



Athena

ATHENA CENTER FOR
LEADERSHIP STUDIES
AT BARNARD COLLEGE

Annual Report 2011

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Executive Summary

These innovative programs would not be possible without the generous support of many donors and sound guidance from our Faculty Advisors, Board of Advisors, Leadership Council, and exemplary staff.

The Athena Center for Leadership Studies was established with an ambitious goal—to create at Barnard College a world renowned center dedicated to the advancement of women leaders. Not just any women leaders, but women who are visionary, bold, courageous, resilient and globally aware; women who embrace diversity and are determined to make the world a better place. In less than two years, we have already created a firm foundation for growth. In 2010-2011 alone, we have:

- Expanded the Athena Scholars Program, enrolling a diverse group of 145 Barnard students who are studying the theoretical underpinnings of leadership, developing practical leadership skills, and are engaged enthusiastically in internships, social action projects, and with mentors.
- Launched the Athena Leadership Lab, a professional development training center that teaches women to be compelling communicators, effective managers, strong negotiators, and to be more resilient and more firmly in control of their financial future. In its first year, the Leadership Lab offered 85 workshops on a wide range of skills and enrolled nearly 1000 participants, both Barnard students and professional women from across New York.
- Created opportunities for public dialogue about leadership that enhances the intellectual life of Barnard and communities across the globe. Athena's conferences, visiting scholars program, *Power Talks* lecture series and the Athena Film Festival attracted thousands of people to the

Barnard campus for lively conversations about what it means to excel, collaborate and lead. Our participation in the Barnard Global Symposium in Johannesburg gave us an opportunity to learn from illustrious African women leaders and share our knowledge about leadership with African high school students.

- Developed an infrastructure for long-term growth. We are particularly grateful for the financial support that the Center has garnered. In April, Connie Williams endowed the Constance Hess Williams Directorship of the Center, an extraordinary gift that will provide long-term support. Generous gifts from a number of donors as well as the Athena Leadership Council—forty-one women who provide their expertise, time, and financial support to the Center—have enabled us to grow quickly. And of course, excellent advice from committed Barnard faculty and from an illustrious Board of Advisors has contributed significantly to our success. With this support we have been able to expand our dedicated staff (bringing our number to four) and employ numerous other consultants, part-time workers, students and volunteers to help with specific projects.



I. Educating the Leaders of Tomorrow

A. The Athena Scholars Program

Because we believe that leadership is earned and learned, Athena scholars are not selected through a competitive process. Rather, any Barnard student who completes the program requirements can become a scholar. Athena scholars must take five academic courses that focus on the study of gender and the study of organizations, including a required introductory course, Women and Leadership, and the Athena Senior Seminar. They must also complete an approved internship, a social action project, and participate in at least three Athena Leadership Lab workshops. The students are recognized as Athena Scholars on their transcripts when they graduate.

We began the fall 2010 semester with 46 scholars and ended the school year with over 145, including 19 seniors, 30 juniors, 64 sophomores and 29 first year students. Most of our students are majoring in economics, political science, and psychology; although an increasing number of students are studying the humanities and STEM fields. Athena scholars hold a wide variety of leadership positions on campus as class officers, resident assistants, and as elected leaders in the Student Government Association, the McAc Board and other student organizations at Barnard and Columbia. They are a diverse group by race, class, national origin, and sexual preference. Currently, the group includes 40 students of color and 10 international students.

As the program has grown, Abigail Lewis, Director of the Scholars Program, has provided individualized counseling

to recruit scholars and to ensure that they are on track to complete the program requirements. She has also developed opportunities to foster community among the scholars, including a weekly newsletter, an orientation program, “major” mixer, social events at the end of each semester, and a graduation dinner for seniors.

