

# 2024 Convention Education Sessions

Saturday, July 13

## EDUCATION BLOCK - 2-3:15 P.M.

### COLLEGIATE CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COLLEGIATE VOLUNTEERS TRACK – JW BALLROOM 1-5

Collegiate chapter delegates, chapter advisors, province collegiate chairs and collegiate experience volunteers are required to attend this track. The session will focus on discussing industry trends and utilizing the Sisterhood Survey results to strengthen areas of sisterhood, retention and operations. We look forward to this valuable time together!

### ALUMNAE CHAPTER OFFICERS AND ALUMNAE VOLUNTEERS TRACK – ROOMS 304-306

Calling all alumnae chapter officers and volunteers supporting alumnae chapters! Join us for an educational track that will focus on member engagement and leadership skills you can apply as you enhance the alumnae chapter experience. You'll also enjoy personal development and networking opportunities. Connect with your fellow alumnae chapter leaders to explore how your chapters can continue seeking the heights and setting the pace!

### LOCAL HOUSE CORPORATION TRACK – ROOM 308

Local house corporation volunteers and officers should attend this track. NHC staff will lead discussions on preparing for the operational needs of today while working toward financial security for house corporations. Topics will include capital planning, reserve goal amounts, planning for the unexpected and more. Worksheets and materials will be available for participants to take back to their board for further planning.

### YOUR WELLNESS SMOOTHIE RECIPE – ROOMS 302-303

Speaker: Ellyn Ludden (Kappa, University of Wisconsin – Madison)

What is the recipe for you leading the life you want? How do you stay on track? What are your wellness goals and how do they impact the rest of your life? Learn the five steps to success with executive coach and fitness trainer Ellyn Ludden. She will inspire you to create goals that you will want to attain, understand why you won't meet some of them and find the secret ingredient to your wellness smoothie!

Ellyn Ludden speaks, trains, coaches and facilitates on the national and international levels with companies. She is an executive coach, coaching CEOs and their teams to new levels of success. Ellyn authored the book *Are You Sleepwalking Through Your Life?*, an inspirational wake-up journey to your life and being present and aware. She has more than 17 fitness certifications and incorporates fitness and healthy lifestyle programs in her speaking and corporate work to encourage all to lead a healthy life!

### **SETTING A HEALTHY PACE TO AVOID BURNOUT – ROOMS 309-310**

Speaker: Ginny Taylor (Iota Alpha, Alumnae Initiates)

Do you feel like you have to "do it all"? Do you find yourself constantly struggling to balance your own needs with the needs of others? You might be at risk of burning yourself out! In this session we will discuss how burnout happens and what we can do about it. We'll identify the cause of our burnout and develop an action plan. This session will help participants increase their self-awareness.

Ginny Taylor is a trainer, facilitator and lifelong learner. Her career has taken her through several institutions of higher education, where she found a passion for figuring out how people learn best. She currently works at the University of Colorado Boulder as a senior training and development specialist. When she's not facilitating, her hobbies include playing music, enjoying Colorado's beautiful nature and showing people pictures of her dog.

### **KEYNOTE SESSION – 3:30-4:45 P.M.**

#### **PACE YOUR MIND: CHANGE YOUR INNER DIALOGUE AND STEP INTO YOUR PURPOSE**

Speaker: Jess Ekstrom

Stepping into your purpose is entirely dependent on the quality of your mindset. The first step to achieving influence and massive success is editing your thought patterns and the negative feedback loops that are holding you back, then finding the growth mindset that will take you to the next level.

Jess Ekstrom knows this better than anyone. She's started two multi-million-dollar social enterprises that have helped women and girls all over the world, but not without a few trips and falls (OK, maybe more than a few!) on her climb to the top.

This keynote will help Alpha Chi Omegas identify the five core mindsets we have and how to use them: The Reactor (happens in times of pressure), The Student (happens in new territory), The Lawyer (happens in conflict), The Dreamer (happens on the edge of opportunity) and The Evaluator (happens when we reflect on our life and progress).

Jess Ekstrom lives by three words: inspiration from frustration. Whenever she's frustrated, she usually finds inspiration in a business idea to solve the problem. Hence, she's a two-time successful social entrepreneur. In 2012, she took a \$300 grant and launched Headbands of Hope, a company that provides headbands to kids with illnesses. Since then, her company has donated millions of headbands all over the world, has become the official headband provider for the NBA and WNBA, and sells in all Kohl's locations.

