Inspiring Programs in STEM

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- Colleges and universities lead the way on gun violence research
- Higher education turns to Indigenous knowledge to address climate change
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1. Dania Collie tested bridge-girder strength as part of her research.
2. Tykerria Fowler analyzed lunar plasma to support life on the moon.
3. Tony Munnings studied how plants can clean pollutants from soil and water.
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The 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award
By INSIGHT Staff

2022 INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD
FROM INSIGHT
Virginia Tech associate vice provost elected president of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education

Virginia Tech congratulates Kimberly S. Smith, associate vice provost for Student Success Initiatives in the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, who has been elected president of the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education. The association advocates for the advancement of Black faculty, staff, and students in the academic community. In her role at Virginia Tech, Smith oversees programs that enhance student engagement and achievement, including Academic Advising Initiatives, the Minority Academic Opportunities Program, the Office of Veteran Services, University Studies, and the Student Success Center.
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Virginia Tech | University of Louisville | University of North Florida | University of North Florida

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A recent study by researchers at Pennsylvania State University and Oklahoma State University has revealed that the majority of U.S. colleges and universities do not offer campus clubs or groups for Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, or Muslim students.

The researchers assessed religious organizations at 1,953 four-year, not-for-profit colleges and universities. They found that 66 percent have no minority religious student group of any type. Buddhist and Hindu student groups each exist at only 5 percent of campuses. One-quarter of the schools have Jewish student organizations, and 28 percent have groups for Muslim students.

The study also examined institutional characteristics and found that certain types of colleges and universities are more likely to offer such groups. Forty percent of public higher education institutions have these organizations, compared with 27 percent of private Christian colleges. “This is partly because Christian colleges or universities are legally allowed to discriminate against non-Christian students, including by refusing to recognize non-Christian student groups,” the researchers note in an article for the website The Conversation. “Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim students may also avoid attending Christian colleges and universities in the first place.”

Campus size also plays a role, as minority religious organizations are more common at large colleges and universities. These schools are more likely to have religious diversity, according to the study’s authors. Additionally, wealthier schools that have large institutional endowments were found to be more likely to offer Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, or Muslim student groups. This is partially because these institutions can afford to provide funds to campus organizations and hire more student affairs professionals whose responsibilities include supporting them, the study states.

The researchers say that the lack of minority religious student groups on many campuses is concerning because these organizations often provide safe spaces for underrepresented students and play a key role in revising campus policies to be more inclusive. In some places, they have been pivotal in establishing campus prayer rooms and convincing colleges to begin offering halal and kosher meals. “The fact that most colleges and universities lack minority religious student groups,” the authors state, “means that many students lack resources that could make them feel more welcome on their campuses.”

**IN BRIEF**

In July, the State University of New York (SUNY) system announced plans to create new and expand existing educational programs for incarcerated students using a $1.5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The grant will fund a three-year initiative to increase the number of state prisons in New York with college education programs, recruit more incarcerated students, and improve student success.

The initiative is spearheaded by SUNY’s Higher Education for the Justice-Involved (HEJI) team, which will collect and analyze employment data of formerly incarcerated students to determine how degree programs can best meet their needs upon release. The team will also work with campuses and penitentiaries across the state to bolster college-in-prison programs.

“College-in-prison programs can be an important step in expanding access and achieving equitable outcomes for those who have been disproportionally impacted by the criminal justice system and who also have traditionally been overlooked and underserved by colleges and universities,” HEJI Director Rachel Sander said in a news release. “This grant renewal will allow us to serve currently and formerly incarcerated New Yorkers in ways that not only promote their success, but the well-being of their families and communities.”

Currently, 13 SUNY campuses offer classes at 20 state prisons and one federal penitentiary. The initiative aims to increase this number to at least 25 by 2023. To help achieve this goal, three additional SUNY campuses — Empire State College, Jamestown Community College, and the University at Buffalo — are working to launch college-in-prison programs by fall 2023.

“Access to higher education is an essential part of the journey for individuals who have been or are currently incarcerated to make a new start and succeed in the long term,” SUNY Interim Chancellor Deborah F. Stanley said in the release.
The populations Danelle Stevens-Watkins, Ph.D., seeks to help are often difficult to reach. It is a common predicament in health disparity research.

One of her latest projects at the University of Kentucky requires asking Black Americans who use opioids to talk about their lives.

