

May 2015 was a busy time for the Women's Center staff and UofL students as they travelled abroad to Morocco and within the states: University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland; Washington, D.C. and Alexandria, Virginia. UofL students Yomna Amer and Mahogany Mayfield wrote about their first global experience to Morocco: its cultural, history and diversity. The group was led by Women's Center staff, Valerie Casey and Jamieca Jones on the nearly two week excursion. Also in May, students Courtney Albers, Kaelin Black, Tiara L.S. Clark and Holly McTaggart attended the National College Conference for Women Students Leaders (NCCWSL) at the University of Maryland. While in the area, Kaelin and Tiara, accompanied by UofL staff Phyllis M. Webb, visited the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in Alexandria, Va., and later visited (along with Courtney) the offices of Congressman John Yarmuth (D-Ky) at the D.C. State Capitol. They reflected on their experiences in the articles listed on these pages. (Photo: Mahogany Mayfield, from the Women Center photo files/Valerie M. Casey)



Director's Message

by Valerie Casey

Welcome to the University of Louisville Women's Center Student Newsletter.

We are very pleased to have you on campus and look forward to meeting you.

Check out our award-winning student group, Women 4 Women (W4W) Student Board, and the newly formed UofL student group, American Association of University Women. These groups provide extraordinary opportunities for student leadership and experiences, including programs, networking and travel, including trips to national leadership conferences and global trips to look at women's roles in society. Previous trips included Peru, Spain and Morocco. Serving as liaison to the W4W Student Board and the AAUW Student Group is Jamieca Jones, Program Coordinator for the Women's Center.

The Center has an active Student-Parent Association which organizes an annual clothing and toy collection program that donates the items to student-parents, and also a Student Women Veterans group. These programs are supervised by Phyllis

Webb, the Center's Program Coordinator and student development expert.

If you are interested in literature, are an aspiring writer or a fan of literature, consider being a member of our Kentucky Women's Book Festival planning committee. Applications are open and can be sent to Mrs. Webb at the Center. A full list of events will be on our web site, <http://www.louisville.edu/womenscenter> and you are invited to also visit us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/uoflwomenscenter>.

Our goal is to provide educational opportunities for students, advocate for women, families and human rights and to build a diverse community on campus that reflects our global perspective. We hope you will consider being part of this fantastic community by joining a student group and attending our programs. Whatever your interest, "You Belong" at the Women's Center and the diversity offices at the University of Louisville.

Wishing you the best here at UofL!
Valerie

Global leader—Trip to Morocco

by Yomna Amer

I love absolutely everything about Morocco: the culture, the history, the landscape, the people, the generosity, the food, everything. Even as an Arab/ American, I still had some prejudices about Morocco before this trip. For example, I left to Morocco with a naïve idea in my head that Morocco is mainly desert. Morocco is only 446,550 km²; however, the diversity of the landscape is more than I have ever seen in the United States.

Hospitality is one of the most remarkable traits of Moroccans. How welcoming and enthusiastic Moroccans are—absolutely amazing. Whenever I spoke Arabic with them, even though I do not speak the same

dialect (Darija), the merchants would give me free gifts. People talk about southern hospitality in the United States, but frankly, it is not comparable to that of Moroccans.

One other thing that fascinated me about Morocco was their patriotism. I could not help noticing the flag in every street, in most private businesses, and even in the Burj Fes mall. I know hanging a flag does not mean anything, but the frequency of it tells a lot. Not to mention how Arabs, Jews, and Berbers live together in perfect harmony. To them, it does not matter which one you are; you are Moroccan. Another example is Tajine. Originally a part of Berber cuisine, Tajine is now a

trademark of Moroccan cuisine.

Even though Moroccans are absolutely proud of their heritage, culture, and language, they are still open to other cultures and languages. Our tour guide on the trip, Farah, loves the '80s music and knew the songs' lyrics word for word. She even knew some bands and singers I have never heard of. All this was a surprise to me because of the assumptions I had about Morocco and Moroccans.

My experience in Morocco is unforgettable. I learned a lot about the culture, migration to and from Morocco, the world, and even about myself through my exposure



to another country abroad. I met amazing people that changed how I perceive the world around me. I saw Hassan II mosque in Casablanca, the most beautiful architecture I have seen in my life. Overall, this trip was beyond perfect, and I would go back in time and live through it over and over again. Going back to Morocco is definitely in my future plans!



