Greetings colleagues and organizational partners,

I am pleased to share the 2014 – 2015 annual report from the Women’s Leadership and Resource Center at UIC. I hope you will enjoy this year in review and the myriad ways that it demonstrates our commitment to gender equity, intercultural engagement across disciplines, and support for victims of interpersonal violence.

The WLRC continues it’s essential evolution in response to shifting educational needs and related cultural trends. Our cornerstone program, the Campus Advocacy Network, is similarly responsive and flexible, providing critical educational and outreach programs as well as extensive and confidential victim’s services.

This year marked a significant transition for the Center and staff when Rebecca Gordon, the Director of 20 years, received an opportunity to become the Title IX Coordinator for our campus. Rebecca started in that role in October of last year leaving behind a legacy for the Center that includes a commitment to strong partnerships and a dedication to equity and inclusion for all. The WLRC staff continues to work with units across campus to expand our impact and deepen understanding on issues of intersectional identity, personal aspirations, and social justice.

I stepped in to the role of Interim Director to support this time of transition including the search for a new full time Director. I welcomed the opportunity to work with the staff of the Center because I deeply admire their work and value their unique roles on our campus. We’ve worked together to compile these highlights from last year. Thanks for your support during this transition.

Sincerely,

Megan Carney

WLRC Mission

Through institutional interventions, support, advocacy and education, our mission is to create a welcoming and equitable environment in which women and women-identified people are able to pursue their educational and career aspirations, free from institutional barriers, oppression and violence.

We strive to create a safe space for dialogue and the exploration of gender and other social identities, which also serve as a lens to analyze larger social issues. Our programs highlight women’s lived experiences and recognize their contributions as contemporary, cultural and historical leaders.
Every year, WLRC and the Office of Special Scholarship Programs host a Women and Scholarship Info Session. Sheena Miller of OSSP presented to an overflowing room during our September session. The program serves as an introduction to scholarships that apply specifically to undergraduate female students. We discussed the types of awards that are available and offered guidelines on how to prepare scholarship applications.

**WLRC Events**

**2014-15 WLRC Tuition Award**

Every year the Women’s Leadership and Resource Center recognizes undergraduate students that have made significant contributions to the movement against domestic violence and sexual assault throughout the UIC campus and/or Chicago community or who have triumphed over personal experiences within these areas. We offer a tuition award whose goal is to support women in their educational pursuits who have a great deal of financial need that is not being met by financial aid or loans.

This year five recipients each received approximately $2,100 towards their studies:

- Janet Montiel
- Sara Weston
- Lux Molina
- Kendal Henard

* Rosa Bacio (not pictured)
Domestic Violence Awareness Month

WLRC/CAN partnered with the UIC Muslim Student Association for "Fact or Fiction: Domestic Violence is Inherent in Islam". Representatives from local community organizations that serve the Muslim community including Apna Ghar and Arab American Family Services joined us for a thoughtful and enlightening panel discussion on violence against women through the lens of religion and culture.
Women’s Heritage Month

The goal of Women’s Heritage Month is to promote activities, programs and events that engage and inform our community about the diverse roles and unique contributions of women throughout history and in contemporary society. Every year WLRC hosts a number of programs that delve into and celebrate the lives and impact of women from a diversity of communities and cultures. At the same time we maintain a unified campus wide Women’s Heritage Month calendar and promote the programs and events hosted by departments and organizations throughout the UIC community.

This year we devoted our Women’s Heritage Month programming to the theme of reproductive justices. This movement lead by women of color takes abortion services and reproductive rights beyond dialogue around choice by examining through an intersectional lens the impact of multiple forms of oppression, social factors and histories on access and discussion around these issues. The 3 tenets of the reproductive justice framework: the right to have children, the right to not have children, and the right to parent children in safe and healthy environments.

Some of the month’s highlights included:

In her talk “My Journey Down America’s Walk of Shame”, abortion activist Emily Letts spoke about her efforts to destigmatize abortion and the role of shame in women’s decision making and sharing of their abortion experiences.

