



Wellesley College & Peking University

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Wellesley's vision for Women World Partners (WWP)?

Wellesley envisions a world in which 50 percent of our leaders are women, both to better reflect the world's population and because they are as well-prepared as—and sometimes better prepared than—men for leadership on a global stage. With a unique approach to educating women for these roles, Women World Partners is working in an unprecedentedly focused way to create the next generation of women leaders.

Wellesley's Madeleine K. Albright Institute for Global Affairs, named for the former U.S. Secretary of State during the Clinton administration and Wellesley alumna, has pioneered an innovative educational model for educating women for leadership. To share this approach to leadership training, Wellesley seeks to build an international network of like-minded institutions with which it will partner and collaborate to produce more—and more effective—women leaders.

How does this initiative fit into Wellesley's larger, long-range plans?

Wellesley believes in women and their talents. And we know that one of the greatest forces for social change in the world is the education and advancement of women.

As the world's preeminent liberal arts college for women, Wellesley has supported and championed women's intellectual and social development and leadership for more than 100 years. The College provides students with an exceptional educational experience and produces women determined—and able—to make a difference in the world.

Women World Partners will take Wellesley around the globe in a series of partnerships with the world's leading institutions. As a vehicle for Wellesley to share its expertise, Women World Partners applies the College's mission on a global scale, giving it increasingly wider impact.

What is the value of the liberal arts in educating women for leadership?

The power to effect change in the world is enhanced by an understanding of a broad range of disciplines and the ability to hear and to synthesize distinct and diverse viewpoints. Bringing this “world” view to bear on the great issues of the 21st century is *precisely* what today's liberal arts curriculum seeks to accomplish. Furthermore, the liberal arts education is known for its unmatched ability to foster creativity and innovation—some of the most sought-after traits in leaders today.

As the world grows “smaller”—and some say “flatter” and more interconnected—and the issues we face become more complex, it becomes increasingly clear that global understanding is not just about political science, it is also about economics, anthropology, philosophy, history, culture, and religion.

With its commitment to a broad interdisciplinary approach, Women World Partners reflects a growing international recognition of the ongoing advantages of a classic liberal arts education for leadership.

Why is China the first partner?

Wellesley College has close, longstanding ties with China. In 1906, a Chinese delegation visited Wellesley at the urging of the Dowager Empress Cixi, who was interested in the education of women. Mei-ling Soong (later Madame Chiang Kai-shek) graduated from Wellesley in 1917. Shortly thereafter, Bin Xin, one of China's most celebrated writers of the twentieth century, earned a degree in literature from Wellesley in 1926. Recognized in China as a leader in the education of women, Wellesley continues to enroll some of China's brightest and highest-achieving young women. Building on this rich history, the College is uniquely positioned to collaborate with Peking University, a leading Chinese university, to prepare women for global leadership.

Why do Wellesley and Peking University make strong partners?

Peking University (also known as Beida) is one of the world's leading universities. It was the first national university to cover comprehensive disciplines in China, and it has been a leading institution of higher education in China since its establishment in 1898. The presence of its own liberal arts college within the University (Yuanpei College) makes Beida an ideal partner for Wellesley as the role of the liberal arts is expanded to better address global problems. Beida is keenly interested in focusing on women's leadership; with this partnership, Beida embarks on its first program targeted solely toward women.

Both Beida and Wellesley foster the highest standard of leadership in their graduates as well as the ability to think, act, and contribute meaningfully and effectively in their chosen areas of interest.

What is involved in the initial joint venture between the two institutions?

The joint venture will begin when 20 Wellesley students travel to Beijing in June of this year to participate in an intensive 10-day academic program with 20 female Peking University students. Supported by faculty from both institutions, the program will be based upon the unique interdisciplinary educational model Wellesley developed for the Albright Institute for Global Affairs. The program will also feature a master class taught by Madeleine Albright herself, who will deliver a keynote address on the imperative of educating women for global leadership.

