



LEADING  
TOGETHER

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# WOMEN LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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**2025 ANNUAL MEETING**

April 17, 2025 — 11:30-2:00 pm

Blue Research Area

Texas A&M University at Qatar

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# PROGRAM

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**11:30-11:45**      **Registration and Networking**

**11:45-12:00**      **Welcome Remarks**

Panel Introduction

**12:00-1:00**      **"CULTIVATING CONNECTION, MENTORSHIP, COMMUNITY AND EXCELLENCE"**

This panel explores the impact of mentorship and professional networks in creating meaningful opportunities and supporting career growth. It will highlight how fostering community contributes to institutional excellence and examine effective strategies for strengthening mentorship initiatives across higher education institutions and organizations.

**Panelists:**

**Dr. Luluwah Al-Fagih**

Associate Professor, Chair of the Women in Academia Committee  
Hamad Bin Khalifa University

**Dr. Kira Dreher**

Associate Dean for Community Excellence and Assistant Teaching Professor  
Carnegie Mellon University – Qatar

**Dr. Samah Gamar**

Director of Academic Affairs  
Qatar Foundation

**Dr. Holiday Powers**

Assistant Professor of Art History  
VCUarts Qatar

**Dr. Amy Walker**

Psychological Counselor and Inclusion Programming Lead  
Georgetown University @ Qatar

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**Moderated by: Dr. Brittany Bounds**

Instructional Associate Professor  
Texas A&M University at Qatar

# PROGRAM

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1:00-2:00

## Closing Remarks Lunch and Conversation over Breakout Sessions

Lunch-table breakout sessions after the panel will be led by Education City leaders from diverse areas—faculty, research, administration, and student affairs. These conversations will expand on the panel discussion, diving into inclusive mentorship, professional networks, and building belonging on our campuses. We invite you to share your experiences, ask questions, and explore strategies to strengthen mentorship and community across EC.

### Session Leaders:

**Dr. Naqaa Abbas** HBKU

**Dr. Brittany Bounds** TAMUQ

**Dr. Kira Dreher** CMUQ

**Dr. Samah Gamar** QF

**Dr. Violet Showers Johnson** TAMUQ

**Dr. Holiday Powers** VCUQ

**Dr. Dalia Atef Rehal** CMUQ

**Dr. Christine Schiwietz** GUQ

**Dr. Amy Walker** GUQ

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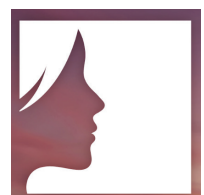
Carnegie  
Mellon  
University  
Qatar

vcuarts  
QATAR

**ATM**  
TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY at QATAR

جامعة  
حمد بن خليفة  
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA  
UNIVERSITY  
عضو في مؤسسة قطر  
Member of Qatar Foundation

  
جامعة جورجتاون قطر  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY QATAR



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Naqaa Abbas**

Dr. Naqaa Abbas is Associate Professor of Practice at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, where she teaches Literature and Rhetoric and Composition courses in the undergraduate program.

Prior to joining HBKU, Dr. Abbas served as Co-Chair of the Women's Faculty Forum at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ), where she played a key leadership role in developing and organizing initiatives aimed at empowering and supporting female faculty and staff. Her commitment to fostering inclusive academic environments is rooted in her belief in the importance of mentorship, advocacy, and community-building for women in higher education.



## **Luluwah Al-Fagih**

Dr. Luluwah Al-Fagih is an Associate Professor in the College of Science and Engineering at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

Prior to joining HBKU, Dr. Al-Fagih was a Senior Lecturer in the School of Computer Science and Mathematics and Computing at Kingston University, London. Dr. Al-Fagih holds a PhD in Financial Mathematics from The University of Manchester and a BSc and MSc in Mathematics and Financial Mathematics from King's College London, UK. Her current research focuses on applications of game theory in smart energy management, as well as renewable energy adoption and energy policy in the region. Dr. Al-Fagih established and Chairs the Women in Academia Committee at HBKU and is an elected member of the University Senate. She is dedicated to advancing initiatives that support the academic and professional development of women in higher education.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Brittany Bounds**

Dr. Brittany Bounds is a distinguished educator and leader, currently teaching U.S. History at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ).

She instructs the foundational survey courses and has pioneered two innovative classes incorporating exercises and simulations. In 2022, Dr. Bounds was elected as the Caucus Leader for the Faculty Senate at TAMUQ, where she advocates for faculty interests and governance. As TAMUQ transitioned towards closure, Dr. Bounds led the Faculty Transition Advocacy Committee, guiding her colleagues through this significant change with a focus on support and continuity. Additionally, she co-chairs the Women Leaders in Higher Education, a collaborative initiative among female faculty and staff from various Qatar Foundation (QF) universities, fostering connections and professional development across Education City.

