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A Brief History of the Feminist Collective
(formerly the Student Women’s Association) from
2010-2017

Amber Hathaway

February 23, 2019
1 Introduction

The Feminist Collective at the University of Maine has been one of the primary sources of campus feminist activism for more than four decades. The focuses of the organization have changed over the years, following the trends in the larger feminist movements in the U.S. and adapting to new technologies and means of communication. The organization’s recent decision to adopt the name the Feminist Collective (Fem C), which is more inclusive of trans, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming folks, signifies one such shift. However, the core mission has remained largely unchanged: to offer a safe space for marginalized individuals in the UMaine community and to fight injustice and oppression in their various forms.

My intention in undertaking this project is twofold: to offer a historical account of the organization demonstrating how it has evolved over time and to provide inspiration for what the future of the organization could look like. There are good ideas and projects in here that fell by the wayside or never came to fruition for one reason or another. Perhaps some of these can be revised and repurposed to meet the needs of Fem C.

Throughout this volume, I will be using the name the Student Women’s Association (SWA) to refer to the Feminist Collective to remain consistent with source materials, as that was the organization’s name at the time. Similarly, I will refer to the Mabel Wadsworth Center, Partners for Peace, and other organizations that have since undergone a name change by the name that they were referred to at the time. This is to prevent confusion if someone were to look back at the articles and other sources I reference in this volume. It is also important, I think, to recognize that there have been times during our organization’s history in which we have not been as inclusive as we should have been. The name issue was discussed early on during my time in this organization, and yet it took several years to adopt a name which better aligned with our mission. I think that’s worth acknowledging.

This volume covers the academic years from 2010-2017. While most histories begin with formation of the organization and proceed from there, SWA’s recent history is what I have the most access to, so I began with what I know and have been working backward. This volume is written from a personal perspective, as it covers the years of my involvement with SWA. It is hard to remove myself and feign objectivity in regard to an organization that I have been deeply involved with for most of my adult life thus far, so I felt that a personal approach would provide a more honest and complete account. I have scattered some personal anecdotes throughout, although I have tried to keep those as footnotes if they did not feel central to the narrative. The Fall semester of 2010 was when I first became involved with SWA. While I am still an active member, I chose 2017 as the ending for this volume because I think the name change signifies a transition point in the organization’s history.

The first section of this book covers four years of SWA, while the remaining sections are devoted to one year each. It wasn’t until I became a co-chair that I started thinking about creating an organizational history, so my recollections of
those earlier years are shorter and less detailed. I originally wrote that section as a standalone article and have kept its introduction, even if it is somewhat redundant.

The 2014-2015 academic year is the one that I cover most extensively, as I had a lot of “behind the scenes” knowledge from being one of the co-chairs. I have used meeting minutes (from 2015 onward) as well as my journal to supplement my memory, but inevitably there are things that I have left out. If you have information or memories that you would like to see included, email me at amber.hathaway@maine.edu and I’ll try to add them to future editions of this work.

The conclusion of this book signifies not an ending, but rather the beginning of a new chapter in the history of our organization. I can’t wait to see what future generations of feminists have in store for Fem C!

Amber Hathaway
Orono, ME
February 22nd, 2019
2 A Brief History of the Student Women’s Association from September 2010 to September 2014, as Best as I can Remember

This fall marks the fifth year that I have been a member of the Student Women’s Association (SWA) at the University of Maine. Although we have occasionally had a historian, as far as I am aware there has not been a concerted effort in recent years to preserve the history of our organization. Since I will not be a student forever (or at least probably not), I decided to write up what I know about SWA’s past so that the students who join SWA after my inevitable departure have an idea of what sort of events we have done, how those projects worked out, and what new directions the group could take.

Shortly after beginning this book, I realized that it could be a nice memento for those of you who have graduated as well, to see where the organization came from, to have as a keepsake of your days spent in SWA, and to see what new avenues the group has explored since you left. This essay focuses on the part of SWA’s history that I know best. Using journal entries and my own memory, I have tried to compile a history of SWA from the first meeting I attended in September of 2010 until the beginning of this semester.

2.1 The 2010-2011 Academic Year

SWA held its first meeting of the 2010-2011 academic year on September 13, 2010. Our co-chairs that year were Mary Callaway and Kalie Hess. I have no record of what we discussed during that first meeting, but I imagine we talked about Take Back the Night (TBTN), which is one of the main events SWA hosts each year. TBTN is a march and rally to protest sexual assault and domestic violence. Our event is part of the transnational Take Back The Night movement.1

At our event, we invite various organizations that deal with sexual assault and domestic violence, such as Spruce Run2, Rape Response Services, Mabel Wadsworth Women’s Health Center3, Male Athletes Against Violence, and Athletes for Sexual Responsibility to set up tables with information about what they do and what services they offer. We also ask each of these organizations speak about their services toward the beginning of the event. We have other speakers as well, such as All Maine Women, who perform a poem written by one of their members who graduated in 2007, Sophomore Eagles, and Dean of Students Robert Dana. A lot of times the women’s a cappella group Renaissance

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1For more details on the movement, visit takebackthenight.org.
2Formerly known as Spruce Run and Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance, the organization is now called Partners for Peace. I have retained the historical name here to avoid confusion when viewing source material dating from this time frame.
3Formerly known as Mabel Wadsworth Women’s Health Center, the organization changed their name in 2017 to Mabel Wadsworth Center to better align with their values of providing supportive and inclusive healthcare. I have retained the historical name here to avoid confusion when referencing material dating from this time frame.
performs at the start of the event. Emily Cain, who has been a Maine State Representative and State Senator, was our keynote speaker for all four TBTN events I attended.

After the speakers are done, we hold the speakout, during which time we encourage survivors to share their stories, if they’re at a stage in the healing process for which sharing feels like an empowering experience. Some years we have also had a purple box in which people who do not feel comfortable sharing their stories in person or who would like to offer support, can leave messages. Members of SWA will read off these messages throughout the course of the speakout.

The march is the last part of the event. Someone from the University of Maine Police Department, usually Officer Deb Mitchell, will lead the march with a police cruiser as a safety precaution. The rest of us follow after the police car, carrying candles and reciting chants.

Two weeks after the initial meeting, we made purple (the color of domestic violence awareness) and teal (the color of sexual assault awareness) ribbons to pass out to people at TBTN. The following week we made these gorgeous light up flowers constructed from tissue paper and pipe cleaners and powered by an LED to carry during the event (see Amber’s SWA Page for a photo of one of the flowers). It has been the only year so far in which we made them, which is unfortunate because they’re pretty awesome. We held TBTN on October 5th, 2010 outside in the space between the library and Cyrus Pavilion Theatre. My partner Brian and I decorated the trees and light posts with purple ribbon. It was really cold.

SWA has a newsletter/magazine called The F*Word4. I think it has taken on various forms over the years and has been more or less defunct as of late, but that year we published an issue of it. We put out a call for poetry, prose and artwork relating to body image and received a number of wonderful submissions. On October 18th, Mary Callaway, Kalie Hess, and I selected the art and writing that we were going to use and came up with a layout for our magazine. The magazine arrived in printed form on January 26, 2011.

Reproductive rights were a central issue for SWA during the 2010-2011 academic year. Life Support, the anti-choice5 group on campus, was active then. They used to rally outside the Memorial Union carrying their grotesque, misrepresentative signs and so a handful of pro-choice individuals would stand with pro-choice signs as counter protestors.

The counter protesting was not exclusively a SWA thing; in fact I think the majority of the protestors were unaffiliated with SWA and many were from the Rainbow Resource Center (RRC). However, Mary Callaway and I were often out there as part of the counter protest. Also, since we are a feminist organization, Life Support’s actions were contrary to our mission, so it became an issue for

4As in feminism, not the other thing you were thinking ;)
5Although the members of Life Support would no doubt use the term “pro-life,” I feel that anti-choice more accurately captures the aims of the movement opposing reproductive choice since many of the people involved in trying to restrict abortion rights have no concern for the pregnant person or the resulting child once the pregnancy is over.
SWA.

Since the anti-choice individuals were always outnumbered, they started to get sneaky. They would break their routine of going out on Wednesdays around noon and go out other days or they would look and see if there were any pro-choice people waiting for them (our offices were down the hall from theirs and we would usually congregate between the SWA office and the Rainbow Resource Center to watch for them) and hang back until they didn’t see us anymore. Thankfully, someone usually spotted them (on Wednesdays if they weren’t already outside, we would send spies to monitor their activities) and so we’d be able to assemble a group of counter protestors in no time.

One week, Life Support hosted a “Week of Life” or something like that. In response, SWA decided to hold a Pro-Choice Week. We ordered these neat pens that say I < 3 Reproductive Rights, which we gave out while tabling and at events. On November 29th, 2010 we held our first Pro-Choice Week event, a showing of the film *The Abortion Diaries*. On Wednesday, November 29th we hosted a panel to discuss the state of reproductive rights in Maine after the election of anti-choice Governor Paul LePage and on Thursday, December 2nd we held The Abortion Conversation Project, in which people were able to discuss abortion and pro-choice sentiments. At least that’s what I gather from this Maine Campus article I’m looking at. I was not able to attend either of the latter events, so I cannot say for sure what they entailed. I’m sure we probably had an event on Tuesday as well, but I cannot seem to find a record of what it was.

In part because of the Pro-Choice Week we hosted, but more because of our longstanding commitment to reproductive rights, SWA received Mabel Wadsworth Women’s Health Center’s Leadership Torch Award. The award is given to a young person or a group of young people working on preserving reproductive rights. We received the award on April 11th, 2011 at Mabel’s annual dinner and awards ceremony (see Amber’s SWA Page for a blurry photo of us receiving the award and also for a photo of the torch pin that we each received). Sandy Caron, a professor at UMaine, had been one of the leaders of SWA years ago (it was called the UMO Women’s Center then) and she talked about what the organization was like in the 1980s. They used to have a fund to provide short term loans so that women at UMaine who needed an abortion but couldn’t afford one could get one.

*The Vagina Monologues* is a play written by Eve Ensler based on her interviews with people about their vaginas. Each year around Valentine’s Day, SWA puts on a production of *The Vagina Monologues*. 10% of the proceeds go to Eve Ensler’s V-Day Foundation and the remaining money is divided between Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance, Mabel Wadsworth Women’s Health Center, and Rape Response Services. SWA members got together to make T-shirts to advertise the event (I was unable to attend, but Mary made me one). The week before and the week of the event, we sold tickets and chocolate vulvas that SWA members had made. The show ran for two days, February 11th and 12th, 2011.

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6Kevit, Maine Campus December 1, 2010
On April 8th, 9th, and 10th, four SWA members, Mary Callaway, Kalie Hess, Amy Marchessault, and I attended the Civil Liberties and Public Policy (CLPP) conference held at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. Abbie Strout and Melanie Rockefeller, who had also been in SWA, went as representatives for Mabel’s. The CLPP conference is an annual conference that focuses around issues relating to reproductive rights and reproductive justice. At the conference they had some speakers and then the participants headed off to various workshops of their choosing. I went to workshops on what it means to be a woman in the feminist movement, how to talk about abortion with people with conflicting feelings about abortion, and how to combat abstinence only sex ed programs rebranded to look like comprehensive sex ed. What I remember most about the trip, though, was spending time with my fellow SWA members. For dinner on Saturday night we went to this Japanese restaurant with amazing sweet and sour tofu. We spent some time wandering around downtown Amherst, looking at the different shops.

