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DENISE TABER FINARD '80
WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
AT RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE
2023-2024: AT A GLANCE



VISION AND MISSION:

The Women's Institute at Russell Sage College promotes a vision of feminism that challenges structural inequalities and advocates for equity and equality for all. The institute serves as a voice which addresses the societal challenges that affect our local, national, and global communities, and inspires positive social change through acts of service.

The Women's Institute mission includes programming, showcasing women's accomplishments, and providing support for the next generation of feminist leaders. One creative way we do this is through The Women's Institute's Student Ambassadorship. Student Ambassadors collaborate with the faculty and staff on events and programming, serve as campus leaders who provide support for organized activities and co-curricular programs, participate in community engagement and volunteer opportunities, and pursue completion of the Women's Studies minor or courses in Women's Studies.



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Be.** A Voice
- Know.** Your Value
- Do.** Something to Make a Difference

Dear Friends,

We are delighted to share with you our “2023-2024 At-a-Glance” report, which highlights the impact The Women’s Institute has made this past year. In this report, you will find an overview of our programs and achievements, the volunteer work of our student ambassadors, and feedback from the individuals and organizations who have benefited from our programs and support.

None of this would have been possible without the loyalty of our donors, volunteers, and supporters. We are grateful for your continued backing and generosity! We hope that this report will inspire you and provide you with insight into the **IMPACT** that your commitment has made.

Shelly Calabrese
Executive Director



impact :: im·pact :: noun

the force of impression of one thing on another : a significant or major effect



Program and Event Highlights



Beyond the Binary: Rethinking Sex, Brain, and Gender

with Dr. Daphna Joel, Professor in the School of Psychological Sciences and Sagol School of Neuroscience, Tel-Aviv University, Israel

Guests participated in a fascinating discussion based on Dr. Joel's groundbreaking research on the relations between sex, the brain, and gender.

Co-sponsored by the Russell Sage College Departments of Biology and Psychology



Wild Women of Oakwood Historic Cemetery Tour

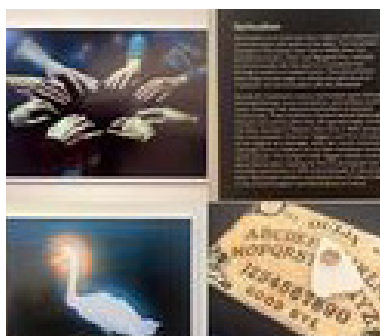
with Rensselaer County Historian Kathy Sheehan

Guests visited the historic Oakwood Cemetery and the gravesites of women who were movers and shakers in Rensselaer County's history. These women were a force to be reckoned with --- suffragists, philanthropists, and even a clairvoyant physician!



EmpowerHER Learning Lab for Students

The EmpowerHer curriculum combines elements of Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, Expressive Writing, and Design Thinking. Students who participated in the program learned skills and techniques on how to harness their innate wisdom, unique talents, and inner confidence.



Séance Exhibit and Conversation

Guests participated in an illuminating conversation on the intersection between spiritualism, feminism, and art with photographer Shannon Taggart and Dr. Ann Braude, Director of Women's Studies in Religion, Harvard Divinity School.

Presented in partnership with the Opalka Gallery at Russell Sage College

Generously sponsored by Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, Franke Stento Mohan Irwin Group



Program and Event Highlights



The Women's Institute Feminist Book Club

Guests engaged in lively Q&As following the authors' talks on topics, such as workplace equality, and the great success story of a legendary African American woman, entrepreneur and philanthropist.

February Book Talk

The Great Stewardess Rebellion: How Women Launched a Workplace Revolution at 30,000 Feet

by Nell McShane Wulfhart

"A meticulously detailed history. . . Rollicking. . . Shocking, infuriating and excruciating. . . [Wulfhart's] account credits [the stewardesses] as having played a pioneering role in fighting sex discrimination, and she tells the story well. . . It is dramatic, invigorating and instructive as a textbook example of the courage, ingenuity and persistence it takes to effect such progress."

—*The New York Times* Book Review

"It was so cool to read Nell McShane Wulfhart's book and then meet her on Zoom! Her book was very interesting. I learned so much about history, labor, and women's rights. I had no idea! And in-person she was really cool. I never knew history could be so interesting and applicable to today."

