



community redefined

Women's Center at UMBC
Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Women's Center at UMBC

FY 2020 Annual Report



UMBC

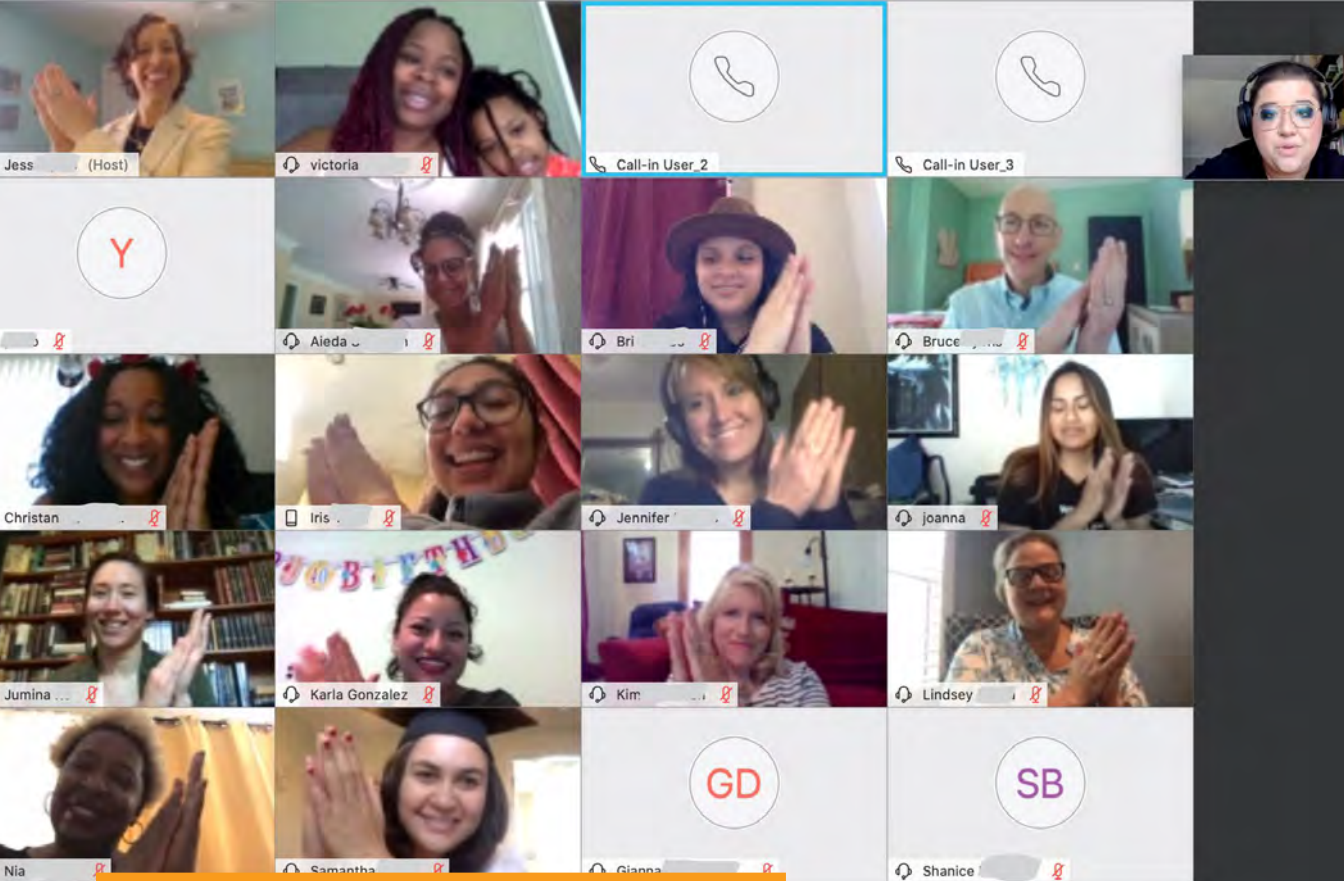


Table of Contents

Letter from the Director	8
Executive Summary	10
Tracking by the Numbers	11
Community Redefined	12
Spotlight: International Women's Day	14
Individualized Support	16
Social Justice Dialogues	19
Learning & Engagement	21
Unique & Critical Services	24
Spotlight: What Women's Center Staff Member Are You? Quiz	26
Committed Staffing & Support	29
Spotlight: The Community That Gives Back	31
Final Thoughts	34
Acknowledgements	35
Social Media & Contact Information	38



i stand up
through your destruction
i stand up

— Lucille Clifton

“”

There are few things that offer peace in this time, so we turn to the words of other truth-tellers and light-bringers like poet and writer, Lucille Clifton. Her words continue to resonate through our society.

To our Black community: we lock arms in solidarity with you and we hold space for the many ways grief speaks through us. As allies and helpers and friends and family, we hope to continue defending your voices, uplifting them, and offering only belief, hope, and love.

Black lives matter. You matter. Endlessly and always.

To white and non-Black people of color: we bear witness to the visceral tangibility of white supremacy and systemic violence. It has always been here. It runs through everything—and the stark truths of oppression are made clear today. We will not turn away. We must turn towards the radical truth of our privileges and our complicity and our responsibility.

There is work yet to be done and we commit, as ever, to being in it with you.



Dear friends & allies,

The 2019-20 academic year contained 12 full months. Twelve full months, just like any other year, and yet, this was no ordinary year. A global pandemic. Civil unrest and public reckoning with our nation's roots of white supremacy and anti-Blackness. It has felt like a million years, and yet, these events only occupied the last 16 weeks of the year. Nonetheless, those weeks cast wide and dark shadows. They disrupted community and gathering. Evoked fear and loneliness. Produced sickness and dying. How many times have we heard or seen the word "unprecedented"?

Throughout the pages, you will find ways in which the Women's Center responded to "the unprecedented." You will also find that the other 36 weeks of 2019-20 were unprecedented in joyful and rejuvenating ways, as well as just wonderfully ordinary. As a result of Retriever Courage recommendations, the Women's Center started the year with our largest operating budget in our history along with the opportunity to hire a third full-time staff member. We celebrated the promotion of Amelia Meman to Assistant Director for Student Success and Academic Excellence and welcomed Brianda "Bri" Gumbs, our new Program Coordinator, in the later part of the fall semester. We also finally graced our Women's Center lounge with long-awaited brand new couches.