Opening up is risky. But, the study is working. Participants are signing up. They are telling stories that are rarely discussed openly in Black communities.

The fact the study is working likely has much to do with the people who are conducting it. Less than 2% of National Institutes of Health-funded senior investigators are Black.

Stevens-Watkins’ lab in the UK College of Education is an exception.

The graduate students and postdoctoral scholars on the team chose to come to UK not just to earn their degrees, but to shine a light on health disparities in Black populations.

Funded by a $3.2 million grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, this is one of the nation’s first studies on nonmedical prescription opioid use among Black Americans, and is helping to fill a dire need for data on this underserved group.

In addition to the opioid study, lab members are also interviewing Black women about breastfeeding messages and training peer support counselors; testing an evidence-based intervention for HIV prevention for Black women in geographic hotspots in Kentucky and Georgia; and training Black community first responders in mental health first aid to improve mental health awareness, literacy, service initiation and access.

Part of UK’s United in True Racial Equity (UNITE) Research Priority Area, these studies are part of a greater mission to elevate impactful research on racial equity and diversity and inclusion across Kentucky and beyond.
READ: Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation
Author Linda Villarosa first garnered attention for her 2018 article in The New York Times Magazine exposing the high rate of maternal and infant mortality among Black mothers in the U.S. In Under the Skin, Villarosa widens her focus to trace the ways in which slavery has had a lasting impact on the entire American health system. From disproportionate rates of heart disease and hypertension to stereotypes about Black people rejecting therapy, Villarosa uses case histories and independent reporting to show how African Americans have spent decades fighting for their health. Published by Doubleday

WATCH: Hiding in Plain Sight: Youth Mental Illness
This new documentary, executive produced by acclaimed director Ken Burns, centers on the mental health crisis affecting young people across the country. The two-part series features first-person accounts from more than 20 young Americans between the ages of 11 and 27 and touches upon issues of awareness, discrimination, and stigma. The film, which was screened at the White House in June, seeks to advance the public perception of mental illness and provide hope for those who may be struggling. Streaming on PBS.org

LISTEN: Sounds Like Hate: “Wake-Up Call”
Through two hour-long episodes, the Sounds Like Hate podcast by the Southern Poverty Law Center highlights the racial reckoning happening at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). In the summer of 2020, VMI students and alumni of color began speaking out about the discrimination and harassment they faced from their White peers and the pervasive influence the Confederacy still holds at the school. Since then, VMI has taken several actions to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. The podcast looks to answer whether these efforts are enough to create real change, and if the election of Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin in 2021 will undo the progress that has been made. Available on all major podcast apps

Our October 2022 Issue:
Schools of Business and Hospitality Management
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**OREGON**

Jayathi Y. Murthy, PhD, is the first woman of color to be named president of Oregon State University in Corvallis. Murthy was the Ronald and Valerie Sugar Dean and a distinguished professor at the University of California, Los Angeles Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science.

**NEW YORK**

Dara N. Byrne, PhD, has been appointed dean of the City University of New York (CUNY) William E. Macaulay Honors College in New York City. Byrne was associate provost for undergraduate retention and dean of undergraduate studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City.

Graciela Mochkofsky, MS, has been appointed dean of the CUNY Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism in New York City. Mochkofsky was executive director of the school’s Center for Community Media and founding director of its bilingual journalism program.

**TEXAS**

Tamara Brown, PhD, has been appointed provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at The University of Texas at Arlington. Brown was executive dean of the University of North Texas College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences in Denton.

Lydia Contreras, PhD, has been selected as vice provost for faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion at The University of Texas at Austin. Contreras previously served as managing director of diversity in the university’s Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost and as the Jim and Barbara Miller Endowed Faculty Fellow in Chemical Engineering.

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National Hispanic Heritage Month Q&A

Each year, National Hispanic Heritage Month offers the opportunity to celebrate the culture and contributions of Hispanic and Latinx people in the U.S. This year’s theme, Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation, is meant to showcase the diversity of this population.

In observance of this important celebration, INSIGHT recently spoke with several Hispanic and Latinx members of the higher education community about their unique experiences and what Hispanic Heritage Month means to them.

Alexis Fintland is a 2022 graduate of Cornell University, where she majored in industrial and labor relations. Fintland is a first-generation Cuban American.

