Rutgers Business School
Center for Women in Business



Five-Year Impact Summary 2026

















Today, women make up almost

50%

of the workforce, yet

represent only

10%

of CEOs in

Fortune 500 companies.

This is not a talent gap.

This is a design gap.

We are leading the way

to strengthen the pipeline

and broaden the bench of leaders,

by making the workplace

work for everyone.



Message From Our Executive Director

When I co-founded the Rutgers Center for Women in Business (CWIB) in 2019, it was with a clear mission: remove barriers, build community and empower women, particularly those navigating the critical mid-career stage. Since then, the momentum we have built has been extraordinary, fueled by the support of our corporate partners, individual champions, and academic thought leaders — a passionate community committed to advancing gender equity and building better workplaces for all.

My advocacy for gender equity began long before CWIB. As a Division 1 gymnast at Brown University, I was part of a landmark Title IX case that was ultimately appealed to the Supreme Court, adding women's teams, without cutting men's programs. The experience shaped my belief that progress is not a zero-sum game: when we expand opportunity, everyone can benefit.

CWIB's work is strongly grounded in that philosophy – creating workplaces where women can thrive drives better outcomes for all people and organizations. We are intentional about including men as allies, in our programming and on our board, and are committed to integrating diverse perspectives into our work.



CWIB Executive Director, Lisa Kaplowitz on TEDx, "Advancing Women by Redistributing the Housework, One Son at a Time" – February, 2022

Research continues to show that women – especially mid-career women – face unique challenges that too often lead to stalled advancement or difficult decisions to leave the workforce altogether. Women remain underrepresented at every level of the corporate pipeline, and with each step from manager to the C-Suite, the gender gap widens. Women of color are particularly underrepresented.

The urgency of this work has never been clearer. Between January and August 2025, more than 450,000 women exited the U.S. labor market, one of the steepest declines on record, driven largely by women with young children – the very population we are committed to supporting. Without intentional action, organizations risk a continued leak in their leadership pipeline. Protecting this leadership bench is not simply the right thing to do; it is a business imperative. Drawing on my 20+ year career in finance, I know that businesses need to drive strong financial performance in addition to doing good – and investing in the retention of diverse leadership talent does both.

I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished, and even more inspired by what lies ahead. The need is urgent, the momentum is real, and the time to act is now. By investing in mid-career women, we are strengthening leadership pipelines and creating workplaces and communities where opportunity expands for everyone.



Lisa Kaplowitz
Co-Founder and Executive Director
Rutgers Center for Women in Business

Research Is The Engine Behind Everything We Do

Our work drives thought leadership, delivers actionable insights, and informs impactful programming.

Our research is widely published across leading academic journals and media outlets, including:



Our Areas of Research Focus:



Reframing Caregiving:
From Workplace Liability to Leadership Asset



The Hidden Architecture of Advancement:
Networks, Peer Support, Sponsorship, and the Cost of Unequal Access



Expanding Opportunity through Entrepreneurship:
Career Trajectories and Support Systems for Women-led Small Businesses



Empowering All Women:
Advancing Women While Transforming Workplace Norms



Engaging Men in Cultural Change:
Building Workplaces that Work for Everyone



Rewriting Business Education:
Including Women – and Women of Color – as Protagonists of Case Studies within Finance Curriculum

1 Reframing the Narrative: Caregivers as Assets, Not Liabilities

Caregiving is often treated as a workplace liability – yet our research shows it is one of the most powerful leadership training grounds available. Nearly 73% of U.S. employees are caregivers. When organizations fail to recognize and support caregiving realities, they lose experienced, high-performing employees at precisely the point when leadership pipelines should be strengthening.

In 2023: We set out to change the narrative by identifying the leadership skills gained through caregiving.

