

gem
GENDER EMPOWERMENT CENTRE

annual report

2024-2025

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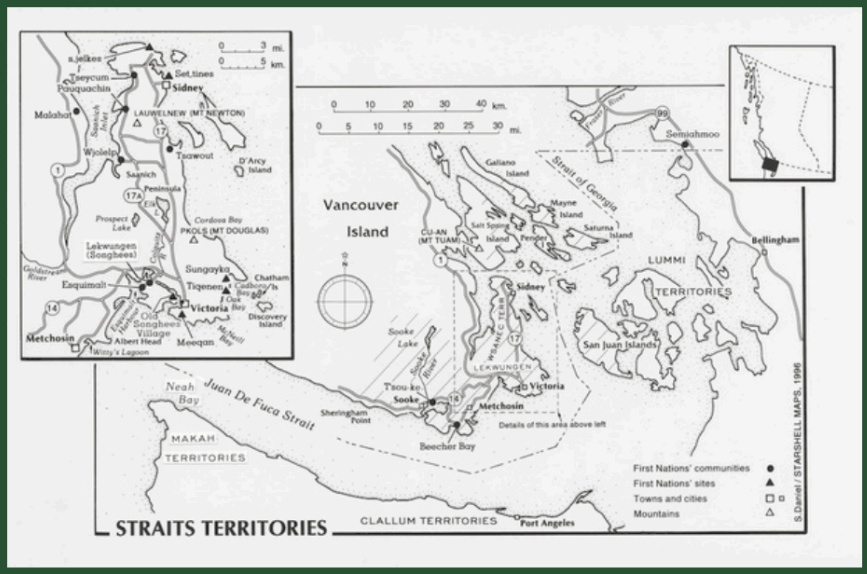
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territory acknowledgement

UVic, the UVSS, and surrounding communities are built on the stolen lands of the lək̓ʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ peoples: the original residents of these territories, who continue to live in relationship with these lands and their more-than-human inhabitants.



As a settler organization on these territories, we benefit from the historic and ongoing displacement and genocide of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island — even while we work to address the harms of these systems.

Decolonization is a crucial part of our work as an anti-oppressive and intersectional feminist organization. In our focus on issues of misogyny and queer- and transphobia, we must center the understanding that colonialism, imperialism and white supremacy are at the root of the cisheteropatriachy.

Pre-colonization, acknowledging and celebrating diversity and fluidity of gender, sexuality and relationships was common in many Indigenous teachings and community practices, both here on Turtle Island and across the world.

As a key part of the settler-colonial project, Euro-Christian ideologies of rigidly binary gender, heteronormativity, and the social roles associated with them were imposed on Indigenous peoples as a means of categorization and control. This occurred through forceful indoctrination, as well as through the specific targeting of those we would label in English as “queer,” “trans,” or “gender nonconforming”— who were often valued as leaders and spiritual practitioners in their communities.

Incorporating a decolonial framework at GEM is a never-ending practice that requires humility, relationship building, and deep learning.

This year, as we continue to witness how imperialism has driven devastation of land and life in Gaza, Sudan, Tigray, Congo, Yemen, Syria, the Philippines and elsewhere — we as a collective have been radically challenged to reflect on how we are implicated in colonial violence, and called to expand the intersections of our feminist theory and praxis. This endeavor requires us to take on a global feminist perspective, taking leadership from Black, Indigenous, and majority world feminists and moving in solidarity with their liberation struggles.

who we are

The Gender Empowerment Centre (also known as GEM)

is a UVSS advocacy group that provides resources and programming focused on the needs of self-identified women, non-binary, trans and gender nonconforming students and community members.

Our drop-in space, located in room B107 of the Student Union Building, is central to our operations, providing a comfortable place for students and community members to study, organize, socialize, and relax. Visitors are welcome to make use of our kitchen, enjoy a selection of snacks and tea, and chill on our nap-worthy couch.

We operate as a collective, using an intersectional feminist, anti-oppressive, and sex positive framework. We host monthly collective meetings where our members discuss goings-on at the Centre, plan future events and programming, and work together to ensure that we are acting in alignment with our values. These meetings utilize a consensus-based decision making model — meaning that all attendees have an opportunity to voice their perspectives, and decisions are only finalized when we reach a conclusion that is unanimously agreed on.

The GEM has existed under several names since the 1980's; first as the 'Women's Centre', and subsequently, becoming the 'Third Space' in 2014. In 2018, we rebranded as the Gender Empowerment Centre – a change designed to better reflect the diverse range of students that we serve. Over these years, we have been dedicated advocates for those marginalized by patriarchy, working to raise awareness of various social justice issues and create a safe and welcoming community on campus.



our mission:

To be a strong, intersectional feminist voice on campus.

our vision:

To create social change through political action, education, and support of University of Victoria self-identified women, trans, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons, and those who share the values of intersectional feminism, bodily autonomy, collective liberation, and sex positivity.

our purpose:

1. To provide a physical space for self-identified women, non-binary, trans and gender non-conforming people, facilitating networking among those who share the values of anti-oppression, sex positivity & intersectional feminism.
2. To offer programs and promote issues in keeping with the centre's core values of anti-oppression, sex positivity & intersectional feminism.
3. To provide a central location for the distribution of information & cater to our community.
4. To maintain a resource library for student and public use.

who we are

our values

intersectional feminism

Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this term describes a theoretical and practical framework using gendered analysis to highlight the interconnectedness of patriarchy to other oppressive systems.

These systems include white supremacy, capitalism, colonization, cisheteronormativity, environmental extractivism, ableism, and fatphobia. Intersectional feminism centers the voices, experiences, needs, and futures of women and gender diverse peoples whose patriarchal oppression is exacerbated by overlapping inequalities.

bodily autonomy

Recognizing that people are experts of their own experiences and needs, and advocating for people's right to make informed choices about their bodies.

We advocate for bodily autonomy while holding the nuances of how personal choices impact self and others, and are shaped by systems of power. We assert that bodily autonomy is a necessary piece of personal and collective wellness, and take a consent-based, harm-reduction approach to bodily autonomy rooted in education, provision of resources, and compassionate support.

collective liberation

We acknowledge the interconnected nature in which personal, structural and systemic oppression exists. It's through this understanding we assert that true liberation must be built on inter-community resistance.

We understand collaboration with other student union groups, marginalized communities, and global activist movements as a foundational component to our projects. As a collective, we will work to hold ourselves and each other accountable in recognizing and challenging individually held biases and judgements, knowing their existence stands in opposition to these goals, and thus, our freedom.

sex positivity

The encouragement of intentional, informed, and resourced sexual expression and exploration. Sex positivity asserts that diverse sexual and romantic expressions can be healing and empowering, and places emphasis on enthusiastic consent and open communication.

We advocate for empowered and safer exploration of one's sexuality, through education, compassionate support, and fostering open conversations. We hold space for the nuances of power dynamics and potential for harm in sexual and romantic relationships. Our definition encompasses those who identify with aromanticism, asexuality, as well as those who choose to refrain from sex and/ or romantic relationships.

who we are

our collective

We are so lucky to have a dynamic group of students and community members involved with the GEM! Our space in SUB B107 continues to be a home-away-from-home for many of our general members. Throughout the year, we have maintained an active collective of approximately 17 members, who regularly volunteer with programming and attend meetings. Through our events across the school year, and our safer sex and menstrual supply programs, we are connected with hundreds of people from across our campus!

general membership

Our general members consist of:

- all people who self-identify as women, non-binary, trans, Two-Spirit, or gender non-conforming;
- everyone who upholds the values of intersectional feminism, collective liberation, bodily autonomy and sex-positivity and are registered at the University of Victoria;
- and faculty, staff, alumni, and community members at large who align with the purposes of the GEM.

collective membership

Collective members are general members who meet at least one of the three following criteria:

1. Have attended at least two collective meetings in the past 12 months;
2. Have volunteered for at least one event in the past 12 months; and/ or
3. Have otherwise maintained a relationship to the collective through ongoing presence in the GEM space.



who we are

our 2024-25 team







outreach & communications coordinator

Beau Houle (they/ them)

communications assistant

Fernanda Solorza (she/her)

board representative

Leslie Harvey (they/them)

Summer 2024:
Prym Goodacre (she/her)

work study staff

library & archive manager: Georgia DeSouza (she/ her)

resource coordinators: Jazz Nielsen (they/ them) & Sahara Jared (she/her)



summary & highlights

2024-25 was a busy, exciting year for us at GEM! We made some awesome updates to our space; poured a lot of love into our reproductive and sexual wellness programming; and did a LOT of crafting (collaging, especially). We hosted many collaborative events, including an International Safe Abortion Day Celebration; a film screening and discussion for NDRAVAW; and premiered our very own Pride Month event, Gay in the Garden! We also expanded our beloved SEXPO into the Feminist Empowerment Expo (FEM-EXPO), a stacked week of workshops, resources, and live entertainment.

