2021 - 22
EMERGING WOMEN LEADERS
Welcome to the 2021-2022 academic year and to the Emerging Women Leaders.

For the past 18 months we have gone through a global pandemic and many of us we were challenged in ways that we never thought possible. We survived and from this experience we have come through stronger, smarter, and more resilient human beings. We are glad that you chose to participate in Emerging Women Leaders this year.

This nine-month professional development program is designed to provide women who are mid-level managers with networking opportunities, learn about leadership strategies and how to think about their professional trajectory in higher education and beyond.

Each month you will be able to hear from women leaders across campus and in the community about their success and how you can strengthen and hone your professional prowess.

We hope that you will enjoy this program and that it will provide you with invaluable nuggets of knowledge.

Saludos cordiales,

Gioconda Guerra Pérez
Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
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PURPOSE
The Emerging Women Leaders Series provides leadership development for mid-level professional women at Illinois who aspire to become organizational leaders. The focus of this program is to equip women with fundamental leadership strategies that will have a positive impact within their work environments and the communities in which they live.

MISSION
Its mission is to empower and equip women who are looking to develop leadership skills for advancement with expert leadership knowledge and practical tools that result in strategic career planning and professional skill building and heightened self-awareness.

FOCUS
Meetings are designed to help women identify and reinforce their strengths while developing proactive strategies and behaviors to make a greater impact within their organizations, their personal networks, and the communities in which they live and serve. Topics will focus on core professional concepts and personal competencies.

OBJECTIVE
The objective is to enhance the participant’s credibility and strengthen their position within the organization; create and sustain effective developmental relationships and alliances that advance careers; maximize personal, professional, and organizational potential through better teamwork and team leadership; think, lead, and manage in ways that celebrate individual attributes and perspectives.

HOW
Meetings will be held once a month from September to May. Presenters are senior level women from the University campus, community leaders from Urbana and Champaign, and professional consultants from various backgrounds, who present on an array of distinctive topics that meet a wide range of leadership development needs.

AUDIENCE
This program is ideal for women who desire to learn more about effective leadership.
“For me, becoming isn’t about arriving somewhere or achieving a certain aim. I see it instead as forward motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self. The journey doesn’t end.”

- Michelle Obama
PARTICIPANTS

KATE ABNEY
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Dr. Kate Abney is a social anthropologist specializing in medical anthropology. She has worked in international higher education for over fifteen years in various roles around the world; degree seeking international student, lecturer, program director, risk management, local program staff and academic coordinator. She earned her BA from Boston University and her MSocSci and PhD at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She has lectured at various universities between Canada, the USA and South Africa, as well as worked with OTS, CIEE, SiT amongst others. Kate joined LAS IP at the end of 2019 from Cape Town, South Africa where she lived for the majority of her adult life. At UIUC, Kate and her team facilitate and teach the LAS 291 & 292.

KELLY BIRKY
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, MARKETING & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
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Kelly Birky is the Associate Director for Marketing and Strategic Communications in the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. In her role, she oversees academic marketing and recruitment for 120+ programs. Kelly is a proud two-time alum from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a BS in Advertising and MS in Library & Information Science. Kelly is originally from the suburbs of Chicago, but fell in love with Champaign during her undergrad years. In her free time, Kelly enjoys spending time with her husband and chasing around her two-year-old twins and one-year-old daughter.

STEPHANIE BROWNSTEIN
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Stephanie is a Senior Scientist / Research Engineer for the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center within the Prairie Research Institute. In this role she manages the scale-up and environmental permitting of carbon capture and utilization projects at power plants. Prior to joining ISTC in 2019 she worked as an environmental engineer in the food manufacturing industry. Throughout her career Stephanie has been passionate about creating inclusive work environments and is thrilled to currently serve as chair of the PRI Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Outside of work, she enjoys mountain biking, CrossFit, traveling, cooking, and spending time outdoors.
PARTICIPANTS

BETHANY Carmien Onwodi
Senior Student Financial Aid Administrator
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Bethany is a two-time UIUC alum who has served students and families from within the Office of Student Financial Aid for 6 years and counting. She is a bit of a chaos magnet at work and tends to attract the most unusual calls or scenarios, but makes time to laugh with her colleagues. In her free time, she enjoys running (currently serves on the board with the Second Wind Running Club) and fitness, cuddling her two black cats, and chasing her toddler.

