

WOMEN IN FOCUS

The inaugural “Women in Focus” conference aims to bring together a network of women to discuss their identities and experiences in higher education.

Friday, April 14, 2023
8:30 am - 4 pm

THANKS TO OUR
CONFERENCE PARTNER:



CALIFORNIA | CLARION | EDINBORO | GLOBAL ONLINE

9 am

Dancing Backwards in High Heels: Men are Professors and Women are Female Professors – MSA Auditorium

Dr. Deborah Calhoun

Professor Emeritus, Notre Dame of Maryland University

10:15 am

A Community of Educators: Women in Higher Education – MSA Auditorium

Dr. R. Lorraine “Laurie” Bernotsky

Acting President, Pennsylvania Western University

12:30 pm

Panel Discussion: The Struggle Can Be Real: Finding, Keeping, and Growing a Career – MSA Auditorium

Dr. Candice Riley

Assistant Professor of Management and Marketing,
Pennsylvania Western University

Rhonda Gifford

Executive Director of Experiential Learning and Employer
Engagement, Pennsylvania Western University

Lynne Fleisher

Director of Online Student Services and Support,
Pennsylvania Western University

Tamiya Thomas

Student, Pennsylvania Western University – California

Grace Hansmann

Student, Pennsylvania Western University – Clarion

1:45 pm

Breakout Sessions

Building Leadership Potential Through the College Experience: A Student Perspective – MSA Auditorium

Mattie Sloneker

Graduate Assistant, Pennsylvania Western University – California

Legal Obstacles Faced by Women in Higher Education – Room 1120

Marcia DePaula

Attorney, Steptoe & Johnson LLP

3 pm

Good Enough: The Delicate Art of Balancing Obligations and Avoiding Burnout – MSA Auditorium

Lisa Hernandez

Vice President of People and Culture, Robert Morris University



DR. DEBORAH CALHOUN

Professor Emeritus,
Notre Dame of Maryland University
Management Consult

Dr. Deborah Calhoun is professor emeritus of business at Notre Dame of Maryland University, where she also served as chair of the Business and Economics Department, acting dean of part-time undergraduate studies, and associate dean for the Accelerated College and Weekend College. In a consulting capacity, she is co-developing and teaching an Emerging Leaders course for nonprofit executives and is coordinating an Art and Activism summer immersion program.

Dr. Calhoun holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from Michigan State University, an MBA in Management from Loyola University, and a doctorate in instructional leadership for changing populations from Notre Dame of Maryland University.

Keynote Speaker

DR. R. LORRAINE BERNOTSKY

Acting President
Pennsylvania Western University



Dr. R. Lorraine Bernotsky is acting president of Pennsylvania Western University, formed through the integration of three state-owned universities: California, Clarion, and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Before her appointment on March 1, 2023, she served PennWest as executive vice president and chief operating officer, focusing on operational excellence, strategic enrollment management, and long-term plans for financial sustainability.

Dr. Bernotsky is on loan to PennWest from West Chester University, where she has been executive vice president and provost since 2017. In this role she led the Academic Affairs division and provided leadership in the areas of budget and labor relations. A former associate provost and dean of The Graduate School at WCU, Dr. Bernotsky has extensive experience in undergraduate and graduate admissions, enrollment management, financial aid, student support services, curriculum development, program review, and assessment.

Dr. Bernotsky holds both a master's degree and a doctorate in politics from the University of Oxford and a master's degree in sociology from Temple University.



DR. CANDICE RILEY

Assistant Professor of Management
and Marketing
Pennsylvania Western University

Dr. Candice Riley is a recreation specialist and an assistant professor in PennWest's Department of Management and Marketing. In college she switched from pursuing a career as a medical technician to studying recreation and tourism management, and she now offers a course in Recreation and Youth Development designed to provide a historical and modern analysis of youth culture in the United States. Dr. Riley has researched several topics related to recreation, including policy administration, off-highway crowding and coping behaviors, and recreation management tactics.

Dr. Riley earned a bachelor's degree in tourism management from Concord University, and a master's degree in parks and tourism management and a Ph.D. in Forest Resource Science, both from West Virginia University.



RHONDA GIFFORD

Executive Director of Experiential
Learning and Employer Engagement
Pennsylvania Western University

Rhonda Gifford is executive director of experiential learning and employer engagement at PennWest's Center for Career & Professional Development, based at the California campus. She began her career at California in 2002 as associate director of career services and previously worked in career services at Saint Vincent College and the University of Pittsburgh.

