

TESTIMONIALS

I realized there were no performance criteria at my company for evaluating my Diversity & Inclusion impact. So, I asked people to provide [direct feedback](#) on my impact:

ON KEEPING MARGINALIZED TECHNOLOGISTS RETAINED IN TECH:

“Lea was hugely influential in my decision to both finish my Computer Science degree and to join Google as a software engineer. She has gone out of her way to make me feel at home at Google, and her work highlighting other women engineers has been incredibly inspiring to me. Lea is a leader who's touched thousands with her work and hugely bolstered Google's reputation as a company....”

Software Engineer at Google (she/her)

“Lea was the keynote speaker at Google's 6th annual GWE summit. **The following day when one of the directors asked what our favorite part of the previous day was, scattered audience members shouted "the keynote speaker" in unison.** And I wholeheartedly agree, Lea's speech was moving and inspiring. The openness with which she discussed the issues that faced women in tech was powerful. As the only girl on my team and one of the few on my floor, Lea's speech and introduction to Women in Silicon Valley was a well-timed reminder that success has no one singular image and to reach for something bigger than myself.”

Engineering Practicum Intern at Google, Student at Duke University (she/her)

“Lea used her platform to help share my personal story in a very powerful way. As an immigrant from Mali who learned English in this country before becoming a tech founder in Silicon Valley, I often struggled to find my voice throughout my life. My interview with WoSV helped me talk about the challenges of being a Black Founder. Many investors, founders, future mentors and peers read my story on WoSV which ultimately helped to open many doors.”

CEO at Tech Start-up (she/her)

“Lea has had an undeniable impact in my trajectory to be a software developer. **It is very likely that without her I would not be in tech anymore.** As a Latina it is rare to be supported as a legitimate tech professional, and Lea's support has always been present through the ups and downs of my career. She has been there to give me a voice when I

needed it most. Through Women of Silicon Valley I have had an outlet to share my accomplishments as well as a constant source of inspiration...”

Freelance Software Developer (she/her)

“While I was at Google and afterwards, Lea was a consistent source of support. Whenever I felt uncomfortable or marginalized, or noticed something within the org that raised a red flag, Lea helped me identify and walk through what I was feeling and **come up with an action plan to move forward**. Having Lea as a friend and source of inspiration kept me motivated to stay at Google and have faith that things would get better as a direct result of her work and people like her.”

Student at Harvard Business School (she/her)

“Oftentimes I find myself questioning whether [tech] is a sustainable or realistic path, but publicly seeing blueprints for having that and success stories, as well as challenges these other awesome humans are facing (because hearing about challenges is validating as well), is so motivating. **When people wring their hands and wonder what can be done about diversity in tech and say "oh, it's so hard, it's a pipeline problem" or whatever else, I hope people see Women of Silicon Valley as a really crucial vehicle for retention and encouragement for women in tech and women aspiring to be in tech.**

Besides that, Lea herself has been so influential in the way she thinks about herself and her identities and how they play in to what she does and the energy she brings to a space and how to command that energy. Just getting dinner with her is always refreshing, validating, and all-around inspiring. She is freaking smart, both in engineering and in life, and she knows herself, which is a priceless quality; any company/organization/endeavor would be lucky to have any amount of her headspace!”

Algorithms Engineer at Apple (she/her)

“I am not sure I would be able to stay in tech, on an all-male product team, if I didn't have the support system and visibility that Lea is creating for us. **Burnout of Latinas/women/queer people in tech is very real**, and I am grateful that Lea is helping to foster a community to create the change that is necessary... You have someone who is very skilled at doing this - I really recommend valuing this unique intersectional work adequately, because we would notice the high cost of its absence.”

Product Manager at PastureMap (she/her or they/them)

“Meeting Lea has been a great privilege. She was one of the few people that understands the challenges and needs for marginalized identities in tech. I really appreciate the time and space she has created for my to share my story and journey as a Diné student trying to create a path to tech. It has not been easy to navigate the tech space where there is hardly any representation, programming, and opportunity for Indigenous people. **Meeting and**

interacting with allies like Lea has motivated me to continue to find pathways to change tech to be more inclusive and accessible to Native folks. She understands the systemic issues that exist that continue to keep Natives and tech separate. I admire her for the important, impactful, and hard work she does for communities and identities that need representation in tech spaces.

