



NEWSROOM

Siegel Institute's past provides a prologue to its future

UPS grant, the White House Project, and Northside Hospital collaborations advance the Siegel Institute's efforts in ethical leadership development

When Dr. Deborah Roebuck ventured from the comfort-zone of her 20-year career as a Kennesaw State University professor in 2006 to lead an institute with a mission of developing ethical leaders, she knew was taking a walk on the wild side. In an era where corporate fraud and white-collar arrests are everyday news and ethical leadership in business can seem like an oxymoron, Roebuck opted nevertheless to regenerate herself through this opportunity to advance personally and professionally.

With a love for academics, but excited by the challenge of implementing ethical leadership principles across society, she stepped into boots she thought were too big for her. As the new executive director of the Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Character, she put her right foot ahead of her left to begin making a difference in the lives of others. Armed with an agenda that included goals like “find new ways to expand my service to others,” “increase my optimism to embrace both challenge and change,” and “build upon the solid foundation that my predecessors had set,” Roebuck set out in 2006 on a journey that she anticipated would change her life.

It is “making a difference in the lives of others” that seems to matter most to this determined woman who devours challenges like a gourmet dinner. Building relationships with others in the community through ethical leadership training put the Siegel Institute on the map as expert professionals since its founding in 2002, though Roebuck and the team are especially excited about the last year's progress.

On its academic front, since Roebuck took the helm, President Dan Papp appointed the Siegel Institute as an academic unit, and the Board of Regents approved the Institute's new Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Ethics, the only program of its kind at the master's level in Southeastern U.S. Dr. Lois Robley, WellStar Distinguished Scholar of Ethics, joined the Institute as its first full-time faculty member and professor of Ethics in June. Roebuck, Robley and team will launch the Graduate Certificate courses at KSU in August 2007.

In its community outreach programs, the Institute made significant strides in collaborating with three major organizations—UPS, The White House Project, and Northside Hospital—in the areas of women's leadership development and ethical

leadership training, thus broadening the wing span of the Institute's capacity to make a difference.

The UPS Foundation awarded a \$10,000 grant to support the Institute's development of its women's leadership programs at the seventh annual Phenomenal Women's Conference in March. The UPS grant is the first received since the Institute was originally established by a million-dollar endowment from the RTM Restaurant Group in 2002.

Earlier in 2007, the Institute established a Phenomenal Women's Alliance to engage women in leadership development through conferences, speaker series and summits, to participate in support groups, to enroll in ethical leadership training, and to network with women across all fields. The added dimension of the Phenomenal Women's Global Alliance will help women develop their global perspective and network. Annual Phenomenal Women's Conferences (PWC) and mid-year mini-conferences demonstrate the Institute's commitment to create meaningful forums for women desiring to shape a leadership legacy and make a significant difference in the world. The 8th Annual PWC April 3, 2008, "The Economic Empowerment of Women," will provide speakers and discussions including gender mainstreaming, micro-enterprise for women, best practices of micro-economics, engaging in the political process, and character development through women's circles.

The White House Project (WHP), a New York based, non-partisan, non-profit organization that advances women's leadership in all communities and sectors up to the U.S. presidency, hosted an "Add Women, Change Everything" luncheon at Atlanta's Commerce Club on June 29. This celebration of women featured Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, White House Project president Marie Wilson, and eight honored Atlanta-area partners who support the WHP. Deborah Roebuck was recognized among the honorees for her programs that advance women's leadership and support the WHP's initiatives.

The Siegel Institute has been encouraging women to involve themselves in the political process, whether as voters, activists or candidates, by promoting WHP events. "Women of all walks of life need to be encouraged to build leadership skills. The Siegel Institute considers this effort to be of primary importance," Roebuck said.

Also this summer, the Institute began delivering its Ethical Leadership Certificate Program to Northside Hospital's Cherokee-branch leadership team. The Siegel Model of Ethical Leadership serves as the foundation for every course, program, and initiative of the Siegel Institute. The Siegel Model is used by eight northwest Georgia colleges and universities, by Georgia government officials, and across Atlanta-area businesses. It also serves as the foundation for the "Why Leadership and Ethics Matter" Speaker Series which Roebuck established as a reciprocal outreach between business leaders and other expert professionals and KSU campus faculty, staff and students.

Roebuck's first year has not been without other moments of surprise and personal gratification. In 2007, the National League of American Pen Women honored her with their Writer of the Year Award. She published her 24th article in a scholarly journal, and her textbook, *Improving Business Communication Skills*, went into its fourth edition.

Now after a little more than a year as executive director, Deborah Roebuck agrees this has been a walk on the wild side for her. The words of her predecessor, Dr. Judith Stillion, continue to ring true: "The Institute's past will be simply a prologue to its future." She's grateful for the progress her team has made since 2006, but she's sitting on no laurels. "With pillars of leadership, ethics and character as our core foundation, our goal is to continue to develop quality course delivery while shaping a legacy of leadership through meaningful relationships with community groups and people from all walks of life."

With an all-new website describing the Institute's array of programs and a calendar of events for the year that takes eight pages to print, Roebuck casts her vision toward the immeasurable work required to back up what the Institute promises to deliver. "I have a true sense of gratitude for the individuals with whom I am building relationships while we all work together to serve the common good and to make a difference in the lives of others."

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