Through all of these moments, we collaborated with dozens of individuals and groups from the UVSS, across UVic, and throughout the greater community, and continued to further our mission of being a strong feminist voice on campus.



summary & highlights

reproductive & safer sex resources

We continued distribution of our core supplies of disposable menstrual products, safer sex supplies,pregnancy tests and emergency contraception vouchers. These products are distributed through the lounge and hallway displays in our space (SUB B107), which we restock as needed (almost daily)! We also distribute these products while tabling at events throughout the year. We saw steady use of these resources over the year and are thrilled to be able to provide so many resources to the community!

our 2024/25 supply distribution breakdown

This year, we initiated a tracking system for our tangible resources, to better understand the needs of our community, assist us with planning restocks, and inform future programming planning! This is the first year we have tracked this data, and we are very excited to have such a concrete look at the impact this program has made on the community! This year, we distributed:

3394 disposable menstrual pads

772 tampons

248 menstrual cups across 3 different sizes

332 pregnancy tests

92 instant HIV test kits

125 dental dams (both latex and non-latex)

37 reusable rectal douches

1131 packets of lube

826 external latex condoms including coloured, flavoured, unlubricated, and non-latex

111 internal latex condoms

13 emergency contraception vouchers

716 disposable gloves (across all three sizes)

summary & highlights:

space upgrades

In June 2024, we completed a series of exciting upgrades to our space!

These included

- switching our library and office into opposite rooms
- re-inventing the new library room as a dual-purpose library and art space
- moving our public-use computer into the lounge area
- general de-cluttering, deep cleaning, and aesthetic updates

Our intentions behind these changes was to:

- encourage the community to make more use of our library
- establish a designated space for our arts-based programming & improve accessibility of our art supplies
- enhance the functionality of our office space, and increase visibility of our office staff
- streamline our setup for hybrid meetings
- create a more welcoming environment that reflects the needs and goals of our collective!

After moving through a full academic year with these new changes, we can confidently say that that have been a huge improvement for the flow and functionality of our space!





summary & highlights

art-based programming

Collaborative art-making has long been used in feminist and activist spaces as a tool of political and personal expression! In our new dual-purpose library-and-art space, we have been hosting a variety of arts and crafts based workshops, casual crafting time, and collaborative art making! These drop-in events were really successful and carry the added benefit of minimal set up time and low material costs, as we were able to source most of our supplies through upcycling, second hand shopping and donations.

july: mask accessories crafting workshop

in collaboration with UVSP and SSD

An afternoon of creating ear-savers, lanyards, and other accessories for your face masks—using reclaimed and upcycled materials!



october: feminist halloween ceramics painting

lead by our collective member, Jayce!

Re-imagining ceramics into decorative art pieces – inspired by feminist takes on Halloween motifs!



november to april: collective collage making



We worked together on a long-term project of creating a collage for our hallway bulletin board!

november: zine making workshop
lead by Georgia







In this rebellious workshop led by our GEM librarian, Georgia, attendees learned about zine making and culture, while freeing their inner artist!

summary & highlights

gay in the garden





A delicious evening of live entertainment and community, in honour of Pride Month, Gay in the Garden was hosted in collaboration with the Pride Collective and the Campus Community Garden.

Gay the Garden featured in an open mic, snack potluck, and live drag performances from local legends Bad Shah and Peaches N' Screams!

Entry was by monetary or non-perishable food items donation, with respective proceeds supporting humanitarian aid in Sudan and the Congo, and the UVSS Food Bank. We collected over $100 and a very full basket of goods!

We would like to thank our incredible performers and attendees, as well as CFUV, who provided audio equipment and support!



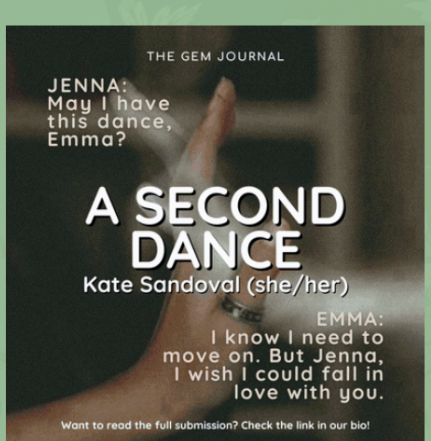
summary & highlights

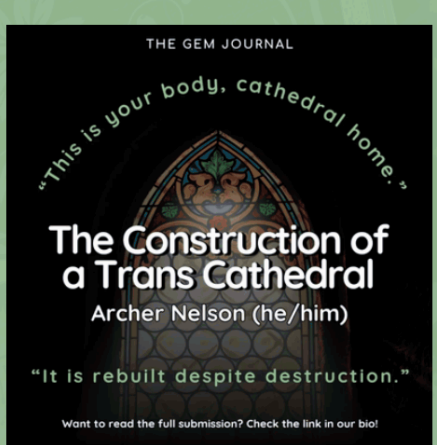
gem journal

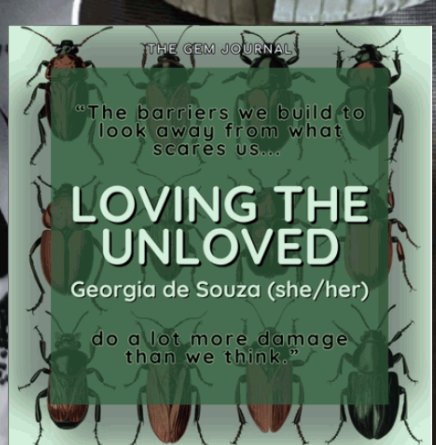
The GEM Journal was launched in 2023 by Communications Officer Fernanda Solorza (she/her) with the intention of creating a space for GEM members to share their stories and art —continuing the legacy of previous GEM publications such as The Emily, Ain't I a Woman?, and Thirdspace. While submission numbers have remained modest, the Journal has become a meaningful project that uplifts community voices and provides a tangible reflection of GEM's creativity and resilience.

The journal initially started without monthly themes, and submissions were shared in our monthly newsletter. After SEXPO 2024, it was decided to implement a monthly theme to inspire contributors to submit their work and also create a space on our website to share the submissions.

The website received 234 views throughout the year (stats accessed on April 17, 2025). Additionally, the GEM Journal initiative continued to grow as we added promotional material on our Instagram to entice people to read the submissions and highlight the contributions of the collective.







Overall, for the 2024/25 year, we received 10 submissions of poetry, photography, essays, plays, among others. The first volume of the GEM Journal is divided into two seasonal issues—Spring and Fall—which can be found in the GEM library. The Spring issue was 6 pages long and cost $4.30 per copy to print at ZAP, while the Fall issue expanded to 9 pages, with increased design elements and printing costs of $6.50 per copy. These zines not only archive creative work but also serve as inspiration and guidance for future design processes.

The 2024/25 GEM Journal Launch took place on April 10. It marked not only the culmination of a year's work but also reinforced the importance of making space for community voices in print. Fernanda would love the Journal to grow into a small but consistent campus publication—continuing to center and celebrate the experiences, creativity, and identities of GEM members for years to come.



summary & highlights

international safe abortion day

In collaboration with the Anti-Violence Project, we hosted our first ever celebration in honour of International Safe Abortion Day!

This was an afternoon of education, advocacy, and socializing in honour of the global pro-choice movement.



