



News Release

Study Finds Women Remain Absent From California Corporate Leadership – Watermark Announces Innovative New Program to Shift This Status Quo

DAVIS, CA - 2 December, 2010 - Watermark and the UC Davis Graduate School of Management today announced the results of the 2010 Census of Women Leaders Report. Titled, "UC Davis Study of California Women Business Leaders: A Census of Women Directors and Executive Officers," the annual report tracks the presence of women executives in Chief Officer and Board Director positions at the largest 400 publicly held companies headquartered in California. The report's findings reveal that women remain under-represented in the C-Suites and Boardrooms of California's top 400 publicly traded companies, with no discernible change over the past six years.

Key Findings of the 2010 Study Include:

- Women hold just 9.5 percent of boardroom seats and highest-paid executive positions, in line with results from previous years during which UC Davis measured a broader category of corporate executives.
- More than a third, 141 of the 400 largest public companies in the state, have no women among their board directors and highest-paid executives.
- The highest percentage of women directors and top managers found was 50 percent, at bebe stores, inc., the popular women's apparel retailer based in Brisbane.
- Just 16, or 4 percent, of the 400 companies have a woman CEO.

"It is proven that diversity of background, experience, and thought in corporate boardrooms and executive suites result in more constructive discussion, better management decisions, and stronger financial performance," said Wendy Beecham, CEO of Watermark. "It is disappointing to see yet again a lack of progress in diversifying California's C-Suites and Boardrooms. We are committed to working with UC Davis to raise awareness of this gender diversity chasm in senior corporate leadership and to build understanding of the importance of transforming this situation."

The New Watermark Institute Board Access™ Program

Today Watermark announced the launch of the Watermark Institute Board Access™ Program. This program will empower accomplished women leaders to successfully seek roles on public or private boards, with the intent of progressing diversity of all types, and enhancing board effectiveness. Watermark will advance the board-ready candidate's quest for a board seat through a robust array of services and resources. A separate track will serve high potential leaders seeking to tune their qualifications for board service.

The program kicks off with an online assessment using the industry gold standard diagnostic tool – Board Bona Fide -- provided by Intrabond Capital Corporation. Watermark will work alongside each participant to use the assessment results to craft a program tailored to the individual's needs. Participants will choose from a menu of personal coaching, exclusive Watermark programs, access to a network of active board members for informational meetings, and facilitated introductions to recruiters, CEOs, and Board Nominating Chairs. More information about this program can be found at wearewatermark.org/programs/boardaccess.

About Watermark

Watermark is a community of more than 400 exceptional women leaders in the San Francisco Bay area seeking to grow their personal impact in their professions and in society. We provide inspiring events, pioneering and standard-setting programs, and foster purposeful, meaningful, and lasting connections among a diverse network of respected peers, elevating our individual and collective contribution. We believe that the most innovative and successful organizations and communities are those that tap into, connect, and empower talented women – and we are committed to doing the same. To learn more about Watermark, please visit wearewatermark.org.

Editorial contact:

Wendy Beecham, CEO, Watermark: wendy@wearewatermark.org, 415.272.4242