

EMERSON LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

**BE HEARD**  
*Women*  
IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

**2024  
CONFERENCE  
REPORT**



**CHAIFETZ**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

# Table of Contents

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- 01 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS
- 02 A THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS
- 03 UNIVERSITY & LOCAL SUPPORT
- 04 INSPIRING SPEAKERS
- 05 BREAKING THROUGH THE BAMBOO CEILING
- 06 IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP
- 07 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
- 08 ASIAN SHOW
- 09 A DEDICATED TEAM
- 10 BUZZ ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- 11 QUOTES
- 12 ABOUT THE EMERSON LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

# CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

01



## MORE THAN 200 REGISTRANTS

**30%**

SLU faculty and staff

**14%**

SLU graduate and undergraduate students

**49%**

Corporations and community

**7%**

Faculty and staff from local universities (UMSL, WashU, etc.)



“In harmony with the United Nation’s International Women’s Day theme of ‘Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress,’ the annual Be Heard conference takes center stage to what can be achieved when gender equity and empowerment are at the forefront of our pursuits.”

Jintong Tang, Director,  
Emerson Leadership Institute



# A THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



The 3rd Annual Be Heard – Women in Leadership Conference was free for all attendees this year, thanks to generous sponsorships provided by:

**Saint Louis University's  
Office of the Vice President  
for Research**

**The Mike Medart  
Women in Leadership Grant**

**UMSL | DBA**  
Doctor of Business Administration



**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY**

CHAIFETZ CENTER FOR  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

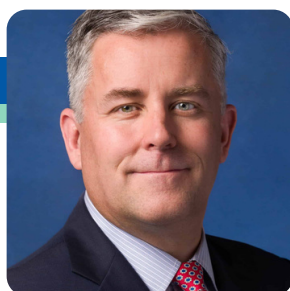


**SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY.**

THE DIVISION OF DIVERSITY &  
INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

# UNIVERSITY & LOCAL SUPPORT

The Be Heard Conference received intellectual and social support from both Saint Louis University and community leaders.



**Michael Lewis**  
Provost, SLU



**Christine Rollins**  
Faculty Senate President,  
Professor of Law, SLU



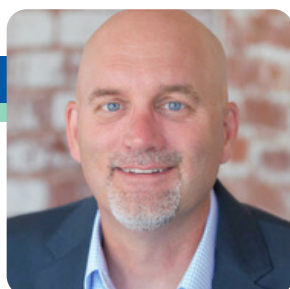
**Barnali Gupta**  
Edward Jones Dean, Chaifetz  
School of Business, SLU



**Leslie McClure**  
Dean, College for Public Health  
and Social Justice, SLU



**Bill Johnson**  
Dean, Professor,  
School of Law, SLU



**Gary Ritter**  
Dean, Professor, School of  
Education, SLU



**Christine Jacobs**  
Dean, School of Medicine & VP,  
Medical Affairs, SLU



**Scott Duellman**  
Interim Dean, School of  
Professional Studies, SLU



**Betsy Cohen**  
Executive Director, STL Mosaic  
Project



**Michael Medart**  
President, Medart, Inc.  
President, Dean's Executive Board



# INSPIRING SPEAKERS

The conference featured inspiring discussions by prominent speakers who volunteered their time, expertise, experiences, wisdom, and insights.



**Michelle Li**  
NBC St. Louis Morning Anchor;  
Co-Founder, The Very Asian  
Foundation  
(Via video)

**Grace Lee**  
Dean of Faculty, MICDS

**Nalini Mahadevan**  
Principal Attorney, MLO Law;  
Co-Founder, Immigrant  
Professional Women's  
Network in STL

**Elaine Cha**  
Host/Producer,  
St. Louis Public Radio

**Shu Schiller**  
Dean, College of Business  
Administration, University of  
Missouri – St. Louis



**Peter Tao - EmCee**  
Principal, TAO + LEE Associates

**Christine Rollins**  
Faculty Senate President,  
Professor of Law, SLU

**Luchen Li - Moderator**  
Associate Vice President for  
Global Engagement &  
International Enrollment, SLU

**Barnali Gupta**  
Edward Jones Dean,  
Chaifetz School of Business, SLU

**Betsy Cohen**  
Executive Director,  
STL Mosaic Project

# BREAKING THROUGH THE BAMBOO CEILING



The 2024 Be Heard Conference was held May 3rd to kick off AAPI month, representing the first campus-wide AAPI celebration at Saint Louis University.

## Supportive Space

Rooted in principles of understanding, respect, allyship, and energy, the conference cultivated a psychologically safe space where diverse voices were heard and valued. Through meaningful discussions and shared experiences, participants embraced a culture of inclusivity and empowerment.

