

## July 2009: Transitions

Welcome! Welcome is one of the most heartwarming words in the English language. It is a greeting of invitation and of hospitality to one who is entering or returning to a new place. I have heard these words often in the past six months:

Welcome to ELAM, welcome to the Institute for Women's Health and Leadership, welcome to Drexel University and to the College of Medicine, welcome to Philadelphia!

It is also my pleasure to return these words. To our [new fellows](#): Welcome to the journey that is ELAM. To our more than 550 alumnae: Welcome back, whether it is through alumnae events, a role as faculty in the program, contacting us for on-line postings of your organization's leadership positions, or sharing tips through the ELAM group on LinkedIn. Welcome back to all the faculty, consultants, supporters, deans and other ELAM mentors whose partnership sustains this legacy of women's leadership.

Any welcome is accompanied by a transition, and transition is never a solo event. My arrival in the ELAM office was a warm one, and in my opinion, the "testing" (you know, the conversations that staff hold casually and formally to see what kind of boss you will be, the discussions with leaders to see how you will work with them or without them) was briefer than any job I had entered previously. What a great team! Each and every one of them—Laura, Kathleen, Katie, Olivia, Tori, and Brian are deeply committed to the success of our fellows. Page Morahan, as Founding Director, is ensconced in the voluminous amounts of data she and her research colleagues have [collected over the 15 years of ELAM](#). Roz Richman, as Director of [Alumnae](#) Relations, reports that she "loves her job" and is eager to connect with as many alumnae as possible this year. My own entrée has taken place on multiple fronts as we develop the vision and plans for significant enhancements to the ELAM program and explore a similar model in other professions such as engineering. You'll hear more about this as the year unfolds.

We here at ELAM specialize in Leadership Transitions. We study the characteristics of good and bad transitions, we provide resources to support good ones, and we aim to honor those of our fellows and alumnae. As Page notes in her spring Faculty Vitae article, [A Continuum of Leadership Development](#), leadership transitions are complex. Good ones are marked with gracious exits, whether voluntary or involuntary, from the previous position—including removal of the "burrs under the saddle" from old conflicts—and celebrations of appreciation. One of my old friends said to me, as I reluctantly walked to a celebration organized by those who had not been particularly supportive of my agenda, "This is not for you, Diane; it is important for all your adversaries and your friends." She was right; the going-away celebrations mark the exit as good memories and help us all start the new position in the right place. Good entrances begin with open communication and listening for the threads of both history and future possibilities that will describe a compelling vision. This must be done while assessing the immediate responsibilities and challenges that were hiding during your recruitment. Anyone skilled in leadership transitions knows to expect this and to leverage the surprises into understanding the organization and working more effectively with those who keep it humming.

You can help us support alumnae transitions. [Positions and More](#) is a great way to let the rest of the world know about your publications, honors, and leadership changes. Contributing to ELAM through the annual campaign or by using the [iSearchiGive](#) site will help us build upon the legacy of the ELAM fellowship with better support for alumnae events and advanced leadership support. And most of all, you can help us by welcoming a new fellow. Each of you will know at least one of the 53 new fellows, who are listed in the press release on our home page. Whether you send them a note of congratulations, take them out for a cup of coffee, or organize a meeting at your school or society, they will have a better transition into ELAM and the new leadership invitations that will find them this year.

Transition into becoming an ELAM fellow should be a community event. Our community is dispersed across the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico, but that should not deter us. You can welcome the new fellows now, by responding to our [LinkedIn](#) posting to advise the new class on how to get the most out of their ELAM year:

Share your wisdom—how would you suggest the new fellows plan to manage their time between family, work, and now more ELAM work?

Share your experience—how did you make the best of your institutional visibility and your institutional action project to advance your leadership skills and opportunities? Your response will make a great Welcome to the community that is ELAM.

*Diane Magrane*