AMY Carr
Office Manager
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Amy Carr was born and raised in Champaign, Illinois and claims to bleed Illini Orange and Blue. She has been serving the students of this campus for over 15 years, having started at the McKinley Student Health Center as a Medical Assistant, and now as an Office Manager for the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps. She recently completed her master’s degree in Human Resources and Industrial Relations on this campus through the School of Labor and Employee Relations all while working full-time and raising her two children. Amy is now exploring new opportunities on campus to expand her impact on the student experience and greatly appreciates the opportunity to participate in this program.

JENNY Cox
Associate Director for Administration
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Jenny Cox has worked at the university for 15 years and is currently the Associate Director for Administration in the Department of Chemistry. When asked what her job entails, she often says a little bit of everything! She serves alongside the department head to ensure that their large teaching and research operations run smoothly, including personnel management of ~450 faculty, staff, postdocs and students and financial oversight of a multi-million dollar budget. Jenny grew up in Southern Illinois and now lives in Mahomet with her husband, two children and their COVID puppy, Cooper. She enjoys planting flowers, reading and being on the beach.
AURORA CRUZ-TORRES
SCHOOL OF MCB ACADEMIC ADVISOR AND EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT ACADEMIC ADVISING COORDINATOR
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Aurora Cruz-Torres is an academic advisor for the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology and she also serves as the Academic Advising Coordinator for the Education Justice Project which provides educational services for students in prison. She received a BS in Human Biology from the University of Puerto Rico and a MS in Molecular and Integrative Physiology from UIUC. She is currently completing an EdM in Education Policy, Organization and Leadership with a concentration in Diversity and Equity in Education at UIUC. Being a Latina in STEM for many years she has developed a passion for assisting and supporting students from marginalized communities through their higher education journey.

JAMEY DUNN-THOMASON
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
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Jamey is a proud UIS Prairie Star and holds a master's degree in public affairs reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield. She has spent more than a decade focused on public policy and state government, starting her career as a journalist at Illinois Issues magazine and NPR Illinois. Then, moving on to serve as deputy director of communications in the Office of the Illinois Comptroller before coming to IGPA in 2019. She is a member of the Edgar Fellows Class of 2017. Jamey loves running, reading and food. She lives in Springfield with her husband, daughter, two cats and a dog.

LIBBY EBELHAR
DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
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Libby Ebelhar serves as the Director of Financial Operations in the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. Libby works primarily with financial reporting, financial analysis, and year end processing for DIA and the State Farm Center. Originally from Owensboro, KY, Libby earned her bachelor’s degree in accountancy from the University of Kentucky and received both her master’s in sports administration and MBA from Ohio University. In her free time, Libby can be found running (very) slowly through town, playing tennis, gardening, renovating her 110-year-old house, or creating ceramics through the Champaign Park District. She loves attending sporting events (Go Illini!), country concerts and hanging out with her fiance and two dogs.
PARTICIPANTS

LESLEI FROESCHL  
SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER  
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Leslie Froeschl is a Senior Project Manager at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA). She leads the Project Management & Reporting team for the Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment (XSEDE), an NSF-funded virtual organization that integrates and coordinates the sharing of advanced digital services - including supercomputers and high-end visualization and data analysis resources - with researchers nationally to support science. In her free time, Leslie enjoys spending time with friends and family (especially her first granddaughter, Chase, who is currently 8 months old!), running and hiking outdoors, reading, and enjoying good food and wine!

ALISHA FUNKHOUSER-WALKER  
RECORDS SUPERVISOR  
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Alisha began working at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2013 as a Public Safety Telecommunicator. In 2017 Alisha took over the position of Records Supervisor. In her role she oversees the police records and provides a variety of professional, technical, and managerial support for the Division of Public Safety. Alisha earned a BA from the University of Illinois Springfield in 2016. She currently resides right outside of CU with her husband and two young sons. Alisha enjoys fitness, running, photography, card-games, and spending time with family. If she’s not coaching her son’s soccer team, teaching a full body cardio-jam session called POUND, you may find her cuddled up on the couch binge watching a Netflix series.

