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**2nd Annual National STEM Collaborative: Women of Color STEM Entrepreneurship Conference**

**HERstory is our story: Creating a legacy of STEM Entrepreneurship**  
**By: Sydney Greene**

TEMPE, AZ - Arizona State University's Center for Gender Equity in Science and Technology (CGEST) and the Office of Entrepreneurship + Innovation will co-produce a national conference hosted by the Maricopa Community Colleges at GateWay Community College, designed to advocate for increased participation of women of color in entrepreneurship experiences and small business enterprise, to advance entrepreneurship education and entrepreneurial student engagement, and to transform the ways that entrepreneurship is viewed, taught and experienced in higher education.

"We are proud to partner with CGEST again for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Women of Color STEM Entrepreneurship conference," said Ji Mi Choi, ASU's Associate Vice President of Entrepreneurship + Innovation. "I can't think of a better way to mutually further our shared goals of broadening access and inviting participation for women of color in STEM disciplines and innovations, than through joining forces and sharing our resources, networks, and collective wisdom and experiences."

CGEST Executive Director Dr. Kimberly A. Scott said the Women of Color STEM Entrepreneurship conference stemmed from a dialogue Scott had with Harvard colleagues Drs. Kimberlyn Leary and Evelyn Hammond. Together they discussed the number of conferences that occur in U.S., but none that was specific to entrepreneurship and women of color. "We thought it would be a great idea that would challenge and celebrate the few women of color who are doing entrepreneurship," Scott said. "We are sensitive to the cultural features of women who belong to many different categories." Scott said the conference is also meant to not only celebrate women and women of color with successful STEM careers, but also hear their narratives that can inspire both women and male allies.

Entitled "HERstory Is Our Story: Creating a Legacy of STEM Entrepreneurship", the conference will include advice and stories from diverse speakers and professionals in the STEM field, while highlighting achievements of successful women of color in STEM and teaching the future women of STEM how to create their own legacy in a male-dominated occupation. Also, the conference will highlight the education, engagement and transformative teachings of entrepreneurship.

There will be a robust curriculum of keynote speakers, panels, interactive workshops, breakout sessions and networking designed to help teach, engage and activate entrepreneurial leaders of tomorrow. The breakout

sessions will highlight three tracks: entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship, and implicit bias. From personal stories of succeeding in STEM to examining personal biases in decision making, conference participants will walk away with knowledge and skills for their academic or professional careers.

Highly regarded keynote speakers include Winona LaDuke, Environmentalist and Political Activist; Laura Gomez, CEO of Atipica; Dr. Traci Morris, Director of the American Indian Policy Institute at ASU; Dr. Antonia Franco, Executive Director of the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science; Retha Hill, Executive Director of the Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab; Dr. Stanlie James, Vice Provost for Inclusion and Community Engagement at ASU; Dr. Jamika Burge, Senior Manager of Research Curriculum and Outreach at Capital One; Dr. Sian Proctor, Geology Professor at South Mountain Community College; and Barbara Whye, Director of Strategy and External Alliances, Diversity in Tech Initiative at Intel.

The Annual Women of Color STEM Entrepreneurship Conference is a signature program of the National STEM Collaborative. University of Alabama Vice Provost and Conference Co-Chair Dr. Patricia Sobecky said the Collaborative was created after a workshop at the White House in 2015 inspired her and Dr. Scott to boldly commit to serving women attaining their goals in the STEM field. “The impact of the National STEM Collaborative, in my opinion, is that it further highlights the opportunities and the challenges that women, especially women of color, may encounter when pursuing an education and career in STEM,” said Sobecky. “I can’t think of a better way to pay it forward than through helping others to experience firsthand the joy and discovery of careers in STEM, which so many of us have experienced ourselves.”

The 2017 Women of Color STEM Entrepreneurship Conference will be held at GateWay Community College on March 23-25. For more information and to register, please visit <https://cgest.asu.edu/2017conference>.

#### **About the National STEM Collaborative:**

The National STEM Collaborative (NSTEMC) is housed at the Center for Gender Equity in Science and Technology at Arizona State University. NSTEMC is a consortium of higher education institutions and community partners that believe all girls and women of color should have access to high-quality opportunities, experiences, and pathways to enter and persist in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (STEM) fields. The Collaborative addresses these concerns by exploring, scaling, and nurturing networks to better position girls and women of color to successfully engage in STEM education and careers, despite the complexity of the issues involved. The Collaborative aims to contribute a rigorous framework that will support improved diversity at all levels, with a focus on girls and women of color.

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