On June 15, 2013, the academic program will culminate in a conference. "Women's Leadership: Making a Difference in the World" will bring together prominent women from China and the United States along with other special guests from around the world. The goal of the conference is to help women advance to positions of global leadership. By sharing their experiences and perspectives, participants will engage, interest, and teach one another and help prepare the next generation of women leaders.

After June, the ongoing partnership will encompass faculty and student exchanges, joint research ventures, "virtual" collaborations, and more. In 2014, Peking University students will travel to Wellesley, Mass., where they will join Wellesley students for another joint academic program supported by faculty from both institutions and based on the unique interdisciplinary pedagogy developed for Wellesley's Albright Institute for Global Affairs.

How was the curriculum developed for the joint academic program?

The joint academic program is designed to inspire fresh and deeply informed insight into some of the world's most pressing problems. Taking a broad interdisciplinary approach, it is modeled on the curricular and pedagogical methods of Wellesley's Albright Institute for Global Affairs.

The 40 young women enrolled will work with faculty from both institutions, leading practitioners with "in the field" perspectives, and international thought leaders to examine some of the ethical, environmental, and economic challenges of worldwide urbanization. Together, they will explore issues such as economic equality,

wildlife preservation, and food supply—joining perspectives from their various disciplines, including economics, environmental science, and political science, as well as from their respective cultures.

On June 8, 2013, Madeleine Albright will teach a master class for the 40 students; she will also lead a faculty forum on the importance of the liberal arts disciplines in a global world. Ming Yuan, director of the Institute of International Relations at Peking University, and Secretary Albright will co-present a dialogue on U.S.-China relations.

How does Women World Partners differ from other international programs led by U.S. educational institutions, or from other women's leadership programs?

As the premiere educational institution for women in the United States, Wellesley is known for developing some of the world's most influential women leaders—from Bin Xin to Hillary Clinton. With the launch of Women World Partners, Wellesley commits to building the global leadership capability of future women leaders.

First, we will share the signature educational model of Wellesley's Albright Institute for Global Affairs with others. The innovative pedagogy—based on a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach to problem solving—has the liberal arts at its core, because there is no stronger foundation for leadership than a liberal arts education.

Second, Wellesley will form long-term partnerships with the finest educational institutions around the world in pursuit of a shared goal: to educate women for leadership.

In service of these objectives—all centered on the larger goal of fostering women's leadership—the academic phase of the partnership will culminate in a first-of-its-kind conference, "Women's Leadership: Making a Difference in the World." Leaders from China and the United States—representing a variety of sectors, including government, business, and science and technology—will convene for an exploration of the opportunities and challenges faced in the cultivation of next-generation women leaders.

Who will teach the courses for the academic program?

At the academic program in Beijing, leading scholars from both institutions and expert practitioners will cover an array of topics, including the impact of urbanization on wildlife preservation (a lecture by Zhi Lv, professor of Conservation Biology at Peking University); global economic systems with an emphasis on housing as it relates to increased urbanization, in a lecture taught by Wellesley economics professor Akila Weerapana; and a lecture on "Inequality: What's the Problem?" taught by Helena de Bres, Wellesley assistant professor of philosophy.

Former U.S. Secretary of State and Wellesley alumna Madeleine Albright will teach a master class for the 40 students, and she will participate in a faculty forum on the power of the liberal arts in a global world.

After June, how will the Wellesley College/Peking University partnership proceed?

Our partnership will continue, both broadening and deepening.

- Women World Partners will launch a website that will serve as a resource for women's leadership. It will include published research, data, and interviews with scholars.
- We expect the programs' student participants to form lasting bonds as part of the transformational experience of working so closely together in June—bonds that will have multiple manifestations, including collaborative research, peer mentorship, and expansive and action-oriented networks.
- The collaborative relationships among faculty of both institutions will undoubtedly continue and yield ongoing opportunities for cooperation, collaboration, and joint research.