Message from the Director

As I write this message, I’m preparing to attend my fifth WLI retreat. I’ll have some catching up to do, as I haven’t yet met the members of this year’s class. Typically I would meet the incoming students at an orientation session in the spring, but I spent the 2012-13 academic year as an administrative fellow to the vice president for student affairs, Damon Sims, and the vice president for outreach, Craig Weidemann. Penn State’s administrative fellows program could just as easily be called the “Administrative Leadership Initiative” – it’s a yearlong crash course in university administration and the leadership challenges that administrators face. The program, which began in 1986, is aimed at increasing the pool of women and minorities who are qualified for careers in university administration. You may recall that Careen Yarnal, former WLI faculty mentor, was an administrative fellow in 2011-2012.

Another of the administrative fellows (there were three of us) last year, Kathy Bieschke, described her fellowship as “revelatory,” and I couldn’t agree more. Although I’ve worked at Penn State for 15 years, I learned more about Penn State, and about leadership, during this past year than in all of the other years combined. I’m excited to bring all of my new knowledge back to the College of Health and Human Development and to the Women’s Leadership Initiative.

This year, as with every year, brings some changes to WLI. In this newsletter, you can read more about our new faculty mentor, Dr. Jessica Mittler. The two of us have made both minor and substantive changes to the WLI curriculum for the fall semester, and we are excited to see the results of those changes. This semester the students will be doing the “Strengths Finder” assessment (in addition to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which has been a part of our curriculum for many years). Jessica has devised “exit ticket” exercises that the students complete during class time that allow them to reflect on what they have learned in class and that also give us, as instructors, real-time feedback on what students are learning and thinking. We’ll be sure to share more about these changes, and others, in the next newsletter.

Given that it’s the beginning of the fall semester, this newsletter contains news about activities that took place both last spring and this fall. You can read about the 2012-13 class’s field trip to Harrisburg this past spring; meet the new, 2013-14 class; and find updates on alumni from all of our past WLI classes. Thanks to everyone for keeping the “WLI Network” strong!

Sincerely,

Dr. Abigail Diehl
2013-14 Mentors
Thanks to our 2013-14 mentors:

Emily Aten, Speech Language Pathologist, 
State College Area School District

Angelique Bacon-Woodard, Scholar in Residence of Learning Communities, Learning Assistance Center, Penn State

Kaitlyn Bazzani (WLI 2006-07), Speech Language Pathologist, 
East Allegheny School District

*Joey Frongel Boyles, Nursing Home Administrator, 
HCR Manor Care

Renee Brooks (WLI 2004-05), Program Director, 
The Ohio State University

Jessica Clothiaux, Speech Language Pathologist, 
State College Area School District

*Sherry DelGrosso, Registered Nurse, 
Bellwood-Antis School District

Deirdre Dlugonski (WLI 2003-04), 
Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, East Carolina University

*Monica Gastiger, Speech Language Pathologist, 
State College Area School District

Lori Gravish, Instructor and Internship Coordinator, 
Department of Kinesiology, Penn State

*Lynn Hendrickson, Administrative Manager, 
Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Vera Hubiak, Specialist Master Consultant, Deloitte Consulting

*Stephanie Mazzeo-Caputo, Senior Vice President of Talent Management, HealthEd

Elaine McKenna, Instructor, Penn State College of Nursing, 
Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

Ann Miller (WLI 2008-09), Staff Nurse, 
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC

Kathy Misunas, Founder, Essential Ideas, LLC

Joelyn Nigge, Nurse Manager, Fletcher Allen Health Care

Caitlin O’Neill (WLI 2008-09), Recruiting Specialist, 
pureIntegration

Sheri Parker, Deputy Division Director – Warfighter Protection and Applications Division, Office of Naval Research, United States Navy

Resham Patel (WLI 2005-06), Senior Program Analyst, 
National Association of City and County Health Officials

Jan Phillips, Nursing Director, Emergency and Surgical Services and Care Coordination, Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

Miriam Powell, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Pink Zone

Sharon Power, Human Resources Consultant/Executive Coach, 
The Power Group

*Kerrillaine Prunella, Human Resources Branch Chief, 
National Institutes of Health

Tracy Sinopoli, Interim Nurse Manager Float Pool and CSO, 
Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center

Irene Soucy, President and CEO, Dietary Directions, Inc.

*Michelle Thal, Physician Assistant, Geisinger Health System

Alison Thornton, Career Counselor/Academic Advisor, Harford Community College

Megan Verbos (WLI 2006-07), Registered Nurse, UPMC – St. Margaret Hospital; Attorney, Abernethy Auld & Young PC

Sloane Veshinski, Licensed Psychotherapist, The Sloane Center, Inc.

