



Fall 2018 ULI WLI Prologis Scholarship Reflection for Annie Clark Cambria

Generally when I tell people I build schools for a living, their responses tend to focus on the “schools” part meaning I get questions about New Orleans unique all charter system or talks turn to where individuals and family members attended school in years past. Additionally, since I work for a state agency that is primarily focused on the education of children means I am often educating others on normal practices of real estate development and don’t often have a chance to reflect and relate to other professionals that are experiencing similar issues. With this feeling of having feet in two entirely separate worlds, the opportunity provided by the ULI WLI Prologis Scholarship was the perfect occasion to engage more deeply in the ULI community than is often afforded me in my every day work. Had I not gotten the scholarship, I doubt I would have attended the Fall Meeting given my other priorities and the particular timing. That would have been a mistake – after attending I’m looking forward to DC next fall and plotting a way to attend Nashville this Spring.

Heading into the ULI Fall Meeting in Boston I was unsure what quite to expect. I was impressed by the content offered by ULI but was primarily looking forward to the ability to connect to other professionals working on large scale real estate portfolios similar mine in New Orleans. I’ve never fully understood the operations of the Product Councils and the ability to attend a full council day as a guest was invaluable, I wasn’t sure who I would know other than my assigned mentor, but I had one degree connections to approximately 75% of the Council, which came as somewhat of a surprise. I almost didn’t have time to have the in depth discussions I wanted to with all of the attendees and other guests, which helped me fully appreciate the richness of the Product Councils. While the connections with the members was powerful, the content provided was even more impactful. The council had a deep dive into Innovation Districts in Boston, and we were able to explore and dissect the reasons for success of these districts through having key players from all aspects of pre-development to on-going project completion distilled best practices to real take aways for applicability to my work. In particular hearing from the development team at MIT who manages all aspects of the development in house similarly to the unusual role I play at the State of Louisiana reinvigorated me.



Beyond the Project Council, I was particularly moved by the speakers during the ULI Changing World Speaker Series, presented by WLI View from the Top Tuesday morning. After recently taking on a senior leadership position, Camille Renshaw's talk in the View from Top rang particularly true to me. Setting diversity as a revenue initiative is essential, especially given the incredible statistics she presented – that diversity initiatives raise revenue 53% were not surprising but a needed affirmation that reflects what I know – that diverse teams are strong, perform better and yes, make more money (or in my case, are better stewards of public funds). It provided another example of content from the fall meeting that is directly applicable to my every day work.

I cannot thank ULI and the Prologis WLI Scholarship for the opportunity and look forward to future involvement with both ULI and WLI initiatives.