WATER RIGHTS, PRIVATIZATION, AND REDUCING PLASTIC WASTE

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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
Intellectual Conceptions

- **Feminism**: the range of committed inquiry and activity dedicated to (1) describing women’s subordination and asking (2) how women continue to occupy that subordinate position and (3) dedicated to change.

- **Ecofeminism**: Distinguishes itself through the inclusion of concerns of non-human entities within its inquiry. The paradigm considers structural gendered causes of the devaluation and degradation of all life.
  - Focuses on upon the patterns among the treatment of oppressed, exploited or undervalued beings and entities and the common ethical and ontological basis for maltreatment
  - Women are no closer to nature than men, essentializing gender and nature
Information

Globally
• 768 million people lack access to an improved water source, and more than 80 percent of these people lack in rural areas.
• 2.6 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, but 663 million people are still without
• At least 1.8 billion people globally use a source of drinking water that is fecally contaminated

United States
• 3.9 trillion gallons of water are consumed in the United States per month.
• The average American uses 176 gallons of water per day compared to 5 gallons of water the average African family uses each day.
• Costs of drinking water and sewer services have been increasing much faster than inflation since the 1980s due to increased capital and operations cost.
• Nationally, the estimated costs for drinking water and sewer utility infrastructure needs is well over $1 trillion in the next two decades.
Insights about the social action issue

Interrelated forms of privatization
- Infrastructure
- Water bottle consumption
What was my SAP?

- Intro + Tapped (2009) + Water tasting contest
- Gov. Chris Christie turning water into private commodity through the Water Infrastructure Protection Act (WIPA).
- Discusses topics from ‘water mining,’ climate change, PET plastic, and BPA as a result of our use of water bottles.
- Today companies like Nestle take 210 million gallons of water a year from Michigan for $200 a year.
Lessons about women’s leadership

• Women are no more environmentally responsible than men
• Collaborative and participatory
Partnerships

[Image of a logo: "TAKE BACK THE TAP" with a website link: www.foodandwaterwatch.org]
Impact

- Changing habits
- Opposing legislations that privatize water infrastructure
- Opposing ‘water mining’ practices from companies like Nestle
- Cognizance of climate change and corporations encroaching in the public goods domain
References

• Erbentraut, J. (2015). There's a secret war being waged over your drinking water. (). Huffington Post.
• Van Abs, D. (2016). New jersey needs a better approach to affordable water and sewer utilities. () NJSpotlight.