Cindy Zimmerman, Co-Leader, Woodcraft Industries, Inc.

*five-year mentor
Dr. Jessica Mittler, assistant professor of health policy and administration, is the new instructor/faculty mentor to the Women’s Leadership Initiative. She replaces Dr. Careen Yarnal, who served as faculty mentor from the 2008-09 to the 2010-11 academic years and again during the 2012-13 academic year. Careen is taking on new responsibilities related to engaged scholarship at the University, although she continues in her faculty role in the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management.

Jessica is one of the WLI’s biggest supporters; she has served on its internal advisory committee since 2009 and has participated actively in many WLI events and workshops. In addition to her WLI responsibilities, she teaches a writing-intensive course for undergraduates and researches how to provide coordinated, patient-centered care.

Jessica received her bachelor’s degree in urban and regional studies from Cornell University, master’s degrees in public policy and health services administration from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. degree in health policy and medical sociology from Harvard University.

Five-Year Mentors Honored at Spring Celebration Luncheon

Four WLI mentors – Judy Dillon, Lynn Hendrickson, Mary Lou Kanaskie, and Michelle Thal – were honored at the annual Celebration Luncheon for five years of mentoring service.

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Meet the Women’s Leadership Initiative Class of 2013-2014

Brooke Abbonizio
Major: Communication Sciences and Disorders
Hometown: Sewell, NJ

Jennifer Antle
Major: Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: State College, PA

Jillian Beaver
Major: Biobehavioral Health
Hometown: Sacramento, CA

Cherisse Benjamin
Major: Nursing
Hometown: Elmont, NY

Sara Bowling
Major: Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: Snow Shoe, PA

Kenya Crawford
Major: Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA

Kelli Eble
Major: Health Policy and Administration
Hometown: Bellefonte, PA

Melissa Ferdock
Major: Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management
Hometown: Hatfield, PA

Lindsay Graham
Major: Kinesiology, Movement Science Option
Hometown: Hamburg, NJ

Alexandra LaMont
Major: Biobehavioral Health
Hometown: Horseheads, NY

Nicole Ramjit
Major: Human Development and Family Studies
Hometown: Doylestown, PA

Janine Ricca
Major: Communication Sciences and Disorders
Hometown: Hillsborough, NJ

Jessica Romberger
Major: Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management
Hometown: Feasterville, PA

Priya Sharma
Major: Health Policy and Administration
Hometown: Cary, NC

Adrienne Spears
Major: Health Policy and Administration
Hometown: Miller Place, NY
Eleanor Brnich  
Major: Health Policy and Administration  
Hometown: Chester Springs, PA

Rebecca Brusca  
Major: Human Development and Family Studies  
Hometown: Murrysville, PA

Michelle Burgess  
Major: Nursing  
Hometown: Orefield, PA

Carolyn Byer  
Major: Hospitality Management  
Hometown: Exton, PA

Alison Carson  
Major: Communication Sciences and Disorders  
Hometown: Lancaster, PA

Lindsey Mayhew  
Major: Nutritional Sciences, Dietetics Option  
Hometown: Woodstown, NJ

Abigail McNelis  
Major: Biobehavioral Health  
Hometown: Richmond, VA

Shanice O’Connor  
 Major: Health Policy and Administration  
Hometown: Yeadon, PA

Cassandra Pantano  
Major: Nursing  
Hometown: Collegeville, PA

Kimberly Quinn  
Major: Health Policy and Administration  
Hometown: Hazleton, PA

Lucia Stone  
Major: Communication Sciences and Disorders  
Hometown: Oley, PA

Elizabeth Swantz  
Major: Nursing  
Hometown: Rochester, NY

Rebecca Tyrpak  
Major: Athletic Training  
Hometown: Vienna, VA

Mariela Villanueva  
Major: Biobehavioral Health  
Hometown: Quakertown, PA

Kathryn Von Holt  
Major: Nursing  
Hometown: Allentown, PA
Fall 2013 Kicks Off with Retreat, Dinner
The annual WLI “field trip” is a key component of the WLI curriculum, allowing students to observe leaders “in action,” to explore such topics as ethical leadership with season leaders, and to practice their networking skills. This year’s field trip was to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to meet with government leaders. The trip was coordinated by Penn State’s Office of Governmental Affairs, which lined up an impressive slate of panelists and speakers during the day-long visit. Sessions included a panel discussion on “Unique Leadership Challenges in the Public Sector,” a keynote speech by Senator Pat Vance, a judicial roundtable, and a panel discussion on “Ethics in Leadership.”