March Book Talk

On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C. J. Walker

by A'Le'lia Bundles

On Her Own Ground is the first full-scale, definitive biography of Madam C. J. Walker, the legendary Black entrepreneur and philanthropist. Written by her great-great-granddaughter, A'Le'lia Bundles, it was the inspiration for *Self Made*, the fictional four-part Netflix series starring Octavia Spencer.

Women's History Month Art Exhibition

The Women's Institute partnered with the Regional Center for Women in the Arts in West Chester, PA, to bring a special exhibition curated by and featuring the work of Valetta. Also featuring: Margo Allman, Lisa Bartolozzi, Joyce Berger, Carla Lombardi, Alice Oh, Rachel Romano, Nancy Sarangoulis, and Lois Schlachter.

THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE
RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE

THE HOFFMAN LECTURE IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY:
THE GREAT STEWARDESS REBELLION

Virtual Book Talk

With Nell McShane Wulfhart

FEBRUARY 13 | 6PM EST

REGISTER AT [SAGE.EDU/THEWOMENSINSTITUTE](https://sage.edu/thewomensinstitute)

THE HOFFMAN LECTURE IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY HAS BEEN ENDOWED BY A GIFT FROM LINDA ROSENFIELD HOFFMAN, RSC '62. IT IS CO-SPONSORED BY THE SOCIOLOGY PROGRAM & THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE AT RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE.

Women's History Month Lecture 2024

ON HER OWN GROUND: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MADAM C.J. WALKER

Monday, March 18 | 6:00 P.M. | VIRTUAL EVENT

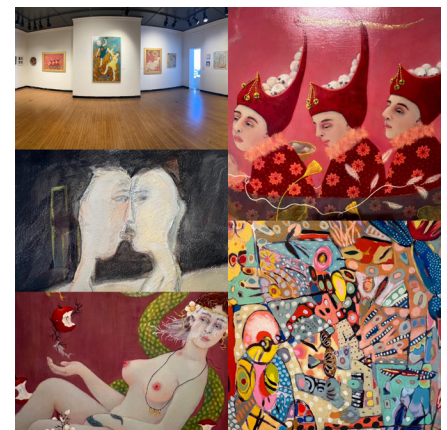
A'Le'lia Bundles is the author of *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madam C.J. Walker*, a New York Times Notable Book about her entrepreneurial great-great-grandmother and the nonfiction inspiration for *Self Made*, the fictional Netflix series starring Octavia Spencer. *The Joy Goddess: A'Le'lia Walker and the Harlem Renaissance*, the first major biography of her great-grandmother, will be published in early 2025 by Scribner.

She is the founder of the Madam Walker Family Archives and serves on several non-profit boards including the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard's Radcliffe Institute, the March on Washington Film Festival, Biographer's International (BIO), Indiana Landmarks, the Women's Suffrage National Monument Foundation and the Smithsonian's American Women's History Initiative. A former network television executive and Emmy Award winning producer at ABC News and NBC News, she is a former chair of the National Archives Foundation and a former vice chair of Columbia University's board of trustees.

Scan to learn more and register

Thank you to our sponsors!
The Helen M. Upton Center for Women's Studies, and the Sociology and History programs at Russell Sage College.

RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE
THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE





Program and Event Highlights



Mini-Conference: Transforming Medical Care Across Disciplines with Women's Institute Visiting Affiliate Scholar



WI Visiting Affiliate Scholar and conference co-creator Rachel Gross assembled a group of panelists for a half-day conference bridging the worlds of advocacy, the arts, gender and sexuality studies, and medicine.

The goal of the conference aimed to re-imagine how medical professionals, patient advocates, and artists who address women's health and the doctor-patient relationship can work together for a more patient-centered world.

Rachel Gross is an award-winning science journalist and author of *Vagina Obscura: An Anatomical Voyage*. A former Knight Science Journalism Fellow and digital science editor of *Smithsonian Magazine*, she writes for *BBC Future*, *The New York Times*, and *Scientific American*.

PANELISTS INCLUDED:



Tori Ford

Founder and Executive Director of Medical Herstory, a not-for-profit organization advancing gender health equity and undoing stigma through storytelling, patient advocacy, and medical education.