Morocco Reflection

by Mahogany Mayfield

While preparing for the trip, I could not decide which aspect of Moroccan culture I was most excited to embrace, or which Moroccan finding I was going to haggle for while in the markets, but what I was most eager about was to return to the Motherland. After traveling to Rwanda last summer, I never imagined getting the opportunity to return to the continent so soon.

If traveling to another country was not enough of a treat, having the opportunity to travel throughout Morocco was surely remarkable. When we first got to Meknes, I immediately loved it, for it was my first

Moroccan experience. I was in awe of its simplicity and effective balance of tradition and modernity. After traveling to a more modern city, Fes, I had a new favorite.

Riding camels in the cool night's air into the Sahara desert, in Merzouga is something that I could never forget. Though the trip in its entirety was amazing, and each excursion contributed to the beauty of Morocco, our time in the desert was one of the highlights of the trip for me. The solitude and sacredness of our voyage, by camel, is a feeling that cannot be replaced. Raised in a Baptist church, I was able to recall stories of the Three Wise Men as we threaded through the Dunes.

This trip really enlightened me of the rich legacies and pieces of the history within the Motherland. The variety of landscapes, cultures, and identities we came across while traveling throughout the country reminded me of the wonders of the great continent: our stay in the desert roaming through the Roman Ruins in Volubolis, the breathtaking architecture, and the crisp air of the gorge's breeze—all truly endless. Aside from the treat of learning about a new culture through interactions, seeing the beauty of a different country makes you want to contribute to your own.

AAUW at UofL

by Emma Pridham, Past President, UofL chapter, AAUW

This past January, UofL gained an incredible new student organization in the American Association of University Women at UofL (AAUW at UofL). It is a national women's organization committed to empowering and advocating for women and their families since 1881. AAUW has over 70 student chapters across the country, and UofL is the first student chapter in Kentucky.

After meeting at \$tart \$mart (an AAUW event hosted on campus by Women 4 Women), the founding officers included: Emma Pridham as President, Tiara Clark as Vice President, Whitney Wilson as Secretary, Daphne Heflin as Treasurer, Seanna Moore as Social Media/PR Chair, and Sarah Baer as Advocacy Chair. We are very grateful for the tireless efforts of Jamieca Jones, the Program Coordinator at the Women's Center, as well as the local Louisville branch of AAUW, as they have supported us through founding and finding our voice on campus.

AAUW at UofL has truly hit the ground running in order to be able to bring these three empowering events to campus within

our first year or being founded. However, events are not the only available offerings. This past May, AAUW at UofL sent three members to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders at the University of Maryland, College Park, Md. They gained an invaluable experience meeting inspirational women leaders and developing as leaders themselves, and they brought all of this great information and empowerment back to members of AAUW at UofL.

What a great first year! We are so excited to kick off our first full academic year on campus this fall with our new officers: Tiara Clark as President, Vaniece Edwards as Vice President, Emma Pridham as Secretary, Katie Hicks-Chambers as Treasurer, Seanna Moore as Social Media/PR Chair, and Courtney Albers as Event Planning Chair. If you are interested in becoming a member or learning more about our great upcoming events, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Women's Center.

Emma Pridham served as President of AAUW, Louisville, last year and is currently a graduate student in the College of Education (CEDH) Research Office.

Courtney Albers

I had the amazing opportunity to attend the 30th annual National Conference for College Women Student Leaders at the University of Maryland at College Park, Maryland. The conference enriched my overall college experience by introducing me to a diverse group of student leaders, attend several informative workshops, and hear from honorable speakers.

We visited the state Capitol and Congressman John Yarmuth's office. We had an informative tour that allowed us to see the rich history that is held within the walls there.

During the conference, I attended a pre-conference session focused on planning and coordinating the Elect Her conference on my campus. Prior to the event we were put into groups and asked to research certain topics. My group was assigned the goal of researching how to create and deliver an effective campaign message and find one helpful resource for that topic. As a team, we briefly introduced that resource to the other attendees. We chose an article from UN Women: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/>

[articles/1238-key-elements-of-the-campaign-message.html](#). This activity allowed students to interact before the conference so when we got there we were eager to meet our new friends. Also, it allowed us to learn from our peers on many topics regarding elections. Topics of interest included: fundraising, public speaking, Elect Her; Empowering you to run; effective communication; graduate school admissions; and tips on healthy lifestyles. A night in D.C. for all the attendees was a highlight of the trip.

Attending NCCWSL was a truly worthwhile experience. It has allowed me to connect with like-minded individuals and learn about useful resources as well as gain knowledge of being an effective student leader and advocate. I will be able to absorb the knowledge I gained from the conference to be useful with my organizations.

