

# The Albion Pleiad

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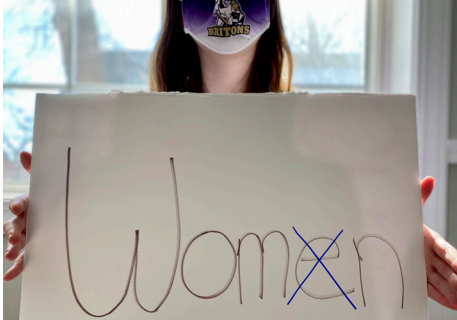
Celebrating Albion's Black-Owned Businesses: Irene's Superior Unisex Salon

COVID-19 Vaccinations on Campus: What Students can Expect

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## Opinion: Women vs Womxn: Why The Difference Is Important

Kenna Childress  
Staff Writer



Women or Womxn are not synonymous. In a progressive era, "womxn" has gained headway (Photo by Savannah Waddick).

Recently, use of the word "womxn" has gained headway. The word was coined by modern feminists on the basis of being more inclusive than the term women itself.

"Womxn" was popularized during what was originally named the Women's March Seattle on Jan. 21, 2017. One of the core organizers of the march, Ebony Miranda, who identifies as nonbinary,

suggested their branch of the Women's March use the term "womxn" rather than "women." Miranda said they believed this spelling represented "women and those affected by misogyny and women related issues."

Elizabeth Hunter-Keller, the communications chair for what became known as the Womxn's March Seattle, stated that the need for the use of a term that included everyone involved was important. Hunter-Keller mentioned that initially, some women, mainly white, were confused by the use of the word "womxn" but understood after some explanation.

"There were a lot of, for the most part, white women, who wondered why we had to use the 'x' and asked us about it. But when we talked to them online, most were totally understanding," said Hunter-Keller in an interview with The New York Times.

Womxn is not the first alternative spelling of women. Since the 1960s, there have been many variations of the word, including "wimmin," "womin" and "womyn."

Ultimately, the goal of the variation in spelling is to remove the root word "men." This is for multiple reasons, among them being the idea of men as the default. Keridwen Luis, a professor of sociology at Harvard University, highlighted this annoyance that feminists have been attempting to deal with for ages.

"If you go back to the logical root of the word, it's that 'men' is the default," Luis said in an interview with The New York Times. "And in many cases in English, we've just reverted to using the masculine as the default for a lot of things. Waiter and waitress. Actor and actress. It used to be that poet was a masculine term and therefore if you were a woman poet, you have to be a poetess, which sounds really Victorian and like you spend a lot of time on a fainting couch. Fortunately, that has dropped out of use."

College groups in the United Kingdom also started to use the alternative spelling as a way to be more inclusive in 2018.

Read more at [albionpleiad.com](http://albionpleiad.com)

## Name a woman on Albion's campus that inspires you?



Lucretia Woods, a sophomore from Chicago, is inspired by assistant professor of biology Marcella Cervantes (Photo by Savannah Waddick).

## Black Women Winning: Leiyah Denson

Aura Ware  
Features Editor



Leiyah Denson is a senior from St. Clair Shores. She majors in psychology and business (Photo by Savannah Waddick).

Black women on Albion College's campus, both students and alumni, have been doing phenomenal work to create

a more inclusive space for marginalized students.

From Ida B. Wells to Angela Davis to Laverne Cox, Black women have historically been on the front lines as trail blazers for change while simultaneously being one of the most disrespected, unprotected and neglected women in this country and around the world. Despite being constantly struck down by society, Black women continually rise up.

Black women on Albion's campus are no different. Despite all the trials and tribulations they have to face on an everyday basis, Black women at Albion continue to take charge in leadership roles and make campus a place for the better. And they deserve their credit.

The Pleiad's "Black Women Winning" series aims to highlight Black women on campus and all they have achieved and continue to achieve.

Leiyah Denson is a senior from St. Clair Shores. She majors in psychology and business (Photo by Savannah Waddick).

### Leiyah Denson

Leiyah Denson is a senior from St. Clair Shores. She majors in psychology and business with a minor in ethnic studies. Complementing her studies, Denson is actively working to bring an organization called Active Minds to Albion College's campus.

"Active minds is an organization that seeks to break down the stigma surrounding mental health and gets people talking about it so that people don't have to feel ashamed," said Denson. "They hope to do that through education and advocacy work."

The reason behind Denson's motivation toward bringing Active Minds to campus is her interest in the mental health of all people.

"I've always liked psychology and abnormal psych, so I really wanted an organization that was focused on mental health exclusively," said Denson.