Wendy Kline, Ph.D.

Dema G. Seelye Chair in the History of Medicine at Purdue University is internationally recognized for her scholarship in the history of medicine, the history of women's health and the history of childbirth.



Dr. Maria Uloko

Urologist revolutionizing the field of comprehensive sexual health. Her expertise spans across an impressive range of treatments, addressing needs of all genders with equal vigor and precision.



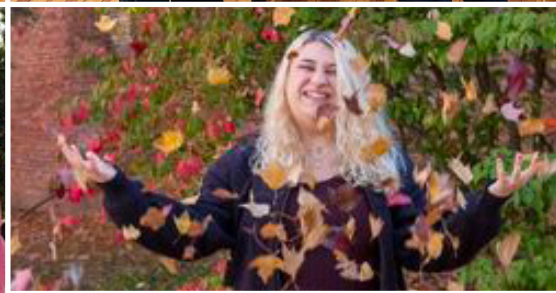
Sophia Wallace

Conceptual artist, and Intimate Justice Advocate working at the intersection of bodies and ethics.

Topics included the history of gynecology and women's health, highlighting major ethical issues the field has faced and the main problems that plague the field today; how to make the most of your doctor's visit and tips to navigate the medical world after being misunderstood, dismissed, or not heard by your provider; and transformative moments in women's health.

The conference also included a practicum component for Health Sciences students and engaged students from the Theatre Program at Russell Sage to act out simulated patient scenarios.

Generously sponsored by the Russell Sage College Alumnae/i Association





ECAR PROGRAM UPDATE

Educating our Campus and Local Community

Every Campus A Refuge (ECAR) aims to assist refugees both in the short term and in the long term and to assist one family directly and many families indirectly. By housing a refugee family on campus grounds and helping them in resettlement, we are directly assisting this family for their 90-day Reception and Placement period and beyond, as the family sees fit.

Educating and reaching out to the campus and local community about the refugee crisis and the initiative is essential in ensuring awareness, involvement, and commitment. By engaging students in Every Campus A Refuge, we can teach our students skills in their discipline, as well as assist refugees more broadly and in more long-term ways through a place-based education model.

Russell Sage College became the first ECAR chapter in New York State in 2021. The Women's Institute and the Office of Service Learning partner on this initiative with the help of student and faculty and staff volunteers. In 2023, the Russell Sage College ECAR chapter developed a partnership with the newly formed ECAR chapter at Hudson Valley Community College, the first of its kind in the country. Together we are combining resources to provide newcomers with much-needed housing and support.

We are proud that we have welcomed and hosted over 30 refugees on our campus since the start of the program.





On-Campus Activities

The ECAR initiative has been recognized by the White House, United Nations, and at the sixth annual President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge Gathering. It has been featured on NPR’s “All Things Considered” with Ari Shapiro, WUNC’s “The State of Things” with Frank Stasio, and in the *Washington Post*, and is part of the State Department Toolkit on how universities can help refugees. Every Campus A Refuge has won the Yousif Badri Civic Engagement International Prize from Ahfad University in Omdurman, Sudan (2021), the Gulf South Summit’s Outstanding Service-Learning Collaboration in Higher Education Award (2017), and The Washington Center’s Higher Education Civic Engagement Award (2017).



YEMEN

ECAR Family from Yemen

“Leaving our home in Yemen was very difficult, but we had to come, it was not safe there. Everything in America is so different, but the people at the college are so kind. They are my first friends. The students played with my children, and they are happy. We are learning English. My husband works every day, and I do not speak English yet. A really kind student speaks Arabic, and for the first time since arriving in America, I have a friend, and I feel safe and happy! I am not alone. Thanks to ECAR we are going to be okay.”



AFGHANISTAN

ECAR Couple from Afghanistan

“We will never forget the kindness, generosity, and support from Russell Sage College. We met the most wonderful people. The students, faculty, and staff were our first friends in America, and we will think of them with fondness for the rest of our lives. The ECAR program allowed us to settle

into our new city without feeling scared or lost. We had been suffering for a long time since the Taliban came, and our lives were in danger. When we arrived at Russell Sage College, we knew we had a future again. My wife was a kindergarten teacher back home, and Russell Sage helped her get a job in a daycare. She loved being with those kids! I became a very proud Russell Sage College employee in Facilities. My co-workers were very kind. Everyone helped us improve our English. Russell Sage has made us very proud to be in America.”



