

THE FUTURE OF WORK

The Role of Women in a Changing Landscape

17th Annual

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Cajundome Convention Center

Thursday, March 21, 2024

7:30 A.M. - 5:15 P.M.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

#ULWOMENLEAD

#LEADTHEFUTURE

WOMENSLIADERSHIPCONFERENCE.ORG



UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

WELCOME MESSAGE



Welcome to the 17th annual Women's Leadership Conference, held in honor of Women's History Month!

This conference is a staple of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the Acadiana community, providing professional and personal development opportunities for women from all backgrounds. We are delighted that you have chosen to join us this year as we uplift and celebrate the many contributions and accomplishments of women far and wide.

This year's conference theme is *"The Future of Work: The Role of Women in a Changing Landscape"*. Women are and will remain a big part of charting the future of our working world. This year, we celebrate and plan for that future, recognizing the women who have paved the way for other women to achieve success, sharing our stories of perseverance, and promoting self-care. Women are the future and the messages shared at this year's conference will serve as the evidence of this mantra.

Joining us in this celebration of women's roles in the future of work is a line-up of dynamic speakers, business owners, and professionals who will present on a variety of topics that celebrate women in STEM careers, promote advocacy and service, shatter glass ceilings, and support women in their journey towards health. We likewise invite you to celebrate with us at our luncheon this year, as we welcome an exciting keynote speaker back to the university and recognize dynamic individuals for their leadership endeavors in Lafayette and the surrounding areas.

We sincerely hope that you have an enlightening day and that you enjoy all that the conference has to offer this year. Once again, thank you for attending and joining us in leading the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kiwana T. McClung".

Kiwana T. McClung, Assoc. AIA, NOMA
Chief Inclusion Officer
Professor of Architecture and Design
Office for Campus Inclusion
University of Louisiana at Lafayette



GENERAL INFORMATION

CONFERENCE TRACKS



Advocacy and Service

This unique track is dedicated to women who are at the forefront of advocating for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive world. It acknowledges the outstanding contributions of women who work tirelessly to advance Belonging in various spheres. The sessions in this track will focus on the powerful women who not only advocate for their own advancement but also work for the betterment of others. Attendees will gain insights into becoming their own advocates, learning from real-world experiences of women who have excelled in this domain. Additionally, this track underscores the importance of community advocacy and how women can collectively drive meaningful change in society. Women have also been instrumental in driving positive change through their dedication to service and leadership in the nonprofit sector. This track celebrates the contributions of women who serve their communities and addresses the critical aspects of dynamic service leadership. Participants will explore the intersection of women and nonprofits, delving into the unique challenges and opportunities women face in this sector. Sessions will likewise focus on dynamic service leadership, the impact of serving communities, and essential skills for effective service, including planning and meeting development.



Breaking Boundaries

This track celebrates the bold and innovative women who are breaking boundaries and shattering glass ceilings in their careers. It explores the evolving nature of work, which includes unconventional working arrangements such as remote work, non-traditional hours, and diverse work environments. Attendees will delve into the concept of 'Skill Stacking,' a method of acquiring unrelated skills and combining them to enhance efficiency and value. The track also delves into expanded leadership skillsets, suitable for leading hybrid, multidisciplinary, and multigenerational teams. Participants will gain insights into non-traditional career paths, emphasizing the non-linear journey that many women undertake. Moreover, this track highlights the global presence and impact that women can have in reshaping the future of work.



Health & Wellness

Good health and wellness are paramount in leading a fulfilling life. Women are not only at the forefront of health and wellness industries, but there are also numerous issues affecting the health and wellness of women in their everyday lives. This track delves into the various complexities, difficulties, and possibilities that women face in the context of health and wellness. It explores the critical issues in mental and physical health, offering insights into achieving balance and setting boundaries in one's life. Additionally, this track emphasizes the importance of advocating for one's health and wellness, empowering women to take charge of their own well-being.



Women in STEM/STEAM

Women are crucial to an inclusive and vibrant future in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics. Though many barriers have been broken and glass ceilings shattered, women are still underrepresented in these fields, which desperately need the unique perspectives that women can bring. This track celebrates the achievements of women who have paved the way for future generations and explores strategies for increasing the number of women pursuing careers in the STEM-STEAM fields. Sessions will include lessons in leadership, traditional and alternative career pathways, and innovations in technology that will affect these fields in the future.

Thank You to our Conference Sponsors and Partners!



STAY CONNECTED THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
SSID: Women's Leadership Conference
Password: Women2024#!