The week of April 18th, SWA held The Beautiful Project. The Beautiful Project (in its current incarnation) is a week of events designed to encourage body positivity, foster self confidence, and promote healthy living. On Monday we had a table in the Union to raise awareness about the chemicals in common beauty projects, handing out information and free samples of Burt’s Bees products. That same day the T-shirts we had ordered for the event arrived. On Tuesday Emily Cain gave a presentation for us on influencing public policy. I’m not sure what events we hosted on Wednesday and Thursday, if any, but on Friday we had our Red Tent (the tent was actually white). It’s an event that SWA has held a number of times during the Beautiful Project (I remember seeing signs for it before I was even aware of what SWA was). The symbol of the Red Tent comes from the biblical practice of exiling women into their own separate living quarters while they were having their period because some believed that having menstruating women would contaminate the community (other early cultures had similar practices). These banishings provided some women with reprieve from their hectic daily lives. Thus SWA’s Red Tent is a place where people can relax. We had snacks, some free natural beauty product samples, and collage making supplies.

There also were some scattered things that SWA did throughout the school year that were less time consuming than the major projects I’ve described. At our meeting on October 25th, some members of the Feminist Majority Foundation came to talk to us about their organization. On March 30th, 2011, we helped make pom poms for the Spruce Run Gala, an annual fundraiser Spruce Run hosts. For our last meeting of the semester, which was on April 27th, 2011, we had a potluck and made pro-choice signs.

2.2 The 2011-2012 Academic Year

The first SWA meeting of the 2011-2012 academic year took place on August 31, 2011. Our co-chairs that year were Casey Faulkingham and Karin Baard. During our early meetings we discussed TBTN, pro-choice week ideas, and what
we wanted to accomplish that year. This was the year Brian and I made the purple box for TBTN (see Amber’s SWA Page for a couple of pictures of it). We wanted to have a mechanism for people to share their stories if they did not feel comfortable speaking in front of the group and thought that having a box in which people could anonymously submit their stories would be a good way to accomplish this. Brian covered an old shoe box in purple duct tape and then I decorated it with tissue paper, ribbon, wrapping paper, and glitter.

We hosted TBTN on October 5th, 2011. It was raining, so we ended up holding the event in the North Pod of the Memorial Union. To quote from my journal,

The event went really well this year. Renaissance sang, and they were amazing. Next a bunch of groups and organizations, including Safe Campus Project, Rape Response Services, Male Athletes Against Violence, Athletes for Sexual Responsibility, Peer Ed, The Counseling Center, and the UMaine Police Department made statements, then Emily Cain gave an excellent speech. We had a really powerful speakout this year. There were so many people who were willing to share their stories either anonymously or by speaking out at the microphone. Then we had the march. It was really cold outside, but the event went really well.

On October 12th instead of holding a meeting, SWA attended the Rape Response Services Auction. During the event, the hosts called up the members of SWA to recognize us for the support we provide.

The following day I learned some interesting history about SWA. There is a program for Maine college women called Maine NEW Leadership. Sharon Barker, SWA’s faculty advisor, helps run NEW Leadership. She had sought out some alums of the program to come speak at the Blue Hill Library about our experiences in the program. Casey Faulkingham and I were two of the people who volunteered and on the drive down Sharon told us stories about the founding of Rape Response Services, the founding of Spruce Run, and the early years of SWA. As I mentioned previously, SWA used to have a fund to help women obtain abortions. The fund emerged prior to Roe v. Wade (so that women could get to New York, where abortion was legal) and the fund was investigated by the FBI over this.

At one meeting, held on November 2nd, we played an ice breaker game in which we each wrote down a fact about ourselves on an index card and passed

\[7\text{Hathaway, journal entry 10/5/11}\]

\[8\text{The aim of Maine NEW Leadership is to encourage college women to consider becoming leaders in their communities, particularly through political office, although we also meet with, for example, women leaders in business and grassroots activists. Several SWA members, including Shannon Brenner, Mary Callaway, Casey Faulkingham, Melanie Rockefeller, and I have been through the program.}\]

\[9\text{It is not clear whether SWA formally existed during this time frame. The Population Control Fund was started by the University of Maine Student Government, but it later became SWA’s domain.}\]

\[10\text{Bet you didn’t know that when you joined this organization!}\]
them to the co-chairs. The co-chairs read off the facts and we then had to guess who wrote the various facts. It was a nice way to relax and get to know one another a little.

SWA also cosponsors various events around campus that align with our mission. I’m not certain whether or not we cosponsored this event, but we advertised it and a few SWA members came to see it. On November 10th the Women’s Resource Center hosted a showing of the movie *Jane*, which is about a network of illegal abortion providers prior to Roe v. Wade. One of the women from the original collective, Peaches Bass, came to the showing to answer questions. To quote from my journal again,

One of the women from the original collective was actually there to talk to us after the film, which was cool. The movie was about an underground abortion system in Chicago that took place prior to Roe v. Wade. One interesting thing that the woman who talked to us pointed out was that none of the women in the collective had to fear for their lives. Their “underground” service, which was actually illegal in those days, was fairly well known, but no one did anything about it. Whereas today, abortion is technically legal, yet we have people protesting outside of clinics and people who kill abortion providers.\(^1^1\)

I figured I would include that bit of text because I remember I was shocked to find out that there was not the violence directed at abortion providers in pre-Roe days and thought that might be new information for some of you as well. She also handed out pamphlets showing how to do a breast self-exam.

Also, in SWA we sometimes have guest speakers come in and talk to us about various issues. At our meeting on November 30th, a woman came in to talk to us about breast health.

For pro-choice week, we made these “I’m pro-choice because . . .” posters in which we would explain why we are pro-choice. Each statement was printed on a sheet which included a photo of the individual who gave the reason, their name, and their hometown.\(^1^2\) We printed out these posters and displayed them around campus, particularly in and around the Union. We held our first pro-choice week event on January 17, 2012, SWAffles for Choice, in which we made and distributed waffles.\(^1^3\) Brian made the majority of the waffles. I had made a compilation of women’s abortion stories that I had found online to show at the event, but it wouldn’t play correctly and so we watched it at the SWA meeting the following day. On Thursday, we were supposed to host a discussion about abortion, but only SWA members showed up, so we ended up talking about all sorts of random things as well.

\(^1^1\)Hathaway, journal entry 11/10/11
\(^1^2\)I think this idea may have originated the previous year, but I don’t have any record that it did.
\(^1^3\)I think our main motivations for using waffles for the event was that SWAffles was fun to say, had our name in it, and most people like waffles. I believe Casey F. came up with the name.
On January 25th we discussed having a feminist pride day. We never ended up having one, but I thought I would mention it because I think it would be a neat idea. There were various incarnations of the idea, but one involved everyone wearing high heels (Puss in Heels was one of the proposed titles). We also talked about making SWA T-shirts at some point.

For our meeting on February 1st, we went to Karin Baard’s house to make chocolate vulvas and color pictures of vulvas in preparation for The Vagina Monologues. We sold the chocolate vulvas while selling tickets for the show and used the vulva colorings to decorate the hallway leading to the room we held the production in. We held the Monologues on February 10th and 11th in DPC 100.

For three out of the four years I have been in SWA, we have made or ordered T-shirts for the Monologues. For 2012, Casey F. and Karin decided to use a quote from the show on the back of the shirt. There’s a part during the play in which women are asked what their vagina would say if it could talk and one of the quotes is “Where’s Brian?” That’s the quote that went on the T-shirt that year. Brian and I ran the cash box that year before the performance on February 10th. It was getting close to the start of the show and there were no more people waiting around to buy tickets, so Brian and I took the cash box and headed inside the performance area. Apparently another wave of people came to buy tickets right after we left and so Casey F. needed the cash box. This gave her reason to call out “Where’s Brian?” in the auditorium.

In April the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP), an anti-choice group that compares abortion to genocide, with a penchant for screaming at people and displaying graphic, misleading posters, came to campus, arriving on April 9th. SWA was supposed to have The Beautiful Project that week, but we changed a lot of our plans so that we could provide support to people who were bothered by GAP’s presence. We had a table outside the Union in which we had pro-choice stickers and literature and a message board in which people could write positive, pro-choice messages. We did not go out of our way to talk to people, just let them come to us, and I think people appreciated that. A lot of people told us that they were glad we were there. I remember one person came to talk to us and they was on the verge of tears. I was glad we were out there for them, but no matter how supportive we were, nothing could completely undo the effect that GAP had on them. That was one of my biggest grievances with GAP is that they had no compassion for the people their graphic display and hateful words were hurting.

SWA had been planning on tie dyeing for an event on Tuesday, but that got too complicated and so we ended up with fabric markers instead. We were again tabling outside to counter GAP and I think I was the only one who decorated a shirt that day\textsuperscript{14}. On Wednesday we held a discussion so that people could talk about their feelings about GAP. On Thursday we had our Beautiful Brunch in which we sat around eating fruit and other such things. We had a low turnout.

\textsuperscript{14}Dan Norwood and I were at the table at the end of the last shift when the sky started downpouring. We had the purple box I had decorated out there and I was so glad that it was covered in duct tape because it managed to survive.
but at least three people, Kalie, Brian, and I showed up. I think other people dropped in as well, like maybe Dan, but I don’t remember now. GAP eclipsed The Beautiful Project that year, but I think it was more important that we were able to offer people support.

We had been planning on publishing an issue of the F*Word, but the semester ended before we had a chance to get everything printed. We had received a number of submissions, however, and so Casey F. and Karin were planning on publishing it as a blog instead. They got everything all set up to publish and I think we planned to debut it at the beginning of the next semester, but I don’t know if that ever happened. For the last SWA meeting of the year, we had dinner at the Union and Casey F. brought in two surprise visitors: her adorable new kittens.

2.3 The 2012-2013 Academic Year

For the 2012-2013 academic year, SWA held its first meeting on September 5th, 2012. There were four individuals interested in becoming co-chair, but after several meetings of discussion we ended up with Casey Weed, Dana Freshley, and Daniel Norwood as our co-chairs. We held TBTN on October 18th. We had it in the North Pod of the Union. At our meeting on November 8th we did an “I Need Feminism because . . .” photo shoot in which we wrote up signs explaining why we needed feminism and posed for photos while holding our signs. There were a number of groups around the world doing similar campaigns and that’s what inspired us to do ours.

Before the start of the 2012-2013 academic year UMaine changed the way it handled sexual assaults on campus. There used to be a program on campus called the Safe Campus Project. Students who experienced sexual assault could talk to the coordinator and receive whatever support they needed, whether it was having someone to talk to or reporting the assault or what have you. They could talk anonymously if they wished and anything they said was kept confidential. During the summer of 2012, the program coordinator left to take a position elsewhere and UMaine did not replace her. Instead, they told students to contact on-call deans if they were assaulted and the deans would file a report. First of all, deans can be intimidating. Secondly, while the national effort to push colleges to keep accurate records of the assaults that take place on campus is coming from a good place, it fails to account for the needs of survivors who do not feel comfortable reporting their attack. The SWA co-chairs set up a meeting with Dean Dana to discuss our concerns with the new policy, but the response we received was far from satisfactory.

