

# FEMINIST QUEER EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

ROOTED  
AND  
BLOOMING

MARCH 23,  
2024



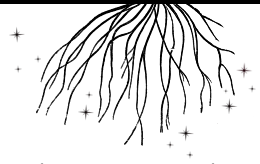
WOMEN AND GENDER  
ADVOCACY CENTER  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



PRIDE RESOURCE CENTER  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

# FEMINIST QUEER EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

## STUDENT-LED AND STUDENT-CENTERED



This conference is designed to be educational and entertaining, providing opportunities for the community to engage in conversations surrounding gender and other social justice issues. The keynote and breakout sessions allow attendees to take part in awareness raising, critical dialogue and reflection, and community building to promote gender equity at CSU and beyond.

## THIS YEAR'S THEME: ROOTED AND BLOOMING

Our theme, "Rooted and Blooming," helps us to reflect both on the necessity of theory and practice in the embodiment of social justice work, and the power that comes with highlighting Queer Theory as an integral part of an intersectional feminist framework.

The name of this conference has evolved over its 19-year history, which helps us to trace the inevitable changes of the social justice landscape. First called the "Women's Conference", and later named the "Feminist Thought and Activism Conference," we are thrilled to share the newly renamed title of the Feminist Queer Empowerment Conference. These three names take us through almost 2 decades of student-led scholarship, collaboration, and activism.

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

"The world of plants offers us such beautiful conceptualizations of human nature, particularly in terms of the growth, resilience, and connection that facilitate social change. The decision to feature the zinnia flower in this design was made carefully and intentionally. The zinnia is known for its notable diversity; the most beautiful gardens contain multiple colors and shapes, which is true for people as well. Zinnias are also highly favored by pollinators, particularly butterflies, and can thus represent the burgeoning spread of liberatory movement and praxis, from one garden to another. Additionally, zinnias have a history as a symbol of equality and justice in the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1960s, and they are able to thrive in many different environments, reminding us to stay rooted in our commitment to create futures in which we, too, can flourish wherever we are."

— Ali Owens | graphic designer, Sociology & WGS major, community organizer & activist

# SCHEDULE

**8:30-9:00**

## **Registration & Check-In**

*LSC Ballrooms | Breakfast served from 8:30-9:30*

**9:00-9:30**

## **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

*LSC Ballrooms*

**9:35-10:35**

## **Breakout Session 1**

**10:45-11:45**

## **Breakout Session 2**

**11:45-12:45**

## **Lunch, Garage Sale, and Vendors**

*LSC Ballrooms*

**1:00-2:15**

## **Keynote: Shanae Adams**

*LSC Theater*

**2:25-3:10**

## **Breakout Session 3**

**3:15-4:00**

## **Breakout Session 4**

**4:15-4:30**

## **Closing Remarks**

*LSC Ballrooms*

LOCATIONS FOR  
ALL BREAKOUT  
SESSIONS LISTED  
ON LAST PAGE

# KEYNOTE

## **SHANAE ADAMS, MA, LPCC, NCC, CIGT**

Shanae "HonestlyNae" Adams (they/them) serves their community in a variety of ways including therapist, educator, and sex-positive enthusiast. They became interested in sexuality as a teen watching *Talk Sex with Sue* and *Real Sex* on late-night TV. After joining a sexuality education club in undergrad, they developed into a well-established sexuality educator, researcher, and pleasure activist and are excited to have over 15 years in this industry. Their mission of sexuality normalization, explanation, and melanated representation drives them to prioritize the healing and experiences of QTBIPOC and femmes of color. They utilize an intersectional and indigenous approach with clients and in lectures to amplify those experiences. They are currently pursuing their Ph.D. in Clinical Sexology.



# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 1

9:35-10:35

### **Creating Queer Community in Ft. Collins**

*with Dana Rumer and Ella Smith*

Fort Collins Colorado, sometimes referred to as "Fort Closet," often lacks a visible queer community. This session will spotlight the LGBTQIAP+ community's formation here, feature prominent drag performers and community spaces, and highlight the necessity of supportive queer community for students at Colorado State University. This presentation includes an interactive 'strut the stage' segment, aiming to foster communal spirit by encouraging audience members to strut, dance, and/or roll down the stage or aisle while the audience cheers them on. Acknowledging Fort Collins' predominantly white population, we emphasize the need for inclusive queer spaces catering to diverse identities. We urge the city to improve by creating more accessible spaces for the young, non-drinking, and intersectional queer community.