A panel discussion lead by Joy Messinger of the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and Brittany Mostiller-Keith of the Chicago Abortion Fund gave us a comprehensive overview of the reproductive justice movement, spoke about the pivotal roles of women of color in the movement & the future of the movement.

Tristesse Burton, PhD candidate, presented on her research in medical ethnobotany with a focus on American Indian botanicals. As part of a discussion about lack of access to pharmaceutical emergency contraceptives for American Indian women, she introduced examples of American Indian botanicals that were used as abortifacients based on ethnobotanical literature. This program was a collaboration with the Native American Support Program.
Feminisms Lunch Lecture Series

This spring semester WLRC piloted the new lunch lecture series, Feminisms. Every month this series features a guest speaker that examines feminism within various cultural locations and contexts in order to broaden our understanding of this complex and

An exploration of why mainstream American “feminism” is negatively associated with colonial and imperial projects in many parts of the world, and how many non-western activist women alternately define their women and gender centered struggles.

Jenny Korn – “Intersectional Constructions of Race and Gender within Facebook Groups: A Feminist Analysis of Digital Identity”
Jenny Korn discussed her research on the construction of online identity and explored how the intersection of race with gender matters.

Scout Bratt – “Bringing Your Feminisms into Health Care”
Scout Bratt of the Chicago Women’s Health Center spoke about informed, self-determined and feminist healthcare, discussed challenges and barriers for women and trans people being and feeling empowered in the health care arena, and shared strategies, recommendations, and resources for ensuring that our whole self is seen, heard, and respected in any and all health care settings.

Judith Kegan Gardiner – “Feminist Friendships”
An examination of popular culture and ethnographic scholarship and what it does and doesn’t tell us about friendships between women.
Jessica Ryan – “Historical Trauma Among Native Americans - Implications For A Narrative Approach To Healing”
Native Americans struggle with disproportionate rates of mental health and societal concerns, conceptualized as the outcome of historical trauma. In this collaboration with the Native American Support Program, Dr. Ryan discussed how a hybrid between traditional Native American storytelling and contemporary narrative therapy approaches might reflect a viable culturally sensitive and competent healing approach for this community.

The Hunting Ground – Film Screening and Discussion
In collaboration with the Gender & Women’s Studies Program and the Department of Criminology, Law and Justice, WLRC/CAN hosted a screening and discussion of the film The Hunting Ground; a documentary and exposé on interpersonal violence and rape reporting on college campuses by survivors, and how their cases are often mishandled or even ignored.

Julienne Rutherford – SAFE Science: Sexual Harassment and Assault in Academic Fieldwork
The Women in Science & Engineering Program and WLRC hosted Dr. Julienne Rutherford as she discussed the findings of her and her colleagues’ survey of sexual harassment and assault in one of the most important stages of professionalization in the sciences: academic fieldwork. Their paper was one of the most read papers of 2014 and has catalyzed conversations about safety in the field.
Donate By Design

Mission
Donate by Design is a non-profit student organization that designs, teaches and creates handmade items to be sold. Their mission is to provide a creative outlet for the many talented crafters at UIC, have fun, and give back to the community by helping victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and hate crimes. They work closely with Campus Advocacy Network.

Accomplishments
Donate By Design had a very successful academic year growing to 35 active members and expanding beyond the Honors College to become an official student organization. They were awarded funding from the Honors College Student Engagement Grant to support club activities and from the Student Activities Funding Committee for their November Pinterest Party. They successful hosted several selling and baking events throughout the year, and will be making a generous donation to survivors of interpersonal violence on our campus through the Campus Advocacy Network.
Healing Arts

Mission
Healing Arts is an organization of dedicated students who aim to supplement local Chicago Public School’s arts programs. All of the workshops they teach are developed by their own students including topics such as theater, dancing, arts and crafts, singing, etc.