KATRINA HAGLER  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF RECRUITING AND DATA MANAGEMENT  
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Katrina Hagler is the associate director of recruiting and data management at Gies College of Business. In this role, she serves as a recruiter and lead Slate contact for residential masters programs at Gies. Katrina has worked on campus since 2007 in roles in the business administration and mechanical engineering departments. Katrina has a bachelor of music in piano performance from Eastern Illinois University and an MBA from Illinois. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband Jonathan and son Ethan. In her spare time she enjoys music, sewing, and crafting.
PARTICIPANTS

AMBER HALL
HUMAN RESOURCE ASSOCIATE
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Amber Hall is a graduate of Eastern Illinois University. She began her employment with UIUC in 2018 as a Human Resource Associate for the Prairie Research Institute. She is a native of the Champaign-Urbana area and has 3 boys; a 4 year old and twins who are 2 1/2. Amber recently passed her SHRM-CP exam and is now a certified HR professional.

KATIE HARRELL
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT
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Katie works in central advancement as a member of the Performance Management team. Her role focuses on driving efficiency in the fundraising operation through campus-wide change initiatives. A data analyst with an MBA from UW-Madison, Katie takes a systems-based and data driven approach to enhancing fundraiser performance by identifying and addressing misalignment between operational processes, technical solutions, and fundraising strategy. Outside of work, Katie enjoys volunteering and currently helps with fundraising at Promise Healthcare which provides affordable healthcare in CU. She also enjoys spending time with family and friends, testing and sharing new recipes, exploring parks, listening to audio books and working on her house.

ANGIE HELMUTH
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICE FOR UNIVERSITY HOUSING
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Angie Helmuth is from Stewardson, IL and is married with two sons, a daughter-in-law and a grandson. She spends her spare time camping and playing with her grandson. She has been with University Housing’s Accounting Department and the University of Illinois for over 10 years.

MEAGAN HENNESSEY
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF IT OPERATIONS
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Meagan Hennessey is the Assistant Director of IT Operations for Gies College of Business, where she recently celebrated 20 years of service. In this role, she manages IT Partners’ daily operations and Gies’ team of application and data developers. After more than two decades in IT, she still loves the creative challenge of juggling timelines, technical specs, and client needs to help a talented team bring new applications to life. Prior to joining Gies, she graduated from Valparaiso University with a degree in American Studies and English and earned a Masters in Information Science from Indiana University Bloomington. She lives in Champaign with her husband and enjoys reading, gardening, cooking, and exploring the history of recorded sound.
PARTICIPANTS

ARIANNA HOLTERMAN
ASSISTANT DEAN
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Arianna Agramonte Holterman is originally from South Florida. Arianna received her Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and History from Florida State University and a Master of Science in Higher Education Administration from Florida International University. She has worked for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign since 2007 in various roles within Student Affairs. She currently serves as an Assistant Dean in the Student Assistance Center supporting students in crisis and emergency situations. In 2020 Arianna started a PhD program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership with an emphasis in Higher Education.

KORTNEY JONES
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NEW STUDENT PROGRAMS, GRAINGER COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
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Kortney Kay Jones is the Assistant Director for New Student Programs within the Grainger College of Engineering. Her primary focus is to recruit historically underrepresented groups in STEM (i.e., women, African American, Native American, & Hispanic students) to engineering and improve yield for majors with low enrollment. Previously, Kortney worked for University Housing & the Office of Student Financial Aid. She has worked at Illinois since 2013. Kortney is a native of Chambana, a mother of an ambitious 5-year-old girl & dynamic 3-year-old boy and has been married to her college sweetheart for over 10 years. Kortney & her husband serve as co-pastors of a campus ministry since 2015. Dancing, organizing, & traveling is her idea of fun.

