

The 2003 N.E.W. Leadership institute was held on the OU campus May 16 – 20, 2003. The 2003 N.E.W. Leadership class contained thirty-three undergraduate women from 15 different Oklahoma colleges and universities and ranged in age from 18 to 45. Their hometowns included Amber, Bartlesville, Blanchard, Canute, Collinsville, Duncan, Durant, Edmond, Enid, Lawton, Miami, Midwest City, Oklahoma City, Okmulgee, Owasso, Pryor, Purcell, Sand Springs, Seminole, Stillwater, Tulsa, Tupelo, Weatherford and Woodward. There were also students from Kenya, Peru, and St. Kitts and first-generation Oklahomans whose parents emigrated from Pakistan, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

“Faculty-In-Residence” were Valerie Thompson (President of the Urban League of Metropolitan OKC), Susan Neal (member of the Tulsa City Council), and Lisa Johnson Billy (a former Chickasaw tribal legislator).

The 2003 program built on last year's successes including a political women scavenger hunt and skills building workshops on organizing and motivating volunteers (Catheryn Koss), leadership effectiveness (Valerie Thompson), self presentation and effective communications (Lisa Billy), career planning strategies (Linda Wegener), team building and creative thinking (Donna Shirley and Alice Fairhurst), and conflict resolution and mediation (Cindy Simon Rosenthal).

During the Saturday campaign simulation exercise, participants could purchase the services of political campaign consultants Denise Crosswhite-Hader, Trish Weedn and Krystal Jones with “campaign funds” (featuring images of Eleanor Roosevelt and Condoleezza Rice). OSU Professor Jeanine Rhea’s Sunday workshop on feminism, leadership, and diversity underscored the challenges and sensitivities required to work effectively in an increasingly diverse society.

A new feature in 2003 was "career jump-start” sessions on how to get a government internship (LeAnn Jenkins), tips on volunteering in political campaigns (Kristal Jones), graduate school options (Sarah Jo Peterson) and attending law school (Lynne Saunders).

The many panels, roundtable discussions and keynote speeches featured Lieutenant Governor Mary Fallin; Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner Denise Bode; State Senator Angela Monson; State Representatives Jari Askins, Susan Winchester, Barbara Staggs and Debbie Blackburn; Secretary of Commerce and Tourism Kathy Taylor; Secretary of State Susan Savage; Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center Director Lindy Ritz; Federal Bureau of Investigation Assistant Special Agent in Charge Debra Mack; Oklahoma State Senate attorney Suzanne Broadbent; Department of Human Service Legislative Relations Director Sharon Neuwald; Tahlequah’s Help-In-Crisis director Deana Franke; Oklahoma City Councilwoman Willa Johnson; Tulsa Councilwoman Susan Neal; Okmulgee City Manager Beverly Rodgers; former McAlester District Attorney Kalyn Free; Communities Foundation of Oklahoma Director Susie Graves; Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy Director Anne Roberts; Oklahoma Trial Lawyers Director Diane Hughes; Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals Judicial Assistant Lou Kohlman; community activist Wanda DeBruler and attorney and social policy consultant Sandy Ingraham.

We again hosted a reception at the State Capitol celebrating women in government. This festive event was attended by many women legislators, State-wide elected officials, state and federal agency heads, judges, and women leaders in city, county, and school governance and Oklahoma political parties. Debbe Leftwich, Chair of the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women, announced the creation of the “Claudia Tarrington Leadership Fund” at the OU Foundation. Contributions to this fund will help finance future N.E.W. Leadership programs. Several N.E.W. Leadership alumni also attended the reception.

N.E.W. Leadership is funded by contributions from firms and Oklahoma citizens who support the goals of our program. In 2003, we received contributions from the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center, Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women, Bank of America, Sonic Restaurants, Journal Record Publishing Company, Crowe & Dunlevy, Eastman Kodak, Zarrow Foundation, Conoco Phillips, and 88 individual supporters from all across the state of Oklahoma. Tax deductible contributions to N.E.W. Leadership are deposited in the OU Foundation. To become a N.E.W. Leadership supporter, go to http://www.ou.edu/special/albertctr/NLO/how_to_contribute.html or contact the Carl Albert Center.