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Gender Equity Center Bill
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WHEREAS, this initiative was brought forward thanks to the community organizing of former ASWC Secretary (2017-2018) Hannah Martin,

WHEREAS, a Gender Equity Center was discussed in depth among the ASWC Senate Table throughout the Spring 2018 semester,

WHEREAS, the discussion of a Gender Equity Center was discussed in depth at the following ASWC Senate meetings:

- I. On February 26th, 2018, where it was stated by former Sec. Martin: “I have done some research on Women's Centers at similar institutions and have found that out of 5 institutions, 3 had either a Women's Center or Gender Equity Center. If they did not have a Gender Equity Center or Women's Center, they had a well established Gender Studies minor. So we have some work to do. I think a Gender Equity Center would be a better move because it would be a space for LGBTQ advocacy and different gender identities. I also found that the Gender Equity Center at Pomona College was started by a student initiative! A student wrote a letter to admin because the climate on campus was difficult for women and they had a center within a year. Is anyone getting ideas? Because I'm getting ideas.”
- II. On March 12th, 2018, where it was stated by former Pres. Bryceton Scurr: “Meeting with Dean Perez earlier this afternoon. Discussed gender equity center, recognizing student leaders... Dean Perez has spoken with President Herzberger, whom has not heard anything about such a center in her time here. However, they are open to continued conversations and hearing something in the form of a bill. Dean Perez suggested it would probably gain the most traction with a new college president. With a new president, there is a strategic planning process, and a gender equity center could be born from that.”
- III. On April 7th, 2018, where it was stated by former Sec. Martin: “I met with Dr. Kaufman and she passed the statement on the Gender Equity Center on to the faculty senate-board. They have suggested some questions focusing on where resources will come from for this center and who should be involved. At their suggestion, I will be meeting with Jenny Guerra this Thursday. Next I plan on meeting with HR and Dean of Students administrative members.”

- IV. On April 30th, 2018, where it was stated by former Sec. Martin that a task force will be created and will consist of “Grace Reeder, Yvan Monreal, Kole Joachim, Nick Segura, Sam Johnson, Emily Olague, Detrick Manning and any students that are interested!”
- V. In various other meetings, like throughout consultations with constituents, it became apparent that during the discussion of establishing a Gender Equity Center occurred multiple times throughout 2017-2018 ASWC Senate Table.

WHEREAS, in meeting with Vice President of Student Life, Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee, Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities and Lead Title IX Investigator, Director of Campus Safety, Executive Director of Human Resources, and executive members and/or staff involved in the Women’s Leadership Association, Feminist Coalition, and the Trans Task Force, a general consensus has been established that a Gender Equity Center is needed and would address many concerns about the safety and rights of students, faculty, and staff,

WHEREAS, Audre Lorde stated “without community, there is no liberation” and that it is important for there to be designated safe spaces for our campus community to access without fear,

WHEREAS, there are detrimental effects associated with experiencing or witnessing acts of sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV) and without adequate care and resources, these can have adverse effects on a person’s ability to thrive in an academic environment,

WHEREAS, Title IX requires schools to “proactively prevent and respond to claims of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence, retaliation, discrimination, and have an impartial and prompt process for investigating and adjudicating reported cases” and that the primary location for a student at Whittier College to access resources relating to sexual and gender-based violence is through administrative facilities,

WHEREAS, having a primary location, such as a Gender Equity Center (GEC), for students to access resources related to gender-based issues such as sexual and domestic violence, women’s empowerment, and women’s health, as well as violence against men, and the rights of those of LGBTQIA+, would be provided by a Gender Equity Center and would improve accessibility to those resources,

WHEREAS, a large majority of college campuses have locations similar to a Gender Equity Center, and Whittier College is demonstrably behind the curve when it comes to providing accessible resources relating to issues of gender-based discrimination and violence,

WHEREAS, we believe Whittier College administration should dedicate increased resources and access to these issues,

WHEREAS, the HEDS Sexual Assault Climate Survey from the 2015-2016 school year shows that a large portion of students, primarily those identifying as female, are unaware of Whittier College’s confidential resources for sexual assault and where to locate them on campus, thus demonstrating the need for a centralized location that provides these resources,

WHEREAS, having the office of the Title IX lead investigator and coordinator located in the Dean of Students office, meaning students, in order to access important resources pertaining to their trauma, have to enter administrative buildings, may hinder many students from seeking the help they need,

