



REPORT

From the office of the...

WGEN Coordinator

TO: Members of the Executive Board

FROM: Jocelyn Heaton

SUBJECT: Women and Gender Equity Network Report #8

DATE:s March 26th, 2019

UPDATE

WGEN held three full educational campaigns this year. First, in November, we ran Trans(forming) Mac, a week dedicated to celebrating and supporting Trans students at McMaster. As a part of this campaign we ran nine events including bringing in Dr. Rutherford, a trans professor for a workshop, holding a student panel on living at the intersectional of racialization and transphobia, as well as hosting the McMaster vigil for the Trans day of Remembrance. This campaign was extremely successful, garnering very positive responses from many trans students at Mac. Second, in February we held Bodies are Dope, a campaign celebrating and supporting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) during Black History Month. In this campaign we held five events including a face and hair mask social, a BIPOC Coffeehouse and a BIWoC of fame photoshoot in the MUSC atrium. Although attendance was not as high for this campaign as we had hoped, those that did attend gave us very positive feedback. Lastly, we ran our final feminism campaign, Making Waves, in March. We notably brought in two major speakers, Sandy

Hudson, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Canada, and Teddy Syrette, a two-spirit



Anishinabe activist and artist. These events were successful largely due to the financial support of PACBIC its various working groups, the office of the President, CUPE, and the Alumni Association. Additionally, we held a few other smaller events including a Intersectionality zine making workshop and a documentary screening. This speaking events were extremely successful and I would love to see WGEN continue bringing in amazing speakers with valuable knowledge to speak to students.

WGEN also held two solo standalone events, and two collaboration events in first term. For our opening event we held WGENius, a night of feminist trivia. We had many new faces at this event who continued to use our service the rest of the year. For our annual Halloween event Spooptacular, we took a new spin to the theme, having an interactive “TERF or Treat” activity instead of a timeline, along with a movie screening. Both of these events were very successful, with large turnouts. Additionally we collaborated with MMPJ to bring in a activist to speak on sexual violence faced by the muslim community. This is part of an ongoing collaboration and positive relationship with MMPJ that I hope to see continue. Lastly we collaborated with the Indigenous Studies Program and the Anti-violence network to put on events for the December 6th Day of Action and Remembrance for Violence Against Women. This event was very well attended and a large success, involving a speaking series, vigil and a red dress display all over campus for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. On top of all of these events,

WGEN also attended over 15 events throughout the year to provide peer support either virtually or in person at the request of other campus organizers and groups.



We have continued to maintain and expand our resources collection which consists of book, pamphlets and information, as well as bras, binder, breast forms and a variety of saef sex products. This year we received update shipments of binders from gc2b, got five new books for the library and sorted our informational pamphlet collection to filter out outdated and ill informed content. We have also begun developing our own research pamphlet on inclusive teaching practices which we hope to be continued next year, to be released as a public resource.

Another major update this year was the creation of an Instagram which has really changed the type of social media engagement we receive. Through not only advertising our own events and campaigns WGEN’s promo team developed instagrams series such as 3wgenreads, highlighting books in our library, and #wgenartists, highlighting the talents of local woman and non-binary artists. We also redesigned the WGEN website in order to make it more user friendly and have all updated information easily accessible. Increased promotions scope (highlight Instagram and website redesign)

As for WGEN’s physical space, usage on a daily basis went down, although peer support bookings and support group attendance went up. We suspect that the lower usage of the space this year is based on early issues with volunteer engagement and facilitation on shift which drastically improved in second term. Additionally, with the QSCC non-

operational, we experienced higher usership last year and consequently with the



rebranding of the PCC, usership would be expected to fall slightly this year. With continued improvement we hope to see usage continue to rise next year. Our peer support bookings were accessed 7 times this year, up from only 2 bookings last year.

In general I am very happy with this years service operation and believe that the efforts of the WGEN executives and volunteers should be greatly appreciated for all they have done for the MSU and the McMaster community.

SERVICE USAGE

Physical Space

In term one we recorded intakes for 11 weeks, with an average of 58% of intakes being completed a week and an average of 70 users reported a week. In term two we recorded intakes for 9 weeks, with an average of 49% of intakes being completed a week and an average of 38 users reported a week. Given the low intake completion rates we have estimated that approximately 100 people access the space every week. We may need to come up with a new intake method that more consistently gets completed, so as to better reflect space usage. We received 21 reported disclosures of sexual violence throughout all 20 weeks of recorded intakes.

