

The FAMU AN

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Women's Edition



Defining womanhood

Kalea Sanders

Assistant Online Editor

What makes a woman a woman?

To care, to cater, to lightly toast a child's bread on Saturday morning? The mundane practice of repetition in fulfilling the needs of others?

It is an almost cynical question shrouded in misogynistic idealism that produces nothing but closed minded cognition.

Practice makes perfect. Cross your legs, fix your hair and make sure those around you never see you without a smile. Be nice. Laugh. Speak up, but not too loud. If you don't, people will think you hate the world.

I know I won't object to that statement.

Many may feel as though this perception of womanhood is dead. After 21 years of life, while simultaneously witnessing the progression of respect toward women across the world increase only a sliver, I'm here to say that this ideology is not even close to dying.

I'm surrounded by that shroud of absurdity on a daily basis. In fact, the one place I thought I would find a significantly less amount of nonsense when discussing the topic of being a woman was by joining an organization made for women, by women. Joke's on me. I was wrong.

I find the same individuals speaking on authenticity and originality pertaining to femininity continually contradicting themselves by spewing an abundance of bias; not only through words, but also through action.

Although the thought of men and women alike practicing these ideals throughout the world — specifically at my own HBCU — makes my blood boil, I believe I may have finally grasped where this self-constrained influence originates.

I won't get in too deep, but let's just say some of you folks need to unlock that childhood trauma in therapy.

So then, what is it that makes a woman a woman? Well, that answer is quite simple; be true to yourself — as corny as that sounds.

Being content with who you are, what you like, who you like, whenever, wher-



Photo courtesy of Google

ever. It quite literally doesn't matter what you say, or what you do. Nothing can make you any less of a woman than the day you realized you were one.

I've had so many people explain the things I do wrong that don't constitute the definition of always being "a lady." What does that even mean?

Voranica Joseph, a senior psychology student at Florida A&M, believes individuality plays an important role in womanhood.

"Having the strength to be different, and not feeding into what society wants us to be [is what shapes a woman]," Joseph said. "We have endured a lot throughout history, and we as women continue to preserve and be the change we want to see in our society."

Women for generations have suffered with the concept of identity. An identity crisis has swept most millennials into a frenzy over sexual identification. This dilemma files atop the already endless combat against a societal fall into the grasp of an overbearingly patriarchal institution.

Finding one's own identity outside a professional box can be extremely

difficult, especially for women. It takes someone strong and determined to be themselves, no matter the price that needs to be paid.

Jaleesa Smith, a third-year music education student, believes in the true simplicity in the definition of a woman.

"You can't put the definition of a woman inside a box," Smith said. "It's a personal feeling."

Freedom of expression is an illusion established via social media. Some form of alter ego or persona is inevitable when establishing yourself on social media. By turning oneself into a specified facade, you automatically limit yourself to displaying that specific persona, taking away from your true identity.

It is an issue many face in this world, but like most other issues, women stand front and center with this one.

Adriana Medina, a senior music student, delves into the perspective of self-identity.

"A woman can be the biggest or smallest person in the world, but as long as she claims she's a woman, who am I to say otherwise?" Medina said. "Nobody has to

tell you who you are. I can't decide that for you."

Whether or not someone feels as though being a woman can be determined by their genitals or mindset, wholeheartedly, womanhood will never be more than what an individual makes it.

I always remind myself that Rome was not built in a day. By taking small strides toward the goal of finding ourselves in womanhood, maybe our great, great, great, grandchildren will have the freedom to be completely and unapologetically authentic.

Why do white feminists ignore Black women?

Cordell Jones

Staff Writer

Feminism is an ideology that has continued to gain more recognition over last two decades. In a more straightforward explanation, feminism is the advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for women.

As the term and its movement have grown over time, divides between the stances and opinions of the movement began to show. This is the case with "white feminism" and "minority feminism."

White feminism, as described by Rafia Zakaria, the author of "Against White Feminism," is "someone who refuses to consider the role that whiteness and the racial privilege attached to it have played and continue to play in universalizing white feminist concerns, agendas, and beliefs as being those of all feminism and all feminists."

The identity that white feminism takes on is known to suppress and minimize the voices of women of color, including Black, Latina, Asian, Native American and trans women.

As the movement grows, these commu-



Photo courtesy of Fordham GSS News

nities are silenced and their issues are left unresolved, leaving many of these women to feel like they have no place in the movement at all.

Rachel Cargle, writer and activist, talks about how white feminism, among other things, is the centering of white women in the movement which leads to the separation and division.

"White women get so caught up in how they feel in a moment of WOC expressing themselves that they completely vacuum the energy, direction and point of the conversation to themselves and their feelings," Cargle wrote.

This highlights one of the many ways and reasons that cause the divide of women in the movement.

All of these factors continuously go against the main ideals of the movement, speaking against the mistreatment of all women.

A first-year psychology student at FAMU, Jordan McCrary, has strong opinions about being a Black woman in the modern-day feminist movement.

"In my opinion, [Black] women are often excluded from the advancements of the feminist movement specifically," McCrary said. "I still feel that white women benefit primarily from the movement and women of color are excluded from those benefits. As an African American woman, I can face multiple avenues of aggression: being Black, being a woman, etc., and most times it's like I have to choose the struggle. It's almost as if we don't count within the movement."

Many minority women feel their voices tend to be left to the side of the movement as a whole.

More women from these communi-

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A woman's choice

Dejana Oliver
Editor-in-Chief

Roe v. Wade provided hope to women around the country and provided a step forward bodily autonomy. However, in the last decade, legislation with the goal of dismantling what that case gave to women has become more frequent and more crippling. Now women are faced with an impossible problem: What do you do if access to healthcare is taken from you?