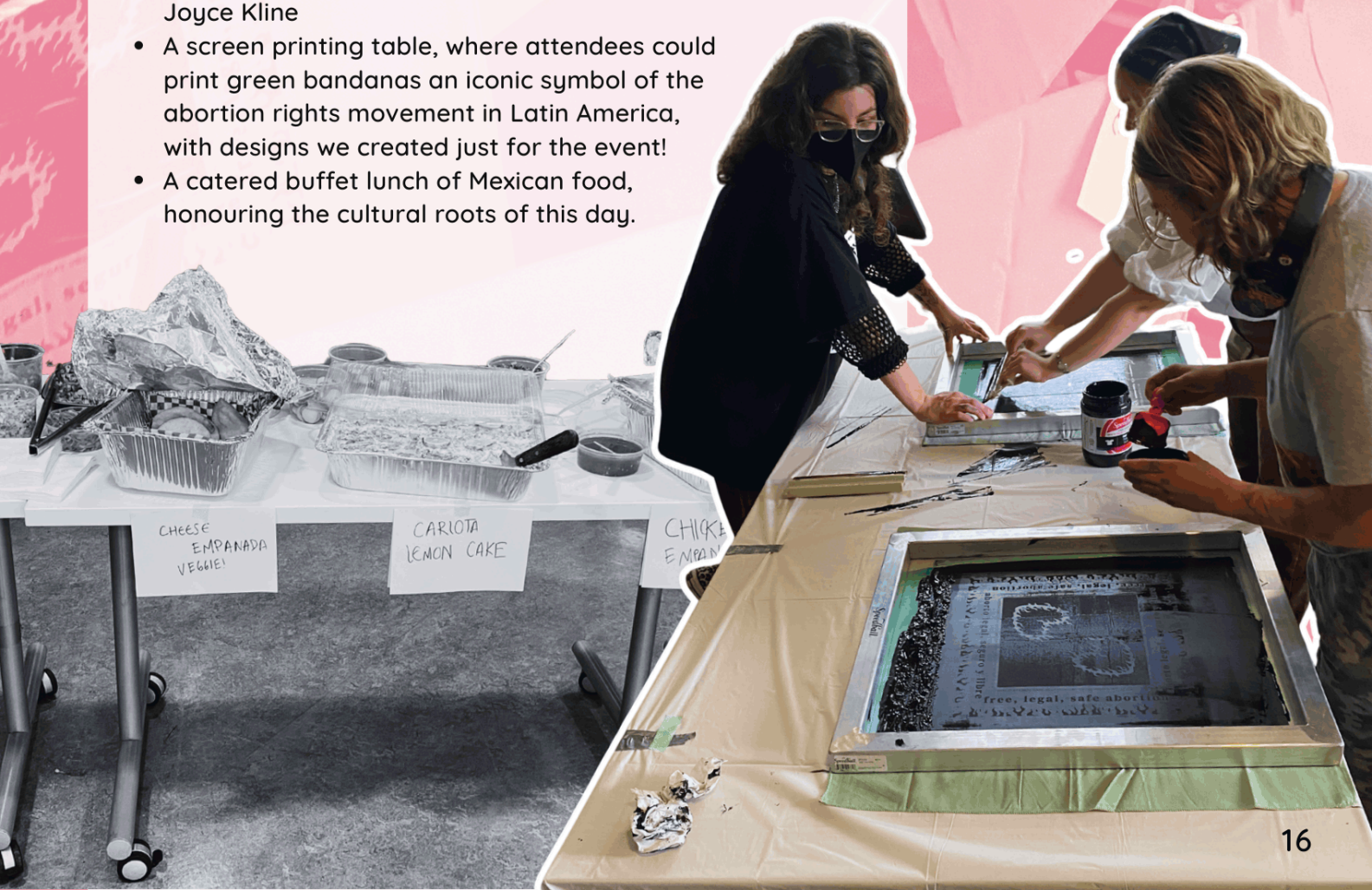


Originating in Latin America and the Carribean in the 90s, this annual day (September 28) and surrounding campaigns have since been adopted by sexual and reproductive health and rights activists around the world.



Our ISAD Celebration included:

- A tabling fair featuring local organizations that work to promote safe abortion in Victoria and Vancouver Island, including the Abortion Support Collective and Island Sexual Health
- A screening of the short film, “Museum of the Abortion Wars,” with the opportunity to chat with the filmmaker, Joyce Kline
- A screen printing table, where attendees could print green bandanas an iconic symbol of the abortion rights movement in Latin America, with designs we created just for the event!
- A catered buffet lunch of Mexican food, honouring the cultural roots of this day.



summary & highlights

FEM-EXPO

FEMINIST EMPOWERMENT EXPO

This year, we launched our first ever Feminist Empowerment Expo (FEM-EXPO for short): a bold, week-long celebration of intersectional feminism that weaves together the magic of workshops, panels, vendors, art, performances, and more!



Hosted in the SUB from March 3-7, 2025, FEM-EXPO was timed as a dual celebration of both International Women's Day and Trans Day Of Visibility. FEM-EXPO is a love letter to empowerment, a celebration of resilience, and a rallying cry for change. We designed this event as a space for embracing what uplifts us, dreaming of what liberates us, and dancing into the revolution towards the future we deserve.

overview

5 days of events

11 events overall

8 educational sessions

26 community collaborators

55 vendors & tablers

16 guest presenters

15 entertainers & exhibiting artists

200+ attendees

15+ volunteers



FEM-EXPO schedule of events

MONDAY MARCH 3

12pm - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE (BOARD ROOM)

Daughters, Mothers, Grandmothers, and Other Sexual Outlaws
GUEST ART EXHIBIT | IN COLLABORATION WITH ISLAND SEXUAL HEALTH & INTER PARES

12pm - 1:30pm
UPPER LOUNGE

"Plant-cestral" Empowerment: A Feminist Introduction to Herbal Medicine
WORKSHOP | IN COLLABORATION WITH CCG

2:30pm - 4pm
UPPER LOUNGE

On Topping: Finding Inspiration and Play Through BDSM
PRESENTED BY COMPLEXXI.KILLS | 18+

TUESDAY MARCH 4

10am - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE (BOARD ROOM)

Daughters, Mothers, Grandmothers, and Other Sexual Outlaws
GUEST ART EXHIBIT | IN COLLABORATION WITH ISLAND SEXUAL HEALTH & INTER PARES

10am - 5pm
MICHELE PUJOL ROOM

Market & Community Fair
ART, VENDORS & COMMUNITY ORGS | CLOTHING SWAP

3pm - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE

Body Mapping: An Art-Based Workshop for Reclaiming the Body
WORKSHOP | PRESENTED BY SSD



FEM-EXPO schedule of events

WEDNESDAY MARCH 5

10am - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE (BOARD ROOM)

Daughters, Mothers, Grandmothers, and Other Sexual Outlaws
GUEST ART EXHIBIT | IN COLLABORATION WITH ISLAND SEXUAL HEALTH & INTER PARES

10am - 5pm
MICHELE PUJOL ROOM

Market & Community Fair
ART, VENDORS & COMMUNITY ORGS | CLOTHING SWAP

11am - 1pm
UPPER LOUNGE

Interfacing with Enforcement: An Immersive Introductory Workshop for Frontline Activism
WORKSHOP

2pm - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE

Starting Your Kink Journey Community & Risk
WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY BLOODBJORN

5pm - 7:30pm
VERTIGO

Trans ID Clinic
PRESENTED BY PRO BONO STUDENTS CANADA

THURSDAY MARCH 6

12pm - 5pm
UPPER LOUNGE (BOARD ROOM)

Daughters, Mothers, Grandmothers, and Other Sexual Outlaws
GUEST ART EXHIBIT | IN COLLABORATION WITH ISLAND SEXUAL HEALTH & INTER PARES

1pm - 2:30pm
UPPER LOUNGE

Queering the Spirit: An Inclusive Multi-Faith Community Circle
CO-HOSTED WITH PRIDE COLLECTIVE & SOCC

8pm - 12:30am
VERTIGO

Pleasure & Play Fair: A Night of Carnival Delights for Queers & Feminist Freaks
DANCE PARTY | 19+

FRIDAY MARCH 7

3:30pm - 4:30pm
VERTIGO

Every Body Wiggle
IN COLLABORATION WITH AIR
FACILITATED BY FLORA WELLS AND TAYLOR SCHIEDEL-FOUCHER





building feminist futures:
FEM-EXPO as part of our event legacy

From 2021 until 2023, GEM ran SEXPO, an annual event focused on promoting informed and empowered sexual wellness and expression. In these three years, SEXPO blossomed from a one-day event to a weeklong exposition of community resources, educational opportunities, and live entertainment—becoming one of the UVSS' most anticipated and beloved events.

We are so grateful for the immense success of this event as a site of promoting sex positivity through an intersectional feminist lens. Yet, simultaniously, it had become apparent that SEXPO's reputation and niche focus had contributed to widespread misunderstandings of the scope and purpose of GEM's work, reducing the accessibility of our space and services for many of our general members.

