Fact Sheet:

*The Institute is a non-partisan, educational entity. Programs of the Institute are open to participants regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, and status as a military veteran.*

History:

In 1996, the Institute for Women in Public Life was founded at UMSL. Its focus was to serve the needs of the students, a majority of whom were female. The first major program was NEW Leadership Midwest, a college women’s week-long residential program co-sponsored by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at Rutgers. The following year, NEW Leadership Midwest later became the “21st Century Leadership Academy,” and the Institute newsletter, Woman Watch, was begun. It is the only publication that lists women appointed to positions in state and local government. It is mailed to over 4000 people around the country and is available on the Institute’s website.

In 1998, State Rep. Sue Shear, the 9th woman to serve in the House when she was elected in 1972, retired from the legislature due to failing health. The adoption of legislative term limits in 1994 meant that no woman would ever exceed her 26 years in the legislature. To honor her unique status, the University of Missouri Board of Curators voted unanimously to rename the Institute in her honor. The legislature unanimously ratified this decision. The Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life became the second university-based public policy center named for a woman office holder. The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine was created in 1989. Like the Sue Shear Institute, the Center hosts a CAWP-inspired NEW Leadership Program, NEW Leadership Maine.

Funding:

The Institute’s primary funding comes through the University of Missouri’s higher education allocation, which is recommended by the state’s Coordinating Board for Higher education and must be approved annually by the Legislature and the Governor. In 1998, the Institute was allocated about $250,000. Since then it has seldom been higher, and often as much as 10% has been held back due to budget constraints.

Additional funding comes from fees charged for programs, donations from over 500 individual supporters, foundations, and corporations, including: Enterprise-Rent-A-Car, the Institute of International Education, and the UMSL Women’s Leadership Council.
College Student Leadership Educational Programs:

The Institute’s course offerings include two college student leadership development programs.

The 21st Leadership Academy

This national model for a university hosted program began in 1998 as a campus residential program for 36 students, 4 from each of 9 MO public universities. Each participating campus (including UMSL) selects its own students based upon the campus’ view of who would benefit most from this experience. Considerations include prior activities in the public policy arena, leadership on campus, interest in women’s public sector leadership, and ability to share the experience with others at the home campus. The campuses also help underwrite the cost of their students’ participation. This week-long program includes opportunities to meet with community, public and private sector leaders who serve as role models and mentors. Participants enhance their public speaking, networking and negotiating skills. In addition, gender related issues such as handshaking, professional attire and appearance and nametag placement are also addressed. Civic engagement opportunities and a snapshot of the public policy process are also included in the curriculum.

LEAD program

This program was established in 2010 to support and encourage the civic engagement of students at UMSL, and instill in them a passion for women’s public sector leadership. The curriculum is delivered through 8-10 activities that are held over the course of the fall semester. In addition to facilitating a sense of community among female student leaders on campus, the LEAD program provides students with an opportunity to develop and practice leadership skills that can be applied to the campus community and beyond. Specifically, LEAD participants gain self-confidence through training in negotiation and networking skills, increased understanding of their leadership strengths, and interactions with women leaders. In addition to the women leaders they meet through the LEAD program, students are strongly encouraged to participate in the Women’s University Mentoring Project during the spring semester following their LEAD experience. Funding for LEAD is provided through a grant from the Women’s Leadership Council at UMSL.
Girls’ Summit

The goals of the Girls’ Summit pilot were two-fold: to provide LEAD program participants an opportunity to apply the leadership skills they had learned throughout the semester by planning and executing a large-scale community event, and to expose St. Louis-area middle school students from diverse backgrounds to opportunities that may help them improve school performance and fulfill long-term life goals. The pilot for this one-day program was funded by the National Association of Women Judges and held on the UMSL campus.

Students from public, charter, and faith-based schools in St. Louis City and County were invited to hear speakers who had overcome significant odds as young women to become attorneys, judges, and successful businesswomen. One of the speakers was a resident of Almost Home, and shared her struggle as a teenage mom trying to finish her education while also working. A total of 89 students from seven schools participated in the pilot.

Both the students and their advisors were very enthusiastic about the Summit. The Institute is seeking funding to replicate the Summit with Fall 2014 LEAD program participants and middle school students. Enrollment will be dictated by the funding this project receives.

Community-Based Educational Programs:

The Institute also offers several programs for the broader community. This group of programs is offered on a varied schedule through the Sue Shear Institute:

- **Pipeline to Local Office**
  Offered annually in the later part of January, this two evening program focuses on campaigns for local government and school boards offices. Faculty includes current office holders, generally graduates of the program, and Institute staff. Topics include figuring out the number of votes needed to win, who the voters are, developing a realistic budget, fund raising, creating a timeline and the most cost effective ways to reach targeted voters.

- **Pipeline to Public Office**
  Offered in November of odd numbered years, this 1.5 day program covers the general formula for a successful campaign. Staff, subject matter experts and current or former office holders comprise the faculty. This program covers many of the same topics as the Pipeline to Local Office and also includes a public speaking skills and practice module. In addition, the challenge of identifying likely voters in both primary and general elections is covered.

Judiciary:

For over a decade, the Institute has joined with the Women Lawyers’ Association of Greater St. Louis to host a workshop on the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan’s application and selection process. The faculty for this program includes recently appointed judges, members of the selection commissions as well as a representative from the Governor’s office, when possible. The WLA generally arranges for CLE credits.
The Sue Shear Institute keeps the only publicly available database on the diversity of the membership of the courts that are part of the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan as well as the diversity of the Commissions that are responsible for selecting the three member panel from which the Governor appoints the new judge. The current information is maintained on the Institute’s website.

Since 2010, the Judicial Selection Commissions have held public interviews for all judicial vacancies. Institute Director Eveloff has attended most of these interviews and offers feedback to applicants, and to members of the Commission, when requested, regarding the questions asked.

**Missouri Board and Commissions:**

To encourage more women to seek appointments and exercise leadership in these positions, the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life has compiled a list of some state Boards that can significantly influence policy in Missouri, their current gender composition, and vacant positions. This booklet is available on the Institute’s website.

In the past, The Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life maintained a “Talent Bank.” This database, created in 1996, was intended to be a resource for those interested in appointing qualified women to public boards and commissions in Missouri. The Institute continues to assist women leaders interested in pursuing appointments to boards, commissions, and other posts at the local and state levels by helping them better understand the process and position themselves for consideration. The Institute also continues to advocate with elected officials and other authorities charged with filling these positions and maintains partnerships with the Office of the Mayor in St. Louis, the Women's Foundation of Greater St. Louis, and the Kansas City Women’s Foundation to advance this work.

**Community Outreach:**

The staff of the Institute gives talks about the state of women in public life to community groups as well as more academic talks at other universities, including Washington University, St. Louis University, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, Missouri State University, and others.

**Partnerships**

Many organizations have requested presentations from Institute staff and partner with the Institute. Among these are the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, World Affairs Council, Office of International Visitors, Fulbright International Fellowship Program, Business and Professional Women, League of Women Voters, Women Lawyers’ Association, The Junior League, America Association of University Women, and others.

The Sue Shear Institute also has affiliations with regional and national groups that track and promote women’s civic engagement, including: the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University; the American Association of University Women; KC Women’s Foundation; The Infinity Project at the University of Minnesota; and the 2012 Project.
On campus, the Institute partners with the Executive Leadership Consortium, the Gender Studies program, the Political Science Department, the College of Nursing, the Office of Student Life, and various other units to provide civic education to students, faculty and staff.