Accomplishments
Healing Arts held workshop sessions on a weekly basis with an average attendance of 20 individuals throughout the entirety of the academic year; considerably higher than their previous year. They established a strong relationship with Chicago Youth Programs (CYP) and are currently establishing a curriculum and a consistent schedule for their upcoming academic year.

WLRC/CAN is thrilled to announce that WLRC’s Assistant Director Athanasia Papaioannou was selected as a recipient of the UIC Award of Merit for 2014. The Award of Merit recognizes academic professional and civil service employees who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence in all aspects of their work.

Athanasia has worked tirelessly for the last eight years to develop and promote programs that further the WLRC mission of creating a welcoming and equitable environment in which women and women-identified people are able to pursue their educational and career aspirations, free from institutional barriers, oppression and violence, through institutional interventions, support, advocacy and education. At WLRC we strive to create a safe space for dialogue and the exploration of gender and other social identities which also serve as a lens to analyze larger social issues. Under Athanasia’s guidance, our programs are intended to highlight women’s lived experiences and recognize their contributions as contemporary, cultural and historical leaders.

It has been largely due to Athanasia’s efforts that WLRC was able to present our three cornerstone programs, UIC Daughters @ Work Day, Women’s History Month and the Women’s Leadership Symposium, to the UIC community. She works closely with many campus offices and programs such as the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Women and the Dean of Students’ Office, where she serves as a panelist for student conduct hearings. She is also a professionally trained advocate for survivors of interpersonal violence, providing confidential advocacy services for CAN’s clients in crisis.

Her receipt of this award is a testament to Athanasia’s commitment to the WLRC/CAN, as well as the UIC community.
The Campus Advocacy Network (CAN) is an on campus service center dedicated to providing confidential, anonymous, free services to UIC students, staff and faculty who have experienced sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking and hate crimes. Our advocates are fully trained to state standards (40 hour sexual assault advocacy and 40 hour domestic violence advocacy) and have extensive training in stalking. They have many years of experience helping victims navigate systems they need to access on campus, including university administrative systems such as Title IX investigations and student conduct hearings, and off campus, including the criminal court system and the civil court system for obtaining Orders of Protection and No Contact Orders.

In addition to direct victim services we also offer education and training on these topics as well as programming about prevention education, bystander intervention, and men’s initiatives.

At CAN we believe that all people deserve safety from harm, but believe that this safety may be achieved in multiple ways. We respect that gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, religious beliefs, and ability can be factors that shape experience with violence.

In 2014, CAN worked closely with UIC Orientation to provide information and training about interpersonal violence to over 2,000 incoming First Year and Transfer students. CAN provided summer orientation leaders with 8 hours of in-depth training about the dynamics of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. Orientation Leaders were also trained on bystander intervention strategies and the basics of facilitating discussions on these issues with incoming first year students. CAN staff provided ongoing support for student leaders by helping them facilitate the discussions, troubleshoot difficult questions, and provide crisis intervention when students feel triggered. Transfer students, as well as parents, guardians, and guests receive shorter versions of this program throughout the Orientation process.
Innovative Partnerships

Greek Life

In 2015, CAN established a fruitful partnership with UIC’s Greek Life Programs and began to offer weekly bystander intervention workshops for all incoming Greek Life members. These workshops were tailored to speak to cultural norms and practices of UIC Greeks, focusing on intervention strategies that they could relate to and deploy. Over 100 members of Greek Life participated in these trainings and as a result, five Greek organizations at UIC have requested further workshops and trainings with CAN. The partnership with Greek Life also extends to staff support and CAN now sits on the Greek Life Advisory Board.

ROTC

CAN and ROTC created a formal partnership this year in which over 200 student cadets received hands-on culturally specific bystander intervention trainings. Thanks to Marcus Guerra, a Peers to Allies leader, we worked closely with Lt. Meyers in the ROTC program to develop a training plan that equipped Marcus and other student leaders with the tool they needed. With the guidance and support of Lt. Meyers, Marcus and his Peers team administered a session for over 200 cadets at LTX training in western Illinois in March 2015. This training is unique to ROTC and serves as a supplement to the National Army SHARP training. The success of this pilot year signals the beginning of a training pipeline for future ROTC student leaders.