After many months of reflecting on these concerns, Beau and Fernanda proposed to the GEM collective that this event – as our Centre's largest undertaking – be expanded to include the full spectrum of our values and aspire to reach more of our members where they're at. Our collective voted in favour of this expansion, and agreed that this new event would still include the playful, sexy spirit (and content) that made SEXPO so beloved.

Combining the snappy branding of SEXPO with the nomenclature of our Centre (Gender Empowerment Centre, shortened as "GEM"), our staff and collective thoughtfully deliberated on the name of this event – and thus Feminist Empowerment Expo, FEM-EXPO for short– was born.

We knew that an event explicitly promoting intersectional feminism would not appeal to the same audience as SEXPO. This was especially true in a context where 'feminism' has been co-opted, fragmented, and misused to promote trans-exclusion, capitalism, and white supremacy.



Understanding this, we held steady in our conviction that we had important work to do in promoting our vision of intersectional feminism— a framework by and for Black, brown, queer, trans, disabled, and poor/ working class women and gender diverse people that works to liberate all peoples from global colonial capitalist patriarchy.



Our initial announcement about this event on social media was met with mixed reviews, as many of our followers expressed concerns about censoring sexuality, whether an event shorthanded as FEM-EXPO could be inclusive towards those who do not identify with femininity, and confusion as to why we felt so strongly about expanding the focus of our major event.





This pushback was not only a valuable lesson in public communications, but also reaffirmed our concerns that the legacy of SEXPO did not adequately promote our purpose on campus, and failed to build up a community of people who were invested in the entirety of our vision.

Through online communications, conversations with potential attendees, and releasing the schedule of events to reveal a diverse range of themes, we worked diligently and thoughtfully to clarify to our audience that FEM-EXPO was, by design, inclusive of sexuality and gender diversity, and was created by an intersectional team of organizers.

Despite this, we were unsuccessful in fully combatting the misunderstandings and disappointment about our event. While this was stressful for our team, the weight of that online criticism did not overshadow the magic that happened in person. We welcomed many students, facilitators, and community groups who might not have had space at SEXPO.



Still, FEM-EXPO had many wins!

- We hosted two bespoke workshops – "Plantcestral Knowledge" and "Interfacing with Enforcement" – using our institutional privilege to support local grassroots organizers in developing educational materials to further their work in community
- Our educational events received the highest engagement we have seen in years for events of that nature, with more than 80 overall workshop attendees, and two sessions selling out in advance of the event.
- We held one of the SUB's best attended night life event this year, the Pleasure & Play Fair, featuring live DJ sets from Barbie Aphelion and Molly Pocket; go-go and pole performances from Trin, Ivy Divine, and Aurora Glitz; a host of spicy carnival games, and one-on-one tarot readings from Rae!



The ultimate goal of this event was to create a soul-nourishing space that inspires learning, fosters community, and strengthens us in our daily battles against systemic injustice – while working towards building a campus community filled with feminist voices and visions, that inspires transformation toward a society rooted in justice, equity and liberation.



When we reflect on our intentions with this event, it is clear to us that in many ways, FEM-EXPO's inaugural year was massively successful.

Our time hosting this event demonstrates our dedication, in the face of many challenges, to the GEM mission of "being a strong feminist voice on campus." In this way, we are deeply proud of this addition to our legacy, and look forward to continuing to creating more events that promote our mission.

summary & highlights

other programming

Throughout the year, we also worked on a variety of other initiatives with various groups across campus! These included:

- A **community engagement session,** in partnership with the UVic office of Equity and Human Rights, for the design and re-painting of our campus' rainbow crosswalk.
- A **screening and discussion of "Polytechnique,"** in honour of National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women – in collaboration with Cinecenta, HerCampus UVic, and WECS (Women in Engineering and Computer Science).
- Our **Halloween Clothing and Costume Swap,** in collaboration with the UVSS Pride Collective and the UVic Sustainability Project.
- **Art, Storytelling, & Climate Justice,** a mural presentation and talk by Beehive Collective, in collaboration with the Campus Community Garden
- An **especially vibrant SAGM**, which included community bingo and games!





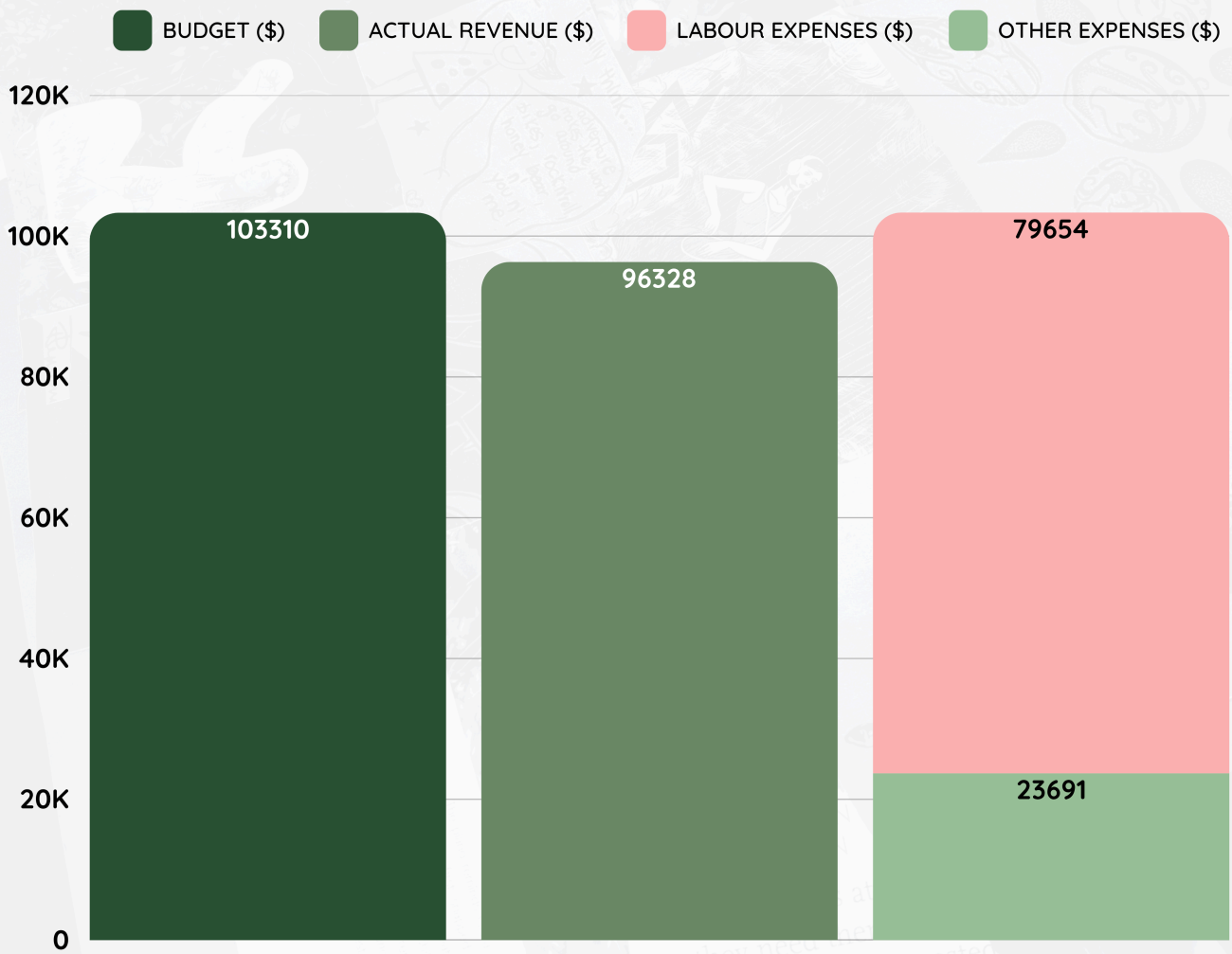


financial overview

Our total revenue for the year was $96,328, the bulk of which comes from our regular student fees. Our revenue was $6,928 under our anticipated budget, due to an error in student fee calculations. Cumulitavely, we were $7,017 over our total budget this year.

Our expenses are divided into two categories. The first, labour costs, includes the wages, benefits, insurance, CPP contributions, employment insurance, employer health tasks, and workers compensation, for both our unionized staff positions (our Outreach & Communications Coordinator, and our Communications Assistant). The second encompasses all of our other expenses, which includes programming and events budgets, equipment and office supplies, advertising and subscription fees.