In between these highlights, our Women's Center continued to do what we do best - build community and belonging, support survivors of sexual violence, journey through the coming out stories of LGBTQ+ students, and call in and hold others accountable in the quest to advance gender equity and commit to anti-racism.

The human brain sometimes has a tendency to remember negative experiences over positive ones and I'm sure that when we look back on this year, the negative will be what dominates our individual and collective memories. And, I'm also encouraging myself to remember that through our challenges, this year provided the Women's Center the opportunity to re-define community. Our Women's Center community is not only our wonderful space in The Commons. We do not need to be physically together

*December 11, 2019:
Jess Myers (left)
smiles alongside
Returning Women
Student (RWS)
Scholars who
graduated in Winter
2020.*

to stand up for each other, sacrifice for each other, rally for each other. **Whether we are sharing the same couch or looking at each other via our mobile devices, our community is the people, and the Women's Center is wherever we are.**

While we will not be the same until it is safe to gather together in person again, what I do know, is that the Women's Center community will continue to evolve, heal, and show up for each other. In what has often felt like destruction to the lives we once knew, the Women's Center can and will continue to stand up through your—through our—destruction. Not all destruction is bad, in fact, some of it is necessary, especially when the structure upholds historic and systemic racism and patriarchy. Not only will we stand through the destruction, but we'll be there with you, ready to share our tools grounded in accountability, healing, and building new possibilities.

Thank you, as always, to our community and supporters for empowering us to believe in new possibilities. Forever and always, Black lives matter...

We see you. We believe you. You matter.

— Jess Myers, Director

December 4, 2019: Women's Center staff and community members (from left to right: Amelia, Scout, Autumn, and Jess) take a picture with their Women's Center shirts. This year, we recommitted to our Women's Center Wednesday campaigns to great success!





Executive Summary

Women's Center Mission Statement

The Women's Center at UMBC advances gender equity from an intersectional feminist perspective through co-curricular programming, support services, and advocacy for marginalized individuals and communities. We prioritize critical social justice as our community value, with a deliberate focus on women, gender, anti-racism, and feminism.

*All are welcome as long as they respect women.
Their experiences. Their stories. Their potential.*

Guiding Principles

We will encourage authentic dialogues among students, faculty, and staff to facilitate consciousness-raising, transformative learning, and self-determination.

We will embody our commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and social justice in our operation, staffing, and programming.

We will operate from a holistic and non-hierarchical anti-violence framework.

We will challenge the barriers that reinforce inequity and oppression impacting our university and broader communities.

We will cultivate women's empowerment, involvement, and leadership in all aspects of university life.

Leading Priorities

Advance gender equity and an inclusive campus climate.

Support student success and community well-being for women and marginalized people.

Sustain and strengthen social justice education and engagement.

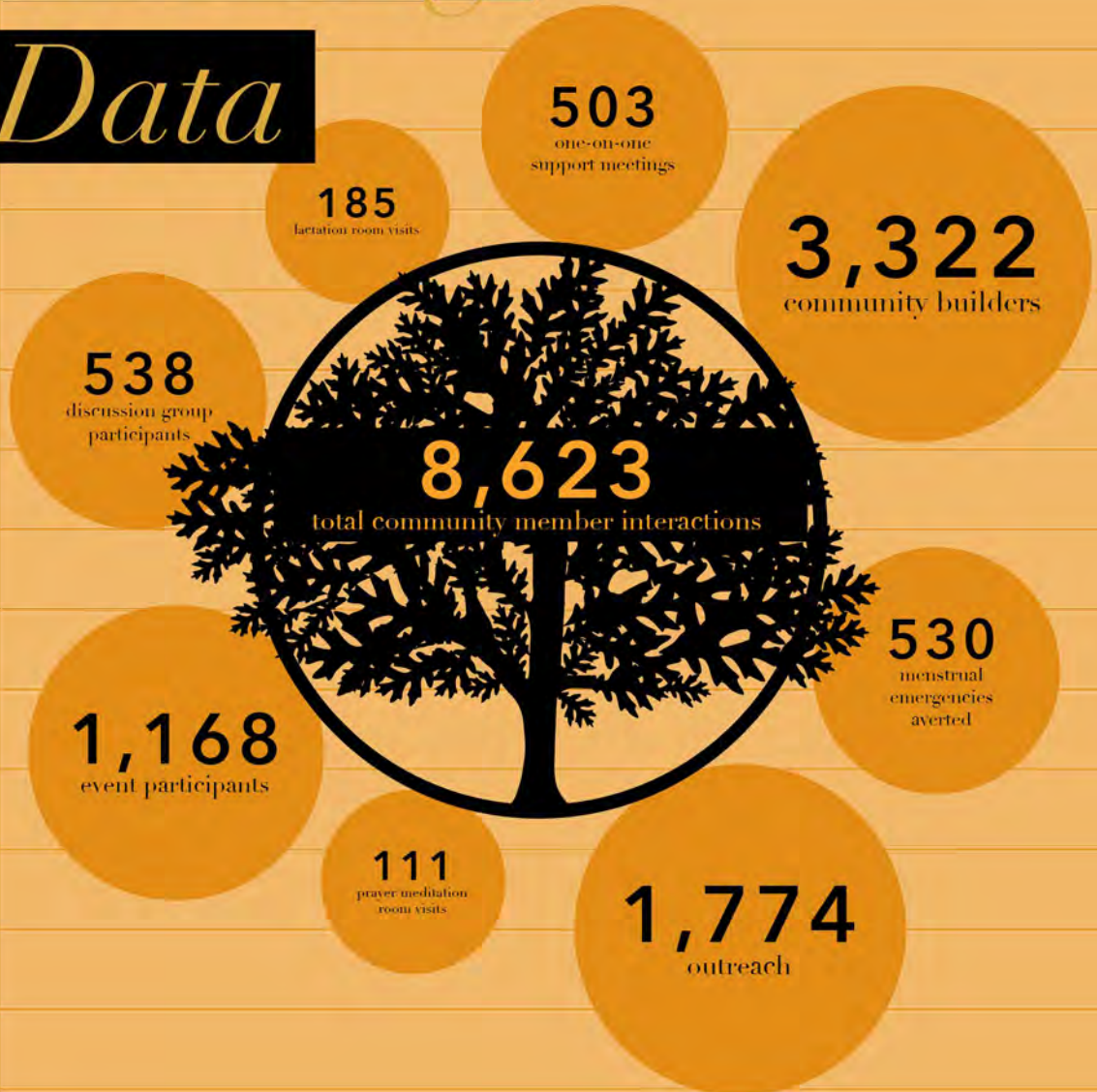
Cultivate a survivor-responsive campus as a means to address sexual violence.