Susan Sanders, then interim director of WLI, said, “The students were excellent ambassadors for WLI, HHD, and Penn State. One of the participants in the first panel asked if anyone could tell them how a bill becomes law in Pennsylvania. When a student gave a thorough answer, the panelist leaned to the woman next to her and whispered ‘I told you they would be prepared!’ The panelists were engaging and very interested in knowing more about the WLI. I think they were surprised at how valuable the experience turned out to be for them personally.” Said Careen Yarnal, then faculty mentor to WLI, “They particularly enjoyed hearing from senior women leaders about the issues and opportunities that their paths afforded, and that leadership growth came in a variety of formats and continued throughout the life-span.”

On the bus home, the students were asked to each share a one word reflection on the day. Some of their words were stimulating, inspiring, energizing, influential, helpful, and perhaps most interesting, hopeful.
Class Notes

2003-04

Joy (Ford) Dieffenderfer and her husband welcomed Anna Viola Dieffenderfer on June 11, 2013 at 8:55 p.m. Anna, who was born at Williamsport Hospital, was 6 lbs. 5 oz. and 20 inches long. Joy reports, “Mommy and daddy love her very much and are enjoying her every day!”

Hye Won Lee recently located to Princeton, New Jersey, and started a job as a grant manager at the Fund for Public Health in New York, where she manages a portfolio of New York City public health programs. She is also engaged to a fellow Penn State alum and they will be getting married at Penn State.

2004-05

Morgan (Lambert) Bellamy and her husband, Scott, are expecting their first child in late October. Morgan is currently the operations manager of Vanguard’s corporate fitness center in Malvern, Pennsylvania. She oversees five facilities with twenty-two full-time employees, bringing health and fitness to the employees to create a better work/life balance.

Megan Moore is living in New York City and attending New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts to earn her master of fine arts degree in dance. For the past four years she has been teaching as an adjunct instructor in dance at Penn State. She also continues to perform professionally with ETCH Dance Co. and serves as the associate artistic director.

Katrina Pierre recently graduated from Teachers College, Columbia University, with a master’s degree in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). She left on August 21 to teach middle-school English at a private school in Beijing.

2005-06

In November 2012, Amina Gilyard was awarded a two-year Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in Silver Spring, Maryland. She is housed in the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Office of Pharmaceutical Science, and is largely responsible for assisting the education specialist in developing and coordinating training, education, and career advancement initiatives for the office. Amina returned to school this fall to pursue a doctor of education degree in human and organizational learning at George Washington University’s Graduate School of Education and Human Development. She received a merit fellowship, which means that her first year of tuition is covered by the university.

Laura (Bicksler) Hughes recently accepted a promotion with her company, Levy Restaurants, as the director of sales at Nationals Park in Washington, DC. She has been in the DC area since her graduation, and has been with Levy Restaurants for five years, starting as senior catering manager at Verizon Center in 2008. She was married in July 2011, and she and her husband welcomed a daughter, Zoey Elizabeth Hughes, on November 4, 2012.

McKenzie Jones Rounds and a friend opened a store called Bloom last fall. They sell ethically manufactured items produced in the USA for children and women, including clothes, toys, and games. They also have a large play area with developmentally appropriate toys and innovative furniture for families to use as a hang-out space. McKenzie is currently living in a new housing cooperative. Her family and three others co-own property in downtown Ithaca, New York, and live in “really cool, smartly designed homes.” Felix and Arlo, her sons, are growing and learning and playing wonderfully.

Joy-Nicole (Powell) Smith lives in Northern Italy with her husband and one-year-old daughter. She completed a master’s degree in teaching through the University of Southern California. This educational experience allowed her to renew her teaching license for pre-kindergarten to fifth grades.

Emily Quinn moved from Washington, DC, to Portland, Oregon, in October 2011. She works as a speech-language pathologist at Shriner’s Hospital for Children and as a research associate at Oregon Health and Science University. She has been selected to participate in the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s Leadership Development Program for Early Career Professionals.

2006-07

Alison (Van Horn) Beam is now policy director with the Pennsylvania Insurance Department and has relocated to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She got married in September 2012 to Andrew Beam, a Gettysburg College graduate.

Michelle (LaBoda) Confer completed her master of business administration degree in May 2013 and is now working as a process manager for Capital One in Richmond, Virginia.

Becky Ferguson is now a California resident. After living in State College for fifteen years she accepted a position at Stanford University as assistant director of integrated marketing services in the Office of Development. Becky reports, “The palm trees are of course gorgeous, but I’m sure I’ll miss the fall foliage.”

