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# Documentary screening sheds light on gender equality issues

By Glen Tadych  
*Trends Reporter*

The Social Awareness Documentary Film Club and Feminists United teamed up with the Department of Philosophy Monday night to raise awareness on gender inequality with the screening of *Miss Representation*.

Released in 2011, *Miss Representation* is a documentary film that illustrates under-representation of women in politics, the media and entertainment.

"It's a really well-done film," said Rebekah Ross-Fountain, senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy. "It covers the range of what's problematic about showing women as sex symbols."

The idea to show the film through the club emerged in Ross-Fountain's 2011 Images of Women class, where she and Laura Cowan, English junior, discovered *Miss Representation* and its message. Ross-Fountain and Cowan then approached the club, an organization formed to raise awareness on social issues, to screen the film. Cowan's role as the club's treasurer provided a direct connection to the group, but her involvement with Feminists United, also as treasurer, resulted in the two student organizations joint-hosting an event for the first time.

"It really brings media to light on the under-representation of women," Cowan said. "It gives women the chance to say, 'Hey, we're still not being represented fairly in the media.' It gives women the

power to do something about it, and something should be done."

A group of 50 students and faculty members gathered to watch the film in the LBJ Student Center at 7 p.m. For 85 minutes, attendees watched the testimonies, most of them harsh but true, of everyday high school students, celebrities and political figures. These included Condoleezza Rice, Katie Couric, Jennifer Pozner and Jackson Katz, among others.

Breakout discussions commenced afterward, giving attendees the opportunity to voice their personal feelings in regard to the film's message.

The overall issue addressed in the film was the appearance and portrayal of women in media and entertainment. The film states 53 percent of 13-year-old girls are unhappy with their bodies and that the number increases to 78 percent by age 17.

Caitlin Miller, microbiology freshman, was one of many who viewed the film and agreed with the illustrated points.

"I feel the way women look and how they act needs to change," Miller said. "I have a niece, and I want to raise her in a nation without discrimination."

Max Anderson, the film club's president and electronic media and political science junior, said the purpose of the organization is to raise awareness on these issues as a means to resolve them.

"It's really easy to point out the problems, but it's harder to find the solutions," Anderson said.