SAW discusses feminism’s history, intersectionality in women’s forum

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Students for the Advancement of Women kicked off women’s history month with “Grab Them by the Patriarchy,” a discussion on the different waves of feminism through U.S. history. Through powerpoint presentation, SAW Vice President Bailey Guidroz dissected the different periods of feminism, from the “pretty general” first wave of general-interest based feminists to the second wave that focused more on reproductive freedoms and education.

“Before this, education was just a plan B; just something to fall back on for women if they couldn’t get married,” she explained.

Guidroz summarized the third wave of feminism, the current wave, as having goals, including expanding feminism to include rights for “not only white women,” expanding reproductive rights “even more;” and addressing gender violence.

“Third-wave feminism definitely receives critique for lack of cohesion,” Guidroz added after listing the topics.

After the slideshow, she transitioned to the topic of intersectionality with a video and opened the floor to comments afterwards by asking, “Why is intersectionality necessary?”

“I feel like it’s very easy to focus in on our experiences and our lives, so it’s easy to leave people out on the conversation. Intersectionality says ‘Hey, other people matter,’” said Kabelo Chirwa, a first-year graduate student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Chirwa cited an article he read about a Native American woman’s experience at one of the several Women’s March protests held around the U.S.

“For her, it wasn’t as empowering. It was more pushing her culture and her way of life aside, and she felt as if her point of views didn’t matter as much,” he said. “Intersectionality says ‘No; people like her were here first. People like her matter.’”

“The Women’s March definitely had some things to work on in that way. I was told that it was organized by a diverse group of people, but attracted a lot of the same type of people,” Guidroz said in response to Chirwa.

Other questions Guidroz asked included: “Why are some women against feminism? Who’s responsible for saving rape culture? Do men take interest in women’s issues?”

The questions led the discussion in the direction of addressing current issues that women face, as well as negative connotations associated with feminism.

Taz Thomas, a student who attended the forum, said he attributes negative connotations of feminism to feminism meaning different things to different people.

“Feminism has a definition, but to different people, it has different definitions,” said Thomas. “Different people have different experiences and because of that, they’re fighting for different things.”

After about an hour of discussion between the audience and herself, Guidroz asked, “What women deserve recognition that do not already get enough?”

After talking about women such as Dorothy Day, Marsha P. Johnson and the women who inspired the “Hidden Figures” movie, Guidroz added one more to the list: Helma B. Constantine, who was the first black woman to attend the University of Southwestern Louisiana after integration.

“I didn’t even know this until I walked in and read that plaque earlier, but she played a big role in desegregating this campus,” Guidroz said.

UL expands scholarship to include more out-of-state students

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The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is extending its Legacy scholarship to students whose parents attended any Louisiana state-accredited college.

Announced on the university’s website Feb. 13, the out-of-state fee-waiving scholarship formerly applied only for students whose parents attended UL Lafayette. Instead, students with one parent who received his or her associate’s degree from any Louisiana institution may receive a non-resident fee exemption; the fee is around $6,800 per semester. Legacy students may also be considered for in-state scholarship opportunities, according to the scholarship’s page.

DeWayne Bowie, Ph.D., vice president of university Enrollment Management, said the change was made after years of discussion among university officials.

“In our effort to bring some of these students home… we expanded our Legacy Scholarship to these students,” Bowie said.

According to the UL Lafayette website, the total enrollment in 2016 was 19,188 students, 1,442 of whom were out-of-state admissions. The scholarship has an annual value of $13,728.

Out-of-state students enrolled in UL Lafayette hoping to receive the scholarship must bring the required documents to the registrar’s office. Along with their birth certificate and a cover letter, students must bring a verification of their parent’s college degree from a Louisiana university. This must be a verification letter from the parent’s college or a transcript.

“A diploma won’t be sufficient,” Bowie said.

The student’s name, ULID and cellphone number must also be submitted to the office physically or via email, mail or fax.