I think that the importance of diversity and inclusion work is imperative at tech giants like Google. You need people that actually care about and have a deep understanding of the issues surrounding tech inclusion. Lea has proven herself to be a champion for people who need to be a part of these spaces but are not able to until certain changes are met from the inside.”

Student at Stanford University (he/him)

“Lea's WoSV series is a constant reminder that I can succeed as a female engineer in a male-dominated space. Recently, I have become more interested in biotech investment, which is an area with very, very few women. Seeing the diversity, intelligence, and resilience of the women that Lea has profiled helps me to approach those spaces with more confidence, inspired by the stories of other women who have faced and overcome far more. Furthermore, Lea's tracking of her D&I work has encouraged me to start tracking the amount of unpaid mentorship and diversity work that I do (and have been asked to do) while being a graduate student. I think it is critically important that this kind of work be recognized (and compensated), and without Lea sharing this best practice of hers I would not have thought to start tracking those things for myself, which I think is going to make a big difference in my career as I move to apply for fellowships and eventually faculty positions.”

MD/PhD Student at Stanford University (she/her)

“I've known Lea 3+ years, and she has contributed to ~10+ personal & professional decisions during that time. She has always been accessible for professional advice, establishing personal connections, and distributing resources. Some specific & notable examples include the following: offering me powerful literature to increase productivity/build mindfulness, introducing me to someone who has since become one of my strongest mentors for professional/graduate school guidance, and keeping a safe and encouraging digital space for personal and professional career discussions in tech. In a broader sense, I have watched Lea as she uses her brand to spotlight and empower marginalized individuals through her women of silicon valley and job-related diversity work. She does more than any other young woman in tech I know of to-date and deserves compensation for the time and labor costs required to execute on this kind of work. I have watched as these expectations have slowly contributed to a sense of exhaustion in Lea that is all-too-familiar when diverse employees are expected to bear the emotional cost of performing advocacy work on top of their expected job duties. Since tech companies do not [yet?] have the employee numbers that are so widely 'sought after' by the same voices calling for diversity, it's only necessary that this advocacy work be accounted for in Lea's day-to-day position.”

CIS PhD student at Cornell University (she/her)

“Following the Women of Silicon Valley page has provided me with a steady stream of encouragement on the days when I feel discouraged. As a young, female, software engineer of color, there is an added pressure to times of difficulty, where my struggles can feel like evidence that coding really is just for men or that I am an impostor. Seeing the women that Lea features is constantly inspiring, especially since it is such a diverse group of women of different ages, races, and backgrounds, who are succeeding and doing great work in technology and are real, relatable people...”

Software Engineer at Chain (she/her)

“I met Lea through my sister at Stanford in 2015. As a young sophomore studying computer science at Santa Clara University, she immediately started mentoring me. I was introduced to her blog, Women of Silicon Valley, and have followed it closely ever since. She even included me on a summer intern interview series on the blog. Though we don’t see each other in person often, she always supports me when I reach out to her via text (particularly when I’ve struggled with sexual harassment and other workplace gender discrimination). Her social media posts are raw and compelling and the way she has shared her challenges has strengthened me as I make my way as a woman in tech as well. Lea is awesome. She is intelligent, organized, persistent, honest, authentic, and works so very hard to advocate for all those who are underrepresented in computer science. I’m glad my sister lived down the hall from her at Stanford because I’m very lucky to call her a friend.”

Student at Oxford University, Former Software Engineering Intern at Google (she/her)

“I’ve been following the Women of Silicon Valley since I first began working in the Bay Area. The work is important. I knew no one in the industry when I first began and the pressure to succeed or leave was enormous. **Women of Silicon Valley and groups like it provide outlets for the pressure and avenues for relationship-building that otherwise don’t exist.** This work has value. It should be evaluated accordingly. [Lea] also had an interview with my girlfriend at the beginning of her journey transitioning into tech. That interview has spawned others and greatly improved my girlfriend’s integration and potential in her new field.”

