

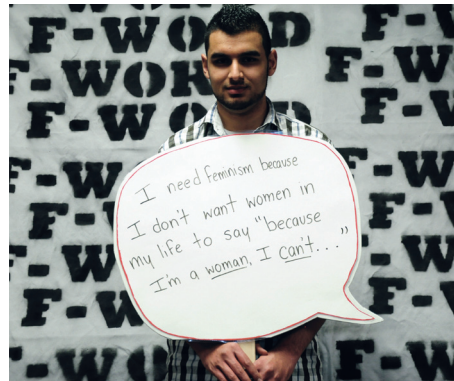
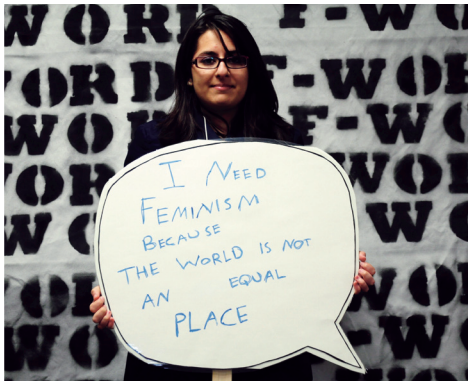


Our Voices

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Who needs feminism?



A NEWS REPORTER, COVERING THE WRC Awards Ceremony in 2010, asked me (a then new and slightly confused WRC volunteer) if feminism was still relevant today. Uncertain and unequipped to handle the question, I mumbled something incoherent about unequal wages and “things” not being “right,” which the reporter casually wrote down. The question of feminism has since been important to me. How does one articulate the diverse aspects of a whole body of theory and history in an authentic and comprehensive way while retaining its relevance to our contemporary world? The answer is one doesn’t—in fact, one couldn’t, at least, not alone. It requires, instead, a compilation of many varying and unique voices from around the world.

In 2012, sixteen women of Duke University in Durham, North Carolina initiated a campaign that is titled “Who Needs Feminism?” (WNF). The goal of the campaign is to reclaim the word “feminism” and to reduce and revise the antagonisms and apprehensions towards the term. To

achieve this, the group has photographed a spectrum of individuals and their response to why they need feminism. The images reveal the diverse applicability of feminism(s) in the various facets of every-day life, including decisions regarding clothing, the body, partners, safety, health, and more. This winter, the WRC has commenced its own WNF campaign by setting up a photo booth at a number of community events, in which volunteers encourage participants to engage with the topic and voice their answers. The photos will be published on <http://www.facebook.com/WNFatUofC>.

The WNF campaign, by showcasing feminism’s relevance and accessibility, significantly counteracts hostile claims that it is outdated, exclusionary, and even radical. The concept of feminism has negative connotations because it appears to privilege a certain idea—the femme, the woman—over its binary counterpart, the

By Nicole Foussekis-Stewart, WRC Volunteer

male. Yet, in feminism, the term “woman” escapes from its categorical definition to represent beyond the female gender: it represents the other, or any identity or group of identities that are excluded, suppressed, and misrepresented by the system as intrinsically outlying or different.

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Feminism, therefore, offers a position from which one can speak, counter, and challenge accepted societal beliefs and practices, including prevalent rape culture, rampant sexual and domestic violence, ideas about leadership, gender differences and more. It is a platform of resistance and deconstruction to the



WRC Awards

Distinguished Student

KENYA-JADE PINTO



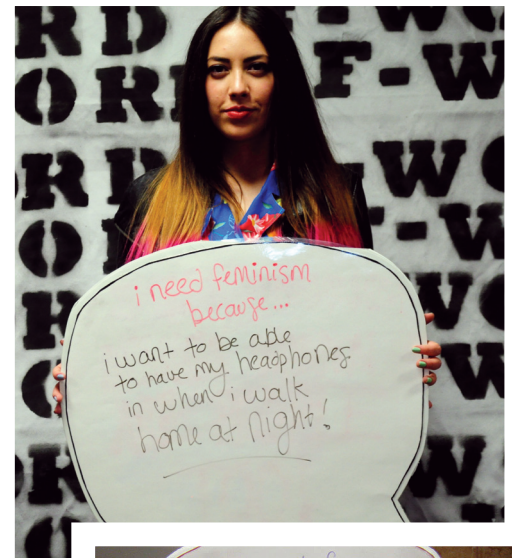
KENYA-JADE PINTO currently holds the position of Students' Union Vice-President Academic where she is unwavering in serving and representing over 25,000 undergraduate students. While her role as VP Academic has asked wisdom from Kenya-Jade in a number of ways, one notable example was the unexpected resignation of the student ombudsperson in August 2012 and subsequent interim role Kenya-Jade would fill. In addition to her fulltime duties and part time studies, Kenya-Jade made herself available to students on an individual basis – making time to both impart advice about how best to navigate specific issues and to offer a compassionate ear. She is completing her final semester of a BA in International Relations and Minor in Development Studies.