We held the first event of pro-choice week, SWAffles for Choice, on January 22, 2013, the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. This time Brian made red velvet waffles instead of plain ones. On Wednesday we showed The Abortion Diaries. On Thursday we had a discussion about abortion. We hosted The Vagina Monologues on February 21st and 22nd.

Late in the spring the Women’s Resource Center put on its first ever UMaine SlutWalk. SWA helped with planning it; we made signs for it at our meeting on
April 18th and it was unofficially part of The Beautiful Project (we chose not to advertise it with our other events out of concern that if we publicized it too heavily, the school might try to put a stop to it). SlutWalk is a transnational movement to protest slut shaming as well as sexual harassment and sexual assault. It began after a Toronto police officer told a group of students that if they did not want to get raped, they should stop dressing like sluts. Another incident, in which a man convicted of sexual assault was given a suspended sentence and told to write a letter of apology to his victim caused additional outrage and further highlighted the necessity of a movement to address victim blaming and rape culture. The first SlutWalk took place in Toronto on April 3, 2011. SlutWalks are usually marches in which people gather together carrying signs denouncing slut shaming and victim blaming. Some people dress in revealing clothing to show that what they wear does not change who they are while some people dress in the clothes they were wearing when they were assaulted to show that clothing choices have nothing to do with rape.

The Women’s Resource Center’s SlutWalk took place on April 22nd. In my journal, I estimate that there were about 15 people participating, including my sister Katie and me (there’s a picture of me in my SlutWalk attire on Amber’s SWA page. No one had a camera at the event, so we couldn’t get any group pictures while there). This day also happened to be Earth Day, so a number of people had gathered on the mall to see the naked green bikers, a time honored tradition at UMaine. Because of this, we ended up with a decently sized audience. We marched around the mall several times carrying our signs and chanting.

The motto for The Beautiful Project 2013 was, “You are the beholder,” a play on the old saying that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. On Tuesday we had an event on beauty in the media, in which people discussed the influence of the media on beauty ideals and were given an opportunity to make their own advertisements. We collaborated with some sororities to do a couple of workshops, one on eating disorders, which we hosted on Tuesday, and one on how to make your own beauty products, which we hosted on Wednesday. At one of these workshops, we replicated a scenario from a Dove Real Beauty advertisement. We had an artist who would sketch someone without looking at them, first using their own descriptions and then using another person’s descriptions. The idea behind this was that individuals are often more critical of themselves than other people are of them and it gave the people who participated a way to see the difference between how they see themselves and how other people see them. On Wednesday we had our “Beauty Is” photo shoot. People would tell us what they thought was beautiful and we would project the words (or sometimes a photo) onto their shirt and then take a picture.

Our final event was The Beautiful Project Gala. We booked the Wells Conference Center and had a bunch of refreshments. After refreshments and introductions, we had a beauty speakout, in which people presented artistic works about beauty. I read a poem and I know at least one other person did as well. We had been planning on having a discussion panel to talk about beauty, but we had such a small turnout that rather than having our panelists sit at the front
of the room and lecture, we all sat at a table and had a discussion. Throughout
the week, we had been accepting nominations for the Beautiful Person and the
culmination of the event was awarding the Beautiful Person winner. We had
received quite a number of submissions and I think all of the nominees were sent
some kind of token, but we had one person who had done some pretty amazing
things for others who SWA chose as a winner.

On April 29th Mabel’s hosted and SWA cosponsored a showing of the movie
I Had an Abortion. We had our last SWA meeting of the year on May 2nd.
At the meeting we talked with Seth Albert, the fraternity brother in charge of
planning Rock Against Rape, an annual concert that takes place toward the
beginning of each semester, and started brainstorming ideas for the event. We
also talked about TBTN. After getting through our official business, we hung
out and ate food.

2.4 The 2013-2014 Academic Year

For the 2013-2014 academic year, we held our first meeting on September 11th,
2013. Our co-chairs this year were Casey Weed and Shannon Brenner. We
hosted Take Back The Night on October 3rd in the North Pod of the Union. I
remember that we had a strong turnout and many survivors chose to participate
in the speakout.

At the end of the previous school year, Abbie Strout from Mabel’s sent SWA
an application to be a campus partner for the 1 in 3 Campaign\textsuperscript{15}, a campaign
to end abortion stigma, and we ended up being one of the groups selected. As
a campus partner, we were expected to put on a handful of events designed to
reduce abortion stigma. For our first event of the year, on October 23rd, we
held a dessert party. In addition to eating desserts, Shannon Brenner hosted a
discussion with an accompanying slideshow about abortion stigma. After the
slideshow, we read aloud abortion stories from books the 1 in 3 campaign had
provided us with. Later in the semester, on December 11th, we set up a table in
the Union and handed out chocolates with facts about abortion taped to them
to dispel some of the myths about abortion\textsuperscript{16}.

SWA is closely aligned with Mabel’s. Every so often, Mabel’s hosts the
Intergenerational Project, in which feminists from all age groups are invited to
discuss various feminist issues. The goal of the project is to help bridge the
supposed rift between feminists of different generations. Although the project

\textsuperscript{15}At the time the 1 in 3 Campaign started, researchers estimated that about 1 in 3 U.S.
women would have an abortion in her lifetime. I would imagine that the same would have held
ture for the population of individuals capable of becoming pregnant more generally, although
I think most of the research at the time assumed that the people obtaining abortions were
women. Abortion rates have declined in recent years, placing that figure at closer to 1 in 4.

\textsuperscript{16}We had some leftover chocolates at the end of the event and I brought some in for my
fellow math grads. I left the chocolates on a desk without explaining what the papers attached
to them were about, so one of the grads picked one up expecting to see math facts and was
surprised instead to see abortion statistics. He wasn’t horrified, but has teased me about it
time and time again, saying things like, “Remember that time when Amber brought in the
abortion candies?”
has been going on for years, on October 30th it was held immediately after the
SWA meeting and so a number of us stuck around to attend. We talked about
several different issues, including how we came to identify as feminists, makeup
and grooming, and abortion in the pre-Roe years.

There is a class called Women, Health, and the Environment which is a
requirement for Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS) majors and a
course that many WGS minors take as well. The final project in the course is
an action project, in which the students do some sort of project or activity to
effect the campus community with an issue that the course addresses. One
of the books that students in the course read is Living Downstream by Susan
Steingraber, a biologist who interweaves her personal battle with cancer with
scientific discussion of the potential hazardous effects of various chemicals in
our environment on humans. There is a documentary by the same name based
on the book and, as part of her final project, Kate Harlan showed the video at
our SWA meeting on December 11th.

I cannot for the life of me remember if we did anything for pro-choice week
other than the one event I have listed in my journal. On Wednesday, January
22nd, 2014, the 41st anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Ruth Lockhart and Abbie
Strout from Mabel’s came in to talk about the history of Mabel’s and about
abortion access in Maine. Brian made SWAffles for the event. We also displayed
our “Pro-Choice because . . . .” posters at the event.

On February 12th we met at Shannon’s house to make chocolate vulvas to sell
for The Vagina Monologues. We were supposed to do the show on February 13th
and 14th, but UMaine cancelled evening classes on the 13th because of inclement
weather and so SWA canceled the show that day. UMaine also cancelled classes
for the day on the 14th, but reopened in the evening and so the show went on,
but we had a low turnout because of weather and because it was Valentine’s
Day.

The Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies department hosts a series of
lectures each year on various issues relating to their program. SWA was invited
to give a presentation on the 1 in 3 Campaign. Shannon, Lucy Comaskey,
and I presented a slideshow about the campaign and our work on March 26th.
On March 27th, to celebrate Women’s History Month, SWA showed the film
Jane. On April 8th SWA held an Equal Pay Day bake sale. On April 9th,
a representative from Rape Response Services stopped by our meeting to give
SWA some pizza and a plaque in recognition of the work we have done to
support their organization. On April 16th, after our SWA meeting, Mabel’s
hosted another Intergenerational Project. This time we discussed feminism and
relationships.

SWA did not hold The Beautiful Project this year. The Women’s Resource
Center did, however, hold a SlutWalk on April 22nd. I was only able to go to
part of the walk because I had a calculus recitation I had to teach at 12:30,

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17 When I took it, I, along with another classmate, surveyed individuals to see how much
they knew about pesticides and created a website to showcase our findings.

18 We’ve done this other years as well, but it’s always scheduled for a time when I’m in class,
it seems, and so I don’t end up writing about it.
but from what I saw, it was pretty similar to what we did the previous year, although the Women’s Resource Center had also made some cool “slut buttons” (buttons with feminist and/or sex positive messages) to hand out this year.\(^{19}\)

Also on the 22nd, SWA cosponsored an event on abortion. Someone from the Maine Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union came in to show and discuss two short films relating to abortion, *Motherless* and *Roe at Risk*. *Motherless* follows several people whose mothers had died from illegal abortions and *Roe at Risk* examines some of the current laws and proposed legislation across the country that limit access to abortion.

On April 23rd, we held our last SWA meeting of the year. We had some snacks and watched and discussed Beyoncé music videos.

\(^{19}\)I stayed for as long as I could and then made my way over to Bennett to teach. By the time I arrived, I was already one minute late, so I waltzed into the recitation I was teaching wearing black sparkly knee high platform high heels, denim short shorts, and a sequined tube top (see Amber’s SWA Page for a photo of it). Most of my students seemed unphased, although I did get a raised eyebrow or two, and recitation proceeded as usual. I like telling this story because too many schools institute sexist dress codes under the guise that girls are distracting boys from their education when they wear miniskirts or spaghetti straps. There are many problems with that notion, but in particular, even though I had more men than women in that recitation section, somehow my students were able to function when I was wearing that outfit. If we stopped preaching that girls’ and women’s bodies are inherently distracting, we might see that boys and men are capable of working when around a woman with an exposed shoulder or thigh.
Figure 1: Amber’s SWA Page
3 SWA in the 2014-2015 Academic Year

The 2014-2015 academic year began with only one co-chair representing SWA. During one of the final SWA meetings of the 2013-2014 academic year, we elected two co-chairs, one of whom was Kate Harlan. She and her co-chair were organizing for the 2014-2015 year when her co-chair decided that the position was not for her and quit, leaving a vacancy in the leadership ranks. With Take Back the Night rapidly approaching, we needed a new co-chair and fast, but there was little interest in the position among veteran members. Kate asked me if I would do it and I said I would if no one else wanted to, so on Wednesday, September 24th, 2014 I became the second co-chair.

We soon found out that the co-chair issue had not yet been resolved. As a graduate student, I was not eligible to officially act as a co-chair, since SWA is an organization recognized by the undergraduate student senate and I didn’t pay the $40 undergraduate student activity fee. You would think there would be some way to remedy this, but undergraduate senate is nothing if not the arbiter of rules. After some consideration, we decided to continue with one recognized chair and me acting in my unofficial capacity.