Software Product Manager at NVIDIA, formerly at Google (she/her)

“The Native Americans in tech community is almost nonexistent. Lea reached out to me and several other Natives in tech and helped us tell our story. As a result, it helped me see that I am not alone and I was able to grow my small community of Natives in tech. My company where I worked at the time saw me in a different way after that. They had been kind of cold towards me as a junior engineer but after I shared the article Lea published, they understood the struggles I went through to get into this field. It really helped me get through that barrier at work where I felt like I wasn’t wanted there.”

Software Engineer at Apple (she/her)

ON RE-CENTERING TECHNOLOGISTS OF COLOR

“Lea is consistently shining a light on the work of people that would normally go ignored - specifically women of color. I'm so appreciative of her tireless work in championing equity in the tech field. She is incredibly deserving of a role that values her tireless efforts in building a much more sustainable and progressive tech community.”

Researcher at NYU (she/her)

“Lea was chosen as our Keynote speaker for our sixth annual We Are GWE intern summit where we bring together over 500 female interns from across 18 offices for two days of community building and education. Lea worked hard for weeks developing an amazing Keynote for our intern attendees. Here is a quote of how this impacted our interns, “As a Vietnamese intern, it means SO much to me to see someone who has Vietnamese heritage speak about her experiences standing up for women in STEM and establishing herself in the tech industry. Her presentation was not only hilarious, but also inspiring and left a great message for all interns to take away from the summit.””

Tech Intern Programs at Google (she/her)

“...This isn't easy work that Lea is doing. If you think of your team as your most important asset, women and women of color consistently get an awful experience, and a lot of us really consider if we want to stay in this field. You have someone who is willing to do the work to improve this - that's amazing.”

Product Manager at PastureMap (she/her or they/them)

“Lea's extensive advocacy work and encouragement motivated me to set higher goals for Miss CEO in terms of our reach and impact. Lea's thoughtful profile of my personal leadership journey as an electrical engineer and founder of Miss CEO has helped us broadcast our efforts to young women from all over the world. I received inquiries from Asia, Africa, Europe and all over the US after the WoSV post went live. I am so grateful to Lea for providing Miss CEO with such a powerful platform so we can continue to improve the ecosystem for young women aspiring to be leaders and innovators one day. Lea Coligado is the real deal. We need more Lea's in this world please.”

Founder of Miss CEO, Lecturer in Stanford School of Engineering (she/her)

“I met Lea at a Stanford Women in Engineering panel (she was one of the speakers), and she gave me her contact information. Shortly afterwards, she met with me over dinner and gave me very useful advice about planning my time at Stanford, and on shaping my career in STEM. She also frequently makes posts on social media about the stories of other women in STEM. These stories are not only inspirational, but are useful in exposing women

of color in STEM like me to techniques, resources and opportunities that can benefit us in our professional journeys.”

Student at Stanford (she/her)

“... I read Women of Silicon Valley on a weekly basis and because of its focus on the experiences of women in an intersectional manner (where is it not solely focused on white women), I feel highly affirmed as a woman of color. This work needs to continue.”

Racial Equity Strategist at Google (she/her)

“Lea draws our attention in such straightforward and eloquent ways to help more of our peers to understand challenges that women and other people of color face in the workplace. She is a tireless advocate for understanding and justice, and through her blog Women of Silicon Valley, has highlighted stories and challenges of people including Natives in STEM, as well as women who have overcome discrimination in many forms in tech and entrepreneurship. She has organized a team to co-manage this widely subscribed blog, and done so as part of her own free time, which constantly amazes me. I strongly believe her efforts should be recognized and compensated as part of her work as she contributes enormous amounts of insight to her general peer and working environments.

Since I met Lea in our undergraduate years, she has embodied a quote she shared: “create value for others.” Lea has created a platform for others to share their voices and perspectives, and a team that will help sustain the platform in the years to come. Lea is a force of understanding and helps connect and shine light on the unrecognized challenges and achievements of marginalized members of our communities. I strongly encourage her work teams to compensate this tireless work.”