2024-2025 budget breakdown

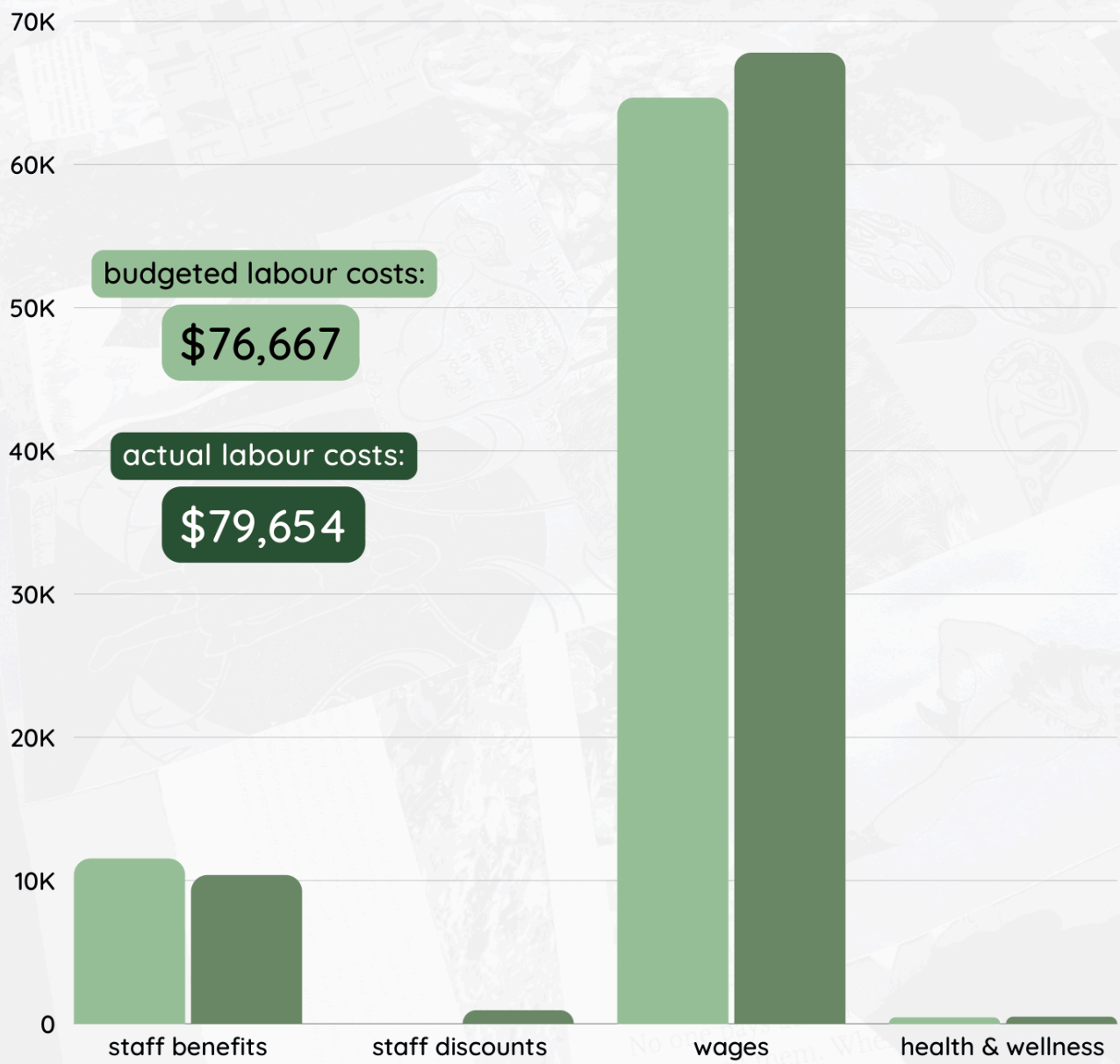


labour expenses

We were $2,987 over budget for our labour spending, as a result of the union raise, which was over our predicted 2%. Our other deviations in our labour categories were as follows:

- Health & Wellness Benefit was $48 over budget
- Staff Discounts (used for purchasing meals at SUB vendors) was $949 over budget, as we did not budget anything under that category.

labour expenses breakdown



account-specific spending

We underspent in almost all account categories, and were $5006 budget under in our total expense categories. Our most significant budget deviations this year were in the following categories:

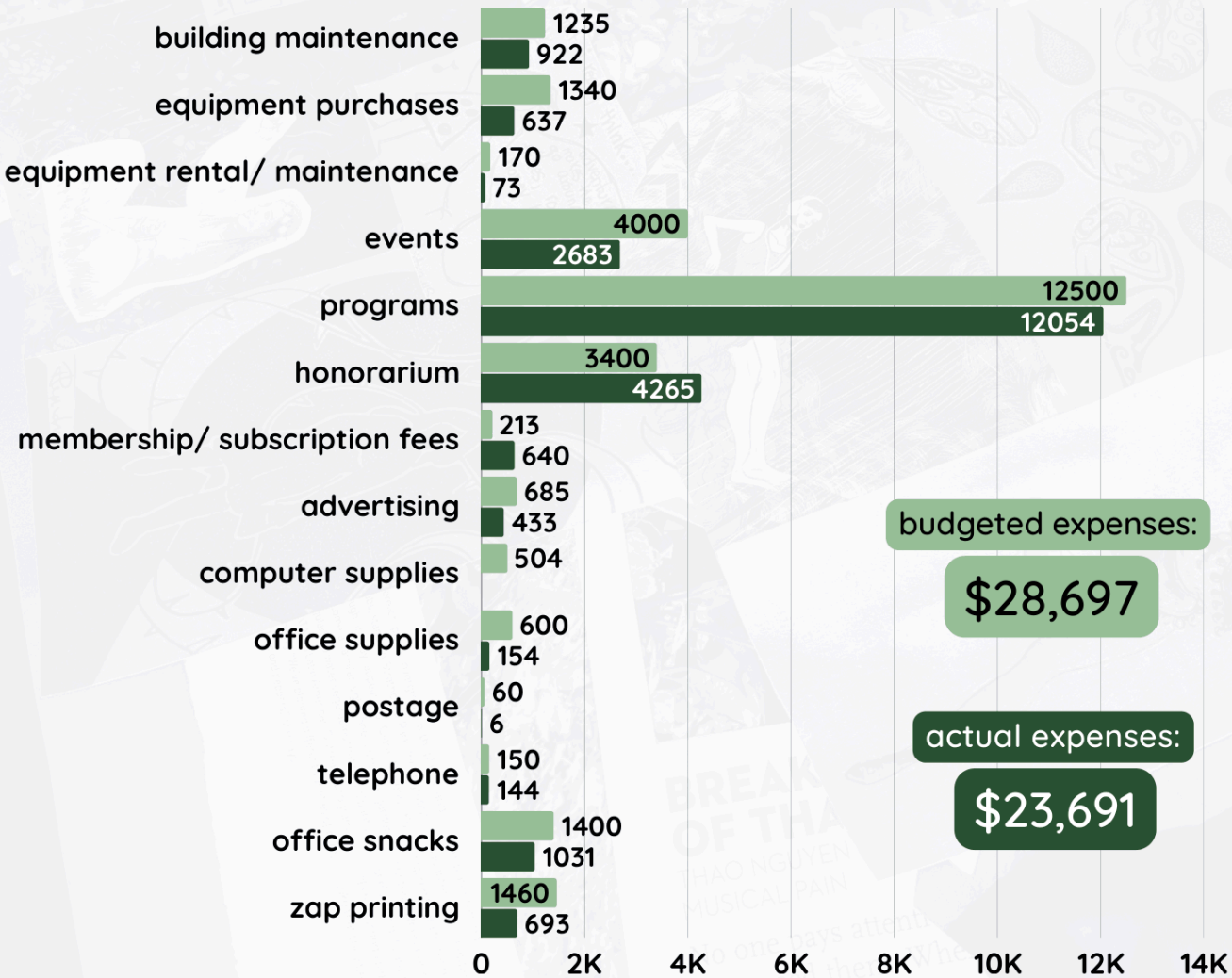
Over Budget:

- **Honourarium:** $865 over
- **Membership Fees:** $427 over - this was specifically because we had an incorrect record of when the website payment was renewed

Under Budget:

- **Events:** $1362 under
- **Other Sundry Items:** $800 under
- **Zap Copy Charges** (for UVSS print services): $767 under
- **Equipment Purchase:** $703 under
- **Computer Supplies:** $504 under
- **Office Supplies:** $446 under

non-labour expenses breakdown



community partnerships

As an organization with intersectional feminism at its core, we understand that collaborating with a diverse range of groups is critical to enact our values and to build a strong community across campus.