### **Mental Health of Queer & Trans People**

*with Ellie Kirtland*

It is important to note that this presentation may contain sensitive topics, including mentions of suicide, queer/trans oppression, and some sexual themes. There has been a long reported history of oppression and marginalization of queer and trans people within the U.S., which has contributed to a large disparity of the mental health of these populations. To understand the ways in which we can improve mental health for these people, it is crucial to acknowledge the factors that worsen mental well-being both systematically and interpersonally, as well as the real life impacts they have. Knowing this, we can work to improve the circumstances for queer and trans people through societal and systemic changes, as well as developing skills and practices in one's personal life to combat oppressive systems. Utilizing feminist theory is key for this, as it provides a framework to view this topic in a way that promotes equity and inclusion, as well as a basis for understanding the intersecting identities that furthers marginalization and deterioration of mental health, such as racial identity, economic status, and ability.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 1

9:35-10:35

### **Latina Queer Feminism**

*with Sophia Johnson*

What is your feminism for? This question, posed by feminist Jessica Hoffman, asks feminists to look inside themselves and the feminism they stand for. Is your feminism inclusive? Is your feminism queer? Does your feminism center women of color? My presentation will explore *Mujerista*, a Latina feminist liberation theology, and the work queer women of color do that does not assimilate to current power structures. This is for the brown girls who have yet to see their culture represented in queer feminism and who wonder where they belong in this empowerment.

### **Intergroup Dialogue & Queer Feminist Praxis Workshop**

*with Jay Bates Domenech, Tory Ramos, Ix Chel Bueno, De'Neen Smith, Cindy Vo, and Madeleine Kamberg*

Through a workshop that blends Intergroup Dialogue and Queer Feminist praxis, CSU undergraduate Peer Educators from the Student Empowering and Engaging in Dialogue (SEED) Program will present on cultivating allyship and co-conspiratorship. The purpose of this work is to advance dialogical spaces to extend beyond traditional boundaries, encouraging participants to explore diverse social identity groups, engage in challenging conversations, and transition from discussion and dialogue to actionable steps.

Learning outcomes include the successful introduction of Queer Feminist frameworks to a broader audience, enhanced student engagement, relationship building, and the development of effective strategies for diversity, equity, and inclusion. These frameworks inherently acknowledge the interconnectedness of race, gender, and sexuality within social and political processes. Through dynamic components such as discussions, interactive activities, and self-reflection, participants gain insights into the complexities of allyship. Our workshops aim to promote a deeper understanding of the nuances surrounding allyship and co-conspiratorship.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 2

10:45-11:45

### **The Experiences of Transgender and Gender-Expansive Students at CSU**

*with Ella Smith, Josif Nedeljković, Archer Casper, Maia Miller, Anna Rember, Harper Hall, Ricky Winston, and Sandrin Molina*

The national debate on transgender rights – particularly for gender-nonconforming (GNC) youth – questions the legitimacy of gender affirmation. Utilizing an intersectional and transformational framework, this roundtable discussion will explore the experiences of transgender students at CSU, the challenges they face, and the University's response to these issues. We will discuss our community-based, participatory research methods, and examine emerging themes from our interviews and official CSU publications and media. We will also situate these themes in relation to creative work by queer and trans artists and writers who inspire us to celebrate CSU's trans students and develop viable and actionable recommendations for the University to improve its support. By amplifying voices and highlighting unmet needs, we aim to advocate for inclusive campus policies and practices that respect and uphold their diverse identities and lived experiences.

### **A Mosaic of Qmmunity Care: Student Responses to Anti-Trans Hate and Legislation**

*with Nora Aslan, Sammy Trout, Dana Rumer, and Ali Owens*

What does the concept of community care mean to you? What would CSU look like if it were a place where trans people could not only exist, but authentically thrive? Join the Pride Leadership Council to learn what students are advocating for on campus in response to the current political climate. In light of the increasing wave of anti-trans legislation and sentiment, we feel it is crucial to highlight the efforts students on our campus are making to counter this discrimination. Learn about student-led initiatives like trans healthcare, gender inclusive housing, the Lavender Cabinet, and the Unicorn Taskforce. We aim to open up the floor to the audience, facilitating a space for folx to brainstorm and share their ideas about what they envision in a community of care, assembling them on a board to create a mosaic that represents our collective vision for a caring community.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 2

