

Senior Project: Gender Equity Center's Galentine's Day

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Cal Poly's Dean of Students is a department on campus that houses several programs which work to promote student and staff leadership, advocacy, inclusivity, and diversity, as well as create community in and around events, clubs, and organizations. One of the most important programs within The Dean of Students is the Cross Cultural Centers; which is home to three centers that advocate solidarity and space for marginalized groups on campus: the Multicultural Center, Pride Center, and the Gender Equity Center. The Gender Equity Center was created when Cal Poly introduced a women's center called Women's Programs in 1994, making it the last of the California State Universities to do so. Since that time, the center has shared its programming and space with Cal Poly's sexual assault advocacy program Safer. It also adopted the title of Gender Equity Center in 2011, was united under the Cross Cultural Center umbrella in 2013, and received its very own office/lounge in 2014. While its history is brief, the GEC has kept to its mission of empowering women-identified and non-binary students by fostering a safe and educational community on campus through facilitation, dialogues, and event programming covering intersectional feminist and womanist ideals.

The GEC is run by a program coordinator, a grad assistant, five student assistants, and four student interns with different backgrounds and interests, but who all share the desire to empower women-identified and non-binary students on campus. This empowerment is achieved through two mechanisms. The first is through providing a safe place within the GEC office/lounge for students to study and socialize. The second is brought about via the planned events and dialogue groups that the GEC hosts throughout the school year. The discussion groups include Gatherings, in partner with the Multicultural Center, Queer Women Wednesdays, in partner with the Pride Center, and the upcoming Women in Athletics group starting spring

2018. Along with the weekly dialogue groups are several small and large events hosted throughout the year. These events include the annual student written, produced, and performed Original Women's Narratives (OWN), Movie Nights, Women in STEM Panel, and Galentine's Day.

This year, as one of the Gender Equity Center's student interns, I was appointed the position of event planner and point lead on the 2018 Galentine's Day event. Galentine's Day is an annual event hosted on February 13th. It was created around the popularity of the fictitious holiday characterized in NBC's 2009-2015 program Parks and Recreation. In the show sensationalizes Galentine's Day as a day where "ladies celebrate ladies" and friendship rather than romantic love. As a GEC event, Galentine's Day focuses on a specific theme and topic for event participants, whereby providing a forum for students to connect while spending quality time with one another. As the point lead it was my job to successfully execute an entertaining, safe, and empowering event for students while showcasing the role of the Gender Equity Center on Cal Poly's campus.

Methods: The Three Phases of Planning the Event

As one of the newest members to the Gender Equity Center staff for the 2017-2018 academic school year, I was eager to begin work on my first project. The logistical parameters I was instructed to work around were its location in the University Union room 221 and a scheduled time of 6-9 pm on February 13th. I begin by selecting an event theme with auxiliary craft activities and decorations. I was to organize event speakers, recruit volunteers, place catering orders, and spearhead all modes of advertising. Planning for Galentine's Day began in October and continued up to the event's start time.

In order to organize the planning over this long period of time I consistently had to revise and update the timeline plan and to-do lists. The initial timeline separated tasks into three phases in order to facilitate a smooth execution. Tasks in phase one were to be completed by the end of Fall Quarter, while tasks in phase two were to be completed a week before the event. The third was event-day tasks and post event reflection with feedback via survey. Organizing the event planning into the three separate phases provided flexibility to spend equal amounts of time on the different tasks; thereby reducing conflict in deadlines.