Over the years, we have collaborated with dozens of businesses, local organizations, and on-campus bodies through various initiatives. We hope to continue building a network of meaningful relationships that serves our community.



safer sex & reproductive wellness resources

Our ability to adequately provide safer sex and reproductive health resources to our community is dependent on ongoing partnerships with other business, wellness providers, and organizations who enable us to procure and distribute these supplies. This year, these programs operated in collaboration with:

UVic Campus Pharmacy, through whom we provide emergency contraception via our voucher program.

PAMCO Distributing, our vendor for dental dams, condoms, lube, and menstrual cups.

UVic Student Wellness Centre, who provides us with the pregnancy tests we distribute at the centre.

Sexy Living, our vendor for reusable douches.

Viv, our vendor for disposable pads and tampons.

Community Link program (presented by REACH Nexus | HIV Implementation Science & Brain Health Department| MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions), who supplies us with instant HIV tests.

FEM-EXPO

FEM-EXPO was our most significant site of collaboration this year! The UVSS board, particularly Sarah Buchanan, the Events Director, played a key role in this event, contributing funding and organizational labor. We worked with dozens of groups, both on and off campus, to provide a thorough range of workshops, performances, and resources:

Education and Awareness: We hosted panels and workshops organized/ co-organized by:

- the Society for Students with a Disability,
- the Pride Collective,
- the Students of Colour Collective,
- the Campus Community Garden, and
- the Advocacy for Inclusive Recreation Program.

Trans ID Clinic: Pro-Bono Students Canada joined us once again for their free Trans ID Clinic.

"daughters, mothers, grandmothers, and other sexual outlaws" Guest Artist Showcase: brought to the event in collaboration with Island Sexual Health and Inter Pares.

Audio-Visual Elements: CFUV provided audio-visual tech support, including live streaming set-up and monitoring for the majority of our educational events.

Funding: We received event funding through partnerships with the Office of Student Life (OSL), and the Advocacy Relations Committee (ARC).

Community Resource Fair and Artist Market: We hosted dozens of community organizations and local vendors at our FEM-EXPO table fair and market.

special thanks to:

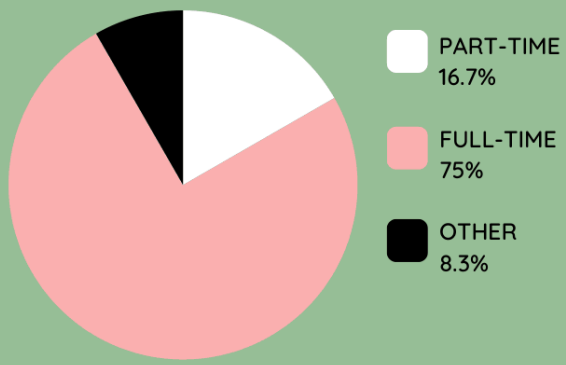
The UVic Pride Caucus, for their donation of proceeds from their Drag Bingo fundraiser

by the numbers

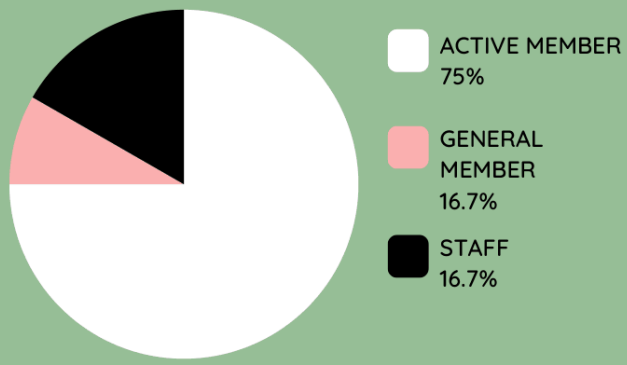
demographics

2024/25 is our second year of running a demographics survey of our members. This survey helps us to gain more accurate insights into the diverse characteristics of the GEM community, better understand the intersectionality among our members, identify emerging trends, and make well-informed decisions that cater to different segments of our community. We had 12 survey participants; the following graphs are key segments of the data we collected.

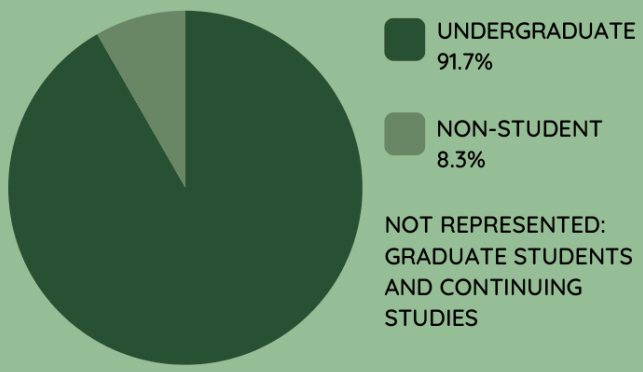
FULL-TIME VS PART-TIME STUDENTS



RELATIONSHIP TO GEM

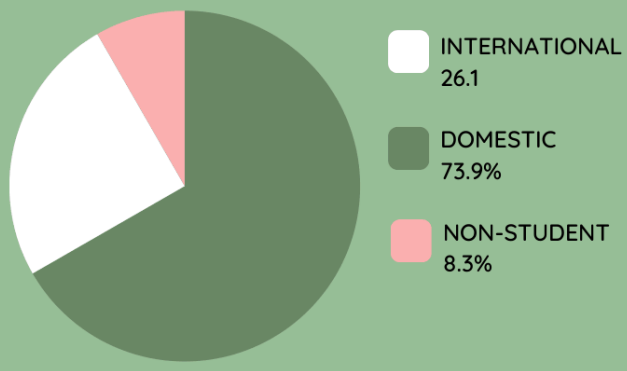


LEVEL OF STUDY

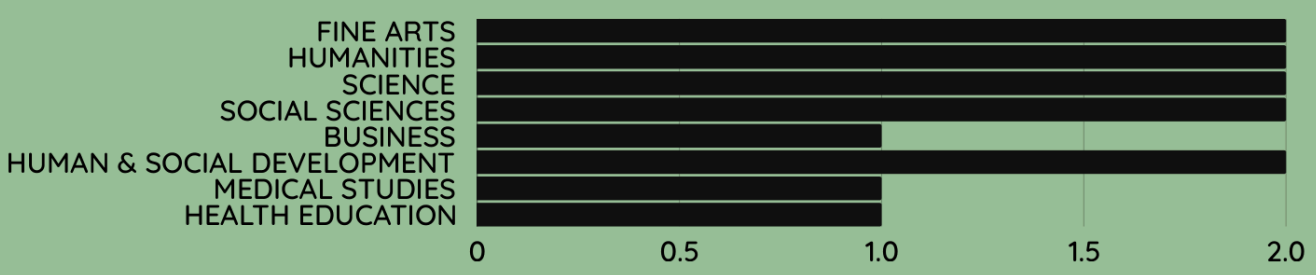


NOT REPRESENTED: GRADUATE STUDENTS AND CONTINUING STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL VS DOMESTIC STUDENTS

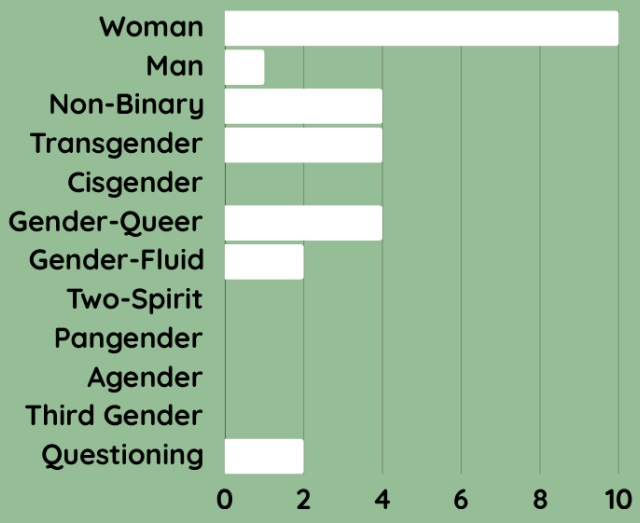


FACULTY OF STUDY

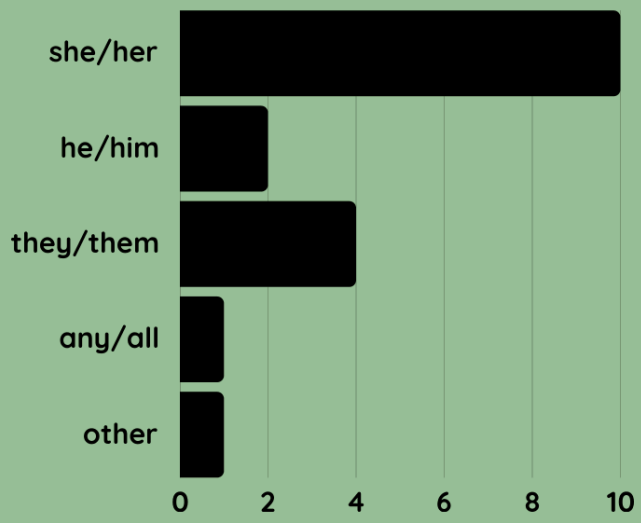


demographics (continued)

"WHAT TERMS DESCRIBE YOUR GENDER IDENTITY?"



