

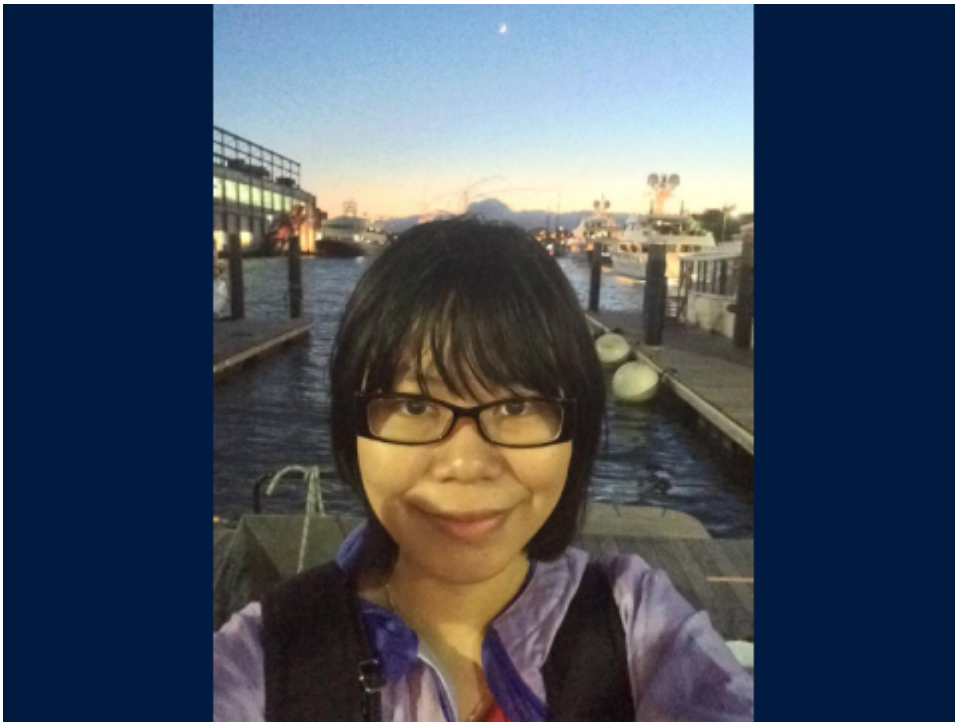
Feminist Camp

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Meet Thu Phan! Thu is a Public Health and Sociology major and she hopes to work in health policy.

Describe yourself and why you wanted to attend Feminist Camp:

Until recently, I never realized I am a “feminist.” I tend to avoid that word altogether because I know a lot of people associate “feminists” as angry women ranting about men and capitalism. One day in my Gender and Society class, my professor told me that I was indeed a feminist because I believe in equal rights for women and women’s empowerment. I attended this camp so that I could learn more about feminist and feminist theories. I want to be able to understand the different aspects

of feminism and progressive theories. I also like to see how feminist theory can be put to use in the real world.

Describe your favorite parts of the conference:

There were two speakers that stood out to me. They were Tina and Mercedes. These two inspiring women were formerly incarcerated while pregnant. They powerfully spoke of their experiences being shackled to the hospital beds and having correction officers mock them during their childbirth. These two women made me see how the criminal justice system is not built for women. Women have special needs such as childrearing that the criminal justice system does not take into account. I never realized how much the negative impacts of mass incarceration have on women. From their powerful and honest stories, I am more sympathetic towards the mothers who are incarcerated for non-violent crimes. I see how the emotional toll of incarcerated mothers can have on their children.

Highlight a speaker or a conference event:

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Detail what you learned that you hope to never forget:

The common theme throughout that 5-day intensive learning experience was breaking down barriers. All the women that we met have broken down gender barriers and many are working to help break down barriers for women less fortunate than them. Whether it is trying to find women philanthropists to donate to women centered organizations, easing the pain of abortions for women who do decide to have an abortion, fighting for better treatment in the criminal justice system, or making art that empowered women across the world, their work is all about breaking down barriers that stand in the way of women. Many of the women we met work in

male-dominated fields, and they spoke honestly on how it can be a challenge, even in 2016.

Why should other students attend Feminist Camp:

I admit that I was nervous about attending Feminist Camp because I was afraid that others wouldn't be open to my moderate opinions or differences. At Feminist Camp, the wonderful women I met blew my nervousness away. They were very opinionated, but also very open to others' opinions. We were all there to learn from each other and develop our own opinions about controversial matter. Most importantly, students should attend Feminist Camp because it allows them to access a valuable network of powerful and inspiring women from all across the country. That is something I am very grateful to now have.

Does this sound like something you might be interested in? Tulane undergraduate students can apply to NCI for funding to attend Feminist Camp. Email Betsy Lopez at elopez@tulane.edu for more information.

Responses have been lightly edited for length and clarity.