

## FROM THE EDITORS



Change is a driving force of life. Virtually everyone, regardless of circumstance, must reckon with change in today's fast-paced climate. As a college student, I have felt its push and pull constantly, like a strong wind blowing past. Swept up in its motion, I feel the dual terror and promise of an unwritten future. Navigating change, however unnatural it may feel, might be what we all have in common. Being human means experiencing the whirlwind of hope and fear surrounding the unknown.

In a raging storm of change, I believe storytelling can provide solace. When we share a story, we freeze a moment in time amidst the chaos. We define a person and place, a beginning and end, and a cause and effect. Through one narrative, we can identify patterns elsewhere, predicting the behavior of the storm consuming the present. In telling stories, we can stand still in a whirlwind—if only for a moment—to make sense of the changes whipping past us.

In this issue of *Women Leading Change*, authors boldly tackle stories of change. Two pieces recount the impacts of climate disasters in Louisiana, where destruction has forced community leaders to make controversial decisions to move forward. Author Emma Meyer analyzes how Hurricane Ida's devastating impact on New Orleans public schools compelled Brenda Mitchell, the leader of a teachers' union, to resist educational reform. Author Kelsey Stankard discusses a parallel crisis in Isle de Jean Charles, where women of the Choctaw Nation face threats of erasure with rising sea levels. In both case studies, climate change displaces people from their ways of life, leaving readers wondering how to restore justice moving forward.

Two other pieces focus on social and cultural changes reflected in what we wear. Author Rachel Moody explores how workplace regulation of dress has shifted over time, particularly in the context of U.S. Congress and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Author Mika Nijhawan turns our focus to Vivienne Westwood's influence on the punk fashion industry, evaluating how dress can demonstrate or undermine our professed values. Both works utilize clothing, a tangible object, to capture intangible shifts in cultural conditions.

To my readers, I hope you enjoy the hard work of our authors and editing team. Each featured author completed a meticulous process of revisions over many months. While telling stories about change, these authors underwent significant changes themselves, growing into mature writers. Molly and I are very proud to showcase the fruits of their labor.

To my authors, thank you for standing still in the storm with me for a while. I've deeply enjoyed viewing the world through your eyes. I hope writing these case studies has helped illuminate a way forward through the chaos. When everything is confusing, we can find clarity through a good story.

Happy reading!

Sincerely,  
Zoe Friese  
Newcomb Scholar  
Class of 2024