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Gender equality, as an idea and as a demand for human rights, has transformed both scholarship and public life in our times. The celebration of the Tercentennial in 2001 offered an opportunity to contemplate gender equality in the context of Yale University's history. When the planning for the Tercentennial was well underway, late in the spring of 2000, women from the faculty and administration came together to ensure that women's presence would be represented. Certainly we could have organized a wonderful conference about cutting-edge research at Yale, starring Yale faculty who did research on gender: historians, lawyers, doctors, artists, urbanists, nurses, and psychologists. As our subsequent dinners have demonstrated, we had no shortage of engaging speakers doing important work. But after much discussion, we who were faculty members chose to invite alumnae back to Yale to speak about how gender has mattered in their lives and careers.

Time was short. In August 2000, I took home a messy folder full of notes and suggestions. I was determined to make a first draft of a program for a major conference to share with the rest of the committee. Many, many Yale alumnae had done path-breaking work on gender, providing leadership all over the world on questions of gender equality. Would they come? Or would time at Yale be seen as a difficult period in prominent women's lives? What themes would encourage them to return to campus and participate? We asked all of our speakers to address how gender equality had altered intellectual agendas within and beyond universities, in our nation and in the larger world, and how gender equality has, and has not, been achieved. We asked them to discuss how gender equality had been articulated, argued, and understood. We hoped they would explore how experiences of gender had influenced their lives as scholars, practitioners, entrepreneurs, activists, and artists.

As our list of invitees grew, so did the size of the committee working on the conference. We were two dozen faculty members from around the campus—from Arts and Sciences, the Medical School, the School of Nursing, the Law School, the School of Architecture, the School of Management, and the Divinity School. Many of us had never met, but we represented the increasing presence of senior women as faculty members and administrators at Yale in the 1990s. Yet much work was still necessary to complete the project of women's full integration into all parts of the University. We could celebrate accomplishments, we could network with the alumnae, but we needed to persuade the larger university community of the distance still to be traversed.

In September 2001, we held *Gender Matters*. Over three hundred people packed the Law School auditorium to hear five panels. In the opening one, alumnae who were university presidents addressed the topic of "Women and Universities." The following day, internationally known scholars and scientists tackled "Invention: New Research Questions." Then a poet, a novelist, and a filmmaker transported us to "Imagination: Center of the Arts." After luncheon remarks by Linda Koch Lorimer, Vice President and Secretary of Yale University, we heard about "Leadership: Reinventing the Local and the Global." After tea, the speakers were "Founders, Entrepreneurs, and Activists." All of our presenters explored how the idea of gender equality has influenced their definitions of excellence. They provided an exceptional program of great intellectual breadth and intensity. In the audience were dozens more faculty, students, and alumni/ae who asked probing questions, debated the issues over lunch and dinner, and stayed up into the night. Together we had an opportunity to speak and listen, to link theory with practice, to link past with present and future. All of us who worked for a year and a half to create *Gender Matters* felt that it marked the beginning of a new commitment to gender equality as part of everyday life at Yale as well as new respect for scholarship on gender. We hope you will share our excitement about working together in the coming years to make this happen.