

FROM THE EDITOR



Our lives are full of choices. Throughout our four years at Tulane University, undergraduate students are faced with many of them, both big and small. We must decide everything from which electives to take next semester to what our future careers may be, and Newcomb Scholars face the additional task of factoring in our feminist frameworks to those decisions. The second year of the Newcomb Scholars program takes the task of feminist decision-making seriously, presenting case studies that Scholars must analyze through the lens of gender, race, and other identity markers. The numerous case studies that students read spark vibrant debate and lead to important questions about leadership, work, and civic engagement. Furthermore, students must construct their own cases, deciding (once again) on a leader whose decision-making the student will trace in a long-form, narrative case study, unpacking their story through an explicitly gendered lens. In this issue, all of our authors present different types of leadership and decision-making.

This year's Scholars cohort knit together a brilliant collection of case studies, deftly exploring the unique challenges and difficulties that come when a leader must decide whether or not to speak out in times of crisis, often within institutions that already marginalize them. Author Alice Qiang follows Google's AI researcher, Timnit Gebru, and poses important questions about artificial intelligence ethics, racism within the digital sphere, and the unique risks that come with whistle-blowing as a Black woman. Author Lana Alshghair unpacks the necessity of weighing one's personal career and credibility against exposing the growing public health crisis in Flint, Michigan, asking us: what should a leader be willing to risk to protect their community? Author Diana Chavez poses a similar question, examining how Berta Caceres leads the fight for Indigenous and environmental rights when faced with potentially fatal stakes. Author Zafreen Ahmed takes us through the historic marginalization and exploitation of Black women in the medical industry as she explores how Naomi Nkinsi grapples with whether or not to rush for reform in her field. Finally, author Amelie Bullen navigates the intricacies of advocating for change within a beloved, yet rigid art form, carefully leading us through the myriad choices of award-winning ballerina Gelsey Kirkland. Although these cases are feature vastly different protagonists and take us all over the world, all of them interrogate what leadership means when one must expose harmful mechanisms of power and articulate the necessity of change.

These authors skillfully constellate a series of case studies that situate feminist politics and leadership amidst personal and collective care, marginalization within institutions, and the power of the state. Reading these cases sparks larger reflections about women's leadership, especially in such a fraught political moment. How do we remain true to our personal values when advocating for justice comes at such a high cost? Can oppressive systems be changed from within? Is speaking out always the best decision? When might silence be necessary?

I am immensely proud of each and every one of these authors for their commitment to snapping these immense questions into focus via their case studies. Months of thorough research, careful storytelling, and rigorous editing have led to these young Scholars' important contributions to feminist authorship. These authors represent the next generation of feminist leaders, willing to ask the hard questions and challenge oppressive systems. I am thrilled to present their scholarship to you; I hope you allow their writing to guide you towards change.

Sincerely,
Carlotta Harold
Newcomb Scholar
Class of 2026