KARLA LUCHT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR MSLIS ADVISING
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Karla Lucht is the Assistant Director for MSLIS Advising at the School of Information Sciences. She provides coordination and leadership for all aspects of advising support for future information professionals. Karla enjoys camping, live music, and creative time. She lives in Savoy with her husband, Tedd, their two children, and three cats.
PARTICIPANTS

ELIZABETH MASON
ACADEMIC SKILLS SPECIALIST
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Elizabeth Mason is an Academic Skills Specialist for the Mannie L. Jackson Illinois Academic Enrichment and Leadership Program. She is a two-time alumna of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Originally from the Chicagoland area, Elizabeth has been a full time employee at UIUC for 4 years. She enjoys reading, Netflix, and cooking in her free time.

ELISE MCCARREN
CHEMISTRY MERIT PROGRAM DIRECTOR
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Elise serves as the Merit Program Director for the Department of Chemistry which reaches over 700 students each year. She is also the instructor of Chemistry 101, Introductory Chemistry.

ANGIE POWERS
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Angie has spent the past 7 years with Gies College of Business. In her current role as Associate Director for Career Services, she coaches graduate students on career preparation and strategies to develop professional relationships for career success. Previously, she was part of the Corporate Engagement team developing partnerships with employers and alumni. Prior to higher education, she worked in industry for 12 years as a marketing professional with both Ford Motor Company and U.S. Cellular. As a double Alumna from the University of Illinois, she holds both her Bachelor of Psychology and her MBA degrees. In her free time, she enjoys baking, entertaining with friends, traveling, and watching her 17 year old son play high school baseball.

KIMBERLY POWERS
ACADEMIC ADVISOR
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Kimberly is an academic advisor in the School of Chemical Sciences, where she is dedicated to helping Chemistry and Chemical Engineering undergraduates realize their full personal, professional, and academic potential. Building on her background in history, anthropology, and teaching first year writing and experience courses, Kimberly has also designed and implemented a student-led first year seminar to help Chemistry majors with their transition to college. She has lived in many big 10 college towns, but has called Champaign-Urbana home since June 2015. In her free time, Kimberly loves traveling, listening to podcasts, and sewing garments.
PARTICIPANTS

ANA RODRIGUEZ
DIGITIZATION COORDINATOR AND REGISTRAR
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Ana Rodriguez is currently the Digitization Coordinator and Registrar of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library (colloquially known as RBML), at the University Main Library. Ms. Rodriguez was born in Brooklyn, New York, and at the tender age of four, her family moved to Puerto Rico. During her time on the island, she completed a BA in Theory of Art from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez (1996), and initiated a career working with cultural heritage institutions. From 1999 through 2003, she worked as assistant registrar of collections at the Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, a pivotal experience that allowed her to care for and work with the national and largest collection of art works and historic artifacts.

TINA ROLFE
ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS SPECIALIST
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Tina Rolfe is the Academic Accommodations Specialist at DRES since 2009 but has been in with DRES since 2007. She is an Illinois alumnus with a BS in Statistics and MS in RST with a focus on disability. She coordinates and supervises the Testing Accommodations Center which proctors exams with accommodations for the whole campus. Tina does one-on-one training of Assistive Technology (AT) for students with disabilities. She also provides campus trainings for faculty and staff on topics including testing accommodations, AT, and working with students with disabilities. Apart from her role at DRES, she has served on several committees within and outside of DRES.

ROXANA RYAN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS
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Roxana has worked in the Office of Corporate Relations for nearly four years, serving as the Associate Director of Research and Analysis. In this role, her main responsibilities are to analyze and report on the contributions of the many corporate partners at the University and to identify potential new partners. Roxana earned two degrees from the University of Illinois - a BS in Journalism and an MS in Information Science. She is married to Cody and they settled in Champaign after graduate school. They welcomed their first baby - Owen - in August 2020 and are learning the ropes of parenting during a pandemic. Martha the Old English Sheepdog and Desi the one-eyed-cat complete Roxana’s family.
PARTICIPANTS

