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Minority women focus of forum

The Women of Color Conference aims to find a common ground

By Erin Snelgrove
Oregon Daily Emerald

Cherrie Moraga challenges the traditional role of women in society. As a female, a lesbian, a fair-skinned Chicana and a leader, Moraga stretches the restrictions society has imposed on women of color.

The keynote speaker at the 4th Annual Women of Color Conference this Saturday in the EMU, she will open the forum for discussion on issues concerning minority women.

Sponsored by the ASUO Women's Center, the conference will include workshops on racism, discrimination and finding a common ground to combat discrimination.

"In this society, there are invisible obstacles that women of color experience every day of their lives," said Bianca Jaikaran, a co-coordinator for the conference. "But by this conference, they will be able to understand the reasons for this isolation and begin to break down those barriers."

Besides the issue of color,

Women of Color Conference

WHERE: EMU

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 30

Registration and workshops from 9 a.m. to 6:40 p.m.

Keynote speaker Cherrie Moraga from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. in 150 Columbia

For more information, contact Hong or Bianca at 346-4095

women are also encouraged to discuss other traits that are unique to them.

"Race isn't the only aspect of a person's identity; gender and religion are important too," said Hong Tran, a co-coordinator for the convention. "It's important for people to celebrate all the characteristics that make them who they are."

Moraga's work and life focus on women's individuality. As a Chicana writer committed to the feminist cause, she is well known for her collaboration with Gloria Anzaldua on the book "This Bride Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color." Moraga seeks to educate others by using examples from

her own life.

"Cherrie Moraga is a powerful woman of color," Tran said. "She's independent, strong and not afraid to say what she thinks. Cherrie's growth and strength serve as a model for others."

Cris Cullinan, another speaker at the convention, will present a forum titled "White Privilege and the Limits of Tolerance." Cullinan will discuss and examine why some individuals discriminate against people of color.

"At this conference, I hope people will get a clearer idea of the ways in which we exclude people from our society," Cullinan said. "I think it's important to realize and understand the everyday exclusion which people of color and other non-dominant groups face."

Everyone, regardless of race or gender, is welcome to attend the convention.

"The goal of this conference is to reach out and open up people's consciousness," Jaikaran said. "This educational burden isn't just placed on women of color. Everyone must actively work together to create a more balanced society."

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