Previously, Dr. Bounds served as Co-Chair of the Women's Faculty Forum at TAMUQ from 2020 to 2022, where she played a crucial role in promoting community and creating a supportive environment for women faculty and staff. Her dedication to academic excellence and leadership continues to make a significant impact within the TAMUQ community and beyond.



## **Kira Dreher**

Dr. Kira Dreher is Associate Dean for Community Excellence at Carnegie Mellon University Qatar, as well as a faculty member in the English Department.

In her Associate Dean role, Kira works with faculty, staff, students and campus leadership to shape supportive, responsive, and transparent community practices. Her office spearheads numerous initiatives, events, and partnerships that work toward these goals. Kira also works toward multiversity collaboration by serving on the WLHE executive committee.

Kira received her PhD in Rhetoric and Technical and Scientific Communication and her MA in Cultural Studies. She studies and publishes on accessible language and verbal/visual strategies for communicating complex information to different audiences. She teaches professional writing, rhetorical style and first-year writing. She also co-edits an undergraduate research journal at CMUQ.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Samah Gamar**

Dr. Samah Gamar is a seasoned higher education professional with extensive experience in education policy, program development, monitoring and assessment, and higher education quality assurance. Her career has spanned the tertiary education sector from technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to postgraduate-level studies.

She is currently the Director of Academic Affairs at Qatar Foundation, a role in which she is dedicated to supporting comprehensive academic excellence across the eight HEIs within Education City, along with leading flagship initiatives that strive to pioneer interdisciplinary approaches, innovative pedagogical and practical evidence-based frameworks, and increased student-centricity and mobility. Samah was the Founding Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, where she played a critical role in securing institutional accreditation from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). She also served as the Academic Vice President of College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, a Canadian branch campus established as Qatar's premier polytechnic institution. Samah was Senior Education Consultant with the Education Above All Foundation, where she worked towards the alleviation of barriers to access to higher education for conflict-affected youth, including an initiative to support progress towards UNSCR 2250.



## **Violet Showers Johnson**

Violet Showers Johnson is Professor of History at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas and Texas A&M University, Qatar (TAMUQ). At Texas A&M University, College Station, she has served as Director of Africana Studies and Associate Dean for Faculty in the College of Liberal Arts. At TAMUQ, she has served as Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Excellence and Development and is currently Interim Director of the Division of Arts and Sciences. A scholar of U.S. immigration history, Dr. Showers Johnson has authored and co-authored books and articles on the Black immigrant experience in America. An award-winning teacher, she has taught courses on U.S. immigration history, African American history, African history and the history of the African Diaspora at five institutions of higher learning, including TAMUQ.



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Archana Kumar**

Archana Kumar is a dynamic HR leader with over 17 years of experience, currently serving as Director of Human Resources at VCUarts Qatar.

A second-generation expat raised in Qatar, Archana brings a culturally nuanced approach to her work, blending strategic HR practices with deep-rooted values of respect, representation, and belonging. Formerly a member of the DEIB Committee, she continues to support cross-campus initiatives that promote fairness, cultural awareness, and equal opportunity. Elected as one of the Staff Senators representing the Qatar campus by VCU Richmond, Archana plays an active role in shared governance, serving on the Accessibility and Equity Committees Working Group.

She is also a core member of the university's Crisis Management Team and Emergency Operations Center, helping lead institutional responses to critical events with care and clarity. Known for her strengths in mediation, emotional intelligence, and organizational culture, Archana integrates mindfulness and creativity into HR programming. She holds a certification in leadership from the Institute of Transformative Leadership at VCU Richmond, complementing her MBA in Human Resources and Marketing and her Bachelor's in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. Certified as a Hatha Yoga teacher, she is passionate about inspiring well-being and belonging within the VCUarts Qatar community.



## **Małgorzata (Gosia) Ledwoń**

Gosia Ledwoń is a seasoned HR professional and operations manager with over 15 years of international experience spanning higher education and the financial services sector. Currently serving as Associate Director for Rewards and Wellness at Georgetown University in Qatar, she specializes in compensation and benefits, staff development, and wellness programming. She supports community initiatives as Co-chair of the Georgetown Women's Alliance – Qatar Chapter and as a member of the WLHE executive committee.

