



Creating Opportunities for Women Alumnae

From Women at Yale to YaleWomen

Since their admission to Yale College in 1969, women have played an increasingly important role in the life of the University, as students, administrators, faculty, and alumnae. Yale's alumnae, currently numbering about 50,000, or one-third of Yale's total alumni body, are engaged in traditional AYA activities, from cultural events, service initiatives and travel, to class, club and professional and shared interest groups -- as participants and leaders. Many women are also generous donors to Yale. Recently, alumnae have welcomed the opportunity to focus specifically on women graduates, to engage our potential to connect with each other and with Yale.

A March 2010 conference celebrated the 140th anniversary of women at Yale University and the 40th anniversary of women in Yale College. It showcased the accomplishments of women graduates, and provided more than 300 participants the opportunity to network with each other. Growing out of that conference, YaleWomen, an organization for women alumnae is being formed.

Local Meetings Grow to National Organization

Initially on a regional basis, women organized get-togethers to make friends and professional connections, and to engage in all the ways Yalies engage. These informal gatherings created a new energy. Many women who had not participated in traditional alumni events attended. This led to a Strategic Planning Retreat in February 2011, and a strategic plan for YaleWomen is being created.



The founders of YaleWomen, 2011

Networking and Mentorship

Women share ideas and advice: from professional to personal, from climbing up – or climbing off – the corporate ladder, to juggling career and family. One participant noted: “While I can discuss these issues in mixed groups, I prefer to get advice from other women.” Similar activities are developing to mentor students and create networks within professions.

Developing Meaningful Relationships

The organization is still young, but full of energy. It's hard to predict how it will evolve – campus partnerships, service opportunities, fund-raising, professional mentoring ... all of these are possible. It may not generate interest from all women graduates, but it's already engaging some alumnae who have not been involved with Yale before.