Jess is a Forbes top-rated speaker with past clients like Zappos, Priceline, Netflix, Canva, Edward Jones, Magnolia, Under Armour, Newell Brands, Leadercast Live, SAS, Harvard, TEDx and more. But her career goals are not just about getting herself on stage; she wants to help more women get on stages as public speakers. In 2018, she founded Mic Drop Workshop®, a company with the mission of empowering more women to share their message as public speakers and authors.

Jess is a bestselling author of *Chasing the Bright Side* and *Create Your Bright Ideas*. She's been featured on the *TODAY Show*, *Good Morning America*, *Vanity Fair* and *Forbes*, and *People* magazine ran an exclusive piece about her when her book was released. You've most likely seen Jess on your TV, whether it was an interview on your favorite morning show, shopping on QVC or watching her run her business from her Airstream in a global Canva commercial.

Sunday, July 14

## **BLOCK ONE - 2:30-3:20 P.M.**

### **COLLEGIATE CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COLLEGIATE VOLUNTEERS TRACK – JW BALLROOM 1-5**

Collegiate chapter delegates, chapter advisors, province collegiate chairs and collegiate experience volunteers are required to attend this session, which will focus on the strategic growth of collegiate chapters.

### **SUPPORTING, EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE – ROOMS 302-303**

Speaker: Mary Brown James (Zeta Omega, Western Carolina University)

*Content warning: sexual violence.* This presentation seeks to provide insight into the work being done to prevent sexual assault and empower survivors. As an advocate working with survivors, Mary Brown James will describe her field of work and discuss how others can get involved and support similar initiatives and organizations. This presentation also seeks to empower participants by teaching them ways that they can intervene in public situations where another individual may be unsafe. You can further the mission!

A Zeta Omega (Western Carolina University) initiate, Mary Brown James holds advanced degrees from both Duquesne University and Purdue University. She is a sexual assault case advocate within the Domestic Violence Intervention and Prevention program at YWCA Greater Lafayette in Lafayette, Indiana. She maintains her support of Alpha Chi Omega by serving on the advisory boards for both the Alpha Beta chapter at Purdue University and the Zeta Omega chapter.

### **TODAY I CHOOSE: TIPS TO MANAGE YOUR MINDSET AND CHANGE YOUR LIFE – ROOMS 304-306**

Speaker: Heather Hall (Delta Zeta, Central Michigan University)

Living in a society that tends to lean into negativity can influence our own brain's thought processes and create negative mindset habits. Training our brains to focus on the positive can benefit our mental and physical health, especially during challenging times. As a three-time cancer survivor, Heather Hall has overcome many challenges in her life. In this interactive session, she teaches simple yet effective tactics for transforming your mindset.

Heather Hall is a communications expert, speaker, blogger and entrepreneur. She embodies resilience and is passionate about helping others overcome challenges. Heather teaches strategies to use your voice and change your life through speaking, coaching and a variety of resources. She is a Real. Strong. Woman. of Distinction award recipient and served in Alpha Chi Omega alumnae chapter leadership roles and as a chapter advisor.

### **PROVIDING FOR YOUR LOVED ONES WHILE LEAVING A PHILANTHROPIC LEGACY – ROOM 308**

Speakers: Marsha Grady (Alpha Upsilon, The University of Alabama) and Allison Foster (Gamma Chi, Stetson University)

Philanthropic giving includes considering gifts now and in the future as you plan what your legacy will be. During this session, members of the Alpha Chi Omega Foundation professional staff and an alumna sister will share what it means to plan for the future and why this planning is important for sisters at any age. Attendees will learn important tips related to estate planning and how to consider Alpha Chi Omega as a part of your plans.

Marsha Grady has worked as the chief development officer for the Alpha Chi Omega Foundation since 2017. Prior to that, she spent five years on staff as a major giving officer and 12 years as a volunteer member of the Foundation's Board of Trustees. Marsha received her Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) designation in 2017.

Allison Foster works as the director of development for the Alpha Chi Omega Foundation. She has been on the Foundation staff for seven years and prior to that worked as a director of collegiate experience for Alpha Chi Omega. Allison has served in various volunteer roles from chapter advisor and alumnae chapter president to member of the NPC delegation. Allison received her CFRE designation in 2023.

### **ELEVATE YOUR INQUIRY GAME: THE ART OF ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS – ROOMS 309-310**

Speaker: Angela Costley Harris (Alpha Beta, Purdue University)

Why do we ask questions? What is the value of asking questions when two or more people make a decision together? What is your best question? In this engaging, creative workshop, we will explore the benefits of asking questions, the qualities of a great question and common question pitfalls. Come ready to play with questions and leave with specific tools to take your inquiry skills to new heights.

