Riecker Challenge Gift Strengthens CEW’s Ability to Support Emerging Graduate

Whether you are a first-time or regular CEW benefactor, this challenge is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference.

We proudly announce that Ranny Riecker, a long-time friend who shares the Center’s commitment to research, recently offered a challenge gift of up to $200,000 to establish the Riecker Graduate Student Research Fund.

This initiative applies to a specific group of scholars – those working on post-baccalaureate degrees. The Riecker Fund will annually finance one or two University of Michigan graduate students, who may engage in research in one of two ways: They may join one of the Center’s ongoing project teams, or they may work with advisors within their own academic disciplines. Either way, the Fund, and its dollar-for-dollar matching challenge, increases CEW’s ability to support budding scholars, enabling them to collaborate with and learn from experienced researchers.

Whether you are a first-time or regular CEW benefactor, this challenge is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference on two levels: For one, you provide essential financial support for bright, motivated and deserving scholars; for another, you ensure that the Center continues to gather relevant data on such complex, contemporary, gender-related issues as access to employment and education, work-life balance, equity and diversity.

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Research Careers Begin at CEW

CEW is a valuable resource for graduate students focusing on gender-related issues. Over the years, many scholars have begun successful careers at the Center, benefiting from the research skills and interests that CEW nurtured. We are very proud of all our former graduate students, including the following three illustrious alums.

Stacy Wenzel, Senior Researcher, University of Illinois at Chicago

From 1993 to 1995, engineer Stacy Wenzel worked at CEW while completing a PhD at UM’s Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE).

“CEW allowed me,” she says, “to experience the type of applied research that first interested me in graduate studies. I wanted to figure out (and still do) how to improve universities and schools so that excellent math, science, and engineering education is accessible to all – especially women and girls.”

Stacy is now a senior researcher at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she co-directs an evaluation team in the College of Education. While she appreciates the grant writing, networking, and collaboration skills she learned at CEW, Stacy particularly values having had the opportunity to work for an “organization that tries to live by its feminist philosophy, where the process as well as the products of the work are good for the women there. I’ve tried

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From the Director

CEW's theme for the year: Global perspectives on women's rights. Around the world, women's rights are defined, discussed, and approached in a variety of ways and contexts.

When this issue of the CEW newsletter arrives, we will be starting another academic year. Throughout the summer, staff members have been preparing for Fall 2007 events and projects. The Mullin-Welch Lecture on October 8, 2007, featuring filmmaker Zana Briski, will formally introduce CEW’s theme for the year: global perspectives on women's rights. Around the world, women's rights are defined, discussed, and approached in a variety of ways and contexts. Exploring the rights of women, therefore, demands that we take an inclusive approach. Each of our Visiting Scholars, as well as our Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist, will add important and unique perspectives to the conversation.

Visiting Scholars
In January 2008 we welcome two Visiting Scholars, Beatrice Quashie Smith and Jadwiga Pieper Mooney. Quashie Smith is an associate professor in Literary Studies at Illinois State University. She will use her time at CEW to work on a book she's tentatively titled Globalization, Gender, Technology and Work Practices in Outsourcing. As she explains, for women in so-called developing countries such as Ghana, process outsourcing in information and communication technologies (ICT) is transforming both public and private life. It is crucial, therefore, to understand ICT outsourcing and its many implications: on the fields of workplace studies and career education for women; and on related policy debates about equity for women in general and in post-colonial societies in particular.

Our other Visiting Scholar, Jadwiga Pieper Mooney, is an assistant professor of History at the University of Arizona. While at CEW, Pieper Mooney will work on her book Local Women in a Global World: The Politics of Motherhood and the Construction of Political Bodies in Chile, 1939-1990, which presents new insights on the politics of gender and nation-building in Chilean history through local and global perspectives.

Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist
Linda Burnham, founder and executive director of the Women of Color Resource Center (WCRC), will be in residence as the Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist from February 11 to March 8, 2008. The WCRC, based in the San Francisco Bay area, focuses on the intersection of race, class and gender in relation to economic justice and human rights. While at CEW, Burnham will explore the question, “Who is/isn't in line to take up the work of a retiring generation of feminists?” She will also examine the differences between social justice feminism and equal rights feminism. Linda intends to develop a curriculum or other mechanism to encourage gender-conscious leadership development in social justice organizations.