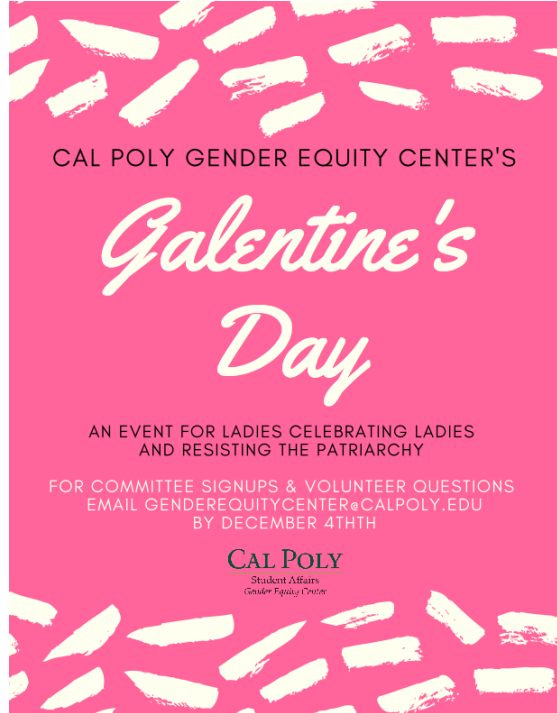
Phase One

The first phase of planning was arguably the most crucial time when planning Galentine's Day. The time was used to ask questions, organize thoughts and ideas, find volunteers, and prepare everything for my return to campus Winter Quarter. The first task of this phase was to come up with the event theme. Aligning with the mission of the GEC, Galentine's Day is meant to unify and empower students while providing a supportive and comfortable environment. Past Galentine's Day events have shared themes such as "Body Positivity" and being "A Cal Poly Goddess." Considering these past themes I wanted this year to capture the essence of being and taking care of one's self. It was my intent for the event to provide attendees the forum to think about which aspect of being a women-identified or non-binary student that makes them feel most powerful. My initial theme idea was "Existence is Resistance," shaped around the idea of showing what Intersectional Feminism and resisting the Patriarchy might look like for an individual. This theme's intent was meant to focus on how the roll of different identities continue to shape us as individuals and how the simple act of existing is one's greatest way of showing resistance to systems of oppression. As a self-identified radical intersectional feminist, who takes the time to actively learn about systems of oppression, the theme "Existence

is Resistance” seemed perfectly suited. However, after discussing the event plan with the GEC staff, it was decided that a slightly more relaxed, but equally empowering theme, was in order. Ultimately, a theme of “Self love/Care and the Power of saying No,” was selected. This theme allowed the event to still focus on individual empowerment, but through the concept of identifying and putting one’s own physical, mental, and emotional health first.

Phase one was continued by selecting event volunteers outside of the Gender Equity Center. It was important to find volunteers that had little to no prior experience working with or attending GEC events, but instead had an interest in becoming involved. The more outside people working on the event the farther its influence could travel. In order to find volunteers I advertised the event and the positions that needed filling. Required positions were marketing/event outreach, decorations/food, and event setup/cleanup. Advertisements included a flyer created using the free online design site Canva. The site has access to hundreds of free flyer, postcard, business card, and invitation templates. The flyer included GEC contact information through the email, genderequitycenter@calpoly.edu, and a committee signup deadline by December 4th. Once the flyer was designed and printed dozens were posted around campus on classroom and department bulletin boards, in addition to being emailed to University Housing and various clubs that I am associated with. By December I had received four responses from students of various grades and academic backgrounds all interested in becoming more involved with the GEC and with Galentine’s Day. Ultimately, two of the four interested parties volunteered in some capacity. In specific, a fourth year business major helped by marketing the

event amongst Panhellenic/Sorority clubs on campus. In addition, a first year parks and



recreation major helped with making decorations and setup on the day of the event. Their assistance with the event was helpful and allowed me to focus my time on other tasks.

As Fall Quarter and phase one of planning was coming to an end I was confident with what had been completed to this point. The event theme, a panel of organized volunteers, a basic outline of activities and arts and crafts, and a menu were set into motion. This brought us to the holiday break where I had time to fine-tune the specifics of the

event.

Phase 2

The first week of Winter Quarter began the six week mark before the event. The next six weeks is where the bulk of the physical labor was initiated. This included the designing and making of decorations and fliers, ordering and confirming food orders, and deciding on presenters. One-on-one meetings with the GEC Coordinator were used to organize weekly deadlines in order to keep track of tasks. This helped with the overall organization and time management of the workload into weekly assignments. The first of these weekly assignments was to consolidate and place an order for all needed supplies. This included decoration and craft materials, photo booth supplies, and food. With help from my decorations volunteer and searches on Pinterest boards, I found several Valentine's Day themed decorations that were cheap and

easy to recreate. The goal of the decorations was simplicity while being cute and fun. Execution included paper heart chains hung around the room and props for students to hold while in the photo booth. Props consisted of accessories, hearts, and flowers printed on multicolored card stock paper attached to bamboo skewers. For the crafts I decided on homemade backpack pins, personal paint canvases, and coloring pages. The pins were black and white letter beads that could be rearranged into different names and sayings and which were glued onto pin backings. The 4x4 personal canvases were provided so that attendees could express themselves individually with paint. The coloring pages were photocopied from a Galentine's Day themed book purchased from Barnes and Nobel, which included supportive sayings and pictures surrounding self love and references to the Parks and Recreation TV program. Ordering the materials consisted of creating a list of all the supplies, and a web link which needed to be sent to the Dean of Students Administrative Support Coordinator. This individual makes all of the Cross Cultral Center's official online orders. The official orders were:

