



# Women's Leadership Initiative at Yale

## Contents:

Welcome.....	1
Mission Statement.....	2
Leading Ladies.....	3-4
W.E. Women Conference.....	5-7
Speakers&Workshops.....	8
Leadership & Contact.....	9
Sponsors.....	10

## WLI History

WLI was founded in 2006 by five undergraduates at Yale who felt the University required an official organization that would prioritize discussion on women's leadership at Yale. Since then, WLI has established a variety of programs for women at Yale, including bi-annual Job Shadowing Days, the Leading Ladies Gala, a mentorship network that spans four professional schools at Yale, and career-building workshops, to name a few. Through these opportunities, WLI members have interacted with prominent women leaders in their industries and have gone on to become leaders in their own right.



## Summer Newsletter

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, Women's Leadership Initiative(WLI) at Yale completed another successful year of outreach and leadership! Below you'll find information on our Mission Statement, a summary of the events we successfully held, announcement of our new board, and of course a final thank you to our amazing sponsors! Whether you're reading this as a member, sponsor, or just hoping to learn more about WLI, we hope you will continue to support us as we grow and expand in the future!



## WLI Mission Statement

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The Yale Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) seeks to empower young women to become leaders at the University and in opportunities after graduation.

WLI is committed to creating a campus culture that prioritizes female leadership among the various experiences offered at Yale. Overseen by an executive board, WLI constantly creates new programs and refines existing ones to address a rapidly changing world, in which the discussion on women's leadership is evolving every day.

WLI emphasizes the ethic of a woman who finds strength from developing her own principles. Therefore, we provide a comprehensive set of opportunities, which include the annual Women in Leadership Conference; a speaker series; programs to shadow working women in NYC; a mentorship network that spans four schools at Yale; and the annual Leading Ladies Gala that celebrates women of example at our own school.

Our success stems from the continuous effort of our members who believe in passing on the initiative as new women arrive at the University. By leveraging momentum and devotion, WLI seeks to inspire individuals to create their own initiative from our shared fundamental vision.



## The Leading Ladies Story

The Leading Ladies Gala was established in 2013 by the Yale Women's Leadership Initiative, inspired by the idea that women at Yale deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments and leadership. We hope this recognition encourages more women to lead in whichever fields they have committed themselves to. To this end, we aim to bring together over 150 Yale undergraduates, alumnae, faculty, and guest speakers to engage in a spectacular celebration of female leadership on campus and beyond.

From "leaning in" to "having it all," the conversation deserves to be amplified and translated into action. The Leading Ladies Gala provides a platform for the Yale community to come together and take pride in its female leaders, as well as to inspire those around us to be leaders in whatever way they choose to define it. Leadership does not necessarily come in the form of being the president of a club; it can mean organizing a study group, starting a project, or even motivating teammates. Whatever leadership may mean to our students, we hope they take the time to recognize it.

## 4th Annual Leading Ladies Gala

On November 12, 2016, the Women's Leadership Initiative hosted our fourth Leading Ladies Gala, an annual celebration that recognizes the achievements of outstanding undergraduate female leaders at Yale. This year, we brought over 200 students, faculty, and Yale alumni together in Pierson College for a night of recognition and celebration of our 150+ nominees and other incredible women on our campus.



Our keynote speaker this year was Ms. Soraya Chemaly. Ms. Chemaly is the Director of the Women's Media Center Speech Project, and is a prominent writer, activist, and feminist who focuses on issues such as wage equality and sexual

harassment, among other causes. Her internationally recognized work appears in TIME, The Atlantic, Huffington Post, The Guardian, and more.

Student performances included The New Blue (Yale's oldest female acapella group) and WORD: Performance Poetry at Yale artist Ashia Ajani, as well as student speakers Cassie Lignelli and Darby Henry.

Through the gala, we hope to inspire one another and recognize that role models can be found all around us.





Special thanks goes to the Leading Ladies Committee, who worked tirelessly to put the event together: Payson Whitwell, Jessica Gao (Chair), Isabella Teng, Muriel Wang, Valerie Chen, Tina Machingaidze, Soraya Chemly (Keynote speaker), Adrienne Owings (L to R).



The New Blue (Yale's oldest female acapella group)



Darby Henry (Student speaker)

## 9th Annual W.E. Women Conference

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The 9th Annual Women in Leadership Conference: Women Empowering Women was held on February 25th, 2017 and hosted over 200 participants.

W.E. Women hosted a keynote addresses and panel discussions on topics ranging from being a woman in finance to fostering queer womanhood. The panel discussions encouraged dialogue between women of different experiences in order to explore the modern problems that women face through an intersectional lens.

Our incredible keynote speakers were Deepali Bagati of Catalyst and Liz Abzug of the Bella Abzug Leadership Institute. See below to view some snapshots of the event!