The first event SWA co-sponsored during the 2014-2015 academic year was Cynthia Enloe’s visit. Cynthia Enloe, a professor at Clark University and renowned scholar specializing in feminism, politics, and global affairs, came to the University of Maine to give a lecture on September 16th. Her talk was entitled “Where are the Women in Violent Conflicts? Finding out will Make us Smarter.” SWA provided some funding for her trip and one of our members, Sarah Nicols, was heavily involved in the process of bringing her to UMaine, but the event itself was hosted by several different UMaine departments. Enloe held a meet and greet session from 2-3:30 and the lecture took place at 6.

Take Back the Night (TBTN) was SWA’s first major event of the year. While Kate Harlan had been making preparations for the event, with the co-chair vacancy issue resolved a week and a day before the event was slated to happen, we still had a lot of work to accomplish in a short amount of time. We managed to pull together some tabling supplies. Sarah Nicols suggested that we make a trifold poster for TBTN and thought it would be neat to get a black poster board and use purple paper for highlighting the words and to decorate the poster with stars. I liked her idea and put together the poster. I couldn’t find a reasonably priced star shaped punch, so I ended up picking up some star shaped Post It notes that we handed out during tabling that people could write messages of support on. They could then stick the notes to the poster, filling the “sky” (the undecorated blank space).

20 In the University of Maine’s FirstClass messaging system, each student organization had a conference in which the members of the organization could communicate with one another, which is where we kept our tabling sign ups in years past. It was a pain to deal with. Every year, someone who needed to be in the conference folder or who needed administrative privileges would not have the appropriate permissions, and it could take weeks to resolve the issue. We had a Facebook group which was more active and which people had better success using, so I made a TBTN sign up in Google Docs and shared it to Facebook. We did not go back to FirstClass after that.
Figure 2: Members of SWA at TBTN 2014. From left to right: Katie Hathaway, Sarah Nicols, Hannah Ruhlin, Eloise Melcher, Kate Harlan, Amber Hathaway, Lucy Comaskey, Adeline Schneider, Robyn Estes, Kirsten Daley, and Amber Mondor.

Figure 3: TBTN Keynote Speaker Emily Cain.
Figure 4: SWA members Amber Hathaway, Daniel Norwood, and Kate Harlan at TBTN 2014.

Figure 5: 2014 TBTN Poster, filling the sky with words of support.
middle of the trifold) with stars.

On Wednesday before the event, I suggested that we try a Facebook campaign to spread the word and we came up with a plan. Our idea was that people would take a photo of themselves, preferably wearing purple and/or wearing their TBTN ribbon, and submit it to Facebook. They would caption it with “I’m taking a stand against domestic violence and sexual assault because” followed by their reason (Dan Norwood suggested making the event like our “I’m Pro-Choice because” campaign) and would end with #UMaineTakeBackTheNight. Thursday morning I created an example post on Facebook and printed out directions to have at the table. A handful of people participated, although we likely would have had better success had we launched the campaign before the day of the event.

We held TBTN on Thursday, October 2nd, 2014. Brian and I headed over to the Union at the usual time to set up. The core SWA members were all there, so things came together pretty quickly. I helped Kate print the programs while Brian led the effort to rearrange the North Pod. We had plenty of refreshments this year, with many SWA members bringing baked goods and chips.

We were unable to get a hold of Renaissance this year and we also were unable to secure a sound system, so we did not have any music. Kate and I introduced the event a few minutes after five. All Maine Women read a poem to kick off the event and then Kenda Scheele, Assistant Vice President and Senior Associate Dean of Students gave a welcoming address. After her remarks, various organizations came up and explained their missions and their services.

Because of her busy schedule, Maine State Senator Emily Cain needed to speak at 5:40, but our organizations finished speaking at around 5:25. I called an intermission so that people could get some more refreshments and check out the various organizations tabling at the event. People also used it as an excuse for a photo op and we got all kinds of great event pictures.

At about 5:38 we called everyone back together. Emily Cain arrived shortly thereafter and she delivered a phenomenal speech, as per usual. Then we had our survivor speakout. Several individuals stepped forward to talk about their experiences with domestic violence and sexual assault. We also read aloud the submission that had been deposited in the anonymous box.

Our police escort was supposed to arrive at 6:45, but we finished with the speakout well before then, so Brian had to call the UMPD to get them to come down sooner. While we were waiting for him to arrive, someone decided to address the audience and remind us that our trauma is valid, even if it seems “small” or “trivial” compared to someone else’s. The police officer arrived as this individual was speaking and seemed unimpressed that he had to wait a minute for them to finish speaking. We then held our candlelight vigil. We chanted the usual chants as we marched around campus, trying to keep up with the police officer, who was driving rather quickly. As the march ended, he seemed to acknowledge only Brian before hurrying off.

This year SWA had the opportunity to partner with Maine Business School

21He insisted that TBTN would not finish earlier than 6:45.
(MBS) Corps to raise awareness about domestic violence. Domestic violence awareness is one of the advocacy missions of MBS Corps and during the month of October they will usually pass out purple ribbons in DPC to get people thinking about the issue. My little sister Katie Hathaway, who is a member of both MBS Corps and SWA, suggested that MBS Corps partner with SWA for TBTN. Several members of MBS Corps did turn out for TBTN and MBS Corps’s advisor, Nory Jones, came up with an idea for another march.

Nory thought that it would be nice to hold a march reminiscent of the civil rights movement marches to raise awareness about domestic violence. She also thought that it would be neat to have President Susan Hunter, UMaine’s first woman president, speak about the issue. I was invited to the first planning meeting and I also spoke for the video made for the event, but MBS Corps and UMaine athletic marketing director John Diamond took care of most of the prep work.

We held the march on Wednesday, October 29, 2014 and it was a phenomenal success. Someone estimated that we had over 200 people there, one of the largest turnouts for an awareness march that she had seen at UMaine. In addition to SWA and MBS Corps, many UMaine student athletes turned out for the event. Dean Robert Dana and UMaine’s mascot, Bananas the Bear led the march, followed by me, Katie, and Katie’s fellow MBS Corps members (who also attended TBTN) Shaunna Peard and Lindsey Blair.

It’s always nice to have a little fun and we had several celebratory events this year, including a Halloween party. At the end of the meeting on October 22nd, a number of us were talking about what we were going to be for Halloween. When I got home I realized that the meeting on October 29th was going to be our last meeting before Halloween and it might be nice to have some sort of party. Four of us showed up in costumes and a couple of people brought snacks. Brian and I (well, mostly Brian) made the Nutella no bake “spiders.” They came out more like blobs than like spiders, but at least they tasted fine.

This was our second year as a campus partner for the 1 in 3 Campaign and our first series of 1 in 3 related events was the 1 in 3 Week of Action we hosted in November. Our first event, on November 17th, was Chocolates for Choice, wherein we set up a table in the Union and handed out chocolate bars and info about the 1 in 3 Campaign. On the 19th we hosted a showing of the romantic comedy Obvious Child. The following day, the 1 in 3 Campaign was hosting the first ever livestreamed abortion speakout. We set up a projector in the Bangor Room of the Union and streamed stories for 3 of the 8 hours of the speakout.

On Wednesday, December 10th we had a holiday party for our final meeting of the semester. We started our meeting with some snacks (some provided by SWA members and others from the Women’s Resource Center’s Stress Free Pre-Finals event) and then launched into ornament making. The year before I had learned how to make glitter ornaments. They’re really pretty and easy to make, so we made some of those. I brought in markers so people could decorate their ornaments. Some people came up with beautiful designs, while others wrote messages such as, “Fuck the patriarchy.” Kate works as an Athena’s Goddess, so after finishing with the ornaments and the agenda, we had a sex toy party.
Figure 6: SWA Halloween Party 2014. From left to right: Sarah Nicols, Lucy Comaskey, Eloïse Melcher, Adeline Schneider, Robyn Estes, Amber Mondor, Kirsten Daley, and Amber Hathaway.

Figure 7: Viewing party for the 1 in 3 Abortion Speakout.
Figure 8: 2014 SWA holiday party. Sitting (from left to right): Mariah Curtis and Raychel Poisson. Second row: Eliose Melcher, Jessica Carignan, Adeline Schneider, Robyn Estes, Amber Mondor, Amber Hathaway, Daniel Norwood, and Kirsten Daley. Third row: Kate Harlan.

Figure 9: Glitter ornaments made by SWA members at the holiday party.
The Women’s Resource Center had posted a flyer about a toy drive to benefit Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance. I thought that this would be a neat project for SWA to participate in and brought the idea up to the group. People seemed receptive and so on Sunday, December 14th Brian, my sister Katie, and I headed over to Target and Kmart to pick out some toys and then brought them to the WRC later in the week.

Pro-Choice Week is probably my favorite event series that SWA hosts. This year I wanted to revamp the programming with four days of new, engaging activities. We planned to do our traditional SWAffles for Choice, but to also have an art gallery during that night. Instead of showing a documentary on abortion, we opted for a popular film that deals with abortion. Since Mabel’s had their Choice and Chocolate Event on the Thursday of Pro-Choice Week, to keep from conflicting with their event, we made buttons during tabling. Lucy came up with the idea of advertising for Choice and Chocolate by attaching info tags about the event to pieces of chocolate, so we had chocolate at all of our tabling. The final event we planned was a reader’s theatre, an event that I have wanted to see SWA put on for years.

We had our first event, the 1 in 3 Art Gallery featuring SWAffles for Choice on Tuesday, January 20th at 6:30 pm. We had thirteen “pro-choice because” posters to display, two collages that I made, another collage, and a sketch by Mariah Curtis. Brian made his famous red velvet SWAffles. At first we had only a handful of people from SWA present, but as soon as the student senate meeting recessed, we were swarmed by senators and ended up running out of waffles. We usually get some people from senate, but I guess being in the room directly across from theirs really boosted the number of people who came.

On Wednesday, January 21st we had a brief SWA meeting at 6. At 6:30 we watched *Dirty Dancing*. We had about eight SWA members in attendance for the film.

Thursday, January 22nd was supposed to be a relaxing day. On Tuesday I designed three button patterns, one saying “pro-choice, pro-feminism, pro-cats” with a picture of Brian’s mom’s cat Calliope, one saying “pro-choice and proud,” and a third saying “I’m pro-choice because” followed by black lines so you could write in your own reason.

Thursday morning I was getting everything ready for tabling when I saw a message from Lucy about an anti-choice group that was planning on staging a protest on the steps of Fogler library at 11:30. It was a little after 8 at this point in time, which meant that we had 3 hours to pull together a counter protest. I posted announcements to my Facebook page and on the UMaine Student Women’s Association Facebook page calling for people to join in a counter protest. Several other SWA members wrote or shared posts as well.

I tabled until time for the protest. I couldn’t find someone to cover the shift during which the protest was happening, so I moved the button maker to the SWA office and left a message on the table encouraging people to take buttons, chocolate, and 1 in 3 swag. By 11:30, we had about seven or eight people ready to protest. I brought up some old signs from the SWA office and then we headed out to the steps of Fogler Library. Several other people ended up joining us. We
had a pretty good turnout given the last minute nature of the protest and we generally had at least as many people as the protestors and many times more. Apparently the protestors had not expected to see counter protestors, or at least that was the way Channel 7 news framed things.

Friday was our final event, the reader’s theatre. Five people came to see the performance. We had five people reading stories: me, Amber Mondor, Kirsten Daley, Eloise Melcher, and Lucy Comaskey. Lucy had to take the bus in and so she could not be there until about 7. I briefly introduced the performance and then called up Abbie Strout from Mabel’s to talk about the organization. After she finished speaking, we began the performance. The four of us present read through our stories. We finished before Lucy arrived, so three of us read through one additional story apiece and then we took a brief intermission until Lucy was able to perform.