Educational Access for Women
Given the close link between women's educational achievement and their national and global status, CEW's on-going focus on educational access for women connects well with our 2007-08 theme. Looking at issues closer to home, Associate Director for Advocacy Sue Kaufmann has been examining the interplay among gender differences in education, women's involvement in technology fields, Michigan's economic crisis and the resulting push for an information economy. (See story on page 1) As Sue concludes in her recently released report Michigan Women and the High-Tech Knowledge Economy, including women in the high-tech fields is a vital piece of solving the Michigan economic crisis.

Challenge Grant Issued
Long time CEW friend Ranny Riecker knows the importance of solid research to better understand the economic and social issues faced by women locally, nationally, and internationally. We are proud that, by establishing the Riecker Graduate Student Research Fund, Ranny has expressed confidence in the Center's ability to conduct and support such gender-based research. Please read the front page article that describes the Fund in detail and then consider adding your own financial support to CEW.

We welcome you to stay connected to CEW during the exciting upcoming year. Attend some of the many programs we'll be offering, stay in touch through our website and our future newsletters, and of course drop by the Center to visit at any time.

Carol Kaufmann, Director
Sue Kaufmann, Associate Director for Advocacy
Kathleen O'Brien, Program Officer
This exciting challenge gift is Ranny’s third major CEW initiative, each designed to offer financial support to different groups of researchers. In 2002, her first major contribution established the Riecker Undergraduate Research Fund. It awards money to University of Michigan faculty members doing gender-related research, making it possible for them to include undergraduate students on their research teams. Over 20 undergraduates have thus far benefited from the Fund, learning important skills by collaborating with their professors on topics as diverse as ovarian cancer treatment, early detection of depression in pregnancy, the history of Michigan’s women’s rowing team, and the impact of HIV prevention programs among South African women.

Then in 2003 Ranny offered a $100,000 challenge grant to further the Jean Campbell Research Fund. As a result of Ranny’s generosity and the responding flood of contributions from Jean’s many friends, the Campbell Fund now brings professional scholars from around the world to CEW every year. Using the vast resources available through the Center and the University, these scholars pursue research projects on a wide range of topics relevant to women.

As befits a great research institution like the University of Michigan, CEW maintains its effectiveness and its strong national reputation by conducting its own research, by sharing that knowledge with others, and by training new generations of scholars to carry on the tradition.

Of course, Ranny’s commitment to CEW extends beyond our research mission. She has been a member of our Leadership Council for 15 years. She is also her family’s representative for the Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship, which honors her mother. Since 1990, CEW has awarded Towsley scholarships to 383 University of Michigan students. At this Spring’s scholarship event, Ranny herself handed out Towsley scholarships to 22 undergraduate and graduate women.

As befits a great research institution like the University of Michigan, CEW maintains its effectiveness and its strong national reputation by conducting its own research, by sharing that knowledge with others, and by training new generations of scholars to carry on the tradition. In 2005, the National Council for Research on Women honored CEW with a prestigious award “for demonstrating the power and value of research for informed action.”

We are proud of our successful alumnae (See adjacent article), and we are delighted by the opportunity to extend our support to new generations of graduate students doing important contemporary gender-based research. We thank Ranny Riecker for trusting us with such an important mission.

Ranny’s challenge has already inspired several CEW friends to contribute to the Fund, and we encourage you to join this group of loyal supporters. For more information about the Riecker Graduate Student Fund, please contact Betsy Wilson at 734.764.7291 or ecwilson@umich.edu.

Profiles of CEW Researchers

Gloria Thomas, Associate Director, ACE, Office of Women in Higher Education

After earning an undergraduate degree from and working for almost ten years in admissions at Swarthmore College, Gloria Thomas worked at the Center from 1996 to 2000, while she completed her doctorate from CSHPE. She served on CEW’s University-wide Faculty Work Life Study; conducted interviews for Through My Lens, a video about the experiences of Michigan’s women of color faculty; and coordinated the Women of Color in the Academy Project (WOCAP).

Gloria is now at the American Council on Education in Washington, DC, where she holds two titles: Associate Director of the Office of Women in Higher Education, focused on leadership development for academic women, and Associate Project Director of the ACE-Sloan Foundation Projects on Faculty Career Flexibility. “Working at CEW launched me into a career focused on success for women in academe. Learning about significant gender differences among faculty at UM and the problems of retention and support for women of color faculty, I developed a passion for helping to recruit and retain women in academic careers and higher education administration.”

