

**Who we are:**

The Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN) is the only national organization whose sole focus is preparing college women for leadership in the public policy arena.

**What we do:**

Each year, PLEN brings about 250 women students from colleges and universities across the country to Washington, D.C. for a weekend, week, or an entire summer to experience first-hand how public policy is shaped and implemented at the national level. PLEN offers seminars throughout the year in areas such as Women, Law & Public Policy, Women & Science/Technology Policy, Women & Public Policy Women & Congress, Women & International Policy, as well as a summer internship program.

Students meet with and learn from women leaders making and influencing public policy at the highest levels in the Congress, courts, federal agencies, corporate sector, policy research and advocacy organizations and the news media. These women leaders serve as teachers as well as mentors.

**Where we came from:**

Founded in 1978 by a consortium of women's colleges, PLEN has served thousands of women since its first Women and Public Policy Seminar in 1983. In recent years more than one-third of the student participants are women of color or from groups under-represented in the policy arena.

Membership in PLEN includes some of the nation's oldest women's colleges like Mount Holyoke, Smith, and Wesleyan (GA), coordinate colleges like Douglass College of Rutgers and the Newcomb College Institute of Tulane, and Catholic women's institutions like St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN, the College of Notre Dame of Maryland in Baltimore, MD and Mount St. Mary's in Los Angeles, CA.

**Why we do it:**

Women are still significantly under-represented in this country's public decision-making process, as members of legislative bodies, the courts, government agencies, and non-profit groups working as policy advocates. PLEN member schools and programs are helping to fill this nation's pipeline of women leaders by providing policy leadership experiences through PLEN that will prepare their students to lead in the public arena.

As a national leadership organization, whose members include women's colleges and other higher education institutions and programs committed to educating and training the next generation of women leaders, PLEN and its members share the conviction that programs designed specifically for women are critical to the development of women leaders in our society.

## Preparing Women to Lead



## **Six Reasons Colleges and Universities Join PLEN:**

- 1) Member institutions offer their students unparalleled opportunities through PLEN by complementing their on-campus curriculum with real-world, skill building and career networking experiences in Washington, DC that will launch public policy careers. Eight out of ten students say their PLEN experience will strongly influence their academic and career decisions.**
- 2) PLEN schools serve their students' growing interest in public sector careers and public service.** Now more than ever women students are aspiring to public leadership roles and see participation in PLEN programs as critical to achieving their goals.
- 3) Participation in PLEN programs is known to strengthen a student's resume and graduate school application; students who have participated in PLEN have an advantage in applying for jobs and grad school.** According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, sixty percent of Americans get their job through networking. The PLEN advantage continues after graduation because alumnae of PLEN are part of a career network for years to come. Notable active PLEN alumnae include Alejandra Ceja, Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary of U.S. Department of Education; Christine Turner, Senior Advisor, USDA Foreign Agricultural Service; and National Geographic's 2010 Emerging Explorer, Kakenya Ntaiya, Founder and President of Kakenya's Dream.
- 4) Member colleges know that their institution, faculty and students realize considerable financial savings through membership in PLEN. Students at member institutions enjoy program fee discounts of 50% and receive priority for PLEN scholarships and internships.** Member colleges appreciate the monetary and personnel resources they save because PLEN staff organizes the six annual programs offered in DC and finds outstanding summer internships for students, supervises that experience, and offers a weekly seminar to enrich it. Clearly, the annual membership contribution to PLEN is small compared to the cost to a single institution of mounting high quality program offerings like PLEN's.
- 5) PLEN membership offers institutions a recruiting edge.** Prospective students are made aware that an impressive array of opportunities will be available to them at a PLEN member institution. Parents are keenly interested in the career connections offered students by PLEN through internships and direct contact with women leaders who open career doors for students and serve as mentors. Furthermore, students who have participated in PLEN become stronger advocates of their college to prospective students and will speak well of their PLEN experience that was made possible by their institution.
- 6) Member schools use PLEN to generate positive publicity for their institution by showcasing the connections that their students make in Washington, D.C. through PLEN.** Photographs of PLEN students meeting in 2010 with EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and the Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter as well nine women members of the House and Senate from both sides of the aisle are available to member institutions for use in admissions and alumni publications.

**Preparing Women to Lead**



Public Leadership Education Network

## Seminar Fees for PLEN Programs 2011-2012

<b>Seminar</b>	<b>Students from PLEN Member Institutions</b>	<b>Students from Non-Member Schools</b>
Women, Law, & Public Policy	\$150	\$300
Women & Science/Technology Policy	\$250	\$500
Women & Public Policy	\$250	\$500
Women & International Policy	\$200	\$400
Women & Congress	\$200	\$400
Summer Internship	\$900	\$1900

All programs require a non-refundable registration fee of \$100.

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# PLEN

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## **Membership Fees and Benefits:**

Students from PLEN member institutions receive discounts on all PLEN seminars and internships and preference in the awarding of program scholarships.

Membership is open to all co-educational colleges and universities as well as specific departments, institutes or programs of those institutions. The annual membership fee for member institutions is \$3,150. Students attending member institutions pay 50% less for program fees than students attending schools that are not members of PLEN.

## **Further information:**

Institutions interested in membership will find additional information about PLEN's program offerings on its website: [www.plen.org](http://www.plen.org). Please feel free to contact the Executive Director, Pamela O'Leary with questions at [poleary@plen.org](mailto:poleary@plen.org) or at 202-872-1585. To speak with a Faculty Coordinator about how other campuses have integrated PLEN programs into their curriculum, please reach out to the contacts below.

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