We started hosting Feminist Discussion Days during the spring semester. At the end of SWA meetings, we like to talk about various feminist issues, be they in our personal lives or something happening on a national or global scale. Unfortunately, we have so much business to accomplish during meeting time that we rarely get to devote as much time to discussion as we would like. During the fall semester, Addie suggested we set aside a separate time to talk about issues and thus the idea of Feminist Discussion Day came about.

We had our first Discussion Day on Monday, January 26th, 2015. We had a small turnout, just me, Addie, Lucy, and Robyn, but we had a good discussion. We talked about the last minute counter protest we had during Pro-Choice Week and the Maine Campus article on it, stereotypes of feminism, and celebrities and their reactions to feminism. We also discussed body image, focusing on eating disorders and how thinness and healthiness are often conflated in contemporary society, how overweight women are portrayed in the media, etc.

The Vagina Monologues is arguably SWA’s biggest event each year. It requires a tremendous amount of time, planning, and collaboration to pull it off, but it is an excellent fundraiser and can encourage a lot of people who don’t necessarily identify with feminism to think about some of the issues that affect those of us with vaginas.

Jessie Carignan suggested Mariah Curtis as a director and she turned out to be the perfect person for the job. We had the first set of auditions in December and by mid-January had a mostly finalized cast list.22

In addition to the tickets, at our table we sold our classic chocolate vulva pops. They were so popular that Kate had to make three different batches of them, for more than 300 pops in total, and we still ended up selling out. In addition to using the traditional milk chocolate and pink and red vanilla baking chips, we also had dark chocolate mint pops, a “confetti” type, which consisted of white, vanilla flavored chocolate with little flecks of pink, yellow, and blue, and purple colored vanilla flavored pops. Kate even made a few pops with sprinkles in the last batch.

22I had never performed in the show before due to the time it requires, but after making sure that I did not have any exams until after the show, I accepted a monologue, with the caveat that I would get to say, “Where’s Brian?”
We had pictures of vulvas copied from *The Cunt Coloring Book* and crayons so people could decorate them (SWA colored a bunch at the meeting on February 4th). We had fliers for the show at the table as well. We also had some raffle items at the table. While I was looking through old Maine Campus articles on SWA, I saw that in 2003 SWA raffled off a sex toy to raise money for *The Vagina Monologues*. I suggested the idea to Kate and she liked it, so she put together two baskets of sex toys to raffle off. She also brought in an oversized stuffed animal frog to raffle.

The first show took place on Thursday, February 12th. That night was a hectic one. Due to an issue with printing the programs and some miscommunication, the cash box did not arrive at Neville Hall until right before the show was scheduled to begin. However, Brian, Dan, and Lucy worked tirelessly to get everyone their tickets and into the theatre so that we could start the show as soon as possible.

Friday night’s performance went more smoothly. Dan spent much of his day splicing together 210 copies of the program so we could have them at the final show. Brian, Dan, Sarah, Addie, Robyn, and I set up the tables and taped up the vulva coloring pages to display, while other cast members set up the stage. My sister Katie helped Dan run the table while Brian checked peoples’ tickets. We were able to start on time and all of the performances went well. We raised about $2,500 for four very worthy organizations, Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance, Rape Response Services, Mabel’s, and the V-Day Foundation.

We had our second Feminist Discussion Day on Wednesday, February 18th, 2015. We saw an increase in the number of attendees. We discussed many issues, including stay at home parents and the way America society values some degrees, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) degrees, more than others. The discussion was very lively and it was clear that people could have gone on talking for hours.

We held our third Feminist Discussion Day on Wednesday, March 18th, 2015. We had pizza from Pat’s Pizza at this event. Attendance was up again and we had a couple of people from WGS 101 attend for one of their events (they have to attend two events relating to women, gender, or sexuality on campus and report back on it as part of their grade). We talked about abortion and different branches of feminism, among other things.

Abortion Provider Appreciation Day is officially March 10th, but since that generally falls during Spring Break, SWA will host an event after break for this. The 1 in 3 Campaign distributes thank you postcards that people can send to their local abortion provider and so for the past couple of years SWA has had a postcard campaign in honor of Abortion Provider Appreciation Day. On Wednesday, March 18th during the SWA meeting, members wrote out postcards to send to Mabel’s.
Figure 10: Brian Toner making his famous red velvet SWAffles for Choice in preparation for the 1 in 3 Art Gallery.

Figure 11: Reader’s Theatre performers Amber Mondor, Lucy Comaskey, Amber Hathaway, Eloise Melcher, and Kirsten Daley.
Figure 12: Anti-choice protesters (left) and pro-choice counter-protesters on the steps of Fogler on the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade.

Figure 13: Pro-choice counter-protesters.
Figure 14: Robyn Estes, Addie Schneider, Lucy Comaskey, and Amber Hathaway at SWA’s first Feminist Discussion Day.

Figure 15: SWA co-chairs Kate Harlan and Amber Hathaway tabling for The Vagina Monologues.
Figure 16: Cast members of SWA’s 2015 production of *The Vagina Monologues* "passing a kiss" as part of their bow.

Figure 17: Cast members of SWA’s 2015 production of *The Vagina Monologues* from left to right: Kirsten Daley, Meghan Frisard, Eloise Melcher, Brittany Zorn, Jessica Carignan, Amber Hathaway, Gema Wheatley, Kate Harlan, Mariah Curtis, Sam Saucier, Betsey Irish, Lara Peterson, and Sarah Nicols.
Figure 18: SWA’s second Feminist Discussion Day.

Figure 19: SWA’s third Feminist Discussion Day.
Due to the busyness of the spring semester, SWA often overlooks Women's History Month. I thought it would be neat to create an event for Women's History Month this year. Eloise came up with the idea to focus on women at UMaine. I can't remember who came up with the idea to make it into a trivia game, but that seemed like a neat idea and so we went with it. Sarah, Brian, and I put together the trivia questions, pulling them from Sandy Caron’s “Women’s Walking Tour” on UMaine’s website. On Thursday, March 26th at 7 pm we had the event. SWA members Sarah, Eloise, Addie, and Robyn came to the event, as did Brian. I asked the questions and everyone else tried their best to answer them. There was a guy sitting at a table near us who joined in and answered a couple of the questions about women in STEM. Afterward we had a short discussion about women in UMaine’s early history, the way women’s appearances are commented on in inappropriate or irrelevant contexts, and the dearth of women who are not conventionally attractive in movies, among other things. Basically it ended up becoming an impromptu Feminist Discussion Day.

Organization T-shirts are something that we’ve talked about doing in SWA for years, but that we never had the time to do. This year, when someone brought up the idea of having a group T-shirt, we quickly settled on a design, with the slogan “This is what a feminist looks like” on the front and the SWA logo on the back. We decided that we wanted the T-shirts to be purple, the (unofficial?) SWA color. Due to UMaine policies, we had to remove the school name from our logo to be able to print on purple shirts.

Amber Mondor came up with an original design for the shirts on CustomInk. After some discussion, we decided that we wanted to have both fitted and unisex shirt options for the T-shirts so that everyone could have the size that fit them best. Unfortunately, there were not any fitted shirts that would match the unisex shirt Amber had designed. Brian and I had used W. S. Emerson in Brewer for math department T-shirts in the past and had been pleased with their work, so I decided to see what they had to offer. We did end up having to change the color scheme a little bit from the original concept, but the finished shirts came out looking really nice. Brian and I picked up the shirts from Emerson’s on Monday, April 6th and I distributed them at the SWA meeting on Wednesday, April 8th.

During winter break, I met up with Abbie Strout from Mabel’s to discuss collaborating on some events and she mentioned showing the film Vessel. We ended up showing it on Wednesday, April 8th at 6:00 pm. SWA cosponsored the event, along with the Maine Alliance for Reproductive Freedom, of which Mabel’s is a part. They really did most of the legwork for the film showing and discussion; we publicized the event and supplied the computer, but they took care of everything else. We had a good turnout. The WRC was packed.

We had not held The Beautiful Project in 2014, so few of our members had seen how we had done it in the past. We started brainstorming ideas for events before winter break and came up with a long list. Unfortunately, we could not do everything, so the events we ended up doing were the ones people chose to organize themselves. We also ended up throwing the Equal Pay Day bake sale into the mix, since Equal Pay Day fell on the Tuesday of the week we chose for
Our first event was the “Beauty is . . .” photo shoot on Monday, April 13th from 10-2. We had held this event during the 2013 Beautiful Project and Dan Norwood suggested doing it again this year. I had really liked it in 2013 and so he and I coordinated together to organize it. What we did was set up a computer and projector at our table in the Union. As people walked by, we asked them what they thought was beautiful and we would let them pick out words and/or images to represent their notion of beauty. We would then project the graphics onto their shirt and take a picture.

On Tuesday, April 14th we had the Equal Pay Day bake sale. I ended up coordinating this event. Brian made his famous Nutella no bakes, Sarah brought in dark chocolate cranberry oatmeal cookies, Addie made cherry coconut oatmeal cookies, some with chocolate chips and others without chocolate chips, and Kate brought in snickerdoodles and peanut butter cookies. I found some materials from the AAUW about Equal Pay Day in the SWA office and put them out at the table too. We raised $21 from the bake sale to put toward buying menstrual supplies for people living in local shelters.

On Wednesday, April 15th we had our Body Positivi-Tea. In order to reduce the number of separate events we would need to plan, I suggested subsuming our final Feminist Discussion day into the Beautiful Project. To better align it with The Beautiful Project, I suggested using body image and beauty as our discussion topic. Over break I came up with the idea of turning it into a tea social and naming it “Body Positivi-Tea.”

Originally I had wanted to get actual teacups to use for the event. However, I could not find inexpensive teacups to use. Brian suggested making cozies for paper cups that people could decorate to look like teacups and I realized that I could make cardstock handles for the cups to make them resemble teacups even more.

We used the leftovers from the bake sale as snacks for the tea. Brian and I brought in most of our tea collection to go along with it and Brian borrowed an electric kettle from the math professor he is TAing for. Amber Mondor brought in some honey and lemon to go along with the tea. We had a decent turnout and a good discussion. I think this was my favorite event of The Beautiful Project.

On Thursday, April 16th we had our Natural Makeup Workshop. Sarah was in charge of coordinating this event, and she did an excellent job. She found a natural makeup remover recipe online and put together samples that came with the recipe attached. She tried to get free samples from companies to hand out, but none of the companies she contacted were willing to give out free samples.

23 I was also working on a floral bouquet at the time and had to run to Dollar Tree to pick up some artificial flowers to finish it off. While I was there, I spotted some cute floral plates and napkins that I decided to get for the event and I realized I could use my floral bouquet as a centerpiece. I’m a little too pleased with the way my bouquet came out and so I was super protective of it as I was walking in. I was sure that the wind was going to tear it apart, but it managed to hold together.

24 Joshua Zellinsky
We had hosted a similar event at 2011’s Beautiful Project and had run into a similar issue then, so we had ended up buying Burt’s Bees sample packs for people to sample. I suggested to Sarah doing something like that, but having it as a prize drawing instead. She liked the idea and so in addition to the samples, we let people enter their names for a chance to win one of two prize packs.