WHEREAS, Gender Equity Centers on other college campuses provide the following:

- I. Penn State (Student Affairs): “supports students who have been impacted by sexual violence, relationship violence, stalking, harassment, and other campus climate issues. GenEq staff provide education, advocacy, referrals, and crisis intervention/support counseling. All services are free and confidential.”
- II. Occidental College: “The mission of the Center for Gender Equity is to address the needs of women, men, non-binary, agender, and transgender members on campus by providing support, advocacy, and programming that promotes awareness, personal empowerment, mutual respect, and equity. The CGE provides a gathering space for all students at Occidental College to study, relax, plan activities, and receive resources on issues regarding gender, sexuality, identity, and the diverse community of Occidental.”

WHEREAS, it is the hope that the creation of a Gender Equity Center on campus would function in a manner similar to some of the examples provided,

WHEREAS, creating a safe space on campus for students to access resources relating to gender issues would improve the availability of resources provided to students and could potentially reduce the occurrence of sexual and gender-based discrimination or violence that occurs on the Whittier College campus,

WHEREAS, it is the hope that a Gender Equity Center could also serve as the primary location for hosting events related to gender issues, such as those put on by groups on campus like the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI), and the Violence, Intervention and Prevention (VIP) Club,

WHEREAS, the ASWC Senate will have a significant sum of money in its Reserve Account, which is intended for campus improvement projects following the end of the academic year and could provide funding for some of the start-up costs associated with a Gender Equity Center and that this initial funding could help push this initiative to the forefront of priorities needed to be addressed by Whittier College,

WHEREAS, the ASWC Senate provides a significant amount of funding to initiatives that improve the campus, some of which should already be provided by the college, and it is important to recognize that student initiative is often the driving force in initiating positive change on campus,

WHEREAS, Whittier College is lacking when it comes to providing the necessary resources that would help reduce the occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence or discrimination on campus,

LET IT BE RESOLVED, that a Gender Equity Center would be a substantial additional improvement to the campus,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the persistence of forms of violence and discrimination on the basis of sex will continue to exist on campus until Whittier College makes a dedicated commitment to providing resources and funding to address this issue,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the current ASWC Senate will provide \$25,000 of funding dedicated to the start-up costs associated with providing a Gender Equity Center on campus,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the money allocated to the start-up costs shall not be used for any other reason,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that future ASWC Senate tables will continue to dedicate time and resources to establishing and maintaining a Gender Equity Center on campus, and will work with the necessary departments to ensure that this initiative is followed through to completion,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that both current and future ASWC Senate tables should not be the sole financial provider in establishing a Gender Equity Center on campus, and that the administration, and the Board of Trustees, will work with the ASWC Senate in providing or securing additional funding for the establishment of a Gender Equity Center,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Bill is just the beginning of the discussions related to starting a Gender Equity Center, and that it is the hope of the ASWC Senate that by providing funding for the initial start-up costs associated with running a Gender Equity Center, relevant parties will recognize the importance of this issue and contribute substantial funding to ensure that a Gender Equity Center will be established at Whittier College,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that starting a Gender Equity Center should not just be an ambitious aspiration but a goal that has an end-date in mind, and therefore that by the start of the 2020-2021 academic year, a Gender Equity Center will have the necessary funds to start providing resources and care to the Whittier College community,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that a Gender Equity Center task force should be established and consisting of ASWC Senate table members, students, faculty, staff, appropriate administrators, gender advocates, and other necessary parties, and that this task force will meet monthly throughout the 2019-2020 academic year to ensure that the initial funding provided by ASWC Senate to start a Gender Equity Center is used appropriately,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that a space study be conducted so as to assess the spaces on campus that could potentially host a Gender Equity Center,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Advocacy Committee of ASWC Senate will be the main committee on ASWC Senate responsible for ensuring that this funding is used properly,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED, that there a copy of this initiative be sent to the following:

Linda Oubré, President of Whittier College

Jim Dunkleman, Vice-President of Finance

Jeanne Ortiz, Interim Dean of Students

Dean of Students Office

Tim Anderson, Office of Advancement

Eva Sevcikova, Office of Advancement

Alex Popescu, Director of Annual Giving

Cynthia Joseph, Human Resources

Sal Johnston, Chair of the Faculty/Interim Dean of Faculty

Board of Trustee members