

Annual Women's leadership conference of 2019 changes their name to accompany their message

Bushra Amiwala, 21, stood at the podium as her words sent vibrations throughout the ballrooms of self-evidence that her strength comes from knowledge. The theme of this year's event is ["More to learn"](#) to focus on how individuals can use their strength with knowledge. On March 9th, the event started at 8:30 a.m. in the Hampton Inn & Suites' ballrooms until 4:00 p.m. that offered three breakout sessions, two keynote speakers, free breakfast and lunch.

They announced that an asterisk shows they are more than their name and implies the event is not just for cisgendered women only. Registered guests comprising MU students, individuals from the community and alumni were the audience for the speakers invited.

"We expect 110 will be here," one member of the executive board for the WLC, Bri Dinwiddie said.

They divided breakout sessions into three categories referred to as educational, informational and inspirational. The titled session "How to Spot and Address Micro-aggressions" by Justine Durham elaborates about the mechanics behind micro-aggression and how someone could cope with the effects inflicted.

"The most detrimental forms of micro-aggression are usually delivered by well-intention individuals who are unaware they have engaged in harmful conduct toward a socially marginalized group," MU student Justine Durham stated.

Durham opened the floor for the audience to share their experience that resulted in 17 individuals each told their own story and revealed their method of coping.

Jamira Burley, named the [White House Champion of Change](#) performed her speech as one of the keynote speakers who shared her journey toward becoming a social justice advocate and consultant. Burley encouraged those to act now rather than wait even if told not to. By staying true to herself, Burley could accomplish her goals on improving communities and gun violence.

The final keynote speaker, Bushra Amiwala is the first Pakistani Muslim-American woman to run for a [commissioner seat](#) on Cook County board that is second largest board in the nation. Amiwala told her speech through stories were about her progress into reaching the position she is at now.

She shares an observation of micro-aggression impose on a woman who wore a burka that experienced an inappropriate joke. Amiwala stated that situation pushed her toward changing the public's perception of what a Muslim woman is.

Through her volunteering, Amiwala decided that she should look into the politics of social justice to improve policies that many people need. She acknowledges that she will run again for a position on the Cook County board.

A member from the executive board of WLC acknowledges that this is a networking event for women to build connections with one another. As the head of the executive board of WLC gave closing remarks about empowering women and mentions that applications to be a part of the WLC executive board will start March 11th.

There was a time toward the end of the event for the guests to mingle, take photos at the photo booth setup and ask Amiwala questions.

“I kinda was learning new topics about things that interested me, I wanted to learn more about, I have so many notes about things I want to look up and learn more about,” MU student Caitlyn Johnson said.