Friday, April 17th was our “Red Tent” crafting and relaxation day. Originally, we had planned on having a sketch artist that day and also I had suggested making it into a Feminist Pride Day, wherein people would wear purple and/or their SWA shirts to show their support for feminism. Addie was coordinating with one of her sorority sisters, Maire, to be our sketch artist, but at the time I booked the room we weren’t sure when she would be available, so I booked the Senior Skulls Room for the 10-2 block. I then realized that maybe instead of tabling we could have some refreshments and crafts in addition to the sketch artist and just hang out in the room all day. The national 1 in 3 Campaign was also having a Week of Action that week and Lucy had suggested getting a room to display some of the 1 in 3 removable wallpaper the campaign had sent us. It made sense to hang it up in the Senior Skulls Room on Friday while we were having our event. Thus the “Red Tent,” a hodgepodge of various activities, was born.

The “Red Tent” is an event that SWA has had at previous Beautiful Projects and is a day of relaxation, often with lots of refreshments and some crafty activities, which is why I decided to adopt that name for our day. The 3rd Annual UMaine SlutWalk was coming up and I decided to have some supplies to make posters for the SlutWalk. I was the only one who ended up making a sign, but I had fun, so that was nice. We also had some jewelry making supplies, which many people used to make bracelets and chokers. When our sketch artist arrived, there were only SWA people there, so she joined us in making jewelry. People seemed to enjoy themselves and it was a nice, relaxing way to end The Beautiful Project.

The UMaine Women’s Resource Center hosted the Third Annual UMaine SlutWalk on Wednesday, April 22nd, 2015 at noon on the UMaine Mall. A number of SWA members were in attendance, including me, Sarah Nicols, Amber Mondor, Adeline Schneider, Robyn Estes, Jessica Carignan, Lucy Comaskey, and Mariah Curtis.

Around the beginning of April, Kate Harlan suggested hosting a fundraiser to provide people in local homeless shelters with menstrual supplies. We started discussing ideas and someone, I think Cameron Grover, suggested doing a performance of period stories. I believe he also came up with the eventual title, “Period Pieces.” People really liked the performance idea and so we decided to

25Originally I had planned on having some earring making supplies and some collage making supplies. Sarah had used string to put together the natural makeup packets and had left the extra string in one of the SWA tote bags. I saw it when I was putting out supplies and placed it on the table with the beads I had brought in case anyone wanted to use it for something. Addie started using it to make a choker. When Amber M. joined us, she saw Addie’s choker and decided to make a bracelet. Soon the majority of the attendees were making jewelry from Sarah’s string.
go with it.

We held the performance on Thursday, April 30th at 8:15 pm in the North Pod of the Union. On the night of we had five performers, me, Kate, Sarah, Eloise, and Kirsten, and ten audience members. The stories were a combination of ones from our own lives and ones culled from the internet. At the end of the performance we opened it up to the audience, inviting them to share stories, and Patia Jellison and Frances Bateman both contributed stories. The show produced plenty of laughter and everyone involved seemed to have a good time.

Our last event of the year was our end of the semester pizza party. We had our celebration on Monday, May 4th, 2015. While everyone was snacking and relaxing, I presented what I had of the SWA yearbook so far and then brought out some scrapbooking supplies so that people could make their own yearbook pages. Everyone’s pages came out so nicely. Brian read aloud a parody children’s book to everyone while people were working on their yearbook pages. Brian had also brought his Tarot cards and he did a couple of Tarot readings. That was the end of the 2014-2015 year of SWA.
Figure 20: Brian Toner and Daniel Norwood (not pictured) projecting “Beauty is Creativity” onto Amber Hathaway’s shirt.

Figure 21: Body Positivi-Tea goers decorating their “teacups.”
Figure 22: Feminist Pride photo shoot.

Figure 23: Relaxing at SWA’s “red tent.”
Figure 24: Participants at UMaine’s 3rd Annual Slutwalk.

Figure 25: Participants at UMaine’s 3rd Annual Slutwalk.
Figure 26: Participants at UMaine’s 3rd Annual Slutwalk.

Figure 27: Period Pieces performers from left: Frances Bateman, Eloise Melcher, Patia Jellison, Kirsten Daley, Kate Harlan, Amber Hathaway, Sarah Nicols.
Figure 28: SWA’s end of the semester party.

Figure 29: Designing yearbook pages at SWA’s end of the semester party.
4 The 2015-2016 Academic Year

We had our first SWA meeting of the year on August 31st, 2015. Instead of meeting in WRC, as per usual, we met in the FFA Room in the Union. Shortly after arriving, our co-chairs, Kirsten Daley and Adeline Schneider, explained to us the reason for the change of location: the WRC no longer existed.

Longtime WRC director and SWA advisor Sharon Barker retired in August of 2014. Her graduate assistant, Ashley Burns, took over the operation in the interim, but I think Ashley and Sharon’s expectation was that UMaine would hire a replacement director. Ashley then graduated, and I’m not sure who took over the WRC after her, if anyone did. Over the summer, the university eliminated the WRC and moved all of the comfy couches and other furnishings from 102 Fernald Hall into storage. The space was then given to the ADVANCE Rising Tide Center.

One of the major focuses of SWA this year was trying to find a way to reinstate the WRC. We created a subcommittee dedicated to this purpose and hosted meetings several times throughout the course of the semester, with the primary goal of composing a letter to the powers that be asking them to bring back the WRC and stipulating what we would like to see in it. At the close of the academic year, the WRC issue remained ongoing, with no resolution in sight.

On September 2nd, SWA participated in the Student Organizations Fair and distributed information about our group. The following day, SWA hosted an Equali-Tea Social. We had tea and snacks and a discussion about various issues relating to feminism and equality. We had about 40 people in attendance. The FFA Room was completely packed.

The Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine is a Bangor area group “dedicated to developing nonviolent approaches to conflicts”26. I have known Ilze Peterson and Doug Allen, two of the founders of the organization, since I was a child and over the summer I was invited to participate in a visioning meeting for the future of the Peace and Justice Center, to give the perspective of a young activist. I was then contacted to see if SWA would be interested in participating in the End Violence Together Rally, put on by the Peace and Justice Center and many other local activist groups. Five of us, me, Addie Schneider, Robyn Estes, Amber Mondor, and Athena Dilligenti, attended the event. We listened to speakers and then marched across the Bangor-Brewer bridge.

It turned out that one of our original co-chairs, Kirsten, was ineligible to chair the organization during the fall semester, although she resumed her co-chair position in the spring when Addie stepped down to study abroad. During our meeting on September 21st, we elected a new co-chair, Frances Bateman.

In September, the United States Congress tried defunding Planned Parenthood over a highly edited video that insinuated that Planned Parenthood sold fetal tissue for financial gain. The rumor has since been debunked and Planned Parenthood has been exonerated in all investigations that have taken place, but

26Quotation source: P&J Website.
conservative politicians used this as an opportunity to try to eliminate Medicaid reimbursement to this vital healthcare provider. Planned Parenthood organized a national #PinkOut for Planned Parenthood day on Tuesday, September 29th. SWA participated by taking a photo on the steps of Fogler Library of us in pink with an “I stand with Planned Parenthood” sign. Seventeen people turned out for the photo.

SWA held Take Back The Night on October 15th. Renaissance opened with a few songs and members of All Maine Women read their poem. Speakers from Mabel’s, Spruce Run, Rape Response Services, Male Athletes Against Violence, and Athletes for Sexual Responsibility talked about their organizations and the services they offer. Emily Cain was our keynote speaker.

After the speakers, we held our survivor speakout. A number of people came forward to share their stories. We had quite a number of people who stuck around for the march this year, enough so that the people at the back of the marching line had a hard time hearing the people at the front, and vice versa.

MBS Corps hosted their second annual march against domestic violence on October 28th. I was invited by Nory Jones to participate and to bring the event to SWA’s attention. We marched around the mall and then listened to various speakers discuss the importance of ending domestic violence. Mariah and I showed up for the event.

On October 29th, SWA and the Philosophy Club held a joint discussion day. We read an excerpt from Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* beforehand and then discussed it. One of the major focuses of our discussion was how men could use their privilege to support feminism.

In January of 2015, the 1 in 3 Campaign unveiled its play, *Out of Silence: Abortion Stories from the 1 in 3 Campaign*. The play is a series of vignettes depicting various scenarios under which people choose abortion. Campus groups affiliated with the organization were encouraged to host their own productions during the Fall 2015 semester.

In anticipation for the event, we tabled in the Union for several days. At the table, we had a white board and camera and encouraged the people walking by to write why they were pro-choice. We then would take their picture. We got about 40 people to participate, which I think is more than the number of “pro-choice because” fliers we’ve collected for any particular Pro-Choice Week. We posted the photos on Facebook to promote our play.

Mariah Curtis directed SWA’s production of *Out of Silence*. Since it was pulled together last minute, we had a combination of acted scenes and reader’s theatre style pieces. We performed *Out of Silence* on Thursdays, November 5th, and Friday, November 6th at 7 pm in Minsky Recital Hall. Representatives from Mabel’s were available both nights after the performance to talk about the subject material with the audience. On November 9th, we had a pizza party in place of our usual meeting to celebrate our successful production of *Out of Silence*.

The final SWA event of the fall semester was our “‘Tis always the season for consent” tabling event. At our meeting on December 7th, we made hot cocoa
pouches, tied condoms to candy cane wrappers, and made a sign for the event. The cocoa and candy canes were handed out at the table we had in the Union on Thursday and Friday of that week.

This academic year, UMaine extended winter break by one week in order to offer winter semester classes. This meant that we were returning from break the week we typically would have hosted pro-choice week, as we hold it to correspond with the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. We had not made any plans for pro-choice week before break either, so we ended up not having it.

SWA hosted the Vagina Monologues on February 12th and 13th, 2016. Mariah Curtis directed the show again this year. The Friday show was held at 7 pm in Neville and close to 100 people came out to see it. There were two showings on Saturday in Cyrus Pavilion Theater, one at 2 pm and the other at 7 pm. The turnout was a bit lower for these performances, perhaps due in part to the threat of an oncoming snowstorm. The shows raised about $824 and the proceeds were divided between Mabel’s, Spruce Run, and Rape Response Services.

The following week, on Tuesday, February 16th, we had a SWAffles and feminist art gallery fundraiser event. Brian made his famous red velvet waffles along with some plain vegan waffles and people could buy one waffle for $2.00 or two for $3.00. We had the art from last year’s 1 in 3 art gallery and a few new art pieces as well.

We spent our meeting on February 22nd finalizing our letter calling for the WRC’s reinstatement. That was our final meeting before spring break, as many SWA members helped out with the Sex Carnival hosted by the Student Alliance for Sexual Health (SASH) the following Monday.

When we returned from break, we had three projects that we focused our attention on: the Equal Pay Day Bake Sale, the 1 in 3 Week of Artivism, and Beautiful Week (also called The Beautiful Project). During our meeting on April 4th, we made signs for Beautiful Week. The following Monday, instead of having a meeting, members split into several different groups to do baking for the Equal Pay Day Bake Sale. We hosted the bake sale the following day, April 12th, which was Equal Pay Day. We asked for suggested donations of $0.78 for women and $1.00 for men to highlight the discrepancy between women’s and men’s wages. In addition to baked goods, we had informational material that people could take to learn more about wage discrimination.

