

XX

A 1973 Newsletter, Revitalized.

Feminist News, Today

On December 19, 2019, LMU hosted the sixth Democratic Debate! An important issue among candidates is student debt. As we know, student debt can be a major barrier to those interested in pursuing higher education and those who are trying to financially survive post-graduation. According to the American Association of University Women (AAUW), nearly two-thirds of outstanding student debt is held by women. Additionally, as Elizabeth Warren points out, student debt is an issue of racial injustice due to the fact that "half of Black borrowers and a third of Latinx borrowers default on their loans within 20 years."

Democratic presidential candidates, including Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Joe Biden, have been discussing their visions of alleviating student debt. If Bernie Sanders is elected as president, he plans to wipe out all student debt, no matter the income level, by taxing Wall Street transactions. Elizabeth Warren plans to provide partial relief for those with a household income of less than \$250,000 and complete relief to those who make less than \$100,000. This money would come from taxing the top .1%. On the other hand, Joe Biden has the least ambitious vision of student debt relief out of the three candidates; he promises to provide relief to those who make less than \$25,000. In Biden's plan, the rest of the population would help with repayment.

Student Spotlight

One of our very own Women's and Gender Studies majors, Jolie Brownell, took the spotlight of a January edition of TEDx Talks. Jolie artfully uses her own poetry as a way to start a conversation on how "intersections of our identities influence the way we walk through and are perceived by this world." To watch the TEDxSalem talk, click the image of Jolie Brownell on the right!

Faculty Spotlight

For this month's spotlight, the XX interviewed Dr. Tahereh Aghdasifar! Dr. Aghdasifar received her bachelor's in Middle Eastern Studies with a minor in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. She completed her M.A. in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Georgia State University. Dr. Aghdasifar continued her education at Emory University, where she earned her Ph.D. in cultural studies with a certificate in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality. Dr. Aghdasifar is working on numerous unique and in-depth projects regarding the experience of women of color and queer women of color. Currently, one of Dr. Aghdasifar's main projects is exploring "how women experience sociality while nude in communal dressing rooms in Iranian bra shops and how Iranian economic policies are impacting women's access to such spaces." Dr. Aghdasifar says her interest in this niche area of study is attributed to the fact that women can "experience erotic pleasure" in these spaces "but outside the confines of identity politics." Beyond her extensive research, Dr. Aghdasifar offers four courses in the Department: Gender, Race and Sexuality, Women in Global Communities, Gender and Social Movements, and Genders and Sexualities: Queer of Color Critique. When asked to tell a fun fact about herself, Dr. Aghdasifar told the XX that she was once the only woman in a men's rugby league!

