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Communication Arts and Sciences

Title of your research project.  
Empowerment is Beautiful: Feminism and Post-Feminism in Beautiful: The Carole King Musical

Description of research. Please provide a few sentences that explain the question and the methods employed in this research project.  
This rhetorical analysis examines the production script of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical through the lenses of second-wave feminism, third-wave feminism, and post-feminism. Based on the life of American singer/songwriter Carole King, Beautiful focuses on the triumphs and tribulations of King's career as a songwriter in the 1960s New York Brill Building, as well as King's personal life, including her relationship with her spouse/lyricist Gerry Goffin. Through this analysis, we explore how Beautiful's characters Carole King and Cynthia Weil embody elements of second and third-wave feminism, and suggest that Beautiful: The Carole King Musical conveys an overall empowerment message that is written for a post-feminist audience, given King's and Weil's empowerment through individual choices rather than through feminist activism. We conclude that this utopian post-feminist message may be problematic for a twenty-first-century audience in that it fails to acknowledge women's current career struggles.

Did this project include Penn State students as researchers?  
Yes

If yes to the above question, please state where it was published.  
This article was co-authored with former Penn State student Julia Schuller. It was published in Studies in Musical Theatre.

What problem do you address with your research?  
How feminism and post-feminism are represented in Beautiful: The Carole King Musical.