- **Letter beads for necklaces, bracelets, and pins** (1 order = 400 beads, \$7.99 each)
- **String for necklaces and bracelets** (1, \$7.59 each)
- **Pin backings to glue beads on** (100 in each order, \$8.39 each)
- **Pink construction paper** (100 sheets per ream, \$14.84 each)
- **Red construction paper** (1, \$8.29 each)
- **White construction paper** (1, \$7.39 each)
- **Magenta construction paper** (1, \$6.50 each)
- **Galentine's Day coloring book to photo copy from** (1, \$8.29 each)
- **Card stock for making the Photo Booth props** (1, \$15.39 each)
- **Bamboo Skewers for making photo booth props** (1, \$4.96 each)

- **Mini canvases for the takeaway art project of painting a nice self care note to yourself**

(item package quantity is 12 for \$6.96 or 96 for \$49.96)

- **String for paper decorations that will hang** (1, \$6.99 each)

An exception to this was the catering order which I placed myself. As a staff member I am provided access to the Cross Cultural Center's purchase order debt card that is used to place food orders and make other small department purchases. It was my intent to have the food theme connect to the popular Parks and Recreation TV show as much as possible in hopes of drawing more attention to the event. In the NBC program the main character is widely known for her love of breakfast food, specifically waffles. With this in mind, a decision was made to go with the concept of chicken and pink waffles. Supplies already on hand were used to prepare the mix and make the waffles while a catering order from Popeyes Chicken on Foothill Blvd was placed. Popeyes provided a catering deal that fit perfectly with our needs of feeding approximately fifty people and included food, serving dishes and utensils. The catering order was placed two weeks before the event and had a pickup date of February 13th.

A second weekly deadline was designing advertising materials and event give aways. Once again, I utilized free templates from the online design site Canva to create materials. I discussion I had with my Coordinator included the idea of using postcards and business cards that had supportive and self love quotes as a giveaway. These would not only be reflective of the Galentine's Day event theme, but also as a promotional item of the Gender Equity Center as a whole. To create the cards I researched self love and care quotes from popular woman identified feminist authors, actresses and performers. The original list included quotes from Bell Hooks, Madonna, Eleanor Roosevelt, actress/activist Samira Wiley, and others. Using Canva's templates to highlight the quotes I was able to rearrange the graphics in an appealing way. The business

cards displayed the phrases “I am Amazing” on one side and “I am Amazing because…” on the reverse. Unfortunately, the business cards did not get printed in time for the event as their intended purpose was to be passed around and then filled out by the students who attended. A key factor in designing the postcards was that they were not only useful for Galentine’s Day, but useful for future GEC events as well. I ordered a hundred of each card for a total of six hundred cards that were passed out when advertising the event in the University Union Plaza. The cards were also distributed during the event and at the GEC’s March event Original Women’s



Narratives.

SELF-LOVE IS REALLY A
FOUNDATION FOR
EVERYTHING, AND
HOWEVER YOU PRACTICE
OR EXPRESS THAT IS SO, SO
IMPORTANT.
- SOLANGE KNOWLES

CAL POLY
Student Affairs
Gender Equity Center

"Do not expect to receive
the love from someone else
you do not give yourself."
-Bell Hooks

CAL POLY
Student Affairs
Gender Equity Center

BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL BEAUTIFUL

CAL POLY
Student Affairs
Gender Equity Center

"IF YOU DON'T LOVE
YOURSELF, HOW IN THE
HELL YOU GONNA LOVE
SOMEBODY ELSE?"
-RUPAUL

CAL POLY
Student Affairs
Gender Equity Center

I am Amazing

I AM *Amazing* BECAUSE:

CAL POLY
Student Affairs
Gender Equity Center



Two different versions of the event flyer were used during advertising. One version was created using the same template used for the volunteer signup flyer. The second was created by the Dean of Students marketing team. As a part of the Cross Cultural Centers under the Dean of Students, the GEC has access to all of their marketing services and resources. Dean of Students employs Graphic Design majors to create flyers for all programming, taking into consideration event theme and target audience. For Galentine's Day an image of the Galentine's Day founder, Parks and Recreation lead character Leslie Knope, was used. The flyer was chosen because it was a recognizable image to students and therefore would capture their attention about the event.

