

# WRC TODAY

## STAFF REFLECTIONS

Some of you may be aware that at the end of this month, October 27th to be exact, the Women's Resource Center will be hosting its seventh annual Women's Conference. The theme for this year's conference is *The Personal is Political: 96 Years of Women's Right to Vote*, which will allow us to explore our own connections between the personal experience and the larger social and political structures, while examining women's rights history and the continued pursuit of equity for all. With this year's election right around the corner, we decided that this month's staff reflection be inspired by this year's conference theme.

### In your experience, how is the personal political?



#### Tarrin Flaherty

*Outreach Specialist, Women's Resource Center*

In a perfect world, nothing that is personal would ever be political. Everyone would be seen only as the individual and not a part of the larger community they are a part of. However, this is not at reality in the world we are currently living in. In this world, when you are a minority, everything you do can be seen as an act to or against the stereotypes of your given group. If a woman decides to work, it is a political statement. If a woman decides to stay home and raise kids, it is a political statement. In order to make sense of the world, we must categorize people, and in doing so, take away their individuality. It is the way the mind works. We are all seen as part of a whole, and therefore, all affect the vision of the whole.



#### Emily Hedstron-Lieser

*Associate Director, Women's Resource Center & Stryker Institute for Leadership Development*

I can't do anything without thinking about my identities...I can't walk into a voting booth or fill out a ballot without thinking about how my vote, or the votes of others, will impact my right to freedoms. Occupying a political identity space as a woman, I also can't do anything without thinking about how my decisions and actions impact others in my group, and how the actions and decisions of others in my group affect me and how I navigate my life. For marginalized identities, the personal is always political, and the political is always personal.



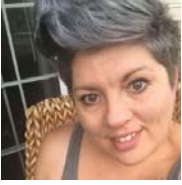
#### Noemy Rodriguez

*Graduate Assistant, Stryker Institute for Leadership Development*

As a woman of color, one of the biggest issues we face is lack of representation in many political decisions. In my experience, the personal has become political when facing antidiscrimination laws that have not been enforced/improved. Age, sex, race, and even social class affected the types of jobs that I would be considered "qualified" for. Although we have come a long way, there are many covert systems at play that continue to perpetuate social stratification and inequity.

# STAFF REFLECTIONS

**In your experience, how is the personal political?**



**Sarah Aragon**

*Leadership Coordinator, Stryker Institute for Leadership Development*

The personal is political... when I reflect on this statement I am reminded of how policed my personhood is as a woman. My body became political at a very young age, I was policed on what to wear at school to be 'appropriate' so my fellow classmates and teachers, read males, could focus their attention on their school work instead of my bare shoulders or exposed knees. The personal is political. Around the same time I was also taught to hide and be shameful of my menstrual cycle, both at school and at home, I mean, no one needs to know that much information about myself (interpreted to mean as a woman, albeit young woman, it was my business to keep myself quite, clean, and not bother others). It wasn't until much later in life did I realize I was also being charged a tampon tax in addition to the 'pink tax' that already increases the cost of most 'female' marketed products. The personal is political. That professionally I make \$0.78 to a man's \$1.00 because I was tailored perfectly to fit into a 'helper' career, is no accident. I was trained young to know what I was 'good' at and what work should be left for the men (i.e. science and math). The personal is political. As I watch the men at my gym take off their shirts when they are hot from working out and want to cool down and I cannot do the same, I am reminded how policed my body is. The personal is political. When I was breastfeeding my last child I had a heightened awareness of how aggressive others opinions could be over the need to simply feed my child, wherever my child happened to be hungry. People and policies both tried to police how, where, and when I fed my child. The personal is political. My contraceptive choices are not readily available over the counter like my male counterparts. Instead I have to access insurance and policies of office and providers that monitor my options and choices. The personal is political. If I don't have access to insurance I must access local resources, Planned Parenthood, to afford the care that I need. Planned Parenthood is not always an option. The personal is political. As I plan to wed my same-sex partner the personal is political. As it is true marriage equality has been won, there is still SO MUCH to continue to fight for to have not just equitable physical access to but psychological and social access as well. To be a woman means to face policies and politics daily. There is no personal in womanhood, only political. The personal is political. Women need to make our voices and the voices of all of our sisters in all of their identities heard so that the political becomes personal.