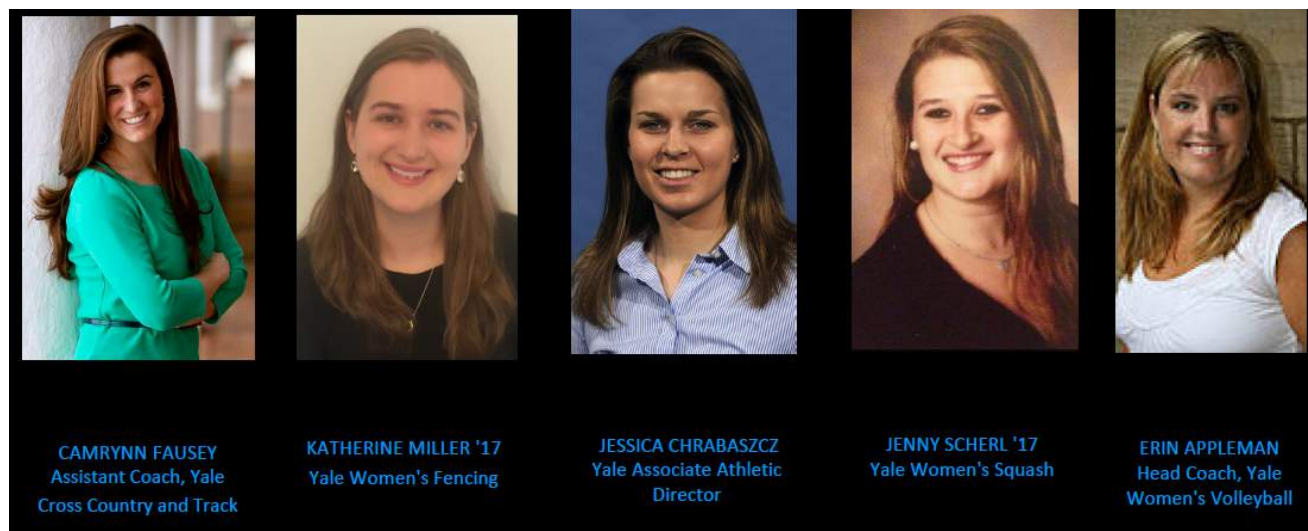


Special thanks goes to the W.E. Women Conference Committee, who worked tirelessly to put the event together: Tasnim Mollah, Kacey Fang, Kendall (Chair), Emma Pred-Sosa (L to R)



## Speakers and Workshops

The Speakers and Workshops program brings students and industry leaders together in engaging conversations about female leadership. Often held in the cozy setting of college common rooms, our unique events allow students to understand leadership in its different forms through discussions and Q&As. Below are just some of the speaker events we hosted this past year.



### Women in Athletics Panel

The first-ever Women in Athletics panel was held on October 27th at 7pm in the Pierson College Common Room. Even in this day and age, athletics remains a male-dominated field and female athletes are widely underrepresented and under-celebrated in many sports. This special event brought together campus leaders in the field of athletics to engage in a dialogue on the status of female athletes at Yale and beyond. Panelists shared their personal experiences as female athletes or women working in athletics and discussed any issues they believe women face in the field, followed by a Q&A with the audience.



### Kate Johnson, GE Digital

Kate has oversight of sales, marketing, and services at GE Digital, a division of GE focused on transforming industrial businesses into digital industrial businesses through the use of software and data analytics. She joined GE in 2013 from the technology industry, where most recently she was a senior vice president in charge of the North American Technology Consulting business at Oracle Corporation. The discussion focused on leadership and innovation in a constantly evolving digital landscape and Kate shared her personal experiences as a female executive in the fields of business, technology and communications, followed by Q&A with the audience.



## WLI Leadership

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WLI is overseen by an Executive Board of approximately a dozen women and a dozen committee members. The President and Vice Presidents oversee the high-level strategy and direction of the organization, spur cross-departmental initiatives across WLI's seven departments, and oversee the creation of new programs and refinement of existing ones. The rest of the WLI Executive Board consists of seven different departments that each manage a critical component of the organization's activities and operations. Every year, over 700 students engage in WLI programs. Thank you to our '16-'17 board, and a big welcome to our new board!

### 2016-2017 Board

President - Haleigh Larson

Vice Presidents - Alexandra Small and Caitlin Walsh

Alumnae Relations Chairs - Claire Lu

Business Chairs - Chelsea Guo and Karen Yang

Conference Chair - Kendall Schmidt

Leading Ladies Chair - Jessica Gao

Marketing Chair - Max George

Membership Chairs - Emily Harburg and Melanie Grad-Freilich

Speakers and Workshops Chair - Romy Vassilev

### 2017-2018 Board

President - Chelsea Guo

Vice Presidents - Karen Yang and Kendall Schmidt

Business Chairs - Genna Abele and Isabella Teng

Conference Chair - Valerie Chen

Leading Ladies Chair - Sarah Gomez and Adrienne Owings

Communications Chair - Corine Lu

Speakers and Workshops Chair - Max George

The organization's expansion and growth stem from the continuous efforts of our members who believe in passing on the initiative as new women arrive at the University. By leveraging their devotion and the momentum of their impact at Yale, WLI seeks to inspire individuals to create their own initiative from our shared fundamental vision.

### Contact Us!

[womensleadershipinitiative@gmail.com](mailto:womensleadershipinitiative@gmail.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/yalewli/>

## Sponsors

Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, Women's Leadership Initiative(WLI) at Yale saw the completion of another successful year. Thank you for assisting our mission and establishing yourselves as industry leaders in workplace equality as well as encouraging young women to achieve their dreams!



If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact us at [womensleadershipinitiative@gmail.com](mailto:womensleadershipinitiative@gmail.com)!