# IMPACT OF SCHOLARSHIP



## THEME

This year's conference featured a focused theme on "Breaking and Powering through the Bamboo Ceiling," touching upon cultural differences, history of stereotyping, unconscious bias, struggles with identity crisis, the myth of the "model minority," and the perpetual foreigner syndrome that challenge Asian American women leaders on a daily basis.

"It is gratifying to know the theme is motivated and informed by research findings grounded in both scholarly works and industry reports. Moreover, as SLU positions itself to join the ranks of Carnegie R1 Institutions, the top-tier research institutions in this country, the impact of conferences like this are well aligned with our ambitions to enhance our research profile."

Michael Lewis,  
Provost, SLU



# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP



“Our workshop was well received and created a sense of connection for participants that continued throughout the day; the panelists for our workshop were great individual voices and effectively complemented each other.”

Brian Wellinghoff,  
Barry-Wehmiller.

## HEAR TO BE HEARD

Presented by Brian Wellinghoff and David Pickersgill of Barry-Wehmiller, “Hear to Be Heard: Harnessing the Power of Attention in the Academy and Beyond” allowed participants to discover the transformative impact of active listening in both academic circles and the business sector.

# ASIAN SHOW

The Asian show featured musical acts and performances from SLU, WashU, and MICDS students.



## Lion Dance

MICDS and WashU Students

Milton Duckworth, Cade Miller,  
Wenting Yu, Henry Oliver, Mac  
Froedge, Michal Kenigsberg,  
Lucas Cheng, Isaac George



## Step Up – Muay Thai

Graduate Students,  
Chaifetz School of Business

Mohamad Soudani &  
Yashwanth Majji



## Vintage Vibrations – An Ode to China's Timeless Female Vocalists

Undergraduate Students,  
Chaifetz School of Business

Darren Cheng & Bryan But

# A DEDICATED TEAM

The 3rd Annual Be Heard – Women in Leadership Conference was made possible by an incredible staff and student support, with a special shoutout to Tyler Merkle (Program Content Coordinator), Megan Kitner (Assistant to the Dean), Jennifer Opperman (Business Manager), Nisha Vodrahalli (Undergraduate Student), Mohamad Soudani (Graduate Student), and Yashwanth Majji (Graduate Student).

## MEDIA COVERAGE

### WEB MENTIONS

- [SLU Alumni](#)
- [DICE Cultural and Belonging Grant Winner](#)
- [SLU News - Pre Event](#)
- [SLU News - Post Event](#)



# BUZZ ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Leading up to and after the event, the Be Heard conference received support on social media from members of the community.

**Barry-Wehmiller**  
40,664 followers  
2d · 🌐

Last Friday, May 3, [Brian Wellinghoff](#) and [David Pickersgill](#) of the BW outreach team had the opportunity to present at the 3rd Annual [Emerson Leadership Institute's Be Heard – Women in Leadership Conference](#). From their website: "For three years in a row, the Emerson Leadership Institute's Be Heard Conference has drawn hundreds of distinguished academics, businesses, and next-generation leaders from St. Louis and beyond for a series of presentations, discussions, debates, keynotes and networking sessions under the goal of advancing gender equity, empowering women, and creating a culture of holistic well-being for all.

"Cultural differences, a history of stereotyping, unconscious bias, struggles with identity crisis, the myth of the "model minority," and the perpetual foreigner syndrome are challenges facing Asian American women leaders on a daily basis. The 3rd Be Heard Conference delves into the intricacies of Breaking and Powering through the Bamboo Ceiling for Asian women in [#Leadership](#)."

Brian and David's workshop, "Hear to be Heard," was a distillation of Barry-Wehmiller's teachings on listening. After the standing-room only workshop, Sarah Jamison and Christine Rollins of SLU and Shu Schiller of UMSL joined for a panel discussion to give practical, real-world perspectives of how women in leadership utilize listening and empathy.

For in-depth information about Barry-Wehmiller's listening skills training, read more: <https://lnkd.in/ehmqXKkY>

[#Leadershipdevelopment](#) [#listening](#) [#hr](#) [#humanresources](#) [#management](#)

**Suzu Barbosa** · 2nd  
Leader of diverse teams · Business Consultant · L...  
1w · 🌐

✓ Following

🌟 Attended my first [#BeHeard](#) conference at [Saint Louis University](#) today! What an incredible morning filled with inspiring leaders. Huge thanks to the conference chair, Dr. Professor [Jintong Tang](#) for the invitation. Her dedication to advocating for women in leadership is truly amazing. Kudos to the entire team at the [Emerson Leadership Institute](#) for orchestrating such a fantastic event. It was wonderful catching up with friends [Esmeralda Aharon, M.A.](#), [Daniela Hila Petu](#), and [Amy E. Wright, PhD](#), and making new connections [Amber \(Bowman\) Frederick, PHR](#). At our table, I met new friends, fostering an environment where we shared our stories, actively listened to one another, and understanding innovative approaches to cultivating empathy-driven leadership spaces.