*February 27, 2020:
The Women's Center
staff contingent
celebrate their
enormous Giving Day
success with a jump
shot in front of the
UMBC backdrop.*

FY20

Tracking

Data





Community Redefined

When explaining the Women's Center, we often describe it as "a space and a place." Our space is the physical representation of who we are—it's the door one comes through, the couches and big comfy bean bags we sit on, and the table we gather around to eat meals. It's the space behind closed doors where we hold pain, tears, and healing. It's the walls that contain our friendships, our learning, our laughter, our rage. It is the space we enter to be together.

Yet, we are more than just a space because we are also a place for support, learning, and activism and if this year has taught us anything, it's that this place goes with us wherever we go and is wherever we are. And, where we went to re-build and re-define our community was to the internet—Webex and GoogleMeet, Instagram Live and Facebook Messenger, emails and chat boxes; complete with our pets, our kiddos and partners, and our bedroom posters. We redefined what community space meant to us, as challenging and incomplete as it might have felt at times. We kept showing up for and with each other.

Prior to campus closing mid-March due to the pandemic, the Women's Center was an active community space and resource with approximately **8,200 visits/contacts** between July 2019 and March 2020. The Women's Center lounge served as a place of comfort and reprieve while also being a space for learning and friend-making with **3,332 community member visits** over the course of this condensed in-person time together this year. We spent only a few weeks on our very brand new couches which transformed our space into a new level of comfort and feeling of home (we truly can't wait until we really get the chance to experience this new addition!). Our usage rates of unique critical services such as the **lactation room (185 visits)** significantly increased from last year while providing **menstrual products to "save the day" during those unexpected moments (530 visits)** remained consistent from previous years prior to closing.

*December 4, 2019:
Students gather
to eat lunch and
talk together in the
Women's Center
Lounge Space.*

Beyond the Women's Center physical space, events such as the Women of Color Reception and the LGBTQ Networking event encouraged participants to connect with our community, find their people, and embrace the practice of taking the spirit of the Women's Center with them wherever they are.

During the fall semester and the beginning part of the spring semester, the Women's Center Scouts program was an exciting way for community members to be recognized as participants in our programming. By completing a set of challenges that included participating in a wider array of event and service offerings than they might not normally, Scouts earned a Women's Center t-shirt or bag. We introduced Women's Center Wednesdays at the start of the year to encourage Scouts to wear their shirts on Wednesdays. Throughout the year, many community members showed off their array of Women's Center shirts on Wednesdays demonstrating their pride and affiliation with our community. Throughout both the fall and spring semesters a total of **60 community members participated in the Scouts challenge.**

Additionally, the Women's Center continues to be a proud partner of the Retriever Essentials Program. The Women's Center served as a pick-up location for bags of food and a place for students wishing to enroll in the "Save-A-Swipe" program (free meal cards for the dining hall) and worked with campus community members throughout distance learning to bridge these critical services. The Women's Center provided support over **50 times to community members experiencing some level of food insecurity** to include working with our Women's Center Advisory Board member to deliver food bags to students during stay-at-home orders.

May 1, 2020: During our Friday staff meetings, we had to document our Black & Gold! UMBC Pride doesn't stop during a pandemic, and neither does the Women's Center staff!



Spotlight:

Celebrating International Women's Day

In honor of International Women's Day, the Women's Center hosted an open house and lunch to honor the ABM women custodial workers working throughout The Commons to keep our spaces clean and our environments safe. This celebration provided us the opportunity to return our gratitude to nearly **45 women custodial workers, a majority of whom were women of color, Latinx and/or immigrated to the U.S from Central American** and predominantly speak Spanish, who help care for our Women's Center space and our home in The Commons.

In a collaboration that benefitted everyone involved, Spanish-speaking students, faculty and staff were recruited to serve as Spanish interpreters throughout the event. Our intentions for this event included creating community and building rapport with on-campus custodial workers while also acknowledging their tremendous contributions to the UMBC community. The open house provided us the opportunity to showcase the Women's Center as a resource and space for our custodial workers and intended to build bridges between our communities.

ABM custodial workers are important members of our UMBC community and we are extremely thankful for the care and support they do in making our campus thrive. Now more than ever with COVID-19 precautions and heightened cleaning protocols, we want to pay it forward to our ABM workers who are on the frontlines in keeping our campus safe. We look forward to turning this first-time event into a new Women's Center tradition.

March 12, 2020: The Women's Center made two flyers to advertise for our International Women's Day Lunch for UMBC's Women Custodial Workers. One in English and one in Spanish (left and right) as many of the people keeping our campus clean primarily speak Spanish.



“ ” It's saved
me honestly.

I've been attending
[one of the Women's
Center's discussion-
based groups]
since my very first
semester as a
Freshman on campus
and I've never
felt so safe being
me elsewhere on
campus.

— Discussion Group Participant, Fall 2019 Focus Group



Individualized Support

This year Women's Center professional staff spent **178 hours in 246 meetings with 117 unique students, faculty, and staff** throughout the year. The most pressing issues the Women's Center supported in these individualized meetings included **sexual violence/Title IX support (87), identity-base concerns (gender, race, LGBTQ+) (51), and academic and professional advising (34)**. In addition to providing advice around navigating Title IX, professional staff also acted as **formal Title IX support persons for 5 students**. A unique category includes meetings with **returning women students (78)**, with a large percentage being mandatory meetings for the RWS Scholars + Affiliates. In our spring exit survey, **100% of RWS Scholars + Affiliates strongly agreed** that "the mid-semester check-ins with Women's Center professional staff are helpful."