Angela Costley Harris has been asking questions since she was perfectly cast as the question mark in her fifth-grade grammar play. Using strategy, coaching and inspiration, Angela helps leaders – from college students to the c-suite – advance their mission and ambitions. She is a Certified Executive Coach, Gallup-certified Strengths Coach, graduate of Purdue University and George Washington University Law School, and proudly served as Alpha Chi Omega's 2016-20 National President.

### **LOCAL HOUSE CORPORATION TRACK – ROOM 312**

Local house corporation volunteers and officers should attend this track. Join NHC staff for an interactive open discussion on additional questions from attendees and parking lot topics from the Saturday session. Participants are encouraged to bring their board's questions or areas of needed support to the session for further conversation, gathering new ideas and continued connection with other LHC volunteers.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TIPS FROM HR PROS – WOMEN & WISDOM LOUNGE**

Speakers: Courtney Schmidt (Alpha, DePauw University) and Chelsie Bickel (Alpha Pi, University of North Dakota)

Join HR professionals Courtney Schmidt and Chelsie Bickel for a session all about leveling up your career! From writing standout resumes to nailing the interview process, explore

professional development tips on all this and more. Bring your questions, too! This session will be interactive and discussion-focused.

Courtney Schmidt has served on Alpha Chi Omega headquarters staff since 2008 and as managing partner of the Pearl Stone Partners team since 2018. She has maintained her SHRM-CP (Society for Human Resources Management Certified Professional) certification since 2016 and earned her MBA in 2019.

Chelsie Bickel has worked as an engagement manager for Pearl Stone Partners for the past two years. She previously served on Alpha Chi Omega staff as a chapter consultant and in various volunteer roles as a chapter advancement specialist, risk management specialist and ASTP facilitator. Chelsie received her SHRM-CP certificate in 2022.

## **BLOCK TWO – 3:30-4:20 P.M.**

### **BLUEPRINT FOR EMPOWERMENT AS A FEMALE LEADER – JW BALLROOM 1-5**

Speaker: Chia-Lin Simmons (Iota Nu, University of California San Diego)

Young women entering the workforce must embrace the challenges they will face and redefine the narrative society has written. Chia-Lin Simmons has surmounted a variety of challenges in her professional life. In this session, she will focus on what she believes is her greatest superpower as a CEO: empathy. Participants will learn what it means to maintain kindness in the face of challenging decision-making and how to make difficult calls without sacrificing kindness.

Chia-Lin Simmons is CEO of LogicMark, provider of innovative medical alert and health communication devices. She is also the CEO and co-founder of LookyLoo, a patent-pending AI commerce company. Active in AI, automotive, mobility, digital media/music and e-commerce technology spaces as an executive, advisor and board member, Chia-Lin was an executive at a number of high-visibility technology companies including Google, Samsung and AOL and led Audible through its acquisition by Amazon as VP of strategic alliances.

### **HOW TO FAIL BETTER – ROOMS 302-303**

Speaker: Dr. Ashley Butler (Alpha Chi, Butler University)

Most of our lives are spent striving toward success. We put success and achievement on a pedestal. But at what cost? In a world dominated by headlines of immense stress, overwhelm and burnout, particularly of high-achieving women, are we actually succeeding? Dr. Ashley Butler will take women through personal stories, shared experiences and real-world examples of not only what failure is, but also why it is important and how we can do it better.

Dreamer, creator and “sometimes” failure, Dr. Ashley Butler knows how to dream big and fail often. Her experience with food and housing insecurity as a child propels her to achieve big goals despite the odds. As a CEO and physician, she has experienced the fall of failure firsthand and the importance of getting back up to try again. A fan of real conversations, Ashley helps other women learn to fail better.

### **HOW MONEY WORKS FOR WOMEN – TAKE CONTROL OR LOSE IT – ROOMS 304-306**

Speaker: Julie Johnson (Chi, Oregon State University)

By 2030, women are expected to control about two-thirds of the entire wealth of the nation. Now more than ever, we need to understand how money works. But many women still face concerns when it comes to our finances. We have the power to overcome these challenges. This session is a first step and a reminder of the importance of financial literacy to take control of our finances and set the pace!

Julie Johnson has been a financial advisor for more than 20 years, choosing this career path on the heels of a difficult and financially devastating divorce. One thing she learned as her business grew was how little people knew about how money works, especially women. How do women take control of their money? It starts with education! Teaching the things about money that Wall Street doesn't want us to know became her mission.