One major challenge this year surrounded the conduct and performance of the Safe(r) Space volunteers. With errors in space facilitation, we saw space usage decrease, however after improvements were made at refresher training in January we noticed significant improvements. A goal for next year may be to improve common and everyday usage of the space. Perhaps the creation of a video about the WGEN space to be shared on social media will serve to remind existing students and show new students how our space can be used on a regular basis and for peer support.

Resources

We gave out an average of 10 books per terms, 5 binders per term. 1 set of breast forms per term, 5 bras per term and an undocumented amount of menstrual products and safe sex products (condoms, dental dams, lube). A goal for next year may be to improve our informational pamphlet collection and get more safe sex products.



Social Media

Our Instagram is one major success of the WGEN promo team. We were warned early on that services don't always succeed at using Instagram as a promotional tool because the platform requires fairly consistent posting, as well as diverse posting not exclusive to promo graphics. Through the integration of #wgenreads and #wgenartists we were able to avoid repetitive graphic postings as well as raising the voices of authors in our library and the talents of local woman and non-binary artists. Additionally we created a variety of other engaging posts such as bios and photos of our volunteers, as well as inspirational and educational quotes. We also provided short notice updates about the various snow closures this winter through our instagram story. I think people will find WGEN's INstagram a fun and diverse representation of everything WGEN does.

On Facebook, WGEN has maintained a strong presence and social media strategy. We typically use this as our main site for event planning, creating campaign and event pages to gauge attendance and do the majority of our other promotions. This remains a successful strategy and we get a lot of engagement from a consistent audience, as well as consistent new followers. We did not use Twitter much this year, and typically get very low engagement on this platform. A potential goal for next year is to improve engagement on this site.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS &



ACTIVITIES

WGEN ran a total of 22 events this year, as well as providing peer support volunteers for over 15 other campus events. The events are more generally summarized in the main update. I have also attached event graphics for all our events at the bottom of this report. Trans(forming) Mac was a wonderful week for building community and solidarity in the trans community. With nine events this campaign was extremely draining

but in the end, very successful, garnering very positive responses from many trans students at Mac. Bodies are Dope was held during Black History Month and although attendance was not as high for this campaign as we had hoped, those that did attend gave us very positive feedback. Making Waves our major feminism campaign, was notable in that we brought in two major speakers, Sandy Hudson, a co-founder of Black Lives Matter Canada, and Teddy Syrette, a two-spirit Anishinabe activist and artist. The campaign in general, and specifically the speaker events, were very successful and I would love to see WGEN continue bringing in amazing speakers with valuable knowledge to speak to students.

WGENius was our first event of the year and we saw lots of new people joining the WGEN family which was lovely. Spooptacular was very successful, with a large turnout and very positive feedback. Our MMPJ collaboration continued an ongoing relationship with the club which we truly value and hope to continue next year. Our collaboration with the Indigenous Studies Program and the Anti-violence network to put on events for the December 6th Day of Action and Remembrance for Violence Against Women was a great way to collaborate with campus partners and spread WGEN's reach. Ongoing projects include increasing the capacity of our resources for our library and donatable goods, as well as developing a research pamphlet for inclusive teaching practice. Additionally we are always in contact with various campus groups, students and faculty doing various consultations on gender equity and gender based violence issues. This ranges from students doing research for classes, faculty members looking to make their classes more inclusive, and MSU clubs and services looking for support and intersectionality at their programming.

We also ran two successful support groups this year, Survivors and Black and Gendered. We are unable to report on the specific successes of these groups to respect the anonymity of the users but in general turnouts were high and when feedback was asked for it has been overwhelmingly positive.



UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

We are already in discussions with Chella Man, a deaf and genderqueer artist who has expressed interest in coming to McMaster for a keynote event next year. We know Chella has a speaking fee of \$5000 plus travel and therefore I have requested WGEN's budget increase to reflect our ability to connect with major speakers. Additionally we are in the process of hiring the 2019/20 executive team.

