Women’s Leadership Conference

Celebrating 120 Years of Women at Brown

SAVE THE DATE!

MAY 3-5, 2012

WHAT: The Women’s Leadership Conference: Celebrating 120 Years of Women at Brown!

WHEN: May 3-5, 2012

WHERE: Brown University, Providence Rhode Island

WHY 120?: Why not? Brown began admitting women long before its peers. To commemorate this special occasion, President Simmons and the Women’s Leadership Council (WLC) are planning a Women’s Leadership Conference for all Brown alumnae. This three-day event will also serve as a unique opportunity to honor President Simmons during her final year in office.

Through a series of keynote addresses, panel discussions and informal gatherings, alumnae will share in the personal and professional journeys of Brown women engaged in dynamic careers and varied pursuits across a range of subjects, from the arts and sciences, to business and non-profits. A variety of diverse speakers and panelists will provide insight on their personal and professional accomplishments and the challenges they’ve encountered in both their work and home lives.

WHO: YOU! Don’t miss this unique opportunity to reflect and reconnect with fellow alumnae!

More information will be available in the months to come!
FAST FACTS ON PHILANTHROPY

By Stacy Palmer ’82

The Women’s Philanthropy Institute asked what the giving differences are between male- and female-headed households. From their report, we learn:

- In every income group, female-headed households were more likely to give than male-headed households.
- In four out of five income groups, women give twice as much as men.
- One in 10 women gives to education while only eight percent of men do the same.

*SOURCE: Women’s Philanthropy Institute, Indiana University

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mary Vasceellaro ’74, P’07, Women’s Leadership Council Executive Committee Member and Steering Committee Chair for the conference celebrating 120 years of women at Brown, shares her excitement about the upcoming anniversary!

By Jaclyn Murphy GS’13

In light of Celebrating 120 Years of Women at Brown, how have women influenced Brown, and how has the University influenced women to date?

This was precisely the question that we asked as we started planning the celebration. The whole conference is really an exploration of the legacy of women here and the place of Brown women in the world. The history of women at Brown is a history of the search for equity. Princeton and Yale each celebrated 40 years of women at their institutions and women have been attending Brown three times as long.

In 1970 I enrolled at Pembroke College, and by the end of that year Pembroke was fully integrated with Brown. It was a transformative time to be at Brown and was a significant change on campus for women. There’s a timeline that was created for the 100th anniversary which starts with Sarah Doyle’s birth in 1830. In 1891, under the leadership of President Andrews, women were first admitted into the Brown Women’s College. A lot of alumnae don’t know our history and I myself was surprised to find out that the name “Pembroke” wasn’t given to the Women’s College until 1928, after a male-led movement to separate women from Brown. Interestingly, Pembroke College was built entirely through fundraising efforts of women. Brown has rich archives of women’s history, and I’m really hoping to see those highlighted and exposed at the conference.

How has the role of women at Brown changed since you went to school here?

Alumnae have shared that, in their experience, Brown was really gender-neutral. They didn’t know it was any different to be a woman at Brown than to be a man. There were no shrinking violets! But once they graduated from Brown, they found that the real world was different. In terms of a monumental change, of course, everything coheres with President Simmons’ appointment in 2001 as the first African American Ivy League President who also happens to be a woman. It’s bittersweet that we’ll be saying goodbye to her at the conference. It’s a great opportunity, but it’s sad at the same time, and definitely something to focus on at the celebration.

As you are strongly involved with women at Brown and beyond, has there been a specific woman in your life that you look up to as a role model or mentor?

As I thought about this question, what I realized is that it’s not one woman who has been a mentor to me, but many. Those women are the Rhode Island Pembroke alumnae. They were the ones who gave me a scholarship to come to Brown and have been my role models.

My father died when I was 14 leaving my mother with a small pension and her income as a seamstress. I applied to Brown as a dream, knowing that other universities were more affordable. I still remember the day I visited campus and had my interview with those women at Pembroke. Without their generous support I would not have come here. They made my Brown dream come true. Today, my husband and I direct our philanthropy toward financial assistance for students for that reason. We try to emulate the generosity of an educational gift.

(cont.)
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
(Mary Vascellaro ’74, P’07 – Continued)

What does Celebrating 120 Years of Women at Brown mean to you? How has the Women’s Leadership Council and the Pembroke Center helped shape the celebration?