Check-in & Continental Breakfast: 7:30-8:00 A.M.**Cajundome and Convention Center**

Check-in will take place in the Hallway outside of the Main Ballroom (Downstairs); Continental Breakfast will be served in the Ballroom

Welcome & Morning Keynote: 8:00-8:45 A.M.**Introductory Remarks**

Kiwana McClung, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
 Patricia Cottonham, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
 Diamond Williams, Habitat for Humanity

Pre-Session Uplift

Dr. Mechelle Roberthon, Talent Development Practitioner
 and CEO of Dr. Mechelle Roberthon Enterprise, LLC.

Breakout Session I: 9:00-10:00 A.M.**Special Session:****Accelerate Women: Creating Your Future of Work**

Facilitators: Kevin Guillory and Jonathan Shirley
 Panelists: Vera Davis, Ashley Mudd, Vanessa Scott
 Panel Moderator: Dr. Patricia Lanier

Personal and Professional Goal-setting Power Hour

Presenter: Dr. Dione Davis

Creating Your Elevator Pitch

Presenter: Anne Swanson

Leading from Abundance

Presenters: DeNair Clark & Robyn Smith

"Oh, to be a Woman" – The Balance of it All

Presenter: Jaci Russo, PCM

Breakout Session II: 10:15 A.M.-11:15 A.M.**Special Session: The State of DEI**

Panelists: Tonya Bolden-Ball, Terry Dugas, & Dr. Dolores Cormier-Zenon, NBCT
 Moderated by Kiwana McClung

Neurodiverse Women: The Untapped Secret Weapons of the Modern Workforce

Presenters: Dr. Maggi Bienvenu & Kylin Jordan, CESP

Breakout Session II: 10:15 A.M.-11:15 A.M.**DEI in Concert with Mentorship: A Year in Review**

Presenter: Faydra Nabers-Allen

How to Get on Lafayette Government Boards and Commissions

Presenter: Veronica L. Arceneaux, Nanette Cook, & Anne Swanson

"The Well Woman" The Pursuit of Health, Happiness and Wellness

Presenter: Dr. Shayla Polk

Keynote & Awards Luncheon: 11:30-1:00 P.M.**Lunch is Served**

Cajundome and Convention Center Ballroom

Lunch Keynote Address

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America

Awards Ceremony

Sarah Brabant Trailblazer Awardee: Dr. Melinda Oberleitner
 Rising Leader Awardee: Sarah Berthelot
 Emerging Leader Awardee: Fumilayo (Fumy) Rita

Breakout Session III: 1:15 P.M.-2:15 P.M.**Special Session: Journey to Leadership**

Panelists: Kiwana McClung, Fumilayo (Fumy) Rita, & Marissa Winters
 Moderated by Claire Babineaux-Fontenot

Your Color Purple: Finding & Claiming Your Voice

Presenter: Dr. Marquia Whitehead

The Future of Work: The Adaptation Advantage

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Stephens

Normalizing Normal Nonsense: The Struggles of a Millennial Leader

Presenter: Dr. Ariel Moore

Yup, That's a Project! Empowering Women for Success Through the Application of Project Management Methodologies

Presenter: Aleisha Johnson Cook

SCHEDULE

Breakout Session IV: 2:30-3:30 P.M.

Special Session:

Breaking Barriers: Empowering Women in Research, Scholarship, and Innovation

Presenters: Jacquelyn Craddock, Dr. Sherry Kraysky, & Bethany Sigler

“What’s on Your Plate” Stress Management and Self-care to Support Women Leading Full Lives

Presenter: Calvany De’Rosa Sampson, LPC, NCC

“Emerging Leaders in Research” Student Poster Session

UL Lafayette Students

Why Write?

Presenter: Morgan Christie

Realities of a Working Mom and How to Deal

Presenters: Megan Sistrunk, Morgan Scott, Emily Covington-Guillory, Dr. Gretchen Vanicor, Danielle Doucet

Closing Message, Final Remarks, and Cocktail Hour: 3:45-5:15 P.M.