ECAR Woman from Afghanistan

“ECAR allowed me to feel safe, welcome, and hopeful during a time of uncertainty. I came to the US by myself, as a young refugee woman dedicated to pursuing an education and improving women’s rights. The opportunity to be a guest on Russell Sage College’s beautiful historic campus with such a strong legacy supporting women’s rights was an honor. I appreciated the opportunity to get to know students and faculty during my time as a guest and was especially inspired by the Women’s Institute. I am currently finishing my bachelor’s degree in political science and women’s studies at Northeastern Illinois University.”

Faculty:

“My students volunteered with our ECAR guests, and they learned a tremendous amount. The opportunity to work directly with recently arrived refugees and support their integration allows our students to do valuable experiential learning and helps prepare them for meaningful careers. I had an education major tell me that volunteering with the children was the most impactful learning experience she’s had during college. Thank you to the Women’s Institute for supporting this important program, and helping us provide the most valuable education possible. The Women’s Institute and ECAR make me especially proud to be at RSC.”

Faculty:

“I was so excited to learn that the Women’s Institute was hosting a Congolese family as part of the ECAR program. I am an immigrant myself, originally from Kenya. Hosting this beautiful family brought richness to my life, and to our entire campus community. So proud of Sage!”

Student Volunteer

“I am so grateful I had the opportunity to support our ECAR family. I am a first-generation American, and I speak Arabic. I was able to volunteer as a translator and interpreter for our ECAR guests. I am a pre-med student, and I learned so much helping them navigate our medical system. I remember what it was like to start over in a new country, and now with ECAR, I am able to help others in the same position. It makes me feel so proud of my family’s journey and what I have accomplished, and it feels so good to help other people as they start their lives here. I learned so much! And it is one of the most meaningful things I’ve ever done.”

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

“The Women’s Institute and Office of Service Learning have been integral and exceedingly gracious and flexible partners in our effort to take the best possible care of our newly-arrived refugee clients. Through the Every Campus a Refuge [ECAR] partnership, we have been able to temporarily house over 30 refugees on the Russell Sage campus in Troy, which provided an enormously helpful emergency housing option when our normal efforts to secure permanent housing were not successful. What is not reflected in that number is the high level of hard work, coordination, late night/weekend phone calls and texts, and many other “above and beyond” efforts that were required to help get each of these new arrivals settled. Because of the ECAR team’s efforts, there are two families of 10, plus a dozen young single adults who were temporarily housed at the campus, who had the best possible start to rebuilding their lives here in the U.S. To say that USCRI is grateful to the ECAR team at RSC for their generosity, flexibility, and care and concern for our clients is a vast understatement.”

David Sussman (he/him)
Director, Albany Field Office
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants



We've Found Our Groove!

Reflections on the 2023-2024 Academic Year

Michelle Napierski-Prancl, Ph.D. | Faculty Director of The Women's Institute

As Faculty Director of the Women's Institute, I am once again pleased to share that I am extremely proud of the work done by the 2023-2024 cohort of Women's Institute student ambassadors. It was a cohort of eight new and two returning ambassadors and included two of our first graduate student ambassadors. As I reflect on 2023-2024, I think the best way to describe the year is to say that we have found our groove. We kicked off the ambassador program in 2020 and navigated the unique challenges of COVID-19 with ingenuity and determination. We continued to develop and adjust in 2021 to the new normal, and over the course of the last two years, the Women's Institute Ambassador program has found our groove. Together, we have worked to create and nourish this "groove" of ours finding what works and changing what does not work. We have found activities and events that feel right and will be repeated each year, and we have created opportunities for ambassadors to implement passion projects near and dear to their hearts that make the programs offered each year unique and fresh.

For the last three years, students have combined community service with a study break during the fall semester final exams by hosting a blanket-a-thon on the reading day. Students bring their laptops to Finard House, grab a mug of hot chocolate, and alternate between studying notes and tying fleece blankets together. At the

end, blankets are donated to a local charity - this year, Keagan and Danielle brought them to Joseph's House & Shelter.