B. Social Action Projects

In 2010-2011, as part of their required senior seminar, eighteen scholars created exciting and unique social action projects that allowed each of them to demonstrate leadership in an off-campus setting. For example, Manya Ellenberg created Dress the Part, Be Yourself, which provided low-income high school girls with outfits for college entrance or first job interviews, as well as workshops on resume and interview preparation. Freesia Levine developed Under One Sky, a teen leadership program that helps adolescents develop a unique knowledge of and personal connection to the environment. Her partner, Trail Blazers, a youth development organization that runs a summer overnight camp for urban youth, has agreed to implement the program. Jorie Dugan created educational packets for children in her project, The First Line. Its mission is to empower youth to be guardians of one another and to help prevent child trafficking. And Ashley Bush put together a plan for a socially-responsible business that designs, manufactures and sells mini-skirts. Each senior presented her completed project to her classmates, and showcased her work at both the Athena year-end party and the May Leadership Council meeting.

C. Fellowships

This year, the Athena Center significantly expanded its fellowship opportunities. The Athena Summer Fellowship Program provides ten rising-seniors, chosen through a competitive process, with paid internships, enrichment classes and summer housing. Seven of these fellowships are specifically funded either through endowments or designated gifts. In addition, Athena offered two Pathways to Non-Profit Leadership Fellowships in collaboration with Leadership 18, a coalition of large non-profits, and three internships through the Williams Internship Program for Women in Politics. Through our weekly scholar's newsletter, we also have been regularly notifying scholars about other internship opportunities.

In addition, the Center joined the Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN), which provides enrichment activities for students participating in summer internships in Washington D.C. and offers a variety of opportunities for Athena scholars to meet women leaders from the public sector.

D. Mentoring Programs

The Athena Mentoring Program, launched in the spring of 2011, matched 22 Athena scholars in their sophomore and junior years with members of the Athena Leadership Council, Barnard alumnae, and other women leaders in the community. The mentor and student met monthly, with the goal of creating an action plan for the student's schooling and career. In the fall of 2011, interested junior and senior scholars will be paired with mentors. In an effort to foster leadership skills, and instill a sense of responsibility to give back, participating seniors will be required to mentor sophomore Athena scholars.

II. Enhancing Leadership Skills

A. The Athena Leadership Lab

What participants are saying about the Leadership Lab:

“Very interactive, positive, animated.”

“I liked the candid, conversational style of the workshop.”

“The instructor was very engaging, used vivid examples, asked lots of questions.”

“The tone and pace was great—never dragged—‘realness’ was there.”

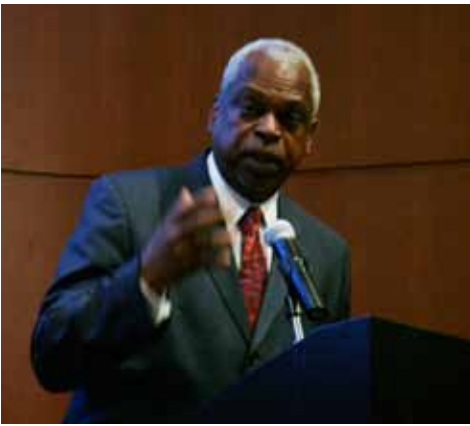
In the fall of 2010, the Center launched the Athena Leadership Lab, offering non-credit professional development workshops designed to teach women the practical elements of leadership. In its inaugural year, the Leadership Lab offered 85 workshops (taught over 105 sessions) in six areas: management, communications, negotiation, financial fluency, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking and resilience. Workshops ran as two-hour, half- or full-day sessions or as a series on weekday evenings or weekends. The workshops took place on the fifth floor of the Diana Center, with two or three workshops running simultaneously and the lobby area set up for registration and refreshments. The use of this beautiful and innovative new space affords participants an opportunity to network with each other.

Over the course of the two semesters, Leadership Lab registration reached a total of 979 people. Barnard students made up our largest group of registrants: a total of 478 Barnard students, approximately 20% of the student body, signed up for one or more workshops. They were joined by 72 members of the greater Barnard or Columbia community and 81 members of the general public. During their four years at the College, Barnard students can enroll in up to ten workshops at no additional cost; all other registrants pay a reasonable tuition that ranges from \$199–\$799. A wide range of discounts are offered to organizations sending multiple participants and to Barnard and Columbia community members.

