on discomfort, and finding peace in being one's authentic self. The guidelines have been useful and important not only for our own space, but for other areas of campus which have adapted and replicated the spirit of Brave Spaces.



## 4. 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, Critical Social Justice, and a powerful Women's History keynote address, students gained greater awareness and education regarding women and gender issues that complemented their learning inside the classroom. Students also 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 Psychology.

This year professional staff increased their presence inside the classroom through presentations regarding gender and racial microaggressions while also providing several workshops through Human Resources' diversity series.

*“The Women’s Center makes me feel connected to and a member of the UMBC community, provides me with a vehicle for making a contribution to campus climate that is far broader than I would be able to accomplish within my department,*

**provides me with ideas to incorporate into my teaching, provides me with events and activities that my students can complete to deepen their learning in my classes, and provides me with a resource to which I can refer students/faculty/staff when they are in need of support and advocacy.**

*The Women’s Center provides an invaluable role on campus, and in my life. The women who run the center are amazing, and I’m honored to be part of their work!”*

— UMBC faculty member






## 5. unique + critical services

Services and programming for underrepresented and underserved populations like women adult learners (returning students), women of color, mothers, survivors of sexual violence, and the LGBTQ community continue to draw UMBC community members into our space.

The Women's Center was proactive in creating community safe spaces throughout the year to provide dialogue and support to community members feeling targeted by instances of violence and tragedy, as well as the changing sociopolitical climate. In the immediate aftermath of the November 2016 elections, the Women's Center acted quickly to design programs through our "What Now?" series to provide resources to students, staff, and faculty concerned about their legal rights, particularly related to reproductive health, transgender rights, and bias-related incidents.

Furthering our priority to cultivate a survivor-responsive campus, the Women's Center led the way in creating and facilitating programs for Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Relationship Violence Awareness Month. We also increased the number of times we presented our Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence workshop by providing insights and skills to over **123** students, faculty, and staff throughout the year.

Ultimately, through our commitment to serving various underrepresented or marginalized populations, the Center aims to support student retention and graduation.



*"I am so grateful to be a part of the  
Returning Women's Scholars program.  
Without it, I really don't think I  
would have had the connection  
to the university that I do.  
You really had a huge impact  
on my experience."*

— Returning Women Scholar



## 6. committed staffing + support

A group of **7** student staff and interns assisted two full-time professional staff in providing support services and programming to the Women's Center community. With additional funding from the Provost's Office, we were able to hire a much-needed part-time special projects coordinator for the spring semester. Examples of student-driven programs include the fall and spring roundtable series, facilitation of identity-based discussion groups, and Self-Care Day. Student staff members were essential in the daily operation of the Center, enhanced connections to community members, and led outreach efforts at campus fairs and tabling events. Our team of student staff and volunteers have been crucial to the successful execution of large-scale events like Take Back the Night and the Clothesline Project.

In addition to our staff, we are supported by a dynamic team of volunteer Advisory Board members, comprised of a total of **9** staff, **5** faculty, and **1** graduate student representing **13** offices and departments from across the UMBC campus. This year, the Board took the spirit of our anniversary year to advocate the Center's mission and reach to upper administration. Their efforts were key in securing additional funding for the Women's Center and a visit from Provost Rous. The Advisory Board is integral in helping the Women's Center professional staff focus on short and long-term goals, as well as identifying the gaps in which we can provide better support and resources to women on campus.



## 7. social media

Our Women's Center and CSJ blogs, which are linked to myUMBC, provide an additional platform to tell our stories and validate marginalized experiences while also allowing student staff experience in crafting their voice and writing skills. Over the course of the year, our staff team created content for **88** blog posts. Moreover, student staff and interns took an active role in maintaining the Women's Center social media presence through creative Instagram and Snapchat "takeovers" and curating weekly hashtag campaigns during the spring semester such as #WOCWednesday and #FeministArtists.





# OUR FAVORITE PHOTOS FROM THIS YEAR



Clockwise from top left: UMBC alumni (and several former Women's Center staff) posing for a picture after the Women's History Month keynote by Loretta Ross; Women's Center staff laughing while trying to take a group photo at the 2017 Take Back the Night; UMBC students taking part in the Women in Leadership series attempt to build the strongest, tallest tower out of marshmallows, spaghetti, and minimal tape; Women's Center student staff pose with CSJ: Home keynote speaker, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha (seated left).



