

WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY™

2026-2027 Program Syllabus



Lacy Schoen

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce

Elevating Women in the Workforce



A LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE DESIGNED FOR YOUR ADVANCEMENT



MISSION

To explore the reasons for the under representation of women in top leadership positions, and to provide proven and actionable strategies to help women overcome the internal and external barriers they are likely to face to their advancement.

APPROACH

Built on research and science, and focused on the realities of women's real-world experiences in the workforce.

WRLA is presented by subject matter experts, providing leadership development strategies proven to support career advancement for women.

HISTORY

For over 11 years, this program has empowered more than 1,500 women across diverse backgrounds and industries to distinguish themselves as leaders, advocate for their value, and achieve meaningful advancement in their careers and businesses. **Participants consistently gain the confidence, clarity, and capability to increase their income, expand their influence, and step into elevated levels of success.** The program originated at California State University Fullerton, in the College of Business and Economics and was presented primarily to students. The program was launched through the Brea Chamber of Commerce in 2022 to working women.

BREAKING BARRIERS. BUILDING LEADERS.



Creating Opportunities for Women to Lead

WRLA was created to help women build confidence, expand their leadership presence, and step boldly into opportunities for advancement and influence.

Barriers That Continue to Impact Women's Advancement

- Limited access to leadership representation and advancement opportunities
- The pressure many women feel to constantly prove their value
- Workplace dynamics that can impact confidence, visibility, and advancement

THE WRLA EXPERIENCE



IMMERSIVE TRAINING ACADEMY

Workshops are based on research and science!

- 8-intensive 3-hour workshops, each focused on overcoming a specific barrier to advancement
- Presented monthly from September through April

PROFESSIONAL COACHING

- Graduates receive continued support through access to professional coaching and mentorship

BONUS SESSIONS

- Provides additional tools and ongoing skill-building resources necessary for career advancement
- Additional sessions are customized to cohort needs

WRLA Women Lead

- Each Academy graduate has the opportunity to keep their momentum and mentorship going by joining Women Lead, an ongoing leadership program that fosters skill mastery after the Academy is over
- Access to Business Leaders Connect Networking Mixer to connect with business professionals and other business and community programs

HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER WOMEN'S PROGRAMS



Traditional University Women's Leadership Programs	Women Rising Leadership Academy
\$6,000+ per participant	\$497 tuition \$200 discount per participant for employees of our funders
Generic leadership curriculum	Designed uniquely on helping women overcome the internal and external barriers they are likely to face to their advancement, specifically tailored to the realities women face today in the workforce
Limited post-program support	• Coaching eligibility included • Continued growth through our post-graduation program, Women Lead: ◦ Ongoing connection with women leaders and local businesses ◦ Bi-monthly lunch time workshops (LIVE Zoom Sessions) ◦ Reinforces and expands foundational leadership strategies ◦ Supportive community focused on long-term development
Often inaccessible financially	Supported by community funders allowing for low tuition and scholarships

THE WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY EXPERIENCE

Why WRLA Stands Apart

A leadership experience intentionally designed for women's real-world growth and advancement



Address the Real Barriers Women Face in the Workforce

*Tackling the internal and external barriers
impacting women's confidence and advancement*



Research & Science-Based Curriculum

*Proven strategies grounded in real-world
application*



Practical Skills for Real Results

*Workshops focused on actionable tools for leadership
success.*



Proven, Measurable Impact

*Graduates are getting promoted and contributing at
higher levels in their workplaces*

Empowering women to lead with confidence and influence in a community of growth-minded women

WORKSHOP DATES



Session Dates:	Workshop:
Oct 9, 2026	The Status of Women in the Workforce©
Nov 13, 2026	Insights from Executive Women©
Dec 11, 2026	Developing Executive Presence©
Jan 8, 2027	Salary Negotiation for Women©
Feb 12, 2027	Mastering Courageous Conversations©
Mar 12, 2027	Navigating Gender Culture at Work©
Apr 16, 2027	How to Increase Your Influence©
May 14, 2027	Workforce Advantage: Becoming an "A-Player"©

HEAR WHAT WOMEN ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



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“The Women Rising Leadership Academy changed my life. I was stuck in an entry level position for 3 years. After the Academy, I applied what I learned and I’m now the District Director for Assemblyman Phillip Chen. There is nothing like the Academy out there. I want every woman to go through this program.”