Legislation in Republican-controlled states has aimed to limit or take away access to abortion care. Florida, Oklahoma, Georgia, Texas, Idaho and others have passed bills similar in language, all criminalizing in some way those who get an abortion as early as six weeks after conceiving or those who perform the procedure. This means many clinics that have offered the procedure run the risk of facing criminal charges, in some cases, if they continue.

“The expected impact of closing clinics, of making abortion difficult to access, is huge. I think that the reality is that a lot

of times we talk about a woman's right to choose, and abortion is often framed as a choice. But from a reproductive justice framework, that's not enough,” Seyi Amosu, a licensed psychologist in Atlanta, said. “Reproductive justice is like the ability to decide about family planning, decide if you want to have children, but also parent the children that you have in safe communities.”

“The question isn't about choice. It's about access, because for many people the choice is irrelevant because they have no access,” she added.

For many women, not having that access can be detrimental. Haylie Grammer, an adjunct professor at Dallas College in Dallas, Texas, had a late-term abortion in 2016. When she was 20 weeks pregnant, doctors found a tumor “invading her body both externally and internally,” Grammer said in a blog post. After countless check-ups and seeing doctors in different states, she was told her child would not make it.



Photo courtesy of Oliver Doullery

The state of Texas allows abortion after 20 weeks if the pregnancy is life threatening to the mother or of the fetus has abnormalities, but after 27 weeks you cannot. So, at 25 weeks, Grammer made the decision to deliver early, knowing that she would be letting go of her baby.

However, before she could even do the heartbreaking procedure, Texas law made her go through a tumultuous experience. Her doctor had to apply for permission to

perform the C-section and Grammer had to sign documents requesting an abortion, during an already traumatic experience. Her doctor was also required to give her a pamphlet published by the State of Texas about the “consequences of abortion,” detailing how she would suffer from depression and anxiety for the rest of her life and possibly become infertile.

Grammer believes that if this happened today, it would have been so much harder in an already difficult situation.

“If this situation were to happen to me today in the state of Texas, it would be impossible to get the medical care I needed,” Grammer said. “I would have to leave the state of Texas in order to get the care needed.”

Grammer is one of many women around the country who have had to jump through hoops in order to have an abortion. Erika Christensen is the co-director of Patient Forward, an organization

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Sisterhood is powerful

Naya Campbell
Senior Writer

Behind every successful woman, there is an army of others on her team rooting for her. Many realize this early on in life with their mom at the heart of their support system, but oftentimes there is a disconnect once they enter the outside world.

The thought of being inferior kicks in and competing with other women becomes an instinct rather than uplifting one another. This goes back at least to the 1900s when women had to compete to be considered for a job. It goes back further when women would be in competition for a high-ranking husband to secure a lifestyle and protection they were prohibited to create for themselves.

Jealousy is presumed to be a woman's trait, along with the idea that women “hate” on one another because they feel as though they are subservient, but womanhood is not a monarchy; more than one queen can fit at the top.

The mindset that there can only be

one creates a barrier that stops women's progression. It is important that these myths are debunked and the narrative is reversed to shed light on the positivity that comes with sisterhood.

What everyone should understand is that women are better when they work together. Monique Jackson, a deputy director for the division of business and resource management in Washington D.C, explains the genuine relationships with the women in her life.

“I first learned about the benefits of sisterhood with my two biological sisters,” Jackson said.

“That understanding of and need for sisterhood transferred into my matriculation at Bennett College – an all women's HBCU – and my initiation into one of the “divine nine” Greek sororities.”

Women today are advancing and taking on more leadership roles. According to Fortune, which ranks America's largest companies, the number of women CEOs



Photo courtesy of Nadia Snopek - Adobe Stock
Demonstration of sisterhood and women embracing and supporting each other, feminism, unity.

running fortune 500 companies increased to 8.1% in 2021.

Imagine the rate that these numbers could increase by if all women in prominent positions mentored other successful women and lifted up other women to follow in their footsteps.

Supporting women-owned businesses across all industries can help as well; not just the hairstylist and eyelash techs. There are many businesses outside of the beauty realm that a lot of people do not know have women CEOs. It is common to see fathers pass down their businesses but we have to start rallying behind our mothers and help them to create generational wealth for their offspring too.

Lillian Elise, a single mother of two, says that calling the women in her life “supportive” would be an understatement.

“I've always had a tight circle of female friends in my life that I consider my sisters. Having that love from at least one other woman in your lifetime is a gift from God,” Elise said.

Networking to find these connections only works if you are doing it right. For men, it is mainly about collecting business cards and sharing laughs at the dinner table. For women it is a tad more diffi-

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Women on ‘The Hill’ deserve better

Charlesalyn Preston
Staff Writer

Make no mistake, women run “The Hill” at Florida A&M University. Of almost 9,000 students, 66 percent are women.

But despite making up such a large portion of FAMU's enrollment, women at FAMU experience many challenges and often feel silenced, unprotected and unsupported.

Women face several disparities in society when it comes to finance, health, and safety and all of these differences are seen on FAMU's campus.

Earlier this semester, freshman psychology major Kimora Williams pointed out to the Student Senate that the campus lacks easy, free access to menstrual health products even though residence halls on

campus receive deliveries of free condoms.

Many FAMU students also complain about the need for more student scholarships, especially since Black women carry up to 20% more student debt.