HILERI SHAH
HUMAN RESOURCE ASSOCIATE
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Hileri works at the Illini Union as a Human Resource Associate. Originally, from India, Hileri came to U of I for her Graduate Studies in 2015 and was employed with the Union as a student. After graduation, she stayed on for full-time employment and was promoted to her current position in 2019. As part of the Shared Human Resources Team, she provides HR support to several Student Affair Auxiliary units. She is involved with Recruitment, Talent Management, Employee Relations, Payroll & Benefits, and Student Employment. She enjoys working and interacting with a wide variety of employees and exploring ways to make the organization efficient. Apart from work, she spends her time reading, being a foodie and making travel plans.

KATHY SULLIVAN
SENIOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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Kathy Sullivan is the Senior Assistant Director at the University of Illinois System Institute of Government and Public Affairs. She is responsible for developing and maintaining relationships with scholars from across the system, who are interested in impacting policy and legislation in the state of Illinois and beyond. In addition to this, Kathy manages IGPA’s public engagement programs. Before coming to the University, she worked for then Senator Barack Obama. She has a BA from Millikin University and an MPA from the University of Illinois Springfield. She received the 2012 DELTA award from the University of Illinois System, was a member of the 2018 Academic Professional Leadership Program, and a 2020 member of the Leadership Illinois Program.

JENNIFER STURNER
MANAGER, INTEGRATED USER SERVICES
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Jennifer is currently the manager of Integrated User Services, at the Technology Services Help Desk, and has served in this role for over three years. Jennifer manages a team consisting of eight full time staff and 50 student employees, all who provide different levels of IT support to campus. Prior to this position, she worked as a student manager in both Classroom Technologies and the Help Desk for close to four years. Jennifer currently resides in Monticello with her husband Chris and eight-year-old son Reed. When she isn’t working or being a chauffeur to and from her son’s many hobbies, you can find her catching up on her favorite flix or remodeling her family’s home.
PARTICIPANTS

KRISTIN TENNANT
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
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Kristin Tennant joined the Marketing & Communications team at the Gies College of Business in July 2021 as their first Creative Director. In this role, Kristin collaborates with team leadership to develop messaging and marketing strategy, while also working closely with the writers and designers to ensure that the Gies brand is elevated through the team’s creative work. Before joining Gies Kristin held marketing positions at the Carle Illinois College of Medicine and the U of I Office of Strategic Marketing and Branding. Outside of work, Kristin enjoys collaborating with her husband Jason and their foodie friends on delicious meals, and spending as much time as possible with her three 20-something daughters.

JULIE WAGNER
RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES COORDINATOR
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Julie Wagner joined the Records and Information Management Services team at the University of Illinois System Offices in 2017. Previously she worked at the Texas State Library & Archives Commission and the Texas Vital Statistics Unit. She has a Master’s degree in Library & Information Science from the University of North Texas. When not working, Julie often volunteers with local animal rescues and enjoys writing and reading fiction.

EMILY WUCHNER
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCE
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Emily is the Associate Director for Student Experience at the Graduate College. In this position, she oversees onboarding and orientation initiatives; works in an ombuds role to assist students, faculty, and departments with challenging situations; and oversees the Thesis Office. She graduated from the University of Illinois with a PhD in Musicology. She also holds a master's degree in Musicology from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and bachelor’s degrees in Music and Journalism from Murray State University. In her free time, she enjoys knitting and crochet, boxing, and listening to music.
MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings for fall and spring 2021-22 will be offered in person and hybrid

Wednesday, September 30, 2021
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
Wednesday, December 8, 2021
Monday, January 12, 2022
Wednesday, February 23, 2022
Wednesday, March 23, 2022
Wednesday, April 20, 2022
Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Sometimes creating a culture of listening is simply a matter of managing the right way. When just a couple of people are doing all the talking in the meeting, I’d stop and go around the table to ensure that everyone gets heard. Other times I would stand up in the next meeting and walk around, physically blocking a person who was talking too much. Sometimes I had quick conversations before meetings. In other words, part of my job was to constantly figure out new ways to give quiet ones a voice.

- Stratsys.com
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