Paulette Maskarino

District Director, Assemblyman Phillip Chen

“I have worked for the City of Brea for the last 12 years, and I had never presented at a City Council study session. Through WRLA, I was able to elevate to put my talents out there. Last night, for the first time, I presented to City Council and did a great job. I could just hear my boss in the background clapping. I could not have made this leap without the confidence I build in WRLA.”

Kristin Steyerman

Supervisor, Special Events, City of Brea

“During my time in WRLA, my self-confidence and career has flourished. I have learned how to set leadership goals with tangible strategies on how to achieve them. The opportunity to connect with other working women as we navigate the stepping stones to our career advancement is priceless. I was able to connect with established women executives in STEM, education, business and local government. These connections and the tools and strategies I learned will benefit me throughout my lifetime.”

Halley McIntire

Office Manager, Academy 831 Dance Studio

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HEAR WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



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“Sierra has taken more initiative to elevate her value to our company since she’s been in WRLA. She has taken work off of my plate, expanding my bandwidth. I’m seeing her future as a leader so much more clearly now. Thank you to whoever has made WRLA possible. It’s not only elevating Sierra’s career, but it has elevated our company, our capacity, and our profitability.”

Ray Waters
Account Director, NVE Experience Agency

“Halley came back after one workshop and sat me down to ask what my top 3 priorities were and how she can help me meet them. I was pleasantly taken aback. Since participating in WRLA, I see Halley as a leader in my company. I now trust her with projects and running the company in my absence. We all, including our customers, have benefited greatly from Halley’s participation in WRLA.”

Krista Casey
Owner, Academy 831 Dance Studio

“I had three employees in WRLA last year. I started noticing upgrades in their performance after the first 2 sessions. The excitement the women felt translated to their work environment here at the city. Prior to the Academy, one participant in particular was very reserved in her speech and interactions. After the Academy, she seemed to find her voice. She has gained tremendous credibility by leading from her strengths, rather than trying to emulate others’ leadership style.”

Jason Killebrew
Director Community Development, City of Brea

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Workshop 1 The Status of Women in the Workforce©



Many women enter the workplace without a clear understanding of the broader dynamics that can shape their experiences: **systemic barriers, opportunities, and dynamics that influence advancement.**

Participants explore how women have progressed in leadership, the challenges that still exist today, and the strategies, support systems, and resources available to help women navigate the workforce.

Transformative Results

- A clearer understanding of the barriers and opportunities ahead
- Confidence in how to fully engage in and benefit from the Academy
- Awareness of how employers and the broader community are invested in their success
- A strong sense of motivation and possibility for what they can achieve

Participants leave inspired, informed, and ready to take ownership of their leadership journey—fully prepared to maximize the impact of their WRLA experience.

WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



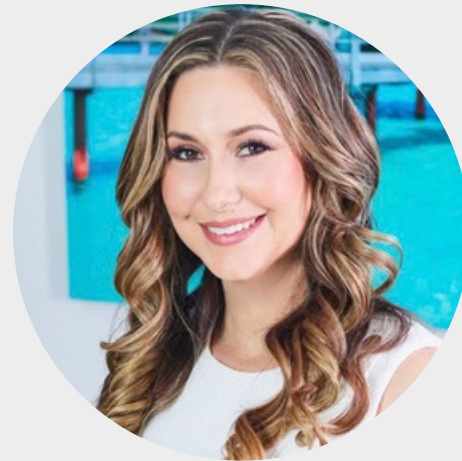
Workshop 2 Insights from Executive Women©