Kenya-Jade's road to VP Academic was not without difficulty. During her campaign in early 2012, Kenya-Jade received the difficult news that her time with her father was limited. Kenya-Jade was dedicated to her belief that her candidacy for VP Academic was strong, and even more dedicated to spending as much time as she could with her dad. Long hours on campus meant long nights at the hospital, but she remained resilient. When Ashley Pinto left the world in mid-May, Kenya-Jade began the daunting task of mapping uncharted territory at work, at home, and within herself.

In an attempt to navigate personal loss and advocate for cancer research and education, Kenya-Jade helped to organize Terry's Cause on Campus as student spokesperson and spoke about her loss alongside Darrel Fox. She was also part of a brave team of students who raised funds for cancer research through participating in a head shave in Mac Hall. As a founding member of the Women in Leadership (WIL) club on campus, Kenya-Jade's compassion can also be found in her dedicating the time to support a mandate of collaboration and innovation between women of various backgrounds, disciplines, and career paths. Most recently, Kenya-Jade has led the charge on a project aimed at highlighting the diversity of women and narratives that exist on campus which will be showcased at WIL's year-end networking luncheon.

system's claim of the natural, the absolute, or the inherent; it is a platform of other voices, other ideas, other utterances, which allow free and uninhibited creation of self. This is feminism's intricate link to the LGBTQA movement, in which identity is fluid and elusive to definition and knowledge but always in the process of defining and knowing. The WNF campaign is a practice of feminism because it offers a place from which one can arrive, speak, declare, challenge, to recognize logical inconsistencies, to offer revisions, and to create a more inclusive, free world.

Today, if asked again, my answer to the reporter would be very different. I would say that feminism is relevant because I desire to speak among many, and I would point to the WNF campaign of voice.



The WRC Awards 2013 Presentation Ceremony was held on March 9 at the University of Calgary. The ceremony is supported by the U of C Alumna Association and the Students' Union.



WRC Awards

Distinguished Alumna

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S WISDOM, RESILIENCE AND COMPASSION

SONIA K. AUJLA-BHULLAR

SONIA K. AUJLA-BHULLAR is a public school teacher with considerable experience in leading initiatives in cultural understanding from a critical perspective. She has tirelessly met diverse students' needs through her teaching, and efforts to work closely with agencies and families. Her work with a highly diverse student body has included program planning for diverse needs for learning disabilities and ESL students, families and staff support in cultural awareness. Her work with families of these students has been an opportunity to see the successes those striving to make Canada their home.



Sonia holds a BA in Development Studies and a MA in Graduate Division of Educational Research from the University of Calgary, and a BEd in

Elementary Education from the University of British Columbia. Her passion in women's studies led her thesis research, "Women of Colour in Education: An Exploration of Minority Teacher Experiences" that documents and analyzes the lived experiences of visible minority women in the teaching profession. Her findings have direct relevance to the fields of women's studies, ethnic studies, critical pedagogy, and teacher education.

Sonia's commitment to seeking the ever-changing status and expectations of women has enabled her with a strong core of empathy, knowledge and understanding. In the past several years, Sonia increased her role with the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA), organizing and planning Girls' Culture Clubs curriculum in both Junior and Senior high schools. She has presented at local, national, and international conferences and meetings, always sharing her important messages of inclusion, empowerment, and education for hope and social justice. Sonia was born and raised in Calgary and has dedicated much of her youth and adult life to volunteer work in the community. Her experiences include work with the CIWA as a facilitator with "New Friends and Neighborhood Groups," the Dashmesh Mission- Punjabi-Sikh Youth Group, the South Asia Police Advisory Committee with the Calgary Police Service, a Board Member of the Alberta Association of Multicultural Education.