Graduate student at NIH and Oxford (she/her)

ON CALLING OUT THE BS AND CALLING ALLIES IN TO ACTION

“Lea is one of the most selfless, tireless, and fiercest people I have had the pleasure of ever knowing. She has taught me so much over the last few years, and it has been incredible to continue to learn and grow with her. Remarkably, Lea continues to advocate for herself and her various communities with the utmost grace and patience, even in the face of extreme adversity resulting directly from her identity as a Southeast Asian woman in tech... Lea possesses a unique capacity to articulate injustice while maintaining respect for others. Whether it’s listening to every voice in the room — even the ones actively seeking to tear her down — or taking the time to think about how any and every course of action she could take would impact those around her, Lea consistently maintains a selfless poise that is quite frankly, amazing. I have witnessed her apply this incredible skillset in a number of

situations, ranging from minor interpersonal conflicts all the way to navigating a situation of sexual harassment in the workplace. And while she is in no way obligated to filter her rightful rage, her decision to do so makes every word she says and every action she takes all the more impactful in our society mired in the construct of respectability politics...”

Senior Program Associate, Gender & Family Justice, Center for Court Innovation, Harvard Law School, Class of 2021 (she/her)

“As a new employee at the Catholic university with a majority of non-religious, Lea has helped me navigate through being a Catholic while addressing to many viewpoints that are outside of that realm. We have had lengthy discussions about race, gender, and class issues as well as how religion plays into those. It has been particularly helpful in how I accompany students at the university in trying to empathetic and to be with them without judging. Lea has had the expertise and experience to accompany me, even when it has been tough for her as she has helped so many others besides myself. For this, I am very grateful that she has done so out of the realm of Google and into many other areas.”

Immersion Program Coordinator at Santa Clara University (he/him)

“Meeting Lea one on one was super valuable to me! She is definitely a role model and an inspirational figure at Google, who is not afraid to challenge the status quo for the benefit of marginalized people.”

Associate Product Marketing Manager at Google (she/her)

“I'm applying to be a full time SWE at Google. Lea's keynote at the We Are GWE conference made a large impact on me. Her talk was the highlight of my conference experience, and she made me feel like Google was not only a place that I could be supported at but also a place where I can work to support others. It made a difference to me and other interns around me to hear her talk about intersectional feminism! And it was particularly important that her talk was the *keynote* and not a breakout session. She is a fantastic role model, and I could not imagine my experience at GWE without her talk or my experience as a woman in tech in college without the WOSV blog.”

Software Engineering Intern at Google, Student at Stanford University (she/her)

“Lea makes me realize that I'm not alone in wanting to improve feminism in the workplace and she's going out and doing it, which inspires me to do it too! This is a twitter I started that I was confident enough to start because of Lea's Women of Silicone Valley posts: <https://twitter.com/WomanOTDay>.”

2LT US Army (she/her)

"I joined a series B startup as a GM over a year ago and met Lea shortly after.... Since our 3-hour chat, I've periodically followed Lea's and Women of Silicon Valley's posts, a few core takeaways -

(1) Sensitivity: Lea's not only incredibly well-informed on the D&I issues she's passionate about, but also respectfully vocal on pointing out where your thoughts are flawed (for which I'm incredibly grateful). I remember asking Lea, as an example, how you can expect a white man to understand his privilege when he's never lived another life. And she unapologetically told me the victimized and underprivileged do not owe the privileged their stories. The privileged are responsible for doing their own research. That was lesson #1 for me on learning about my own privileges.

(2) Empowerment: while it's important to self-educate, it's also critical to have a safe platform for women to speak out if they choose to - that's Women of Silicon Valley. I'm grateful women have shared incredibly vulnerable and personal stories, usually "taboo," and Lea's opened the floor to share and discuss. It's also motivated me to fight for what I believe in and to be more open and understanding personally and professionally.

(3) Stand up for what's right: Lea's taught me to stand for what I believe in. I love her unapologetic energy and selfless commitment to her beliefs. At my start-up, we had recently hired a stellar remote worker a week after he passed his trial period. After a re-org, his role was removed, and he was let go. I remember fuming about how we poorly handled the situation while browsing through FB and came across a WoSV post. It reminded me of Lea and what she stood for, so I pinged four department heads and had a discussion with each. In two days, the remote worker had a new home. Lea taught me the importance of action and that every voice, every little step is progress."

