

LIFT WHERE YOU STAND

Women's Stock Pitch and Leadership Summit connects students and mentors

BY CLAIRE DE LISLE



KEYNOTE: *Todd Boehly '96 and Kelly Grier P '22 discussed getting started in a career, adding to the culture of an organization, giving and receiving feedback, leading in a team and advice from Grier's personal career path.*

THE ANNUAL WOMEN'S STOCK PITCH AND LEADERSHIP SUMMIT, now in its fourth year, is more than a competition or a conference. It's an opportunity for women students to demonstrate what they've learned and receive personalized coaching on key business skills from industry leaders.

More than 70 businesswomen (and a few men), many of whom are W&M alumni, parents and executive partners, returned to campus to serve as judges, panelists and coaches. They shared their expertise and provided valuable connections for students to Fortune 500 companies, consulting firms, startups and more.

Students from 23 U.S., Canadian and Australian universities attended the event, which was sponsored by some of the biggest names in financial services.

The two-day summit began March 29 with a welcome from President Katherine Rowe, followed by a keynote conversation between Kelly Grier P '22, EY U.S. chair and managing partner and Americas managing partner, and Todd Boehly '96, chair, CEO and controlling member of Eldridge Industries. Todd and Katie Garrett Boehly '95 established the

Boehly Center for Excellence in Finance at the Raymond A. Mason School of Business, for which the summit is the signature event.

Grier spoke to a theme recurring throughout the summit: the importance of emotional intelligence to career success. Emotional intelligence, often called EQ, is the ability to identify and manage your emotions and handle interpersonal relationships well.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others. See their aptitude for change, meet them where they are and bring them along," said Grier. "Create relationships that transcend hierarchy. Ensure everyone is valuable and their contributions matter, in a safe environment where people challenge you and are heard."

The next morning, the students dove into the stock pitch competition, convincing panels of judges to purchase a real-world stock. William & Mary's team — Alicia Draper '20, Alden Wagner '21, Jay Thompson '19 and Vivian Xi '20 — pitched T-Mobile. They made it to the final round, but ultimately lost the top prize to the University of Pennsylvania's team, which pitched Wingstop.

Karen Kennedy Schultz '75 of the Board of

Visitors said she was “blown away” by the students. “Their maturity and their presence, and their ability to respond to pointed, complicated questions, gives me great pride in the next generation. I’m truly buoyed by this experience,” she said.

After the competition, Ann Benjamin, retired managing director of Nueberger Berman LLC, shared insights from her career, emphasizing the importance of passion for your work, advocacy for yourself and others, and taking initiative to actively manage your career from day one.

“One of the most challenging tasks in my 30-year career was recruiting talented, well prepared, articulate young women. Had this competition existed then, I would have known just where to look,” she said.

Students then broke into panel sessions: “Lift Where You Stand: Women Helping Women” and “Make Your EQ Work for You: The Key to Networking Success.” Panelists shared advice based on their extensive and varied experiences. Then, students discussed real-life scenarios in small groups with the coaches to guide them.

Tovia Rosner '19 wants to be a coach for this

event one day. She competed in the stock competition her sophomore year, which led her to the equity research job she’ll start after graduation.

“This is the most fun day of the year — it’s great to see all the alumni return,” Rosner said. “I —100 percent — want to come back as a coach or judge after I graduate. I want to pay it back to the many mentors I’ve had along the way. That’s how I’ll know I’ve made it, when I can share what I’ve learned with students like me.”

To finish the day, students created and delivered their elevator pitches, which are 20- to 30-second summaries of themselves. They also honed their networking skills by practicing entering and exiting conversations, asking relevant questions and more.

Students and coaches walked away with practical advice and new connections to industry professionals — and each other — that can help them throughout their careers.

“One of the benefits of this event is the people around you — your friends, peers and competitors. Get to know them and stay in contact. You will see them again,” Benjamin advised participants. “These are the future leaders of the business world.”

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CELEBRATING WOMEN: *President Katherine Rowe kicked off the two-day summit, which included a stock pitch competition.*



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