Interdisciplinary Dialogues

Real Talk

The Real Talk series presents social justice conversations through the lens of interpersonal violence. This year over 66 people attended the series which partnered with the Chicago Alliance to Free Marissa Alexander and the Latin American and Latino Studies program on topics ranging from masculinity and disability; the violence of low wage temporary work; and inequality in bilingual education in Guatemala.

Reimagining Masculinity Initiative

The Reimagining Masculinity Initiative, a partnership between the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change, hosted bi-weekly dialogues throughout the year with over 250 participants. Each session featured a different theme for examining the ways that masculinity is constructed and expressed. In March 2015, we hosted a screening of the feature length documentary, *The Mask You Live In*, drawing over 130 attendees.

Power Plays

CAN launched a new program series this year entitled *Power Plays* to explore moments in current popular and political culture that speak to the diverse ways we experiences and talk about race, gender, class, sexuality, and violence. In October, in light of several high profile incidents of domestic violence in the National Football League, CAN hosted *Power Plays: Addressing Gender, Domestic Violence, and Race in the NFL* featuring Dr. Beth Richie, Director of UIC’s Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy and Senior Advisor to the NFL’s policy group on domestic and sexual violence. This event was co-sponsored by the African American Academic Network.
Building Student Leadership

Peers to Allies

In September 2014 CAN facilitated the 3rd Annual Peers to Allies Leadership Retreat providing comprehensive and evidence-based prevention education to 21 UIC students. This violence prevention program situates leadership development, bystander intervention, and social justice education as the cornerstones for student engagement.

Participants attended a three night camping retreat packed with workshops, interactive activities, and facilitated dialogues. The evidence-based curriculum led students to develop a deeper self-awareness including an increase in their ability to recognize the signs of interpersonal violence, practical bystander intervention skills, and training mandated by the Campus SaVE Act and Title IX, all while making meaningful connections with other student leaders from the UIC community. Through several years of assessment we know that Peers provides measurable results that directly contribute to making UIC a safer campus for everyone.

2014 Participant Testimonies

“Seeing real people, say real things, in real time, made me feel and believe that intervention was possible no matter who you are, what your background is, or what the situation is.”

“I’m becoming more involved with the University. I started my own campus organization this semester. And I wouldn’t have done that if I hadn’t gone on this trip.”

“I feel like the more people there are like us around, the safer I feel on campus. And the more I pay attention, more people become involved with these issues, the more we can change it.”
Domestic Violence Awareness Month: Advancing Conversations on Power-Based Violence

Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) in October was full of programs designed to raise awareness about the prevalence of domestic violence, create a culture of support for survivors, and encourage bystanders to intervene with perpetrators.

This year, CAN created several events to highlight the case of Marissa Alexander, a woman living in Florida who was incarcerated for defending herself against her abuser. While Ms. Alexander did not injure her abuser in the course of self-defense, the state of Florida tried her for attempted murder and the case gained national attention. CAN scheduled a Real Talk session and a Teach-In about Ms. Alexander’s case and dedicated a Center bulletin board to raising awareness of this case. All of our efforts were designed to encourage thinking about the ways that survivors of domestic violence, especially those not seen as “ideal victims” or sympathetic in the eyes of the state, are made more vulnerable and subject to more violence when they access the systems that claim to protect them. By focusing on the impact the criminal legal system has on domestic violence survivors of color, CAN was able to form fruitful partnerships with partners on and off campus including UIC’s Social Justice Initiative, UIC’s Criminal Justice Society, Project NIA and the Chicago Alliance to Free Marissa Alexander. CAN was also instrumental in supporting an off-campus exhibition entitled No Selves to Defend which explored the history of women of color criminalized for defending themselves against sexual and domestic abuse.