"Empathy is strong. It is a leadership skill." [#BeHeard](#)

**Ruth Kim** · 2nd  
General Counsel, Sr. VP & Sr. Partner at Fleishma...  
3d · 🌐

✓ Following

Belated post about an uplifting event on Friday. The [Emerson leadership institute](#) at [Richard A. Chaifetz School of Business - Saint Louis University](#) hosted the Be Heard Conference on Asian Women in Leadership. Business School Dean [Barnali Gupta](#), program organizer and chaired professor [Jintong Tang](#), and their able staff pulled this conference together in 2 mos. Engaging faculty of [Shu Schiller](#) @Chris Rollins and @Sara Jamieson, as well as expert trainers from [Barry-Wehmiller](#) provided food for thought. Taped comments from SLU Provost, and KSDK journalist, philanthropist and co-founder of [The Very Asian Foundation](#) -- [Michelle Li](#) set the perfect tone for the meeting. Comments by [Betsy Cohen](#) Barnali Gupta Benefactor Medart and [Peter Tao](#) (with the John Lennon "Imagine" socks), expressed support, allyship, and enthusiasm. Thank you to panelists [Elaine Cha Grace Lee Nalini Mahadevan](#) and [Shu Schiller](#), who provided life experiences, suggestions, and perspectives to the very receptive crowd that FILLED the @Monastero conference center.

Remarkable energy, networking and bonding in that room. Great to see you all and [Melinda Love Arielle Claypool](#) [Suzy Barbosa](#) [Helen Lee](#) [Anna Crosslin](#)

[#StLouisRising](#) [#touristinmyownhometown](#) [#explorestlouis](#) [Greater St. Louis, Inc.](#) @StLouisCivicPrideFoundation

**Meng Wang, PhD, MBA** · 2nd  
Transparency Lead at Bayer Crop Science | Educa...  
1w · Edited · 🌐

✓ Following

Although the percentage of business school deans of [#AAPI](#) (Asian American or Pacific Islander) heritage in the U.S. has doubled over the past six years, only 1% of the U.S. business school deans are AAPI women.

Progress has been made. More work needs to be done.

Right here in St. Louis, two business schools ([#SLU](#), [#UMSL](#)) are proudly led by women leaders of AAPI heritage.

What an inspiring [#BeHeard](#) event today that brought academia, industry, and the community together! And a wonderful kickoff for the AAPI Heritage Month.

[Shu Schiller](#) [Barnali Gupta](#) [Jintong Tang](#)

# QUOTES



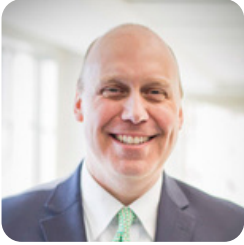
"I sensed the audience members each has strong takeaways."  
Betsy Cohen, Executive Director, STL Mosaic Project

"The event was so well organized and successful! It was inspiring to hear excellent women leaders to share their experiences and insights."  
Gaiyan Zhang, Curators' Distinguished Professor of Finance, Finance Board Scholar, UMSL.



"The best part for me is how these events bring us together to continue to make STL the welcoming city it is."  
Esmeralda Aharon, Program Director, SLU School of Medicine.

"What an inspiring event and an amazing group of leaders!" "It is clear that there is a strong desire for more conversations about women in leadership, and in particular AAPI women."  
Dean Leslie McClure, College for Public Health and Social Justice, SLU.



"The event was wonderful. Listening to the panelists on stage (and to Michelle's video) was very instructive and inspiring."  
Jay Rainey, Head of School, MICDS

"This team of people "behind the scenes" and "on stage" created a fantastic event! Thank you!"  
Laura Burkemper, CEO, Scaleblazer



# ABOUT THE EMERSON LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



**CHAIFETZ**  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

The Emerson Leadership Institute serves as a leadership 'hub' that supports impactful training programs, leading-edge research initiatives, and market-driven community engagement activities where ethics and responsible leadership are core tenets.

## INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP TRAINING

The Emerson Leadership Institute offers training programs on various topics related to leadership and ethics. Programs are developed and delivered by Chaifetz School of Business faculty and staff, partnering with leadership experts from Saint Louis University and throughout the country. Contact us to learn how ELI can create a custom program to meet your specific individual, group, business, and industry needs.

## PROFESSIONAL EVENTS

The Emerson Leadership Institute provides opportunities for community leaders to engage with experts on leadership and ethical business. Professional conferences, seminars and speaker sessions bring together business leaders, scholars and members of the community in a rich learning environment.

Contact the center at [eli@slu.edu](mailto:eli@slu.edu) for more information.

To cultivate transformative leaders who will make a positive societal impact.



**VISION**  
**MISSION**



To provide training, research, and community engagement programs that inspire and develop leadership competencies with a focus on:

Scholarship + Inclusion + Innovation + Societal impact