BUDGET

<i>ACCOUNT CODE</i>	<i>ITEM</i>	<i>BUDGET / COST</i>
6102-0308	OPIRG button maker	\$30.30
6102-0308	Trans(forming) Mac	\$474.13
6102-0308	MMPJ collaboration	\$87
6102-0308	Bodies are Dope	\$306.94
6102-0308	Atrium Rental	\$323.19
6102-0308	Making Waves	\$224.34
6102-0308	Exec gas reimbursement*	\$160

6102-0308	Sandy Hudson speaking fee*	\$4688.69
6102-0308	SH speaking fee (various reimbursements)*	-\$3200
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$3094.59
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$294.59
6103-0308	Clubs Button maker	\$12
6103-0308	WGENius prizes and food	\$186.23
6103-0308	Clubsfest tables	\$20
6103-0308	Spooptacular props and food	\$118.85
6103-0308	Bounce check reimbursement	-\$36.79
6103-0308	Teddy Syrette speaking fee*	\$810.00
6103-0308	TS speaking fee (PACBIC FNIM reimbursement)*	\$300
6103-0308	Ikea Charge	\$796.36 **OVERSPNED**
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1606.65
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$606.65
6501-0308	Sponsorship poster	\$55.00
6501-0308	Website banners	\$55.00
6501-0308	Hiring graphics	\$75
6501-0308	WGENious package	\$75
6501-0308	Survivors	\$35.65
6501-0308	Black and Gendered	\$109.65

6501-0308	Spooptacular package	\$150
6501-0308	Trans(forming) Mac	\$275
6501-0308	Bodies are Dope	\$275
6501-0308	Miscellaneous charges	\$139.69
6501-0308	Making Waves	\$275
6501-0308	Banner*	\$75
6501-0308	Hiring graphics*	\$75
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1719.99
	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$219.99
6494-0308	Mistaken charge (2017-2018)	\$420.63
6494-0308	Fall volunteer appreciation	\$70
6494-0308	Faculty Donation	-\$50
6494-0308	Exec appreciation*	\$100.00
6494-0308	Winter volunteer appreciation*	\$20.00
6494-0308	Volunteer T-shirts*	\$520.00
6494-0308	Exec Sweaters*	\$400.00
6494-0308	Mistake sweater charge	\$420.63 **OVERSPNED**
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$1480.63

	REMAINING IN LINE	-\$730.63
6804-0308	Training Weekend	\$273.16
6804-0308	Refresher Training	351.73
	TOTAL SPENT IN LINE	\$624.89
	REMAINING IN LINE	\$75.11
<i>TOTALS</i>		
TOTAL BUDGETED DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$6,800.00
TOTAL ACTUAL DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		\$8526.75
REMAINING DISCRETIONARY SPENDING		-\$1726.75

I have included expected expense for the rest of the year, indicated by an asterisk. I was given permission to overspend by \$1216.99. This is due to a \$420.63 charge from 2017/18 and \$796.36 capital budget charge error due to funding miscommunications. Having brought in two major speakers we are also expected to overspend on the budget by \$509.76. With this overspending we are still short approximately \$1000 on Sandy Hudson's speaking fee which Kristina has assured me will be worked out. If there will be no consequences to WGEN's future budget I can agree to these funds being taken from our budget.

VOLUNTEERS

WGEN had approximately 50 Safer(r) Space volunteers this year. We held two Training weekends, one two day weekend for all volunteers in September, and a one day refresher training in January. Additionally we hired a few extra volunteers for term two and trained those few for one day in January. One problem we faced this year was that many of our volunteers were new to WGEN. As a result we had some problems with volunteer engagement and conduct on shift. However, after our refresher training in January we noticed significant improvement and hopefully we have people reapply next year to continue the momentum of improvement and carry over lessons from this year.

WGEN had 8 people on our Events Committee this year. Trans(forming) was a successful campaign for the committee, with lots of input into events. The committee struggled during Bodies are Dope, missing many meetings and not contributing to the brainstorming and facilitation of events very much. However, things picked up for Making Waves with volunteers contributing more to all the events.

WGEN's Executive team was made up of nine people this year. I think the executive team was amazing this year. They performed very well in their roles, fostering an inclusive space, improving our resources, running wonderful events and creating a noticeable online presence. But also, they become a loving and supporting community for each other. I think the wonderful thing about MSU equity based services and peer support services is that they can foster these close knit teams of people who uniquely relate to their peers lived experiences. This team was truly an honour to work with and I can only hope WGEN has executive teams like mine in years to come.



CURRENT CHALLENGES

I think we should really try to increase the reach of our service, encouraging people to understand the mandate of our service as inclusive of all genders, and especially folks who experience sexual violence, of any gender. Additionally I think a major challenge is increasing event attendance. I think seriously considering which events gather more attendance and focusing efforts on those types of events would help our service fulfil our mandate more.

