

AS Board of Directors Proposal for Gender-Targeted Programming

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Associated Students Women's Center

This year the Associated Students Women's Center is proposing to offer *five* gender targeted programs. This proposal is designed to give you an introduction to the purpose of each of these programs, as well as to give you a background in our understanding of why it is important for these programs to be targeted at Women-identified students and community members.

November 16th & 17th & Winter Quarter 2010: The Vagina Memoirs Process & Production (gender exclusive)

Beginning with the Open Call for Casting on November 16th & 17th, and the following quarter of weekly process meetings and the February 23rd – 26th production dates, the Vagina Memoirs are one of our most powerful and valuable events that we offer. As the last four years have modeled, we are seeking to have a trans-inclusive program for the Vagina Memoirs that offers the chance for women-identified people to participate in both the process and production. This production is based in empowering women's voices, stories, and experiences and to highlight the marginalized voices of women. This program specifically addresses stories related to the historically silenced issues of women's bodies, sexuality, reproductive rights, and violence against women. Due to the gendered nature of how we view these issues in our society, we believe it is valuable to offer this program and process to women-identified students.

However, we do support the inclusion of all genders, specifically male-identified students in supporting the process and production, volunteering at the production itself, and participating in the multi-gender workshops that are to precede and follow the production as part of VWEEK itself. Although this program is targeted at women-identified individuals we believe it is incredibly important that people of all gender identities have the chance to support and witness the production of the Vagina Memoirs at Western this year. We are incredibly proud at the progress that the Women's Center has made in the past towards including men's voices in new visions of feminism and we hope to continue this work by developing strategies for integrating more volunteers to support the production itself.

January 10th (tentatively): Women's Night @ the Rec Center (gender targeted)

This event offers women-identified students the chance to engage more fully in activities at the Wade King Student Recreation Center. At this event we will be offering workshops on belly dancing, rock climbing, and weight lifting.

We value having this program be gender-targeted towards women-identified students because it promotes community building amongst women-identified students in a safe and supportive way. Additionally, this program is based in awareness that aspects of gyms, athletic communities, and types of recreation are male-dominated arenas which are often times not inclusive to, and intimidating to female-identified enthusiasts.

Winter Quarter: Elect Her – Campus Women Win (gender targeted)

The number of female-elected student officials at Western is a mere 14% and only one female-bodied person has been elected to our AS Board of Directors in the past two years.

Seeing an opportunity for needed empowerment of women in politics, Morgan Holmgren, the director of the Representation and Engagement Programs, applied for our campus to receive the Elect Her – Campus Women Win grant training. The Elect Her initiative acknowledges the necessity to build the pipeline of women running for office in order to diminish the long-standing political leadership gender gap and provides grant recipients with a free training, encouraging women to run for student government on their government on their campuses. We just received word that Western is one of eleven schools in the entire nation to host the training in 2011.

The training will occur sometime in winter quarter, tentatively in February or March. We are awaiting more information as to what the training entails.

People who identify with any gender are encouraged to participate with the knowledge that the training is targeted for females.

Spring Quarter 2010: Women's Outdoor Excursion (gender targeted)

This event is coordinated with the AS Outdoor Center and the Women in the Woods club and will be offered in the Spring of 2010. A women targeted excursion is a chance for women-identified students of any background and experience with the outdoors to have a chance to learn about, participate in, and enjoy a women's excursion. This event will take place over a weekend in Spring Quarter, and will be an overnight trip organized and facilitated by female trip leaders. Basic outdoor safety and skill lessons will also be taught, in order to make the event more available to all women-identified students who wish to attend.

The purpose of having this event be gender-targeted is to provide a space for women to participate in athletics and physical activity regardless of their background with the outdoors and to feel safe and supported by other women-identified people at Western in doing so. Our intention is that this event will challenge students to try something new, while also building community amongst those women on campus who are interested in the outdoors. We are excited about the possibility of having this event later this year!

April 16th, 2010: Take Back the Night March (gender exclusive)

This April the Women's Center will be offering our annual Take Back the Night March. This event is part of a series of events on April 16th including a speaker, a rally, and a march through Downtown Bellingham. The speaker and rally segment of this event will be inclusive of all genders. However, we are requesting that the March through Downtown Bellingham be only for women-identified students and community members. This event has historically been gender targeted at women-identified students and community members due to the nature of the event being for "women to take back the streets" and to make a stance about safety and against violence. This event is intended to honor women's voices, women's spaces, and women's safety and therefore, we hope to have the March be for women-identified students and community members only.

However, the other segments of the event are open to all genders and historically the Men's Violence Prevention Project has offered a Candlelight Vigil during the March in order to give male-identified people a chance to participate in all aspects of the event to some extent. This event will be occurring this April on campus and in Downtown Bellingham and we are excited to draw in many participants and new students to this event.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns, and we are excited to work with you more on these events!