Last year, Professor Tracy Gilbert introduced us to her friend Dana Marlowe, founder of I Support the Girls, and there was an instant connection and appreciation for the work she does advocating for folks experiencing homeless and/or distress. Her organization helps individuals to stand tall with dignity by providing bras and menstrual products – something that resonates very strongly with our ambassadors. Within the last two years, our ambassadors



have collected over 500 bras for I Support the Girls - this year's collection led by Leah and Jenny was a fun Mardi Bra theme to coincide with Mardi Gras. There is a momentum and a competitive drive to continue this project and collect an even greater number of bras next year, so I believe events like the bra drive and blanket-a-thon, as well as the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk (coordinated this year by Danielle), and Toys for Tots toy drive (coordinated this year by Theadora), will be staples on each year's calendar.

In addition, each of the ambassadors took leadership of their own passion project, which adds something new and exciting to the programming we do. For example, Shauna placed rainbow flags next to the peace poles on each campus and held a rainbow egg hunt for International Transgender Day of Visibility, while Jenny and Sophia worked with the Baking Club to coordinate monthly birthday cake deliveries to Joseph's House & Shelter. Keagan co-sponsored an event with Athenians to help celebrate a Pi day (March 14) with a new twist on paint and sip – a paint and pie – and Lauren worked with campus offices, including Resident Life and the Wellness Center, to offer a Love Should be Sweet table in Buchman Pavilion, which provided information on “red flags” and “green flags” in relationships.

The ambassadors also played a vital role in supporting the programs the Women's Institute produces for a more global audience, such as A'Lelia Bundles Women's History Month lecture about her great-great-grandmother and her book, *On Her Own Ground: The Life and Times of Madame C.J. Walker*, The Hoffman Lecture in Sociology & Social Policy featuring Nell McShane Wulfhart's book talk on *The*

Great Stewardess Rebellion, and Dr. Daphna Joel's talk on *Beyond the Binary: Rethinking Sex, Brain and Gender*. Leah, Shauna, Danielle, and Merideth each took on a leadership role during these events and did impressive jobs introducing the guest speakers. In addition, ambassadors took turns greeting guests and representing the Women's Institute at the Women's History Month Art Exhibition in Rathbone Gallery and networking with alumni and guests during photographer Shannon Taggart and Dr. Ann Braude's Conversation on Spiritualism, Art, and Feminism event.

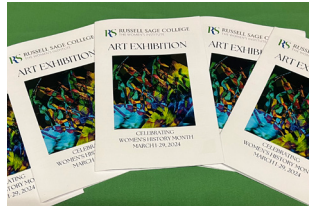
My Faculty Director report last year was titled, “On Wednesdays, we meet in Frear House!” and it is clear that our Wednesday meetings in Frear, now Finard House, are the reason we have found our “groove” and why the ambassador program is such a success. Each week, we gather around the long table to workshop ideas, problem solve, collaborate, and get to know one another. We share our ideas, our goals, and even a few slices of pizza. As you can see from the list of events at the end of this report, much can be accomplished when a group of ambitious students gathers around a table and gets to work.



Conversations with the ambassadors reveal that they look forward to these weekly gatherings and described these meetings as essential to creating a sense of community and friendship. Wednesday meetings provide a change of pace from the busy week of classes, and Finard House serves as an inviting second home on campus. Occasionally, Lauren, who serves as a graduate assistant to the Women's Institute as well as a student ambassador, will swing by Bitchin Donuts and grab a box of treats for our meeting (the French Toast flavor is a favorite), and these meetings tend to be a bit livelier than others. Other Wednesdays, we may be powered only by hot chocolate or a cold bottle of water, but the meetings are just as productive. We learn much about each other during these meetings – from personal struggles and personal victories to who likes pesto mayo



Faculty Director's Academic Year Reflections



on their French fries (Jenny), and who is applying to dental school (Danielle). The relationships grow and develop quite organically simply by spending time together, and the ambassadors look to support one another -- whether it be to help with a Women's Institute project, personal challenge, or academic question. Several ambassadors speak of the close friendships they have developed with other ambassadors in their cohort, who they may have never met otherwise. The ambassadors support one another – rooting for each other whether at a Gator softball game or at Undergraduate Research Day.

