

THE GALEN TIMES

“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven.” — Johannes Gaertner



March is the month of recognition for all the women in the world who strive to make a difference in society. We encourage students to express gratitude and a resounding appreciation to the women around them. Therefore, we have included several sections in the newsletter that speak about women and their success in history.

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The Success Of Women

By Adrian Palma

The month of March symbolizes the month of recognition, admiration, and appreciation for all women across the world. While every day we should value and appreciate the women around us, let us commend our Belizean ladies and inspire them to continue excelling on all levels whether it be through sports, education, politics, business, and other valuable areas in society. Women have immensely contributed to the development of the world as we know it today and we should acknowledge all the women around us that are striving to leave a successful legacy in this life. Looking at Barbados, our sister country in the Caribbean region, we see that women have broken the barriers between women and politics. Mia Mottley, an attorney, elegantly climbed the ladder from an opposition senator all the way to being the first female Prime Minister of Barbados in 2018. Interestingly, despite the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mottley's resilience propelled her to seek re-election where she and her party won all 30 seats in the House of Assembly; A truly remarkable event for Mia Mottley and all other women who aspire to be politicians. By dominating the election polls, Mia Mottley became a celebrated politician and a role model to other women. Bringing it closer to home, we should remember the late Dame Minita Gordon, who dedicated her life, as the Governor General of Belize, to ensure equal educational opportunities for women.

Gordon showed leadership and diligence through her duties as the Governor General. I cannot emphasize enough how monumental it is for history to have a successful and bold woman like Dame Minita Gordon as the first Governor General of Belize. Her ultimate goal was to empower other women to be leaders and writers of their own destinies. In all walks of life, women have been influencers and figureheads for success and development. Here at Galen, women have also been on the frontline to provide quality education and a robust teaching experience to our Eagles. Our esteemed Provost, Dr. Aird, has spent over 25 years in higher education and joined Galen in 2003 as an assistant professor. Galen has now become a prestigious and renowned university in Belize. Therefore, we see that women have shown perseverance and dedication in any and all challenges that they encounter. As I proudly express my recognition to these triumphant women, I want to congratulate the Lady Eagles who competed in the La Ruta Maya River Challenge to break the bias against women. We see here that our Lady Eagles are doing their part in supporting other females who face different social issues. The future looks incredibly promising as women become more confident, knowledgeable, and determined to be the best in all fields of life. With that said, I encourage our Lady Eagles to break the barriers that prevent women from being in leadership and for them to continue striving for excellence.



Lady Eagle Testimonial

By Casiana Lind

Every year, the world celebrates women during the month of March! This year is no different with the international theme being 'Break The Bias'. While this month is dedicated to celebrating females, we must understand why the world saw it necessary to dedicate an entire month to women. It all boils down to history. There was a time whereby the world we currently live in was solely a man's world And women acted as the glorified 'help' in running their world with our main purpose seemingly being to continue family lineages.



Thankfully, we have come a long way and feminine empowerment is on the rise. It goes without saying though that there are still strides to be made, hence the 'Break The Bias' theme. Today, I do believe that our little country- Belize, is not too badly off in terms of gender equality. Women are provided with equal academic, and professional opportunities for the most part. The challenge in my opinion is when dealing with personalities and individualized beliefs. I will briefly target three areas: the political, academic and professional atmosphere.

Unfortunately, politics is still a male-dominated sport with just a few women at the forefront. Why is this? Why does our society seem to be okay with placing our blind trust in more men than women? Personally, I have heard a few comments during my brief dabble in the political scene all totaling up to 'women are too emotional and are unworthy of the political crown'. My response has always been that maybe the world needs to be nurtured and not 'provided for'. A child can be given all the luxuries in life, and still grow up to choose the wrong path. Likewise, a country may be economically driven but if the society, the people, the children are without nurturing guidance then all will be lost.