Providing individual support to UMBC community members is more than just a number of meetings we hold within our office spaces. The individualized support we provide represents lifelines, a deeper connection to community, belonging, and mattering, and for some, a renewed path to retention and graduation from UMBC. In response to our individualized support survey sent to students following their meetings with professional staff, consistent words used by community members completing the survey included helpful, trust, and safe. A significant theme expressed throughout the survey responses was the feeling that Women's Center staff went above and beyond in the support they provided.

In addition to direct support, the Women's Center professional staff work to connect

October 9, 2019: Our Social Work Intern, Scout shows our Gender, Women's, + Sexuality Studies Intern, Autumn, a picture from their phone. Both interns were tabling in the Breezeway for National Coming Out Day.

each of these UMBC community members in need with the appropriate resources making consistent referrals to University Health Services, Counseling Center, Academic Success Center, the Title IX Coordinator and the new Office of Equity and Inclusion, and other relevant resources both on- and off-campus. This year, we helped build greater connection for survivors of sexual violence with the off-campus resource, TurnAround. Twice a month, students had the opportunity to meet with an advocate from TurnAround via "office hours" hosted in the Women's Center creating greater access to this community resource that otherwise may feel inaccessible. Women's Center staff also served on the newly formed Academic Care Team providing support as needed to the Academic Advocates coordinated care case management model.

Community members find their way to our individualized support services in many ways including word-of-mouth from friends, referrals from faculty or staff, or through our events and outreach. We prioritize our ability to meet with these community members without the barrier of scheduled appointments and many of our meetings occur as a result of walk-ins. As we moved online mid-March, the ability to translate this model of service was impacted resulting in an overall reduction of this type of support for the year. Yet, the shift to online platforms also created a new layer of access in that our 1-1 support numbers after the close of the spring semester have stayed consistent when usually we see a drastic decline in requests. Holding space for individualized support is where our tagline, "We see you. We believe you. You matter." truly counts. Through the challenges presented by our current reality of living through a pandemic, this is an essential service we remain committed to providing.

*December 11, 2019:
During our End of the
Year Celebration for
Returning Women
Student Scholars +
Affiliates, we present
each of our graduates
with a pin, a flower,
and a good, old-
fashioned hug.*



“ ” I gained
a place of
acceptance and
understanding. The
Women's Center is a
place that is filled with
compassion, guidance
and empathy.

At a time when I felt I
had no one, I had the
Women's Center.

— Returning Women Student Scholar, End of the Year Survey



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. We host a variety of events that offer myriad ways for the UMBC community to engage in critical thought and social justice dialogues. This year's Brave Space Forums focused on Deconstructing Womanhood, which explored the interaction of gender, body politics, and race. Largely planned and implemented by our student staff members, Brave Space Forums continue to deepen dialogues at the Women's Center around feminism and social justice. Topics this year included:

Fall 2019

Hair There and Everywhere: The Gendered Politics of Body Hair

Menstrual Monster Mash: Deconstructing Stigma

The Maternal Mandate: Why the Familial Obligation?

Spring 2020

Refracting the Colorism Complex: Shades of Impact on Women of Color

Correct Curvature: The Maddening History of Women's Body Ideals

Maidens Made in Double Standards: The Madonna/Whore Paradox*

**Due to Covid-19 regulations we were unable to present "Maidens Made in Double Standards"*

*September 3, 2019:
Toward the end of the Women of Color Reception, all of our guests came together in a huge circle (about 50 people!) and illustrated the connections that bring us together by passing around a ball of string and creating a larger web that brought all of us together.*

When participants were asked whether or not they believed they could engage in a conversation about why our Brave Space Forum topics are social justice issues, **100% agreed (n=76)**.

With the success of last year's Pop-Culture Pop-Up series launch, Women's Center

student staff continued this new programming component which lends itself as an opportunity to be agile in having conversations about relevant and current issues without significant planning that most other events and programs require. Popular topics for this year's Pop-Culture Pop-Ups included **"Exploring Self-Love with Lizzo"** and **"Goop: A Critical Look into Gwyneth Paltrow's Wellness Empire."** This series continues to show the importance for community members to have an immediate space to vent, ask questions, and explore their curiosity around mainstream topics.

The Brave Space Guidelines continue to serve as our foundation in supporting our efforts 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. Additionally, through partnership and support of UMBC's restorative practices community, the Women's Center staff helped facilitate brave space discussions between various communities using the model and spirit of restorative practices.

In reflecting on six empowering years of Critical Social Justice (CSJ), we recognize that this initiative provides a significant platform for us to create spaces for students, faculty, and staff to engage with social justice issues on campus. We also recognize that our campus culture has evolved since we first launched CSJ, so in consensus with our campus partners, we decided to take a gap year to reevaluate the program as a means to better serve our community. Given continued interest and support from our community, we are confident that we will be able to revive CSJ in future years.

Social justice dialogue among our community and partners is essential to providing care and accountability to disrupting heterosexism and white supremacy. With our mission statement grounded in anti-racism and intersectional feminism, the protests grounded in police brutality and the call for Black lives to matter beginning in late May as a result of the murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd (and many others) called the Women's Center into action. Distance learning and remote work provided us the new opportunity to meet the needs of our community and hold ourselves accountable to our anti-racism commitments. We continued holding the Women of Color Collective throughout the summer in addition to hosting a healing circle for current and past Women Center student staff. The long and continued structural violence towards the Black and African-American community requires attention, action and accountability and the Women's Center remains committed to being a leading voice in calling for structural changes from within and beyond our UMBC community.

*February 3, 2020:
Student staff member,
Kay, laughs while
hanging out in the
Women's Center
lounge with other
members of our
community.*





Learning & Engagement

As a unit of the Division of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, the Women's Center is proud to provide a distinctive undergraduate education and contribute to the academic goals of the University. In addition to supporting UMBC's functional competencies for student learning, the Women's Center relies on a [co-curricular student learning outcomes map with distinct learning outcomes](#) we use to center our approach to programming and services.