That whole week we also tabled for the 1 in 3 Week of Artivism. The 1 in 3 Campaign places a lot of emphasis on activism through art. They just released a graphic novel adaptation of five abortion stories. We distributed copies of the graphic novel at the table. We also had craft supplies available for people to create their own abortion related art pieces if they chose. An intern for Mabel’s helped us with tabling on Wednesday.

The following week, April 18th-22nd, we hosted Beautiful Week. On Monday we had a “Beautiful Post-Its” campaign, where, during tabling, we encouraged people to write body positive messages on Post-It notes and stick them at var-
ious locations around the school to brighten peoples’ day\textsuperscript{27}.

During our Monday meeting, we made signs for SlutWalk. Unfortunately, since the WRC does not exist anymore, all of the wonderful signs they had have either been misplaced or destroyed, so we had to start over again. With so many of us working together, though, we were able to make a decent number of signs.

On Tuesday we had our “Beauty is” photo shoot, wherein we asked people what they thought was beautiful and then typed up their message and projected it onto their shirt and took a picture. Due to technical difficulties, we were unable to do the photos for the first couple of hours of tabling\textsuperscript{28}. After those issues were resolved, things went smoothly. About 17 people participated.

Tuesday night several SWA members got together to make natural makeup products to distribute the following day during tabling. In addition to distributing natural makeup samples, Wednesday was also the day of our Body Positivi-Tea. We had reserved a particular room in the Union for the event, but when the schedule was posted, we were not on it and we ended up being left without a room. However, one of the custodians directed us to a room which had been reserved for another group, but none of the members had shown up to. We got settled in, had some snacks, and were well into our discussion when a couple of members of the group showed up. We invited them to join our discussion and they did. Everything worked out well.

On Thursday we had tabling to advertise our final events of the week. Friday was the final day, and it was a very busy one. During tabling, we focused in on the WRC, providing people with information about why we need it and showing them our vision for it. At noon on the mall we hosted UMaine’s 4th Annual SlutWalk. It was our first year holding it on our own, and I think it went well. About 30 people showed up to participate. The mall was packed with people enjoying various Earth Day festivities and awaiting the arrival of the naked green bikers, so we had a huge audience and they were on the whole pretty enthusiastic and supportive. Since neither of our co-chairs were able to be present for the event, I ended up leading the march. I took us through the two traditional laps around the mall and then someone suggested we make our way through the Union, so we did that too. As we were en route to the Union, the naked green bikers made their appearance and we paused to move aside for them and to cheer them on. Later that night, for our final Beautiful Week event, we hosted a screening of \textit{Miss Representation}.

We had our final SWA meeting of the year on May 2\textsuperscript{nd}. It was a pretty laid back meeting. During that time we held elections. Frances Bateman chose to

\textsuperscript{27}This idea had been done as part of the Beautiful Project several times in the past, although I cannot recall which years.

\textsuperscript{28}I wasn’t able to be there to table that morning, but I supplied the computer and camera. However, the computer I provided is a little abnormal, so tabling got off to a rough start. Brian had installed multiple operating systems on it, and Windows 7 is not the default operating system. Linux is. You have to specifically choose Windows during the startup, or else it will boot straight into Linux, and for whatever reason, the particular projector we had refused to recognize the computer when accidentally booted into Linux. However, I stopped by on my way to a lecture to see how things were going and Frances, Olivia, and I were able to get everything straightened out.
continue on as co-chair and Lori Loftin opted to join her. We easily reached consensus for each of the vacancies.
Figure 30: SWA members at the End Violence Together rally from left to right: Amber Hathaway, Addie Schneider, Robyn Estes, Amber Mondor, Athena Dil-ligenti.

Figure 31: #PinkOut for Planned Parenthood on the steps of Fogler Library.
Figure 32: Thursday night Out of Silence cast from left to right: Jessica Carignan, Gema Wheatley, Mariah Curtis, Meghan Frisard, William Bann, Lydia Schneider, Sophie Dow, Rachel Simonds, Amber Hathaway, Daniel Norwood, Sam Saucier, Emily Barnett.

Figure 33: 2016 Vagina Monologues cast.
Figure 34: SlutWalk 2016

Figure 35: SlutWalk 2016
5 The 2016-2017 Academic Year

We had our first meeting of the 2016-2017 academic year on Wednesday, August 31st at 7 pm. Frances Bateman and Lori Loftin were our co-chairs for the fall semester.

The first event we hosted was a protest of Brock Turner's early release from jail. Brock Turner was convicted of sexually assaulting an unconscious woman, but the judge chose to sentence him to only six months in county jail because he was a swimmer at Stanford with a “promising future.” The judge thought a longer sentence would be too hard on him, ignoring the fact that Turner's actions had done irreparable harm to another human being. Turner became eligible for parole after serving only three months and was then released for good behavior. SWA felt that this was a grave miscarriage of justice and we organized a protest.

We held our protest on Friday, September 2nd. About twenty people turned out for the protest, although not everyone was able to come at the same time due to class schedules, so it’s hard to gauge how many people attended in total. A picture from the protest of Athena Dilligenti holding a sign saying, “I have BBQ sauce that’s been in my fridge longer than Brock Turner was in jail” went viral, receiving almost 4,000 reactions on Facebook.

The next event SWA hosted was our Repeal Hyde Week, which we held Monday, September 26th through Friday, September 30th. Friday marked the 40th anniversary of the Hyde Amendment, which bans federal funds from being used to cover abortion care except in cases of rape, incest, or when the pregnant person’s life is in danger. Although it originally applied to Medicaid, it has since been expanded to include healthcare plans for all employees of the federal government, military personnel, Peace Corps members, and residents of Washington DC. The Amendment is not permanent but rather is reintroduced each year as a budget rider. Congress could appeal Hyde by removing it from the budget, but each year they choose to keep it. Many organizations devoted to reproductive rights, including our partner organization the 1 in 3 Campaign, in conjunction with All* Above All (an organization which unites groups and individuals to build support for ending abortion bans), planned events to protest the Hyde Amendment.

We tabled Monday through Thursday, offering information about the 1 in 3 Campaign and the Hyde Amendment. The Repeal Hyde Art Project offers “Repeal Hyde” bird templates that groups can print and color and then display for an easy art gallery. We had these at tabling, as well as some cool swag from the 1 in 3 Campaign and All* Above All, including nail art and sparkly temporary tattoos, plus the usual buttons, stickers, story books, etc. We colored some birds for our display during the Monday SWA meeting.

Friday was our big event, an abortion access art gallery and ice cream social from 1-4 in the Totman Room of the Union. Meghan Frisard, our 1 in 3 coordinator, put together a poster of the birds we’d collected throughout the week. She also put up some of the reusable wallpaper with stories the 1 in 3 Campaign had sent us previously and the graphic novel posters they had sent us. We had
The campaign to reinstate the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) was one of the principal focuses of SWA for the 2016-2017 year. SWA members Frances Bateman, Sam Saucier, and Meghan Frisard attended the Advocates for Youth Conference in mid-September. Frances and Sam returned from Urban Retreat with new strategies for organizing the WRC campaign, which they presented at our meeting on September 26th. An important component of this effort was determining who had the power to change the situation. Sam and Frances identified Dean Dana as someone who would be instrumental in getting the WRC reinstated and began meeting regularly with him. They also stressed that we needed to build community support for our effort and many of our efforts throughout the fall and spring involved reaching out to students, organizations, and sympathetic faculty and asking them to stand with us.

Obtaining a physical location for the WRC became the principal focus and major accomplishment of our campaign this year. The WRC was previously located in Fernald Hall, which is a nice space, but removed from the central parts of campus. We wanted a space in the Union so it would be more accessible to folks who aren’t familiar with the campus layout.

Our vision for the WRC which we established during our early meetings of the semester also includes a staff person who is not a mandated reporter to provide confidential counseling for survivors of rape and sexual assault, as well as perform the administrative tasks necessary to run the center. We want the WRC to offer positions for work study students, as the previous incarnation did. We hope to offer free menstrual hygiene products and contraception, information about sexual and reproductive healthcare services, and outreach programs to the greater community. Some of these ideas did not come to fruition this academic year, but these were the core components of our original vision.

SWA held Take Back The Night on Thursday, October 20th at 5 pm. At our meeting on the Monday prior to the event, we made some purple and teal ribbons which we handed out at tabling on Wednesday and Thursday as well as during the event. We also had the black poster board with the stars again and by the day of the event the “sky” had been filled with sticky note “stars.”

Frances and Lori welcomed everyone to the event and then introduced Renaissance, who gave a lovely performance as usual. Two representatives of All Maine Women read the poem that AMW reads annually. Representatives from the Mabel’s, Spruce Run, Student Alliance for Sexual Health (SASH), and Rape Response Services spoke about their organizational missions and the services they offer. Emily Cain was our keynote speaker.

This year the SWA organizers thought to have tissue packets on hand for the survivor speakout, which was a great idea, as the speakout was once again a very powerful but emotionally charged event. Many survivors came forward and shared their stories. After that we had our candlelight march around campus. We chanted some of the traditional chants but also some new ones our co-chairs
had added to this year’s program. It was rather windy, so folks had to shield their candle flames and the wax ended up dripping in various directions. The weather was very temperate for this time of year, though, so that was nice.

On Thursday and Friday October 27th and 28th, SWA hosted a tabling event with SASH to promote consent. At tabling, members handed out condoms and baked goods.

November 8th was Election Day. Things did not go well that night. November 9th was a hard day for many in the social justice community. On campus, Trump supporters chalked disturbing messages like “Grab her by the election” along the sidewalks.

One thing that I love about SWA is the supportive environment it tends to foster. So many of our members checked in with one another and offered messages and gestures of love and support. Lucy Comaskey and Addie Schneider brought donuts and coffee to give out on campus and set up a message board in the North Pod for people to write expressions of love, support, and encouragement. Amnesty International was hosting a letter writing campaign that day and Lori invited us all to use that space to come together, eat pizza, and process the aftermath of the election with likeminded people.

Early in the semester, we started talking about creating an activist board so that leaders from various campus activist groups could network with one another. There are many student activists on campus, but we tend to only have enough time to focus our energies on a couple of activist groups, even if our ideals align with many of them. The insularity makes it hard for groups to reach beyond their already established communities. One of the hopes of starting the activist board was that it would keep activists better informed of what other groups on campus are doing and provide opportunities for various organizations to work together and support one another. The activist board convened for the first time shortly after the election. Representatives of SWA, SASH, Wilde Stein, and Amnesty International were present at the first meeting, as was reported in our SWA meeting on November 14th. By the end of the semester, Green Team, Students for Climate Justice, the Black Student Union (BSU), and the Student Heritage Alliance Council (SHAC) has also signed on.

Our last major event of the semester was our production of Out of Silence. We started tabling on Monday, December 5th and tabled throughout the week. That Tuesday at 6 pm in Fernald 101, we hosted a showing of the film Vessel with free pizza to continue the conversation about abortion access and build up momentum for our production. Meghan Frisard directed the show, which we performed on Thursday, December 8th and Friday, December 9th at 7 pm in Minsky Recital Hall. We had a decent turnout both nights.