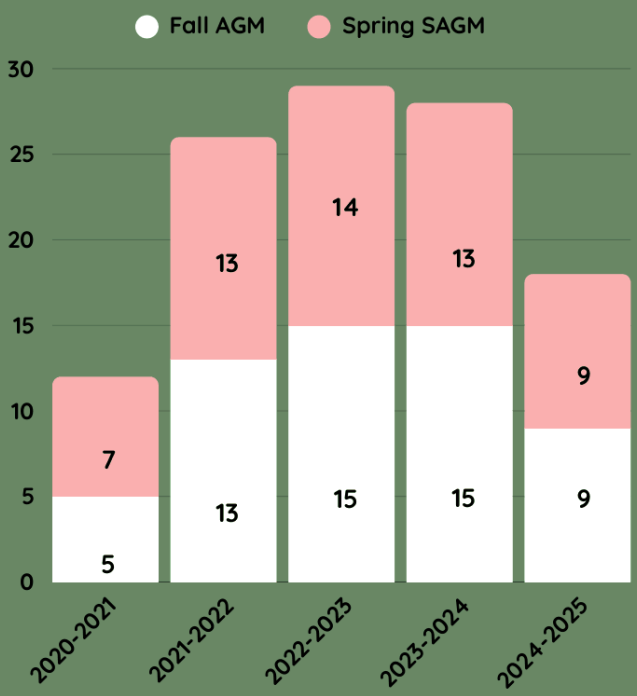
"WHAT PRONOUNS DO YOU USE?"



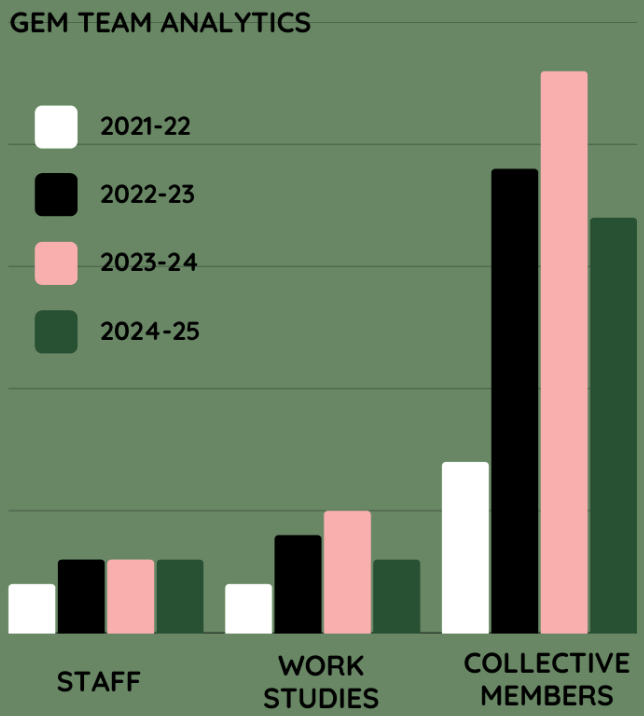
year-to-year

Attendance at this year's (S)AGMs was lower, likely due to the Spring meeting falling during Reading Week after FEM-EXPO's rescheduling. GEM aims to boost engagement in 2025–26 by adjusting timing and addressing other barriers to participation.

AGM ATTENDANCE



GEM TEAM ANALYTICS

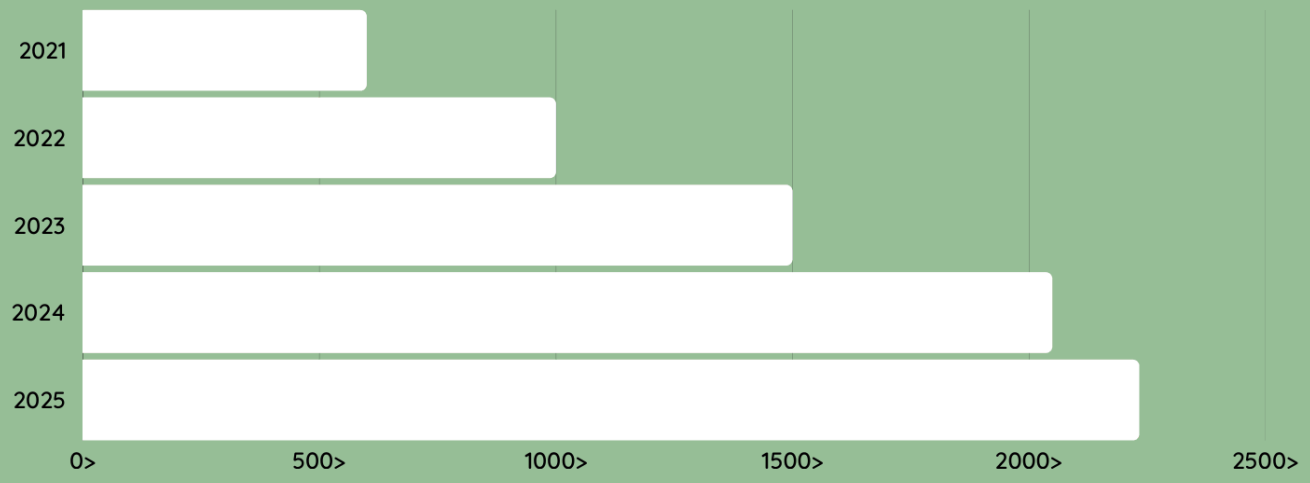


Note: Number of work studies indicates the number of staff hired (including shared job positions).

social media

Our social media continues to be one of our most frequently used and powerful outreach tools!

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS YEAR-TO-YEAR



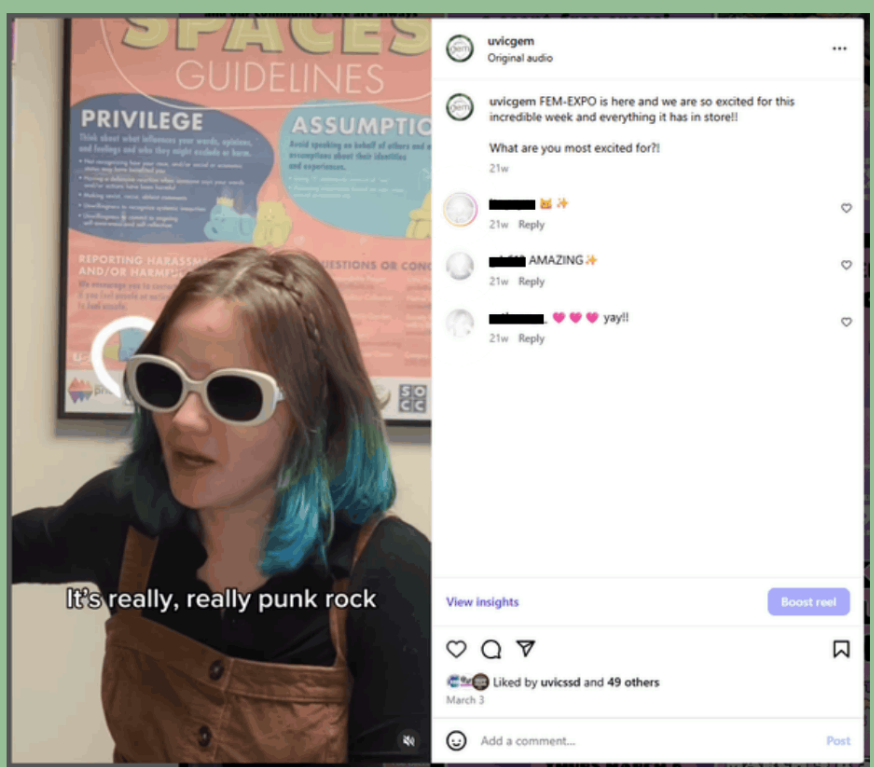
FEM-EXPO

FEM-EXPO was our most prolific period of content creation this year! We created 21 social media posts; and three collaborator posts over a two-month period before, during, and after the event.