October 30, 2019:
Two student staff
members, Scout and
Kaitlyn, pose for a
picture in the lounge.

Through programming like the Returning Women Student Scholars + Affiliates program, specialized identity-based discussion groups, Brave Space Forums, and various workshops, to include Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence and Microaggressions and Implicit Bias in the Classroom and Beyond, students gained greater awareness and education regarding women's and gender issues that complemented their learning inside the classroom. During the time campus was open, students frequently used the Center's space for studying, took advantage of the student computer, and borrowed books from our lending library while also practicing community accountability through brave space dialogues. During distance learning, the Women's Center met our communities online for continued learning through InstagramLive conversations and a 5-week social media campaign for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

From these discussions and workshops, students demonstrated their learning via various assessments, all of which indicated that **100% of participants were able to learn more about social justice issues and skills for intervening in microaggressions.** When asked to assess their year as participants in the Returning Women Student Scholars + Affiliates program, **100% of survey respondents strongly agreed/agreed that "During your time as a Returning Women Scholars or Affiliate did you practice or gain applicable skills in professionalism, critical thinking, leadership, and teamwork?"** When prompted, scholars identified skills related to time management, stress management, and campus resources/support.

In a program evaluation of two discussion groups, Women of Color Collective and Between Women, conducted by community psychology student, Ishita Arora, **many participants (73.7%) reported that Women's Center's groups played a key role in**

their academic and personal success at UMBC. The most commonly reported ways in which Women's Center's groups played a key role in participants' academic and personal success at UMBC included **friendship-building opportunities and increases in several areas such as sense of community and belonging, self-confidence, and access to support, resources, and connections.**

Every year, the Women's Center supports academic learning through internships. This year we provided a Gender, Women's + Sexualities Studies internship and an inaugural field placement to a social work student. The opportunity to provide a social work field placement presented new meaningful ways for the Women's Center to engage in student learning and professional development using an extensive learning agreement. Over the course of the year, the student, Sam Hertl, played a significant role in facilitating Between Women and We Believe You, while also developing a macro project dedicated to evaluating and addressing the accessibility of Women's Center events and programs. Additionally, throughout the fall semester, staff supported a Psychology graduate student's learning and skill-acquisition throughout their Program Evaluation course. This student created and executed an evaluation for our discussion-based programs, Between Women and Women of Color Collective, producing rich data in which we can use to improve our programming. Some of the evaluation's data can be found throughout this annual report.

The Women's Center also helped UMBC's Retriever Courage wrap-up an ambitious and successful goal to train all faculty and staff in-person by providing education and awareness around the importance of supporting survivors of sexual violence as a co-facilitator of the mandatory Title IX trainings. **In the final sessions, 549 faculty, staff, and graduate assistants were trained.** Additionally, the Women's Center supported efforts to **train 270 student organization leaders** in this area during the fall semester's Leading Orgs.

As the university shifted to distance learning and remote work, the Women's Center also made efforts to provide additional learning and engagement opportunities for faculty and staff. These efforts included a co-sponsored workshop entitled **"The Role of Gender Power in Online Course Discussions: How to Design Online Learning Experiences that Prevent the Silencing of Women's Voices"** that was attended by **60 faculty and staff** and the beginnings of a Summer Care discussion series that held space for the complexities of living and working through a pandemic and civil rights unrest.

*January 22, 2020:
Returning Women
Student Scholars
+ Affiliates created
personal maps of
their campuses to
show what, at UMBC
and Shady Grove,
are most important
to them.*



“” The professional and student staff at the Women’s Center have garnered my trust and provided one of the few spaces on campus where I can be closer to my most authentic self. I don’t have to wear my mask.

— Women’s Center Program Assessment by Ishita Arora
(excerpt from focus group)



Unique & Critical Services

Services and programming for underrepresented and under-served populations like women adult learners (returning students), women of color, mothers, survivors of sexual violence, and the LGBTQ community continue to draw UMBC students, faculty, and staff into our community. Over the 2019-2020 school year, the Women's Center hosted the Women of Color Collective, Between Women, Spectrum, and We Believe You. Some highlights include the rejuvenation of Women of Color Collective by Bri Gumbs's creative and passionate guidance; We Believe You's consistently high retention rates and the addition of a social work field intern as a co-facilitator; and finally, Spectrum's return to a bi-weekly discussion group from a events-based approach in previous years.

August 26, 2019: Returning Women Student Scholars + Affiliates gather before the start of the school year for their fall orientation. This is one of the most anticipated community building events on our calendar!

In evaluation by Ishita Arora, Between Women and Women of Color Collective participants answered the question, "How has the group facilitated your self-reflection, introspection, and awareness?" Two significant responses from this focus group: **"I feel more comfortable talking about the uncomfortable"** and **"[the group has] exposed me to new perspectives and has made me think about new topics I haven't considered before."**

All of our discussion groups continued throughout the year despite the shift in delivery from in-person groups in our lounge to virtual meetings as campus transitioned to distance learning in mid-March. The continuity of these groups proved to be an asset

to many of our community members who, in the midst of a pandemic and anti-Black state violence, craved stability and needed spaces to engage authentically. This crucial community building inspired the Women's Center to continue offering identity-based groups throughout the summer and also led us to expand our repertoire to include a series of faculty and staff centered "care groups." For the first time in recent history, we also created space for student staff alumni to return to their Women's Center roots through a Women's Center Staff Alumni Racial Justice Accountability/Healing Space.

The Returning Women Students Scholars + Affiliates program continues to be a unique and important service the Women's Center offers to women adult learners over the age of 25. Over the course of the year, we supported **a cohort of 26 scholars and affiliates** providing semester orientations, monthly programming curated to fit the needs of older students, and individualized meetings while also **awarding \$68,187**. All returning women students at UMBG are invited to participate in the monthly events and are encouraged to join a closed Facebook group for networking and community-building opportunities. As campus transitioned to online learning, the scholars + affiliates maintained active participation by joining online meet-ups, reaching out for individualized support, and celebrating a well-deserved graduation and end-of-year celebration. Graduating scholars still received their scholars pins through a snail-mail care package and "pinned" themselves during our online celebration attended by fellow students, staff members, and donors.