Startup consultant, Formerly at Uber (she/her)

"She's made me aware of the severity of the diversity problem in tech and has shown me what I can do as a cis-male to advocate for and contribute to increasing diversity in tech."

Software Engineer at Google (he/him)

"Lea has been a vocal advocate for diversity and inclusion at Google. She has educated our ERG [the Filipino Googler Network] about many great initiatives like Women of Silicon Valley, a fundraiser she started for a retiring Google shuttle driver, and social issues like workers rights and responsible tourism."

Community Building Lead for Filipino Googler Network (he/him)

"Lea has inspired me to care for others and myself in a positive way that promotes inclusion within a group dynamic. She taught me the importance of being aware of historical reasons for why people are in certain positions today. Lea is so incredibly passionate about diversity & inclusion that it inspires me to do more for others!"

Account Development Representative at Samsara (he/him)

“Lea's social, emotional, and artistic work, as well as her ambition and presence has been a huge factor in keeping on track with the values I believe in and has brought me a channel I can directly support... It's been honestly educating and empowering. **Lea is one of the strong women of the Bay area who will not be afraid of calling out people or the system on injustices and privilege, and she will go the extra mile to highlight the people whose labor go unnoticed.** I don't want her own labor to go unnoticed, since she has been such an essential nod in the network of powerful women who give strength to be assertive and keep me in check.”

Grad Student at the Academy of Art University (she/her)

“Lea has been an upstanding role model for many women in the technology industry specifically in voicing personal stories of courage and vulnerability on her public/personal profiles. As an ally and supporter of the great work that Lea does - I always refer aspiring women engineers/tech professionals to her work and story.”

Product Manager at PatientPing (he/him)

“Lea built Women of Silicon Valley from the ground up and created a 20% job for me to partake in its growth. I currently serve as Editor of the WoSV and through this role, I've learned a lot about what it takes to create editorial content and marketing (and soon events) that impact the way people view the technology industry. WoSV has given me an outlet that allows me to work on issues that I care deeply about (diversification of the tech industry & amplifying the voices of women in the workplace) without having to leave my current job at Google. This opportunity simply would not exist if Lea hadn't created it. Through her time, effort, and tireless work ethic, Lea is truly making an impact on our industry, and that work deserves to be recognized.”

Strategic Partnership Development Manager at Google, Editor-in-Chief at Women of Silicon Valley (she/her)

“Lea honestly has given me a sense of purpose! I was looking for something that I could really sink my teeth into and use all of my talents and WOSV has been that place. Lea is super encouraging and really wants all of her team to grow personally and professionally. She even took me on a free trip to Paris! Cannot express how grateful I am to have her as a friend! Lea for president!

Litigation Paralegal at Google, Head of Community at Women of Silicon Valley (she/her)

“Léa really helped me be a leader by letting me take on work I was passionate about. I started as an editor on WoSV, which I really loved. But as we grew, I really wanted to take on an operational role and flex my skills with building processes. Léa was willing to let me

try a job I had never done, and I thank her for that. I was able to build my skills while adding value to an organization I truly care about.”

Content Strategist at YouTube, Former Head of Operations at Women of Silicon Valley (she/her)

“Lea is an incredible leader on the Women of Silicon Valley team. After being featured as an intern during the summer of 2017, I knew that I wanted to work with the incredible organization that she has built when I returned to Google for my second summer in 2018. As she helped with my onboarding, I saw how much energy she has put into building a unified, organized team. She has incredible attention-to-detail, and she is an inspiration to all those who meet her.”

Software Engineering Intern at Google, Student at Yale University, Intern at Women of Silicon Valley (she/her)

“Lea has been an amazing and dedicated leader of Women of Silicon Valley. She has dedicated 200% into this project and invested her time and personal resources to create a support environment of women in tech. She also works to empower us, her team, to utilize our resources and maximize our opportunities to do diversity and inclusion work.”