We are fortunate to have attracted experienced, highly-regarded instructors who are experts in their fields. As professors of business and communications, industry professionals, accomplished authors, and professional trainers, they teach high-quality, hands-on, interactive workshops. Nearly all of the evaluations collected from workshop participants ranked both teaching methods and course content as excellent or very good.

The Leadership Lab published a fall and spring catalog, both in print and online, and created an on-line registration system. A preliminary marketing plan was aimed at women's organizations and HR departments at local non-profits and businesses. We are pleased with the early results: strong enrollment among students, and excellent instructors and programming. Increasing the enrollment of working women at the early to mid-stages of their careers is a major priority going forward.

Christine Shin, the Associate Director of the Leadership Lab, has decided to leave the Center in late June in order to pursue other opportunities. We thank her for the wonderful job she did to create and grow the program in its first year.



III. Contributing to the Public Dialogue on Women's Leadership

A key priority for the Athena Center is to bring to Barnard a wide range of renowned leaders from academia, public service, business and the media to challenge and inspire us and to contribute to the intellectual dialogue and life of the Barnard community. During the year, Athena sponsored two academic conferences, a visiting scholar, and four *Power Talks* and lectures. In addition, the Athena Film Festival, a four-day celebration of women and leadership and the Barnard Global symposium in Johannesburg, South Africa highlighted women's leadership in the United States and around the globe.

A. Conferences

On October 5, 2010, the Athena Center sponsored a half-day conference entitled: *Building Partnerships: What Men Can Do to Advance Women's Leadership*. Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, authors of *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* delivered an inspiring keynote address at an opening luncheon, which was followed by two additional panels of leaders from the private and public sectors and a cocktail reception. Approximately 350 people attended the event.

In early December, 2010, approximately 125 people attended a research symposium: *Bolder Policies for Diversity at the Top?* that Athena co-sponsored with the Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. Center for Leadership and Ethics, Columbia Business School.

The breakfast keynote was delivered by Esther DuFlo, the Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics, MIT. The keynote was followed by two panels that examined the effect of women on corporate boards.

B. Visiting Scholars

“The conversation . . . was thought-provoking, inspiring and incredibly meaningful. Dr. Frei made me rethink my definition of leadership, offering a new meaning that includes the bettering of others.”
—Manya Ellenberg ’11

In January 2011, Professor Frances X. Frei, the UPS Foundation Professor of Service Management, at Harvard Business School joined Athena for three days, meeting with students, center staff and delivering to a wonderful crowd the first lecture in our series of *Power Talks*: *Reverence: Leading Organizations with Excellence and Integrity*.

C. Power Talks and Lectures

Since its founding in 2009, the Athena Center has brought distinguished leaders to Barnard’s Morningside Heights campus to share their stories and insights with the next generation of leaders. In January 2011, we launched *Power Talks*, an Athena Center lecture series with the goal of bringing to campus four to six leaders per year from a range of disciplines including academia, government, business, journalism, the arts, and public service. Scheduled on Wednesday evenings, the events feature a lecture and question and answer session with the audience. *Power Talks* are offered free of charge to any Barnard or Columbia University student. A \$20 fee is charged to all others.

This spring, in addition to Frances X. Frei, our visiting scholar from Harvard Business School, Athena sponsored *Power Talks* with Margot Adler, the New York

bureau chief of National Public Radio who discussed *Vampires are Us: Women, Power and Leadership* and Anna Quindlen, '74, the best-selling author and commentator who spoke on *The F Word: A Celebration*.