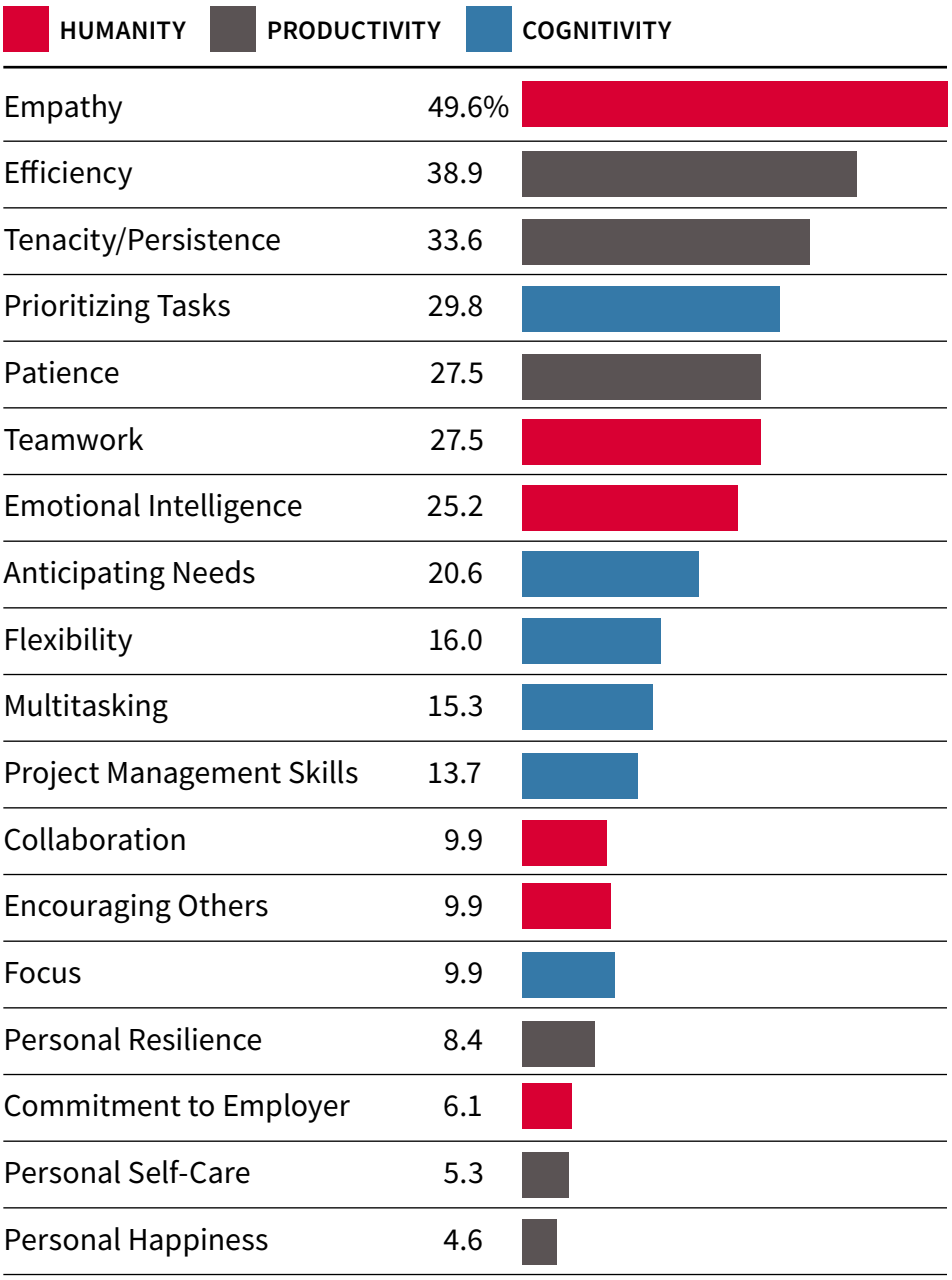
In 2025: Our employer-focused study found that caregiving skills align with 77% of workplace skills valued by employers and 100% of leadership competencies identified by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Critically, these skills - adaptability, decision-making, problem solving, and resilience – are the very capabilities least likely to be replaced by AI.

In 2026: CWIB brought a powerful message to the United Nations global stage: Caregiving remains largely invisible, undervalued and is essential to gender equity in the workplace. **You can see the presentation here.**

Spotlighting Our Research

Below is the breakdown of respondents reporting improvement in workplace skills gained through unpaid caregiving by category:

Caregiving Skills



Source: Rutgers Center for Women in Business, Rutgers Business School survey of 131 caregivers between April and May 2023, Harvard Business Review.

2 The Hidden Architecture of Advancement: Support, Sponsorship, and Success

We research how women build social support in professional settings and how unequal access to mentorship, sponsorship, and peer networks affect career advancement. Our work highlights the powerful role of informal peer networks in shaping confidence, resilience, and opportunity – especially in high-pressure fields such as finance, where representation is still evolving.

3 The Female Protagonist Project

In 2016, a major study found that only 11% of case studies within business school curriculum featured female protagonists. Since then, some academic leaders have worked to increase women's representation. By spotlighting mostly male leaders, classrooms shape not just what students learn but who they believe can lead – quietly reinforcing the association between leadership and masculinity.

