

## FROM THE EDITOR



The Newcomb Scholars program provides students with an incredible opportunity during their second year: to learn about their subject of choice through an in depth dissection of leadership in the field. The products of this exploration are the independently researched and written case studies showcased in this journal. The transformative nature of this project cannot be overstated: writing my own case, which integrated political science and public health, has influenced the way I think about community engagement through research ever since. Therefore, when I was asked to be the editor for this issue of the *Women Leading Change* journal I did not hesitate to accept the position—how fortunate to have the opportunity to continue learning about applications of women’s leadership through time and across disciplines.

Most Scholars, myself included, are unfamiliar with learning through cases when they enter the *Women Leading Change* course, because this approach is much more commonly used in law and business. However, over the course of the semester many of us find it to be one of the most effective pedagogies in which we’ve ever participated. The key to the success of case teaching is exactly that: it’s participatory. Through reading and discussing cases, students learn about and sometimes even assume the personas of the characters in the case to act out real challenges of actual world leaders, which often remain unresolved. This type of experiential learning teaches content, but also imparts lessons akin to those gained from real leadership experience.

Another major strength of the case method, especially in the context of the Newcomb Scholars program, is the flexibility to explore interdisciplinary issues. The authors of the cases in this issue of *Women Leading Change* exemplify this perfectly, all while taking on the weighty subject of gender discrimination. Several explore challenges faced by women who are breaking into traditionally male-dominated fields, from biological research to federal politics. Some examine women’s leadership challenges through various means of combatting the effects of environmental degradation, including of scientific journalism and grassroots organizing. Several help us understand how gendered leadership can break down other sociopolitical systems of oppression, from the erasure of indigenous rights to the exclusion of trans individuals in women’s colleges. It is hard to simplify and categorize the interlocking web of themes that run through these cases, but that is the beauty of this issue: it reflects the interdisciplinary challenges of real world leadership.

I hope that you enjoy reading and learning from each of these articles as much as I did while editing them. Each author contributes a rich historical analysis, and a unique academic perspective, through their examples of challenging leadership dilemmas. There are resonant lessons for each of us in every case. I am humbled to be affiliated with this group of students and eagerly anticipate the work they produce over their next two years in the Newcomb Scholars program. May they carry on crushing the patriarchy.

Sincerely,

Kelsey Williams  
Newcomb Scholar  
Class of 2019

Kelsey Williams is a senior Newcomb Scholar majoring in Public Health. She hopes to attend an MD-PhD program upon graduating from Tulane University to research and practice sexual and reproductive health medicine.