The Athena Center also co-sponsored a lecture with the Columbia Venture Community. Vivek Wadhwa, an entrepreneur and a visiting scholar at University of California-Berkeley, senior research associate at Harvard Law School, and director of research at the Center for Entrepreneurship and Research Commercialization at Duke University spoke on *What Makes an Entrepreneur Successful* and *Why Are Certain Groups Left Out of the Tech World?*

D. Athena Film Festival: A Celebration of Women and Leadership

On February 10-13, 2011, the Athena Center in partnership with Women and Hollywood sponsored the Athena Film Festival: a celebration of women and leadership. The festival was a resounding success in its inaugural year. During the four-day festival, 25 feature films, documentaries, and shorts – including five premieres and two Academy Award-nominated films – as well as conversations with directors, activists, actors and film industry executives, highlighted the wide diversity of women's leadership in both real life and the fictional world.

At our opening reception, we honored with Athena Awards 13 exemplary women leaders who have made their mark on the film industry, including Academy Award nominees, Debra Granik and Anne Rosellini (*Winter's Bone*); Greta Gerwig, who was recognized by A.O. Scott of the *New York Times*, as the “definitive screen actress of her generation” (*Greenberg*); Academy

The response to the festival exceeded our expectations. Twenty-two hundred (2200) tickets were sold or distributed to the movies and panels; an additional 350 people attended the opening night reception, and there were 180 festival volunteers.

Award- and Emmy-nominated film and television producer, Debra Martin Chase (*The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*) and noted writer of stage, screen and page, Delia Ephron (*You've Got Mail*).

A survey revealed that 96% of the attendees rated the festival “excellent” or “very good.” We are especially grateful to members of the film industry who served on our Honorary Host committee and to our individual and corporate sponsors who made this event possible.

E. Barnard Global Symposium: Women Changing Africa

In March, Athena Director Kathryn Kolbert joined President Spar and Barnard faculty and staff at the Third Annual Barnard Global Symposium in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event brought together nearly 400 exceptional women from across the continent—leaders in government, commerce, academia, media, and the arts—for a day of collaboration, networking and discussion. Two panels entitled, “Conversations on Leadership” and “Voices of the Next Generation” were moderated by President Spar and Director Kolbert. The panels showcased both older women who had played a significant role in the creation of the new South Africa and emerging leaders who are making a difference for women. The day began with introductory remarks from Maria Ramos, group chief executive of Absa Group, Ltd. The Athena Center also helped to organize a half-day symposium on leadership for high school students from across the African continent. Two Athena scholars along with four other Barnard students led leadership workshops with the African students and after their return to campus sponsored a program that brought the issues home for further discussion.



IV. Building a Strong Infrastructure

A. Funding and Governance

The Athena Center's growth would not be possible without the generous support of its donors. In April 2011, Connie Williams agreed to endow a Directorship of the Athena Center which will be named the Constance Hess Williams Directorship. This extraordinary gift will enable the Center to prosper and attract other significant contributions and endowments.

In addition, the Center is thankful for a number of endowment pledges and individual gifts that support the Center, the Athena Leadership Lab, the film festival and student fellowships. Over the last two years, we have also been fortunate to have the support of forty-one members of the Athena Leadership Council, co-chaired by Pat Nadosy '68 and Azita Raji '83. Throughout the year, Leadership Council members have given both their time and expertise. They have served as mentors, worked on the film festival and attended meetings and dinners to get to know the scholars and each other. They also have generously pledged significant donations to the Center.

The Athena Center has been lucky to have the sound guidance of a committed group of faculty advisors who have shaped the direction of the scholars program and the advice of an illustrious Board of Advisors from business, law, media, academia and the non-profit sector. We are grateful as well to the dedication and hard work of the Center staff. In the

past year, we have grown from a staff of one (Kathryn Kolbert) to four full-time employees (adding Christine Shin, Abigail Lewis and Maria Perez-Martinez) and have employed numerous other consultants, part-time workers, students and volunteers to help with specific projects. Their extraordinary work has enabled the Center to grow and prosper in a very short period of time.

V. Conclusion

The Middle States Report noted: “The Athena Center has the potential to draw together the curricular and extra-curricular lives of Barnard students in a particularly dynamic way.”

