Executive Women In Bio Selects Candidates for 2020 Boardroom Ready Program

NEW YORK, July 16, 2020 – Executive Women In Bio (EWIB), a group of senior leaders committed to promoting, empowering, and elevating executive women in biopharma and the life sciences operating within the national non-profit organization Women In Bio (WIB), are proud to announce the 21 women selected to participate in the 2020 Boardroom Ready program. Boardroom Ready is EWIB’s exclusive executive development platform, designed to support women’s participation on corporate boards in the life sciences.

“Each year, Boardroom Ready has the honor of selecting leading female executives to participate in a program that is actively changing the landscape of life science corporate boards,” said Shehnaaz Suliman, M.D., President and COO at Alector and Co-chair for EWIB. “We are excited to have each of these amazing women participate in the program and to welcome them to our Boardroom Ready community of great leaders delivering significant, impactful influence on boards.”

The 2020 participants join a strong community of ambitious program alumnae, who have earned 50 boardroom appointments since its inception in 2016. The candidates selected for this year’s Boardroom Ready program are:

- Brinda Balakrishnan, M.D., Ph.D. – Group Vice President, Corporate and Business Development, BioMarin Pharmaceuticals, Inc.
- Liz Bhatt – Chief Business and Strategy Officer, Applied Molecular Transport
- Katherine Bowdish, Ph.D. – Vice President and Head of R&D Strategy, Sanofi
- Melissa Cruz – Board of Directors Member and Audit Committee Chair, eSolutions, Inc.
- Becki Filice – Senior Vice President, Portfolio and Product Management, Aimmune Therapeutics
- Virginia Finnerty-Brooks – Vice President, Corporate Development and Strategy, Dermira, Inc.
- Kirsten Flowers – Chief Commercial Officer, Kura Oncology
- Kate Hermans – Chief Business Officer, Pharma, 83bar
- Jill Howe – Vice President, Finance and Treasurer, Gossamer Bio
- Abigail Jenkins – Senior Vice President, Business Unit Head Vaccines, Emergent BioSolutions
- Julie Krop, M.D. – Chief Medical Officer, Freeline Therapeutics
- Cristina Larkin – Chief Operating Officer, Spero Therapeutics
- Philina Lee, Ph.D. – Vice President, Marketing, Patient Services and US Precision Medicine, Blueprint Medicines
- Alicia Levey, Ph.D. – Chief Business Officer, Pionyr Immunotherapeutics
- Christy Oliger – Senior Vice President, Oncology, Genentech
- Sumita Ray, J.D. – Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, Calithera Biosciences
- Deidre Roniger – Senior Vice President, Corporate Development, Ambys Medicines
- Susan Sobolov, Ph.D. – Chief Operating Officer, Caelum Biosciences
- Nicki Vasquez, Ph.D. – Senior Vice President, Alliance Management/Portfolio Strategy and Operations, Sutro Biopharma
- Karin Walker – Chief Accounting Officer, Prothena Corporation plc
- Jane Wright-Mitchell, Pharm.D., J.D. – General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, Vaxcyte

“If there is ever a year to reevaluate the status quo and take bigger strides in closing gender gaps, this would be it,” said Matt Fust, board member, Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical. “While it will require effort across the industry to make lasting change, programs like Boardroom Ready, which elevate highly qualified women from the C-suite into the boardroom, are vital to driving much-needed diversification of biotech and pharmaceutical leadership.”

The Boardroom Ready program is designed to be a foundational resource for executive women interested in serving on corporate boards. This year’s program has been restructured to maximize participant and organizer safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the 2020 program will be hosted
on a virtual platform. The core components of this year’s program include a two-and-a-half-day board certification course hosted by George Washington University and an additional two-day applied learning course, which will be immediately followed by the 4th annual Boardroom Ready Alumnae retreat. The course refines each candidate’s understanding of the structure, roles, and responsibilities related to serving on both public and private life science boards. Throughout the program and following completion, the program network of mentors, sponsors, and past alumnae facilitate the matching of program participants with companies seeking new board members. Program participants have been appointed to boards on leading public and private life science companies, including 10x Genomics, Dicerna Pharmaceuticals, and Seattle Genetics.

“It is inspiring to witness the successes the Boardroom Ready program has shown year after year,” said Michael Rice, Founding Partner at LifeSci Advisors and founding sponsor of the Boardroom Ready program. “We are thrilled to be supporting this organization and the program participants for our fifth consecutive year.”

EWIB is seeking qualified mentors to work with this year’s program selectees. Boardroom mentors play an essential role in the program, offering guidance, encouragement, and experience-based strategies for networking, interviewing and assessing the fit of a potential board seat. For more information, please contact EWIB@womeninbio.org.

About Women In Bio
Women In Bio (WIB) is an organization of professionals committed to promoting careers, leadership, and entrepreneurship of women in the life sciences. Each of its 13 chapters hosts numerous events throughout the year, including networking, career development, professional education, and executive level-focused events. WIB also hosts a mentorship program that offers women the chance to mentor or be mentored, a Young Women In Bio program, which offers events and encouragement to middle-school aged girls, webinars, and the support of a large national organization with 13 chapters and growing. As a volunteer organization, WIB offers leadership opportunities at every stage of your career, and a chance to expand your network in a supportive and professional environment. For more information, visit www.womeninbio.org.

About EWIB
Executive Women In Bio (EWIB) is a committee comprised of senior leaders in biopharma and the life sciences operating within the membership-based, national non-profit organization, Women In Bio (WIB). EWIB champions for greater diversity and is committed to supporting female leadership through professional development programs, including Boardroom Ready. EWIB strives to be a foundational resource for women in executive roles, by fostering achievement and empowering women to be the best leaders and influencers they can be through formal education, training, and structured networking. EWIB offers a competitive, intensive board competency-building curriculum, which includes a two and a half-day course at George Washington University, to refine skills and to increase preparedness for the responsibilities related to serving on both public and private boards.

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