The biggest issue, though, lies in safety and sexism which are still present even with a majority female student body. Specifically, the female student body at FAMU believes that the institution should handle reported sexual assault cases better.

FAMU has a victim advocate program where it offers services such as crisis intervention, emotional support, safety planning, assistance filing for injunctions and other services. However, some

students still feel that more can be done for women who find themselves in these unfortunate circumstances.

Ashely Laurent, president of the student organization Warriors Against Rape (WAR), said that while she loves her HBCU, the university needs improvement in supporting women who have been victims of sexual assault.

“In my opinion, they focus more on how the victim could've prevented the attack rather than focusing on the attacker,” Laurent said.

“FAMU needs to take these cases more serious. It seems like they feel like women will get over these things and that the effects won't be long-lasting, but that is far from the truth. These incidents can scar



Photo courtesy of famunews.com
Women dominate FAMU's campus

people for the rest of their lives if they're not handled properly,” she added.

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Still waiting for the ‘Year of the Woman’

Kayla Walton
Staff Writer

Historically, the term “Year of the Woman” was formulated in the late 1960s. However, the term wasn't popularized in the media until 1992 when a wave of women complained that Anita Hill, who testified that Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had been sexually inappropriate with her, was mistreated by an all-male Senate Judiciary Committee [led by Rhode Island Sen. Joe Biden].

The term was used for political references, especially during voting for state officials.

Women have created space in all areas, regardless of adversity, and have engineered change in a white male-dominated world. The music industry, politics, the medical field and many others have slowly

begun to see more female representation.

Historic women such as Condoleezza Rice, who was appointed national security adviser by President George W. Bush in 2001, was the first Black woman (and the second woman ever) to hold the position. Another historic woman is the Speaker of the House, Representative Nancy Pelosi, who is the first woman to ever hold the



Photo illustration by Neil Jamieson for TIME

position.

These women and others have paved the way for others to make their own legacies.

Amanda Gorman, 24, made history last year as the youngest known inaugural poet. Gorman was 22 at the time of President Biden and Vice-President Harris' inauguration when she beautifully stole the show with her poem, “The Hill We Climb.”

Although more women are breaking many barriers, there are people who do believe women have not been getting as many rights as we should.

Bethune-Cookman University graduate student and small business owner, Haedan Patterson, mentions even though

women have more rights than before, they are still mistreated no matter how hard people try to be inclusive and make the country fair.

“... Not much has changed. Women are still getting paid less than their male counterparts, not to mention women of color are getting paid even less,” Patterson said. “Women are still underrepresented in government, entertainment, business, etc. It discourages other young women who look to seek their career in politics or throughout government.”

According to The National Partnership for Women and Families, women working full and part-time jobs make 79% of what their male counterparts earn. Also, wom-

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Judge Baker inspires

Tanasia Reed
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of Judge Tiffany Baker

On Nov. 3, 2020, Tiffany Baker became the youngest African American woman to be elected judge in the Second Judicial Circuit at 35. This was not just a huge win for Baker's law career, but a historical moment for Black women and

girls in the state of Florida.

Baker defeated her 2020 Second Judicial Circuit judge opponent by over 8,000 votes. Baker says her clean and spiritually led race for the elected position was overwhelming but an experience that she is immensely proud of.

A man who worked at the Supervisor of Elections Office informed Baker that she had 24 hours to complete missing documentation to qualify for candidacy in the election. After a conversation with Baker's mom about her campaign, he remembered Baker and went out of his way to make sure she qualified for the race. She stayed up all night to complete her paperwork and was approved to continue her campaign shortly after.

"Every time I started to doubt, God would send an angel to affirm, encourage,

lift, motivate and keep me going," said Baker.

With an emphasis on making everyone in the community confident in the state's justice system, Baker currently presides over the Juvenile Delinquency and Family Law Division. According to Leoncountyfl.gov, Baker was recently appointed to serve as a Circuit Champion by Chief Judge Jonathan Sjostrom.

In her elected position, Baker started a tie program that encourages juveniles to learn how to tie a tie for five community service hours and earn three more for wearing a tie to court. She also has a collection of ties in the courtroom where defendants without ties can take one. Another one of her programs began in January 2022, where juveniles placed on probation can learn a skill or trade for

community service hours and a source of income as a part-time job.

The Florida native was born and raised in Quincy, Fla., but relocated to Miami at 12 years old after her parents divorced. After living there for a year and a half, Baker moved to Tallahassee with her father and attended Amos P. Godby High School.

Even though she was unsure about her future career, Baker attended and graduated in 2007 from the University of Miami with a Bachelor of Science degree in finance and a minor in chemistry. She became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., the mock trial team, and Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity during her undergraduate career.

With this degree, she thought of open-

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Women taking over Marching 100

Jalynn McDuffy
Staff Writer

When you think of a member of the Florida A&M University's Marching 100, do you picture a man or a woman? If you picture a man there may be a reason.

The music industry is male dominated. Statistics prove that men make up 60.4% of all music related occupations.

FAMU's campus is not an exception seeing that 63.6% percent of music majors are men.

Despite the lack of recognition as leaders in the band, there was one woman who superseded the standard and proved she was capable. Cori Bostic became the first female drum major in the Marching 100's 72-year history.

Bostic's love of music and her goal to become a drum major was influenced heavily by her parents, both FAMU Marching 100 alumni, who she says

taught her that she can reach any goal she strives for.

The path to becoming a drum major is not an easy one, let alone for a woman. Bostic said other women have tried and failed, but the support and mentoring of these women, and other women leaders in the band, were what inspired her to keep going.