In our first two years, we've learned a great deal about what women need to advance, building upon Barnard's 122-year legacy of providing a top-flight education to women. Demand for our programs, which is growing exponentially, is one measure of Athena's success. A base of strong support from faculty, college administrators, advisors, donors and Barnard alumnae is another. Finally, recognition from independent reviewers is also a gratifying measure of our progress. As the Middle States Evaluation Team noted in their report to the College:

The Athena Center is one of the College's initiatives that fall in the general category of engaged learning: attempts to break down the walls of the traditional classroom and laboratory and extend student learning into the community, international settings and situations where students can claim ownership for their own independent intellectual accomplishments.

In particular, the Report noted:

The College continues to provide innovation and experimentation in its offerings outside the classroom. One notable example is the Athena Center for Leadership Studies, with offerings designed to serve students and alumnae. All indications point to an exciting and innovative program taking shape there.

As we move forward, we will continue to build upon our early achievements and experiment with new ways to advance women's leadership both for Barnard students, the broader Barnard community and women from across New York.

Center Staff

Kathryn Kolbert, the Constance Hess Williams Director of the Athena Center for Leadership Studies and Professor of Leadership Studies, has directed the Athena Center since its founding. Kolbert is a public-interest attorney, journalist and leader in the non-profit sector, who brings to Barnard extensive experience in collaborative leadership, educational programming, and civil-rights advocacy.

Christine Valenza Shin '84, is the Associate Director of the Leadership Lab where she develops and manages Athena's program of professional development workshops, open to Barnard students, alumnae, and women across New York. Her experience as Program Director of Barnard's Financial Fluency Program for Alumnae helped her to jumpstart the Leadership Lab which successfully launched in September 2010. A 1984 graduate of Barnard, Christine was a history major and education minor, and earlier in her career was a teacher and teacher educator. We are extremely grateful to Christine for her energy, hard work and unending enthusiasm for Athena. She will be greatly missed when she leaves the Center in late June to pursue other opportunities.

Abigail Sara Lewis is the Program Director of the Athena Scholars Program where she uses her extraordinary counseling and organizing skills to recruit, advise and nurture the Athena scholars. Before coming to Barnard in fall 2010, she was the Assistant Director of Pathways Advising at Douglass Residential College, Rutgers University. She taught in both the History and Women's Studies departments at Rutgers, and worked at New York University, the CUNY Graduate Center, and the NYC Department of Education. Abigail received her

B.A. and M.A. in African American Studies from Columbia and U.C.L.A. respectively. She completed her Ph.D. in History at Rutgers in 2008. A chapter of her dissertation will be featured in the upcoming anthology, *Freedom Rights: African America's Long Struggle Toward Freedom*, (University of Kentucky Press: 2012).

Maria Perez-Martinez is the Athena Center's Administrative Assistant. She holds a Masters degree in Publishing from New York University and a Bachelors degree in English/Drama from Northwestern University. Prior to working at the Athena Center, Maria was a stay-at-home mother of two. In her spare time, Maria is an avid reader and writer. She is currently finishing up an adapted screenplay as well as a young-adult novel. Maria is also Co-Founder of GoodChoiceReading.com, a book-reviewing blog.

Sara Leger, Events Manager for Development and Alumnae Affairs, works part-time for the Center as its Logistics coordinator for the Athena Film Festival, center conferences and Leadership Council meetings.

A wonderful group of **student interns and volunteers** have helped us complete our work including Ashley Bush, Patricia Urena, Nina Ahuja, Lindsey Harris, Christy Romano, Ruth Wilner, Clara Dessaint, Kim Schoenfeld, Mica Spicka and Emmeline Rodriquez. We are grateful as well to Women and Hollywood, Laura Shields, Indre Studios, Berger Hirschberg Strategies, Frank PR, theCoup.org, CUArts for help with the Athena Film Festival, and Elizabeth Jensen, Kasey Kaufman, Lauren Glover, and Addavail Coslett for help with the Athena Leadership Lab.

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Constance Hess Williams '66

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The Athena Center for Leadership Studies

Barnard College

3009 Broadway

New York, NY 10027-6598

212.854.1264

athenacenter@barnard.edu

athenacenter.barnard.edu