As the Faculty Director, my most important task is to create connections between the Women's Institute and the curriculum. One of the ways this is done is through the requirement that ambassadors take a course in women's studies and/or make progress toward completing the minor in women's studies. This ensures students have a scholarly foundation in feminist studies to help inform the work they do as ambassadors. This year, four students, including two ambassadors (Shauna and Merideth), completed a minor in Women's Studies by completing the capstone course WST 405: Women's Studies Forum. (Kudos to Merideth, who completed her capstone paper in her junior year.) Students choose a topic of interest to them, and they explore the topic from a feminist perspective. As you can see from the titles of their final papers, there was a variety of interesting topics covered in the course:

- Sexualization and Perception of Women in Video Games by Alexia Cusack
- Female Representation in the Marvel Cinematic Universe by Merideth Diegel
- LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health: Intervention, Treatment & Prevention by Shauna Ferris
- Was Shakespeare a Feminist? by Jenna Wilkinson

Finally, each year ends with a bittersweet academic celebration where we honor the graduating Women's Institute ambassadors and seniors in Women's Studies. This year, our senior farewell honored three graduating ambassadors: Keagan Desjardins, Shauna Ferris, and Danielle Williams, and we inducted four new members into Iota, Iota, Iota, the honor society in women's studies: Alexia Cusack, Jenny Bryan, Leah Madore, and Jenna Wilkinson. In addition, ambassadors started a new tradition this year by awarding superlative honors to one another that highlight how well they have come to know one another over the course of the year. They are creative expressions and delightfully heartfelt gestures that showcase a unique trait they have come to admire in one another. Sometimes they may include an inside joke only other ambassadors would appreciate. It is a pleasure to witness their bond, and it is truly one of my favorite days of the year.



While it is bittersweet to say goodbye to our 2023-2024 ambassador cohort, I am looking forward to a new and exciting year beginning this fall. Thus, it is with great excitement that I welcome the 2024-2025 cohort of Women's Institute ambassadors. This cohort includes several new and returning ambassadors, and I am looking forward to a great year ahead with these amazing students.

“It is my privilege

to acknowledge the work of the Women’s Institute at Russell Sage College from two perspectives: that of a RSC faculty member and as a financial supporter. The Women’s Institute is a vital source for information about women’s issues from international to local viewpoints. It attracts visiting scholars, who continue with and expand their particular areas of research. It provides quality programs in a venue where RSC students, faculty, and members of the Capital Region communities at large congregate, learn, and interact with these scholars frequently throughout the year. The Women’s Institute is an asset to Russell Sage College, the Capital Region, and beyond. I am honored to be involved with their work.”

Gertrude B. Hutchinson, DNS, RN, MA, MSIS,
Assistant Professor, RSC School of Nursing,
Retired CCRN

Faculty Feedback



“**During the spring of 2024**, I worked closely with The Women’s Institute to incorporate an Interprofessional Education (IPE) activity into the conference on Medical Advocacy. One class from each discipline within the School of Health Sciences (Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Psychology, and Nutrition) and SUNY Albany’s Public Health Department participated in this program. The institute had the great idea to do a patient-health worker simulation with medical actors. This was a fairly difficult program to organize, as it depended on several faculty and students to fulfill key roles. The institute was ready to meet these challenges and maintained consistent communication throughout the process. Participants indicated that this conference was hugely successful. The students remarked that they had a better understanding of the importance of team-based learning and advocating for their patients.”

Alicia Harlow, Ph.D. | Licensed Psychologist | Associate Professor
Psychology Department, Chair | Graduate Program Director



“My students had an invaluable experience

working as standardized patients for the Interdisciplinary Case Conference on Medical Advocacy. It took them from the comfortable world of imaginary circumstances into using their acting skills with real-life practitioners and having to think quickly on their feet. The experience resulted in a great post-mortem conversation, and many students felt confident that they could do this acting work in the medical field again. Thank you!”