**Savana Griego**

*Graphic Design & Marketing Specialist, Women's Resource Center & Stryker Institute for Leadership Development*

For me, when I thought about the statement "the personal is political" I really had to ponder on what this really meant to me. I feel that since personal choices end up becoming political issues I have never really thought about how much my personal choices are or could be impacted. It fills me with sadness and concern to think that I never thought twice about this because it is the norm to hear and see these issues in political debates. I think that being more aware and thoughtful about what is being debated within the political realm will make me a more informed voter.

# student voices

Welcome to the Student Voices section of the WRC Today! This section may look a little different for some of you. If some of you remember, the Student Voices section of the WRC Today was actually launched in the Spring of 2016. We collaborated with Gender Studies to feature written pieces by students in the four newsletters we distributed last Spring semester. Student voices began as a space for students on campus to be able to discuss various topics relating to women's and gender issues, have their voices be heard and to get various perspectives on these topics. When initially launched, the Student Voices section was not open for all students on campus to submit pieces. However, that is changing this year!

While the purpose of Student Voices continues to be offering a space to heighten gender consciousness (being aware of what it means to have a gender identity and navigate from a gender place), we have decided to open up the section to allow all students on campus to submit not only written pieces, but also visual art, self-reflections, poetry and much more. If you want to join the Women's Resource Center in heightening gender awareness at the University of Northern Colorado, then submit your piece to us! Topics can vary anywhere from identity and intersectionality to injustice and gender.

If you are interested in submitting a reflection or piece (e.g. short story, poetry, visual art, etc.) to be featured in our monthly newsletter and online content, submit to, or for more information, contact Emily Hedstrom-Lieser at [emily.hedstromlieser@unco.edu](mailto:emily.hedstromlieser@unco.edu).



**Savana Griego**

*Graphic Design & Marketing Specialist, Women's Resource Center & Stryker  
Institute for Leadership Development*

# Untitled

by Emily Ireland

“Be sure to have a witness. Assess the situation and respond proportionally to the threat. Any excess force and you could be the perpetrator. It is up to the victim to assess the danger and the deterrence to react appropriately. Execute only if you have strong evidence and reasons to prove you are in danger. Before executing any sort of act of defense, be sure to issue a warning of intent to the attacker. Be sure they are aware they do not have consent. This will help you avoid any charges filed against you, if he decides to play the victim (Jacob Krawczyk, studying Criminal Justice).”

Be careful, be wary: sexual harassment hides in the shadows, and when it's exhumed, it is often disregarded.

When I put on a tight dress and wear that shirt that makes me feel so confident, I have to think about the consequences. When I walk into a club with my friends, I feel glaring eyes burning at my chest. Their hands like shadows, are reaching out as if touching me. It often goes so unnoticed. Sexual assault in its “smallest” of forms is a disregarded as a common occurrence and seemingly insignificant. If I'd turn around and slap someone across the face for touching me without consent, I would need a witness. Most people would scoff and say I'm just being oversensitive. They'd accuse me of being the victim, perhaps. I chose to wear that outfit. I chose to drink. I chose to walk toward the bathroom. I chose to have a good time. It is all too often my fault. But why? Why is it me who is to blame? I have so many questions.