"The people who tried out before me gave me the strength, wisdom and knowledge to be able to try out again, not give up, and come back even stronger," Bostic said. "When those [young] girls are looking at me and saying I can do it, it's because I'm looking at the women who came before me who tried to do the same thing and got so close and didn't make it."

Though it took several years for a woman to hold the highest title in FAMU's

band, Bostic says it is not because women were not thought worthy for the position.

Band is known for the family style bonds and close-knit community. Everyone is expected to be accountable and uplift each other to keep that "one band, one sound" atmosphere.

A changing demographic within the Marching 100 may have also contributed to the achievement and made these bonds that much stronger for Bostic.

Bostic noticed by her senior year, more and more women were joining the band, allowing for sister-like bonds and a sense of community for the growing number of women in this space. In her own experience, Bostic remembers distinguished female leaders that followed her and pushed her along her own journey.

Members like Gabrielle Farmer and



Photo courtesy of Cori Bostic
Cori Bostic, the first female drum major at FAMU

Ariana Montgomery were key role models for Bostic, her high school section leader and drum major who also played for the Marching 100, were a crucial part of the skill and discipline she developed while at

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A woman's place is in the (White) House

Toni Christopher
Staff Writer

Women have made tremendous strides in politics over the years, yet sexism and misogyny have kept the presidency an exclusive home for men.

All 46 United States presidents have been male. This male dominance is not a result of a lack of political activity from women. In fact, in recent years, women have obtained more positions on local, state and national levels of government.

The most significant strides made by women in politics are reflected in both the executive and legislative branches of government.

According to the Center for American Progress, a record number of 142 women were elected to Congress in 2020, 118 women were elected to the House and there are over 2,000 women serving as state legislators.

Nancy Pelosi regained her position as speaker of the House in 2019, after previously serving in the role from 2007 to 2011. This not only added to her historical achievement of becoming the first woman elected to be House speaker, but made her the second person in 60 years — and first woman — to be entrusted with this position twice.

In the same year, Alexandria Ocasio Cortez became the youngest woman ever elected to Congress, Deb Haaland and Sharice Davids became the first Native American women elected and Rashida Talib and Ilhan Omar, became the first Muslim women elected.

Kamala Harris was elected as the U.S. vice president in 2020, making her the first woman — and first woman of color — to serve in this position. With Harris serving as vice president and Pelosi as speaker of the House, this is the first time in American history that the next two people in the presidential line of succession are women.

The increase of gender diversity within American politics should indicate that Americans are ready for a woman leader, but many remain skeptical about the idea of a woman president.



Photo courtesy of www.huffpost.com
For the first time in American history, two women are in the line of presidential succession.

A 2020 article published by The Conversation argued that members of the legislative branch are typically positioned to rise to higher levels of government. However, despite having obtained powerful positions in government, this has not been the case for women.

Some research suggests the hesitancy regarding a woman president stems from voters'

worry over the perception of their peers. In other words, while someone might vote for a woman president, a negative attitude toward female leadership from a neighbor would ultimately deter them from doing so.

A USA Today article read, "Seventy-one percent say they personally would be comfortable with a female president, but just 33% say their neighbors would be — a telling and perhaps more candid measure."

However, this seems like an attempt to disguise their own discomfort regarding female leadership as concern for their neighbor and shift blame from themselves. After all, if these individuals truly wanted a female president, they certainly had the opportunity to elect one at the time the USA Today poll was taken.

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Women making gains in STEM

Kayla Butler
Staff Writer

The science, technology, engineering and math [STEM] fields are dominated by men, making it hard for women to break through in these disciplines, especially in positions of leadership. Nonetheless, we're starting to break that barrier.

According to The Census, women jumped from 8% of STEM workers in 1970 to 27% in 2019. Men made up 52% of all workers in the United States but 73% of all STEM workers.

Despite years of progress and continuous proof that women are capable of positions in STEM fields, there is still a preconceived notion that certain careers are for men.

Gender roles and stereotypes tend to shape people's perception about what men and women should do in households and even careers.

Maxine Jones, director of the women's studies program at Florida State University, believes it is necessary for students to see representations of themselves in all fields.

"Male students need to know that they can become nurses and female students need to know that they can be doctors and researchers," Jones said. "It is difficult to break deep rooted gender-based generational and cultural traditions and biases of what women can do and be."

Research from the University of Houston shows that "stereotypes of girls having lower interest in computer science and engineering than boys are formed as early as six and cause gender disparities in motivation for computer science and novel activities."

Women and minorities as a whole experience a huge disparity in STEM fields and the lack of representation can continue that cycle. When more women and women of color progress in these areas, there can be an influx of ideas and

fresh perspectives.

The amount of female faculty and professors in many STEM programs can sometimes contrast with the high number of female students enrolled in them. At FAMU, specifically, there is a higher number of women in many fields such as certain majors in STEM. In 2019, 82% of graduates from the biology program were women.

Miracle Kennerly, a chemistry student at FAMU, says that FAMU and other schools would benefit from more Black women as STEM professors. Kennerly has had only two female STEM professors but says that their warm nature is necessary for classrooms.

"Hire quality professors who are Black women, women who are going to inspire girls to use STEM to monopolize their career and break into new markets," Kennerly said. "I learned that I could use chemistry to create natural hair care products. That's why it's my major. I saw a way to help my community through the things that were taught in high school from a Black woman."

While disparities are still evident, progress is definitely being made. In 2018, FAMU launched the FAMU ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Initiative with the goal of improving the campus climate for women faculty in STEM, social, and behavioral science fields. The initiative offers mentorship and development opportunities for female faculty.

