

# Leading Edge Institute



LEADING EDGE

Volume 1, Issue 2

CHANGING THE FACE OF LEADERSHIP IN ALABAMA

July 2008

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## A Word from the Executive Director



Rev. Angela Wright  
*Executive Director*

Just over a year ago, the Board and Advisory Council of Leading Edge had a very important conversation. We knew that Leading Edge had deeply affected the lives of many young women in Alabama, making them strong leaders devoted to improving life in Alabama. But we also knew that our impact could -- and should -- be much greater. If we were serious about changing the face of leadership in Alabama, our program needed to reach more people over a longer period of time. The way had already been paved -- now it was time to move! So we made some very ambitious commitments. I am really proud to share with you how far we have come!

Here's a snapshot:

We increased the number of participating colleges by 50% (from 10 to 15), including 3 historically black colleges and universities, 5 private colleges, 9 state universities, and 1 community college;

We created regional Women's Community Councils in East Alabama, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa; Mobile and Huntsville are soon to follow. The Councils will offer a life-long network of support to our alumnae and local women leaders, as well as a strengthened financial base for Leading Edge (You can read more about our Community Councils below)

We initiated Women & Wealth, a financial literacy component to our curriculum;

We laid the groundwork for a Technology Initiative which will enable us to extend our training to students and other women throughout the year. Using virtual classrooms and social networks, we can give many more young women a much more consistent and comprehensive leadership experience;

We engaged students, alumnae and Community Councils on two social change issues: funding for universal pre-kindergarten and constitutional reform. This year, legislators allocated \$7.3 million to expand state funded pre-k classrooms, resulting in an additional 103 sites- serving a total of 3,350 children. Constitutional Reform took a few steps forward as well.

I know this will come as no surprise to you -- in order to maintain the staffing needed for this dynamic expansion, we have to raise more money! We hope you will contribute to Leading Edge this summer so we can continue to reach and connect many more women in our state. You can give online at [www.leadingedgeinst.org](http://www.leadingedgeinst.org) or mail a check to Leading Edge Institute, 3324 Independence Drive #100, Birmingham, AL 35209. Many thanks to all of our donors and to our outstanding staff!



"...being a part of LEI has helped me embrace who I am. Because of Leading Edge I understand who I am, my purpose in life, and how to get started down that path. It's amazing how you can be confused and within a week find so many answers to the questions you've been asking yourself for years."

Kathryn Bowers, UAB

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Class IX Colleges

- Alabama State University
  - Athens State University
  - Auburn University Montgomery\*
  - Birmingham-Southern College
  - Gadsden State Community College\*
  - Jacksonville State University
  - Judson College
  - Samford University
  - Stillman College
  - Talladega College\*
  - University of Alabama
  - University of Alabama at Birmingham
  - University of Montevallo\*
  - University of South Alabama
  - University of West Alabama
- \* denotes new school

# Leading Edge Institute

## Summer Institute at a Glance

**Day 1: Defining Leadership Together**

*Knowledge Café; Social Change Model*

**Day 2: Learning about ourselves in Community**

*Team and Trust Building; Strengths Quest, Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory; Etiquette dinner; and Professional Etiquette*

**Day 3: Women’s Leadership**

*Sociology of Gender: Dr. Stephen Parker; Why Women Should Rule the World book discussion; Circle of Living Leaders: Elaine Van Cleave, Lynn Elgin, Rosalind Pijeaux Hale, Joan Perry, Kristina Scott; Understanding Ourselves as Alabamians: Scott Douglas*

**Day 4: Women’s Leadership in Alabama**

*Visit State Auditor Sam Shaw, Emily Thompson (Chief of Staff for Secretary of State Beth Chapman), Anthony Leigh (Deputy Treasurer); **\*\*Women Leaders Matter Luncheon\*\***; Southern Poverty Law Center; visit Janice Hamilton (Public Service Commission); Goals and the Effects of Self Talk*

**Day 5: Understanding, Including and Working with Others**

*Welcoming Diversity: Rev. Angie Wright, Kathy Boswell, Myrna Pittman; Voting Rights Museum, Edmund Pettus Bridge; Tour of Selma: Joanne Bland; Black Belt Community Foundation; Local Leadership Dinner and Fishbowl discussion: Mike Bortnik, John Allan Clarke, Della Maynard, Charles Holmes, Don McMillan, Mary Moore, Frankie Oglesby, Robert Turner, Jr., Thomas Wilson*

**Day 6: Leading Through Serving**

*Community Service in the Black Belt; Visit Greensboro and Mason’s Bend: Auburn Rural Studio McKenzie Stagg; 6 o’clock Lawn Party*

**Day 7: Changing Alabama by Changing the Face of Leadership in Alabama**

*Women and Money: Blanche Hudson, Dawn Brown; What Now?; The Action Project; Issues to Follow; Southern Rural Black Women’s Initiative: Tee Barnes; Impact Alabama: Stephen Black; Lucy Jones-Tufts (Class II); Small Group Closure and Recommitment*

**IS YOUR ALMA MATER NOT LISTED? GIVE US A CALL AT 205.879.9045 AND LET’S SEE IF WE CAN GET THEM FOR CLASS X!**



It starts with just funding your education. There’s nothing like starting your adult life \$10,000 in debt. Then, you sign up for a credit card in exchange for a free t-shirt, or better yet, food. There is a party this weekend and that means new outfit. Charge it. You get a boyfriend and spoil him, just a little bit. Charge it. Your boyfriend dumps you and you fail a

test in the same day. It’s time for “retail therapy.” Charge it. This is just a surface level view of why we have to include financial literacy in our program.