David Baecker | Professor of Theatre
Sherman David Spector Professor
in the Humanities

“Partnering with The Women’s Institute

for the medical advocacy conference was an invaluable learning opportunity for the healthcare students at Russell Sage. The conference gave the students in the Physical Therapy (PT) Department a chance to hear about challenging issues that individuals from disparate groups encounter that often are not well covered in the PT curriculum.

Faculty commented that the conference provided a means to branch out from the traditional PT curriculum and generated many thought-provoking conversations with students. The case presentations allowed students to practice difficult conversations in a safe learning space. Thank you!”

Cathron Donaldson PT, DPT, MS
Board-Certified Clinical Specialist in Pediatric Physical Therapy (PCS)
Assistant Professor, Physical Therapy Program

Students are energized and engaged by Women’s Institute Programming. *“Beyond the Binary” helped students to explore how everyday research questions can be looked at in a new way. Throughout the semester, we kept returning to the question, am I thinking beyond the binary? Thank you for providing quality programming to engage our students in critical thinking.”*

Sara Schuman
Coordinator, Gen Ed Core
Director, Kathleen A. Donnelly Center for Undergraduate Research



Our partnership with The Women’s Institute at Russell Sage College has been an incredible collaboration for I Support the Girls.

“Over the past two years, The Women’s Institute’s dedication to our cause has resulted in the collection of over 500 bras, providing essential support and restoring dignity to the folks we serve. Our partnership extends beyond donations; hosting an educational session in March 2023 allowed us to directly connect with The Women’s Institute ambassadors, enhancing their understanding of the challenges faced by those we serve.

This partnership exemplifies how community-focused efforts can create substantial impact, and we are grateful for the continued support from the Russell Sage College community.”

Dana Marlowe
Founder and Executive Director of I Support the Girls





What Students are Saying...

BEYOND THE BINARY EVENT

“To be present at this event [Beyond the Binary] felt like learning something new that was interesting and exciting. I feel as though experiencing it here at this event or at the TedTalk could have been similar, and I feel I still would have been interested in the topic. I think that this affected my learning because it helps us understand something about ourselves. And with this knowledge, we can use it in a way to not only better ourselves but help make those around us knowledgeable as well.”

“This was an incredible event. I am a nursing major, and Dr. Daphna Joel helped me understand key medical concepts better than any textbook! She brings science, research, and medicine together with complicated issues in our society. I understand sex and gender better than ever before and feel more prepared to support these issues in a medical setting better.”

WHAT STUDENTS LEARNED AT THE GENDER BIAS IN MEDICINE CONFERENCE

“Getting to collaborate with professions that I had no knowledge on what they do and how beneficial collaborative care is to a patient.”

“Working as a team is much more effective. History and previous medical issues/psychiatric issues and treatment are very important. Doctors can ‘fail’ patients.”

“Women’s health needs to be advocated more.”

“I found it to be very interesting and changed how I think patient care should work.”

“I think that this experience, more so than my clinical rotation, helped me to see the unique perspective that each member of the healthcare team brings to the table (in real time).”

“I learned how important it is for someone to advocate for the patient. There were so many things/areas that could have helped the patient if someone spoke up.”

“There is not as much information out there about the female anatomy and function and health than I thought.”

“I love Rachel Gross! She made learning about anatomy, the body, and gender really interesting, fun, and important.”

“The case study was unique and I didn’t know that nutrition can play an important role in ED.”





What our Participants are saying...

The Great Stewardess Rebellion
Book Talk
“I loved everything about this - the topic, the speaker, the great moderator, and the accessibility.”

BEYOND THE BINARY

“I found the information very fascinating. The data was represented in a very conceptual manner, which made it easy for the audience to comprehend these complex ideas.”

ON HER OWN GROUND: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MADAM C.J. WALKER

“This was one of THE BEST presentations I’ve attended! The speaker was enthusiastic, well-informed, didn’t seem to be reading from a script, and had great information about her ancestor!”

WOMEN’S HEALTH: TRANSFORMING MEDICAL EDUCATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES

“A terrific blend of facts, figures, and personal anecdotes. A great way to role model what a medical relationship should entail.”





The Student Ambassador Program

The Women's Institute Ambassador program is a crucial part of the mission of the Women's Institute. They are exceptional young women and this program helps them to develop leadership skills.