Cynthia Hughes Harris, dean of FAMU's School of Allied Health Sciences, believes there will be progress.

"In general, there are more and more women entering STEM fields and it may take a while for them to rise to the top. However, as the number of women in STEM increases, I'm confident we will see

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Women's Edition

MATCH THE FACT

<p>1. MISTY COPELAND</p>	<p>A AMERICAN POLITICAL ACTIVIST, PHILOSOPHER, PROFESSOR, AND AUTHOR</p>
<p>2. MAYA ANGELOU</p>	<p>B AMERICAN LAWYER, AUTHOR, AND FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN FIRST LADY</p>
<p>3. ANGELA DAVIS</p>	<p>C AMERICAN POET, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, AND MEMOIRIST</p>
<p>4. MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE</p>	<p>D AMERICAN EDUCATOR, WOMANIST, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST, PHILANTHROPIST, AND HUMANITARIAN</p>
<p>5. MICHELLE OBAMA</p>	<p>E THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE PRINCIPAL DANCER IN AMERICAN THEATRE BALLET</p>

Two can play this game

Pam Rentz
Online Editor



Photo courtesy of Gary's Instagram @tajiagary
Artist Tajiah Gary.

The melodic art of music has united and divided people for centuries. Whether it be genre versus genre or artist versus artist, music lovers everywhere will go to war for music that they grew up with, rappers from their hometown and songs that brought them out of dark places.

An ongoing argument in the music community is the double standard between male and female artists — specifically, why are women disproportionately criticized for writing songs about disrespecting men and having sex when men can freely do the same thing?

It's not breaking news that some male artists have consistently produced hit songs that have content related to having sex with a woman — or multiple women — while treating them poorly, undermining their intelligence, calling them derogatory names and even promoting acts of sexual abuse.

Perhaps both kinds of lyrics are unethical regardless of the gender, but listeners are the ones who keep songs like these in high demand.

Misogyny is the dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women. Misogynoir is the dislike of, contempt

for, or ingrained prejudice against Black women. Both continue to create obstacle after obstacle for the music industry girlies.

Up and coming artist, Izzy Joven, says one reason this double standard causes so much controversy that the positive effects these lyrics have on women makes men angry.

"I feel like men genuinely feel threatened by the amount of women that are coming out in the industry. My male friends always complain about the City Girls, and how they're boosting girls' heads for no reason, but it's like so are the male rappers," Joven said.

Male artists are allotted more latitude in their artistry, such as more lyrical freedom and exploration between different genres and beats.

Tajiah Gary, a female artist from Atlanta, says the double standard in the music industry is driven by intimidation and it bleeds into more components of the craft other than just lyrics.

"I am a very girly person, but my artistry definitely brings out masculine perspectives of my identity. I like to rap or sing about what's real and in a lot of cases, topics such as sex, scamming [men], females getting money is real for a lot of women. People also tell me all the time that I should either choose to make R&B music or rap music, but they're not going to tell any male artist that he can't find that in between," Gary said.

An artist's gender also depicts the way in which their record label allows them to present themselves on and off the stage.

Women such as Katy Perry, Lady Gaga, Nicki Minaj and Britney Spears have broken barrier after barrier with their beyond-entertaining live performances. Following their jaw dropping shows, they were expected to keep up these "wow factor" personas to keep fans intrigued and give their record labels a multitude of options to monetize their personalities.

Lady Gaga's wild outfits became a

running joke during the past two decades. Her "bubble outfit" is an honorable mention from her performance at the 2009 House of Blues.

Nicki Minaj is a constant topic in the media for her over-the-top music videos such as the "Anaconda" video where she had a whole lotta snakes and a whole lotta dancers with big butts to go alongside them.

Britney Spears performed with a live serpent wrapped around her body during her 2001 Video Music Awards (VMAs) performance of her hit song "I'm a Slave 4 U."

All of these amazing women are remarkably talented without their wow factors. And after years of the costumes, music videos, dramatic performances, and yes, the snakes, they were "allowed" to focus less on these factors and evolve into musicians recognized first and foremost for their music.

Nicki still gives us everything and more in her music videos and Gaga comes in nothing less than stunning at all her appearances. However, in recent years, Gaga has not been correlating her music with her outfits and Nicki has been staying true to her flow without shocking her fans with anything more provocative than they've already seen.

Female artists are pressured and even sometimes required to create outstanding rapport among the public as to why they should bother with their existence as an aspiring artist.

There are strict guidelines in the music industry for female artists. Whether these guidelines are clear or imaginary is up for debate. Women must follow these guidelines in efforts to just be heard.

Sing well, but sing differently than everybody else, but not too differently because people won't listen if it's too unfamiliar.

Once they've been heard, they must be larger than life to be seen.

They must do something that will have

the media talking and people watching. A dress made out of meat, a bright pink wig with matching pumps, an entire Candy Land themed performance, and probably something to do with a goddamn snake.

After checking a long list of boxes and making all the right impressions (and a few bad ones for the tabloids), women will finally have the leash of the music industry loosened inch by inch. They will then be allowed to maneuver through the field with more autonomy.

Highlighting the over-the-top measures that women are subjected to does not negate the hard work that male artists put in. It also does not insinuate male artists have no personality, alter egos, or stage presence.

Kanye's cockiness and Harry Styles' whimsical wardrobe are prevalent factors in their celebrity personas. But Styles' clothes are one of his only wow factors beyond his singing. And Kanye's cockiness and disregard for others (paparazzi, Stormi, and Taylor Swift to name a few), says more about the death grip that the patriarchy has on the music industry more than it says anything about Kanye's character.

