

2016 ULI Fall Meeting—Dallas, TX  
WLI/Prologis Scholarship Recipient Essay  
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## **Paying It Forward**

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Thanks to the generous donation of Prologis I and nine other women were able to attend the ULI Fall Meeting. While there were countless learning opportunities, the two themes that most permeated the conference for me were paying it forward and increasing the visibility of women in the industry.

One of the reasons I'm drawn to ULI is the openness of the members, the desire to get to know new people, to share ideas, and to use each other's learning to improve the built environment. This was at no time more clear than the four days in Dallas. Starting with Prologis, who has decided to use its sponsorship funds to advance the learning and engagement of ten women. These dollars don't end with the conference, but live on through the contributions these women make going forward, contributions that are more impactful given the learning, connections, and experiences gained through a week with ULI and its members. The structure of this week further emphasizes the pay it forward culture. As scholarship winners we are paired with a mentor – someone who volunteers her time for the betterment of another. Mentors get to know the scholarship winners, take us to events, and introduce us to members we wouldn't otherwise connect with. We also attended a product council day. For anyone who has participated on a product council, it is no secret these days are filled with invaluable programming, and it was an honor to be a guest. Product council members have so much to share, and they do so openly. Some of the best learning of the day came from the ad hoc discussions between sessions, where members reflected on the information and how they will apply to their specific role in the industry. Yet another example of being an open book for the betterment of the industry rather than playing it close to the vest to enhance personal gains.

Real estate is a historically male dominated industry, and though it still is, I'm starting to wonder if the numbers are as skewed as we think, or if it's more a visibility issue. In truth it's still both; however, WLI is leading the charge to minimize the visibility gap. One effort is to increase the number of female panelists. For its part the Fall Meeting advanced this goal, as every session I attended had female representation. But more than numbers, these women were welcomed as peers by their male counterparts and the audience, were incredibly bright and experienced, and many were quite charismatic. This couldn't be clearer than the View From the Top conversation with Lucy Billingsley or Patricia Healy's conversation with President George W. Bush. While there is still work to be done, these female panelists are leading the way.

For my part, I am inspired to bring these two qualities back to Denver. To become more engaged with WLI and help build a rolodex of women to serve on panels, as well as working with ULI Colorado to advance the pay it forward culture locally.