### **TOUGH CONVERSATIONS DON'T HAVE TO BE TOUGH – ROOMS 308**

Speaker: Laura Easter (Theta Rho, James Madison University), Ph.D., LPC

The tough conversations we avoid often have greater consequences than the conversations we prefer. This session, designed especially for collegians, will help you provide feedback in a way that will contribute to more productive collaboration. We will identify the consequences of avoiding these conversations, the barriers to initiating them and the benefits of having them. You will learn a model for providing feedback in a way that is not only objective and clear but also opens the door to collaborative problem-solving.

Laura Easter has more than 25 years of experience in the mental health field as a therapist working with children and teens, an adjunct professor, and a supervisor. She is the chief operating officer for Elk Hill, a nonprofit that provides mental health and special education services to children in Central Virginia. Laura received her doctorate in counselor education from the University of Virginia and serves as the chapter advisor there for Zeta Lambda.

### **FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS: KNOW THEM, DEFEND THEM, ADVOCATE FOR THEM – ROOMS 309-310**

Speakers: Julie Cain Burkhard (Beta Sigma, University of Georgia), Donna Smith Chereck (Alpha Phi, The University of Texas at Austin) and Kitty Cannon deKieffer (Epsilon Kappa, California State University, Fullerton)

The First Amendment protects all people of all ages, but violations of the First Amendment are increasing on today's college campuses. Donna, Julie and Kitty will share their knowledge and experience and the ongoing work of the Fraternity and Sorority Political Action Committee (FSPAC) and the Fraternity and Sorority Action Fund (FSAF) regarding the First Amendment and freedom of association. Join your Alpha Chi Omega sisters to learn more about how you can enhance and protect the sorority experience, and in particular First Amendment rights, by involvement in a bipartisan political process.

Julie Cain Burkhard is an initiate of the Beta Sigma chapter at the University of Georgia. She is an Alpha Chi Omega Past National President and a past chairwoman of NPC. Julie served as a founding board member and past president of the FSPAC, as well as a founding member and past president of the FSAF. Professionally, Julie is the fundraising director for the FSAF.

Donna Smith Chereck is an initiate of the Alpha Phi chapter at The University of Texas at Austin. She is an Alpha Chi Omega Past National President and past Foundation trustee. Donna's experience as a past advocacy chairman for NPC aligns with her advocacy role as a board member of the FSPAC; she currently serves as the vice president of membership & recruitment for the FSPAC and as a director for the FSAF.

Kitty Cannon deKieffer is an initiate of the Epsilon Kappa chapter at California State University, Fullerton. She is a past chair of the Alpha Chi Omega Foundation, a past executive director of the Gamma Phi Beta Foundation, a past president of the Foundation for Fraternal Excellence, the current vice president of fundraising for the FSPAC and a current director for the FSAF. Kitty has served as chairperson for more than 15 nonprofit boards.

### **REACH NEW HEIGHTS WITH VOLUNTEERS: USE WISDOM, DEVOTION AND ACHIEVEMENT SKILLS TO SUCCEED! – WOMEN & WISDOM LOUNGE**

Speaker: Elizabeth Kinder (Zeta Eta, Bradley University), MBA, PMP

Ready to learn and practice skills to build your confidence? Join this session to develop your leadership or collaboration with volunteers. We'll use our values of wisdom, devotion and achievement to frame our lessons and activities. This session will include self-reflection, small group conversation and movement to maximize your learning and networking with sisters. Sisters of all ages and experiences are welcome. Holding a current leadership role is not required!

Elizabeth Kinder is a Zeta Eta (Bradley University) initiate and currently volunteers as the province collegiate chair specialist, a role that allows her to support recruitment, onboarding and ongoing training for PCCs. When she's not supporting Alpha Chi Omega volunteers, Elizabeth professionally leads volunteers as CNO Financial Group's director of community relations, overseeing philanthropic and sponsorship efforts including the CNO Indianapolis Monumental Marathon. Elizabeth loves running and plays the cello at nursing homes through a community orchestra.



## **BLOCK THREE – 4:30-5:20 P.M.**

### **#SQUADGOALS: BUILDING YOUR ULTIMATE TEAM – JW BALLROOM 1-5**

Speaker: Melissa Perez Ramirez (Beta Omega, The University of Toledo)

No single person can be successful without assistance from a team. With the help of iconic pop culture teams, you can learn how to build your own squad, work effectively within your team and learn from each other to reach your goals. Find out how your problem-solving process works alongside differing personalities and how you can find your way through communication and consideration.

