

Panel of female writers explain changes in media, careers

Kathy Woodard

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When the Career Center held the last of a series of career panels for the semester, the focus was not only the convergence of the written word, but also the role of female writers.

"I think a common form of expression for many writers is to blog and get their ideas out. So, when my book was not accepted by a traditional publisher, I made an online magazine. When the next was not, I created a blog," said **Cornelia Powell, creator of Weddings of Grace online magazine.**

Powell and three other women writers explained their role as women in the writing world and changes of the written word in general.

Approaching writing later in life, Powell said the pure convenience of writing in the 21st century is what prompted her to become an author.

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Alli Marshall

Fashion editor at Mountain Xpress

tops. Cut and paste, you know, the ease, I love it. So, I'm really more of an editor than a writer because I see the world that way, in pieces," Powell said.

Alli Marshall, fashion editor for the Mountain Xpress, said her entire job is changing with the convergence of magazines and newspapers.

"We aren't really using the AP style anymore, which was essentially the rules newspapers

followed. So, it's interesting to go back and forth between the print product and the online product. I think we are all still trying to figure it out, it's still pretty new," Marshall said.

Marshall, a graduate of A-B Tech, said she embraces the changes as a step forward in reporting.

"(We are) incorporating blogs and video and photography and any combination of those. Even

though I'm a writer and I love the written word, I really love the use of slideshows because the way we digest information has changed a lot and looking at images really gets the message across," Marshall said.

Joy Neaves, assistant director of the UNC Asheville writing center, said her previous job with a children's book publisher, illustrated how it was obviously a woman's world.

"It's just very predominantly women. Standing in a room of children's books publishers, you can see that," Neaves said. "But, in the role of an editor, that becomes invisible because you are connecting one on one with the author, and being able to nurture their idea is a pretty gendered role."

Jennifer Lipsey Edwards, author, illustrator and art educator, who writes a series of children's art books, explained her struggle balancing motherhood and her career.

"It gets harder when you find a partner and have kids,"

Edwards said. "Not only was I birthing a baby, I was also birthing a book."

Powell said being a woman writing for women, sometimes attracts more than ladies.

"I write mostly for women, and the things I write about are thought of as a women's topic, and at the same time I think the world is more and more open for relating, and open in that way and men are listening too, because my writing is about relationships, and men are just as interested as women," Powell said.

Marshall said she believed the writing world was blind to gender.

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we really cared about, and we wanted to do something about it."

Beth Porter, student government executive of sustainability, said she first learned about the locally important issue of mountaintop removal at Power Shift and, as a result, became more involved in wanting to put an end to it.

"Students will come back as effective and motivated change-agents, on campus and in the community, for the rest of their lives," Eggers said.

The conference includes workshops on special topics such as how to create a university campus that uses clean energy, as well as learning how to promote and implement clean energy campaigns and policies.

"The weekend culminates in training people to lobby and talk to their political representatives," environmental studies student Goyer said. "People don't realize how easy it is for citizens to take the initiative to

do that."

Power Shift relies on the influence of the millennial generation to let their voice be heard across the nation, according to the website. Power Shift officials said they believe the environmental future of the nation can be changed, and the conference gives them the tools to do that.

"This is the most valuable training nationwide that I know of in developing leadership skills and lobbying change," Eggers said.

One of the biggest components of the conference is lobby training, Goyer said. Through teaching students how to take the initiative and go lobby in their own communities, the conference emboldens them to talk to their senators about issues important to them.

"People think they can't impact politicians, but they don't try," the ASHE president said. "If they just try, they could see how easy it is and how it works. It does work because it has before."

Goyer said people should realize anyone can call and make

an appointment to speak with their political representative, and they are obligated to meet with them. The goal of Power Shift is to give students the necessary resources and training to make that meeting successful.

"The conference is meant to comfort others working on the same issues you care about," Porter said. "It also shows that you have the power to enact change on your campus."

The conference is open to all students, not just those in environmental studies, Porter said. The conference also touches on economical and social justice issues.

"It's open to anyone who cares about anything," the senior said.

UNC Asheville aims to take 70 students to the conference this year.

Students have the opportunity to register for \$10 if they volunteer for eight hours at the conference.

"The biggest impact all this has had on me is realizing that there is something much, much bigger than yourself to care about," Porter said.



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Goyer

Students Keith Fletcher and Emma Hutchens at Power Shift.