

**Sustaining Leadership Learning After ELAM®:
a call for broad, deep, meaningful engagement**

ELAM is now 16 years old. With over 600 alumnae in leadership positions throughout the United States and Canada, we are progressing well in our mission to increase the number of women in positions of institutional leadership where they can effect sustained positive change. We are proud. However, one of our primary goals is to support sustained leadership so that alumnae can have a major impact on the culture of our organization. How shall we accomplish sustained success? The answer to that important question lies within this wonderful community of leaders.

The learning edge and trusting community that you experienced during your ELAM fellowship has prompted many of you to request an alumnae program that would take you back to this experience. ELAM has given birth to a marvelous community of leaders who are now in a position to care better for themselves, and to do so within an alumnae community, supported by ELAM/ICELA staffing and funded by class gifts contributed to the Legacy Fund.

ELAM alumnae gathered during the 2010 AAMC Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. to consider what an effective alumnae organization should offer its members. In a series of [Liberating Structures](#) (speed networking, TRIZ, and 25 gets you 10) several dozen alumnae identified strong interests in networking through professional and regional meetings and electronic resources, peer mentoring to include immediate response to challenges, and programming relevant to their personal and professional lives. The more than 70 alumnae and fellows who attended the ELAM tea offered specific suggestions for advanced ELAM leadership development, including programming and approaches to strengthening our [community of leadership practice](#). ELAM is eager to respond to these needs and to have the opportunity to address our goal to support the sustained leadership of our alumnae so that they can continue to move forward the mission of increasing the impact of women's leadership in academic medicine, dentistry, and public health. In order to sustain and extend our leadership capacity, we will need to *broaden, deepen, and sustain* our personal and professional leadership effectiveness. How would an advanced postgraduate program support this? **Ideas are outlined below, followed by links to two tools that can give you a voice and vote in how the first ELAM alumnae professional development program evolves.**



Deborah DeMarco (Class of 2010) leads alumnae in a speed networking process to meet new colleagues and explore what each wishes to gain from and contribute to an alumnae organization.

Broaden our views: explore issues “out of our disciplines and out of our fields” and “get out of our comfort zone” (In ELAM we say “stay on the Learning Edge”); keep informed on the wider political and social issues of the academic community and the world beyond. Programming could include:

- Journal jig-saw. This is the approach that Page Morahan and Carol Aschenbrener have used to expand fellows’ knowledge of organizational change and inclusiveness. Analysis of pre-selected articles proceeds over three steps: 1) reading a single article alone, 2) sharing the “take-aways” from that article with 5- 6 others who read it, and 3) sharing the group’s viewpoints with another group of 5-6 related articles, thus moving into cross-article analysis and application to one’s own circumstances. This approach not only expands one’s knowledge but also strengthens group skills while practicing important progression of inference (What did you read/hear? What does it mean? What shall we do with it?) Potential topics include health care reform, accountable care organizations, collaborative (team based) trans-disciplinary activities, inclusive decision making, corporate recruitment and retention approaches.

- Revisit the learning of one of ELAM's Forums on Emerging Issues. Many of the fellows are now sophisticated in organizational change issues and could lead a mini-forum that accesses the skills of prior ELAM forums. For example, a combination of [Liberating Structures](#) such as "5 Why's" or Open Space Technology supported by readings (and expanded by a journal jig-saw as described above) would enhance our understanding of contemporary dilemmas. By including a sampling of stakeholders, including local leaders and other professions, we might actually begin to address these national challenges. Similarly, [Appreciative Inquiry](#) as an approach to positive change has transformed organizations. Could an appreciative inquiry activity on trans-professional health care research benefit our communities when we return home?



Deborah German (left) from the first ELAM Class of 1996 and Jill Baren (right) from the Class of 2009, partnered during the November alumnae meeting to share ideas about what an ideal alumnae organization would look like for ELUMS.

Deepen understanding of self and others: open ourselves to an inclusiveness that welcomes and validates the perspectives and experiences of others. This requires a deep, deep listening that sets aside our own views and helps others see their own wisdom more clearly. This also may be one of the most challenging skills of leadership. Programming would include lots of practice in reflection and open inquiry. Programming might involve:

- Learning circles that capture the wisdom that each of us holds in our hearts and our minds; such circles leverage the strengths of individuals and groups through open, honest inquiry and affirmation.
- Peer consultations that provide mirrors to our rationales and organizational approaches using "step-back" approaches that sort the forest from the trees and "clearness committees" that lead us to our own certainties through inquiry.
- World Café and Appreciative Inquiry approaches that incorporate reflective journaling and small group conversation into the sequence of: What do you think? Why does it matter? What shall we do?