The public and the industry allow Kanye to wreak havoc upon anybody he pleases because his douchebag persona complements the behavior.

Rihanna coined herself a "Good Girl Gone Bad" back in 2007, but it's safe to say that she would not have been allotted the space to publicly humiliate whoever she pleased with no consequences just because of an album's title.

This argument can be summarized into "what's good for the goose is good for the gander," — an old phrase meaning something that what is OK for one person should be OK for another person.

Up and coming male rapper, DKOMX, 18, agrees that women are judged more harshly in the industry, but regardless of the misogyny they face, in the coming

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Freedom unchained

Kyla Hubbard
Lifestyles Editor

When the feminist movement started, women engaged in intense discussion and sought to abandon social norms, earn respect and gain political rights. Today, the movement has transformed to include physical liberation and women are finding new ways of breaking from patriarchal standards.

The modern-day feminist movement is gaining traction on social media and women are seeking sexual revolution through discussion, exploration and critical thinking.

The confidence and control women demanded over their bodies heavily affected the role of women in society and their ability to speak up for themselves. In the early fight for women's rights, things like the right to choose and to use contracep-



Photo courtesy of Womanizer Toys|Unsplash
Women are turning to social media to enhance their sexuality.

tives like birth control allowed women to practice the same sexual freedom as men.

With the increased access to Planned Parenthood and other health clinics, women gained a voice and resources to

deal with their sexual lives freely.

Women everywhere are now able to easily consume information from other women and professionals about their experiences, bodies, sexuality and thinking. With various social media apps like Reddit, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, Youtube or Twitch, there's a special community for everyone.

Argie Poulias, a psychotherapist and life coach in Florida, believes that the internet allows the conversation about sex to be less taboo.

"Young people have grown up really confused about the role of sex and feel like they have fit in with what society tells them about sex," she said. "There are things like religious views and misogynistic views that make sexuality for women

portrayed as a bad, shameful thing, that frankly men don't have to deal with. I think healthy sexuality and getting comfortable with it is very important."

Noella Williams, a graduating senior at Florida A&M University, agrees that the internet has heavily influenced the way she approaches discussions and understandings of her sexuality and identity.

"Social media encouraged me to feel open to having discussions revolving [around] my sexuality and gender identity," Williams said. "For example, my TikTok algorithm tends to place Black and queer creators onto my FYP that are creating content that revolves around conversations about queer identity, sexual liberation and navigating your sexuality."

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The social media effect

Jaelen Patrick
Opinions Editor

Social media has taken society by storm. According to a survey conducted by University of Nevada's School of Medicine, over 90% of teenagers use social media and approximately 75% have at least one social media profile by the age of 17.

While social media has enabled people to build relationships, express themselves and become more educated, it also has downsides.

Social media is not as much of a hobby as it was before, but more of a guidebook to how you should look, act and perceive yourself. Unfortunately, this has had a detrimental effect on the way women — young women and girls in particular — view themselves.

As women scroll through their feed,

they are unknowingly comparing themselves to what they see, affecting their self-esteem. This leads women to adopt traits that are unhealthy as they compare themselves to unrealistic beauty standards that they are exposed to online.

Precious Robles, a third-year pre-physical therapy major at Florida A&M University, recalls a time where she witnessed this happen.

"I do feel like women compare themselves to social media and what other females look like," Robles said. "I had a friend who used to compare herself to other people and she had a lot of issues dealing with that, but I have seen it happen before and it always has to do with social media."

Another study done by behavioral scientist Clarissa Silva suggests that 60 percent of people using social media reported that it has impacted their self-esteem in a negative way.

Nowadays, you will rarely catch someone posting a picture or video that does not utilize a filter or has not been edited even the slightest bit. More and more women want to appear just as perfect as the women they compare themselves to, and fear others seeing their flaws.

Some women no longer bother to post anything as they want to avoid being judged altogether.

The idea of women trying to meet unrealistic beauty standards even goes beyond social media. Today, some women



Photo courtesy of dailyillini.com

won't dare leave the house without make-
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Body positivity is a challenge

Jazlen Patrick
Opinions Editor

If you were to take a look back into the early 2000s, you'd see the ideal body type for a woman: a small waist, small legs, small arms. Overall, a slim figure.

Now, in the year 2022, that has seemed to change, but not to a more realistic, relatable or diverse standard.

Although we still see this slim figure in modern society — especially in the fashion industry — the stereotypical ideal image for a woman on social media is large breasts, a small waist, wide hips, thick thighs, and a large butt.

This "hourglass" shape has been around for years, but in the last couple of years it has been prioritized and idolized in social media culture.

You may think that straying away from the unnaturally skinny body type is a step in the right direction, but argumentatively, praising a specific body type in general

can cause the same issues for women as it has in the past — especially one that is unrealistic for most.

Unfortunately, this creates no "in-between" for women with natural bodies to feel comfortable and accepted.

Social media's portrayal of the hourglass body type has young women wanting to achieve the typical influencer and celebrity Kim Kardashian shape because of how it is glorified.

Young women all around the world have taken it upon themselves to achieve this look with plastic surgeries, like Brazilian butt lifts (BBLs). This market that has seen exponential growth since 2020.

According to Business Insider, "In 2020, surgeons performed 40,000 butt augmentation procedures that brought in \$140 million worth of revenue ... the number of butt augmentation surgeries



Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock
Body positivity, woman looking at herself in the mirror.

increased 90.3% between 2015 to 2019."

