



“If there’s a WILL,
there’s a way!”

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Women in Learning & Leadership (TCNJ)



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The College of New Jersey
Women in Learning and Leadership



The WILL Program at TCNJ

Women In Learning and Leadership (**WILL**) is a comprehensive academic program that fosters an understanding of gender and its intersections with race, class, religion, sexuality, ability, and other aspects of social identity. **WILL** enables students to apply classroom learning to contemporary social justice issues through leadership opportunities, activism projects, and diversity events.

- **WILL** provides a solid foundation for the academic study of gender through a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS).
- **WILL** engages students in and out of the classroom, encouraging them to extend academic experiences into social action projects both on campus and in the Mercer County area.
- **WILL** sponsors events throughout the year that bring prominent scholars and speakers to discuss gender and diversity related topics.



Events

WILL students attend lectures, workshops, and retreats with figures whose scholarship, struggles, and successes they study in class. The **WILL** Program also sponsors activities and performances that are open to the entire college campus as well as the general public.



"This program has allowed me to view college education in a more inclusive and diverse perspective, and it has been an amazing and eye opening journey." Noelle Halikman, '24

Previous Internships held by WILL Members

- Environment New Jersey
- Planned Parenthood of NJ
- Cosmopolitan Magazine
- Ernst & Young
- Johnson & Johnson
- NASDAQ
- Public Advocate - Office of Trenton
- Congresswoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman's District Office
- Self Magazine
- Planned Parenthood of NJ
- Working Group of Girls at the United Nations
- First Lady's Office (NJ)
- Princeton Area Community Foundation for Women and Girls
- NJ Department of Health
- NJ Department of Civil Rights
- Courier News

History

Founded in 1980 at the University of Richmond, **WILL** was developed as a program to promote self-confidence, self-esteem, and leadership skills in young women. It is the first program in the United States to combine coursework in Women's and Gender Studies with internships and leadership opportunities outside the classroom. The **WILL** Program at The College of New Jersey was founded in 2001.

In addition to The College of New Jersey, a number of public and private institutions have **WILL** programs including Duke University, Washington and Lee University, Tulane University, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Cincinnati University, Pace University, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.



"I loved being a WILL student and I love being connected to it today. WILL continues to inspire me to speak up, take risks, and dream bigger than I ever thought possible."

Emily Bent, '03 - Professor Pace University

WILL Alumnae Are:

- Working for prominent financial corporations, media outlets, respected non-profits, and Federal/State government offices.
- Pursuing advanced degrees in various academic and professional fields such as: communications, education, law, medicine, psychology, public policy, sociology, and women's studies.
- Advocating for human rights in national and transnational organizations.



"I have learned a lot about social justice and what it means to be a feminist by being a member of WILL. I will carry this with me throughout my career and life and will forever view everything through a feminist lens." Caroline Francesconi, '23

Leadership and Activism

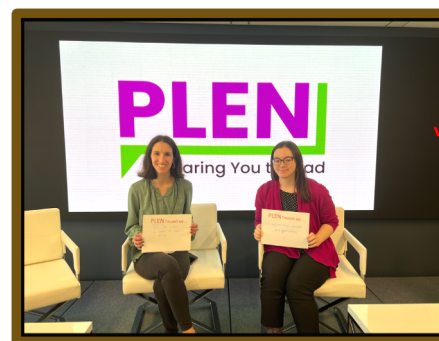
WILL students develop leadership skills and gain real world experience over the course of the program. Students apply academic knowledge to social problems affecting the campus community, the Mercer County area, nationally, and globally.

- **WILL** students have held positions on college wide committees, councils, and organizations including the TCNJ Board of Trustees.
- **WILL** students have organized International Solidarity Projects that allow students to learn about the lives of people who have been socially, economically, and/or politically marginalized. Students have an opportunity to study and then dialogue with native residents on globalization and trade, post-war transition, the effects of religion on a population, and the impacts of US foreign policy.



WILL Student Organization

- WILL encourages students to build on the history of activism and leadership that they study in class.
- The WILL student leadership organization, which includes an elected board and student committees, encourages active decision making.
- WILL students have participated in state and national conferences, political action projects, educational forums, and social awareness campaigns.



"I love WILL! It has given me a community of like-minded individuals who each contribute a diverse perspective to everything we study and do. We are all passionate about the curriculum and making our experiences great."

Megan Folina, '26

Curriculum

The five course WGS minor serves as the cornerstone of the WILL curriculum, providing a theoretical framework for the examination of gender, societal institutions, and a wide range of social justice struggles and achievements. All courses fulfill Liberal Learning requirements. WILL students represent all of the Schools across the College: School of Business, School of Nursing and Health Sciences, School of Science, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Arts and Communication, School of Education, and the School of Engineering.

- The minor is interdisciplinary, contributing to the holistic nature of the program.
- WILL students complete a supervised internship closely tied to their academic study, which proves invaluable in their future careers.
- The flexibility of the minor allows students with busy schedules, including student athletes and those planning to study abroad, to participate in the program.
- Working with your WILL advisor, you can create an academic plan that allows you to complete the required coursework before graduation.



"WILL has brought me some of my closest friends. I am also glad I had the opportunity to serve on the E-board as that position marks my first leadership role at TCNJ." Grace Sullivan, '25