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

*August 26, 2019:
Returning Women
Student Scholars +
Affiliates take a group
picture with President
Freeman Hrabowski
who comes to their
orientations every
fall and listens to the
scholars' stories.*



Spotlight:

Which member of the

Women's Center Staff are you?

1. What's in your "Watch Again" section on Netflix?

- A. The X-Files
- B. Grey's Anatomy
- C. Parks and Recreation
- D. The Expanse
- E. Adventure Time
- F. Thor: Ragnarok
- G. One Piece
- H. Growing Up Wild: A Baby Animal Documentary

2. What niche discussion group are you going to facilitate?

- A. Slam Poetry on TikTok
- B. Crying at a Punk Concert
- C. The Lessons of Tegan and Sara Applied to Real Life
- D. Dungeons & Dragons & Feminism
- E. Making Stickers from Anything Around You Right Now
- F. Blowing Things Up and Calling it Science
- G. Playing Basketball But Gay
- H. The Art of Civil Disobedience

3. You must pick an animal sidekick...

- A. Mongoose
- B. A very pretty cat
- C. Remi (just Remi the Cat)
- D. A tiny toad
- E. Fruit bat
- F. Tardigrade
- G. A small plant
- H. Shiba Inu

4. What do you want from the Yum Shoppe?

- A. Creme Soda
- B. One Lindor Chocolate Ball
- C. Nothing, thanks! I brought my lunch!
- D. Zebra Cake
- E. Cosmic Brownie
- F. M&Ms
- G. Seaweed Chips
- H. Hot Cheetos

5. What is your signature fashion item?

- A. Letterman jacket & a tiny backpack
- B. Envious band tees
- C. A Women's Center t-shirt (WOMEN'S CENTER WEDNESDAY, PEOPLE!)
- D. Elaborate moth makeup
- E. Silly earrings
- F. Rainbow overalls
- G. Dad shirt
- H. A cool hat

6. What is the next song on your playlist?

- A. November by Tyler The Creator
- B. Twin Size Mattress by The Front Bottoms
- C. Closer - Tegan and Sara
- D. Killing in the Name by Rage Against the Machine
- E. Ribs by Lorde
- F. Sprained Ankle by Julien Baker
- G. Truth Hurts by Lizzo
- H. No Scrubs by TLC

7. My dream Women's Center would have...

- A. A union for student staff ONLY (NO management allowed)
- B. Sleepovers
- C. A very quiet fridge
- D. Walls of white boards
- E. An endless supply of candy
- F. A 3D printer
- G. A Switch
- H. An office with a hat rack

Are you a Scout? Or more of an Autumn?

Maybe you're more of a Bri on the outside but a Nandi on the inside?

This quiz was originally posted on BuzzFeed.

If you got mostly Es, you are...

SCOUT! Lucky YOU! You're imaginative, colorful, and always willing to be a pal. You skip to your own beat AND bring everyone along for the ride--and what a ride it is. An intuitive and adaptable creature, you are a natural born social worker who can see the good in just about anyone. Everyone who knows you is better for that. Wow, you're like a human rainbow. (Scout is standing on the far left)

If you got mostly Fs, you are...

AUTUMN! Oh HECK! You're Autumn. You have a big ol' brain that is as ready to debate big philosophical questions as it is to help you get through the next semester's worth of super hard organic chemistry homework. You are proud of who you are and passionate about making everywhere you go a better place for the next generation. Also, you're probably going to be in space at some point, so there's that going for you too. (Autumn is in the red and black plaid and seated on the right)

If you got mostly Gs, you are...

KAY! Okay, you won this quiz. I guess we can all go home. You're Kay. You're a competitive and enthusiastic human being who wears their heart on their sleeve. You are super cool, but also probably have a big cheesy smile and a very ardent love of anime (not that those things aren't cool, too!). You have an imaginative mind and a strong sense of justice--which means you're always ready to save the world. But first, you should probably have a snack. (Kay is in the gray and white plaid and seated on the left)

If you got mostly Hs, you are...

BRI! Whoa, there, badass! You're a Bri! You're all about rolling up your sleeves, getting your hands dirty, and putting in the work to save this world. Fearless and honest, you always say what needs to be said. You have a fire in your eyes for social justice... and maybe also for chocolate. Also, you are taking back the fedora (and all other hats co-opted by misogynists) by FORCE. (Bri is standing behind the couch and wearing a hat, of course)





Committed Staffing & Support

This was a historic year, in that for the first time ever, **the Women's Center full-time staff became a team of three.** Through the advocacy and support of the campus community and as a result of Retriever Courage recommendations, the Women's Center received funding to create and hire for a new position. This led to the **promotion of Amelia Meman to assistant director with a specific focus on student success and inclusive excellence and hiring Bri Gumbs as our new program coordinator.**

October 9, 2019: Our National Coming Out Day tabling crew (left to right: Autumn, Kay, and Scout) and their colorful table set up!

A group of six student staff and interns over the course of the academic year assisted the professional staff team in providing support services and programming to the Women's Center community. Examples of student-driven programs include the Brave Space Forum (formerly Knowledge Exchange) series, facilitation of identity-based discussion groups, Pop-Culture Pop-Up discussions, and virtual lounge hangouts.

In addition to our staff, we are supported by a dynamic team of volunteer Advisory Board members, comprised of **faculty and staff and graduate students serving as affiliates representing 22 programs and departments from across the UMBC campus.** 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 the campus. Advisory Board members helped the Women's Center launch a new faculty/staff discussion series in the spring and a summer care series that focused on engaging community during remote work.

Advisory Board member, Elle Everhart, continued to provide administrative support throughout the fall semester as a part-time general associate and played an integral role in helping onboard our new program coordinator. Between Women also benefited from the astute dedication provided by Beck Hertl, Library Services Specialist, who served as the staff co-facilitator during the fall semester.

