Forté Foundation Launches Men As Allies Initiative To Help Engage Male Students In Gender Equity On Business School Campuses

New Program Builds On Increased Interest By Male Students In Fostering Gender Equity

(Austin, TX, December 7, 2016) – Today Forté Foundation announced its new Men As Allies Initiative to help male students benefit from, and get involved in, enhancing gender equity on business school campuses and to take that experience back to the business world.

The new initiative leverages insights from male ally programs started on 10 business schools campuses -- including Harvard Business School, The Wharton School, and Columbia Business School -- and is part of a growing movement in recent years to enhance gender equity in business and society, including the United Nations’ HeForShe initiative, Catalyst’s Men Advocating Real Change (MARC), and the White House’s Let Girls Learn.

“Over the past few years, we’ve seen a surge of interest from men in getting involved in issues of gender equality on business school campuses,” said Elissa Sangster, Executive Director, Forté Foundation, a non-profit consortium of leading multinational companies and top business schools working together to launch women into fulfilling, significant careers through access to business education, opportunities, and a community of successful women. “Many men have felt like outsiders and did not know how to get involved. Our initiative sheds light on what male MBA students can do to enhance diversity on campus, which will create a positive ripple effect both at school and when they return to the business world.”

Sangster added, “We may have reached a tipping point as more women are pursuing an MBA and more men are interested in supporting gender equity. While we are making great progress, and getting closer to 40 percent women’s enrollment at our member business schools, initiatives like this one that foster inclusiveness, will help us get to gender parity faster.”

The initiative, designed to foster the creation of male-led gender equity groups on campus, includes a new “Men as Allies” website, which contains a toolkit for male students at business schools interested in creating their own initiatives on campus to enhance gender equity, but who need more information to move forward. The toolkit includes insight on reasons to start a group and how to do it, what activities and events are successful, and how to adopt gender-supportive behaviors and work effectively with the Women in Business club on campus.

The website also features insights and podcasts of recent MBA graduates who played a leadership role in the male ally group at pioneering business schools that have walked this road and can share best practices and stumbling blocks. The podcasts feature male allies discussing why they wanted to get involved, what they’ve learned, and what they took back to the workforce. In addition, the site contains valuable research that provides ample evidence of the positive impact of gender diversity in business.
The Forté Foundation initiative launched with help from its business school members and diversity experts, including Anne Weisberg and Lisa Levey, and thanks to generous financial support from Carnegie Mellon University (Tepper School of Business), Cornell University (Johnson School of Management), and Georgetown University (McDonough School of Business).

The initiative leverages the momentum and insights of business schools that have created programs to engage men as champions of gender equity, known as “Manbassadors” programs at some schools. These 10 business schools include:

- London Business School – ManBassadors, started in 2016
- Columbia Business School – Manbassadors program, started in 2015
- New York University (Stern School of Business) – Male Allies, started in 2015
- University of California – Los Angeles (Anderson School of Management) – Manbassadors, started in 2014
- University of Michigan (Ross School of Business) – MBW Allies, started in 2014
- University of Pennsylvania (The Wharton School) – 22’s, started in 2014
- Stanford Business School – WiMEN, started in 2014
- Duke University (The Fuqua School of Business) – Male Ambassador Program, started in 2013
- Harvard Business School – Manbassadors program, started in 2013
- Northwestern University (Kellogg School of Management) – Male Allies, started in 2013

“There are multiple benefits to men who join the movement to create greater gender equity,” said Sangster. “Understanding gender equity positions men ahead of the curve in school and in business. This increased awareness gives them an edge in providing support to female colleagues, and retaining them in the workplace. It also leads to greater organizational health, financial success, and life satisfaction for both men and women.”

ABOUT FORTÉ FOUNDATION
Forté Foundation is a non-profit consortium of leading multinational corporations, top business schools in the US and abroad, and the Graduate Management Admission Council. Its mission is to launch women into fulfilling, significant careers through access to business education, opportunities and a community of successful women. Forté is the leading organization that provides a national infrastructure for women at all stages of the career continuum to access the information, scholarship support and networking connections they need to succeed in business careers. Additional information about the Forté Foundation is available online at www.fortefoundation.org.

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