Kelly (Kraemer) Hughes lives in Groton, Connecticut, with her husband Joe. They welcomed a daughter, Riley, in June 2013. Kelly continues to work as a surgical physician assistant at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital.

Priscilla (Sicard) Nunez earned her master of science in nursing and master of public health degrees from the University of Pennsylvania in May. She and her husband are expecting their first baby in November.

2007-08

Ashley Akright received a promotion from convention services manager to manager of conference coordinators at Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland, outside Washington, DC.

Sara Ross transferred jobs within Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and is working as a registered nurse in the hospital’s emergency department. She also started pursuing a master’s degree via the University of Pennsylvania’s Acute-Chronic Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Program. She also became engaged in August.
2008-09

Emily (Haworth) Finch has begun her third year of her Ph.D. program in immunology and infectious diseases at the Huck Institutes of the Life Sciences at Penn State. She was selected this year for a CTSI (Clinical and Translational Science Institute) TL1 training grant. This grant will mean that she could potentially earn a dual title (two Ph.D. degrees) with the second degree being in clinical and translational sciences.

Lauren Fischer recently graduated from John Jay College of Criminal Justice with her master’s degree in public administration, and has begun a two-year Presidential Management Fellowship program with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Dena Glazer graduated with a master of social work degree from Touro College Graduate School of Social Work this spring and accepted a position working in a private special-education school in New York City.

Sarah Laubach passed the Critical Care Registered Nurse examination in June. She is also in the process of applying for certified registered nurse anesthetist school, and has received an acceptance, but is awaiting an interview from her top-choice school to make a decision.

Ann Miller graduated in May 2012 with a bachelor of science degree in nursing from Duke University School of Nursing as a member of the nursing honor society, Sigma Theta Tau. She is now working at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit.

Jamie Wheaton graduated in March from Drexel University’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program and has moved and started a job in Washington, DC, at an outpatient orthopedics clinic. She is getting married in September 2014.

Chelsie White received her master of science degree in health policy and administration from Penn State in May 2012 and briefly worked at Yale University doing community health surveys and research for the School of Public Health. She has since relocated to Maryland to work full-time as a project specialist for the National REACH Coalition, a non-profit organization that contracts with the federal government’s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She oversees eight regions nationally that are developing projects with the intention of improving the health of racial/ethnic minority populations. Chelsie also writes, “Outside of work I was able to reconnect with Caitlin O’Neill who is from my class of WLI at a recent Women Leading the Future’ conference hosted by Ladies of DC. We are hoping to meet up again in the near future to catch up! I actually saw her post on the WLI Facebook page related to the conference and then sent her a message to get more information and then we met up at the conference! WLI is still working its magic for me even outside of Penn State.”

Elizabeth Zimmerman-Clayton graduated from The University of Pittsburgh with a master of social work degree and a certificate in gerontology in April. She is now working for Family Hospice and Palliative Care in Pittsburgh as the quality-of-life program coordinator. In this position, she helps patients tell their life stories through video, photography, or audio recordings. “These legacy projects are generally for the family to have after the patient passes, and are very helpful in the bereavement process.”

Lauren (Robinson) Zug married fellow Penn Stater Graham Zug (’10 KINES) in June. They live in Palmyra.

2009-10

Alyssa (Todaro) Brooks passed her qualifying exam and will advance to candidacy in December. Her dissertation will examine the sleep patterns of alcoholics in recovery at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center.

Erica Ehland is a labor and delivery nurse in Charlotte, North Carolina, and also a full-time student at Frontier Nursing University working toward a master of science degree in nursing to be a certified nurse midwife.

Desirae (Walttemyer) Ford got married to Brian Ford on June 29, 2013. Brian is a fellow Penn State graduate who teaches high-school math at Central York High School. Desirae is working as a decision support and strategic planning analyst at the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center.

Shakera Harris is attending Bryn Mawr College, pursuing a master of social service degree (master of social work degree equivalent) and a master of law and social policy degree. Her expected graduation date is May 2014. This year she is interning at Domestic Abuse Project, where she will be providing counseling services to battered individuals. She also works part-time as a therapeutic staff support worker for children with autism.

Kelly McGill has been working at The Virginia Hospital Center in Arlington, Virginia, for two years. She is currently an associate administrator for the employed physician groups that are affiliated with the hospital. Over the course of two years she has managed the Maternal Fetal Medicine office, managed a five-physician primary care office, and assisted in the implementation of the new Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction Surveys. She has also been part of the Hospital’s Emerging Leaders Program, which is a yearlong leadership development course that is led by the hospital’s CEO and members of the executive team. Currently, she is helping the hospital’s senior administrative team open up a new primary care office in Vienna, VA. She and her fiancé, Chad, are getting married in October in the Eisenhower Chapel at Penn State.

