

**Student Services Fee Proposal: Women’s Resource Center Needs Staff Support and Budget**

**Introduction**

The ASUA Women’s Resource Center provides a wide range of programs and services to the University community, including four strands of continuous operations including: Safe Walk, self-defense classes, a documentary film series and a Health and Sexuality Committee, which provides free HIV testing and comprehensive sex education workshops to UA students. In addition, we are responsible for creating and providing many individual programs and services including but not limited to Women’s Herstory Month and a large scale collaborative Take Back the Night rally aimed at ending violence against women. We have also developed an internship program that 70 students have participated in, brought in over $70,000 in outside funding, collaborated with over 75 campus and community groups, organized 100 successful events, and received approximately 100 press hits.

Considering these successes, it is shocking to note that a mere 2.5 years ago the Women’s Resource Center on this campus was nearly non-existent. In late 2006, the WRC was re-founded by a graduate student with immense organizing experience within the campus, community and non-profit sectors, who has devoted nearly 40 hours/week of unpaid labor ever since. Despite this quick growth, the WRC has reached beyond its capacity as a student and volunteer-run organization. We are institutionally under-funded and under-supported. Consider these facts: All Pac-10 schools outside of Arizona have a professionally directed Women’s Center. The Women’s Centers at each of our Peer Institutions are professionally operated. In fact, the average Women’s Center at a Pac-10 University has a professional director, three full time staff, an office comprised of 1400 sq feet and operating budgets of $210,000. By contrast, the WRC at the University of Arizona has no professional director, no paid staff, a space of 200 sq feet and an annual budget of approximately $6,500.

**Funding Request**

The WRC requires additional funding to maintain its current level of programming and services. Without increased funding, our Center will look radically different next year. For the past three years, the WRC has been operated by unpaid students with great amounts of unpaid staff support. This system is not only unsustainable but is also unfair to both the general student body and the unpaid students and staff running the Center.

- Funding for a paid, professional Director. The average salary for a Director of a Women’s Center at a Pac-10 University is $57,343. We request $57,000 to cover this cost.
- Funding for student employees: Two ½ time Graduate Assistants—$36,954. Five undergraduate students at $7.25 for 10 hours/week for academic year—$11,600.
- Funding for Programming, Services and Advertising—$15,300. This includes SSF signage.
- Funding to transition the Center from being student-run to professionally supported—$5,000. Without this transitional support, the incoming director will be forced to start from scratch, losing the institutional history, community connections, and information on best practices that the WRC has developed over the past two years.

**Total Request: $125,854 plus ERE costs for employees.**

The requests put forth by this proposal are directly in line with students’ wishes, as outlined in the SSF evaluation. The WRC proposes to use this funding to provide on-campus jobs for graduate and undergraduate students. These students will then work to provide services that reflect the students’ requests for more services relating to Wellness and Health. For example, these students will coordinate self-defense classes, sex education workshops, HIV and STI testing, and Safe Walk among providing other educational programs and services to the UA community. Of particular importance to this proposal is the fact that the WRC is the only on-campus group providing each and every one of these services free of charge. Because of this, nine prominent campus and community organizations support this proposal and have provided letters of support. Additionally, over 4,300 campus and community members have signed onto our petition pledging their support for professionalizing the WRC, with the overwhelming majority of signatures from UA students.

Please do not hesitate to contact Carly Thomsen, Malia Uhatafe, Tommy Bruce or Chrissy Lieberman to receive more information. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Carly Thomsen, Women’s Resource Center Founder, former Director, and current Advisor

Note: The Women’s Resource Center does not view this proposal as conflicting with the Unity Center Concept proposal also being put forward to the SSF committee. In fact, members of the WRC served on both the Unity Center Concept Team as well as the Unity Center Advisory Team. However, even if the Unity Center is funded and approved by the University Administration, the current proposal put forth is exactly that: a proposal. Having funds directed specifically toward the WRC to hire a paid director would grant us increased legitimacy and ensure that the WRC is included in all diversity-related measures this campus sponsors for years to come.