



## Laura Nichols Award

From her arrival at the University of Maryland in 1987 to her retirement in 2014, Laura Nichols was a key staff member in Women's Studies and an important advocate for equality and inclusiveness in the university as a whole. The Laura Nichols Award recognizes undergraduate students who exemplify her commitment to feminist principles and social change through their scholarship, service, activism, and/or creative endeavor. Women's Studies majors and certificates, Black Women's Studies minors, and LGBT Studies certificates and minors are all eligible.

Applications may be for activist, service, or creative projects that reflect a commitment to social change and the values of equality, inclusion, and justice. Applications may be for work done on-campus or in the wider community. In some instances awards may be given to support a student research project if it fulfills the goals of the Laura Nichols Award. Students may directly apply or nominations for the Laura Nichols Award may be forwarded by any member of the University community. We especially encourage students to nominate other students whose work they see as especially worthy.

For this inaugural award, applications will be accepted for projects completed within the last 2 years, for ongoing projects, or for projects to be undertaken sometime within the 2016-17 academic year.

Applications/nominations will be accepted for work done by a single student or for a group of students working together in an activist/service/creative endeavor. In the instance that the nomination is for a group of students, the majority must be officially enrolled in one of the departments programs: Women's Studies major or certificate, Black Women's Studies minor, LGBT Studies certificate or minor.

Applicants must be in good academic standing at the time of the application and should submit:

- A 300-500 word statement describing the academic, service, activist, or creative project for which the nomination is being made and, especially, noting the ways in which this project reflects a commitment to social change and the values of equality, inclusion and justice. Please be as specific as possible in describing the work, considering its impact/importance or potential impact/importance, and indicating why it is especially worthy of the Laura Nichols Award.
- If you are proposing a new project: 100-200 word narrative of the applicant's prior work in this area or other qualifications for successfully undertaking the proposed project
- Resume(s)
- Transcript(s) (unofficial is okay)
- Names and contact information for two individuals who could serve as references in relationship to the project

In the case of nominations, the nominee should explain their relation to the student(s) and/or project and should confirm that the student(s) have agreed to be nominated.

The award carries a certificate and \$600.

**Applications are due Monday, September 26, by 4:00 p.m.** and should be submitted via email to Professor Elsa Barkley Brown, Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Women's Studies – [barkleyb@umd.edu](mailto:barkleyb@umd.edu).

The recipient(s) will be announced at the department's Fall Gathering on Friday, October 7, 3:00-5:00 pm.

Recipients will be expected to present a discussion of their work at the department's Undergraduate and Research Day, Wednesday, December 7, and to submit to the department a short written report on their project by the end of the semester.

### Laura Nichols

As Assistant Director and Academic Advisor, Laura Nichols managed the administrative functions of the department and from 1987 to 2014 advised every Women's Studies major or certificate student; she also advised

Black Women's Studies minors. Especially noteworthy was Nichols' work to facilitate students' experiential learning opportunities through internships that had social, economic, educational, and/or political impact on women's lives and that helped students develop the skills to critically analyze their work experiences and practically consider how they might implement feminist models in the workplace. Nichols's dedication to student success—in both their on-campus experiences and beyond—was unwavering, and part of the legacy we hope to preserve through this award.

In addition to the ways that she served the department, Laura Nichols was also an active proponent of equality and inclusiveness in the university as a whole. A longtime member (and 2002-04 chair) of the President's Commission on Women's Issues, Nichols also served on the campus Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Committee. Throughout 2004 and 2005 she organized surveys and focus groups culminating in a co-authored Center for Leadership and Organizational Change report on campus climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender faculty and staff. For this work, she was awarded the 2005 Champion of Our Community award by the LGBT Staff and Faculty Association. Beginning in the late 1990s, Nichols served as a member of the Peer Consulting Network for the Center for Leadership and Organizational Change and today continues in that capacity. A serious Terp, Laura and her four children all attended the University of Maryland.