However, this new "look" is not the only changing beauty norm.

Another popular trend that has been growing in popularity is fuller, softer

lips. Although this one is more common among women of color, especially those of African descent, it is still one that women look to surgical professionals to help them attain.

According to plastic surgeon Dr. George Sanders, "recent statistics from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reveal that 27,000 lip augmentation procedures were performed last year." This revealed that a lip augmentation procedure was performed nearly every 20 minutes.

Fashion and beauty industries take advantage of the popular trends created by society and capitalize on them in marketing and producing their products. This can cause women to change their looks to what they feel "acceptable" and what is seen as "beautiful" by society.

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FAMU's female athletes: Separate and unequal

Sydney Bellamy
Staff Writer



Photo courtesy of @famu_softball and @famualetics
FAMU Softball Team

In 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments was passed to ensure in part that women and men participating in athletics get an equal opportunity. Yet 50 years later, women's athletic teams still

struggle to receive the same support as male athletic teams.

Data has shown that women's athletic teams across the country get less support than men's athletic teams.

Is the same true for with Florida A&M's athletic department?

FAMU has a total of eight women's teams, including a bowling team that competed in the Southwestern Athletic Conference round-up and a volleyball team that won the SWAC championship.

Although FAMU has a plethora of teams that are all accomplishing noteworthy things, the women's teams are not receiving the amount of support they should be receiving on game day.

FAMU is a school that prides itself on community and emphasizes a close knit "FAMULY" feel, but freshman tennis player Sierra Sandy says she experiences something very different as a female athlete.

"We definitely get support over social

media, but when we have games and events that same support isn't there," Sandy said.

Men's teams on our campus are heavily supported, from baseball to football and everything in between. FAMU students love to pack the pit alongside the "Incomparable Marching 100" in Al Lawson and ready to send the opponent home with a loss, so why don't we see this when the women's basketball team plays before the men?

According to Omari Rasheed, a first year psychology student at FAMU, the women's basketball team is not receiving the same packed pit as the men's team.

"The team gets little support from fellow Rattlers," Rasheed said. "I believe it is due to the stereotype of being less athletic, our women's teams are just as talented and deserve the same amount of support."

On a national level, women's sports

teams are receiving the same low percentage of news coverage as they did four decades ago. The most recent study on this matter shows that coverage of women's sports on ESPN and other major news sources is at an all time low of 5.4 percent.

Although this lack of support is an issue all over the nation, we have to make change in our community first. As FAMU students, faculty and staff, we have to start showing up for our women's teams. They deserve the same consistent support that we show our men's teams.

Recently, Thai Floyd, a FAMU alumna and sports journalist, tweeted on what she hopes to see in the near future for women's athletics on the HBCU level.

"I wish that the HBCU All-Star Game also had a game for women as well," Floyd said. "There are so many great players that deserve the platform and exposure," Floyd said.

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FAMU's cheer team — separate and not equal

Jada Henderson
Staff Writer

Florida A&M University cheerleaders — highly visible at football and basketball games, and oftentimes at monthly convocations — are the only members of an athletic department team who do not receive any scholarship support.

To make matters worse, cheerleaders for football are expected to pay dues \$1,500 at the start of each school year while basketball cheerleader dues are \$850, according to current cheerleaders.

What is the difference between other sports and cheer? Some may say the involvement of a ball, and others may say the outfits.

According to NCAA.org, “A sport shall be defined as an institutional activity, sponsored at the varsity or club level, involving physical exertion for the purpose

of competition against teams or individuals within an intercollegiate competition structure.”

FAMU cheerleader Sierra Ross believes that cheerleading is indeed a sport.

“I do feel as if people not viewing cheer as a sport has a major part in why we do not get scholarships,” Ross said. “People often do not understand what we as athletes go through when it comes to cheering; just because we are not throwing a football or shooting a basketball does not validate that we are not a sport.”

Brandi Tatum-Fedrick, coach of FAMU's cheerleading team, did not reply to emails seeking comment and an explanation as to why the athletic department treats the cheer team different from all its other sports.



Photo courtesy of FAMU Cheer Instagram
FAMU Cheer Team

If you go to the athletic department's website, you will find cheerleading listed among the women's sports. FAMU cheerleaders, for whatever reason, do not receive scholarships while they are offered to FAMU students participating in every other sport.

FAMU cheerleader Ashlynn Bole said that a scholarship would make a significant difference financially — even it was only a partial scholarship.

“If swimming can be considered a sport, then cheer where we flip, jump and lift and throw human bodies can be a sport. We risk our lives cheering every day just like football players, so what is the difference?” Bole said.

“We do not get any scholarships. I wish we did because it would help the team and the coaches. There are no monetary incentives; for example, almost everyone who plays another sport gets at least a partial scholarship to help them significantly financially,” Bole said.

“Besides our love for cheer and each

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Female athletes deserve better pay

Vanessa Laurent
Senior Writer



Photo courtesy of istockphoto.com

Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the Olympic Games, once said, “No matter how toughened a sportswoman may be, her organism is not cut out to sustain certain shocks.”

This thinking still exists in the controversial debate around gender and equal pay in sports.

While pay for women has improved over the years, the gap is still unacceptable.

According to Forbes, Women National

Basketball Association players make an average of \$71,635 a year, while the average National Basketball Association salary is \$6.4 million.

There are people out there who would blame the gender pay gap in sports on women. We all hear comments like “women aren't as entertaining,” “women aren't as fast” and “women don't dunk,” but the women's game is not to blame.

In many sports, the gender pay gap is the result of sexist beliefs and decades of underfunding.