We also hosted another candy canes and consent tabling event. We did some crafting for the event at our final meeting of the semester on December 5th. Tabling for the event was that Thursday.

One event that we’d hoped to have but that we were unable to do due to location and scheduling conflicts was a clothing SWAp. Fast fashion is a major source of environmental pollution and sweatshop labor is often used in clothing production, so a clothing swap seemed like a more ethically sound way to get
some new clothes. The idea was that anyone on campus could bring in clothes that they didn’t want and swap them with other folks. People would receive a certain amount of tickets to exchange for new clothes based on the number of items that they had brought in, or, if they wanted clothes but didn’t have anything to swap, they could buy tickets. We had hoped to use any money collected to buy menstrual supplies for people in local shelters and to donate leftover clothes to the Orono Thrift Shop. Other ideas which did not come to fruition were a Secret Feminist holiday exchange, basically Secret Santa with a feminist bent, SWA stickers, and a weekly feminist coffee hour.

We began the semester with a new co-chair, Sam Saucier, who took over for Frances (who was studying abroad in England), and a new 1 in 3 coordinator, Taylor Cray, who took over for Meghan (who was studying abroad in Australia). Before we had our first meeting, the newly formed Student Activist Board held a Peace, Love, and Pizza event. Friday, January 20th, 2017 was Inauguration Day, and the event provided a way for activist groups to come together in solidarity and discuss their missions and plans for the new year. The event was held in the North Pod at 6 pm. SWA also tabled at the Student Organizations fair on January 25th.

The campaign to reinstate the WRC was still building momentum at the start of the spring semester. Our co-chairs had met with Dean Dana during the fall semester and were continuing meeting with him throughout the spring. Dean Dana assured us that we would have a space for the WRC by the end of the semester. As the semester progressed, our co-chairs began meeting with the provost and other prominent university figures as well. We had launched a petition on change.org and had surpassed 500 signatures by the time of our meeting on January 30th. In November, our campaign had been endorsed unanimously by Student Senate and we continued to reach out to external groups, creating a coalition document for other campus organizations to sign demonstrating their support for the WRC.

Olivia Ruhlin and Sam Saucier co-directed SWA’s 2017 production of The Vagina Monologues. SWA tabled throughout the week of February 6th. In addition to tickets, we sold vulva pops made by SWA members and vulva clay jewelry crafted by Sierra Hillebrand, who donated a portion of the jewelry sales to our fundraising effort. This year student tickets sold for $3, non-student for $5, and vulva pops were 1 for $2 or 3 for $5. The show was supposed to be performed Thursday, February 9th and Friday, February 10th at 7 pm in Cyrus Pavilion Theatre. However, because of the snowstorm, UMaine was closed after 12:30 on Thursday, so we were only able to hold the Friday performance. Nonetheless, on Friday, Cyrus Pavilion Theatre was packed and even with the cancellation, we raised about $730 to be divided between Spruce Run, Rape Response Services, and Mabel’s.

One of the events during the Socialist and Marxist Lunch Series consisted of a student activist panel. SWA was among the student groups represented on this panel. The lunch series event took place on Thursday, March 2nd at 12:30 in the Bangor Room of the Union.

In place of meeting on February 20th, we had organizer training to help us
advance our campaign to get the WRC back. The training started at 4 pm in the Union. Shomya Tripathy of Advocates for Youth, whom our 1 in 3 coordinator works closely with, flew in to provide us with this training. Shomya encouraged us to set concrete deadlines and escalate our tactics, starting with delivering our petition. Our petition had languished a little and we set a goal of garnering 1,000 signatures by the end of March. Erin Butts designed QR codes that people could use to access the petition and she and several other SWA members brought these to WGS classes to hand out. The momentum picked back up and we had over 1,000 signatures by meeting time on March 27th, which we celebrated with a pizza party. On March 31st at noon, several SWA members delivered our petition, pertinent comments on the petition, the coalition document, and newspaper and blog articles on and in support of the WRC to Dean Dana and to Provost Hecker.

On April 3rd, in place of a regular meeting, SWA members met at Sam’s house to bake for the Equal Pay Day Bake Sale. We had the bake sale the following day in the Union. On April 10th, we got our awesome new SWA T-shirts, which Olivia Nichol designed. At our meeting on April 17th, we wore our shirts for a group picture.

Our final major project of the semester was Beautiful Week. On Monday, April 17th we had our “What does beautiful mean to you?” photo shoot, in which our tabling volunteers asked passers by what they thought was beautiful, projected what they said onto their shirt, and took a picture. At our meeting that night, we made natural makeup samples to hand out at tabling. Samantha Bullard and I were in charge of making the coffee facial mask, which was quite a messy endeavor. We passed out the free samples at tabling on Tuesday, along with sustainable beauty information. Our tabling effort on Wednesday focused on the WRC. We also had our Body Positivi-TEA event that day, which was at 1 pm in the Totman Lounge. Being in the middle of the day during the busy part of the semester, a lot of people were unavailable. Sam, Lori, Robyn, and I showed up. We had tea and snacks, but our conversation strayed from body image, although it largely stayed feminism-focused :). On Thursday we had a table about the 1 in 3 Campaign.

The final event of Beautiful Week was SlutWalk. We held UMaine’s Fifth Annual Slutwalk on Friday, April 21st, 2017 at noon on the mall. It was supposed to rain that day, so we weren’t sure if we were going to be able to have SlutWalk then, since we didn’t want to ruin the signs. Outside it was gray, but it wasn’t until a few minutes before noon that a very light sprinkle of rain started. About 30 of us had already assembled, though (the numbers fluctuated throughout the march as people joined in late; I’m not sure how many participated in total), and so we decided to go ahead with the walk anyway29.

It was freezing out! Many of us had chosen outfits that left large swaths of skin exposed to the elements, so the weather situation was less than ideal and we ended up truncating our march. We walked from Fogler Library to the

29It was lucky for me that we chose to continue, because I’d already switched labs with another PHY 122 instructor so I could be there.
black bear statue near the Field House, then back, veering toward the Union. Someone from the news who was probably covering a different event took some video footage of us standing around the bear statue, although as far as I’m aware, the footage never made it onto the news. We looped around the Union and made our way to the area where Earth Fest was going on (the area near the main entrances to the Union) and then cut through the Union. The naked green bikers had postponed their ride due to weather, so we had a much smaller audience than usual, but we still reached some people and hopefully encouraged them to think about rape culture. Also, someone filmed portions of the event and conducted interviews with participants to make a documentary for their EDT 400 class, so hopefully our message will spread to a larger audience through that production.

After SlutWalk, a man who has been marginally involved with SWA in the past posted a rant against SlutWalk to the SWA Facebook group page, in which he completely mischaracterized SlutWalk and argued that women who participate are serving in their own oppression. At least I think that’s what he was arguing; it was difficult to tell. He presented his views in a condescending, self-assured way, even calling his perspective “objective” at one point. He was dismissive of the SWA members who tried to engage with him and it became apparent that he was not interested in having a conversation but rather wanted to foist his views on others. He was banned from the group page and his outbursts (he private messaged several members in addition to his rant in the group) became a topic of conversation at our last meeting.

We had our final meeting of the school year on May 1st. We had elections and were able to come to consensus without any debate or dissent. Lori elected to stay on as co-chair and Meghan Frisard will be joining her in the fall. Taylor will remain our 1 in 3 coordinator. Sarah O’Malley was elected secretary, Cassandra Dechaine treasurer, Ashlee Atchinson historian, and Kirsten Daley PR chair. After our meeting we went to SHAC’s ice cream social, where there was a pinata which several SWA members bludgeoned.

During our final meeting we also settled on new name for our organization that better represents our inclusion of and commitment to people of marginalized gender identities. At an earlier meeting, on September 26th, 2016, we discussed the possibility of changing SWA’s name. I think the proposed name was something along the lines of the Gender Equity Coalition. People had mixed feelings about the name change. Some raised concerns about this prospective name conflating our work with what Wilde Stein, the campus LGBTQ+ group does. Another concern was that by removing the ‘women’ from the equation, it might embolden men to step in and try to take over the organization. Another perspective offered was that the name itself was less of an issue than our actions; if we wanted marginalized individuals to feel at home in our organization, we should do more to meet their needs. We did not reach a consensus at that time and the topic fell off the radar for a little while. We started discussing naming possibilities again toward the end of the semester. We were able to come to consensus on the name The Feminist Collective, which better represents our organizational values and also addresses some of the concerns that
other prospective names raised.

On Thursday, May 4th, SWA was given Room 227 in the Memorial Union for the WRC. We still have a lot to do in the upcoming years to be able to serve the UMaine community in the way that we hope to, but it was awesome to see that our hard work is beginning to pay off. The WRC will probably be volunteer run by SWA for next year, but hopefully sometime soon we’ll be able to secure funding and a staff person to run it. One of the biggest obstacles we face is getting a staffer who is not a mandated reporter; we’ll need someone who is not employed by the University to fill that role. We still have a long road ahead of us, but I can’t wait to see where next year takes us.

Here are some projects and ideas that we discussed during meetings but didn’t fully flesh out during the spring semester. One effort that we started working on was a pregnancy and parenting subcommittee. Pregnant students and students who are parents have few resources available on campus and we want to make sure that their needs are being addressed. We talked with the president of Commuter and Nontraditional Students (CANS) and she was receptive to the idea of working with us, but we didn’t make a ton of progress on this front this semester. We were hoping to have a Pregnancy and Choice Advocacy Training with Abbie Strout from Mabel’s, but we postponed the event due to low projected attendance. We also discussed the possibility of folks getting doula training to be able to better advocate for pregnant students. We’d like to make pregnancy assistance a service of the WRC once we get it operational. We were approached by several organizations about collaborating on a tampon drive, but this didn’t end up happening either. Two ideas we had for the Beautiful Project that didn’t make it into the event this year were a multicultural fashion show and an event focusing on how beauty ideals affect women of color more than white women.

At each meeting, during check in our co-chairs asked us a check in question. Thanks to our secretary (SWAcretary?) Delaney Woodford, many of these check in questions have been preserved in our meeting minutes. Here are some of the check in questions we answered:

- If you were a fruit, what fruit would you be?
- Favorite thing about fall.
- Plans for and experiences over various holidays and breaks (Summer Break, Fall Break, Thanksgiving, Winter Break, Spring Break, Easter).
- What TV show are you watching right now?
- What’s your favorite floor of Fogler Library?
- If you were on death row, what would you choose for your final meal?
- What’s your favorite pizza topping?
- A funny/interesting story from high school.
This concludes the history of our organization under the name the Student Women’s Association. I can’t wait to see what The Feminist Collective will accomplish in the coming years!
Figure 36: SWA members and friends on the steps of Fogler protesting Brock Turner’s early release.

Figure 37: Renaissance performing at the 2016 Take Back the Night.
Figure 38: The cast of SWA’s 2016 production of Out of Silence.

Figure 39: Participant’s in UMaine’s 5th Annual SlutWalk on the steps of Fogler Library.
Figure 40: Participant’s in UMaine’s 5th Annual SlutWalk at the black bear statue near the UMaine Field House.