

# The *Women* for FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Winter 2016



## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2015

The Women's Leadership Institute develops, encourages and celebrates female leadership at Florida State University. In three years, 134 students, 21 facilitators, 20 committee members, 16 guest leaders and 15 special guests—totaling more than 200 diverse women representing our University community—have come together to create what a student attendee described as a “ridiculously powerful” learning experience.

Women for FSU provided the spark and funding necessary to create WLI. As the catalyst, W4FSU approached the Center for Leadership and Social Change to create a collaborative effort to enhance women's leadership programming on FSU's campus. WLI is a program to celebrate. Through its student outcomes, collaborative process and community engagement, this partnership will continue to raise the urgency of developing female leaders; create innovative financial opportunities to support leadership learning; and build FSU's reputation as a community known for developing female leaders who are transforming their communities.

Since 2013, a multi-generational group of female alumnae, faculty, staff and students have developed and presented the Women's Leadership Institute to enhance women's leader identity and leadership capacity. Rooted in the belief that leadership is learned through experience, education and reflection, this national award-winning institute can be best described through our attendees' voices.

Attendee responses to pre- and post-assessments were formally analyzed to create a picture of the powerful experience. Participants were asked to respond to the statement: “With or without a position of authority, I identify as a leader.” The

responses of those who strongly agreed leapt from 46.81 percent on the pre-assessment to 84.78 percent on the post-assessment. In addition, attendees responded to a statement examining their awareness of bias: “I am aware of the messages society sends me of bias that can keep women out of leadership roles and questions their capacity to lead.” Again with a significant jump, participants who strongly agreed with this awareness statement increased from 57.45 percent on the pre-assessment to 91.30 percent on the post-assessment.

Participant voices support these quantitative measures. Describing her experience from the Institute, one student stated, “Life will present its barriers and obstacles but I will overcome. I am not alone and there are others here with me.” When the Institute came to a close on Sunday afternoon, participants created “I believe...” statements to summarize the impact of their WLI experience. One woman's voice captures the vulnerability and strength in the room that afternoon: “I believe I have learned new ways to conquer the world as a woman. I have discovered ways to unlock and travel uncharted areas in my life. I am walking away with the knowledge of trusting and believing more in myself. Love who I am, love who I was, love who I will be!”

Established in 2010, the Women for FSU endowment has grown to almost \$250,000 through the generous support of our members. The Women's Leadership Institute is the major project funded from endowment proceeds—as the endowment grows, WLI will grow. If you wish to contribute to the expansion of WLI, please visit [w4fsu.org](http://w4fsu.org). ❀

—Laura Osteen, Ph.D.



*Keynote speaker Sophia Danvers—  
global manager with Cisco,  
College of Communication and  
Information triple graduate, and  
six-time All American and ACC  
Track and Field Champion—  
advised her audience to bring their  
whole selves to the job.*



*Sherrill Ragans*

Many of you returned to campus in the fall for some of the events that are part of life at FSU—Homecoming, Parents' Weekend, a football game or two and many of the alumni opportunities provided by our academic programs. Thank you for continuing to share in life at FSU through engagement with current FSU students, graduates and friends in your community. Your generous support of W4FSU's endowment has enabled us to fund a project that has become a fall highlight for a select group of female students. For the third year, W4FSU has partnered with FSU's Center for Leadership and Social Change to bring the Women's Leadership Institute to campus. You will learn more about this special project in this issue of the newsletter, as well as when you attend Backstage Pass on March 18–19, 2016.

I am privileged to follow Jaimi Wacksman as chair of W4FSU's Executive Committee. Jaimi's inspired leadership helped us define our mission with three bold words—**engage**, **invest** and **celebrate**. I invite you to strengthen your commitment to FSU today by engaging, investing and celebrating all that is most important to you in this vibrant community for which we have great passion.

W4FSU has come a long way and we will continue to inspire women to remain connected to each other and to FSU. Please email me at [swragans@aol.com](mailto:swragans@aol.com) to share your ideas and suggestions for our future! ✨

—Sherrill Ragans  
Chair, Executive Committee

### WOMEN FOR FSU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- |                       |                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Florence Ashby        | Annie McFarland |
| Lynn Bertram          | Sherrill Ragans |
| Sarah Coakley         | Cherie Rowland  |
| Alicia Crew           | Marilyn Spores  |
| Cassandra Rayne Gross | Janet Stoner    |
| Julie Granger Kritz   |                 |



## BETTY LOU AND JIM JOANOS INDUCTED INTO FSU HALL OF FAME



*Betty Lou and Jim Joanos*

Betty Lou Joanos answered the call from Doug Mannheimer, chairman of the FSU Hall of Fame, telling her that she and her husband, Jim, would both be honored at last September's induction ceremony. When asked for her reaction, Joanos said, "I was shocked. We've attended this ceremony for years, and celebrated the inductions of many friends." It was especially meaningful for Joanos to receive the Moore Stone Award, as she worked in Dr. Moore's office and Dean Stone was her dean in the College of Education.

Joanos graduated in 1957 and later completed her doctorate in 1985. Her commitment and involvement with FSU has been unwavering from the very beginning. As a student, Joanos was actively involved in a wide range of extracurricular activities, but when asked to identify a favorite,

she readily replied her participation in the FSU Flying High Circus.

