

Name: Dean J. Johnson, Dir. Peace and Conflict Studies/Prof. of Philosophy/Affiliated Faculty Women's and Gender Studies

Title of Project: Sexual Violence and Transformative Change: Events with Aishah Simmons

Amount Awarded: \$5000

Select the key priority areas of the Forum for which the proposal intended to address:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff (AFSCME) | <input type="checkbox"/> PT Employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Students - Phila |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People of Color/Non White | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Women | <input type="checkbox"/> Intern'l Students |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LGBTQA | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Trad Student |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual Assault Policies and Procedures | |

Brief description and goals and outcomes of your project:

Aishah Simmons is a leading Black feminist scholar, writer, director, and activist who work expands decades in addressing sexual violence was brought to campus virtually for two experiences: 1) The screening of "NO!: The Rape Documentary" and a public interview and 2) a workshop, "Transformative Storytelling to Ignite Social Change A workshop with Aishah Simmons." The events took place February 24 and 25. The program was sponsored by Peace and Conflict Studies, the Department of Philosophy, the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, and the Center for Women and Gender Equity. The Dowdy Multicultural Center and the Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy also provided support and added their names to the list of hosts.

Goal 1: To raise awareness about sexual violence and how it impacts the whole of campus, especially women, transgender, and non-binary people.

Goal 2: To allow the campus- and wider-communities to engage in a conversation with an expert in sexual violence who is also an award-winning director, author, and producer.

Goal 3: To provide a learning experience for people who want to tell their stories as a way engage in social change.

Goal 4: To provide a model of conflict transformation and civic engagement to the larger community.

Description of procedures, steps, timeline:

In late May at the request of the grant committee and after conversations with the others hosts and Ms. Simmons, it was decided to hold the events virtually. This ultimately saved the university some monies because there were no travel or accommodation fees for the speaker. Just before the Fall 2020 semester the hosts collaborated and confirmed with Ms. Simmons on dates for February 2021. We began to develop ads and notified constituents of the planned events. See images below. In January, Johnson, Liam Lair, Sendy Alcidonis, and Tess Benser discussed recruitment of a student or two to work to take part of the public interview ultimately deciding on Yami Reyes. About two weeks out from the event there was an ad push through social media, constituent emails, and classes about the event. The zooms were originally created as regular meetings. The day before the screening it was decided to switch the zoom meeting to a webinar to help protect the privacy of those in attendance. A captioner was also added to the event.

Analysis of the success of the project and results achieved:

Overall, the events were a great success. Reported feedback from those who attended the events was overwhelmingly positive. Students who attended the events reported greater awareness and energy around sexual violence. Those who attended the workshop felt empowered and challenged. It seems all of the goals were met. There are always new things to learn when hosting such events. Here are a few: 1) It seems like the numbers for attendance were down. It is not unusual for past events like the screen and interview to draw 150-200 participants. The program numbers were about 50. There are

a number of factors that likely place in to this: a) zoom fatigue, timing of the event, and the subject. On the last point this was a program about sexual violence. If you are a student who is living in a space with others and have no privacy or with someone who is abusive then attending such an event might be difficult. It is much easier to slip away to a “campus event” that is live on campus than to attend in a less-than-friendly home environment. 2) Making arrangements for captioning is much more difficult than it should be and takes resources. In the future I would recommend to the committee public events should have captioning or signing built in to the award. 3) Workshops via zoom can be successful and workshops on zoom may have less appeal due to fatigue.

Overall, the events were very successful. Thank you for your support for this important work.



NO! THE RAPE DOCUMENTARY
Break the Silence, Stop All Forms of Sexual and Gender-based Violence

An Evening With Aishah Shahidah Simmons

Feb. 24, 6pm-8:30pm

Join us for a virtual screening of *NO! The Rape Documentary* followed by a public interview.



Scan to Register

Free and open to the public.
Registration required.
Go to: <https://bit.ly/2YioV6m>



photo by: [Julie Yarbrough](#)

Aishah Shahidah Simmons is a leading Black feminist scholar, writer, director, and activist whose work spans decades in addressing sexual violence.

About the film: *NO! The Rape Documentary* is the 2006-released Ford Foundation-funded, groundbreaking film about intra-racial rape, accountability, and healing in Black communities. Produced, written, and directed over a period of 12 years, by child sexual abuse and adult rape survivor, Aishah Shahidah Simmons, this internationally-acclaimed, award-winning film also explores how rape is used as a weapon of homophobia.

Hosted by: Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of Philosophy, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Center for Women and Gender Equity, Dowdy Multicultural Center, and Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy.
Supported with assistance from: Innovation in Diversity & Inclusion Grant.
Contact: Dr. Dean Johnson @ djohnson4@wcupa.edu. West Chester University of Pennsylvania

Sexual Violence and Transformative Change
A Workshop With Aishah Shahidah Simmons

Feb. 25, 9am-12pm



photo by: [Julie Yarbrough](#)

During this workshop participants will have opportunities to talk about their life experience and be instructed in ways to tell their stories in order to create change. The workshop includes components of body work and contemplation.

Aishah Shahidah Simmons is a leading Black feminist scholar, writer, director, and activist whose work spans decades in addressing sexual violence. She is the editor of *Love WITH Accountability: Digging Up the Roots of Child Sexual Abuse*; winner of the 2020 Lambda Literary Award (Lammy) for Best LGBTQ Anthology. Simmons is also the producer, writer, and director of *NO! The Rape Documentary* a film about intra-racial rape, accountability, and healing in Black communities.

Free and open to West Chester University participants.
Registration required and limited to 30.
Go to: <https://bit.ly/3iUtxJm>



Scan to Register

Hosted by: Peace and Conflict Studies, Department of Philosophy, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Center for Women and Gender Equity, Dowdy Multicultural Center, and Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy.
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