Across all posts, we saw 3192 Instagram interractions (likes, saves, and shares), with our furthest reaching post gaining 406 interractions, over 11,000 views, and reaching 4275 accounts.







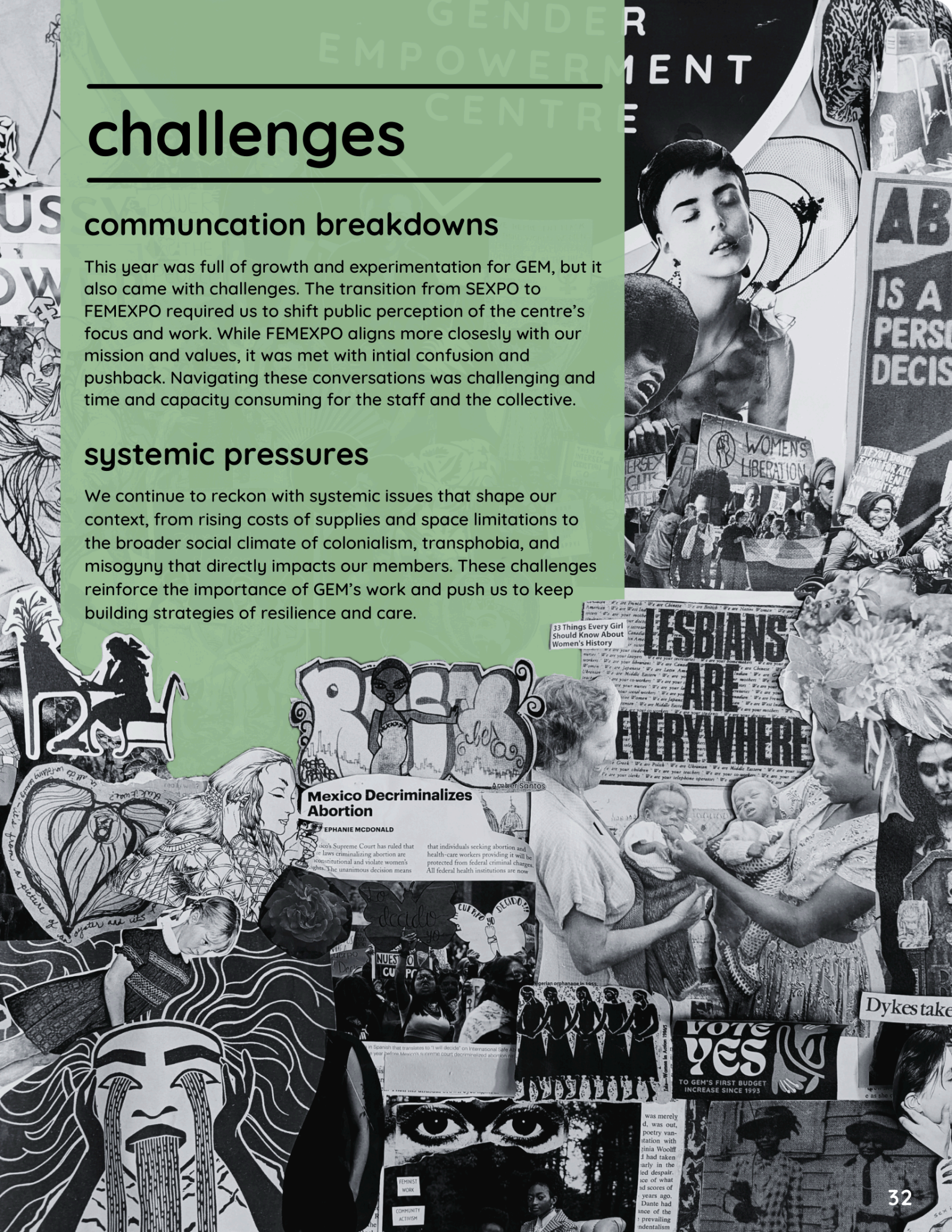
challenges

communcation breakdowns

This year was full of growth and experimentation for GEM, but it also came with challenges. The transition from SEXPO to FEMEXPO required us to shift public perception of the centre's focus and work. While FEMEXPO aligns more closely with our mission and values, it was met with intial confusion and pushback. Navigating these conversations was challenging and time and capacity consuming for the staff and the collective.

systemic pressures

We continue to reckon with systemic issues that shape our context, from rising costs of supplies and space limitations to the broader social climate of colonialism, transphobia, and misogyny that directly impacts our members. These challenges reinforce the importance of GEM's work and push us to keep building strategies of resilience and care.



burnout

The GEM is a small team of staff and volunteers, and balancing our ambitious programming with limited time, funding and energy was difficult. While our community stepped up in incredible ways, we continue to grapple with how to ensure sustainability and avoid burnout among staff and collective members.

Particular examples include:

- **Lack of strong volunteer structure:** Our volunteer participation was lower this year, and we have yet to implement a structure for recruiting and retailing our active membership. We are hopeful that establishing better tools for delegation, communication, and role development will help things run more smoothly next year!
- **Funding:** Although we received a budget increase, continuing to run our programming is becoming increasingly challenging amidst rising inflation that simultaneously increases demand for our resources, as well as the cost of providing them! We are looking at alternate ways to increase our funding, such as relevant grants.
- Event Planning: We love to host events, but sometimes we put unrealistic pressures we place on ourselves to do much more than we have capacity for. This is especially a problem with FEMEXPO, which (like the legacy of SEXPO) is expected to be bigger every year.

Organizing large-scale programming like FEM-EXPO on top of day-to-day responsibilities stretched our team thin, often leaving little space for rest. We learned firsthand how the passion and care that drive our work can also lead to overextension when not balanced with boundaries, wellness practices, and collective care.

This is not just a personal struggle but a systemic one—student organizers are asked to do a great deal with limited resources, within structures that don't always recognize or support the labour of feminist, queer, and decolonial organizing.



looking forward

Looking ahead, GEM is committed to deepening our work in three key areas:

Community Care and Sustainability:
We want to strengthen internal supports for our staff, volunteers, and members, ensuring GEM remains a nourishing space for everyone involved.

Programming and Events:
Building on the success of FEM-EXPO, we aim to make it a cornerstone annual event, refining it each year while continuing to offer a wide variety of smaller workshops, creative projects, and wellness resources.

Visibility and Advocacy:
We plan to grow our presence on campus and beyond, amplifying feminist, queer, and trans voices, while expanding our partnerships with community groups and local organizers.

We know the challenges ahead are real, but so too is our collective power. By centering joy, creativity, and care, GEM will continue to be a vibrant hub of resistance, learning, and connection.





Some initiatives we are excitedly planning for the 2025-26 year include:

- Increasing internal community building efforts & collective membership by:
  - Establishing community guidelines
  - Building a volunteer structure
  - Increasing the number of collective meetings to two per month.
- Increasing educational and resource-based programming
  - Design and execute a system for referral services
  - Plan and host regular events focused on connecting member to information and resources
- Increasing the GEM Journal engagement
  - Build a consistent editorial team
  - Facilitate low-barrier opportunities for contribution
  - Encourage multimedia storytelling.

conclusion

As we close another year, we are filled with gratitude for the collective energy that makes GEM what it is.

Our space, our events, and our impact are only possible because of the students, volunteers, collaborators, and community members who show up, share their skills, and bring their whole selves into the work.

The year reminded us that intersectional feminist organizing is rarely easy, but always worth it. Whether through the quiet act of restocking supplies, the bold vision of FEM-EXPO, or the everyday conversations that happen in our lounge, GEM continues to embody the belief that a better world is possible.

We are proud of what we have accomplished, and even more excited about what lies ahead. Together, we will keep pushing for justice, joy, and liberation on campus and beyond.

See you next year!

With care and solidarity,
- The GEM Team