## 8. financials

We experienced an exceptional year of support from campus partners and external donors to help us accomplish our programming goals while also maintaining the daily operations of the Women's Center. With an operating budget of only **\$1,237** and a student staff budget of **\$3,706**, the additional funding from carry-forward funds, co-sponsorships, reservation fees, in-kind donations, work study, and for-credit internships has been essential to our continued operation. This November, we received a desperately needed one-time budget increase of **\$25,000** from the Provost's Office, which allowed us to hire a part-time staff member to expand our outreach throughout the spring semester.

By successfully launching our 25th Anniversary GiveCorps campaign in August of 2016, we ended the year with **\$7,965** in our USM Foundation account, which is used to supplement programming and staffing needs. A total of **46** people donated to the campaign to reach our fundraising goal of **\$2,500**. Through creative social media campaigns, we also saw an increase of in-kind donations and contributions from our Amazon Wish List totaling approximately **\$973** of in-kind support. This year, the Student Government Association co-sponsored Take Back the Night for over **\$2,000**, which is financial support the Women's Center will be able to rely on in the future as well.

A total of **\$66,295** in scholarship funding was awarded to **24** Returning Women Student Scholars.

# Budget Highlights



## RECEIVED

**\$9,452**

Co-Sponsorships

**\$973**

In-Kind Donations



## SAVED

**\$2,280**

via Internships

**\$1,000**

via Federal Work Study



## SPENT

**\$14,345**

on Student Staff

**\$6,340**

on Contingent I Staff  
(Part-Time, Spring Only)