Andrea Guzmán Oliver, EdD, has served as the associate vice president for student outreach and diversity at Florida Atlantic University since 2014. She was born in the U.S. to Puerto Rican parents.

Gavin Mariano is a doctoral student at Indiana University Bloomington studying higher education leadership and Latinx studies. He also serves as the president of the Latine* Graduate & Professional Student Union. Mariano is a second-generation Mexican American.

Christina Torres García, PhD, is an assistant professor of communications and the director of the Latino and Latin American Studies Program at Central Washington University. She was born in Mexico and immigrated to the U.S. as a child.

Editor's note: The following responses have been edited for clarity and length.

Can you describe your experience in higher education as a Latinx individual?

Fintland: During my first year of college, I felt incredibly lost and overwhelmed. I was far from home and felt disconnected from my cultural roots. On top of that, I was constantly questioning if I was good enough to be there compared with the rest of my peers. The Cuban American Student Association was the first group I joined on campus — a smaller student group that really felt like home. In the midst of a hectic Thursday, I could escape to the fourth floor of the Latina/o Studies Program building and grab some cafecito. As I took on more academic and extracurricular responsibilities, I found myself returning to the same space to unwind and reaching out to the same Latino professors for support and guidance.

Guzmán Oliver: If I had to summarize my experience, I would say that it has been a bumpy road, yet very rewarding. As a product of Detroit Public Schools, the first in my family to attend college, and growing up in a home where I only spoke Spanish as a child, I can relate to and empathize with many of the challenges experienced by students of color, particularly Latina/o/x students of similar backgrounds and experiences.

Mariano: It has been an ongoing endeavor because going to college was never an “ordinary” experience for me. In high school, I was one of four boys living with a single mother. Getting by was the biggest of our concerns. Back then, my Latino identity was not salient to me. Even with dead-end grades, my proud Boricua guidance counselor fought to help me make it to IU as a first-generation student. With the success of earning a bachelor’s and master’s degree — and now in a PhD program — came the embrace of my ethnicity and the benefits and challenges that came with it.

What are some of the challenges you have faced and overcome?

Guzmán Oliver: Some of these challenges I have faced and overcome and some I continue to face. I have been perceived as not being “prepared” for upward mobility due to lack of experience and not being capable of effectively leading because I am a single mother. I have been excluded from conversations and decision-making even when it clearly aligns with my area of expertise. Or I am included as an afterthought when the desired result is not achieved.

I am exposed to sexual innuendos and, in some cases, inappropriate behaviors. Typically, I am one of few women in leadership or at certain conferences, so I experience quite a bit of “mansplaining” or I am overtly dismissed as if I don’t belong at the table. I have to maintain a very high level of emotional intelligence to avoid being seen as the angry Latina, but I can’t be too friendly or I risk being sexualized.

The lack of representation of executive-level Latinas can feel isolating. You are often treated as the spokesperson for all Hispanic/Latina/o/x people at your organization and as a result feel pressure to represent them well and to be successful.

Mariano: I have experienced imposter syndrome, outright racist attacks, and countless microaggressions. “Invisibility” probably describes it best. Even now, with all my life experience and my advanced degree endeavors, those feelings never went away — they just diminished a bit in part due to the changing zeitgeist and progressive attitudes of IU and society in general.

Torres García: I am a Mexican immigrant from a farmworking background who spent my childhood selling goods in the streets of Tecomán, Colima. In the U.S., where I attended middle school, I soon realized how impersonal...
the education environment could be as I experienced it through a special education program and later through the English-as-a-second-language track. I realized that my language, traditions, and culture had no value in our educational institutions. My identity started trembling, until I met with a Latina advisor. She understood my history, community, fears, and positionality, and its intersections of systemic oppression.

During college, I felt like an imposter and an outcast around dominant narratives regarding who is an “American” and who is not. These dominant narratives were again highly emphasized during the anti-immigration climate of the Trump administration, rooted in racist, nativist rhetoric.

Currently, as I explore the faculty path, there is a constant reminder that I am one of only a few Latina faculty at this institution. This reminder is not only when other colleagues send their Latinx students for me to mentor but also when I participate in committees and advocate for minoritized students. This work can be exhausting. As I advocate for change, my voice sounds so quiet, as if it is coming from the end of a tunnel. Luckily, I have been able to create a community here at CWU, from my Latinx peers to my advocates and mentors.