Charlene Reynolds
Airport Director
John Wayne Airport



Brinda Leon
Superintendent
Brea Olinda Unified School Dist



Letitia (Tish) Berbaum
Founder & CEO
Blue Sands Wealth



Bonni Pomush
Chief Executive Officer
Working Wardrobes



Claudia Keller
President & CEO,
Second Harvest Food Bank

The Power of Representation

Women often struggle to see a clear path to leadership because few have **access to relatable examples of women who have successfully navigated the barriers** they themselves face.

Participants learn from role models what is possible and attainable for them.

Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in their ability to navigate leadership challenges
- Increased clarity around practical pathways to advancement
- A stronger belief that executive leadership is both attainable and achievable
- Expanded perspective through real-world examples of resilience and success

Participants begin to reframe their perspective—not as individuals limited by barriers, but as professionals capable of navigating and rising beyond them.

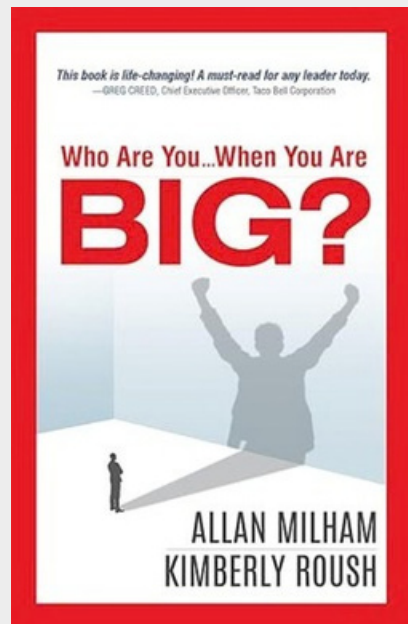
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Workshop 3 Developing Executive Presence©



Kimberly Rousch
Executive Coach,
All-Star Executive Coaching



Building Confidence & Authentic Leadership

Many women in the workplace **struggle with confidence and feel pressure to conform to others' style of leadership.** Without the opportunity to define their own approach, they may hold back or limit their potential. Participants experience a shift from uncertainty to clarity about who they are as leaders and how they want to show up.

Transformative Results

- Increased confidence in their voice and leadership presence
- A clearer definition of success aligned with their values
The ability to lead authentically, rather than conforming to a one-size-fits-all leadership mold.
- Greater readiness to step into opportunities with composure and credibility

Participants become better equipped to engage their full leadership capability with the confidence and presence needed to lead effectively.



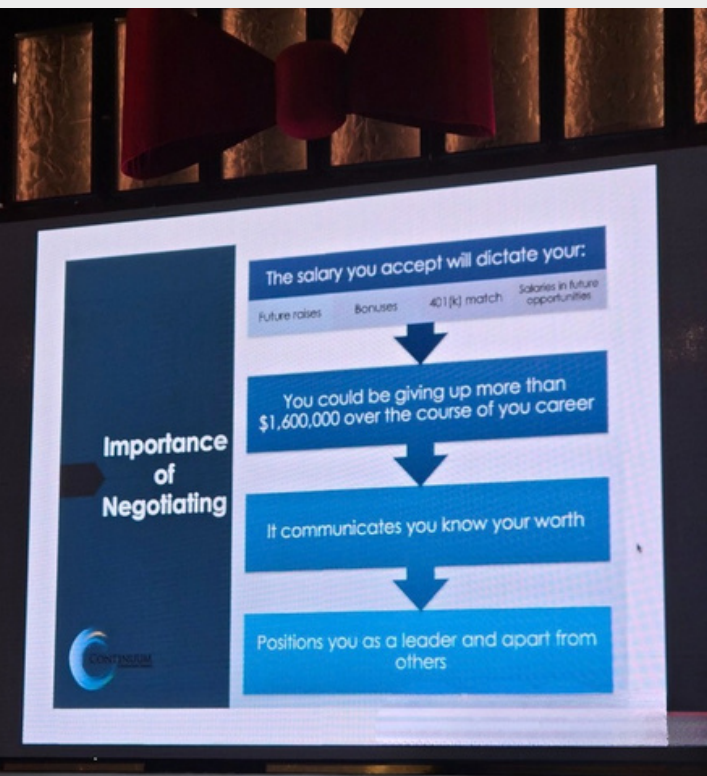
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Workshop 4 Salary Negotiation for Women©



