

WLI Prologis Scholarship

Elizabeth Morrison

Attending the ULI Fall 2018 conference was a fantastic experience as a mid-level career professional. For the last 7+ years I have been active with my district council particularly in the Young Leaders Group. As I transition out of the YLG in the coming year, I am looking for new ways to engage with ULI at a local and national level. Participating in the Fall Meeting and having the opportunity to shadow the Industrial and Office Park Development Council (Gold Flight) opened my eyes to the benefits of being engaged with ULI on a national level. The IOPDC Gold Flight is an extremely impressive group of industry leaders who welcomed my attendance and encouraged me to speak up during council discussions. The most valuable part of the full day council session was the hour and a half “open dialogue” session at the end of the day where members engaged in spirited conversation on current trends in the real estate market. The national councils provide a network of engaged leaders from a diverse set of geographies that form an invaluable resource for its members. Real estate is a very local business but hearing from a diverse, broad group is critical to staying on top of market trends. I was lucky to have Val Achtemeier as a mentor for the day and it was clear that Val has made very strong connections through her product council as well as the WLI national network.

In addition to attending the IOPDC Gold Flight council day, I attended the Housing Affordability Symposium on Tuesday. The Symposium brought together both the conventional apartment industry (represented by the ULI Multifamily Council participants) and the affordable industry (represented by the ULI Affordable Housing Council participants) for an afternoon of dialogue around new solutions for low income households as well as the “missing middle”. The symposium was important for me to attend as JBG SMITH, in partnership with the Federal City Council, has recently launched an initiative to address housing for the “missing middle” in the Washington DC metro area. Bringing together individuals from both the conventional and affordable sides of the business is critical to coming up with a solution to the affordable housing crisis in urban cores throughout the US. As a traditionally market rate developer, JBG SMITH recognizes that the overall health of the Washington DC economy and its workforce is directly correlated with the region’s ability to provide safe and affordable housing for its residents. ULI is the leading organization in the real estate industry that provides a forum to bring people together to discuss these important issues. The several hours I spent at the Affordable Housing Symposium connected me with professionals from around the country that I can share ideas with and learn from.

I am incredibly grateful to the Women’s Leadership Initiative and Prologis for sponsoring a fantastic opportunity for so many female real estate professionals. I remember not that long ago when the ULI Washington WLI chapter was formed and I could not wait to get involved. Our chapter is now thriving, and I look forward to continuing my involvement at the local and national level.