# 25th Anniversary at a Glance

**\$2,500**

Gifted by 46  
Women's  
Center  
friends



**13**

Former  
professional +  
student staff  
engaged



**1**

Birthday  
Party

**100**

Yummy  
Cupcakes

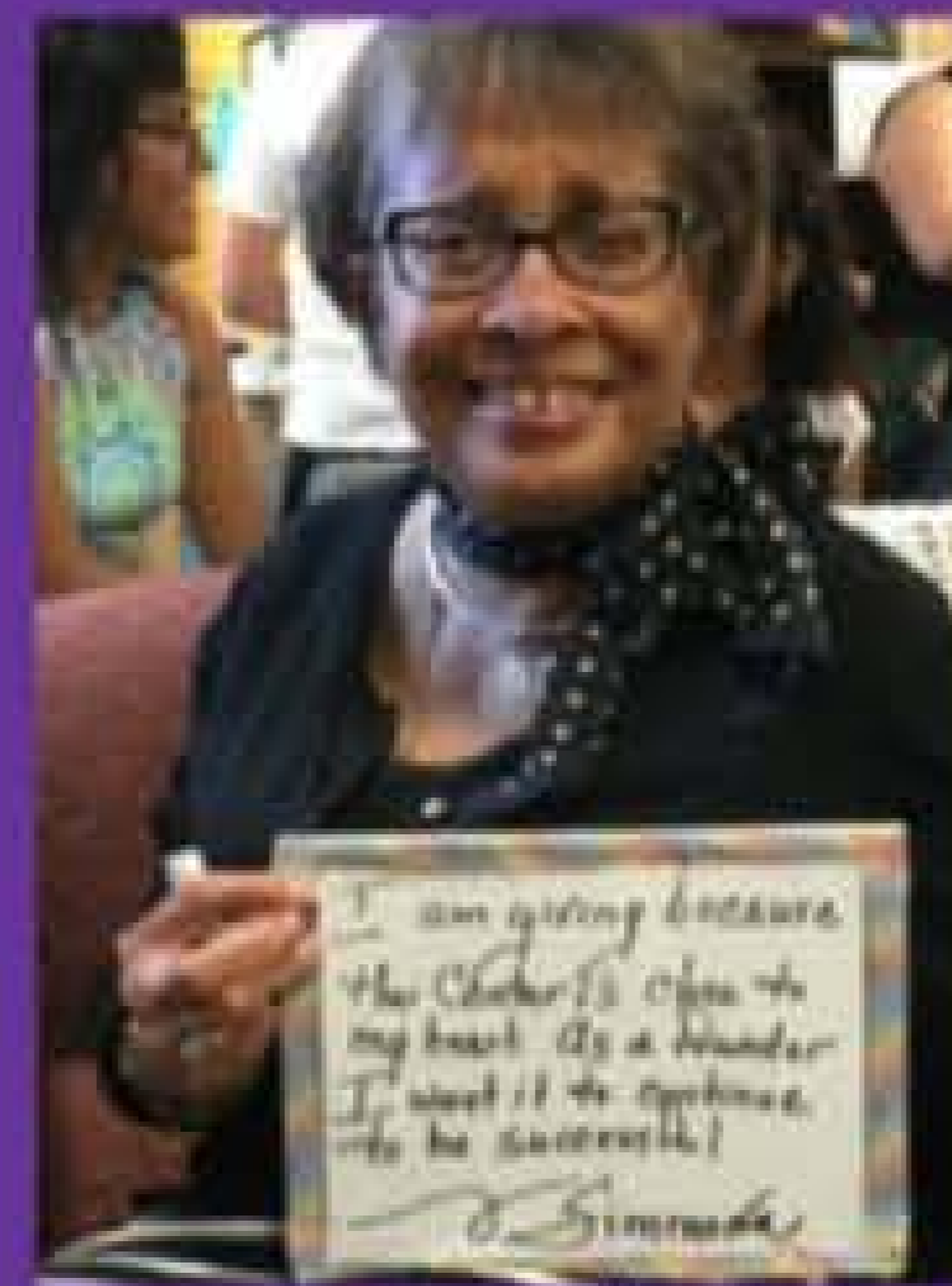


**9**

Alumnae  
volunteered at  
events

**26**

Gifts from  
alumni for a  
total of \$1605



*'I love the Women's Center because...  
It's a place to come home to  
even years after graduation.'*

-UMBC alumna, Class of 2012

## Thank You to Our Donors!



**WOMEN'S  
CENTER**  
at UMBC

Joshua Abrams • Kathleen Algire-Fedarcy • Christina Animashaun • Brianne Best •  
Stacy Branham • Virginia Byrne • Dayna Carpenter • Doha Chibani • Crystal Diaz-Espinoza •  
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Dinah Winnick • Elizabeth Wunsch



# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In response to the November elections and the historic Women's March, the Women's Center acted quickly to provide several opportunities for discussion, education, and resources to support community members concerned with the changing sociopolitical landscape's impact on their lives. To contextualize these emerging issues within the greater scope of women's rights, we brought renowned human rights activist Loretta Ross to deliver a keynote lecture on International Women's Day.

This was our first keynote event for Women's History Month in several years, and the response was overwhelming with over **150** attendees, including several alumni. Ross' lecture, entitled "Women's Rights as Human Rights in the Age of Trump," generated thoughtful conversation about a multitude of issues, including reproductive justice, re-thinking intersectionality, and countering call-out culture in activism. This event exemplified how the Women's Center's mission and programming goes beyond what is often thought of as simply "women's issues" by exploring interconnecting social justice issues to serve our broader UMBC community.





# CONTINUAL TRANSFORMATION: 25 YEARS AND BEYOND

The Women's Center's 25th anniversary was an ideal opportunity for us to reconnect with several UMBC alumni and former staff members. What became apparent in these reconnections is that as the Women's Center continues to grow and change alongside UMBC and the ever-changing societal context in which we operate, our core values and the feeling of belonging we give to those in our space remain ever constant. We will always pride ourselves in being a safe and brave space as we work to earn the trust and respect of those who find themselves engaging with the Women's Center and our staff. In 1991, this meant solidarity with those feeling empowered to address sexual harassment in response to Anita Hill's congressional testimony. In 2017, it looks like helping community members find their voice and their call to activism and feminism in the wake of national events such as the Women's March and grassroots movements like Black Lives Matter. Both the challenges and highlights of this year served as vivid reminders why the Women's Center exists and matters to our campus community and climate. We stay true to our mission statement centering the intersectional feminist work we do as a campus-based women's center committed to student development, retention, and support for the entire campus community.