CWIB has launched an initiative to author case studies that feature all women as protagonists to be leveraged in finance curriculum (an industry that remains male dominated), selling over 2,000 to date in top business schools worldwide.



GROW Mid-Career Mentoring Program

Mentorship Matters: While mentorship and sponsorship are shown to have a significant impact on career advancement, studies show that 20% fewer women are mentored compared to men.

700+
MENTEES TO DATE

Virtual group mentoring program accelerates the advancement of mid-career leaders. Participants are guided by experienced senior executives and certified coaches and engage with a supportive community of motivated peers.

Cohorts of 8-10 mid-career executives meet monthly for five, hour-long sessions over four months. Each session leverages a research-based curriculum and an action plan to hold mentees accountable for achieving goals.

The GROW Curriculum includes:

- Career Advancement & Influence
- Self-Advocacy & Compensation
- Networks, Community, & Belonging
- Burnout & Resiliency
- Authentic Professional Branding
- Executive Presence
- Evaluation & Feedback

Across the GROW program, participants shared:

90%
Improved executive presence

93%
Felt better positioned for leadership

95%
Became stronger self-advocates

92%
Increased self confidence

What CWIB Mentors and Mentees are saying about GROW:



"GROW brought together a mix of smart, generous, and seriously impressive women from different industries, backgrounds, and experiences – all with the same goal: to grow."

– Moire Brandt (Mentee, Spring 2025)



"I received thought-provoking and actionable feedback (my favorite kind!) to set me on a path of growth and success. With each session, I see how valuable GROW is to mid-career professionals like me."

– Jennifer Prystupa (Mentee, Fall 2025)



"Empowering the mentees with tools, resources, and encouragement was truly uplifting and inspirational for me – it made me realize how critical it is for women to have other strong women around them to lift them up."

– Samreen Malik, Senior Vice President, Healthcare Territory Executive, PNC Bank

Corporate Partnerships Driving Inclusive, High Performance Workplaces

CWIB is leading the way in partnering with organizations to translate research into action, equipping leaders with practical tools, data-driven insight, and collaborative learning experiences that strengthen retention, accelerate advancement, and build more inclusive, high-performing workplaces.

ERG/BRG Leadership Roundtables

CWIB hosts communities of leaders who support and advocate for women within their organizations. Roundtables bring together corporate leaders to exchange best practices for engaging their organizations to better support, retain, and advance women. The Roundtables also serve as critical voices, providing insights directly informing CWIB's future research agenda and program design.

Project Consulting: Inclusive Workplace Solutions

CWIB partners with companies delivering firm-specific engagements designed to address real organizational challenges. By analyzing internal company data and integrating leading academic research, CWIB develops tailored strategies, frameworks, and practical toolkits that help organizations create diverse, engaged, and high-performing teams.

Nareit FOUNDATION sanofi

Sponsorship of Industry-Specific Mentorship

Companies can sponsor industry-specific cohorts within CWIB's flagship GROW virtual mentorship program – a powerful way for partners to invest in leadership pipelines while strengthening meaningful connections within their sectors.

Sanofi sponsored a cohort focused on healthcare professionals, creating space for peer learning and leadership development with mentorship provided by Sanofi senior executives.

CWIB is also proud to be a recipient of the Nareit Foundation's Dividends through Diversity grant. This support is accelerating the GROW mentorship platform, and is designed to support leadership growth for mid-career professionals within the real estate and REIT industries.

Studies show that gender diverse executive teams lead to more innovation and profitability

Since 2019, our Corporate partners have included:





















































Our Mission in Action: Bringing Academics and Practitioners Together

CWIB's annual conference is a one-day event at Rutgers Business School that convenes leading scholars and corporate practitioners for dynamic conversations at the intersection of research and real-world practice. Through engaging panels and interactive breakout sessions, participants explore recent findings, current workplace challenges, and opportunities for meaningful impact. Attendees gain research-backed insights they can translate into action, while building high-impact connections with academic thought leaders and accomplished executives in focused, small-group settings. Together, participants examine emerging trends shaping women's advancement, inspire future research that strengthens leadership and workplace inclusion, and create a collaborative space where diverse perspectives help shape the future.