After all orders were placed and advertising was planned and executed, it was time to decide what the timeline of the day's event would entail. This event, unlike larger presentations and shows, was not meant to have a rigorous schedule that forced students onto a preplanned

path. The intent was for participants to feel relaxed and welcomed and to enjoy event activities.

The timeline was as follows.

- **6:00** - people come in, drawing pages and snacks
- **6:30** - introduce/welcome everyone to the event, present topic
- **6:30-7:00** - Speaker 1
- **7:00-7:30** - arts and crafts, more time to hang, color, eat, and take pictures
- **7:30-8:00** - Speaker 2
- **8:00-9:00** - arts and crafts, more time to hang, color, eat, and take pics and clean up
- **9:00** - event officially ends

Creating this structure allowed students to leisurely participate in the presentations and dialogues while continuing to participate in crafting and collect food. Event presenters were provided this plan so that they could prepare according to the event's structure. Ultimately the search for presenters was easier than initially planned for. Considering the event theme, my intent was to find presenters that would mirror the message of self care, and that it is different due to individual expression. The first presenter selected was GEC Coordinator Kirsten Vinther. Her presentation covered the concept of setting boundaries and limitations on what one wants to do and not do as a form of taking care of oneself. To find a second presenter I reached out to a Cal Poly Administration faculty employee and the Cal Poly PULSE (Peers Understanding Listening Supporting Education) Health Education program. While the Administration employee declined my request, a member from PULSE replied positively. A student who works at PULSE's EROS (Educational Resources On Sexuality) team expressed interest in collaborating with the event because they had a presentation they thought would go well with the theme. The presentation they had planned was on Masturbation as a form of self love/care and how taking

care of one's own sexual health is important. I liked the idea of this presentation because of how it connected with the theme, in addition to having another campus program get exposure at a GEC event. When confirming with EROS I was instructed by my staff members to remind them about using inclusive and encompassing language and dialogue in their presentation. This entailed asking them to talk about masturbation and how it's interpreted by cis-gendered (gender matches assigned sex organs) and trans and non-binary individuals who might attend the event. It was my job to ensure that the space created by the event was educational, empowering, and safe for all student attendees. With the presentations set, the timeline made, and all orders placed and the second phase was complete.

Phase 3: Week of the Event

Phase three consisted of the final organization and execution of the tasks that needed to occur the week of the event. Confirmation of orders and creating last minute decorations was of top priority. Fifty-five inch head shots of famous cis and trans women and non-binary feminists were printed on excess card stock and hung around the event room in an effort to add more color. Like the postcards, these pictures will continue to serve a purpose in other GEC events, such as decoration in an OWN advertising campaign. When reserving event rooms through Cal Poly's ASI, groups are permitted thirty minutes before and after the scheduled event in order to set and cleanup. I used the hours before 5:30 to prepare all event materials and assign roles to scheduled volunteers and staff for a quick and easy setup. Two GEC staff members were assigned to pick up the catering order while the rest of the volunteers decorated the event room, setup the photo booth and the craft stations, rearranged furniture, and displayed flyers for other Cross Cultural

events. Upon completion of these tasks, the doors were opened at 6 pm to those waiting to attend.

As the event began students entered and immediately engaged with the activities by sampling the food and crafts. Students arrived in small groups and as individuals. There were a total of thirty student signatures on the sign-in sheet. I addressed and welcomed the crowd after 30 minutes by prefacing the night's theme and introducing the first presenter. Kirsten's presentation on boundaries was received well. She led an engaging conversation with the room and encouraged participation via time to reflect on and then share individual interpretations of boundary setting. The second presentation on masturbation also fared well with the attendees, as it was made slightly more interactive by the EROS presenter. After a short discussion on masturbation as a self-care tool, the presenter passed out a comprehensive checklist of individual and partner sexual actions and habits that attendees could review and fill out. The activity was designed to encourage participants to think more deeply about what they do and do not like a sexual experience to consist of. This exercise encourages individuals to develop more confidence in knowing what works for their own body. The activity was both entertaining and liked by participants. It was clear throughout the event that students appeared comfortable because they were permitted to engage in the activities at their leisure.