Louise August, CEW Research Specialist

Louise August first came to CEW in 2002 when, like Stacy and Gloria, she was earning a PhD in higher education—making a career change from corporate finance to academic research. After completing a dissertation based upon CEW data, Louise remained on the Center’s staff as a Research Specialist. Over the past five years, she has conducted applied research on a variety of gender-related issues, including retention and career satisfaction among women faculty; academic career flexibility and work-life balance; working conditions for professionals in the non-tenure track instructional rank; and the low numbers of women in upper management positions in our state’s top 100 corporations.

“CEW’s warm, collegial environment has given me both financial and moral support,” Louise says. “I’ve been able to remain in a great academic setting where the mission meshes perfectly with my own research interests.” Louise also introduces CEW research to national audiences through her many publications and conference presentations, most recently at the Association of Institutional Research Conference in Kansas City in March, 2007.

A fully funded Riecker Graduate Student Research Fund will ensure that, through our collaborations with building scholars like Stacy, Gloria, and Louise, CEW continues to make key contributions to gender and racial equity and other important national issues. We urge you to consider contributing to the Riecker Graduate Student Research Fund.

The CEW Website

Upcoming events, CEW’s program information, research and current initiatives.

www.cew.umich.edu
UM Alumnae Council Supports CEW’s Outreach Program for Community College Students

The University of Michigan Alumnae Council has selected the Center for the Education of Women to be the recipient of its annual Birthday Greeting Award for 2008. CEW staff members Kirsten Elling, Aimee Cox and Carol Hollenshead presented Supporting Non-Traditional Student Success for a Diverse U-M to the Birthday Greeting Committee this past March, and we are delighted and grateful that it was honored as the winning proposal.

The Alumnae Council has supported CEW from its beginning, providing a portion of the original funding for the Center for the Continuing Education of Women in 1964. In those early years, the women who sought help from CEW were primarily returning to school after an interruption in their post-secondary education. Through the more than 40 years since that time, our services have broadened to include current students, career changers, and women and men undergoing life transitions. Our experiences indicate that many of the students who need help today are women who matriculate at community colleges. As the University of Michigan strives to maintain a diverse and talented student body, one focus is on students who wish to transfer from community colleges to our campus and who, in order to be successful, may need particular kinds of outreach and support.

CEW To Build Stronger Connections Over the years, the Center has worked with many community college students. We are indebted to them for sharing their stories, accomplishments and needs. By seeking their assistance, these individuals have helped us to learn about the unique challenges they face, the uncommon resilience they bring to their educational quests, and the secrets of their academic success. They have taught us how to help others in their situations. With funding from the Alumnae Council, as well as from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation grant to the University, CEW plans to build upon our experiences and reach out in innovative ways to the state’s community college students, faculty and staff. One effort to build stronger connections will involve the creation of a network of community college women’s centers across the state. The network will convey the message that the University of Michigan is accessible to students in community colleges and that they will be welcomed, supported members of the student body.

Locus of Support As another part of our winning proposal, CEW also intends to create a “locus of support” for transfer students that combines counseling programs and small group interactions to ease the transition onto a campus geared primarily for traditional students. By calling upon former CEW scholars, many of whom have themselves been community college transfer students, we plan to build a collaborative team for this ambitious project.

Zana Briski, Founder of Kids with Cameras, Screens her Film Born into Brothels

CEW is honored to welcome Zana Briski as the 2007-2008 Mullin-Welch lecturer. The founder of Kids with Cameras, Briski co-directed and co-wrote the 2005 Academy Award winner Born into Brothels. The film, which has won several international awards, documents the filmmakers’ efforts to work with children of prostitutes, enabling them to use the art of photography to explore their environment of poverty in the midst of India’s increasing prosperity. Briski will present a screening of Born into Brothels and hold a question and answer session afterwards. The Center will host a reception after Briski’s presentation.

Please register for this event online at www.cew.umich.edu or by calling 734-764-6005. Seating is limited.

Photo: Gear Running, Kids with Cameras

The CEW Mullin Welch Lecture Monday, October 8, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Michigan Theater Screening Room, 603 E. Liberty Street

Group shot, Calcutta, Kids with Cameras
Sloan Foundation Research Project Completed

Researchers have completed the third and final publication from our three-year Alfred P Sloan Foundation Grant study about non-tenure track faculty in the U.S. “Making the Best of Both Worlds” incorporates a chartbook of data from our national survey with a discussion of the importance of non-tenure track faculty and suggestions for how institutions of higher education can attract and retain high quality non-tenure track faculty. In addition, this Sloan Foundation grant funded our development of the National Clearinghouse on Academic Worklife (www.academicworklife.org), which has received an average of over 1200 unique visitors each month since its launch in May.