Since 2023,

CWIB has welcomed

570+ conference participants (virtual and in-person)

representing **100+ Companies and Non-Profit Organizations**

in partnership with **30+ Academic Institutions and Think Tanks**



Conversations that Matter:

Conference Themes and Panel Highlights

2023: Women in Hybrid & Remote Work

Featured Sessions:

- Remote Work and Career Advancement: Is there a Gender Gap?
- Evolution of Workspace Design to Facilitate Collaboration and Engagement
- Reimagine Inclusion: Fireside Chat with Best-Selling Author, Mita Mallick

2024: Reimagining the Advancement of Women

Featured Sessions:

- Advancing Women in the Evolving DEIB Landscape
- Gender and Power: How Definitions of Power Affect Women in the Workplace
- Inclusive Leadership Keynote: What Will Matter Most in the Era of AI with Karalee Close, Head of Talent and Organization, Accenture

2025: The Future of Workplace Belonging: Gender, Technology, and Connection

Featured Sessions:

- Technology and Community: Help or Hindrance?
- ERGs, BRGs, and Professional Networks as Engines of Belonging
- Talk to Me Nice - The Seven Trust Languages for a Better Workplace: Fireside Chat with Best-Selling Author Minda Harts





Fostering Full-Circle Moments That Connect Women Across All Stages

CWIB offers programming throughout your career from students beginning their journeys, to mid-career professionals expanding their influence, to senior leaders shaping the future at the highest levels. We create spaces where mid-career and executive women learn from one another, exchange ideas, and build meaningful relationships that extend beyond a single event.







60+
IN-PERSON
AND VIRTUAL EVENTS

7,100+
ATTENDEES

CWIB hosts regular webinars and in-person events, focused on equipping mid-career professionals with the skills, insights, and strategies needed to thrive. Best-selling authors, accomplished professionals, seasoned executive coaches and leading experts share practical guidance through engaging workshops and conversations, helping participants strengthen leadership capacity and drive meaningful career growth.

Top Left: Wine & Wealth Event building financial literacy

Bottom Left: Annual Golf Clinic featuring hands-on instruction from Rutgers Golf Team

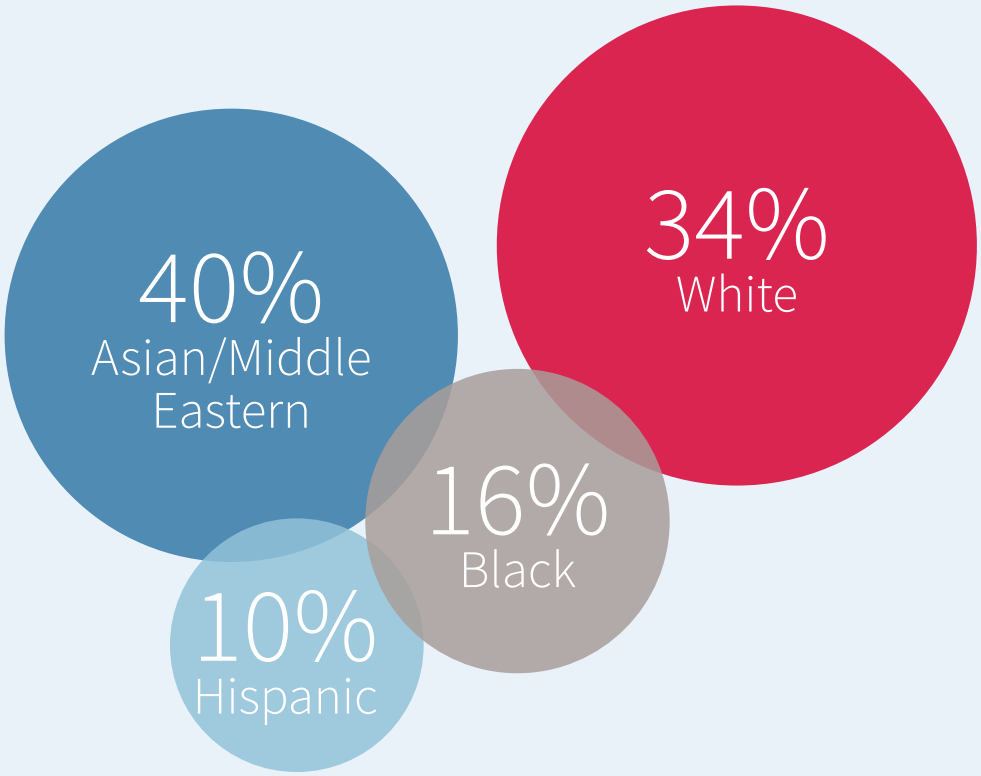
Bottom Right: In-person gathering of GROW mentors and mentees