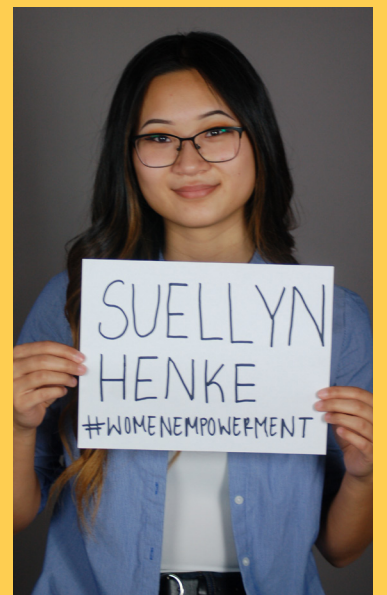
Denson knows it takes no shortage of work to bring an organization to Albion's campus, but she is determined, nevertheless. She has created an interest survey that she is sending to students and academic departments to gauge how much other students are ready for this organization to come to campus.

"I really want to make sure that [Active Minds] isn't just recruiting psychology people," said Denson. "I want it to be something that's important to everybody because it affects everybody, whether it's direct or not."

Along with working to bring Active Minds to campus, Denson is also involved with Diversibility as the organization's secretary.

"I started as a sophomore, and I've always kind of liked Umbrella groups, because growing up with my background, there weren't many groups focused on diversity and including people," said Denson.

Read more at [albionpleiad.com](http://albionpleiad.com)



Lily Goldberger, a senior from Allegan, is inspired by professor Suelllyn Henke (Photo by Savannah Waddick).

Portraits for Women Leaders on Campus In Honor of Women's History Month.



Mary Collar, 1997 (Photo Courtesy of Albion College).

This print edition of The Pleiad is dedicated, in loving memory, to Mary Collar, who served as an English professor at Albion College for over 40 years and was a champion in making room for every woman on campus. Collar taught mainly twentieth century literature as well as English classes that emphasized gender and women's sexuality. Collar was an inspiration to many, and her presence will be missed greatly in Albion's campus community. A virtual memorial service for Collar will be held on March 27 at 11 a.m. with limited access in Tennant Hall for those who cannot attend the broadcast.

In Loving Memory of Mary Collar.



Scan this to watch our #WomenEmpowerment video





Albion news delivered weekly to your inbox. Sign up with our QR code.

## Name a woman on Albion's campus that inspires you?



Grace Hoffman, a junior from Flint, is inspired by instructor and director of the quantitative studies center Karla McCavit (Photo by Savannah Waddick).



Alex Mileski, a junior from Lapeer, is assistant director for greek life and student organizations Kristen Sarniak (Photo by Irene Corona-Avila).

Portraits for Women Leaders on Campus In Honor of Women's History Month.

### THE ALBION COLLEGE PLEIAD

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# Opinion: Language Perpetuates Implicit Sexism

Jordan Revenaugh  
Editor-in-Chief

In 2014, Always launched the "Like a Girl" campaign, targeted to help women and girls take back the phrase "like a girl," often used to insinuate weakness, and turn it into something new, something strong.

It's seven years later, and in my mind, the campaign was successful. It completed the duty it set out to do, which was to allow women and girls to take a phrase that was once demeaning and demoralizing and turn it into something positive. The explicit sexism of "like a girl" and phrases like it obviously called for change and called for us, as a society, to cease use of phrases that further perpetuate sexism and the stigmatization of women outright.

Even though this campaign and others like it were a step in the right direction toward eliminating sexist language, sexism remains ingrained into our everyday language.

The phrase that really spurred on this train of thought for me personally was "son of a bitch."

Dictionaries often define the phrase as "a general term of abuse for a man." Though the origin is disputed, the term was potentially first coined by William Shakespeare in 1605 and is still an integral part of everyday language in America.

However, delving into the etymology of the phrase reveals that, for as often as it is used as an insult toward men, it's actually an insult toward the mother of the man at whom the insult is being directed. Even when we attempt to direct insults at men in society, the blame ends up falling back on women due to the language we use, thereby perpetuating sexism in an implicit way.

Maybe that example is more obvious, but gendered language certainly doesn't stop at the phrases that are more outwardly and overtly sexist.

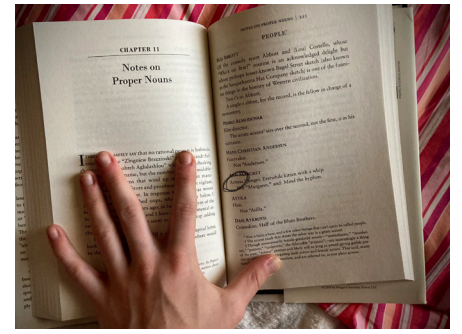
Phrases that we tend to use as praise when something is done right, including wingman, right-hand man and poster boy, are all oriented toward men. Meanwhile, the phrases that we use to express dissatisfaction at one's behavior, like prima donna, Debby Downer and Negative Nancy, are all directed toward women. This disconnect potentially creates an implicit instinct to attribute more positivity toward men and more negativity toward women since we do so subconsciously in our everyday language.