According to a study by Matthew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., college debts add up to students having less optimism about themselves and their career.

Although college debt is often unavoidable, we are trying to teach our participants healthy spending and saving habits as well as, equip them with the knowledge to conquer college debt, budgeting, small business loans, 401Ks, retirement plans, and the list goes on. Our Women & Wealth program is one more way we are empowering women.

## Leading Edge is Statewide

Over the past year we have started 3 new community councils: East Alabama, Montgomery and Tuscaloosa.

The East Alabama Community Council mentors current students and alumnae in the area, and is producing a book called *Dear Dani*. *Dear Dani* is a collection of hard-won wisdom from women leaders in East Alabama of-

ferred to young women at the beginning of their careers. It’s going to be a bestseller! The council also brought Gadsden State Community College into the fold – an experiment in working with two-year colleges. During Summer Institute, our Montgomery Community Council sponsored a great fundraising luncheon honoring local

women leaders – it was a truly inspiring event. They also helped us bring in Alabama State and AUM. The new Tuscaloosa Community Council plans a series of breakfasts, a film festival, and a fundraising luncheon next fall. We have high hopes for new Councils to continue to sprout up around the state.

## Volume 1, Issue 2

### Insights after Summer Institute: Simone Schicker

**How would you define leadership?**

Leadership is the ability to see a situation and take a role in either making it better or improving what is already good.

**In your view, what are the most important competencies for an effective leader?**

Knowing when to step aside. Knowing how to communicate effectively. Being able to do what you know is right, even when it is not the popular choice

**Where do you see yourself in ten years?**

I see myself graduating from Rabbinical school and hopefully married. Also, a leader in my community.

**What are Alabama's Biggest assets or strengths?**

The friendly people, diverse landscape and the possibility to improve beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

**What are the biggest challenges for our state? What do you think are the root causes to our challenges?**

Racism. Ageism. Sexism. People not allowing others to try new things. The root cause is that people are still living in the past. Tomorrow is a new day. Let us take this opportunity to make it a better one.

**Describe your greatest accomplishment. Why is this accomplishment your greatest?**

Graduating from high school and being accepted into college are my greatest accomplishments so far, because my schooling was unorthodox and so many people did not believe I could make it in the "real world." I have proved them wrong. This has also allowed me to realize I can do whatever I set my mind to do.

**How has Leading Edge Institute helped you?**

It has allowed me to embrace who I truly am.



**Simone Schicker**  
Birmingham— Southern College



**SAVE THE DATE**

The 9th Annual  
**Lighting the Way Gala**  
is scheduled for  
**February 29, 2008**



"Leading Edge helped me find my strengths and showed me how to use those to help me be an effective leader."

**Olivia Bailey, UWA**

**Mission:**

*To inspire, prepare and empower young women of Alabama to lead our state to a more equitable and prosperous future.*

### Leading Edge is Going Virtual

With the prevalence of Facebook, MySpace, RSS Feeds, YouTube, blogs and E-news, we knew it was time for Leading Edge Institute to go digital and that is what we are doing.

We are already on Facebook and MySpace and we send e-newsletters to our constituents. In the very near future, we will launch our

virtual classroom.

Facebook and MySpace are making us more accessible to our participants and more visible for future participants. Our e-newsletter is keeping everyone abreast on the happenings of Leading Edge and our causes. The virtual classroom will allow us to educate our participants year round.

Although it can be intimidating and costly, we are committed to acquiring the needed technology. Why? Because it will allow us to help us have a larger impact, to stay connected, and most importantly "Change the Face of Leadership in Alabama."

We would really appreciate your help!

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE  
OUR  
E-NEWSLETTER?  
JUST SEND YOUR  
E-MAIL ADDRESS TO  
BONYCLE@LEADINGEDGEINST.ORG  
OR SIGN-UP ON OUR WEBSITE!**



LEADING EDGE

## Changing the Face of Leadership in Alabama

LEADING EDGE INSTITUTE

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### About Us

Leading Edge Institute is a dynamic leadership development program for college women across the state of Alabama. We bring collegiate women together to help develop their leadership skills, expose them to critical issues facing Alabama and inspire them to make a difference in the state.

### Thank-You

Leading Edge Institute operates due to generous donations from the following sponsors:

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