

Urban Land Institute Women' Leadership Initiative
2012 Fall Meeting Scholarship Program

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October 29, 2012

The 2012 Fall Meeting was my first ULI Fall Meeting. As a newcomer I was particularly impressed by the overall quality and depth of content that was covered, as well as the remarkable role that ULI member volunteers play in the effectiveness of the ULI organization and the meeting.

Throughout my career I have attended conferences relevant to the planning, economic development and real estate industry, but I cannot recall a meeting that offered the caliber of speakers, moderators, content and discourse in one place at one time on such a range of relevant and compelling topics. While my work is generally very localized – just one neighborhood in one city – I was pleased to find takeaways, lessons and inspiration in a range of session topics that were far more global in scope and range than I had anticipated.

Prior to the meeting, I had obviously learned about the ULI Women's Leadership Initiative, but what I did not know was that the initiative was 100% conceived, executed and inspired by ULI member volunteers. The notion that an initiative can gain so much momentum and support and create such an impact so quickly is a testament not just to the individual professionals leading the WLI, but also the efficacy of ULI. Upon learning of the origin and impetus of the program, I am even more proud and honored to have been selected by these leaders to become a more active member of the initiative.

The role of ULI member volunteers was also evident to me through the Product Council program. It is impressive enough that the Product Councils offer a tremendously beneficial small group environment in which to gain industry-specific knowledge, but the concept that the content and administration is 100% volunteer driven is an amazing feat. I was delighted that the content of the council that I was a guest participant of was so applicable and directly relevant to my day-to-day work. Seeing the Denver Union Station redevelopment and better understanding it in the context of public-sector leadership and private-sector investment was particularly useful.

By learning more about WLI and participating in a Product Council, I was struck by ULI members' propensity and generosity to give back to the organization and their peers. It is clear that the benefit of commitment to ULI membership and involvement is not just networking and continuing education, but is all about philanthropy and leadership.