Additionally, professional staff represent the Women's Center through many institutional committees and councils. Staff continue to support the Retriever Courage initiative by serving on its various committees to include search committees and on-boarding support for the new Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) staff members, the Faculty and Staff Advisory Committee, and the newly founded Inclusion Council. Motivated by this strong partnership with OEI, professional staff participated in and were certified in Level One Title IX Training for Administrators and Title IX Coordinators by the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA). As a strong partner of Retriever Essentials, the Women's Center is also represented as a key stakeholder in this organization's leadership structure. Staff are also a part of the LGBTQ Faculty and Staff Association and the LGBTQ Campus Climate Workgroup. Women's Center professional staff members supported student leaders through the advisement of two large student organizations: We Believe You and the LGBTQ Student Union.

Of special note this year, in recognition of her commitment to advancing social justice and gender equity at UMBC, **our director, Jess Myers, was awarded the University System of Maryland's Board of Regents Award for Inclusion, Multiculturalism, & Social Justice in September 2019.**

August 27, 2019: Our Women's Center staff were honored with a visit from UMBC's official comfort dog, Chip! A year later, and she's a little too big to pick up and hold...





Spotlight: *The Community That Gives Back*

This year's UMBC Giving Day marked a tremendous milestone in Women's Center history with our largest fundraising event to date. In just one day, **146 Women's Center friends and allies showed up to raise over \$14,698 to benefit the Women's Center programming and services.** Of those 146 donors, **51 were UMBC alumni whose overall contributions made up half of the funds raised** confirming a sentiment we often tell graduating students: "Once the Women's Center is your home, it is always your home." In addition to financial support, several alumni signed on to support the day as a social media ambassador.

August 12, 2019:
The Women's Center Advisory Board is made up of compassionate and dedicated faculty and staff from across UMBC's campus. Here, they pose for a group picture after the annual retreat.

To help draw on Women's Center community members and supporters' excitement, we were fortunate to have **two distinct match challenges from Dr. Kate Tracy, M.A. '01, Ph.D. '03, ACE Fellow at UMBC 2019-2020.** Our first challenge to raise \$4,000 to unlock a \$4,000 match was met early in the day with the next match of rallying 100 individual donations that would unlock \$3,000 coming later in the evening. This generous match challenge from **Dr. Tracy is part of larger donation made this year to create the Maxine Tracy Women's Center Endowment.**

In an effort to honor her grandmother, Maxine, and support the Women's Center community, this endowment will benefit the Women's Center programming and services for year's to come. **In recognition of this lasting support, the Women's Center's lactation room and wellness room will be renamed the Maxine Tracy Wellness Room.** The renaming celebration scheduled for the spring will be rescheduled once campus re-opens.

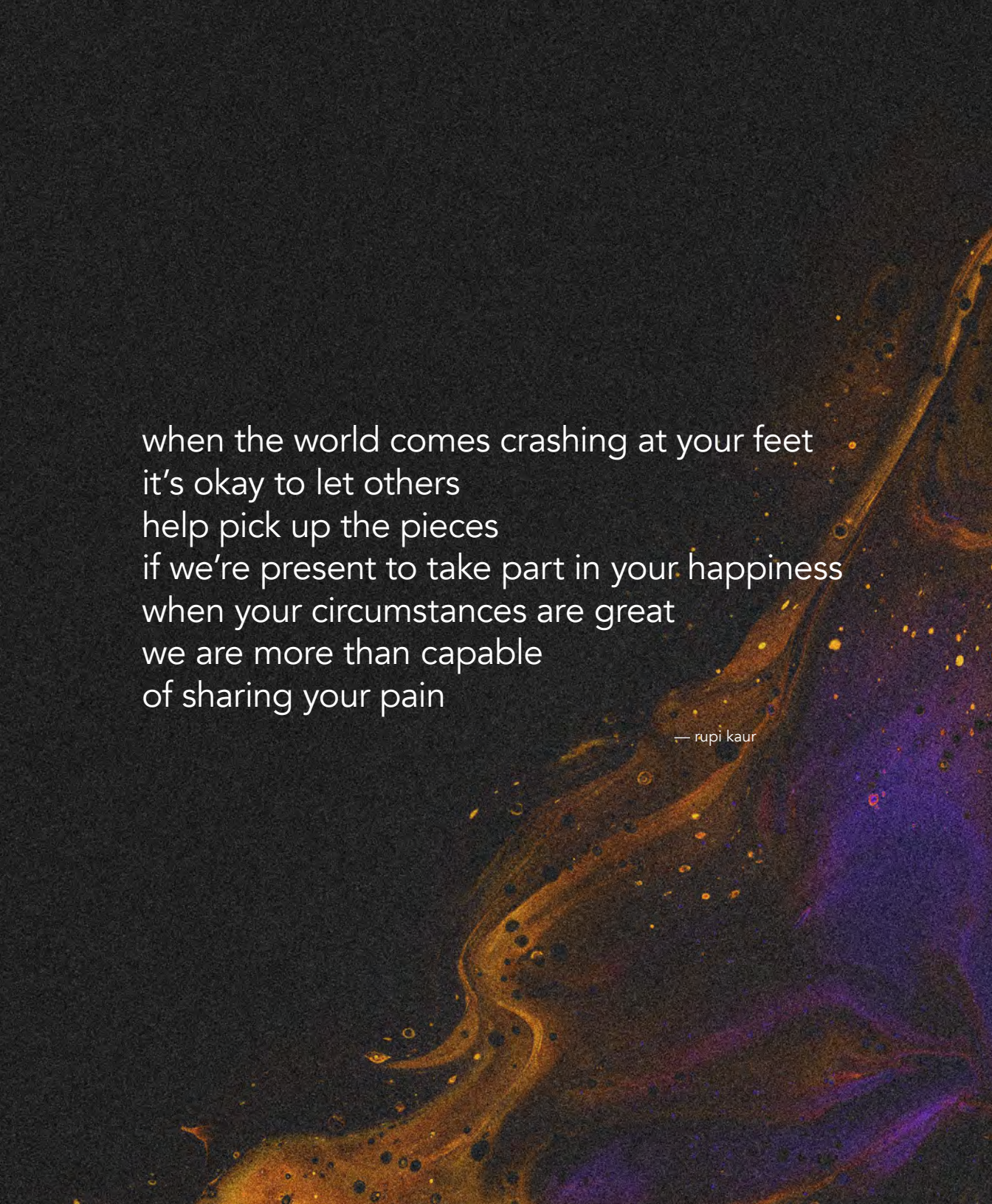
Through our Giving Day efforts along with our one-time and sustaining donors throughout the year, the Women's Center raised **\$17,116 from donor support** this year. With donated funds we are able to provide honorariums for guest speakers, pay students for their work, expand our programming and event offerings, and purchase three brand new couches for the Women's Center lounge. Purchasing furniture with donor funding enabled the Women's Center to stay committed to our mission of critical social justice by ensuring our lounge furniture was not created through prison-labor currently required by the state's contract with Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE).

