

## **2022 Women's Law Student Association Award**

### **"Wake Women in Leadership: A Conversation with the President and Deans of Law, Medicine, and Business"**

#### **About the Program**

"Wake Women in Leadership" provided a candid conversation about the challenges of leadership and strategies for women attorneys and other female professionals to pursue excellence in their careers through mentoring, leadership development, and character growth.

"Wake Women in Leadership" grew out of the fact that four women held simultaneous tenure of the university Presidency and Deanship of professional schools at Wake Forest University – Medicine, Law, and Business. In honor of International Women's Month, we began working on an event to provide these women with an opportunity to share their lessons of leadership. This was the first event of its kind, but something we hope will catalyze future collaborations among women in the professional schools. The event was attended by 62 participants comprised largely of current law students, law professors, and local Wake Forest School of Law alumni. The panelists engaged in a dynamic conversation answering such questions as: "How have you grown into your own leadership style instead of conforming to others' ideas about the type of leader you should be?," "How do you balance engaging in 'family life' (whether it be relationships with children, partners, parents, siblings, friends) with pursuing your vocational goals?," "Women are often perceived differently at different ages and stages of their careers. Do you feel your positions in leadership or others' perceptions of your leadership abilities have changed as you've matured?," and other questions from the audience. At the reception after the event, attendees remarked about how much they enjoyed hearing candid conversation about the challenges women professionals face in their careers, and different helpful strategies such as mentorship, coaching, reflection, and self-education. An article detailing the event will soon be published here - <https://law.wfu.edu>.

#### **Advice for Replicating the Program**

- Start early! Planning began in November 2021 for a March 2022 event
- Once panelists are identified, find a moderator who complements the panelists but provides their own unique voice
  - Set a date, and be sure to coordinate start and end time expectations with panelists
  - Identify possible collaborators – other organizations in your area, affinity groups, etc.
  - Set up a registration portal to prepare for food, programs, seating needs, etc.
  - Develop promotional materials for a variety of formats – digital media, bulletin boards, social media, etc. We used a QR code and a registration link in our materials!
  - Develop a list of questions for panelists by talking to members of your community
  - Send a run-of-show to the panelists and organizers two weeks prior to the event, to ensure all day-of details are prepared
  - Promote, promote, promote!!
- Follow-up with every communication sent to encourage maximum participation
- Share day-of responsibilities so that all organizers have an opportunity to enjoy the event
- Send thank-you's to everyone who helped along the way!

#### **About the Organization**

Women in Law was founded to help students identify and face problems and issues that exist for women in the legal profession and in the law itself. The organization is open to both men and women and has various activities, including seminars with female attorneys, guest speakers, and social activities. In addition to building community within the law school, Women in Law is dedicated to supporting the local community through partnerships with other organizations and direct impact activities. For example, Women in Law operates a mock trial program in partnership with the Girl Scouts in Winston-Salem and has partnered with the Domestic Violence Awareness Coalition and other affinity groups on a variety of initiatives. Women in Law currently has 128 affiliated members from among the current Wake Forest Law student body.