In Belize's professional world, there seems to be a preexisting concept that women are able to move up the ladder because they are physically appealing. Whether one is given a raise, a promotion, or the opportunity of a new job, plenty of people will attempt to water those little achievements as nothing more than a stroke of luck. 'She is lucky to be physically attractive, because that is how the doors are opened for her.' Skills and qualifications are somehow thrown out the window when we make it past the finish line. To combat this, many of my mentors have said something very simple but very true, "Be so good, you are undeniable." Educate yourselves regardless, work hard regardless, and grow your skill set regardless. You. Are. Deserving.

Lastly, your personal life presents these biases we might never rid ourselves of. The topic of love in my generation brings about the popular phrase 'is she wifey material', without many men questioning if they bring as much to the table as they expect women to. Furthermore, statistics reveal that approximately 1 in every 4 women will experience some form of gender-based violence throughout their lives, it is more common than we mark it up to be. So what? Are you willing to trade your freedom so as to get rid of your loneliness? Also, why does society seemingly raise us to be good wives? Why can't we be raised to be GOOD WOMEN? In friendships, we must watch out for ourselves 10x over as betrayal is also quite common. Empowerment is a pretty banner many hide under, so it is up to us to set boundaries. These boundaries can only come after we have discovered self-love in its purest form. Do you love yourself enough to not accept the bare minimum? Do you love yourself enough to remove yourself from situations that take more from you than it gives to you?

To conclude, women empowerment does not translate to a complete global conversion from patriarchy to matriarchy. To me true female empowerment comes from equality, understanding that both genders have a place in society. Whether one chooses to conform to conventional roles or branch of, we must accept and enable! Most of all, we women must persevere and push through whatever. Remember, if you can't find a kind person, be one because only love can drive out hate and only light can eliminate the darkness.

La Ruta Maya River Challenge

After two long years of COVID-19 restrictions, Belize saw an easing to the regulations set by the government and with that, came the return of La Ruta Maya River Challenge. An exhilarating four day canoe race where thousands of Belizeans tune in and follow participants who journey across the rivers of Belize. The competitors of the race show their determination and skill by paddling over a hundred and seventy miles to reach Belize City from the Macal River. La Ruta Maya has always attracted the attention of locals and tourists. La Ruta Maya is one of the best events to experience with your family. As the saying goes, “La Ruta Maya is MORE than just a race”. This year’s La Ruta Maya River Challenge was especially fun and impactful as we had Galen Eagles competing in the race to break the bias and end violence against women. With teamwork and determination, Tina Herrera, Jayda Brown, Jasmin Armstrong, and John Waight became the 2022 winners of the Intramural category; we are proud of our Eagles and congratulate them for their accomplishment in the 2022 La Ruta Maya River Challenge. Notably, we thank the Hon. Minister Dolores Balderamos and her Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tanya Santos from the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs for sponsoring the Eagle Champions. With that said, we remind our Galen Eagles that great success is obtained with hard work and dedication. Continue to soar Eagles!



World Day of Social Justice

Simulation Challenge

World Day of Social Justice was celebrated on February 20, 2022, under the theme “**Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment**”.

To commemorate this day, the Office of Student Affairs partnered with the Faculty of Arts, Science, and Technology to create a Simulation Challenge where several students were given different scenarios as though they were part of the informal employment sector. The scenarios challenged students to ‘live’ for 7 days through the eyes of others and document their feelings, thoughts, and experiences.

Every day, the students took notes of every meal or purchase they made, considering the budget given to them. The participating students were invited to a debrief session to share their experiences of the challenge. Many of them expressed that they felt anxiety, frustration, and sadness because of the financial situation that they were assigned.

The overall purpose of this challenge was to build awareness of the vulnerability of workers in the informal economy. Informal workers often lack any form of social protection or employment-related benefits. Terry Eagleton said, “the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”. At the end of the debrief session, the students expressed their appreciation towards education, their job, and a greater awareness of the reality of others.

A big thank you to **Ms. Sherry Gibbs**, **Ms. Kristcha Deguerre**, and **Deiny Montoya** for their assistance and facilitation during this event!