Bethany Mooney has spent the last two years in Washington, DC, working in Georgetown University Hospital’s Neuro Intensive Care Unit. This fall she began pursuing a master’s degree in the University of Pennsylvania’s Family Nurse Practitioner program.

Katie Ritter is working at a catering company, Design Cuisine, and recently was promoted from sales associate to account executive. She is a member of the Penn State Alumni Association’s Metro Washington Chapter. She and four other Penn Staters recently signed up for the Philly Half Marathon in November.

Stephanie Smith will graduate from physician assistant school at Drexel University in December. She is in the process of applying to various jobs in the Philadelphia area. She also just completed her graduate project for which she worked with the Homeless Health Initiative to create a women’s wellness program for women living in Philadelphia shelters. The program holds weekly exercise and nutrition education sessions for the women with goals of improving the health of women and children living in the shelter environment.

Michelle Stephenson received her bachelor of science degree in nursing from Eastern University, passed the nursing boards, and is now a registered nurse.
2010-11

Veronica Ariel recently finished serving a twelve-month term as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) in Bennington, Vermont, with Southwestern Vermont Health Care.

Meixi Chen recently graduated from the master of accounting program at the University of Virginia. She is living in Arlington, Virginia, and working at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Washington, DC, as an auditor.

Chelsea Doub is in her second and last year of her Master of Public Health program at the Yale School of Public Health. In addition to her public health curriculum, which includes the very beginning stages of her thesis-writing, she is also a graduate assistant for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Harm Reduction Initiative under an associate dean of student affairs for Yale College. She also has recently become the regional director for The Borgen Project, a national nonprofit organization that aims to fight global poverty by mobilizing people across the globe behind efforts to make poverty a political priority. Chelsea writes, “To say the very least, my life is super busy. However, one big thing that I have come to realize during my time as a graduate student here at Yale is that I would not be the person I am today without The Pennsylvania State University. In particular, the Women’s Leadership Initiative truly groomed me into the professional that I am today, and gave me an upper hand on skills that many of my colleagues are just beginning to learn.”

Sarah Kach moved to Florida in June 2012 to serve as a manager-in-training for Vista Host Hotel Management, and was promoted to assistant general manager of a Hampton Inn in Florida in October 2012. In August she was transferred to Nashville, Tennessee, to be the assistant general manager of the Home2 Suites Nashville Vanderbilt.

Melissa Navarro is living in San Francisco and works as an associate market manager at Expedia, where she is responsible for 450 hotel properties in Silicon Valley, Half Moon Bay, Napa Valley, and Sonoma Valley.

Ashley Sammaritano graduated in May from the School of Nursing, passed her nursing boards in July, and started working at Lehigh Valley Hospital in June. She has aspirations to be a travel nurse, nurse practitioner, and/or a strong woman leader in whatever life endeavors she pursues.

Ashley writes, “I am forever grateful for the opportunity that I was given to participate in the Women’s Leadership Initiative. I have maintained a close relationship and friendship with my mentor, Sherry DelGrosso. She has been an extremely helpful resource for me as a new nurse. Her advice and support has had such a positive impact on me. She is an amazing person and role model for both my personal and professional life.”

2011-12

Kate Campbell got married this summer. She is working as a nurse at Mount Nittany Medical Center and her husband is attending graduate school at Penn State.

Hannah Carroll is in her first semester at Fontbonne University in St. Louis, Missouri. In May, she will begin her internship rotations to become a registered dietitian and will graduate in December 2014. Hannah writes, “I am currently taking a leadership development course and I am eager to dive back into some of my papers and projects from WLI. During the first day of class, my classmates and I were asked to share a leadership experience. I was so proud to tell my classmates about the Penn State WLI and our Washington, DC, trip.”

Elizabeth Catlin recently began physical therapy school at Northwestern University.

Amy Kalajainen recently began graduate studies at the University of Pittsburgh in its two-year Master of Sports Medicine program. She is also serving as the graduate assistant athletic trainer for the University of Pittsburgh Gymnastics team.

Alex Koller recently started graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh and is working toward a master’s degree in speech-language pathology.

Megan Taylor recently accepted a position with Hilton Worldwide as a manager trainee at The Fess Parker, a Doubletree by Hilton Resort in Santa Barbara, California.
Please keep us updated by sending us information about a new address, new job, special accomplishment, etc.

www.hhd.psu.edu/wli/Alumni-Update

2013-14 Internal Advisory Committee

Faculty Mentor/Curriculum Adviser
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Sara Young (Health Policy and Administration)

Adviser Representative
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