Closing Message & Final Remarks

Kiwana McClung, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Cocktail Hour to Follow Final Remarks

Cajundome and Convention Center Ballroom

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Special Session:**Accelerate Women: Creating Your Future of Work**

Facilitators: Kevin Guillory and Jonathan Shirley

Panelists: Vera Davis, Ashley Mudd, Vanessa Scott

Panel Moderator: Dr. Patricia Lanier

Join us for "Creating Your Future of Work" at the 2024 Women's Conference, featuring a panel of three dynamic women business owners: Ashley Mudd (Ashley Mudd Consulting LLC), Vanessa Scott (Simply Chic Balloons by VScott LLC), and Vera Davis (The Cookie Door). Explore the transformative journey from employee to business owner and the delicate balance of entrepreneurship while still being employed. Gain insights into navigating challenges, seizing opportunities, and redefining the landscape of work. Discover firsthand experiences, strategies, and invaluable lessons as these trailblazers share their stories of resilience and success. Don't miss this enlightening session shaping the future of female entrepreneurship and workplace dynamics.

Personal and Professional Goal-setting Power Hour

Presenter: Dr. Dione Davis

This session will provide participants with a roadmap for not only planning but also developing a roadmap to attaining personal and professional goals.

Creating Your Elevator Pitch

Presenter: Anne Swanson

In today's fast-paced world of work, you only get a few seconds to get your message across. This presentation will help people do just that. Attendees will learn about why elevator pitches are so important and receive examples of them. After this, attendees will participate in a workshop to create and practice their elevator pitch. Each attendee will leave with a refined approach to quickly introducing themselves with intention.

Leading from Abundance

Presenters: DeNair Clark & Robyn Smith

Join us for "Leading from Abundance: A Nature-Inspired Leadership Experience" to discover transformative leadership principles. This immersive workshop will help you cultivate an abundance mindset, identify parallels between nature and leadership, and gain valuable insights into leading authentically.

"Oh, to be a Woman" – The Balance of it All

Presenter: Jaci Russo, PCM

This session will explore the challenges and triumphs that women face in navigating career, family, and personal growth. Discover how to find balance, foster resilience, and celebrate unique strengths to thrive in diverse roles. This session will inspire connections and personal growth.

Special Session: The State of DEI

Panelists: Tonya Bolden-Ball, Terry Dugas, & Dr. Dolores Cormier-Zenon, NBCT

Moderated by Kiwana McClung

The session will focus on the current state of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), addressing present challenges and the future implications of opposition to this work. Topics that will be addressed include DEI's historical roots in the Civil Rights, LGBTQ+ Rights, Disability Rights, and Women's Rights movements, as well as conversations around the words associated with the work. Panelists will also discuss intersectionality and the importance of DEI in their various sectors. Join us for this timely discussion, which will bring to light the issues, mindsets, attitudes, and communication barriers that DEI leaders are currently working on to cultivate more inclusive workplaces and communities.

Neurodiverse Women: The Untapped Secret Weapons of the Modern Workforce

Presenters: Dr. Maggi Bienvenu & Kylin Jordan, CESP

This interactive presentation explores neurodiversity and its impact on women in the workplace. Attendees will develop a deeper understanding of neurodivergent traits, gain strategies to support neurodivergent employees and discover how to leverage neurodiversity to enhance creativity, innovation, and overall business success. Leave the session empowered to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace for all!

DEI in Concert with Mentorship: A Year in Review

Presenter: Faydra Nabers-Allen

Mentorship is key to personal and professional growth. The presenter will share stories of three mentees and their growth outcomes after a year of mentorship. This DEI session will cover each mentee's challenges, navigation, and achievements. It will also provide helpful homework assignments and guidance that foster ongoing engagement.

How to Get on Lafayette Government Boards and Commissions

Presenters: Veronica L. Arceneaux, Nanette Cook, & Anne Swanson

This presentation will give an insider's view on how to get appointed to Lafayette Consolidated Government Boards and Commissions. Attendees on boards and commissions will be encouraged to share their stories on how they obtained the roles. Attendees will have the opportunity to look at Lafayette's Boards and Commissions, determine which ones they may be interested and brainstorm a strategy for applying

"The Well Woman" The Pursuit of Health, Happiness and Wellness

Presenter: Dr. Shayla Polk

The primary goal of this presentation is to celebrate the resilience and strength of women while addressing the specific challenges and opportunities they encounter in their pursuit of health, happiness, and wholeness. By delving into the intersections of personal development and well-being, this session is designed to empower women with the knowledge and practical tools required to lead healthier, happier, and more fulfilling lives. The presentation will be structured around engaging discussions, thought-provoking questions, and an interactive writing activity to foster profound self-understanding.