The idea of a conference has always been discussed by the Women’s Leadership Council and the 120th anniversary of women at Brown was a good handle to hang this on. Since the Pembroke Center is also celebrating its 30th anniversary, it’s been a nice foundation to start the year which will culminate with the conference. We will be highlighting the Pembroke archives during the conference, which will really tie the two together and provide a fitting end.

For the past 20 years, I’ve had the opportunity to interact with women at Brown from all generations. Through my work with the Pembroke Center I’ve even been able to interact a little with the academic side. I was one of the first members of the Women’s Leadership Council, and one of the reasons I joined was to see if their goals would be different from the Pembroke Center. Since I joined the Council, I’ve learned a lot about philanthropy. When women give to an organization, they give of their money and also of their time. They give to be able to help.

The Women’s Leadership Council’s mentoring program [The Women’s Launch Pad] provides women the ability to be actively involved with a student who needs a role model. It gives them a way to really help the University, but often they find that as a mentor they are learning as much as their mentee. Not many places offer an opportunity like that.

As far as what the celebration means to me, when I was accepted into Pembroke the schools [Brown and Pembroke] merged fully by the end of my first year, so gender was not really an issue that I experienced or saw. It wasn’t until I had a daughter that I became more introspective about what it means to be a woman in today’s world. Generations of women need to learn from each other. This is what the Pembroke Center and the Women’s Leadership Council have in common and will bring this concept to the conference.

Why is the celebration and preserving the legacy of women at Brown important?

I think we forget how shaped we are by history. It’s about legacy more than past: both where we come from and the Responsibilities we have from that. Brown women have leadership positions throughout all industries and the conference is an opportunity to showcase our alumnae and be able to network, especially with our younger alums. We have designed panels around young alums to allow them to interact with other alums from different industries and hopefully this sharing of advice and ideas might resonate with them and lead to the exponential growth of future endeavors.

Women open up around other women differently than they do around men, and this is part of what we want to capture. I hosted a technology panel at my house with women from Google, Pixar, and other companies. At this gathering women spoke frankly about the real world and their jobs. This is the kind of experience that I hope will happen at the conference.

What can we expect to see at the celebration in May? What part of the celebration are you most looking forward to?

This conference is a celebration of women and recognition of all that we have created here. An important aspect of the conference is to celebrate the achievements and wisdom that President Simmons has shared with Brown. People want a conference that will be both inspiring and life changing. We want people to leave the conference with a deeper knowledge of the history of women at Brown and an appreciation for what Brown women are doing in the world.

The conference is designed to be inter-generational. All of the panels will feature alumnae and we have a fabulous list of names to draw from! We will also have lectures by key faculty to provide alums with a unique opportunity to interact with the academic side of Brown. Everyone will get something different out of it. Attendees can expect to find topics that really focus on diverse aspects of life and career. One key area will be focused on lifestyle issues – balancing marriage, career, and children. We will also plan to feature Brown alumnae in the entertainment industry.

As for what I am looking forward to personally, I’m a history buff. I’m interested in seeing our archives come to life with a performance based on the collection of historical documents we have from women who attended Brown. Additionally, I think it is magical when women come together, especially from different generations. As a mentor talking to today’s generation of women, I see that women often don’t want to talk about life balance. Women today want to be able to do it all without thinking about the compromises that have to be made along the way. I think it will be interesting to hear from the different generations at the conference because I think we can learn from each other. I am looking forward to feeling the awesome collective energy.

120th Focus Groups

Members of the Women’s Leadership Council and the 120th Steering Committee are partnering on a series of Focus Groups open to all alumnae to generate excitement for the celebration of 120 Years of Women at Brown.

Events will be taking place in the following cities:
- Boston
- Los Angeles
- Washington, DC
- New York
- Chicago
- Rhode Island

Dates will be posted at www.brown.edu/wlc when they are confirmed.

A big thank you to Council Member and 120th Steering Committee Chair, Mary Vascellaro ’74, P’07 for hosting the first Focus Group in San Francisco on October 4, 2011!
Congratulations to….

Liz Sherman '77, P'06, P'09 for sponsoring the $1 million Challenge in support of the innovative research initiatives at the Pembroke Center. Remarkably, the Center and its supporters surpassed the goal and went on to raise over $1.5 million! Liz was honored for her leadership at the Center’s 30th anniversary celebration on November 4, 2011 when she was presented with the Pembroke Center award.

