

## FROM THE EDITOR



As college students progress through their academic career, we encounter distinct instances of decision. Some decisions come without great consequence—what dorm to live in, which society to join, or even what dining hall delicacy will be had for dinner. Some decisions, though, we look back on as defining moments in our character, both professional and personal. To be a researcher...to be a feminist...to be a writer? The second year of the Newcomb Scholars program confronts students with these questions—often whether we are ready or not. This year's cohort embraced the challenge head-on, deciphering what topics incited their curiosity and what voice captured their passion, building a collection of cases exploring power and public identities. Each author carefully interrogates how women leaders have engaged with public identity, institutional constraints, and the burdens or possibilities of visibility, and how this can inform future leaders.

All our authors in this issue present different forms of leadership in their cases. Canseco takes on personal resilience and emotional labor in capital defense work, raising serious question about feminist leadership under state-sanctioned violence. Maran examines paradoxes of feminist expectation and pragmatic governance in post-conflict Liberia, encouraging us readers to consider the importance of symbolism in leadership. Lai unpacks the tensions between institutional belonging and feminist resistance from within, sharing the story of a woman fighting for representation in an institution she had been ousted by. Harold asks how we lead when our identities become political battlegrounds, exploring queer identity, public backlash, and the politics of visibility on the set of the American Library Association. Across contexts of law, religion, politics, and identity, these cases situate leadership within questions of visibility vs. discretion, loyalty vs. dissent, and reform vs. retreat.

The authors subtly plant broader reflections on women leadership. How can power be reclaimed within systems that were built to be inherently exclusionary? How do we reimagine traditional notions of authority? And, perhaps most importantly, how do we maintain a hopeful disposition in the face of adversity?

I cannot express enough how impressed I am with these authors' dedication to answering such questions. Not only do the authors conduct rigorous research, they also tell a story—one that requires deep ethical and emotional engagement, an important pillar in feminist pedagogy. The future of feminist leadership lies in the type of creation we see in these cases, in questioning, coalition-building, and resistance. I am proud to introduce cases from our future feminist leaders, and I hope you enjoy.

Sincerely,  
Ainsley Anderson  
Newcomb Scholar  
Class of 2025