Sustain each other's leadership: "Tempered Radicals"

[Myerson] and "Iron Butterflies" [Regine] can tire of maintaining the paradoxes of sustaining positional leadership effectiveness and taking collaborative, inclusive approaches to change within our traditional organizational hierarchies. Wings tire as they work against the winds, even though to others your progress may seem effortless. This may be the greatest challenge of transitioning from the ELAM fellowship to the larger ELUM community of leadership practice. Programming would build upon the ELAM cores of valuing relational skills, strengthening management and leadership skills, discovering the power of visibility and visible contribution within your institutions. Alumnae have proposed topics that include career advice, negotiating for resources, personnel management, job searching and interviewing, and professional presentation (communication and image). Advancing our competence as leaders will require coming to the meeting with real challenges to be met with open minds and trust that comes from confidentiality and open hearts. It is likely to require:

- Pre-conference work that might include readings, interviews, observations, case analyses.
- Workshops that provide simulation and practice to enhance our skills and draw out our uncertainties so that we can chart new paths.
- Creating a community of support that respects the confidentiality and values of each of our endeavors, to recreate the environment of leadership learning we first experienced in the ELAM fellowship.

Build Community by connecting with others in the network: Yes, be sure to connect with your LC and APSOM group members. Equally important is to work and have fun with less familiar members of this talented and thoughtful

community. Programming would invite alumnae into a variety of social and professional development activities in combinations that include:

- Learning communities and APSOM groups.
- Special interest groups of discipline, work setting, or scholarship focus.
- Whole community activities that expand each ELUM's access to the full ELUM community of practice.

Care for Yourself physically, spiritually, and intellectually: The ELAM fellowship now includes principles of positive energy management such as morning exercise, breaks at least every 120 minutes, long lunch periods that allow for rest, recreation, and nourishment, and attention to each other's strengths and gifts. Since this approach often is not bred into our professional lives, there is opportunity here for the postgraduate program to expand our knowledge and skills. How would it appear in programming?

- Early morning exercise programs to stretch and strengthen with colleagues. Research shows that morning exercise has benefits in terms of mental alertness throughout the rest of the day.
- Free time: Some think of this as spa time. I think of it as "time out" of planned conference when a participant can do as she wishes, as positive time management in which the program does not consume a 12-hour day (making an ELUM feel as though she is at work). Since we will be meeting in mid-winter, a long lunch would allow us to see the sunshine (Nashville alumnae have ordered sunshine for the event), whether to exercise, go sightseeing, enjoy a leisurely lunch, or seek "retail therapy" from the local merchants.
- Mindfulness learning. A yoga class, a meditation lesson, a session in journaling or creative writing would bring to each of us a new skill in self awareness and reflective leadership.



(From left to right): Doris Cope (Class of 2007), Jennifer Woodward (2008), Ann Thompson (2001), Aina Puce (2007), Jill Siegfried (2002), Sandra Quinn (2007), and Margaretha Casselbrant (2005) gather in Pittsburgh in 2008 with Director of Alumnae Relations, Rosalyn Richman. As ongoing efforts to sustain the leadership of ELAM alumnae are enhanced by the Legacy Fund and the new alumnae organization, ELAM hopes to see more reunions and regional professional development programs.

Contribute to others' welfare: Wouldn't it be lovely if the community—the university or civic community hosting the alumnae event—was to benefit from our presence? I recall ELUM Laura Schweitzer's presidential inauguration in which the university arranged a day of service in the community. Imagine the influence ELUMs could have on K-12 girls who doubt their capacity for leadership; imagine the good we could do for a community by pooling our many talents.

The contract is signed. We are holding rooms for you and your class in Nashville at [The Hutton Hotel](#) on December 8-11, 2011. We need to know what you wish in order to convene a meaningful gathering. Please access this link to take the [ELAM Alumnae Leadership Development Program Survey](#) that will inform the program planning committee working with Rosalyn Richman, director of ELAM Alumnae Relations, as they design the event. The survey will close on Wednesday, December 22. If you wish to explore in a more conversational manner, the [ELAM LinkedIn site](#) is open for discussion!

Share Your Thoughts With Us!

Take the [ELAM Alumnae Leadership Development Program Survey](#)

Join the discussion on [LinkedIn](#)

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