In 2017, psychologists Michela Menegatti and Monica Rubini made a claim that the English language, specifically, reproduces sexist ideas held in society on the grounds of not only word choices and phrases, like "son of a bitch," but also through basic grammatical structure.

The researchers argued that language perpetrates existing gender stereotypes on the grounds that masculine nouns and pronouns are often the root word of all feminine nouns and pronouns, but they are also more commonly used and more archetypal in everyday language.

It might not seem like a big deal on the surface, but human brains are hardwired to use as many heuristics and schemas as possible to take shortcuts in our thought processes. From a neurobiological standpoint, more thinking requires more energy, which requires more glucose. And we are creatures who are built to conserve as much energy as possible.

In the world of business, we create mental pictures, stereotypes, for who fits the image of a certain job. We picture construction workers as strong men who wear overalls and a hard hat. We picture entrepreneurs as businessmen who wear navy suits and always have a fresh haircut. We picture the president of the United States, 45 times out of 46, as a white man.



Style guides to the English language denote using the word "actor" for men and "actress" for women. These distinctions are so long-held and common in society that we tend to not notice the implicit sexism they weave into the English language (Photo Illustration by Jordan Revenaugh).

The pattern here is that all of our go-to mental representations tend to be men.

Our stereotypes of success and business are heavily male-centric because of the way that our language normalizes the term "businessman" and makes "businesswoman" a less common and almost obsolete phrase. When women disappear from society's mental representations of holding a certain position, they become less likely of actually holding that position because they're not who the employer envisions when looking for candidates for a specific job.

With regard to grammatical structure, Menegatti and Rubini explain that sexism is tied to the way in which expressions referring to women tend to be more grammatically complex than those referring to men.

## Albion College Women's History Month Events:

**Panel of Albion Alumni Professional Women (WGSS/AAUW)**  
March 26, 7 pm

**In-Person Walk through of new Women's Center in Robinson & Virtual Tour**  
March 8

**Art Submissions for Women's Center**  
March 1 - March 26  
(winners announced Apr. 2)

**QueerCore with Queen Earth**  
March 5, 7 pm - 9 pm

**Know Your Worth: Salary Negotiation Workshop with Amy Everheart Perry**  
March 18, 6pm

**Letters to your Influencer**  
March 22, 3pm in the KC

**Movies at the Bohm (UB) weekends in March**

**UBreak Table w/ Paint by Numbers feat. historical women**  
March 31, 6-8 pm in the KC

**AKA Alumni Panel**  
TBD

**Compliments Campaign (Panhel)**  
March 8, 3pm in the KC

**Self Care Goodie Bags (AAUW)**  
Mar 16 via sign up

**Breaking Barriers Series**  
Keena - March 18, 7pm, prerecorded  
Paola - March 23, 7pm, prerecorded  
Locks of Love - April 6, 7 pm

## Women Leaders on Campus in Honor of Women's History Month

Erin Lathrop  
Sports Editor

After being petitioned by the National Women's History Project, March was designated as Women's History Month in 1987.

In honor of March being Women's History Month, The Albion Pleiad highlights just a few of the many women leaders on Albion College's Campus.

### Alex Mileski

Alex Mileski, a junior from Lapeer, was elected Panhel Council president in the fall of 2020.

"I wanted to become Panhellenic president because of the two amazing leaders I saw come before me," said Mileski, via email. "I saw the opportunity to make a bigger impact on my community, and that's exactly what I want to do."

One of Mileski's goals as president is to create deeper bonds and connections throughout the different Greek life chapters on campus.

"I hope others can learn to positively impact Greek life," said Mileski. "I hope they can learn that we are all one big happy family, no matter the chapter letters they wear. I hope others learn that anyone can step up and be a leader even without a position."

One of the things Mileski has

already started to create is Panhellenic families. In a Panhellenic family, girls from each chapter get together to get to know each other better. Mileski said that she has gained interest from a lot of people, which makes her "Panhellenic heart so happy."

"My favorite part is definitely bringing the women in every chapter closer together," said Mileski. "That is my big goal for my presidency is Panhellenic sisterhood. I am starting Panhellenic families, which are an easy way to bring all of the chapters together and make friends super easy. I love seeing other women love each other and each and every chapter. My favorite part is seeing women gain everything they can from the Panhellenic sisterhood."

### Lily Goldberg

Lily Goldberg, a senior from Allegan, was elected president of the Asian Awareness Group in the spring of 2020.

"The desire to want to spread Asian culture on campus drove me to run for the presidency," said Goldberg. "Just wanting to spread awareness, and I thought it would be fun."

Through her desire to spread awareness, Goldberg has learned many leadership skills.

(Photos are displayed along the margins)  
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