

# The F Word

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## Feminism: The movement from a male's perspective

By Anonymous  
*Student Contributor*

In high school, I had a girlfriend. During our relationship, she began exploring feminism while I had no interest in learning about it.

When she began delving into the seemingly infinite amount of literature on modern feminism, she did not hesitate to bombard me with her newfound perspective. I debated every facet of her activist cause in hopes to get her off my back about issues that I didn't deem relevant or worthy of discussing. I wanted to prove to her that feminism was outdated and simply not worth my time. We were already living in a relatively progressive era of America's history, there are numerous laws that make discrimination by gender illegal, and women seemed to constantly be making strides in society. I consistently made the argument that any issues that she brought up were a cause of an individual's choices, rather than some societal pressure.

Regardless of what my arguments were, or how valid they were, I soon realized that I did not know what it felt to be a woman. My girlfriend began asking

me various questions that I never even considered as a male.

"Do you consider the possibility of getting sexually harassed because of what you are wearing?"

"Have you ever gotten cat-called on the street?"

I never considered these questions in my life, while many girls are exposed to these decisions very early in their lives.

The pressures of being a girl may have become subtler

in the 21st century, but that does not invalidate trends of systematic or nearly universal marginalizing experiences towards women. My lack of knowledge about the female experience meant that I had no right to argue against the notion that women were marginalized almost universally in our society.

So all I ask is to reconsider how you view feminism. Before

you make judgments and dismiss feminism, understand what its goals are and why they exist. Be more empathetic; don't solely use your personal experience to define your worldviews (and this goes for all genders). Once we make assumptions about another person's life, we silence their very concrete and real experience. To dismiss the notion that women are

systematically less privileged than men is to dismiss the very real fear a woman has when being followed on the street alone. It is to dismiss the reality that the way the media portrays female beauty creates unrealistic societal standards of beauty. It is to dismiss the reality that females are the only gender to give birth to other humans. It is to dismiss the fact that women were not allowed to attend Lehigh University until only 40 years ago.

Reconsider your position.



# The Multicultural Center: a place for many cultures, not just minorities

By Christine Hubli  
Class of '16

Almost two years ago, as a second-semester sophomore still finding my place at Lehigh, I walked into the M room for my first Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) Ambassadors meeting. It was the first time at Lehigh, and probably ever in my life, that I was of the numerical minority. It was a powerful moment, and something I try to reflect on every now and then, because I know there are students who experience this feeling every single day at Lehigh, as well as at other predominantly white universities. My roommate had seen the request calling for new OMA Ambassadors in the University Announcements and encouraged me to apply because she thought it sounded like something I'd be interested in. Little did I know how much of an impact this organization would have on my time here at Lehigh, marking the first step of a much greater journey towards social justice.

OMA Ambassadors has allowed me to meet and forge friendships with people at Lehigh that I might have never crossed paths with because of how stratified this campus is. I have presented campus-wide programs like House of Privilege and Baby Mall. I have facilitated discussions like "I Am a Culture, Not a Costume". OMA Ambassadors even gave me the opportunity this year to attend the Intersecting Identities retreat, an amazing experience in which I met and spoke with passionate students from both the Women's Center and the Rainbow Room, as well as the Office of Multicultural



Affairs. I have listened to others' experiences and perspectives, learning something new almost every day. I connected with my fellow Ambassadors and advisors on a truly deeper level at the retreat with the OMA organizations that I attended my junior year. I have learned a lot about myself and my privilege, and what I can do to empower those who do not have the same privileges that I do.

***"Multicultural means many cultures. It doesn't mean 'no white people allowed'."***

When I talk about the organizations on campus I'm a member of (LU Cheerleading, Alpha Gamma Delta, the Lehigh Prison Project, etc.) people always give me a puzzled look when I say OMA Ambassadors. They respond with, "Wait but, aren't you white? Why

do you go in the M room? That's only for black/minority people." I give these perhaps well intentioned but ignorant souls a polite smile and say, "Multicultural means many cultures. It doesn't mean 'no white people allowed'." OMA Ambassadors has presented me with so many opportunities that I never would have had if I hadn't joined. I haven't changed the world, but it's a start. As a senior with graduation looming ahead of me in the spring, I am eternally grateful for everything the OMA Ambassador program has given to me, and the effect it has had on making me the person I am today. I'm so glad I wasn't too scared to step out of my comfort zone and try something new, to get involved in something on campus that really means something to me. OMA Ambassadors has completely burst the bubble I once lived in, and I absolutely love it. Although the "real world" isn't pretty, it's up to us as the people living in it to change that.

# Walk a Mile in Her Shoes: the men's march explained

By Dalisbeth Galvez  
Class of '14

There is an old saying: "You can't really understand another person's experience until you've walked a mile in their shoes." Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® asks men to literally walk one mile in women's high-heeled shoes. It's not easy walking in these shoes, but it's a great challenge that gets the community to talk about something that's really difficult to talk about: gender relations and sexual violence. This issue is not just a women's issue; men hold a seemingly untapped power as well. Walk A Mile in Her Shoes exists to empower men to come together with women in solidarity to end violence against women.

The Sisters of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, Inc. are once again hosting "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes - The International Men's March to Stop Rape, Sexual Assault & Gender Violence" along with Kappa Alpha Theta, Alpha Chi Omega, Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., the Women's Center and Break the Silence.

***"The march will take place on Wednesday, April 23rd, starting on the UC front lawn at 4:10pm."***

We are also suggesting a

donation of \$3, all proceeds will go to Turning Point, Lehigh Valley's Domestic Violence Shelter that helps over 5,000 survivors of gender violence every year.