10:45-11:45

### **Feminism & Economics**

*with Deborah Nunes*

Economics is one of the sciences with the smaller presence of women and people of color, even when compared to STEM fields. This seminar explores why women are reluctant to follow a career in economics, exposes the ways in which women's work was made invisible by economics, explains why that is a problem with broader societal consequences, and ultimately argues that the inclusion of minority voices in economic science is urgent and necessary. I present some of the unique concepts that economists study for the promotion of gender equality, such as the gender pay gap, women's glass ceiling and men's glass escalator, and the care economy debate. This seminar is a call for college students and younger generations to consider how a career in economics can provide singular tools for minority voices to make an impact on the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **Feminist Aesthetics as a Tool for Inclusion**

*with Katie Simmons*

Feminist aesthetics emerged in the 1980's as a critical framework for analyzing the gender assumptions made by traditional Western aesthetics. It asserts that women and non-binary genders have been excluded from art as participants, subjects, and intended audiences. Thus, the making and viewing of art is thoroughly gendered and should be recognized as such if we hope to broaden our conceptions of what counts as art, who makes art, and who should look at art. In order to make the arts more inclusive and accessible, feminist aesthetics considers how we can disrupt the elitist paradigm of Western aesthetics in which the white, cis-gender, able-bodied, heterosexual male reigns supreme. This presentation will focus on this history of feminist aesthetics and how it can be used to recontextualize how we see art, eschew the restrictive environments of galleries and museums, and encourage all humans to make art, interact with it, and talk about it. Furthermore, it will be detailed how feminist aesthetics is a tool not only relevant to art; it is one that can be used to critique and question nearly any historically gendered paradigm, many of which we encounter on a daily basis.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 3

2:25-3:10

### **Safety and Support: Queer & Trans Experiences with Intimate Partner Violence**

*with Grace Storm*

Interpersonal violence impacts everyone regardless of identity. Join us as we learn about how interpersonal violence impacts the queer and trans community specifically. There will be discussions about statistics/ rates of violence within the community, of oppressive systems further exacerbating violence, understandings of layers of violence, and more. There will be an emotional safety planning activity and journaling space to process the presentation. Content Warning: We will be discussing the sexual, physical, and emotional violence and trauma of lived experiences. Please do what you need to take care of yourself during this presentation and use discretion when deciding to attend this presentation.

### **Asexuality and Compulsive Heterosexuality**

*with Amber Thibeault*

What are the meanings of asexuality, heteronormativity, and compulsive heterosexuality? What exactly is attraction? Are the limited media portrayals of asexuality correct? This presentation will debunk common myths about asexuality, and take a deep dive into the "invisible" sexuality. There is so much incorrect information out there about asexuality and sexual attraction, so this presentation is everything I wish I had known when starting to question my sexuality. Although there is still much to learn and research about within these topics, join me to start the conversation and self-analysis that is crucial to understanding compulsive heterosexuality and your sexual identity.



# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 3

2:25-3:10

### **The Fetishization of Women of Color: Analyzing Media, Dating Apps, and Hookup Culture in Relation to Sexual Violence and Discomfort**

*with Balqis Nugroho*

This workshop will highlight how the fetishization of women of color is present within many aspects of contemporary society. From media portrayals, to dating apps, to hookup culture, the fetishization of women of color has caused not only discomfort for women of color but also contributes to the normalization of sexual violence towards women of color. Through a decolonized approach of the subject, participants will be able to hold discussions and analyses on the fetishization of women of color within many different realms of society. Overall the hope of this workshop is to educate and empower participants to change the way women of color are viewed within Western society. Through collective dialogue and action, attendees will be equipped to foster positive change and create safer spaces for women of color in all facets of society.