Student participation began to dwindle around 8:30 pm, allowing for a more concentrated wrapup of the event. Volunteers and GEC staff assisted with cleanup of the event space and returned materials to the GEC office. The next step in Phase three was to prepare for the evaluation process and reflection.

Results

An important aspect of putting on a Cross Cultural event is ensuring that there is an opportunity to contact event attendees with future event information and volunteer opportunities. It is a way for the centers to track the amount of traffic at events and to make sure that the students remain connected with our Center's programming and community. The sign up sheet from the Galentine's Day event was used to email a post-event Survey Monkey to all attendees. In order to get a more positive response on the survey I included my role at the Gender Equity Center in addition to my senior project work on the event. They were informed that the survey was not mandatory but that their feedback would be helpful in improving future events. The survey itself consisted of seven questions that asked the attendees to rate and comment on the event and its eventual improvement. The survey questions were:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being great), please rate your overall experience of attending the event. (sliding scale)
2. How did you hear about the event? (select option)
 - Flyer
 - Social Media: GEC Instagram/FaceBook Post
 - Word of Mouth
3. Which Arts & Crafts option did you participate in? (select option)
 - Letter Pins
 - Painting
 - Coloring Pages
4. Which Presentation did you watch/participate in? (select option)
 - Kirsten - Boundaries
 - PULSE/EROS - Masturbation

5. Which presentation did you enjoy more and why? (comment/text box)
6. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being great), how would you rate the atmosphere and location of the event? (sliding scale)
7. Do you have any other comments, questions, or suggestions for next year's event?
(comment/text box)

Of the thirty surveys distributed twelve were received back. Question one asked attendees to score the event on a scale of 1 to 10. The mean score was 8.7 with a range 7.8 to 10. Question two asked through which of the several marketing tactics did they hear about the event. Thirty percent responded with social media posts on the Gender Equity Center's official Facebook and Instagram accounts, fifty percent responded with flyers around campus, and ninety percent responded with word of mouth. Question three asked in which of the arts and crafts activities did they participate. Forty percent selected painting, sixty percent selected letter pins, and seventy-five percent selected coloring pages. Question four asked which of the two presentations they listened to, participated in, or otherwise engaged. Eighty percent responded with Kirsten's presentation on boundaries and ninety percent responded with the PULSE presentation on masturbation. Question five asked participants to write about which presentation they enjoyed most and why, in order to gain a better idea of how the presentations were received. Overall, participants claimed to enjoy both presentations equally because they were about topics that they either don't think about on a regular basis or wouldn't consider related to the topic of self care. Participants agreed that both presenters did a good job in introducing the topic and facilitating the conversation within the room. Question six asked to rate the atmosphere of the event on a scale of 1 to 10. The mean score was a 9.5 with a range of 7.1 to 10. Question seven asked for final comments, concerns, or ideas. The prevailing feedback was that participants wished that

there had been some type of ice breaker allowing introduction of individuals. Thereby making it a more personable experience.

Overall, the feedback received on the survey was positive and participants appeared to enjoy what the event had to offer. Upon reflection, I believe the event's success can be attributed to the detailed structure and my planning, in addition to assistance from volunteers and fellow GEC staff members. Through my experience in leadership activities and extracurriculars in both high school and college I became familiar with the enormity of work that planning such an event would entail. However, in my new position at the GEC I am still becoming accustomed to their established events overall. I was able to rely on input and guidance from fellow staff members in helping to make this Galentine's Day event successful. While remained similar to past year's versions I was able to bring a more unique power of individualism.

Conclusion

The role of the Cross Cultural Centers is to create events and spaces for marginalized and underrepresented groups on campus. Whether through the Multicultural, Pride, or Gender Equity Center, students of all backgrounds and identities can find community events to connect with. On campus it is the GEC's job to bring programming that unites and highlights the identities of female and non-binary students. One of the most important ways of doing this is through events that celebrate friendship and self love. This year's Galentine's Day event was executed in way that showed this quite positively. Through food, crafts, music, and productive dialogue, Galentine's Day 2018 captured the essence of promoting gender equity at Cal Poly.