Amanda Batty, a former professional biker and an advocate for female athletes, says that your gender shouldn't have to be the biggest obstacle in achieving your dream.

“Growing up, I was told I wasn't good enough because I was a girl,” Batty said. “It didn't matter that some of the boys had never touched a bike before. It was about gender not talent. Being a woman

in sports has left me with more questions than answers.”

Women have been fighting for equality in many spheres throughout history, longing for rights equal to their male counterparts. Women were once not even permitted to participate in the Olympic Games. When women were finally allowed to participate in sports, many had to go through gender testing to assure they were not men trying to cheat their way around.

Unequal pay for female athletes is a violation of the rights they have worked so hard to attain.

Not only is creating a fair future for women's sports important, but recognizing inequalities that currently exist, and understanding how they came to be, is essential for women entering and staying in the sports industry.

The Women's Sports Foundation says that by the age of 14, girls drop out

of sports at two times the rate of boys. Another survey shows that 51 percent of women quit playing sports by the age of 17.

It's possible many women do not see sports as a space for them. Even if women do stay in their sports, they generally don't think they are worthy of professional level play since they aren't likely to see themselves on television; only four percent of all sports media coverage is devoted to women's sports.

It's also difficult for female athletes to continue in the world of sports when funding is very limited, which could be another reason for the lack of representation.

A Canadian Press report revealed that not only is funding the largest barrier for women participating in sports, but that men get a majority of athletic scholarships from universities.

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When will the fight be over?

Kayla McKinney
Managing Editor

Centuries of women have been trying to uproot the misogyny ridden foundation of society, picking up their pitchforks and taking to the streets in demand for basic human rights, individual freedoms and a level playing field.

Though we have better education and more freedoms than once allowed to women, have the battles waged against gender inequality been won?

I think it would be easier for women if there was a simple answer but, unfortunately, a woman's experience is anything but simple.

Each generation faces different challenges as society adapts. Our grandmother's generation were simply fighting to be heard in a world where women were supposed to be silent and reserved. They achieved their goal with the suffrage movement.

Likewise, women from our mother's generation took up a different fight to be seen and gain representation. Through them, women's numbers in the workforce increased tenfold.

If you ask both generations, women today have it much easier, see many more opportunities, and are progressing quickly. However, modern age women believe more challenges and societal pressures exist today.

Jessica Clark, associate professor of classics at Florida State University believes, “We've yet to achieve gender equality or parity equality.”

It would be inconsiderate to say the advances made by previous generations of women were not enough, but as society progresses so do our demands.

Yes, women today are seen in positions of power and have platforms for which they can vouch for themselves, but does this mean anything if they still lack basic tenets like respect, appreciation, freedom to make decisions and a general belief that they do not belong in certain spaces?

These discrepancies perpetuate false narratives and stereotypes about the



Photo courtesy of Bryan Woolston / Reuters file

woman's experience and hold women back from achieving more.

The stereotype that women can not successfully operate in higher positions, along with societal gender norms in the home, are one of the reasons women still do not receive wages on scale equal to that of their male counterparts.

“[There] still seems to be a prevailing belief that women are mothers and women want to be mothers,” said Clark.

At the same time, we are still fighting battles our parents and grandparents were fighting for.

Sexual violence and abuse against women is like a genetic trait that is passed down through each generation, no matter the ethnicity.

The World Health Organization states one in three women fall victim to some form of physical or sexual violence by a significant other, or sexual violence from someone outside of a relationship.

Another quarter of women between the ages of 15 and 24 that have experienced a relationship would have undergone some form of sexual violence by a partner by their mid-twenties.

In other words, everyone knows at least one woman — probably more — that has experienced a sexual assault.

It is hard to measure whether the collective efforts of women have amounted to anything when old obstacles currently threaten our ability to live while new barriers continue to present themselves by the day.

“Not only are women not able to claim their rights, but when they attempt to, it seems as if the law is not on their side,” Clark said.

Many men will try to justify violence towards women by blaming a woman's body type, fashion choices or mere existence in a particular space.

When women do speak up and demand justice, they are frequently disregarded. National surveys suggest less than two percent of reported sexual assault cases lead to a conviction.

Men in government also constantly degrade and disenfranchise women when they create insulting and insensitive legislation.

At least sixteen states have created laws that restrict a woman of her sexual

and reproductive rights and limit a woman's ability to make basic decisions. Many more states are trying to pass legislation that would aim to reverse legal measures hundreds of women fight tirelessly to attain.

Why, through every period in history, have women been reduced to nothing but their anatomy? And, why does it seem like there is a trade off for women to get rights and protections?

Part of the problem could lie on women. You could ask one thousand women what an equal world looks like and get one thousand different answers.

There are women today who say gender roles prevent us from equality, while others believe tasks like taking out the trash is an inherently male chore. In the same way, some say they want similar opportunities men are allowed, but if someone suggests women should be drafted to go to war this ideology falls flat.

By this standard, it seems what women want is empathy and understanding more than equality.

Still, it is difficult to expect men to treat women equally when women don't even know what that looks like to them.

Furthermore, it is hard to define equality when the meaning is constantly changing.

If we look at society through the lens of trying to keep up with the requests and demands of each generation of women, can we honestly say society is so far behind with granting women what it believes is equality?

At the same time, is it realistic for women to expect society to be ready, or quick, to support equality in all aspects when there is no precedent?

As frustrating as it may be, women have to accept that the current constructs of society took centuries to create and will probably take twice as long to undo. Trying to enforce new social norms will, naturally, meet a lot of pushback from

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