### **How Do You Find the Right Therapist for You?**

*with Natalia Delgado Paredes*

Your mental health is a root of your tree that allows for future growth. Watering the roots is of utmost importance and seeking therapy is one such way. But how do you find the right services and therapist for you? Seeking a therapist can be a challenging and overwhelming process, and due to the lack of diverse providers, this process can be especially difficult for marginalized individuals. In this workshop, we will learn the steps to seek a therapist, understand the benefits of therapy, and create awareness of what you really want and need in a therapeutic relationship. Whether it is someone that looks like you or truly understands your experience, everyone deserves to be fully seen and accepted in the therapy room.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 4

3:15-4:00

### **Establishing Culturally Relevant Leadership Styles**

*with Lyric Williams*

Each year, studies are done focused on how leaders obtain their position, retain it, and battle stereotypes. We have been answering the "What makes a leader?" question since we were kids. This question was usually answered with descriptions of the people in power we were exposed to frequently such as politicians, celebrities, or family members who take on a leadership role, and our criteria reflected what we saw in them. My goal with this presentation is to reinvent that criterion utilizing stigma and assumptions, instead of letting them be defining factors. It is known that socially nothing changes overnight and peoples' views of each other are no exception. We are going to look at a new perspective of leadership from a role model and imitation stance. This involves gratitude, practice, and reflection which are all important in finding the leader that we see in ourselves.

### **Assessing and Addressing Burnout**

*with Emily Ambrose*

Hey, you. How you holding up? In a time when we may be simultaneously over stimulated and under connected, how are we understanding what we're going through – in college, in life, in the world? Looking at the research of Drs. Amelia Nagoski and Emily Nagoski, we will understand stress, stressors, and what relatively small behaviors we can do to move through our stress cycles. When socially constructed ideas of the culture of white supremacy, gender roles, and sexual and romantic relationships create oppressive systems that weigh down on us constantly – what can we do? This workshop will help explain what and why we are burning out – and what individually and collectively, we might be able to do about it.

# WORKSHOPS

## BREAKOUT SESSION 4

3:15-4:00

### **Feminism, Queerness, and Culture: Unraveling the Privilege and Applications Behind Safe & Brave Spaces**

*with Lauren Banas*

Safe spaces are characterized by ensuring, which is often hard to do, physical and psychological safety. Alternatively, brave spaces embrace criticism and debating or dialoguing different ideas and perspectives. Research shows that safe spaces are inherently entrenched in privilege, as most every space is a brave one for marginalized identities, and dominant populations often don't consider whether a space will be psychologically or physically safe for them. This presentation will offer fundamental training techniques to enhance equitable and inclusive conversations with a focus on unraveling the privilege inherent in safe spaces. It also aims to equip participants with basic facilitative training techniques directed at dismantling barriers to inclusivity. From maintaining participant wellbeing to encouraging open dialogue, attendees will learn practical strategies to navigate privilege and facilitate meaningful conversations that embrace diverse perspectives.

### **Keynote Workshop: Continuing the Conversation and Diving Deeper**

*with Shanae Adams*

For those who want a deeper dive into the topics addressed in the keynote presentation, Shanae Adams will create a container for participants to engage in dialogue and embodied transformation. You will have the opportunity to continue the conversation and ask questions relating to decolonial queer and feminist theories, human sexuality, the nuance of QTBIPOC experiences, and how all this can inform your queer feminist praxis on campus, in the larger community, and in relationships – with others and with yourself.

# SESSION SCHEDULE & ROOM LOCATIONS

	ROOM 308-310	ROOM 312	ROOM 322	ROOM 324
<b>Session 1</b> <b>9:35-10:35</b>	<i>Creating Queer Community in Ft. Collins</i>	<i>Latina Queer Feminism</i>	<i>Mental Health of Queer and Trans People</i>	<i>Intergroup Dialogue &amp; Queer Feminist Praxis</i>
<b>Session 2</b> <b>10:45-11:45</b>	<i>Experiences of Trans and Gender- Expansive Students at CSU</i>	<i>Feminism and Economics</i>	<i>A Mosaic of Community Care: Student Responses to Anti-Trans Hate &amp; Legislation</i>	<i>Feminist Aesthetics as a Tool for Inclusion</i>
<b>Session 3</b> <b>2:25-3:10</b>	<i>How Do You Find the Right Therapist for You?</i>	<i>Asexuality &amp; Compulsive Hetero- sexuality</i>	<i>Fetishization of Women of Color</i>	<i>Safety and Support: Queer &amp; Trans Experiences with IPV</i>
<b>Session 4</b> <b>3:15-4:00</b>	<i>Assessing and Addressing Burnout</i>	<i>Establishing Culturally Relevant Leadership Styles</i>	<i>Unraveling The Privilege Behind Safe &amp; Brave Spaces</i>	<b>LONGS PEAK ROOM</b>  <i>Keynote Workshop: Continuing the Conversation and Diving Deeper</i>

**NOTES:**



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- BELL HOOKS



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