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### Shared Experience

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# Summit for Success

*For 10 years, Council for IWU Women has helped students succeed.*

**Story by KIM HILL**

As a college senior, Ade Olayinka '11 was encouraged to attend the Council for IWU Women's annual summit. Olayinka was so impressed by the council's commitment to current students that she became a member herself the following year as an Illinois Wesleyan alumna.

Each year, several of the 80 alumnae and friends who comprise the council return to campus to offer their talents and resources in support of the personal and professional development of the women of IWU.

At her first summit as a student, Olayinka met alumnae who had taken many different paths to achieve success. "These women were doing amazing things individually, and they were doing amazing things for Illinois

Wesleyan," she recalls. "So when I was asked if I would join the council, it was kind of like the opposite question: Why wouldn't I join?" she adds. "It was definitely a no-brainer."

At this year's summit, the 10th annual, Olayinka moderated a Saturday morning speed-networking event connecting current students and alumnae. That was just one of many sessions and events, including practice interviews, breakout sessions and the awarding of scholarships to students Paula Amat Norman '19, Megan Mink '18, Rachel Dolan '17 and Nicole Chlebek '16. New this year was a well-received PechaKucha-style event, where 11 IWU faculty, staff, alumnae and students presented visual essays on topics ranging from female tech entrepreneurs in Jordan to being a first-generation student. All summit meals, sessions and funds for the scholarships are funded entirely by Council for IWU Women members.



Council for IWU Women President Carol Liske '77 offers career tips to Karen Silverman '16 at this year's summit.



Students Crystal Ocampo-Fernandez '18, left, and Kimberly Mensah '16 at a summit breakout session.

Nursing alumna Karen Zander '70 presented the address at Friday's kickoff luncheon. Zander is president and CEO of The Center for Case Management, a Massachusetts-based, clinician-owned company providing case-management leadership to the healthcare industry. Zander told the audience she awoke from surgery in September 2007 to find she was paralyzed. She said she had a second surgery two days later that prevented her from being a quadriplegic.

Zander urged her listeners to surround themselves with winners, "and doesn't listen to the complainers and the whiners. It's not helpful, it's not constructive, and you won't find your own strength if you find yourself with people who are complaining." Positivity and support were on display throughout the summit. During the career connections event, nursing major Rosie Mallet '16 (Portland, Ore.) noted

several alumnae offered to bring her resume to the appropriate people at their places of employment. “It’s just nice to feel so supported,” said Mallet. “It’s great to be part of that kind of community.”

Cindy Basilio ’17, a math major, says she came to the summit because she’d heard great things about the event from other friends. “Hearing about the alums’ experiences and opinions about jobs has been very important,” says Basilio. “Especially for me, someone who has too many passions and can’t focus on one.”

Olayinka can relate to those feelings. “I so remember that kind of flux in the spring of my senior year,” says Olayinka, who is now a Ph.D. student in public policy and political science at Duke University.

“I’m not sure how much I have to offer current students other than talking about graduate school processes,” she adds. “I feel like I’m still benefiting from this event, too, because I’m still getting a lot back from other council members.”

**For more information, visit the Council for IWU Women's website.**