

FROM THE EDITOR



As a recent graduate of Newcomb College Institute, I have spent these past months reflecting on how the Newcomb Scholars Program prepared me for my post-graduate journey. Throughout my four years as a Scholar, the Program challenged my fellow Scholars and me to think critically about how to work toward a more equitable world, particularly in terms of gender and instilled in us the research and leadership skills needed to bring about change in our respective fields of study. Having served as both an author and editor of case studies for *Women Leading Change*, I am confident in saying that the case study method embodies the Program's two tenets of rigorous academic research and leadership training, and, as such, is an integral step in the Scholars' development into the leaders of change we will become – and already are.

While writing my own case study, I learned the personal leadership lessons that case studies can offer. From the very beginning, the Newcomb Scholars Program makes clear to its Scholars the importance of writing case studies through a gendered lens. By the Program's third seminar, we Scholars are well-versed in the negative impacts of the dearth of case studies examining women, gender, and feminism and recognize how valuable producing such case studies is for the study of women and leadership. Frustrated by the unfamiliar writing style and wanting the comfort of our own disciplines' research methods, however, my cohort of Scholars began to ask how we would benefit from personally writing these case studies. We knew the case study teaching method allowed us to discuss critical questions about women and leadership, but what did we stand to gain professionally and academically by actually writing a case? As we embarked on our writing processes, we soon realized that writing case studies provided us with the invaluable opportunity to delve into contentious issues in our own fields that we may not have otherwise done. Regardless of our future careers – whether in the chambers of government, the halls of a museum, the inside of a lab, or out in the field – as women leaders we will confront moral, ethical, and professional dilemmas. The process of writing a case study allowed us to analyze and explore these potential dilemmas, providing us with leadership lessons to carry with us into our respective fields.

The topics of this issue's case studies, ranging from dilemmas in public health and medicine to debates about immigration and art policy, reflect the diversity of fields in which case studies can serve as instructive tools for examining gender and leadership. Yet the articles in this issue also demonstrate that case studies on women, gender, and feminism offer leadership lessons beyond the organization or individual. Each case in this issue examines how the decision of an individual or a group about a dilemma can have broader societal impacts, either at the national or international level. Some cases in this issue examine how leadership dilemmas can affect society's most vulnerable populations, such as immigrants, survivors of rape, sex workers, and sexual minorities. Other cases consider how decisions in Congress or in the military can influence broader debates about women, feminism, and gender. Regardless of the specific topic, this issue shows that leadership dilemmas have implications for topics as broad as democratic governance and international law and as personal as the family. Examining these complexities of leadership is instructive not only for the authors but also for our readers.

Writing this letter has been bittersweet, as it marks my last act as a Newcomb Scholar. I am honored to have served as an editor for this journal, and I hope the readers of this issue both learn and teach from the case studies, which are written by extraordinarily bright women who will certainly become the protagonists of case studies on women and leadership in the future.

Sincerely,

Jennie Barker
Newcomb Scholar
Class of 2016