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Women's Fund Chief Named to two National Leadership Posts

Carla Oleska, CEO of the Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts, has been chosen to participate in the **First Annual Women Leaders Summit: Global Solidarity for Empowering Women** on October 13, 2010 at the Won Buddhist Center at the **United Nations, New York**. She has also been chosen to become a **Vision 2020 National Delegate** and will meet with the **Congress of National Delegates in Philadelphia** on October 21, 2010.

The First Annual Women Leaders Summit is a convening of 50 women leaders from religious, spiritual, academic and secular feminist backgrounds to engage in multigenerational, inter-religious and interdisciplinary dialogue to strengthen women's leadership.

The goal of the Women Leaders Summit's is to strengthen the bonds between various religious and secular women leaders, preparing them to work together at the upcoming Universal Ethics Conference at the United Nations in 2011. The Summit's focus on gender equality will build the foundation for further work on the ethical, moral and spiritual dimensions of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals which will be the main focus of the 2011 Universal Ethics Conference.

The Women Leaders Summit is sponsored by the United Nations Foundation, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and Religions for Peace International.

Oleska joins another prestigious group later in October when she goes to Philadelphia to become a **Vision 2020 National Delegate**.

More than 1,000 registered to nominate or become **Vision 2020 National Delegates**, but in the end it came down to 102 extraordinary women who will serve as chief advocates

for women's leadership and equality in their home states. **Carla Oleska** has been chosen as one of the delegates for Massachusetts.

Vision 2020 is a national project focused on advancing gender equality by energizing the dialogue about women and leadership. Its first public event takes place on Oct. 21-22, 2010, when a congress of national delegates, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, will meet at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia to launch an action agenda to move America toward equality by 2020, the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment. The name of the conference is **Vision 2020: An American Conversation about Women and Leadership**.

The national search for delegates focused on finding women who have demonstrated a commitment to helping women and girls. These delegates are willing to mobilize resources to bring about positive change and implement elements of the decade-long Vision 2020 agenda, signing on for a minimum three-year term following the conference.

Delegate nominations came from individuals and organizations across the country, including Vision 2020 National Allies, U.S. governors, senators and representatives.

Speaking about the value of her participation in these events Oleska said, “While I am personally honored to be chosen for participation, I am extremely excited to gather new ideas and knowledge that can be of use to women and their communities here in western Massachusetts. These summits will bring together women from across the country, allowing us to explore commonalities, share our local endeavors, and most importantly, establish networks for increasing women’s leadership in the creation of solutions to our national and global challenges.”

Oleska is Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Fund of Western Massachusetts and has held the position since 2006. Prior to joining the Fund, she had a long and varied career in administration and teaching at Elms College, Chicopee, Mass. She has more than 20 years of professional experience in creatively addressing the needs of women and girls, specializing in the design of programs enhancing academic preparation, higher education access, and degree completion. Her civic involvement includes service on numerous boards and committees, including Girl Scouts of Pioneer Valley, the Polish Center for Discovery and Learning, the Board of Directors for Community Action of Franklin and Hampshire Counties, the Hampden County Literacy Cabinet, and is co-founder of the Women’s Leadership Network .

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