Katerina Hencova
Financial Planner,
Continuum Consulting Group



Advancing Equity Through Compensation & Negotiation

Many women don't fully understand what can be negotiated—nor how to advocate for their value. As a result, they may accept less than they deserve, reinforcing pay inequities that impact both financial security and confidence. The principles taught also apply to business owners charging what they are worth.

In this workshop, participants gain the clarity and confidence to approach compensation conversations differently—handling them as opportunities rather than barriers.

Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in advocating for their value
- An understanding of the importance of equitable compensation
- The ability to clearly articulate their contributions through benchmarking similar positions
- Increased readiness to negotiate with professionalism

Participants leave excited to pursue opportunities that reflect their true value—**strengthening their financial future and sense of professional confidence.** They gain valuable skills to negotiate effectively on behalf of their employers, and themselves adding to their value.

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Leading Through Difficult Conversations

Many women hesitate to address challenges in the workplace due to fear of being perceived negatively or lacking the tools to initiate difficult conversations. As a result, issues may go unaddressed, limiting both individual effectiveness and team performance.

In this workshop, **participants learn to approach difficult conversations with confidence and clarity**—seeing them not as risks, but as opportunities to lead, build trust, and create solutions.

Transformative Results

- Increased courage to initiate and navigate difficult conversations
- A deeper understanding of how different individuals show up in the workplace
- The ability to meet others where they are and communicate more effectively
- Greater readiness to lead in challenging situations and contribute to positive change

Participants leave empowered to step into adversity with confidence—**equipped to address challenges directly and take an active role in improving workplace dynamics through strong, solution-focused leadership.**

Workshop 5 - Mastering Courageous Conversations©



Lauren Sweeney
Chief Growth & Impact Officer
The Riviera Group

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Workshop 6 Navigating Gender Culture at Work©



Lacy Schoen

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce

Navigating Bias & Building Understanding

Women in the workplace often encounter unconscious bias and **cultural differences that can impact how their contributions are perceived**, leading to missed opportunities and causing them to be undervalued despite their capabilities.

In this workshop, participants gain awareness of these dynamics and **learn how to navigate them with confidence and intention.**

Transformative Results

- A stronger understanding of bias and how to address it Increased ability to bridge differences in communication and leadership styles
- Greater confidence in creating opportunities for understanding
- Practical approaches to elevating visibility and value

Participants leave better equipped to navigate workplace dynamics and leave with clear strategies to lead through bias and gender difference challenges.



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Workshop 7 How to Increase Your Influence©



Lacy Schoen

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce



Building Influence & Strategic Relationships

Many women under estimate the role influence plays in leadership success. Without strong relationships or the tools to build them, their contributions may go unrecognized and their impact limited.

In this workshop, **participants gain a clearer understanding of influence as a core leadership capability**—one that enables them to build relationships, expand their visibility, and advance their goals.

Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in leveraging their female strengths to build influence
- The ability to cultivate meaningful, strategic relationships with the right influencers
- Increased awareness of how to use influence effectively

Participants leave empowered, recognizing they can create opportunities and achieve their goals through intentional action and strategic relationships.

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Workshop 8 - Part I Workforce Advantage: Becoming an "A-Player"©

Many organizations invest in talent development but struggle to **connect leadership mindset, habits and behaviors to business outcomes**. At the same time, emerging women leaders may not fully understand how their soft skills contribute to organizational success.

