Women In Bio RTP announce the launch of 3.8 Initiative

Durham, NORTH CAROLINA, August 11, 2022– Women In Bio is thrilled to announce the selection of 13 participants in this year’s inaugural WIB-RTP 3.8 Initiative, a program seeking to increase start-up board leadership for women in the Research Triangle Park area’s life sciences and health tech innovation system. The announcement occurred during the August 10 kickoff event at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center, which featured keynote remarks from North Carolina Secretary of Commerce Machelle Baker Sanders.

The 3.8 Initiative, named for the March 8 International Women’s Day, is a 10-month program dedicated to giving women leaders the tools and knowledge they need to become future board leaders. The three key pillars of the program include: a supportive network of women leaders in the life science, health tech community; a curriculum of startup board fundraising diligence and areas correlating with individual gaps in training, experiential opportunities for board readiness; and facilitation of board seat placement for our cohort graduates by working with local VCs and incubators. Each cohort participates in several workshops and engages with subject matter experts outlining content relevant to startup board governance and leadership seminars.

“We are pleased to launch our WIB-RTP 3.8 Initiative to offer women leaders in the life sciences industry new pathways for expanding their own professional potential and the cumulative contributions that they make to growing bioscience and tech ventures across North Carolina,” said Shirley L. Paddock, Chair of the WIB-RTP Chapter and Senior Vice President of Clinical Development-Project Management at Syneos Health. “Our region is a hub of biotech and pharmaceutical innovation that benefits immensely from women who are pioneering new horizons in the field, and we look forward to working with a variety of partners to further equip these leaders to take next steps in making a strategic difference for companies and an economic impact in the state.”

The initiative is supported by KickStart Venture Services, a department and life sciences startup accelerator that is part of Innovate Carolina, the central team for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. KickStart is working to build awareness about the 3.8 Initiative among women leaders in Research Triangle region, provide expert speakers, hone the program’s curriculum, and connect participants to startups seeking board members.

“We are excited and honored to partner with Women In Bio to support and announce this talented group of women leaders as participants in the inaugural WIB-RTP 3.8 Initiative,” said Mireya McKee, PhD, Director of KickStart Venture Services. “As we work
together with this impressive and diverse cohort, we look forward to helping provide targeted education programs, skill-building sessions and enduring connections with life science startup companies, which will benefit immensely from the knowledge and experience that these women will bring to their boards.”

The candidates selected for this year’s program are:

- Lora Allemeier, Mentor in Residence, Duke University
- Hortense Dodo, PhD, President and Senior Scientist, IngateyGen LLC
- Michelle Egger, Co-Founder and CEO, BIOMILQ
- Virginia Fitt, General Counsel and Compliance Officer, ChemoCentryx, Inc.
- Mary Gunn, Independent Board Director, Welwaze Medical
- Courtney Kamlet, Vice President, Group General Counsel & Corporate Secretary, Vontier Corporation
- Heidi Kay, PhD, Founder and CEO, Jericho Sciences, LLC
- Cassandra Kennedy, Senior Vice President, Global Head Regulatory, Compliance and Quality Assurance, Labcorp
- Pepper Landson, Co-Founder and CEO, Praetego Inc.
- Reed Loughrey, Vice President, Business Insights and Strategy, Syneos Health
- Christina Mack, PhD, Chief Scientific Officer, IQVIA
- Tracy Raines, PhD, Chief Innovation Officer, AgBiome
- Katie Warner, PhD, Co-Founder and Vice President, RNA Biology, Ribometrix

KickStart is supporting the launch of the WIB-RTP 3.8 Initiative through award funding that it received from the U.S. Small Business Administration Growth Accelerator Fund Competition, which aims to open professional pathways for women in STEM fields to pursue entrepreneurship. The initiative receives strategic support from the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD), the North Carolina Biosciences Organization (NCBIO) and the UNC School of Law’s Director Diversity Initiative. These organizations use their professional networks to identify and engage cohort participants, mentors and session speakers.

In addition to hearing from Secretary Sanders, the participating candidates were welcomed to the program by several distinguished speakers: Karen Albritton, Partner, Thinc Strategy and Senior Advisor, Walk West; Natalia Mitin, PhD, founding CEO of Sapere Bio; Sallie Shuping-Russell, Chair of Carolina Research Ventures and former Managing Director of BlackRock Private Equity Partners; and Anna Tharrington, Managing Partner of Hutchinson PLLC.

For more information, please contact rtp3.8@womeninbio.org.
About UNC/Kickstart

KickStart Venture Services is a department of Innovate Carolina, UNC-Chapel Hill’s central team for innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development. KickStart supports research-based startup formation and growth by providing education, early-stage funding and on-campus accelerator space. KickStart also connects founders to key service providers, management and investors in the local innovation ecosystem.

Since 2009, KickStart has provided guidance and $2.6 million in funding to more than 100 companies. The companies have gone on to raise $99.7 million in federal SBIR/STTR grants and more than $1 billion in total funding. This is a 385-fold leverage over the dollars provided by KickStart. In 2020–21, KickStart companies earned $131 million in annual revenue and employed nearly 700 people.

About WIB-RTP

Founded in 2010, the WIB-RTP chapter benefits from and contributes to the rich life sciences industry across the state and surrounding regions. North Carolina ranks biotechnology as one of the top three industries in the state. Research Triangle Park (RTP) has been ranked one of the top areas in biotechnology development in the US. Many women’s careers in life science have been launched in RTP. We are home to major biotech and pharmaceutical companies, a rich venture capital community, and top research institutions and universities.

About Women In Bio

Founded in 2002 to support all women employed in the field of life sciences from the classroom to the boardroom, Women In Bio (WIB) is a multifaceted organization with 14 chapters across North America and Montreal. It offers an array of professional educational programs, peer to peer learning, mentoring and networking opportunities, and is the only organization for women that integrates all career levels and life sciences fields. WIB is funded by sponsors and partners dedicated to supporting women of all ages in their lifelong journey in the life sciences and beyond. Please visit www.womeninbio.org.

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