Sexual harassment is so scary. Nearly every girl I've spoken to has had a terrifying experience. Small or drastic, none the less, that experience is engrained into your mind forever. Someone like Brock Turner receives a punitive punishment. He gets 3 months jail time for raping a girl behind a dumpster. You can't read that sentence without your heart dropping. Three months, for what his father called “20 minutes of action” that changed that woman's life forever. But he's a young man, with a future ahead of him said the judge in his defense. Well, a girl's world was turned upside down. Maybe she'll never trust this world again. Every instance of injustice should be taken seriously. People's stories must be validated by others. Until we all don't start standing together, we are just helping evil prosper. Until then whenever I wear a dress that makes me feel sexy and confident, I will make sure to take a witness along. I say that with all due sarcasm and no fear.



*Emily Ireland is currently a meteorology major with a minor in math. She's passionate about politics and social injustice, and wants to use her voice to try and make a difference.*

**Consulting Editor to this Piece:** Dr. Ather Zia, Lecturer in Gender Studies and Anthropology



# Please know that Feminism is for everyone

*by Stephanie Bechtel*

After reading, “Feminism is for Everybody” by bell Hooks, I realized that feminism as a movement had been all around me as a young woman. I grew up in the 60’s and 70’s. At that time because of my upbringing I was confused about where I fit in the movement. It was a time when the society demanded a woman support their man’s every desire, to be beautiful at the expense of their health, to bear many children and to keep the home fires burning. Some of these women experienced rape and battery at the hands of their husbands, with no accountability for the man. Till this day women have to fight against abuse and rape of this kind.

Women in the 60’s did not know how limited their lives were until the consciousness raising (CR) groups that feminists convened began to meet. To be in a room with other suppressed women being forced into a type of slavery and being told it was for the best of the children and for their marriage, allowed them to find out they weren’t alone. These CR groups provided a powerful message to society. Through the use of marches, pamphlets, and weekly meetings feminists were able to bring awareness to the issues of women. The black civil rights movement was also influential when it came to feminist movement and women’s demand to no longer be suppressed by men and the patriarchal society.

Feminism made women realize that they are not sex objects that a man needs to carry on his arm in public. As a movement it made women aware that men controlled every aspect of a their life. The examples of glass ceiling in the corporate world, or sports, which were and are still segregated are examples of a strong patriarchy women had to live under. Previously even employment ads were split into two columns, one for male only and one for women only positions. Some places of employment excluded women completely, that is telling of how men were afraid of losing their rankings in society.

Today, thanks for a strong feminist movement there is an awareness of women, and their intellectual capabilities. Higher education curriculum has opened the doors to studying issues of women under an interdisciplinary rubric like the Women’s Studies programs, which proliferated due to feminist movement. UNCO’s Women’s studies program now called the Gender studies is one of the oldest in the nation. These are spaces that allow us to think and study gender and women’s issues further to create a more egalitarian and just society. I believe more awareness of gender and gender equality will be a strong thread over the entire world and will create justice and peace for all humankind.



*Stephanie Bechtel is a student of environmental sustainability at UNCO. She had returned to school to study perma-culture and urban farming.*

**Consulting Editor to this Piece:** Dr. Ather Zia, Lecturer in Gender Studies and Anthropology



# CATALYST

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**For more information please contact**  
**[Jeremy.Davis@unco.edu](mailto:Jeremy.Davis@unco.edu) or 351-1365**

Any person requesting disability accommodations for this event please contact 970-351-2289 at least 3 business days in advance.

**Sponsored by:**

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTHERN COLORADO**

Office of Student Life

# 7th Annual Women's Conference

The personal is political:  
*96 years of women's right to vote*

**Thursday, 10.27.16**  
**UC Ballrooms**

Join us in exploring our own connections between the personal experience and the larger social and political structures, while examining women's rights history and the continued pursuit of equity for all.

**Registration is now open!**

Student Registration

Open now until Oct. 14th

Staff & Faculty Registration

Open Sept. 12th-Oct. 14th

**First 50 people to register will receive a registration gift!**

Please visit our website for registration information:  
[www.unco.edu/womensconference](http://www.unco.edu/womensconference)

Questions? Please contact Kelsi Miles at 970-351-1492 or at [kelsi.miles@unco.edu](mailto:kelsi.miles@unco.edu)



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