In this workshop, participants gain a clear understanding of how their mindset, habits and behaviors drive value—strengthening productivity, retention, performance and profits.



Transformative Results

- A clearer understanding of their impact on organizational success
- Increased confidence in aligning their approach with their leadership and business goals
- The ability to position themselves as strategic contributors through soft skills

Participants leave with a stronger understanding of success factors and how to apply them —recognizing that how they align upward is a key driver of organizational success and economic impact.

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Workshop 8 - Part II

Commencement Speaker: Charlene Reynolds

The Women Rising Leadership Academy was honored to welcome **Charlene Reynolds**, Director of John Wayne Airport, as this year's Commencement Speaker—an accomplished leader whose career **exemplifies the growth, resilience, and leadership potential the Academy seeks to cultivate.**

With more than two decades of experience in aviation and public service, Charlene leads one of Orange County's most vital transportation hubs, overseeing strategy, operations, and innovation at John Wayne Airport.

As one of the few women—and among an even smaller number of women of color—to lead a major U.S. airport, her journey exemplifies the extraordinary impact of perseverance, vision, and authentic leadership.

In her address, Charlene reinforced a defining message of the Academy: *“Leadership is not determined by title, but by the courage to step forward, challenge perceptions, and create opportunity.”*

“Sometimes you have to take off your cape.”
— **Charlene Reynolds**



Charlene Reynolds
Director, John Wayne Airport
Commencement Speaker

Charlene's story provided a tangible example of what intentional leadership development can achieve. Participants left the program with renewed confidence, expanded perspective, and a clearer vision of their own leadership potential.

