

UNH Women's Studies Launches 'Who Needs Feminism' Campaign

Thursday, February 28, 2013

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Molly Branch exhibits a poster created for the Women's Studies Program's "Who Needs Feminism" campaign on Thursday, February 14, 2013

The UNH Department of Women's Studies has launched the "Who Needs Feminism" campaign. We asked Molly Branch, project coordinator of the Who Needs Feminism campaign and a senior English teaching and women's studies major, to tell us a little about it.

Why is UNH launching the Who Needs Feminism campaign?

The "Who Needs Feminism" campaign was first launched at Duke University and became so popular on social media that other universities also started taking up this campaign. This year felt like a great time for UNH to join the movement. With all of the recent victories happening in politics for women, especially in New Hampshire, we thought it would be a great time to bring some positive awareness to feminism and show how really relevant it is right now. We want to decrease negative associations with the word "feminism" that would keep anyone from identifying with the movement, and we want to create a network of feminists on the UNH campus. Our hope is to also highlight the Women's Studies Program at UNH.

What is feminism?

Feminism—although historically a movement to end sex discrimination against women in political, economic and social spheres—has now transformed into a more inclusive movement that fights to end the oppression of people of all identities (ability, class, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.).

Why is feminism misunderstood?

I think many people have the wrong idea about feminism. There are lots of stereotypes that one thinks about when they hear the word feminist, but a typical feminist doesn't exist. Feminism is about equal rights and equal opportunities. It is about making people aware of the places where they do and don't have privilege and why. A privilege is an unearned benefit or advantage one receives in society by nature of their identity. It's also about making people aware of the systems of oppression in which we live. Systems of privilege and oppression hurt us all, so it's up to all of us to work to bring about a more equitable society.

Is feminism necessary today?

Absolutely! To learn more about why feminism is necessary today, check out our Who Needs Feminism campaign and take a women's studies class!



What work still needs to be done regarding women's issues at UNH, nationally, and internationally?

There is a lot of work to be done. For one, we need to begin to be a more inclusive and intersectional movement. We aren't just working toward "women's issues" or for what people believe are *just* "women's issues," but for all social justice issues. We have to start to work together for equity for all.

At UNH it would be great to have an activist group to educate anyone interested in feminism. A new student organization was just started this year called VOX. UNH VOX seeks to educate, empower, activate, and unite the voices within our community regarding contemporary feminist issues, including, but not limited to, reproductive justice, sexual freedom, gender equality, and body image. It would be great to see more student clubs and organizations around that do this, too.

Nationally, it would be great to see a society where women are taken seriously, where sexual assaults don't occur, where the clothing female politicians choose to wear is not the focus of a news article, and where women have control over their lives, decisions and bodies.

As for internationally, we should be able to hope for the same things.

What do you hope to accomplish at UNH with this effort?

We really aim to combat the negative associations with feminism and make people realize how critical it is to keep ourselves aware and empowered to make change.

What role do you see for the inclusive community of feminists at UNH that you hope to build?

It would be cool to have a diverse group of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members get together and start an organization that meets weekly to discuss activist issues with which to get involved. Also, it would be great to have a community of bystanders who interrupt rape jokes, sexual assaults, and ignorant statements, and instead help people learn about others, celebrate and respect our differences, and work towards a socially just community.

How can students (and faculty and staff, if eligible) get involved?

Stop by the Women's Studies Program office at Huddleston 203, take a women's studies course, attend our events (Events are listed on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page, check out what SHARPP and the President's Commission on the Status of Women are doing as well as all the other President's Commissions), volunteer and be a part of making change! Anyone interested is welcome. We would especially like to invite everyone to the UNH Feminist Week Events March 1-7. The UNH Who Needs Feminism campaign will be launched at these events.

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INCLUSION



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