Gosia has a proven track record in leading diverse teams, optimizing HR operations, and driving organizational well-being initiatives. Prior to her role in academia, she held various leadership positions at Thomson Reuters, overseeing regional operations and large-scale teams across EMEA. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Gdańsk. Passionate about people, processes, and wellness, she brings energy, structure, and innovation to every role.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Holiday Powers**

Dr. Holiday Powers is Assistant Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at VCUarts Qatar.

Her book *Moroccan Modernism* was published in December 2024 at Ohio University Press as part of the New African Histories series. She has contributed to journals including *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art* and *The Journal of North African Studies*, and books including *Under the Skin: Feminist Art from the Middle East and North Africa Today* and *Decolonizing Islamic Art in Africa: New Approaches to Muslim Expressive Cultures*.



## **Dalia Atef Rehal**

Dr. Dalia Atef Rehal currently serves as the Associate Dean for Student Affairs at Carnegie Mellon University Qatar (CMUQ).

She is an international educator with nearly two decades of experience fostering student development in both the United States and the Middle East. Her career showcases a strong foundation in student affairs, encompassing areas such as academic advising, leadership development, wellbeing programs, academic integrity, and community engagement.

Earlier in her career at the University of Texas at Austin, Dalia coordinated college readiness programs and a successful first-year mentoring initiative. Her doctoral research focused on the Qatari student experiences, highlighting her commitment to understanding and supporting diverse student populations within a global context.



# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Christine Schiwietz**

Dr. Christine Schiwietz is Assistant Dean and Professor at Georgetown University Qatar, with experience at both the Qatar and Washington, D.C. campuses. An accomplished educator, administrator, and scholar, she has led transformative initiatives that advance intercultural collaboration, academic excellence, and innovation in global education.

She is the author of *America's Higher Education Goes Global*, exploring international branch campuses, higher ed globalization, and cross-border collaboration. A recognized expert in sociology and global education, Christine has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Harvard Political Review*, and *Gulf Times*, and has shared her insights at forums including the UN Women's Guild. Christine is also an award-winning filmmaker.

Her leadership extends beyond academia: she serves on the board of the American Chamber of Commerce Qatar, is a former president of both the Georgetown Women's Alliance and the DC Sociological Society, and actively bridges academia, business, and community engagement on a global scale.

# PARTICIPANTS

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## **Amy Walker**

Dr. Amy Walker is a U.S. Licensed Psychologist with over 20 years of experience in psychotherapy, career coaching, consulting, teaching, and training. Dr. Walker currently serves in a dual role at Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) as both a Psychological Counselor and Inclusion Programming Lead. In this capacity, she provides one-on-one and couples counseling, psychoeducational programming, and cultural programming that assists students to enhance a sense of belonging at the institution and in the broader Qatar community.

Amy began her career in Qatar as the Director of Career Services at Carnegie Mellon University Qatar. Dr. Walker returned to the psychology field full time where she served as a telehealth psychologist, assisting students at U.S. based institutions to manage mental health challenges. She also served as the first volunteer psychologist for the Qatar Mental Health Helpline, a resource established in response to the pandemic. As a consultant, Dr. Walker created and facilitated training programs to assist international organizations improve their response to organizational development and change management and provided executive coaching for diplomats and local hires at the U.S. Embassy in Qatar.

Dr. Walker earned her B.A. in Communications from the University of Pittsburgh in 1999 and her M.A. in Career Counseling from the University of Maryland College Park in 2001. In 2007, Amy obtained her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Penn State University. In February 2025, Amy completed an Executive Certificate in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through the Institute of Transformational Leadership at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

# WOMEN LEADERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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WLHE emerged from the momentum of the Women in Leadership Conference held in October 2022, led by female faculty and leaders from multiple institutions, including Carnegie Mellon, TAMUQ, Georgetown, HBKU CHSS, HEC Paris, and Qatar Financial Center.

Following the conference, organizers formed WLHE to sustain conversations and action around gender equity in Education City. We hosted our first Leading Together Annual Meeting in May 2024, focusing on leadership and male allyship, with our April 2025 meeting centering on mentorship within our community.

WLHE is committed to supporting female faculty and staff in higher education and fostering a collaborative, inclusive environment where women can thrive.

If you are a faculty or staff member in QF and would like to join us in promoting equity and empowerment through education in Qatar, please register as a member at our website for exclusive access to the networking directory:

**[www.qatarwlhe.com](http://www.qatarwlhe.com)**



## The WHLE Team

Chair	<b>Brittany Bounds, PhD</b> TAMUQ
Board Members	<b>Naqaa Abbas, PhD</b> HBKU <b>Kira Dreher, PhD</b> CMUQ <b>Archana Kumar</b> VCUQ <b>Malgorzata (Gosia) Ledwon</b> GUQ



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