

# Women learning to build political muscle

■ Yale Women's Campaign School held at University of Idaho aims at helping political aspirations come true

By JOEL MILLS  
OF THE TRIBUNE

MOSCOW — Amaia Kirtland wants to be a U.S. senator and maybe even the president of the United States someday.

Noemi Herrera has more modest goals, like getting elected to the state Legislature so she can help the Hispanic people of Idaho.

Both women are getting a head start on their political aspirations at a three-day Yale University Women's Campaign School at the University of Idaho. The school helps women from around the country and world run for political office and run election campaigns.

"In order to make some of those laws to help these people, you have to be in office," says Herrera, a 27-year-old psychology major from Nampa. She says growing up in Idaho with her Mexican parents, both resident aliens who could not vote, she never saw a connection between politics and real life.

"I always wanted to make a change to make my community advance," Herrera says. But not until she joined the recently formed UI chapter of the Boise-based Women of Color Alliance did she realize the most rapid societal changes come from the top.



Noemi  
Herrera



Amaia  
Kirtland



Sonya  
Rosario



Carolanne  
Curry

Kirtland's mother taught high school government in her hometown of Boise. "I've been involved in politics since day one," says the 20-year-old political science major, and she thought she knew a lot about political campaigns.

But she says the conference has opened her eyes to the nuts and bolts that hold a campaign together and make it run.

"It's really like a stepping stone," Kirtland says of the toolbox she feels the conference has opened for her. Not quite ready for that Senate campaign yet, she says she will first flex her new political muscle in coming student elections.

Sonya Rosario, executive director of the Women of Color Alliance, was

instrumental in bringing the Yale campaign school to the Northwest. She attended a conference in New Haven in July of last year and was so impressed she asked its directors to come to Idaho.

"Not everybody has the finances to fly to Connecticut, to pay \$950 for the training plus pay for hotels, taxis and all the things you need when you're traveling," Rosario says. The portable version of the campaign school is \$100 for advance registrants.

Rosario says she was tired of seeing women underrepresented in the Legislature, where 28 of 105 seats are held by women.

"If we look at the Capitol, the story is pretty telling. Men are making de-

isions for women's bodies, families and homes."

She hopes the campaign school will empower women to run for office and direct campaigns that will bring more women into the lawmaking body.

"And people of color as well."

Carolanne Curry is president emeritus of the Yale campaign school. She says the program has been taken to Houston, Miami, New York City, Boston and other East Coast cities. But this is its first run in this part of the country.

"We're opening up to the women of the Northwest an opportunity to understand what the campaign process is and to demystify what the campaign process is," Curry says.

Among skills like fund-raising, communications, voter registration and strategy development, Curry says the school aims to teach something even more fundamental.

"Self assurance. Confidence. Leadership skills," she ticks off. "They feel a lack of self confidence, but they are as capable of doing this as any person out there. They're not limited because of gender, and they're not limited because of experience or skills."

Curry says that underlying lack of confidence stems from the 200 years it took American women just to get

## 'Iron Jawed Angels' will be shown at UI

MOSCOW — The HBO film "Iron Jawed Angels," about the women who fought for the right to vote, will be shown at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the University of Idaho Student Union Building Borah Theater.

The Idaho Women's Network will staff a voter registration table, and a discussion will be held after the showing, sponsored by the UI Women's Center.

the vote, and the two decades after that their vote was still dictated by the man of the house.

"From 1776 to 1920 women were regarded as property rather than individuals in their own right," she says.

But along with the vote came a progression toward independence through women entering the workplace, civil rights and women's rights. She sees the campaign school as a natural evolution of that progression.

The campaign school runs through Saturday and will return next year, Curry says.

Mills may be contacted at [jmills@lmtribune.com](mailto:jmills@lmtribune.com)

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