A Passion for Counseling

“My work at CEW offers me the opportunity to address the needs of a wide variety of adults, as well as the ability to present an array of information and resources.” says Carolyn Lewis-Stone, who joined CEW this year as a Senior Counselor. Although she is new to CEW, Carolyn’s background includes working with children, parents and families, young adults and mid-life adults. Enthusiasm, confidence, practicality and humor have long been components of her passion for helping people help themselves. Carolyn has a Master’s Degree in Social Work from the University of Michigan and has worked in a variety of mental health and student counseling settings.

One aspect of working at CEW that Carolyn finds especially rewarding is “the opportunity to connect briefly with participants while helping make their life transitions a little smoother.” She notes that in any given day she might meet with a recent college graduate who faces the responsibilities of his/her first professional job or a worker dissatisfied with her job and exploring the possibility of pursuing an avocation or returning to school. And, says Carolyn, “As I meet with participants, I hope I model what it looks like when one loves her work.”

Have you met Betsy?

Betsy Wilson is the new CEW Director of Development. Betsy comes to us from the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at UM, where she was a Development Officer, but her background is actually broader than development. Betsy worked in sales and marketing in the telecommunications industry before taking time off the professional track to start and raise her family. When she returned to the work setting, Betsy wanted to commit her time and energy to a field where she could make a real difference. After much thought and exploration, she joined the University of Michigan development team.

Betsy has been with CEW since late spring and, as you can see in the related story on Page 1, she’s already busy working on the gifts for the Riecker challenge. We welcome Betsy to CEW and hope you’ll soon have the opportunity to do so too.

Coming in October

CEW in Action is a new section of our website that will enable you to keep up to date on important Michigan and national issues. Click on “CEW IN ACTION” on the CEW homepage.

(www.cew.umich.edu)

CEW Campaign Update

With the Michigan Difference Campaign concluding next year, it seems a good time to take stock of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done. We are pleased to announce that we have exceeded the 3.5 million dollar goal that was established for CEW. In fact, we have over 3.7 million dollars in gifts and pledges. Thank you to all of our friends and donors for your strong show of support.

While we should all be proud of the accomplishments to date, there is still work to do! Two key areas are under-funded: the Graduate Student Research Fund and the Counseling & Program Fund. They are at just 50% and 34% of their respective goals.

The Graduate Student Research Fund

Goal: $400,000 Gifts & pledges to date: $200,000

The Graduate Student Research Fund which enables UM graduate students to be part of research teams – is an essential aspect of CEW. CEW has always been a nimble, sharply focused and entrepreneurial organization where the research we conduct has immediate practical applications. This fund has been “jump-started” with the generous challenge gift from Ranny Riecker (see related story and challenge details on page 1). Through the support of generous donors who have pledged a total of $100,000, and with the Riecker matching funds, we have raised a total of $200,000 in gifts and pledges. The challenge has helped us reach 50% of our goal in a matter of months. To reflect Ranny’s generous contribution and challenge, this fund has been renamed the Riecker Graduate Student Research Fund.

Counseling & Programs Fund

Goal: $927,000 Gifts & pledges to date: $314,880

CEW’s counseling services are central to our mission. We continue to serve a broad and diverse population through our counseling services, reaching more than 1000 participants each year. We also provide a wide array of programs – including workshops, lectures, and conferences – that focus on education, careers, and leadership. The Counseling & Programs Fund is our highest priority goal within the CEW campaign.

IRA Rule Allows Tax-Free Charitable Transfers from IRAs

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 offers a cost-effective, easy way to support CEW. Through the end of 2007, donors 70.5 years or older can transfer assets directly from an IRA to a charity and gain certain tax advantages. For more information about giving through the Pension Protection Act, go to www.umich.plannedgifts.org/archive_2007_03.html or contact Betsy Wilson at 734-764-7291.
Local community members may recognize Connie Kinnear, one of CEW's newest Leadership Council members, in conjunction with the Ann Arbor Summer Festival. Connie is a decade-long Festival board member and, as treasurer for the past eight years, she is responsible for financial aspects of the annual event. With an undergraduate degree in economics/secondary education and an MBA, both from the University of Michigan, Connie lends her marketing and accounting skills to one of Ann Arbor's most popular traditions.

Connie earned her MBA over several years' time, taking one course a semester while also raising two children: Daughter Maggie is a legal aid attorney in Atlanta, and son Jamie is a senior marketing manager at General Mills in Minneapolis. Jamie and wife Nina's son Ethan is the first Kinnear grandchild.