**What should colleges and universities, especially predominantly White institutions (PWIs), do to support their Hispanic and Latinx populations on campus?**

**Fintland:** Fund their programs. This includes investing in Latinx professors who will stay and build up Latina/o studies programs at universities. Following my graduation, I found out that seven joint and affiliated faculty members from the Latina/o Studies Program were retiring or leaving Cornell. When I sat down with one, they told me it was because they were not being paid enough. I find this to be incredibly disheartening and damaging to both the Latinx students at Cornell and the department at large.

For students, these professors are vital for building community and belonging. It is essential for colleges and universities to take the time to truly invest in these programs and allocate sufficient funds to hiring professors to teach Latina/o studies classes. As Latino students, we deserve to learn and connect with our history while accessing mentors who best understand us.

**Guzmán Oliver:** In order for PWIs and other institutions to ensure they are properly supporting Latinx students, they need to truly know and understand them. It sounds simplistic, but so often institutions fail to recognize that their Latinx students may be very different from those of another institution and therefore success strategies cannot be interpreted as transferrable. Colleges and universities need to determine how many are first-generation students, the first in their families to be born in the U.S., low-income, raised speaking Spanish, attended Title I schools, grew up in a single-parent home, or have military ties. I would also challenge colleges to look even deeper and determine how many are Afro-Latino versus Euro-Hispanics, how many have parents who entered as refugees and have a strong belief in the American Dream, and how many have been here for generations and are affected differently by systemic racism and discrimination. All of these questions will yield responses that will allow the university to develop programs and holistic support that effectively serve the needs of their Latinx students instead of implementing strategies that work at other institutions.

**Mariano:** Institutions should officially embrace “Latine” as a gender nonbinary and inclusive term instead of using it sporadically in student organizations. Furthermore, they should stop confining the recognition of the Latine heritage to just 30 days in the fall, by just celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. Perhaps most importantly, colleges and universities should stop having tacos and salsa dancing as the hallmark of all Latine heritage events.

**Why do you think it is so important to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month?**

**Fintland:** Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month is an important reminder of how diverse and far-reaching the Latino community is. While often forgotten or not taught in school, our history reveals how much we have persevered. Hispanic Heritage Month helps create a space where we can reflect on our struggles and celebrate our successes. At the same time, it is a very important opportunity to educate others.

**Guzmán Oliver:** Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month is beneficial for two predominant reasons. It validates the experience of Hispanic and Latinx Americans and acknowledges their contributions to the success of our country. It also serves to educate non-Hispanic and non-Latinx Americans of these contributions and challenges stereotypes and preconceived notions of Hispanic and Latinx Americans.

**Torres García:** Considering that history has not highlighted the contributions of BIPOC — including Hispanics, Latinos, Afro-Latinos, Chicanos, Indigenous peoples, and other marginalized groups — and we continue being nearly invisible in corporate leadership, mainstream politics, and popular culture, and underrepresented in the teaching and faculty positions, I believe Hispanic Heritage Month could provide an opportunity to remind ourselves of the work ahead of us for reaching social equity.

This month brings the opportunity to not only celebrate with some Mexican foods and drinks but to consider the long economic and political history of struggles faced by these individuals — for instance, to acknowledge the annexation of land before and after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the creation of programs to bring bracero and guest farmworkers to this country, the subjugation of undocumented people within a broken immigration system, and to reflect on the historical inequity entrenched in our institutions.
Land-Grant Universities Are Establishing Leadership Positions to Repair Relations with Native American Communities

By Lisa O’Malley

In 2020, a Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative report by *High Country News* magazine exposed how a multitude of higher education institutions across the U.S. have profited from the dispossession of more than 10 million acres of Indigenous land through the Morrill Act of 1862. This land, seized from nearly 250 Native American tribes, often through violence and aggression, was used to establish the U.S. land-grant university system.

Colleges in nearly every state — including high-profile institutions such as Cornell University, Purdue University, and the University of California system — are part of this structure and still continue to profit from it. Following the report from *High Country News*, many of these institutions began issuing land acknowledgment statements and other responses to redress the historical exploitation of Indigenous property.

Some universities, however, have taken these efforts beyond symbolic gestures to make structural change by establishing key leadership positions tasked with repairing and building relationships with local Native American communities.