Special Session: Journey to Leadership

Panelists: Kiwana McClung, Fumilayo (Fumy) Rita, & Marissa Winters

Moderated by Claire Babineaux-Fontenot

Join us for a special fireside chat moderated by Claire Babineaux-Fontenot. This insightful conversation will explore the unique and diverse experiences of three women leaders, the challenges encountered, and the successes and lessons learned along the way. The discussion will also focus on "women helping women" and the incredible benefits of supporting women in leadership positions. Not only will attendees learn about the dynamic leadership journeys of these women, but they will also gain insights that will assist them with their own leadership aspirations.

Your Color Purple: Finding & Claiming Your Voice

Presenter: Dr. Marquia Whitehead

In Alice Walker's 1989 novel, *The Color Purple*, women find their voice despite society's stereotypes. This interactive session analyzes themes and character traits of the book and motivates attendees to discover their own voice and power. Remember: "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

The Future of Work: The Adaptation Advantage

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Stephens

The future of work requires us to adapt at the speed of change, let go, and learn fast to thrive, and lead ourselves and our organizations in this evolution. Inspired by the book, "The Adaptation Advantage" by McGowan and Shipley, this presentation will include content to help you understand why and how to adapt as a leader, and a questionnaire to see how well you're doing so far in your adaptation journey.

Normalizing Normal Nonsense: The Struggles of a Millennial Leader

Presenter: Dr. Ariel Moore

This session will address the struggles faced by young female leaders in today's dynamic world. We will discuss common hurdles, such as imposter syndrome and insecurities stemming from limited experience, and provide actionable strategies to overcome them.

Yup, That's a Project! Empowering Women for Success Through the Application of Project Management Methodologies

Presenter: Aleisha Johnson Cook

This session is designed to empower women by showcasing the practicality and versatility of Project Management Institute's (PMI) methodologies, which can be applied across sectors and within their personal lives. It aims to equip women with actionable insights, strategies, and tools to apply project management principles to be successful in their personal and professional endeavors.

Special Session:**Breaking Barriers: Empowering Women in Research, Scholarship, and Innovation**

Presenters: Jacquelyn Craddock, Dr. Sherry Krayesky, & Bethany Sigler

This session's core focus lies in fostering an environment that encourages women to embrace their passions and interests, irrespective of societal norms. By providing a platform for dialogue and skill-building, the session seeks to inspire women to explore and excel in diverse innovative sectors. Participants will engage in thought-provoking discussions, gaining insights from trailblazing women who have broken barriers in their respective fields.

"What's on Your Plate" Stress Management and Self-care to Support Women Leading Full Lives

Presenter: Calvary De'Rosa Sampson, LPC, NCC

The session will start with a self-assessment, followed by a discussion on delegation and collaboration. It will then focus on stress, including time management and boundary setting, with practical workshops and group reflections. Mindful exercises and an interactive Q&A will also provide a holistic approach to stress reduction and self-care.

"Emerging Leaders in Research" Student Poster Session

UL Lafayette Students

This engaging poster session will feature posters demonstrating research that has been conducted by students enrolled at UL Lafayette, under the direction of our esteemed faculty and the Advance Student Research Experience (ASRE) initiative. The session will showcase the dynamic culture of undergraduate and graduate research embedded within our R1 institution. Browse at your leisure and engage with the future of our research community.

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Why Write?

Presenter: Morgan Christie

This session explores the power of voice, storytelling, and writing for advocacy. We'll discuss the platforms available to women for advocating their causes and explore how to incorporate advocacy into creative and academic writing. Participants will learn how to spread their message and advocate for their cause in any environment they choose.

Realities of a Working Mom and How to Deal

Presenters: Megan Sistrunk, Morgan Scott, Emily Covington-Guillory, Dr. Gretchen Vanicor, Danielle Doucet

This panel aims to shed light on the multifaceted experiences of being a working mother in today's world. Our panel of five mothers will share personal stories, discuss the realities of balancing career and family, and offer valuable insights on effective coping strategies and support systems. Attendees can expect an open dialogue that fosters a community of shared experiences and solutions.



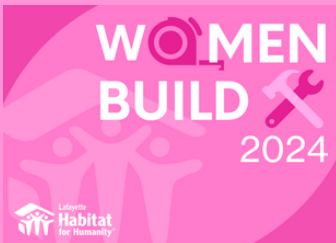
Get Ready for the Day During Our Pre-Session Uplift!

Facilitated By

Dr. Mechelle Roberthon

Talent Development Practitioner and CEO of Dr. Mechelle Roberthon Enterprise, LLC.

