

Women Leaders Share Success Strategies at WCU Forum

When Madeleine Wing Adler was particularly swamped with work during her 16-year tenure as West Chester University president, her savvy administrative assistant would put an occasional half-hour hold on her schedule. As Adler tells it, these small blocks of time offered a chance to catch her breath, reflect, or jot down notes from back-to-back meetings. "And sometimes I just used the time to play solitaire on the computer," she recalls, with a chuckle.

Even energetic and motivated leaders such as Adler need to decompress so they can face the challenges of their jobs with renewed vigor. And so, too, do the rest of us, regardless of our own roles in higher education.

This was just one of the tips shared by five panelists – all highly successful female leaders – at a Women in Higher Education Leadership event held at WCU in early May. More than 80 women and men from across campus filled Sykes Ballroom for the afternoon sessions, which also included presentations by WCU faculty, staff and recent graduates. The event concluded with a reception at Tanglewood. Sponsored by the Offices of the President and Provost, the program was designed to grow and sustain the pool of women leaders at the University, says Vice Provost Jeff Osgood.

"This event was just the beginning," notes Osgood, who was instrumental in planning the program. "We wanted to provide useful knowledge to participants that day, as well as solicit their feedback on what kind of programming and support will best fit their needs in the coming academic year and beyond."

In addition to Adler, panelists included: Kathleen Howley, deputy vice chancellor of the State System of Higher Education; Barbara Lyman, vice president and provost for academic affairs at Shippensburg University; Ira Blake, vice president for academic affairs, Bloomsburg University; and Diane DeVestern, retired from the position of assistant vice president for student affairs at West Chester University.

"The Women in Higher Education Leadership event was a great opportunity to begin building networks of women leaders across campus," says Alicia Hahn-Murphy, director of the Women's Center at WCU. "It is important for our students to see women leaders supporting each other and pulling other women up the ladder."

The program format encouraged audience participation and Monica Lepore, director of Camp Abilities and a faculty member in the department of kinesiology, was one of many attendees who asked questions and shared their insights.

"I learned from hearing multiple perspectives on issues related to higher education leadership, not only from the panel, but from the audience, and the women at my table," says Lepore. "I believe that everyone who attended felt a renewed sense of purpose."

To get involved in future Women in Higher Education Leadership events, look for email announcements or contact Osgood at josgood@wcupa.edu.