(Courtney will be a junior this fall at UofL and is a Nursing major. She is a founding member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) UofL; serves as Chair of Elect Her Leadership Conference and is involved with Relay for Life and Sigma Kappa Sorority).



Holly McTaggart, Kaelin Black, Courtney Albers and Tiarra Clark at the NCCWSL Conference this past May. Photo from the Women Center photo files/Phyllis M. Webb

Kaelin Black

At the conference, I attended a Start Smart workshop to learn how to negotiate my salary and learned why and how there is a wage gap between women and men. I attended four other smaller sessions that were different but each very informative. All of these sessions were extremely interesting, and I was able to listen to many inspiring women share their stories and accomplishments.

At the conference were larger events that

every student attended. We listened to Maysoon Zayid, who is a comedian and activist for women. She was very funny and made a lot of great points. She told us about how demeaning the word bitch is, and how we all need to support one another and not put other women down. Another keynote speaker was Nancy Hogshead-Makar. She is an Olympic gold medalist who is now a Title IX lawyer. The Women of Distinction spoke and made me want to be a better woman and leader. My whole experience

was extremely rewarding. There is nothing I would have changed about the conference. Our dorm was nice, the food was really great, and we also went out one night in DC. Buses dropped us off at Union Station, and we were able to eat and then walk to The Capital, the Washington Monument, and down the streets of downtown DC. It was so beautiful, and so larger than life. Getting to tour the Capital and The Center for Missing and Exploited Children was very rewarding, and I learned so much.

This experience will help me in coming up with events and to raise awareness on the UofL campus. I have so much passion for gender issues and want to someday do something to better the lives of women all around the world. Sexism does not only affect women; it also affects everyone from children to men to the elderly. This is an issue I hope our generation will be able to fix, and I hope to be a part of the solution.

(Kaelin is a freshmen at UofL and is a board member in the Women 4 Women Student Board).



An attendee at the Human Trafficking Awareness Conference held last year. (Photo by Tom Fougere, UofL photographer).



Holly McTaggart

I am a senior Industrial Engineering major and this was my first time attending NCCWSL. I had very few expectations for the conference and found myself thoroughly enjoying the fantastic opportunity to meet, network, and grow with fellow female leaders.

That first night was definitely a highlight for me. NCCWSL honored six incredible women at their "Women of Distinction" awards ceremony. Amanda Simpson, the executive director of the US Army Office of Energy Initiatives, Lynn Rosenthal, Vice President for Strategic Partnerships at the National Domestic Violence Hotline, Miriam Yeung, Executive Director of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum and Elizabeth Acevedo. She is a poet who has over 12 years of performing under her belt. Two of the speakers were unable to attend the awards ceremony.

The second day opened with a bang (quite literally). The Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, an all-women group from DC that perform West African drumming. So once awake, Maysoon Zayid took the stage. She was incredibly inspiring and discussed her struggles and successes as a stand-up comedian with Cerebral Palsy. She spoke about how as humans we deserve accommodation when we need it, and how we need to be more aware of others accommodations they may need.

After that we chose four workshops, out of 50+ options, to individualize the conference. All of those I attended were interactive and engaging. The first one was based on similarities between how successful women lead, and focused on the key aspects

(meaning, framing, connecting, engaging, and energizing). The second one was based on how to be heard and respected as women in the professional workforce. The third workshop was about how to be emotionally intelligent. The last workshop I attended was the most relevant to me. It was conducted by Cristina Corbett who is a researcher for AAUW, and she presented her research on why we find so few women in the STEM workforce, or more specifically the Technology and Engineering workforce. She found that a lot of it has to do with the general population's implicit association with men in these fields.

We had the opportunity to go out to see all of the monuments in DC all lit up at night. It was really spectacular to see and feel the importance of our nation's capital.

The last day we were privileged by a performance from Capital Blend, an all-women's a capella group based out of DC. Following the high energy opening, Nancy Hogshead-Makar encouraged us to be individual, coachable, and embrace the support of your personal team. She is an Olympic swimming gold and silver medalist and CEO of Champion Women, a non-profit that advocates for the enforcement of Title IX.

Overall, the conference was empowering to say the least. It was so encouraging to be surrounded by so many fantastic women with such large goals. Thank you to AAUW and UofL Women's Center for sponsoring this chance for me to gain the knowledge I need to better lead women on campus, at work, and in my personal life.

Former and current members of the Women 4 Women Student Board at their annual Business Luncheon with then Executive Vice President & University Provost University Shirley Willihnganz.

you belong.