Melissa Perez Ramirez has been a nonprofit professional for more than 10 years, leading teams at Buckeye CableSystem, YMCA of Greater Cleveland and Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio. Melissa also worked with YMCA of USA on multicultural leadership development programs to help uplift BIPOC leaders to executive level roles throughout the country. Currently, Melissa is the vice president of development for Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio and lives in the Cleveland area with her husband, Mike, and two teenage kids.

### **FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING: EMBRACING POSITIVE CHANGE – ROOMS 302-303**

Speaker: Lynsy Karrick (Zeta Eta, Bradley University)

We often live by the phrase "That's the way we've always done it." Unfortunately, it's difficult to grow or improve as a person, a leader or a chapter if we don't break free from that philosophy. In this session, we will explore ways that we are being held back by our own traditions, how to look at our practices with a critical eye and how to reduce the anxiety we feel regarding change.

Lynsy Karrick is leadership development expert who has spent the last decade helping college students, corporations, volunteers and teams live and lead more intentionally. Through lessons on change, influence, building relationships and CliftonStrengths, she helps audiences transform their groups from surviving to thriving. For more information on how Lynsy might be able to help your organization, visit [www.lynsyleads.com](http://www.lynsyleads.com).

### **PROMOTING WOMEN'S CARDIOVASCULAR WELLNESS: HEART SMART SISTERS – ROOMS 304-306**

Speaker: Dr. Ellen Thompson (Gamma Omicron, Marshall University)

This will be an enlightening session on women's heart health, where we'll delve into the unique risk factors women face and explore approaches to risk reduction. As women, we know that our hearts beat to the rhythm of life's many stages, from adolescence to adulthood and beyond. Yet, in the whirlwind, it's important to pause and prioritize our wellness. We'll navigate the maze of women's health with expert guidance from a practicing cardiologist.

Ellen Thompson is an alumna of the Gamma Omicron chapter at Marshall University, where she also attended medical school. She is currently the director of the Cardiology Training Program at Marshall School of Medicine and maintains a practice. She focuses on cardiac imaging and education. She is also a member of the Rho Phi Rho (Gamma Omicron Alumnae) chapter. She has one son, CJ, and lives in Huntington, West Virginia.

### KEYS TO COACHING A WINNING TEAM: COMMUNITY, CULTIVATION, CONSISTENCY – ROOM 308

Speaker: Kim McClure (Gamma Omicron, Marshall University)

How can you build a team that works toward unified goals? In this session especially designed for alumnae, we will talk about the importance of building a community, cultivating each member's potential and being consistent as we focus on the importance of a leader being a thermostat, not a thermometer.

Kim McClure is a connector. She believes that creating communities can be a catalyst toward achieving goals. Her experience with frequent relocations has given her opportunities to learn the impact of being a part of meaningful support systems that have long-lasting outcomes. Kim currently leads and works with a team of 25 volunteers as the volunteer director of province alumnae chairs for Alpha Chi Omega.

### CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS: A GUIDE TO NETWORKING AND DEVELOPING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND – ROOMS 309-310

Speakers: Bridget Guernsey Riordan (Gamma Mu, Ball State University), Ph.D., and Michael Earley

Making meaningful connections is key for both personal and professional growth. Along with connections, individuals need to develop their personal brand and how they present themselves to others. With strong relationships and established personal traits and motivation, members will be prepared to move forward with poise and confidence. This program will guide attendees on how to cultivate strong mentoring and professional relationships, pinpoint who they are as individuals and communicate for success.

Bridget Guernsey Riordan is a past Alpha Chi Omega consultant, Ball State alumna and has served in higher education at three different institutions. Her recent journal articles have been published in *College Ready* and *Wellness Issues for Higher Education*.

Michael Earley is a member of Sigma Nu Fraternity and president of the Ball State Alumni Board. He is also the author of *Connecting for Success: A Student's Guide to Networking*.

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PANEL – WOMEN & WISDOM LOUNGE

Panelists: Jari Askins (Psi, University of Oklahoma), Maree Lattanzi (Alpha Tau, University of New Hampshire), Yvette Martinez (Zeta Nu, Texas A&M University) and Chi-Lin Simmons (Iota Nu, University

of San Diego)

Join a group of alumnae sisters from a variety of backgrounds and industries as they share their wisdom, advice and lessons learned from their career and leadership. Learn how you can stand out and leverage your network as you pursue personal and professional development!