WRLA ICF & CTA CERTIFIED COACHES



Lee Anne Maki



Tara Norton



Nahid Casazza



Dr. Renee Christensen



Greta Boye



Elizabeth Olson



Karen Holmes



Lois Carson



Joanne Larson



Karen Gifford



Nancy Hauschildt



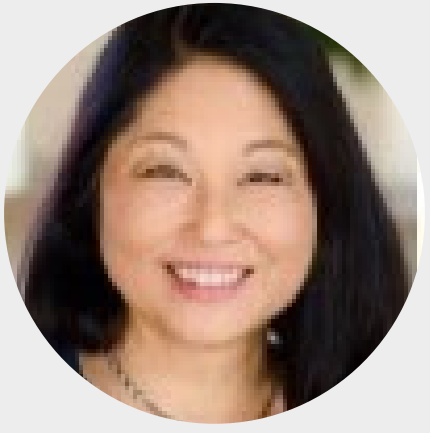
Nanor Ohenesian



Paloma Gonzales



Maria Medina



Sarah Takehara



Anne Tammel



Alexa Fleur



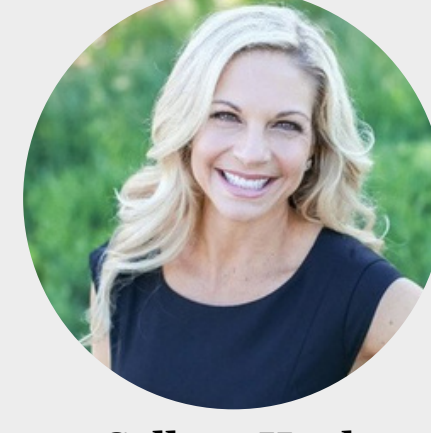
Trixi Mendardt



Monica Horner



Lauren Sweeney



Colleen Hauk

PARTICIPANT RESIDENCY



62% Orange County

25% Los Angeles County

6.5% Riverside County

6.5% San Bernardino County

**Including participants all the way from
San Diego County and Sacramento County!**

WRLA - YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS - PROVEN RESULTS



Earned some type of compensation increase

39%

Taking more initiative at work

56%

Received positive feedback from boss/employer

58%

More knowledgeable of boss's priorities/needs

60%

Relationship with boss improved

67%

Experienced increased resilience

92%

Experienced increased confidence

98%

WRLA EMPLOYERS REPRESENTED



A Pinups Secret	Fast Signs	New Directions for Women
American Red Cross	First Foundation, Inc.	Newport Printing Solutions
Amway	Friar Tux	North Orange County ROP
Antioch University	Glidwell	One Digital
Aprilrae.com	Goodwill Orange Ccounty	Orange Chamber of Commerce
Be the Sunshine	Habitat for Humanity	Orange County Business Council
Beyond Blindness	HdL	Park Lane Jewelry
Brea City Lift	Healthcare Property Advisors	Purple Notary Signings
Blunt Wealth Services	Hollis	R Legancy Construction
Chapman University	House of Representatives	Renee Jean Makeup & Skincare
Chase Suite Hotels	In n Out Corporation	RISE Advising Services
Chic Party Rentals	Inspira Behavior	Rabby Films
Childhood Drowning Prevention Foundation	La Habra Police Department	Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
City of Brea	Lander Chiropractic	Segerstrom Center for the Arts
City of La Habra	Lewis Group of Companies	Southern California Gas Co
Cordova Media Group	Life Touch Photography	State Fund
County of Orange - Supervisor Chaffee's office	Light & Life Christian Fellowship	Sully-Miller
Coyote Hills Golf Course	Little Scholars Academy of California	Suzuki Motors
Crown Capital Securities	M & R Jewelers	Teachtaire Design
Easterseals	Mercury Insurance	The Sisters of St. Joseph Orange
Ensign Services	Michelle's Apron	Vital Link
Farmers & Merchants Bank	MVS Foundation	Western University
		Winn Financial Management

FUNDERS



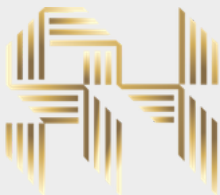
Argyros College of
Business and Economics
Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship
and Business Ethics



JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT
ORANGE COUNTY



JUKEBOX



ADERS & HERRER
PERSONAL INJURY | OUR PERSONAL MATTER



aa/r/r Atkinson, Andelson
Loya, Ruud & Romo
A Professional Law Corporation



PHILLIP CHEN
59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



SULLY - MILLER
CONTRACTING Co.
A COLAS COMPANY

MERCURY
INSURANCE
WE ARE ONE TEAM



CSUF | COLLEGE OF
Business
and Economics



SUPERVISOR
Doug Chaffee
COUNTY OF ORANGE,
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 4



Women in Leadership Council



Dr Anastasia Lander



Jennifer Ta



Leticia (Tish) Berbaum



Jodean Hudson



Tammy Lawton



Tracey Aders



Dr. Lori Muse



Clarissa Serpas



Ann Smith



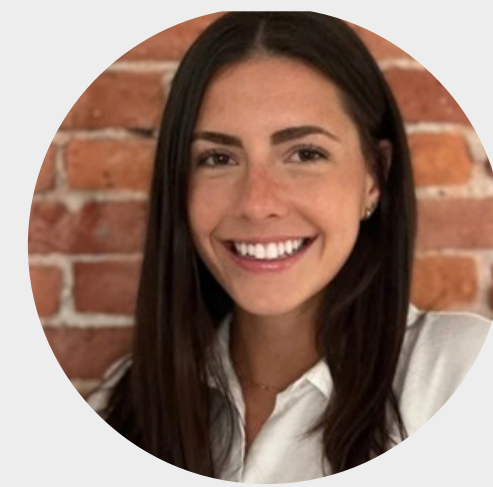
Dr. Cynthia West
Author, Public Speaker



Anna Sophia Servin



Jill Dunn



Maggie Dunn
JUKEBOX

HEAR WHAT WOMEN ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



To watch this video go to:
<https://womenrisingleadershipacademy.com>



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