Gifford has held numerous leadership positions, including president of the PASSHE Career Services Association and the Western Pennsylvania Career Services Association. She was selected as Cal U Woman of the Year and was honored with the first Vulcan Exceptional Service Award and the IUP Student Affairs Distinguished Alumni Award.

Gifford earned a master's degree in student affairs and a bachelor's degree in business administration, both from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

LYNNE FLEISHER

Director of Online Student Services
and Support
Pennsylvania Western University



Lynne Fleisher is director of student services and support for Global Online, PennWest's fully online learning option. She joined the State System in 1995 and spent more than 20 years helping online learners to achieve their educational goals as director of Clarion Online.

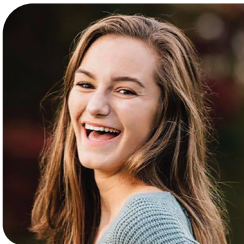
Fleisher earned a B.S. in Speech Communication and an M.Ed. with a technology concentration, both from Clarion University of Pennsylvania.



TAMIYA THOMAS
Student
Pennsylvania Western University –
California

Tamiya Thomas is a business student at PennWest California, where she has consistently made the dean's list. She has performed in multiple productions with Cal Theatre PennWest, worked as a community assistant and, as an intern with Dr. Stephanie Adam, helped to create the Women in Focus conference. Thomas also works extensively with public relations, tourism and special event planning.

In the spring of 2023, Thomas plans to complete her bachelor's degree in business administration and management, with minors in musical theatre and tourism/event planning from Pennsylvania Western University.



GRACE HANSMANN
Student
Pennsylvania Western University –
Clarion

Grace Hansmann is studying library and information science at PennWest Clarion. She has been a member of the Clarion University Chamber Singers and the Clarion Concert Choir, and she is vice president of Clarion Allies, a group that educates, advocates, and promotes equality, and provides a safe and supportive environment for all students.

MATTIE SLONEKER

Graduate Assistant
Pennsylvania Western University –
California



Mattie Sloneker is a graduate student at PennWest California, where she is studying accountancy. As a graduate assistant, she provides administrative, research and academic support for faculty. She also is an intern in the tax department at Deluzio & Company LLP.

During her time as a student, Sloneker has held multiple leadership roles, including president of the Accounting Club and vice president of the Student Government Association. She was a member of the Cal U Peer Mentor Club, Alpha Lambda Delta honor society, the Student Association Inc. board of directors, and the National Society of Leadership and Success. She was named accounting student of the year, made the dean's list, and served as a supplemental instructor for a Principles of Finance course.

Sloneker earned dual bachelor's degrees in business management and accounting at California University of Pennsylvania.

MARCIA DEPAULA, ESQ.

Attorney
Steptoe & Johnson LLP



Marcia DePaula, Esq. understands the importance of authentic connections by engaging in thoughtful conversation, active listening and exhibiting empathy. Clients appreciate Marcia's ability to make connections with them, but more importantly, her ability to provide solutions to their problems.

Marcia understands the importance of being face-to-face with clients, and she can routinely be found conducting on-site client visits, seeking feedback and providing training.

Marcia focuses her practice in the areas of labor and employment law and higher education. Marcia's practice is a unique blend of litigation prevention and litigation defense. Marcia helps employers work through Title VII, ADA, FMLA, and ADEA related to discrimination, harassment, accommodations, discipline, and termination. Success in counseling clients is rooted in her willingness to listen to her client in order to understand the legal situation, as well as the impact on business operations and workplace environment.

Marcia negotiates collective bargaining agreements and handles grievance arbitrations.

LISA HERNANDEZ, ESQ.

Vice President of People
and Culture
Robert Morris University



Lisa Hernandez, Esq. is vice president of people and culture at Robert Morris University, where she oversees the university's Human Resources Department. She joined the university in 2018 as Title IX coordinator and was promoted to chief human resources officer in 2019, and to her current role in 2022.

Before her career change from civil rights litigation to higher ed compliance, Hernandez spent 17 years as an attorney, including more than a decade as a senior trial attorney with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Hernandez earned a bachelor's degree in international relations and a Juris Doctorate, both from the University of Pennsylvania.