While her children were young, Connie worked as a marketing specialist, but in the past several years she has devoted herself primarily to community service. In addition to the Summer Festival, Connie has volunteered for several years at Neighborhood Senior Services and the Family Learning Institute, where she currently tutors a reading student one afternoon a week.

Connie was born in Grosse Pointe, but she and her husband Tom — who met as students in an undergraduate economics course — have lived in Ann Arbor for over 37 years. Tom Kinnear is a professor of marketing at the Ross School of Business and director of the Samuel Zell and Robert H. Lurie Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies. The Kinnears also contribute their time and energy to Greenhills School, where both Maggie and Jamie were students. For the past 12 years, Connie and Tom have co-taught an AP economics course every fall semester. Over time, Connie has assumed a majority of the teaching responsibilities, which currently means that she teaches two classes at Greenhills every day of the week.

And, in the wake of the Michigan's current economic problems and shifting employment trends, CEW is helping people to adjust and retool.” — Connie Kinnear

CEW is delighted that Connie has become one of our partners and supporters. “I guess I was always aware of the Center's existence,” she explains, “primarily because director Carol Hollenshead and I were dorm mates. So I've followed CEW's activities out of the corner of my eye.” Then, a few years ago, after encouragement from Leadership Council member Molly Dobson, Connie agreed to serve on a committee to select finalists for the Center's annual scholarship program, something she's done for two years now. That involvement in turn led her to accept the invitation to join the Leadership Council in Fall, 2006.

Why is Connie committed to CEW? She believes “the number one, crucial issue in this country today is education. By supporting people who seek education as the way to become more productive and fulfilled, CEW is making a difference in individuals' lives.”

Connie was the first person to pledge money for the new Riecker Research Challenge (See page 1). She did so, she says, because “research is the endowment for the future. The kind of practical, policy-oriented research that CEW conducts prepares people — especially women — to be in the right places at the right times. The Riecker Fund will ensure future generations of scholars the opportunity to enhance their research skills and contribute to the world.”

“CEW is so lucky to have Connie's expertise, friendship and support,” says Carol Hollenshead. “On behalf of the many students who will benefit from her generosity, I especially thank Connie for responding to Ranny Riecker's challenge and moving us closer to our research fundraising goal.”
Michigan citizens are experiencing a level of economic upheaval unseen since the Depression. Every day we read about lost jobs, declining tax revenues and the ever-worsening state budget crisis. As manufacturing industries decline and manufacturing jobs disappear, it is becoming increa- singly clear that, for the state and the nation to thrive, we in Michigan must cultivate the knowledge-driven, entrepreneurial sectors of our economy, particularly so-called “high technology.”

To do so, we will have to greatly increase the number of residents holding college degrees, particularly in the physical sciences, computer technology, engineering and mathema- tics (STEM) fields. Although women’s participation rates in those fields are generally low, none of our state leaders has addressed this gender gap, which is a major barrier to producing the trained professionals that are critical to the state’s economic success. Impending Baby Boomer retirements, with the potential loss of half our scientists and engineers, make tackling this problem even more urgent.

Higher Education Determines our Destiny

Business leaders increasingly value access to an educated workforce over other factors, including tax policy, in deciding where to locate their businesses. Because few people migrate to Michigan from other states, we create our own workforce to a greater extent than nearly all other states. Therefore, the education delivered by Michigan’s institu-

In Michigan in 2005, only two women in the state earned Ph.D.s in computer and information sciences.

Michigan Women Earn 70 Cents for Every Dollar...

Women’s Talents Untapped

Stark statistics from Girls, Inc. demonstrate the extent to which U.S. women’s talents and skills in the STEM fields are underutilized: “Of all doctoral degrees earned by [U.S.] women in 2000 “5% were in engineering, 1% in math, [and] 1% in computer science.” Such low rates are not inevitable, nor do they reflect women’s lack of aptitude. In many parts of the world, including Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, India, North Africa and the Middle East, women have significantly higher rates of participation in computer science, for example, with rates as high as 50% or more in Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Since the U.S. does not train enough U.S.-born scientists and engineers to meet our needs – in large measure because of women’s low rates of participation – high percentages of degrees in STEM fields are awarded to foreign-born students: 34% in the natural sciences and 56% in engineering, for example. According to the National Science Foundation, “Among all doctorate holders resident in the United States in 2003, a majority in computer science (57%), electrical engineering (57%), civil engineering (54%), and mechanical engineering (52%) were foreign born.”

