

Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour
Baltimore City WOW Festival at Notre Dame of Maryland University
October 7, 2016, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Notre Dame of Maryland University was host to the 2016 Women of the World Festival on its campus in Baltimore City on Friday and Saturday, October 7 and 8. The festival offers workshops, seminars, mentoring sessions and many other activities. The gathering also offered the opportunity for the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour to travel to a college campus.

Dr. Marylou Yam, President of the University, welcomed an audience of 20 to the Listening Tour session late on Friday afternoon. The attendees at the forum included women of all ages, individuals and representatives of women's and community advocacy organizations. They identified a wide range of issues and challenges for the women of Maryland, selected five they thought were most important, and discussed possible remedies.

The group then identified actions that could be taken to address those top five issues:

- 1. Weaknesses in the educational system that impact girls disparately, including lack of STEM preparation for girls**
 - a. Establish statewide standards for maximum class size
 - b. Establish a task force, that includes parents as well as educators, to examine all aspects of the education system to identify and eliminate sex bias
 - c. Provide training for faculty, counselors and administration to eliminate gender bias, and to encourage girls to pursue education and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)
 - d. Restore physical education, arts and music in public schools
- 2. Unequal pay, including low wages for predominately female occupations**
 - a. Enact legislation requiring employers to provide access to all employee wages, if requested by an employee.
- 3. Lack of support for LGBTQ Students**
 - a. Establish more support groups
 - b. Conduct public relations campaigns aimed at eliminating bias
 - c. Provide sensitivity training for faculty and counselors
 - d. Establish safe spaces on school and college campuses
- 4. Stigma, cost and lack of access associated with women's health, including mental health, insurance costs, women's specific health needs and those of LGBTQ community**
 - a. Establish a single-payer insurance program
 - b. Require "mental health care parity": insurance providers to designate primary mental health care providers just as they designate primary physicians

- c. Increase the number of health care clinics on campuses and in the community
- d. Provide sensitivity training for health care providers for appropriate treatment of patients with various sexual orientations and identities

5. Lack of affordable housing

- a. Explore avenues for rehabilitating and/or using existing building stock to create more safe and affordable housing
- b. Provide public and private incentives for developers; eliminate strategies for developers to avoid requirements to include affordable housing
- c. Examine best practices world wide
- d. Ensure low income tax payers are aware and able to access existing tax credits

The chart below lists all the issues that were identified during the course of the public forum and shows the number of votes each one received from those in attendance, as they considered the priority level of each issue in comparison to the others.

Number of Votes	Issue
9	Weaknesses in the educational system that impact girls disparately, including lack of STEM preparation for girls
8	Unequal Pay including low wages for predominately female occupations
6	Lack of support for LGBTQ Students
6	Stigma, cost and lack of access associated with women's health, including mental health, insurance costs, women's specific health needs and those of LGBTQ community
4	Lack of affordable housing
3	Lack of affordable child care
3	Homelessness
2	Lack of parental leave with pay
2	Need for a livable minimum wage
2	Too few women in elected and appointed leadership positions
2	Police brutality targeting minority women in low income communities
1	Need for women's health clinics especially on college campuses
1	Shelter and transitional housing for victims of domestic violence
1	Lack of support for single elderly women
0	Need for drug treatment programs that meet the needs of women with children
0	Lack of access for persons with disabilities
50	Total Votes – 16 Issues

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Notre Dame of Maryland University: Voices of Maryland Women

Photo Album







