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**WIF (WOMEN IN FILM, LOS ANGELES) ANNOUNCES
ENTREPRENEURIAL PATHWAYS INITIATIVE;
RELEASES STUDY HIGHLIGHTING GRAVE DISPARITIES IN FUNDING
FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE SCREEN INDUSTRIES**

LOS ANGELES, California; January 19, 2022... Today, WIF (Women In Film, Los Angeles) announced the findings of a groundbreaking study conducted by Alicia Jessop, Esq. of Pepperdine University: **“Women Entrepreneurs in the Screen Industries: Obstacles and Opportunities.”** The report not only shines a light on the severe lack of capital investment in female-led entertainment enterprises, but also lays crucial groundwork for strategies to remedy this imbalance –strategies that will shape WIF’s work in the coming months and years. The full research paper can be found on the WIF website [HERE](#), as well as an introductory executive summary [HERE](#).

Research findings include:

- Only 18.6% of studio subsidized film deals and 35.7% of studio subsidized television deals were with women-owned companies.
- Only 18% of production companies with non-studio funding were women-owned.
- On average, men-owned independent production companies receive over seven-times the amount of funding of women-owned independent production companies.
- Barriers to screen industry entrepreneurship faced by women include:
 - A lack of access to network relationships with individuals capable of offering or providing funding;
 - Unconscious, systemic, and organizational biases that have resulted in a general assumption that women possess “less professional success and/or experience,” which is often a main prerequisite for investors looking to fund entrepreneurs;

- A lack of self-confidence by women in their own abilities to structure financing, compete for funding, and ask for the capital they need; and
- Gender-based biases, including parenting obligations, that are disproportionately managed by women.

The study also recommends several solutions to break down the existing barriers and provide equal opportunity for women entrepreneurs, including:

- Fund women-owned companies,
- Expand womens' professional networks,
- Increase womens' financial literacy.

The research is part of **Entrepreneurial Pathways**, a WIF initiative formed in 2019 to equalize opportunities for women-owned businesses. It is led by WIF Board President **Amy Baer**, WIF Board Treasurer **Stasia Washington**, and WIF CEO **Kirsten Schaffer**. The research was conducted by **Alicia Jessop**, Associate Professor at Pepperdine University and academic director of Pepperdine University's Institute for Entertainment, Media, Sports and Culture (IEMSC).

WIF Board President Amy Baer said, "The origin of this study was actually quite personal to the WIF Board. At a 2018 Board meeting, several highly accomplished women were sharing anecdotal frustrations about the obstacles to launching enterprise in the screen industry, while constantly watching men of equal experience and stature repeatedly and successfully land investment. In commissioning this study, WIF sought to capture any data that could back up these personal stories. We wanted to examine the rate of female entrepreneurship and funding to women-owned businesses across the expanse of the entertainment industry."

Researcher Alicia Jessop notes, "This research shows that women are more ready, educated, and capable than ever to found and lead impactful screen industry businesses. However, significant barriers continue to foreclose paths to entrepreneurship for women in the screen industry. In order to optimally reach and engage all consumers, it is essential that women have equitable pathways to entrepreneurship as men. This study provides a critical roadmap and understanding of how that can be accomplished."

While the numbers of women-owned businesses in the industry are paltry, the lack of representation is most striking amongst women of color and LGBTQ women. It is WIF's intention that this study will spur future WIF research into why women continue to be underrepresented in screen industry entrepreneurship and how the industry can evolve

to promote women's interests in business across all aspects of the industry. To truly advance the interests of women in the screen industry, women must be empowered not only as creators, but as developers of enterprises.

Added WIF CEO Kirsten Schaffer, "There really cannot be true parity across the board in our industry until there is parity in accessing the financial resources with which entertainment entrepreneurship is built. WIF's Entrepreneurial Pathways is in the early stages of developing new programs to support women in building businesses, large and small, in all areas of the screen industry."

About WIF

Founded in 1973 as Women In Film, Los Angeles, WIF advocates for and advances the careers of women working in the screen industries, to achieve parity and transform culture. We support women and people of marginalized genders in front of and behind the camera and across all levels of experience. We work to change culture through our distinguished pipeline programs; we advocate for gender parity through research, education, and media campaigns; and we build a community centered around these goals. Membership is open to all screen industry professionals, and more information can be found on our website: wif.org. Follow WIF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).

About Alicia Jessop

Alicia Jessop is an Associate Professor at Pepperdine University. An attorney licensed to practice law in California and Colorado, Jessop's research focuses on women's career development and leadership. A sports journalist since 2011 writing for outlets including Forbes, CNBC, The Huffington Post, SI.com, The Washington Post, and The Athletic, Jessop has successfully navigated the male-dominated sport industry to build a successful brand. She is the founder of RulingSports.com, a widely-read sport business resource, which has allowed her to become a highly sought after expert on matters related to sport, entertainment, and media.

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