Women represent the greatest potential for increasing the state and country’s scientifically and technologically-trained workforce. Overall, women in the state earned 70 cents for every dollar earned by comparably employed men, causing Michigan to be ranked 47th in the country for wage equality. Michigan women working full-time in computer and mathematical sciences earn 83% of men’s wages, and women working in architecture and engineering earn 82% – figures that are certainly better than the average but eleven percentage points behind the national wage ratios in those fields.

Breaking Down Barriers

The barriers girls and women experience in the STEM fields include low self-confidence, self-concept and cultural fit; stereotyping; inadequate teaching methods; discrimination and other institutional barriers; and difficulty combining work and family. Ability is not the problem. There is no difference in performance or grade point average between men and women. Teachers, parents and grandparents can encourage girls to persist by debunking stereotypes, educating them about how science, technology and engineering make people’s lives better by solving real-world problems, and helping them learn about successful women in those fields. Across the country, colleges and universities, including some in Michigan, are finding creative ways to reduce barriers, developing models that can be more widely adopted. Examples at the University of Michigan include the Women in Science and Engineering Program and the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

Women represent the greatest potential for increasing the state and country’s scientifically- and technologically-trained workforce, but women’s participation in these fields is important for more than attracting and generating jobs. It also has a direct impact on innovation. William Wulf, president of the National Academy of Engineering, says: “The products and processes we create are limited by the life experiences of the people who develop them... At a fundamental level, men, women, ethnic minorities, and people with handicaps experience the world differently. Those experiences are the ‘gene pool’ from which creativity springs.” Michigan cannot afford to squander such valuable resources.

Susan Kaufmann is the Associate Director for Advocacy at the Center for the Education of Women and the author of Michigan Women in the High-Tech Knowledge Economy, available at www.cew.umich.edu.

“Ability is not the problem”
The Center is currently enjoying the presence of Dr. Aimee Cox, who is in the midst of a two-year post-doctoral appointment at CEW, jointly funded by the Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and our own Jean Campbell Research Fund. Aimee is involved in a number of research and community outreach efforts:

- **Crossing Boundaries**, a project sponsored by the National Center for Institutional Diversity, encourages and supports University of Michigan faculty and staff members to contribute their expertise to understanding and addressing difficult social problems, particularly in the Detroit area.
- CEW’s new community college outreach program, described on Page 4 of this newsletter.
- Interviews with University of Michigan women of color faculty on issues of recruitment, retention and climate, aimed at understanding the reasons for the declining numbers of women of color faculty at U of M. Aimee has presented preliminary findings of her research at two conferences: the Creating Institutional Change Conference at the University of Wisconsin and the Activist Scholarship Conference at the University of Texas-Austin.

In addition, Aimee is pursuing her own academic and personal interests. As a member of the BlackLight Project at the University’s New Center in Detroit, Aimee works “to inspire positive change” in the city of Detroit and its young women. BlackLight offers workshops to “challenge, educate, transform, empower and heal the community…through dance, poetry, oral history, creative writing, music, and the visual arts.”

Aimee was born and raised in Cincinnati. Her love for the arts, especially ballet, began early in her life. She attended Vassar College, in part to be close to the world of dance in New York. Aimee majored in anthropology, and she also earned scholarships to both the Dance Theater of Harlem and the Alvin Ailey Dance Company.

After graduation, Aimee performed for two years with the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble in New York. In 1998, she came to the University of Michigan, where she earned a PhD in anthropology in 2006. In part because of her dissertation research, Aimee became involved with a shelter for young women in Detroit, working to improve social mobility and success among marginalized young African American women and studying the effects class has on such success. She also became interested in artistic expression – especially dance and creative writing – as a vehicle for social change.

In the future, Aimee plans on an academic career in the “perfect place” where she can combine her scholarly work with her love of the creative arts, community development and activism, focusing on young women and the impact of race and gender on their social mobility.

Being at CEW has enabled Aimee to work on a number of important projects. As she explains, “In the past, the impact of race has been at the forefront of my consciousness and research. Working at CEW allows me to shore up my understanding of gender and how it intersects with race to affect young women in all aspects of their lives. It’s knowledge that will make me a better, more thoughtful social activist and scholar.” In turn, CEW is benefiting from Aimee’s intelligence, enthusiasm, and infectious commitment to community development.

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Center for the Education of Women
330 East Liberty
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104-2274
www.cew.umich.edu

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“Working at CEW allows me to shore up my understanding of gender and how it intersects with race to affect young women in all aspects of their lives.”

Aimee Cox, PhD