Women and Under-Represented Minorities in High-Growth Entrepreneurship in the US: Challenges and Opportunities

A conference at the Brookings Institution, Washington, DC

November 9-10, 2022

Supported by:

Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis

Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal

The Bellwether Foundation

Overview:

Women represent 50.5% of the US population¹, yet recent reports suggest that only 2% of venture capital money went to female founders in 2021.² Those identifying as Black or African American represent 13.6% of the US population, but black founders received only about 1% of venture financing in 2020³ and 1.4% in 2021.⁴ People identifying as Hispanic or Latino represent 18.9% of the US population; data from Crunchbase suggests that Hispanic or Latino founders receive only about 2% of venture funding.⁵

While the challenges faced by women and under-represented minorities in accessing venture financing are well-known, the causes of the persistent gap between representation at the population level and financing are less well understood.⁶ An understanding of the root causes is a key input to designing public and private policy solutions to address the gap. This conference aims to highlight academic work that explores these causes.

A unique feature of this conference is its connection to practice. The conference supports a practitioner-led commission to address these challenges. Ten commissioners, comprised of entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, and venture capitalists will join the conference participants and engage in dialog about their work. The list of commissioners can be found at the end of this announcement.

This conference is supported by the Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal (SEJ), a premier outlet for scholarly research on entrepreneurship, and by the journal’s parent organization, the Strategic Management Society.

Through the generosity of the Bellwether Foundation and the Olin Business School, Washington University in St. Louis, travel to and lodging in Washington, DC will be paid for one author of each accepted paper.

¹ https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/LFE046220
⁴ https://www.crainsnewyork.com/entrepreneurship/nyc-black-founders-raise-more-startup-funding-large-gap-remains
⁵ https://www.wired.com/story/latino-founders-hard-raising-money-vcs
**Submissions:**

We seek empirical work or empirically-grounded theoretical work that addresses these issues. We welcome submissions of full-length papers, or shorter summaries of 5-7 pages. While we seek to highlight unpublished work, preference will be given to work that is at an advanced stage.

Please send your submission to: mingzhu@wustl.edu.

**Dates:**

Submissions should be received by September 5. Authors of accepted papers will be contacted no later than October 1.

**Questions:**

If you have questions about the conference, please email Dan Elfenbein (elfenbein@wustl.edu) with the subject heading “Conference Questions.”

**Conference Committee:**

Dan Elfenbein (chair), Washington University in St. Louis
Sekou Bemiss, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Melissa Graebner, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, Co-Editor, *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*
Jorge Guzman, Columbia University
Amanda Sharkey, Arizona State University

**Commissioners:**

- [Christine Aylward](#), founder & Managing Partner – Magnetic Ventures
- [Lori Coulter](#), founder & CEO – SUMMERSALT
- [Charli Cooksey](#), founder & CEO – WEPOWER
- [Morgan DeBaun](#), founder & CEO – Blavity, Inc.
- [Gaurav Garg](#), founding partner, Wing Venture Capital
- [Martin Hunt](#), venture investor, CEO Swaanlab USA Ventures
- [Lisa Morales-Hellebo](#), founder & General Partner – REFAIOND
- [Andre Perry](#), Senior Fellow – The Brookings Institution
- [Akeem Shannon](#), founder & CEO – Flipstik
- Final Commissioner TBD