

PRESS RELEASE

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Empowering Voices and Transformative Journeys Highlight Women's History Month Celebration at WUST

WISE–WE Fellowship Gains Strong Momentum

Alexandria, VA — March 26, 2026 — More than a hundred accomplished women gathered at Washington University of Science and Technology (WUST) for a powerful Women's History Month program that redefined the traditional networking event—transforming it into an immersive, experience-driven platform for leadership, storytelling, and connection.

Titled “*Rewriting the Narrative: Women Building Careers on Their Own Terms*,” the event brought together professionals from across the DMV region to explore career growth, leadership, and intentional career design. The program was hosted in collaboration with the [Association of Black Women in Project and Program Management \(ABWIPPM\)](#), the [Project Management Institute Washington DC Chapter](#), and WUST as part of the celebration of Women's History Month 2026.

Among the keynote panelists was [Mrs. Farhana Hanip](#), Chief Financial Officer of WUST and President of PeopleNTech, joined by an accomplished lineup of leaders: [Lennecia S. Eley](#), Assistant Dean and Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University; [Dr. Amalisha Sabie-Aridi](#), STEM-MBA Program Director at WUST; [Ratima Kataria](#), Vice President for Health IT Strategy at ICF; and [Tareka Wheeler](#), Project Management Professional and industry leader.

The panel was expertly moderated by [Felicia Tribble](#), Chapter Lead of ABWIPPM, who guided a thoughtful and engaging discussion on resilience, leadership transitions, entrepreneurship, and redefining success across different stages of life and career. Panelists shared candid reflections on challenges and pivotal moments, offering both inspiration and practical insight to attendees.

Farhana Hanip underscored the importance of honesty, hard work, and purpose-driven success, while also acknowledging the critical role of family support. She reflected on how she and her husband, [Abubokor Hanip](#), Chancellor and Chairman of WUST, navigated challenges together—demonstrating resilience through partnership.

In his remarks, Abubokor Hanip congratulated the participating women on their courageous journeys and emphasized the importance of ensuring women have equitable opportunities to contribute to global progress.

Tareka Wheeler highlighted the importance of confidence and self-advocacy, encouraging women to “show up” boldly—what she described as the “audacity to show off.” Dr. Sabie-Aridi spoke about persistence and resilience as foundational to growth, while Ratima Kataria emphasized the importance of distinguishing oneself. Dr. Eley reinforced the value of preparation for the next level of opportunity.

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A major highlight of the evening was the announcement of the **WISE–WE (Women Entrepreneurs) Fellowship Program** by [Priya Kothari](#), Executive Director of the WUST Foundation. The initiative is designed to support emerging women entrepreneurs through mentorship, guidance, and access to institutional resources. Demonstrating immediate impact and strong interest, **more than 10 women signed up for the fellowship program during the event**, underscoring the demand for platforms that empower women to lead, build, and innovate.

Beyond the panel, the program was intentionally designed to foster meaningful engagement. Structured networking, interactive breakout sessions, and community dialogue created opportunities for attendees to connect, exchange ideas, and build lasting professional relationships. Breakout sessions were led by [Laurin Kelly](#) and [Kanika Tolver](#), focusing on career advancement and consulting in project management.

The success of the event was driven by the collaborative efforts of the WUST Marketing and Special Projects teams, led by [Jose Ortega](#), Director of Marketing. Guided by a vision to move beyond traditional networking formats, the team reimaged the event as an immersive experience designed to engage attendees on multiple levels.

Through thoughtful design, seamless execution, and a refined cherry blossom–inspired aesthetic—including a stunning floral installation that became a focal point of the evening—the space was transformed into a visually captivating and memorable environment. The result was not simply an event, but an experience that embodied renewal, growth, and empowerment, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

WUST’s project management student volunteers also played a vital role in the event’s success, providing exceptional support across registration, logistics, and guest experience, ensuring a seamless and welcoming environment for all attendees.

As conversations continued through networking and dinner, the evening concluded with reflections that highlighted its lasting impact—empowering women to lead with confidence, embrace their journeys, and continue rewriting their narratives.

About Washington University of Science and Technology

Washington University of Science and Technology is committed to delivering innovative academic programs and fostering industry partnerships that prepare students for success in today’s evolving workforce. Through initiatives such as the [WISE Accelerator](#) and the WISE–WE Fellowship Program, the university continues to create pathways for leadership, entrepreneurship, and community impact.

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