Diversity Channels Specialist at Google (she/her)

ON MY LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN OF SILICON VALLEY

“You know those moments in life when you're so inspired and wholeheartedly consumed by something that you don't notice time passing? Your mind doesn't wander, you don't mindlessly scroll through your phone, you forget about refreshing your inbox? You feel like nothing else matters? That is how I felt the first time I read Women of Silicon Valley's blog and dove into the stories of the womxn that resonated deeply with me. It is now nearly two years later and the feeling - my breath stopping, my mind sharpening and my heart bursting with passion about WOSV's mission - is so memorable. From the second I learned about WOSV, I knew I needed to get involved. Lucky for me, Lea came knocking!

Lea emailed Google's HOLA (Hispanic/Latinx Opportunities in Leadership & Advocacy) group at Google about Women of Silicon Valley to recruit an editor, and it was my golden moment to pursue the opportunity. I applied to become the Editor of WOSV as a 20% project. Up until this point Lea had operated WOSV by herself, so when I came on board as Editor, we became the start of the WOSV team. We quickly added a third member, Tamar, and it seems we haven't stopped since - now WOSV is made up of 10 incredible women! I was so lucky to be the first one Lea took onboard to grow her footprint, and I'm forever

thankful she took a leap of faith inviting me to join her. It is so rewarding to see how the team has grown and is making such wonderful impact.

My background is in business and my role at Google is in marketing, so pairing that with Lea's engineering background and role at Google, we made a great team! We sourced women to feature on WOSV, photographed and interviewed them, wrote blog posts and pushed them out on our social channels. Once our team grew, we were each able to specialize a bit more. I focused on our brand and growth strategy, building love for the WOSV brand and growing followership across our blog and social channels. I ran experiments to optimize our posting strategy, promoted posts to have a mix of paid and organic posts, and analyzed our performance across channels to learn what worked and what didn't, so we could continue to optimize our strategy to reach our target audience, grow followership and encourage engagement. I took a strategic look at WOSV through business review and ensured our goals and our day to day activities laddered up to achieving these. I also attended events to meet new amazing women to feature in WOSV, looked for new partnerships with potential partner organizations, sourced and interviewed women to feature in future stories, and sometimes even served as photographer. I loved thinking strategically about how we could do new and different things to further WOSV's reach and success.

Beyond my own passion for Lea's and WOSV's mission, from a professional perspective, my involvement in WOSV actually helped me make my next career move to my new role as an APMM looking after our Influencer marketing strategy for Google Australia/New Zealand. WOSV provided me a unique opportunity for strategic thought and leadership experience at Google. I was able to create and iterate my own growth and marketing strategy on a high stakes project, which doesn't always happen at this early point in my career. My experience strategically contributing to the growth of WOSV's social channels and brand awareness was part of the reason my manager selected me for my current role creating and owning an influencer marketing strategy for our consumer Google products. I am so grateful for the experience I gained through WOSV, both personally and professionally.

However with the new location and time zone, I knew I would have to take a step back from my involvement in WOSV. It was beyond difficult to say goodbye to the team, but I knew firsthand how wonderful and capable the team is, and that they would only continue to grow and improve WOSV. I still closely watch the improvements Lea and the team are making, and am always impressed by their creativity and success. The team has grown so much, and the volume of stories they are able to share is so impressive!

The most rewarding part of being a part of the incredible organization Lea created was hands down the amazing women I met, both from the WOSV team itself and the women we feature. I draw inspiration every day from each and every one, and I'm so beyond thankful to know them. Thank you, Lea!!

Lea is a very special person who has created an incredible organization that touches thousands of lives every day, around the world. She is brilliant, driven, compassionate, and isn't afraid to put herself out there and support those who can't raise their own voices. She is a model and exemplary friend, engineer, D&I advocate, and Googler who we all look up to. She works tirelessly on D&I advocacy outside of her core role, but given her success impacting lives through WOSV, she deserves to be recognized for her contributions to the D&I space with a 50/50 split. I am happy to be a reference for Lea and support this in any way I can."

Associate Product Marketing Manager at Google Australia, Former Head of Marketing at Women of Silicon Valley (she/her)