Dr. Mechelle Roberthon holds accreditation as a Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Dr. Mechelle Roberthon Enterprise, LLC. Within this capacity, she is a distinguished speaker and consultant specializing in talent development/ staff training, and she offers expert guidance in employee acquisition, retention, and engagement. Dr. Rob received her Doctor of Education degree from Baylor University and holds a Master of Science in Education with a specialization in Training and Performance Improvement. In the community, she has been acknowledged as a 20 Under 40 honoree in 2020, a Woman of Distinction from the Girl Scouts Pines to Gulf Council serves on 1 Acadiana's board of directors, serves on committees for United Way and 1 Acadiana, and is a member of Leadership Lafayette Class 35.



THE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ARE PROUD SUPPORTERS AND VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WOMEN BUILD 2024!

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LUNCHEON KEYNOTE



Claire Babineaux-Fontenot

CEO of Feeding AMERICA

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot is chief executive officer of Feeding America, a nationwide network of 200 food banks and 60,00 food pantries and meal programs. Prior, she was executive vice president and global treasurer at Walmart, partner-in-charge of the Baton Rouge office and tax practice leader for Adams and Reese LLP, dispute resolution practice leader for the southwest region at PwC, and assistant secretary for the Office of Legal Affairs for the State of Louisiana.

Claire has served on boards such as Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, National Urban League, and National Association of Black Accountants. Claire is a UL Lafayette Alum. She was named among TIME Magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in 2020. She holds a Juris Doctor from Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge and a Master of Laws in Taxation from Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law in Dallas, Texas.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

AWARDS



Dr. Sarah Brabant

The Women's Leadership Awards recognizes inspirational community leaders who have made significant contributions to advancing leadership and gender equity. The Sarah Brabant Trailblazer Award was established in 2016, The Rising Leader Award was established in 2021, and the Emerging Leader Award was established in 2020.



The Sarah Brabant Trailblazer Award recognizes visionary, courageous, pioneering, and inspirational leaders who have made a lifetime of contributions (30+ years) to advancing leadership and gender equity. Recipients are those dedicated to serving others with extraordinary passion and excellence, and those with a proven record of community service, outreach, and volunteerism.



The Rising Leader Award honors dedicated, accomplished individuals who demonstrate sustained commitment (15+ years) to serving the community and to advancing women's equity. Recipients of this award work to build collaborative relationships, develop leadership skills, are collaborative, dedicated, and serve others with extraordinary passion and excellence.



The Emerging Leader Award celebrates inspirational individuals who have made substantial contributions (5+ years) in service to the community and have shown a commitment to advancing women's equity. Recipients of this recognition are dynamic, emerging professionals who serve others with demonstrated passion and are examples of excellence in service to their community.

SARAH BRABANT TRAILBLAZER AWARD



Melinda Granger Oberleitner, D.N.S., R.N., F.A.A.N.

Dean Emerita, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

LHC Group Myers School of Nursing
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Melinda Oberleitner is an accomplished nursing professional, educator, and researcher with over 40 years of service to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where she earned her bachelor of science in nursing and is now Dean Emerita of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. She has made invaluable contributions to the field of nursing and health sciences education, earning her a reputation as a visionary leader and accomplished scholar. Dr. Oberleitner is an award-winning oncology nurse and a long-standing member of the Oncology Nursing Society. She has received numerous awards, including the National Oncology Certified Nurse of the Year Award by ONS and the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation. In 2020, she was named a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, one of the most prestigious honors for nursing leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia. Throughout her career, Dr. Oberleitner has maintained an active research and scholarly agenda, with especially significant impact in the areas of workforce development and reducing health disparities among immigrants who are cancer patients and survivors. Her research and scholarship have been widely published in high-impact journals, making her an influential voice in nursing education and clinical practice.

Dr. Oberleitner has played a pivotal role in expanding the role and reach of health sciences at UL. While the many ways that she had led growth in the academic programs, research initiatives, and community outreach of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences are far too numerous to list, I want to highlight some of the most significant tonight. In 2021, Dr. Oberleitner secured the largest private philanthropic investment in the university's history, providing a framework for enhancing every aspect of the nursing program. Under her leadership, UL Lafayette was named a Center of Excellence by the National League for Nursing in 2020, recognizing excellence in teaching hospitals, clinical sites, and colleges and universities. Dr. Oberleitner's dedication to UL Lafayette, her students, and her colleagues has been exemplary. She has cultivated a culture of excellence in nursing education and has fostered the development of future nursing leaders. That is a lasting legacy—and it is a legacy that contributes much to why UL continues to thrive as the primary creator of the region's healthcare workforce. In retirement, Dr. Oberleitner continues to be an active member of the local community and serves as a member of the Executive Board of Directors for Hospice of Acadiana and Miles Perret Cancer Services.