Here are testimonials from some of the participants:



“My sincere and humble feelings after participating in the seven days World Social Justice Session comprises of three feelings (Sad – Happy - Sad). Firstly, I mentioned sad because the scenario assigned to me gives me a 360 reflection of how my life used to be during my early upbringing where we had to struggle with a tight budget, which was in line with my WSJ scenario, it was \$35.00 a week. I know what it is to be able to accept the least on the table from my parents. Secondly, I said “happy” because moving from a tough and bumpy road to reach where I am today is a self-fulfillment venture. Thankfully, I have made it this far and I continue to jump hurdles after hurdles so I can be able to assist those who assisted me when I needed it the most. Lastly, I did mention “sad” again, simply because I know when I walk two or three houses away in my neighborhood, I will surely meet people who are living my first stage of life. Empathizing with them is a good start, but taking action makes all the difference.”

-Zenubio Coc

“Many times as young people we tend to ignore the severity of the financial situation people in poverty are going through. In the scenario I was assigned, I was a tacos vendor with 3 kids to maintain. On the 3rd day of my simulation challenge, I began to feel overwhelmed, stressed, and frustrated by the small budget that I was living on. This challenge made me express my full support to search for solutions and to achieve poverty eradication by advocating for full employment and decent work for all.”

-Deiny Montoya





“Overall, the simulation challenge was one of a kind. After completing the challenge, I have looked at life from a different perspective. While doing the exercise, I have felt emotions of empathy and frustration. It is a sad reality that many people in Belize survive on a low monthly income. My takeaway from doing this activity varies for several reasons. Firstly, it is key to practice financial budgeting, especially with the steady increase in price of goods and the annual or monthly salary of a low/ minimum wage. Secondly, I have also learned that as current/future leaders of Belize, it is important to raise awareness on such social issues that continuously hinder the alleviation of poverty. Most importantly though, I have developed an appreciation for my education and my many other wants and needs. It’s a privilege and a blessing to have such opportunities that other people may be longing for.”

-Jayleen Logan

“Although it was only a simulation, I felt a plethora of emotions like stress and frustration throughout this challenge. It made me realize how fortunate I am to be attending Galen University and more aware of deeper societal issues. I have a new perspective and greater appreciation of things I took for granted, such as access to education, healthy meals, and good healthcare, which many people do not have. I hope to bring more awareness and help mitigate harmful preconceptions about people in poverty so that we as a society can eradicate it and create a more equitable society for all.”

-Saniyya Rosado





“Participating in the WSJ challenge taught me a lot. It allowed me to see life from a different perspective than I had previously. It made me realize how difficult it is and made me empathize with individuals who may be experiencing the scenarios we had as part of the challenge. It also helped me realize that unanticipated troubles that happen in a person's daily life might seriously disturb one's well-being. Due to unforeseen expenses, many people may not know where their next meal will come from. Another insight was that many people may suffer from mental health concerns as a result of financial difficulties.”

-Raul Castillo

“When I first started thinking about the simulation, I thought about how it might allow us to step into other people's shoes. Especially because I was simulated as a retired elderly man with no one else to worry about, which made me think it would be easy to manage. However, I had a bank loan to pay and the pension I was receiving was insufficient, forcing me to sacrifice several of my everyday luxuries. In addition, when it came to grocery shopping, I believed I had covered all of the essentials, such as food and water, but I had forgotten to get all of my toiletries. This made me realize that, even though I believed I was budgeting well, there were still things I needed. So despite, attempting to organize my week ahead of time, I couldn't predict what the future held, and the unforeseen situations I was put in, made life much more difficult especially for those living in poverty. Which is why the simulation was so us more aware of the challenges individuals confront on a daily basis.”

-Kevin Rivera





“The experience of participating in the World Social Justice Challenge was very eye-opening. It allowed me to better understand the distinct battles and struggles that people may go through everyday. So, whenever possible, be kind and lend a helping hand.”

-Kiralynn Cruz

**Thank you to
all
participants!**

Important Dates

March 14-18 : Course Evaluations

**March 22-27: Mandatory “Selection of Courses for
2021-3 Summer semester**