Selected annually, our ambassadors:

- Collaborate with the institute's leadership to develop and deliver the Women's Institute's events and programming (three or more events each semester).
- Attend one admissions event/open house each semester or host students interested in the Women's Institute Ambassadorship.
- Participate in summer orientation or move-in weekend.
- Make academic progress toward the completion of the Women's Studies minor or complete one course in women's studies.
- Receive a \$1,500 scholarship.

From an Ambassador's Perspective...

SOPHIA PEARL '25, NUTRITION SCIENCE

"My name is Sophia Pearl. I'm a junior Nutrition major in the Class of 2025, currently completing my Women's Studies minor. Being a Women's Institute ambassador means to embody the feminist history that Sage was founded on as well as [to] bring awareness to feminist issues. A way I am doing that is through combining my Nutrition major with my Women's Studies minor and bringing awareness to women's nutrition issues."

"I have always been interested in feminist issues and the rich history of Sage as a women's college. I joined the Women's Institute in hopes of preserving this history and tackling feminist issues, especially in my intended field of work. I also recently declared a Women's Studies minor so that I can further my knowledge regarding women's health and social issues. I took the lead on bringing members of the Women's Institute and the cheerleading team to the Making Strides walk in Albany recently. We walked in solidarity with survivors and those whose lives were lost to breast cancer. Women's health is a feminist issue!"



DANIELLE WILLIAMS '24, BIOLOGY

"Being a Women's Institute ambassador meant more than I could ever imagine this semester. Being not only a woman but a woman in science, I really got to work on my leadership roles and performing, and kind of crafting, the way that I interact with my community, especially uplifting and advocating for women within the institute as well as within the community at Sage."





LAUREN BUSH '23, CANDIDATE FOR M.S. IN CHILDHOOD/SPECIAL EDUCATION

"I'm in the Childhood/Special Education program. I've been at the Women's Institute for two years now. It has helped me find growth at Sage but also within myself. Most of my work has been involved with domestic violence awareness. That was a big part of my personal life during my first years at Sage, so just being able to reach out to the community and other students and helping them in any way to turn my experience into a positive for someone else was important. I was interested in the Women's Institute to not only grow as a person but also to strengthen my connections within the RSC community and local community! Something that I am passionate about is spreading awareness and providing support for victims of domestic violence and relationship abuse. My personal experience as a survivor took a toll on my role as a student, and I know that my situation is not unique. I wanted to use my experience to help others. One project I did around Valentine's Day was called Love Should Be Sweet. We partnered with Residence Life to purchase roses, carnations, and candy. We had resources for different local organizations, flyers with red flags and green flags, and DIY cards to spread self-love. We sold the roses and carnations and donated all of our proceeds to Equinox. It was so fulfilling to know we were able to support a local organization and also spread awareness using my platform as a Woman's Institute ambassador!"



LEAH MADORE '25, PSYCHOLOGY

"I am a junior and a Psychology major. Being a part of the Women's Institute at Russell Sage has given me the opportunity to increase my interpersonal and communication skills. I've had the opportunity to help organize and plan events and also balance my time with other extra and co-curricular activities."





Looking Ahead: 2024-2025

Looking Ahead



2024-2025 VISITING AFFILIATE SCHOLAR

We are excited to announce this year's visiting affiliate scholar, Judith Helfand. Judith is a Peabody Award-winning filmmaker, teacher, and media activist; her documentary films are socially conscious, humorous, politically engaged, and personal. She is also co-founder of Chicken and Egg Pictures, which provides funding, mentorship, and industry access to a global community of women and gender-expansive filmmakers. We will be exploring themes of art and activism with Judith throughout the year, hosting a film festival for students and a film screening and artist talkback for the public this fall.



BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!



DENISE TABER FINARD '80 WOMEN'S INSTITUTE AT RUSSELL SAGE COLLEGE

We are thrilled to share that The Women's Institute has received a transformational gift in memory of Denise Taber Finard, an alumna from the class of 1980!! The gift will support operations, student ambassador scholarships, and experiential opportunities, and honorariums for guest speakers and the annual visiting scholar. The institute and the building it is housed in is now named after Denise, which was announced at a naming and dedication ceremony on September 19.

Scan the QR code below to watch the very inspiring dedication ceremony.