Sarah Hamilton Berthelot

President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of United Ways

Sarah Hamilton Berthelot serves as President and CEO of the Louisiana Association of United Ways, an organization of eight member United Ways. For nearly 10 years, Sarah has worked to advance the collective action of United Ways in Louisiana. Sarah was selected by her peers to serve on the United Way Worldwide Network Advisory Council, a body of leaders spanning the global United Way Network. Sarah currently provides project leadership to nine public-private statewide partnerships, including strategic work with the Louisiana Department of Child and Family Services, Louisiana Department of Health, Louisiana Department of Corrections, and Louisiana Board of Regents. In collaboration with United Ways throughout Louisiana and United for ALICE, Sarah coordinated the introduction of ALICE to Louisiana in 2016 and leads the ALICE Project in Louisiana (ALICE stands for Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed). Sarah has advanced the work of the Louisiana 211 Statewide Network, which has positioned Louisiana 211 to be one of the most agile 211 state systems in the country.

Sarah's board and task force involvement includes Past President of Louisiana Voluntary Organizations Active During Disaster (VOAD), Board Member for the Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations (LANO), Board Member for the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, Leadership Team Member for the Ready Louisiana Coalition, Board Member for the Association of Junior Leaders International (AJLI), Past President of the Junior League of Lafayette, Founding Board Member for the 705 Young Professional Group in Acadiana, Appointed Member for the Louisiana Governor's Task Force for the 2020 Census, Member of Leadership Lafayette Class XXI, Member of the Children's Cabinet Advisory Subcommittee, and appointment to the Empower Families to Live Well Legislative Coalition.

Sarah is a first-generation college graduate of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, completing a Bachelor of Arts focused on Interpersonal and Public Communications. Sarah has received honors through the years — including being named one of Acadiana's Women Who Mean Business; recognized as Lady of the Year by the Faith House and named as one of the Top 20 under 40 by The Daily Advertiser. Sarah and her husband, Jon, live in Youngsville. They are the proud parents of two children.

EMERGING LEADER AWARD



Fumilayo (Fumy) Rita

Executive Director of Lagcoe

Fumy Rita is the Executive Director of Lagcoe, a non-profit organization established to help advance the energy industry. Born in Moscow, Russia, and raised in Lisbon, Portugal, her roots trace back to the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

An alumna of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Fumy earned her Master of Science in International Communications (2020) and a Master of Arts in Francophone Studies (2017). Her academic journey included serving as an adjunct at South Louisiana Community College and an internship with the Lafayette Utilities System.

At Lagcoe she played a key role in launching the Energy Leadership Program and revitalizing the Young Professionals of Lagcoe, introducing the Little Energizers, and orchestrating the successful implementation of the Executive Summit. Her impact continued into 2024 with the establishment of the Roux Fest. Fumy's professional journey includes positions such as Craft Workforce Coordinator at The Lemoine Company. She also previously served at the Lafayette Consolidated Government's International Trade Division (Le Centre International) as the Information and Translation Specialist.

She is a graduate of the Leadership Institute of Acadiana - Leadership Lafayette Class 33 and Leadership Louisiana Class 2023, and her service record includes the Junior League of Lafayette, Boys Scouts of America, and St. Joseph's Diner.

Residing in Lafayette, Louisiana, with her son and daughter, Fumy Rita embodies leadership through experience, dedication, and a relentless pursuit of excellence as the Executive Director for Lagcoe, where she continues to advance the energy industry with vision and passion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Staff at the Cajundome Convention Center

Louisiana Spice Catering

The UL Lafayette Office of the President

Dr. Michael Gervais and Patricio Salinas

Claire Babineaux-Fontenot
& the Feeding AMERICA Team

Dr. Mechelle Roberthon

The UL Lafayette College of Engineering

Dr. Sherry L. Krayesky-Self
Director, Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship
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17th Annual
**WOMEN'S
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 2024**

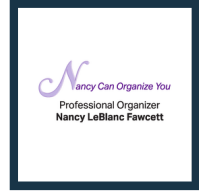
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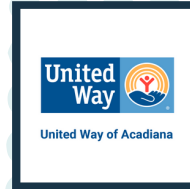
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