On a more specific note, the provincial election and subsequent policy changes such as OSAP cuts and threats to trans rights caused significant stress on our team and user base. Both in terms of handling our positionality as a service in the current political climate, as well as our team members personal experiences and reactions to the policy changes caused significant distress.

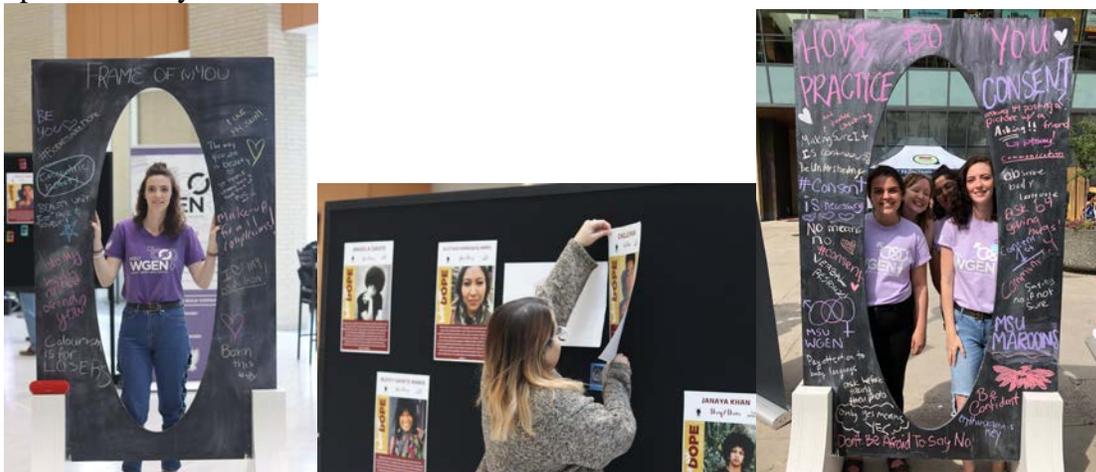
Additionally we struggled with operating a useful Events Committee. People missed lots of meetings and did not complete tasks they were assigned on time. The Committee was run by the CEP & SPA executives this year, which caused some administrative confusion over who was responsible for the committee operation. I think with the new configuration of the executive team, with a new role dedicated to running the committee, the operations will improve. This role is now title the Logistics Coordinator.

SUCSESSES

I think the sheer quantity of events and programming that WEGN put out this year is a testament to WGEN's work ethic as a service. With a total of 22 events throughout

three campaigns and various solo and collaboration events we had a strong presence on the events scene at McMaster. Trans(forming) Mac was a wonderful space, with the Trans Day of Remembrance bringing out more people than in previous years. We ran an extra campaign this year, Bodies are Dope which was missed last year, providing a specific space for BIPOC users of our services. Additionally bringing in two major speakers for Making Waves was a wonderful accomplishment and two very well received events.

We also instituted many changes in our other operations such as using a new library system to check books in and out that is much more user friendly and allows us to incorporate a more interactive browsing experience. We also made an Instagram and as explained in previous sections, this was a major success. Finally, myself and the incoming PTM have redesigned the executive team, creating two new roles and shuffling existing roles around. There are still 9 positions in total but they are much more conducive to smooth operations, more clearly organizing responsibilities. There are two new positions, the logistics executive and the research executive and there is no longer two SPA and Resources, but rather one each. This simply reassigns work in a more organized manner. I think this is a great success that will significantly improve WGEN's operations in years to come.



OTHER

WGEN is not able to be as political as we would like, often because our political inheritance is underestimated by the MSU. As a service representing some of the most marginalized folks on campus, we need to be able to express statements and opinions in an autonomous matter, that may not always align with the MSU's stance. I believe with more autonomy on political commentary, WGEN could better serve our user base, better representing their true feelings towards the current political climate. Additionally I think WGEN should have two paid staff, at least. For the first 8 months of my contract I tracked my hours, consistently overworking by anywhere from 2-15 hours over my contract obligations. I did this work because I am passionate about this service and it needed to be done to maintain the safety of my users, and integrity of the service. I believe with a paid assistant position WGEN could significantly improve our operations, mostly by avoiding the severely underestimated amount of stress placed on the PTM alone, and lessening the burden on executives and volunteers.

Finally.. the last EB report of my term :)