PATRICIA OKAHASHI

PATRICIA OKAHASHI was a passionate learner and feminist, earning two degrees, BA in Psychology from the University of British Columbia and BA in Women's Studies from the University of Calgary. She used her academic knowledge in combination with her astute capacity to assess psychosocial situations to promote justice, for women when she was Coordinator of the Women's Resource Centre in the 1990s and later, for persons with disabilities at the Vocational and Rehabilitation Resource Centre and then, the Calgary Scope Society and the Disability Action Hall.

She was the embodiment of resilience. For most of her adult life, she endured scleroderma and lived with increasing pain. She remained innovative but practical, knowing how to develop projects to keep the Centre financially afloat. She gave all who entered the Centre personal attention and made it a place of safety, laughter and



companionship. She showed leadership in organizing events such as the December 6th Memorial Ceremony, marches, the Dollar Doughnut Days, and a walk-about in MacEwan Student Centre in support of lesbians. In her final years, she struggled with cancer. She maintained an excellent sense of wry humour and persistently challenged societal inequities, developing innovative projects such as her last one, a film about artists with disabilities. She never gave up, for example, always finding a way out of the funding and space crises that beset the Women's Resource Centre.

She demonstrated her compassion for others through her pursuit of research and fair policies for women and persons with disabilities. Even when her own ill health resulted in early retirement, she continued to assist the Disability Action Hall and to volunteer in the community. She was always ready to give her time, her heart and her strength to help individuals and to change oppressive societal practices. Most importantly she modelled a commitment to justice, thereby inspiring others to join her in seeking respect and dignity for everyone.

THE SHEILA O'BRIEN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP 2013

Samantha Cheuk



SAMANTHA CHEUK is in her third year of Health and Society with a concentration in Anthropology in the Bachelor of Health Sciences (Honours) program. Her research practicum with Dr. Bonnie Lashewicz examines hybrid masculine identities of fathers of children with autism spectrum disorder. This is important to her academically

and personally because it recognizes changing family structures by exploring the perspectives of fathers, instead of only mothers, to promote equality between the genders in the research literature. She enjoys the interdisciplinary nature of her degree stream and looks forward to applying her knowledge into a culminated research project this summer with the Global Health Program in Tanzania.

Samantha joined the WRC as a peer support volunteer in September 2010 and then moved into her current role as co-team leader for the Community- Building, Peer Support, and Outreach team in September 2011. She is energized by her conversations with fellow volunteers and visitors in the centre and enjoys learning with them about gender equality. Samantha inspires, engages and includes new and old visitors, making them all feel welcome at the Centre. Samantha has demonstrated an exceptional display of leadership, attentiveness, consistency, involvement, incredible capability of managing multiple responsibilities and tasks. The most powerful and life-changing workshop that Samantha has attended at the WRC has been the Let's Talk Leadership series. These workshops challenge Samantha to grow on a personal level and shape her leadership identity so that she can empower others, especially women, to discover their full worth and potential. Samantha was selected by her WRC volunteer peers to be recognized for her outstanding contributions to the WRC.

For more information on the award, please visit: http://www.ucalgary.ca/women/volunteer_award

VICE PROVOST STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Dr. Susan Barker



EVER SINCE DR. SUSAN BARKER joined the Provost's Office at the University of Calgary in July 2012 as Vice-Provost Student Experience, recognizing excellence in student leadership is a paramount objective. "We have some amazing students. We know that many of them make outstanding contributions to the community through volunteer work as well as helping fellow students. When they do this alongside high academic achievement it is right and proper that we acknowledge their efforts in making this world a better place as the whole of the University of Calgary family benefits from such selfless leadership." Susan understands that the benefits of creative and research-led teaching within an authentic student-centered and sustainable context is key to the University of Calgary becoming one of Canada's top five research universities by our 50th anniversary in 2016.

Susan is an exceptional leader and innovator joining us from the University of Alberta where she was Chair of Secondary Education and Professor in Science and Environmental Education and, from 2008 to 2010, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs and Services, Faculty of Education. Susan has extensive research grants and peer publications to her credit, and a wide breadth of international experience in ecology and education. She shared with us that UNESCO indicates "that world-wide, gender-based discrimination in education is both a cause and a consequence of deep-rooted disparities in society. Poverty, geographical isolation, ethnic background, disability, traditional attitudes about their status and role all undermine the ability of women and girls to exercise their rights." This is particularly important to Susan who has a strong interest in sustainability and sits on the University of Calgary Academic Sustainability Committee. She indicates that equity and social justice are critical areas to focus on to help ensure a sustainable future and she is excited to be part of the University of Calgary family.