Ultimately, the Women's Center continues to feel immense gratitude for our campus partners and external donors financial support to help us accomplish our programming goals while also maintaining the daily operations of the Women's Center. In addition to our a larger base operating budget of \$12,300 and a student staff budget of \$5,767, carry-forward funds, co-sponsorships, in-kind donations, federal work study reimbursements, and for-credit internships are essential to our continued operation and growth.

New and signature events for the Women's Center like the LGBTQ Networking event and Take Back the Night (which we sadly had to cancel this year) are solely possible through the generosity of campus partners financial co-sponsorships.

*January 22, 2020:
Returning Women
Student Scholars +
Affiliates share insight
and experiences as
adult learners.*



The background is a dark, textured surface with swirling patterns of deep orange, brown, and purple. Scattered throughout are numerous small, bright golden-yellow specks, giving it a cosmic or marbled appearance.

when the world comes crashing at your feet
it's okay to let others
help pick up the pieces
if we're present to take part in your happiness
when your circumstances are great
we are more than capable
of sharing your pain

— rupi kaur



Final Thoughts

The challenges of this year provided the Women's Center the ability to grow and stretch in ways that enabled us to serve our UMBC community in ways we could never have imagined; some that were happy and some that were painful. We hope that both the challenges and highlights of this year serve as constant reminders to why the Women's Center exists and matters to our campus community and climate. As the impact of our work continues to grow, whether on campus or on the internet, we stay loyal to our mission statement centering the intersectional feminist work we do as a campus-based women's center committed to student development & retention, inclusive excellence, and creating a community of mattering and belonging.

This is community. This is community re-defined. This is a community that sees you, believes you. A community where you will always matter. This is the community of the Women's Center at UMBC.

January 21, 2020: We challenge our minds and creativity during staff training! Our student staff sit in a circle discussing ideas for potential Women's Center programs that incorporate three props that were randomly taken out of a basket.



Acknowledgements

2019-2020 Staff & Interns

Autumn Cook
Kaitlyn Kylus
Kay Hinderlie
Morgan Mullings
Nandi Cook-Creek

Sam Hertl
Amelia Meman
Bri Gumbs
Jess Myers

December 4, 2019:
Everyone gets a
Women's Center
shirt! Our campus
partners pose with
Jess (second on left)
and Amelia (far right)
for a quick picture
with their new (and
old!) shirts.

Women's Center FY20 Donors

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Amanda Sharp
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Event & Discussion Contributors

April Householder
Aryn Dougherty
Ashley Sweet
Beck Hertl
Caroline Bodnar
Christina Allen
Cira Tapia
Collin Sullivan
Delana Gregg
Eileen Meyer
Elaine MacDougall
Elle Everhart

Freeman Hrabowski
Haley Owens
Ishita Arora
Jamie Gurganus
Jennifer Harrison
Jessica Long
Jessica Wyatt
Joanna Gadsby
Karina Lopez
Kate Drabinski
Katie Rehbehn
Keia Brown

Laura Ott
Lee Blaney
Lindsay DiCuirci
Liz Winters
Lucie Blauvelt
Marcela Mellinger
Maria Celleri
Maria Sanchez
Mariajosé Castellanos
Marie Lilly
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Cynthia Wagner, *Department of Biological Sciences*

Dinah Winnick, *Office of Institutional Advancement*

Elle Everhart, *Department of Gender, Women's, + Sexuality Studies*

Erica D'Eramo, *Center for Women in Technology*

Jennifer Harrison, *Faculty Development Center*

Jessica Wyatt, *Office of Institutional Advancement*

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Lindsay DiCuirci, *Department of English*

Lucie Blauvelt, *College of Natural and Mathematical Sciences*

Marcela Mellinger, *Social Work*

Maria Sanchez, *College of Engineering and Information Technology*

Marie Lilly, *Office of Institutional Advancement*

Melissa Lundberg, *University Health Services*

Michael Stone, *Honors College*

Sherri Braxton, *Department of Information Technology*

Vickie Williams, *Department of Education*

Affiliates:

Aliya Webermann, *Department of Psychology, graduate student*

Allison French, *Department of Psychology, graduate student*

Keller Trotman, *Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Public Health, graduate student*

Rahne Alexander, *Intermedia and Digital Art Program, graduate student*

February 27, 2020:
Jess poses with our Women's Center community member and We Believe You leader, Haley, who donated all kinds of goodies to support us during Giving Day.





BALTIMORE COUNTY

Women's Center at UMBC: Home and Belonging

109 views • Feb 17, 2020

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[Click here for a quick introduction to the Women's Center on YouTube.](#)

Address:

1000 Hilltop Circle

The Commons, Suite 004

Baltimore, MD 21250

We are located right next to the Dunkin' Donuts.

Phone: (410) 455-2714

Email: womenscenter@umbc.edu

Website: womenscenter.umbc.edu

*Fall & Spring Semester Hours**

Monday - Thursday: 9:30 am to 6 pm

Friday: 9:30 am to 4 pm

February 17, 2020:
Click the photo above
for a quick video
introduction to the
Women's Center!

*UMBC's campus COVID-19 precautions limit the amount of faculty, staff, and students who are able to be on campus. For the safety of our community, the Women's Center's physical location (including the office and lounge) will be closed but our staff will be working and providing all services remotely until it is safe to come back to campus. For the latest information and updates, visit covid19.umbc.edu.

