

National University Launches the Institute for Leadership Synergy to Boost Organizational Effectiveness through Enhanced Gender Equality in the Workplace

The private, non-profit National University is collaborating with Institute co-founder and leadership expert Will Marré to offer individuals, businesses and organizations evidence-based principles to advance workforce equity and company performance

La Jolla, Calif. – January 30, 2018– To address the need for greater gender equality in organizational leadership roles, [National University](#), which was founded on the principle of serving adult learners and working professionals, launched today the [Institute for Leadership Synergy at National University](#). The Institute incorporates a unique emphasis on educating, empowering and equipping both women and men to employ the behavioral tools of “gender synergy” known as SMART Power to create more effective workplace cultures by leveraging the leadership styles and contributions of both women and men.

“The Institute for Leadership Synergy at National University provides a forum to engage ongoing discussions and an action plan to inspire more women to seek leadership positions and inspire men to collaborate with women to create an abundant and sustainable future for themselves and the organizations they represent,” said Adriana Cabré, Institute co-founder and Vice Chancellor of Human Resources for National University System.

The Institute, which is seen as particularly needed and relevant in light of recent attention over workplace disparities and lack of women in leadership roles in the U.S., also includes Institute Executive Director Joylyn Darnell, of the National University System; and Institute co-founder Will Marré, creator of the SMART Power Academy, and co-founder and former president of the Covey Leadership Center, which brought the “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” to millions worldwide. The Institute marked its launch today by presenting a diverse panel and audience of prominent leaders to share ideas and advance the Institute’s mission with a discussion on “The Synergy Effect: How Businesses Can Better Leverage the Leadership Strengths of Women and Men.”

Research makes it increasingly clear that companies with more diverse workforces perform better financially. However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that women represent only 27 percent of Chief Executive Officers in the United States. Through the “**Million SMART Women Project**,” the Institute, which is housed within the National University Division of Extended Learning, aims to become a center of research and community building through workshops, advocacy and an online certificate program. The Institute is dedicated to inspire and train more women to lead, and to engage an equal number of men to be advocates, sponsors and champions of women to maximize their mutually beneficial strengths.

“Many of our National University students are mid-career, and the skills emphasized by the Institute for Leadership Synergy will enable them to affect positive, transformational

change in their organizations, placing them on a strong pathway to leadership,” said Dr. David Andrews, President of National University.

National University was founded on the principle of serving adult learners and lifelong learners, who are seeking to advance their careers and enhance their lives, and the Institute aligns with the University’s commitment to serving a diverse student population. The average age of the University’s students is 32 and about 60 percent of the University’s students are women. National University ranks among the Top 20 universities in terms of number of master’s degrees granted to women nationally, and among the top three in California.

It is also a natural evolution of the National University System’s PreK-6 [Sanford Harmony](#) social emotional learning program that provides a foundation for children of all backgrounds to develop skills in areas such as collaboration, communication, and accepting differences. Sanford Harmony, which was inspired by philanthropist and entrepreneur T. Denny Sanford, aims to strengthen relationships and increase understanding among children into adulthood. “The Institute supports the goals of Sanford Harmony and the National University System to positively impact and transform life-long learners, enterprises and communities through world-class education,” said Dr. Michael R. Cunningham, Chancellor of the National University System.

With its own focus on workforce leadership skills and approaches, the Institute for Leadership Synergy at National University is dedicated to helping organizations adopt transformational leadership in place of traditional authoritarian styles, said co-founder Marré, who brings over 30 years’ experience creating leadership breakthroughs at the world’s top organizations including Johnson & Johnson, Disney, Nike and Gap.

“Our long-term vision is to enable women and men all over the world to more effectively work together to co-create a better future based on positive innovation and measurable results that benefits both themselves and the organizations they represent,” said Marré.

###

About National University

Founded in 1971, National University among the largest private, nonprofit institutions of higher education in California. With more than 150,000 alumni, National University is the flagship institution of the National University System. National University is dedicated to making lifelong learning opportunities accessible, challenging, and relevant to a diverse population of students. Four schools and two colleges – the College of Letters and Sciences; the Sanford College of Education; the School of Business and Management; the School of Engineering and Computing; the School of Health and Human Services; and the School of Professional Studies – offer more than 100 graduate and undergraduate degrees and 23 teacher credentials. Programs are offered at locations throughout California and across the nation, and are also available online. National University is headquartered in La Jolla, California. <http://www.nu.edu/>