



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Women In Film and Pepperdine University
Partner on ENTREPRENEURIAL PATHWAYS, a New Initiative
to Improve Funding for Women-led Businesses in the Screen Industries**

LOS ANGELES, CA—June 24, 2019 — Pepperdine University and Women In Film, Los Angeles (WIF LA), a nonprofit organization that advocates for and advances the careers of women working in the screen industries, and are proud to announce a research partnership that seeks to identify the drivers and inhibitors of funding for women-owned businesses in the screen industries. The project is part of **Entrepreneurial Pathways**, a new WIF initiative that will work to equalize opportunities for women-owned businesses. It will be led by WIF LA Board President **Amy Baer**, WIF LA Board Treasurer **Stasia Washington** and WIF LA Executive Director **Kirsten Schaffer**. The research will be conducted by **Alicia Jessop**, Academic Director for Sport Administration at the Pepperdine University [Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports, and Culture](#) (IEMSC); and **Sharifa Batts** (MBA '18), Executive Doctorate student at Pepperdine.

The partnership with Pepperdine was publicly announced at the WIF Annual Gala on Wednesday, June 12, 2019 by Schaffer, who said, “Women In Film has partnered with Pepperdine University to conduct a study that will examine the paucity of funding for female-led companies and will then create an action plan to connect women to the tools and resources needed to raise capital. Every week I read a story in the trades about a man receiving tens of millions in seed money for his business, while equally qualified women struggle to raise \$2 million. We are going to change this.”

IEMSC and the [Pepperdine Graziadio Center for Women in Leadership](#) (CWL) will lead the project in collaboration with Women In Film, with support from an interdisciplinary group of faculty and students from the university’s undergraduate school, Seaver College, and the Graziadio Business School.

“The foundation of our center is rooted in a commitment to prepare women to succeed in their careers, helping them to feel competent, confident, and ready to lead,” said Bernice Ledbetter, director of the CWL. “We are delighted to partner with Women In Film as it seeks to break ground in another key element of their mission: the funding for women’s business ventures in the screen industries.”

“Built into Women In Film’s work is the importance of creating opportunities and networks for women both on-screen and behind the scenes. Through professional development, education, and programming, WIF empowers its community to transform culture by working towards parity in employment and representation,” said Amy Baer, WIF LA Board President. “Entrepreneurial Pathways is a crucial step to helping women access capital at the top of the system, a major roadblock to a gender-balanced industry.”

“The inequity in funding for women-led businesses has been around for decades,” said Nelson Granados, executive director of IEMSC. “For this systemic problem, thought leadership through collaboration between academia and industry makes a lot of sense. Pepperdine will support Women in Film with rigorous scientific research that will help to identify the factors related to barriers to and funding for women-led businesses in the screen industries. The findings will serve as a base for WIF to make tangible actions that improve funding for women entrepreneurs.”

About Women In Film, Los Angeles

Women In Film, Los Angeles (WIF LA) advocates for and advances the careers of women working in the screen industries—to achieve parity and transform culture. Founded in 1973, Women In Film supports all women working in film, television, and digital media from emerging to advanced career. Our distinguished programs include: mentoring, speaker and screening series, production training program, writing labs, film finishing funds, legal aid, and an annual financing intensive. Women In Film advocates for gender parity through research, education, and media campaigns. Women In Film honors the achievements of women in Hollywood through the Legacy Series, annual Emmy and Oscar parties, and our signature event, the Women In Film Annual Gala. Membership is open to all media professionals and more information can be found on our website: wif.org. Follow Women In Film on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

About the Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports, and Culture at Pepperdine University

The [Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports, and Culture](#) (IEMSC) is dedicated to the creation of interdisciplinary pathways for students pursuing careers in the creative, business, and legal sectors in entertainment, media, and sports. IEMSC supports academic offerings from [Seaver College](#), the [Graziadio Business School](#), and the [School of Law](#) to prepare the next generation of multidisciplinary leaders who recognize the cultural and societal impacts of media and entertainment. IEMSC also seeks to complement students' education with unique internship and professional development opportunities, access to industry professionals through conferences and networking events, and thought-leading research.

About the Center for Women in Leadership at the Pepperdine University Graziadio Business School

The [Center for Women in Leadership](#) (CWL) at the [Pepperdine University Graziadio Business School](#) seeks to strengthen the leadership capacity of women students, alumni, staff, and faculty to take on leadership roles. To best prepare women for successful careers in the marketplace, organizations, and communities worldwide, CWL offers initiatives carefully designed to empower women. The center also provides mentoring programs, skills development, research studies, and an ongoing global dialogue about women in leadership.

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