Those of you who have attended a circus performance will be familiar with the "Bicycle for Five." I've learned that it was previously a three person act and that it was Joanos who added the two additional riders. Along with her circus participation, Joanos was also an active member of the Village Vamps, Garnet Key, Sophomore Counsel, Junior Counselor, Junior-Senior Prom Court, as well as being the secretary of the Sophomore Class, queen of Freshman Carnival and listed in *Who's Who*.

Following her student years, Joanos remained actively involved on campus. Her career at FSU has included serving as chairwoman of the Board, associate director of the Alumni Association and coordinator of home economics programs, as well as serving on the Board of Directors of the FSU Association of Retired Faculty. Joanos pointed out that being involved with the Emeritus Alumni Society was a natural step for her following her role with the Alumni Association. She also drew the connection between the early days of the Emeritus Society and her current involvement with the Women for FSU. In the early days of the Emeritus Society, all of the original members would have been women, as they would have been students at FSCW. For Joanos, it was a natural flow for her to become involved with Women for FSU. Our warmest congratulations to Joanos on her induction to the Hall of Fame! ✨

—Sarah Coakley



## GIVING BACK: KIDZ1STFUND



Photo credit: Ryals Lee, Jr.

Three Marching Chiefs— Breanna Amborn, Zachary Miller and Kyle Willard— matched as donors.

Since Coach Jimbo Fisher joined the Seminoles in 2007, the FSU community has learned a lot about Fanconi anemia, a rare genetic disease that can result in bone marrow failure and an increased risk of developing certain cancers. Coach Fisher's son, Ethan, is affected by the disease, which prompted him to start the organization Kidz1stFund to raise awareness and funds to support research for a cure.

Kidz1stFund was introduced to the Marching Chiefs when David Plack, director of athletic bands, was approached by the organization about screening all of the Chiefs' members for a possible stem cell match. The odds of there being a match among the Chiefs were very low—statistically, only one or two students out of the entire student body at FSU should be a match. However, in the more than 400 members of the Chiefs,

three students were found to be matches. One of the matches was a student in the color guard, Breanna Amborn.

When Amborn learned she was a match, she was eager to help and donated her stem cells shortly after being screened. She helped save the life of a woman in her fifties who has three sons close to her age. Amborn says they have text messaged and hope to meet soon, but have not yet spoken over the phone. When asked why they have been waiting to speak, Amborn replied, "Because when I hear her voice, it's real." Her words give insight to how poignant this experience is and the effect it has not only on the person in need but also on the donor.

Since her donation in 2013, Amborn has remained involved by helping to screen and register people on campus with Kidz1stFund,

and this experience has even changed her long-term career goals. Ultimately, she plans to work for a non-profit organization, like Kidz1stFund, to continue helping those affected by the disease.

Amborn's story is an inspiring tale of giving back. Her admirable desire to save someone else's life resulted in a transformative experience that changed her own life and has set her on a path to continue to positively impact the lives of others. ✨

—Ellen Holbert

*Ellen is a double major in environmental studies and studio art, with a focus on public art. She became involved with W4FSU through Sarah Coakley, who served as her mentor at Master Craftsman Studio.*

## CONVERSATIONS IN PHILANTHROPY

Last summer we asked, "Where is YOUR passion for FSU?" and "How are you fueling your flame and participating in *Raise the Torch?*" As of winter 2016, FSU has raised more than \$850 million toward its \$1 billion goal. This achievement might make you feel that FSU doesn't need your support...that is WRONG!

President Thrasher has remained a strong leader as we focus on reaching our goal. Are you familiar with our initiatives around

the Entrepreneurial University, the Student Veterans Center and the Institute for Successful Longevity? These are just a few of many areas that you can become involved in, develop a passion around and help support. Did you know that larger gifts can always be made in a five-year pledge that makes giving easier?

Historically, women have given more to causes they are passionate about. With W4FSU, you can be involved and see the impact of your

gifts. We hope you are or will consider giving not only because you are involved with W4FSU but also because you are a SEMINOLE and proud of it. Be part of the giving that keeps your passion for your university alive.

It takes all our friends, families and alumni to give their time, talent and resources to drive our university into the TOP 25! ✨

—Janet Stoner

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT [W4FSU.ORG](http://W4FSU.ORG)



The *Women* for  
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION  
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## BACKSTAGE PASS



We are delighted to announce that registration is open for the seventh-annual Backstage Pass to the Very Best of Florida State University! This year's event promises to be another exciting behind-the-scenes journey and will be held March 18–19, 2016. We will visit the colleges of Law, Music and Business, and will explore how each discipline intersects with the spirit of entrepreneurship.

Backstage Pass is the perfect opportunity to experience FSU's exceptional programs. It is also a time to refocus on our mission to engage with FSU while we celebrate women's stories and invest our time, talent and resources in the

future of the University. As in previous years, the weekend will open on Friday evening with a reception and educational program. We will conduct our annual meeting over breakfast Saturday morning, and then enjoy more behind-the-scenes encounters until midafternoon. The weekend concludes with Saturday's dinner and celebration, featuring the Gift of Wisdom award presentation. Take a look at your invitation for more exciting details!

As always, Backstage Pass provides an unparalleled opportunity to spend time with friends, both old and new, and to connect with devoted members of FSU's community. Join us

this year for what promises to be yet another unforgettable celebration, and bring a friend (or two!) to share in the adventure with you. Registration is open until March 4, and you can visit [one.fsu.edu/backstagepass](http://one.fsu.edu/backstagepass) to save your place now.

See you in March!

Cassandra Rayne Gross & Pat Ramsey  
Co-Chairs, Program Planning Committee