Throughout October CAN organized student engagement activities at Student Center East in partnership with Connections for Abused Women and Their Children to solicit donations for residents in their domestic violence shelter. Throughout this effort, we received several boxes of donations including book bags, personal hygiene items, and toys for the residents.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month: Creating a Supportive Campus

Each year, CAN creates programs for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) in April to raise awareness about the dynamics of sexual violence, create a campus that supports survivors and holds perpetrators accountable, and give people tools for intervening on rape culture.

Highlights from this year:

- Miriam Lewin lecturing on “Sexual violence and dictatorship, 30 years later. The end of the taboo”, in partnership with the Latino Cultural Center;
- A workshop called, “This is Not That: Sexual Assault and Hook Up Culture”, in partnership with the Asian American Resource Center;
- A lecture by scholar and CAN volunteer, Meghna Bhat, entitled, “Examining Representations of Violence Against Women in Bollywood Cinema”, presented in partnership with the Women’s Leadership and Resource Center, the African American Cultural Center, and the Asian American Cultural Center;
- A workshop titled, “Queering Consent” in partnership with the Gender and Sexuality Center and featuring staff expertise from Chicago’s Broadway Youth Center.

A panel for faculty staff on the role of the mandated reporter in disclosing sexual assault. The panel featured CAN’s primary advocate, along with representatives of the Dean of Students Office, the Counseling Center, UIC Police Department, and UIC’s Title IX Office. The panelists discussed UIC staff best practices for reporting disclosures, supporting survivors, and remaining compliant with Title IX mandates.
Education & Outreach by the Numbers

**FALL 2014**
- 2265 Attendees at Events
- 1327 Attendees at Presentations

**Orientation**
- 2,021 First Year Student
- 1,201 Transfer Students

**3,222 Total Students**
- 734 Freshman Parents
- 228 Transfer Parents

**962 Total Parents**

**Topics and # of Participants**
- 496—Bystander Intervention
- 247—Domestic Violence
- 48—Masculinity Initiative
- 312—Other
- 16—Real Talk
- 420—Sexual Assault
- 157—Space Visits
- 100—Stalking

**SPRING 2015**
- 798 Attendees at Events
- 678 Attendees at Presentations

**Orientation**

**174—Bystander Intervention**
- 42—Domestic Violence

**156—Masculinity Initiative**
- 56—Real Talk

**215—Sexual Assault**
- 60—Space Visits

**35—Stalking**

**Topics and # of Participants**
From July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, the staff saw 61 total clients, had 97 anonymous contacts, and had 498 total client contacts.

WLRC/CAN spent a total of 146.25 client hours in the following areas: 68 in crisis intervention; 1 in disciplinary board advocacy; 25.75 in legal advocacy/court accompaniment; and 51.5 in victim/survivor advocacy. WLRC/CAN reported 9 incidents to Community Law Enforcement and 9 incidents to Campus Police and obtained 4 EOP/Plenary Orders of Protection.

Of 61 clients, 51 were female, 5 were male and 5 were other/unknown. 5 clients were African-American, 7 clients were Asian, 12 clients were Latina/Latino, 1 client was Native American, 31 clients were white and 5 clients were Unknown.

During the 2014-2015 academic year CAN provided direct advocacy services to 61 students, staff and faculty survivors of interpersonal violence. CAN advocates helped 4 people obtain an Order of Protection through the civil court system, and accompanied 4 students through the process of a student conduct hearing against their perpetrator, as well as assisting survivors in obtaining safe housing, safety planning, requesting and negotiating academic and housing accommodations, accompaniment to meetings with on and off campus officials, helping access financial resources, and making connections with emotional support services.

In addition to the direct client services our advocates provided CAN was also engaged in policy making through participation on several on and off campus committees, including: Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office, Sex Crimes Advisory Group and Domestic Violence Task Force, Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office Campus Work Group, State’s Attorney’s Central Community Justice Center Advisory Group, Illinois Attorney General’s Campus Task Force, It’s On Us – Get Involved and Take Action Subcommittee, It’s On Us – Education and Engagement Subcommittee.
Thank you to all of our partners at the campus and throughout Chicago!