

Carey hosts latest event in female mentoring programme



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Chilean professor Claudia Berger delivered a session on public speaking to a group of mentees last week as part of a series of events in the second edition of Carey's female mentoring programme, Learning to Lead.

Berger spoke last Tuesday, following on from the launch of the edition on 3 May, where Chile's Minister for Women and Gender Equality, Isabel Plá, spoke about women's career development and the challenges they face in reaching senior positions.

A group of nine mentees are benefiting from the events, which cover a wide range of topics designed to develop their professional skills. Also last month, three female partners - Shearman & Sterling LLP New York's Denise Grant, Guyer & Regules' Corina Bove, and Souto, Correa, Cesa, Lummertz & Amaral Advogados' Raquel Stein – led a networking and personal branding panel which was moderated by Carey counsel Patricia Silberman.

In August, a public relations specialist is scheduled to lead a session on communication, and in October, mentees will take part in a session focused on negotiation skills. Mentees also benefit from monthly one-on-one sessions which focus on the specific needs and concerns affecting each lawyer in her career. "I wish I'd had a mentor when I was younger!" notes mentor and legal counsel from Anglo American Paola Cifuentes. "It's helpful for younger lawyers to get the perspective of a woman – who has been through the same process as a lawyer and a woman – on the dos and don'ts in their career."

The Learning to Lead programme, which is also supported by the New York Bar's Vance Centre, was set up in 2015 and is coordinated by the Chilean representatives of the Vance Centre Women in the Profession Programme (WIP): Carey's Patricia Silberman and A y G Abogados' Carolina Menichetti. The programme's board is composed of Carey's Chairman Jorge Carey; partners Jessica Power and Lorena Pavic who are founders of the programme; and partner Francisca Corti.

The second edition sees the participation of male mentors for the first time. As Corti explains, to stamp out on gender inequality and stereotypes in the workplace, men need to participate. "Men need to be involved in

promoting gender equality to make real changes in the private and public sector,” Corti says. “Without this partnership, we won’t be able to produce lasting social changes.”

Corti goes on to say how the inclusion of male mentors helps prepare female mentees for the realities of working in today’s legal world. “Male mentors can be of real help to [female mentees] to help them develop skills and traits more usually associated to men because of gender stereotypes,” she says.

This edition’s mentors are: partners Marcos Ríos and Francisco Ugarte from Carey; María Loreto Silva from Bofill Escobar Abogados; Teresa Cremaschi from Barros & Errázuriz Abogados; Verónica Waissbluth from Waissbluth, Martorell & Arrieta Abogados; general counsel Dafne González from GNL Quintero; legal counsel Paola Cifuentes from Anglo American; Rosario Celedón from Banco Central de Chile; and researcher and academic María Agnes Salah from Universidad de Chile.

Earlier this year, Six Chilean firms hosted the Vance Centre’s first Women in the Profession (WIP) event in Santiago. Carey was one of these firms, alongside A & G Abogados, Albagli Zaliasnik, Alessandri, Bofill Escobar and Recabarren & Asociados.

Mentor Salah notes how times have significantly changed since her early days as a lawyer. “I’m sad to say the word ‘mentorship’ was alien back when I started my legal career,” she says. “But I am confident of the benefits of mentorships: it’s a space to share experiences lived by other lawyers which can enrich the perspectives of younger lawyers; it also provides a space to analyse the challenges mentees will face in their careers, providing them innovative tools to confront them.”

Other initiatives across the region demonstrate how more and more firms are taking an active role in helping to break the gender moulds of both male and female lawyers. This year’s International Women’s Day marked a growing number of firms taking steps such as more flexi-time for men and longer paternity leave as just some of the efforts taken in redefining the fight against gender stereotypes in the legal workplace.

Chile’s legal market has the lowest number of female partners among featuring in the Latin Lawyer 250. Latin Lawyer’s most recent women in law survey found that only 9% of law firm partners are women. Salah highlights how this regrettably is not a phenomenon limited to the legal profession. “The misconception of the role of women, the role they play in family and society, has contributed to this profound inertia against the implementation of changes needed,” she says. “There has been a persistent lack of consciousness on the importance of this topic [of women in senior positions].”

Learning to Lead works with young female lawyers in the public and private sector of Chile, helping them acquire professional and personal leadership skills, with the aim of increasing the number of female lawyers in senior positions across law firms, in-house counsel and the judicial branch in Chile.

Country :

Chile