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Building Equity in St. Louis Entrepreneurship

New Collective Focuses on Equity in St. Louis' Early-Stage, Tech-Based Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

ST. LOUIS – In the first-ever regional summit focused specifically on race and gender equity among St. Louis' early-stage, technology-based entrepreneurship ecosystem, entrepreneurs, support organizations, funders, and investors together will imagine and commit to actions that build race and gender equity into the ecosystem's future.

The summit, from **8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, November 30, 2017 at Harris-Stowe State University**, will feature brief, thought-provoking presentations, interactive activities, and solution-building discussions to plan a year of action for 2018.

This event launches **St. Louis' Equity in Entrepreneurship Collective** – an intentional effort of regional entrepreneur support organizations, investors, funders, and company founders working to ensure that systems built to support new entrepreneurs in tech-based ventures operate equitably, especially related to race and gender.

The St. Louis' Equity in Entrepreneurship Collective is a winner of the [Kauffman Inclusion Challenge](#), and one of the only efforts across the country that is focused on building equity in tech-based entrepreneurship ecosystems at a regional level, making the critical work we do together a potential blueprint for the rest of the country.

[BioSTL](#) applied for and received the grant on behalf of the St. Louis region. Since 2008, BioSTL has been leading efforts to build diversity and inclusion in St. Louis' early-stage, technology-based entrepreneurship ecosystem.

“Central to this role is convening partners to align efforts and build capacity as we work to increase the number of women and people of color starting scalable businesses in St. Louis,” said Natalie Self Clay, BioSTL program manager. “This Equity Summit will serve as guidepost to identifying the most promising pathways to equity within the ecosystem, along with recommendations for critical actions needed – and a commitment from attendees to take those actions within their organizations – that help advance equity.”

The day's agenda highlights a presentation by Nicole Hudson, Deputy Mayor for Racial Equity and Priority Initiatives for the City of St. Louis. Other speakers include:

- Natalie Self Clay, Program Manager, BioSTL & Backbone Staff, Equity in Entrepreneurship Collective
- Elise Miller Hoffman, Principal, Cultivation Capital
- Christian Johnson, Co-Founder, MultiPass
- Atul Kamra, Managing Partner, SixThirty
- Dr. E. Lance McCarthy, CEO, Ferguson 1000
- Dr. Cheryl Watkins Moore, Director & Lead, Bioscience Entrepreneurial and Workforce Inclusion Initiative, BioSTL
- Leslie Lynn Smith, President & CEO EPIcenter, Memphis and former CEO, TechTown Detroit

**WHEN: Thursday, November 30, 2017
8 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

**WHERE: Harris-Stowe State University
Clay Early Childhood Development/Parenting Education Center
3026 Laclede Ave
St. Louis, MO 63103**

About BioSTL

Since 2001, BioSTL has laid the foundation for St. Louis' innovation economy with a comprehensive set of transformational programs that advance St. Louis' leadership in solving important world challenges in agriculture, medicine, healthcare, and other technology areas. BioSTL has introduced nationally-acclaimed initiatives in startup creation and investment (BioGenerator), strategic business attraction (GlobalSTL), physical environment (including the Cortex Innovation District and BioGenerator Labs), entrepreneur support (BioSTL Fundamentals), seed and venture capital, a diverse and inclusive workforce, and public policy. Find us online at biostl.org and follow us on twitter @BioSTL.

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