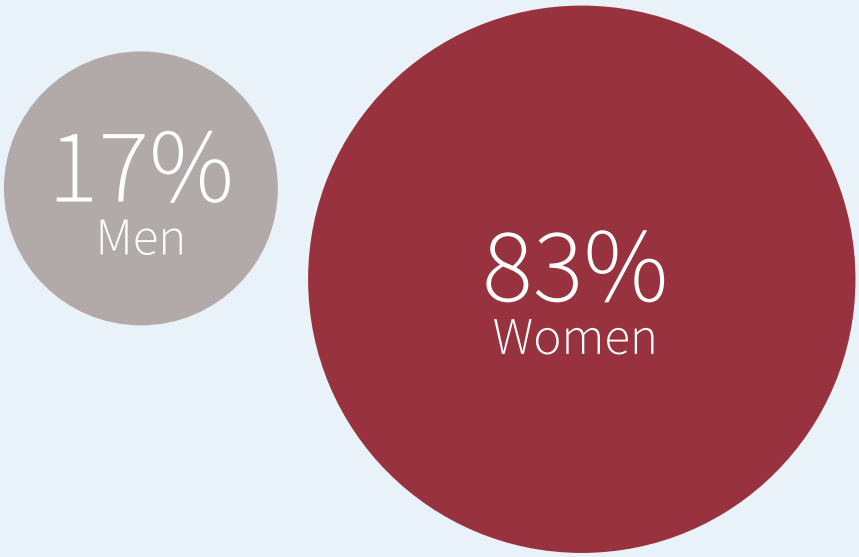
Scholarships

CWIB awards selected students with up to $5,000 in scholarship money to fund expenses while pursuing a degree at RBS. These scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate a commitment to developing their own leadership potential as a woman leader and/or advancing other women in business. By providing scholarships to students, we are removing a financial barrier to access education, as well as providing financial support for deserving students to attend educational events that support their learning and growth.

Approximately $300,000 in scholarships have been awarded to date.

Our Inclusive Community





Our Team and Supporters

With deepest gratitude, we thank the members of our growing network for your ongoing support of CWIB. Because of your time, generosity, and leadership, we're building community and empowering women with the skills and confidence to succeed as business leaders.

Faculty/Staff



Lisa Kaplowitz
Co-Founder and Executive Director



Beth Gellert
Associate Director



Viviana Ortega
Program Coordinator



Krystal Duarte, Ph.D.
Post-Doc Research Associate

Research Fellows



Mason Ameri, PhD
Rutgers Business School Professor of Practice, Management & Global Business, Executive Director of RBS Honors Program



Kristina Durante, PhD
Rutgers Business School Professor and Vice Chair, Marketing



Olivia Foster Gimbel, PhD
Rutgers Business School Assistant Professor, Management & Global Business



Simi Kedia, PhD
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Terri Kurtzberg, PhD
Rutgers Business School Professor, Management & Global Business, Dean's Research Professor



Kate Mangino, PhD
Author, Consultant, Facilitator, Speaker



Phyllis Siegel, PhD
Rutgers Business School Associate Professor, Management & Global Business



Sevincgul Ulu
Southern Illinois University (SIU), Carbondale, Assistant Professor, Marketing



Alex Van Zant
Rutgers Business School Assistant Professor, Management & Global Business

Student Interns



Thank you to the Rutgers Business School student interns who support CWIB each semester. Your dedication, ideas, and hard work strengthen our programs.

Advisory Board



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Adam Feigenbaum
Senior Advisor, Susquehanna Growth Equity



Melissa Kung
Senior Finance Director
Johnson & Johnson



Sheila McGrath
Independent Director, Granite Point Mortgage Trust



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Harding Loevner



Candice Tse
MD, Global Head of Strategic Advisory Solutions, Goldman Sachs



Katie Stratton
CGO
Shipt

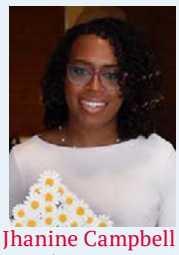
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Ashley Hull
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Rutgers Business School



Hira Hussain
Team Lead, Control Department
Fidelity Investments



Pranitha Kashyap
Corporate Financial Strategy
Allegiant Air



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Financial Sponsor Coverage
Deloitte



Mara Domanski
Senior Customer Success Manager
Workday



Florianna (Flo) Heun
Project Manager
Orion Innovation



Venu Muni
Director of Inventory Management
Capacity LLC



Julie Petulla
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