***"All proceeds will go to Turning Point, Lehigh Valley's Domestic Violence Shelter."***

Lambda Theta Alpha hosts Walk A Mile in Her Shoes every other year and is one of our most popular events that brings together the Lehigh community. In 2012, we registered 132 men to walk and are looking forward to breaking this record.

## Interview with an advocate: Lehigh's Gender Violence helpline, simplified

By Kylie Gray  
Class of '14

We all know that Lehigh offers resources for students who have experienced gender violence, but sometimes the details can get a little fuzzy. We interviewed Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Residence Life Jenn Scaia to find out more about her role as an Advocate, a position she has held for many years. Lehigh University's Advocates are professional staff members who are trained in gender violence to provide counseling and confidential support for students who have been assaulted, either recently or in the past.

Ms. Scaia explained that the Advocates, who are available 24/7 every day by calling 619-758-4763, undergo extensive training in gender violence by Brooke DeSipio, the Assistant Director of the Women's Center and Break the Silence Advisor. Through the training, they are exposed

to resources on and off-campus and also meet with various offices and organizations, such as LUPD and health professionals. Ms. Scaia said, "Advocates understand how to report gender violence and the parameters of confidentiality, which allows us to explain this to survivors. After our initial training, Advocates meet monthly to discuss policy changes on campus, review current literature, and provide peer support for each other."

Confidentiality seems to be a big concern for students, and may be the only reason a survivor feels comfortable enough to discuss his/her experience. While Advocates are required to complete the Gender Violence Incident Notification Form, the survivor has options with what is shared. Ms. Scaia explained, "It's important to know that the survivor also has choice in this process and may share as much as he/she is ready or willing at the time of reporting. This information remains confidential

and there are limited instances that the survivor may be contacted by Brooke to follow up."

While professional staff may have different reasons for becoming Advocates, it seems clear that the health and well-being of the students are at the forefront. Ms. Scaia said, "I am an advocate because I care deeply about issues of gender violence, giving voice back to survivors, and educating about consent and prevention." She went on to explain what motivates each interaction she has with a student as an Advocate: "My main goal is to support the survivor and provide both immediate and long-term resources for the survivor's welfare. Often, I am explaining processes and providing options for the survivor, allowing her/him to make empowering choices at an incredibly difficult time. It's essential to listen deeply to survivors and their individual experiences so that I am best serving them in that moment."



# Celebrating your body with LU Healthy Body

By Claire Englund

*Class of '14*

Routine objectification and sexualization of men and women in the media and other cultural institutions can lead to anxiety, shame, self-disgust, undermined confidence and discomfort with one's own body. This issue is especially pertinent amongst young adults on college campuses who are in the process of forming their own lives. To help combat this issue and promote a healthy unitary sense of self, the Women's Center will be hosting a variety of events this semester through the Healthy Body Image Initiative, open to all members of the Lehigh community. The purpose of the Healthy Body Image Initiative is to celebrate all people – regardless of size, age, skin color, ethnicity, ability or gender identity.

One of the events that was held

this semester was a Panel Discussion about Disordered Eating. All members of the Lehigh community were invited to an open discussion in which a panel of students recovering from eating disorders shared their stories. Audience members then got a chance to ask questions, helping them to understand the disorders and how to help someone who is affected. This event was organized in an effort to break the silence around disordered eating, a phenomenon that directly affects Lehigh's community.

***“Come celebrate your body on April 10th at 7:30pm in Lamberton Hall.”***

To end the Spring Semester the

Healthy Body Image Initiative is planning its annual Real Beauty Fashion Show to redefine what we consider to be the ideal model. All are welcome to come help spread positive messages and promote self-empowerment associated with body image. Anyone is invited to participate as a model or an audience member. Models will strut their stuff on the catwalk wearing the newest trends from popular local boutiques like Loose Threads and Apotheca. Or if you have a favorite outfit that you would like to showcase we would love to see it. Come celebrate your body on April 10th at 7:30pm in Lamberton Hall.

If you'd like more information about Healthy Body Image events on campus or would like to help out, please contact [luhealthybody@gmail.com](mailto:luhealthybody@gmail.com). And don't forget to love your body!

## Real Beauty Fashion Show

Thu, April 10 7:00pm  
Lamberton Hall

## Walk a Mile in Her Shoes

Wed, April 23, 4:30pm  
UC Front Lawn

## Don't Forget Tuesday@ Noon Discussions!

Held Tuesdays At 12pm  
Women's Center UC 207

## Want to contribute to The F Word?

Come to the Women's Center or email one of the editors:

**Kylie Gray:**  
[kag414@lehigh.edu](mailto:kag414@lehigh.edu)

**Jacqueline Peterson:**  
[jjp216@lehigh.edu](mailto:jjp216@lehigh.edu)

## WOMEN'S CENTER

Room C207,  
University Center  
29 Trembley Drive  
Bethlehem, PA 18015-3064  
Hours: M-F,  
8:15 AM - 4:45 PM  
Phone: (610) 758-6484  
Fax: (610) 758-6164  
Email: [inwnc@lehigh.edu](mailto:inwnc@lehigh.edu)  
Web: [www.studentaffairs.lehigh.edu/women](http://www.studentaffairs.lehigh.edu/women)

## The F Word Staff

Rita Jones, Ph.D.    Brooke DeSipio, M.Ed.  
Center Director    Center Assistant Director

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Center Office Coordinator

Kylie Gray  
F Word Editor

Jacqueline Peterson  
F Word Copy Editor

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# THE ADVOCATES

Gender Violence Hotline: (610)-758-4763

Available 24/7 every day of the year.