Donna C. E. Williamson '74 who is a 2011 recipient of the Alumni Service Award. A volunteer leader since the 1970s, Donna has worked on many of Brown’s alumni programs, often filling multiple leadership roles simultaneously. A former member of the Corporation and overseer of the Brown Medical School, Donna is currently a BRUnet volunteer, a former member of the Corporation and overseer of the Brown Pembroke Center. Remarkably, the Center and its supporters surpassed the goal and went on to raise over $1.5 million! Liz was honored for her leadership at the Center’s 30th anniversary celebration on November 4, 2011 when she was presented with the Pembroke Center award.

The Women’s Launch Pad (WLP) is a Brown-based mentoring program that helps facilitate relationships between alumnae and female students in their senior year at Brown. The overarching goal of the program is to provide participants with the opportunity to make meaningful connections to the next generation of Brown women. Through individual mentoring pairs, students receive guidance from mentors sharing reflections on their own career paths and they often become key touchstones for the mentees. In its sixth program year, the WLP is supporting 123 mentoring pairs.

This past October over 200 program participants shared their enthusiasm for this unique and rewarding program at the Women’s Launch Pad Kick-off event featuring keynote speaker Judi Allen ’79. The audience of female students and alumnae represented the diverse and accomplished members of the WLP community. New this year was an alumnae panel discussion moderated by Nancy Neff ’76, P’04, P’14 and featuring mentors Shelley Fidler ’68, P’09, Jacqui Hogsan’03, Nancy Kail ’84 and Bonnie Reibman ’74. This panel served as a training platform for mentors and it was recorded for future viewing.

Below is a collection of testimony’s provided by mentors and mentees:

- Upon graduation, my mentor did not immediately have a job and I am in the same predicament. Our career fields are different but related and she has been able to give me tips based upon her experience. —Mentee
- I gained vital experience regarding the job market and etiquette that I’d be unsure about without this program. —Mentee
- I was successful in sharing my experiences with my mentee who was diligent about taking steps to explore/learn about/make contact with possible career opportunities. She has a plan and we will keep in touch. —Mentor

To date, the Women’s Launch Pad community is 627 women strong!

SAVE THE DATE!

December 8, 2011: 120th Focus Group in Washington, DC, hosted by Nancy L. Buc ’65, Genine M. Fidler ’77, P’04, P’12, Shelley N. Fidler ’68, P’09, Stacy E. Palmer ’82 and Sophie D. Waskow ’07.

January 10, 2012: 120th Focus Group in Los Angeles, CA hosted by Lauren A. Corrao ’83, Natalie E. Fair ’86, P’15 and Donna McGraw Weiss ’89.

January 11, 2012: Women’s Launch Pad winter gathering in New York City hosted by Alexandra E. Mandis ’95.


Stay Tuned! We are in the process of confirming dates in January and February 2012 for 120th Focus Groups in Rhode Island, Chicago, New York, and Boston!

The Women’s Leadership Council is pleased to welcome six new members!

- Wendy E. (Cohen) Handler, Ph.D. ’80, P’14
  Concentration: Mathematical Economics
  City & State: Chestnut Hill, MA

- Alexandra E. Mandis ’95
  Concentrations: Italian Studies & French Civilization
  City & State: New York, NY

- Amy L. Reiss ’85
  Concentration: History
  City & State: New York, NY

- Sandee (Ting) Simshauer ’84
  Concentration: Computer Science
  City & State: Newtonville, MA

- Donna E. (McGraw) Weiss ’89
  Concentration: Biochemistry
  City & State: Pacific Palisades, CA

- Dana G. Zucker ’90
  Concentration: Political Science
  City & State: New York, NY

Women’s Leadership Council Student Assistant

This newsletter is brought to you by the Women’s Leadership Council student worker: Jaclyn Murphy GS’13. Jaclyn is assisting with all Council activities, communications, and event planning.

A graduate student in the Masters of Public Policy program at Brown, Jaclyn received her BA from Michigan State University in International Relations and Comparative Cultures and Politics. During her undergraduate career, she worked on communications and event planning for the Associated Students of Michigan State University (ASMSU), as well as the campaign Generation YES! in Dublin, Ireland.