Colorado State University (CSU) became one of the most recent land-grant institutions to create such a role in June 2022 when it announced the hiring of an assistant vice president (AVP) for Indigenous and Native American Affairs. The position’s overarching responsibility will be to oversee “initiatives, research, consultation, and programs that relate to and impact Indigenous and Native peoples and Nations,” according to the job description.

In addition to fostering relationships and collaborating with tribal nations, the new AVP will be tasked with creating a more inclusive environment for Indigenous students and employees at CSU, according to Tiffani Kelly, assistant director of the school’s Native American Cultural Center and an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. These duties will include working with the center and other campus units to develop strategies to increase recruitment and retention of Native American students and ensure that all Indigenous individuals at CSU feel welcomed.

The push to address issues of Native American inclusion and representation at CSU stemmed from a 2018 incident involving the racial profiling of two prospective Indigenous students during a campus tour. The situation was handled “very, very poorly” by campus police officers, Kelly says, and led to conversations about the institution’s treatment of Native Americans.

“[The incident] raised a lot of
questions both on our campus and nationally about policing, but also very much about how our Native students and Native communities are not really present, or welcome, or visible on college campuses,” Kelly explains. In fact, Native Americans make up a relatively small portion of CSU students; approximately 141 were members of a federally recognized tribe in 2021, less than 1 percent of the university’s undergraduate population. However, Kelly notes the number is closer to 875 when including individuals who self-identify as Native American.

In response to demands from student activists following the incident, then-President Tony Frank formed a task force, later converted to a permanent Native American Advisory Council, to address challenges faced by Indigenous students and staff. Kelly, who formerly served as chair of the council, says that after engaging in outreach with students, employees, activists, and local tribal members, the group recommended that CSU establish a high-ranking position that would report directly to the president on Native American matters.

“These [dedicated Indigenous and Native American Affairs] positions can’t live in diversity offices. This is tribal sovereignty, this is government-to-government work that, as an institution, is [CSU’s] responsibility to be doing.”

Tiffani Kelly

“...These [dedicated Indigenous and Native American Affairs] positions can’t live in diversity offices,” Kelly says, explaining that this role includes many responsibilities. “This is tribal sovereignty, this is government-to-government work that, as an institution, is [CSU’s] responsibility to be doing.”

For this reason, the role will require not only a deep familiarity with the historical context of CSU’s status as a land-grant university but also the ability to approach tribal nations with the respect they deserve. An example of this work will be training faculty and staff...
on issues of data sovereignty to ensure they are not unfairly profiting off the publication of research involving Native American communities.

The University of Minnesota (UMN), another land-grant institution, likewise recently sought to repair relations with Indigenous communities by creating a senior-level position dedicated to tribal affairs. In May 2021, UMN President Joan Gabel appointed Karen Diver as senior adviser to the president for Native American Affairs. Diver is the former chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and former vice president of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, in addition to having served as a senior adviser to President Barack Obama on Native American affairs.

The appointment is part of the university’s recent focus on honoring its obligations to local tribal nations, a goal outlined in its 2025 strategic plan that is in large part a response to calls from student activists and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) to better prioritize this population’s needs. UMN initially began this work in 2019 when Gabel hired Tadd Johnson, JD, as the school’s inaugural senior director of American Indian Tribal Nations Relations. A former tribal attorney and professor emeritus at the UMN Duluth campus, Johnson says his role was essentially that of a liaison between the university and local tribes. By scheduling regular meetings between Gabel and tribal leaders, Johnson was able to facilitate open dialogue that allowed the Native American community to express “what they wanted, what mistakes [UMN has] made, and what we could do better,” he says.

Johnson also played a role in establishing groups known as American Indian advisory councils at nearly all of UMN’s campuses. In addition, he recently helped secure a $5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to fund a series of racial justice projects and initiatives at the university, many of which will address Native American relations. One such effort is the Towards Recognition and University-Tribal Healing (TRUTH) Project, which involves UMN faculty researchers working with the MIAC and interns from each of Minnesota’s 11 tribes to examine the university’s history with tribal nations. The TRUTH Project report, which is expected to be published later this year, will serve as a guideline for future policies at UMN.

Going forward, Diver and Johnson will continue to explore ways to highlight the needs of Native American students and build relations with local tribes. As more land-grant universities begin making amends for their legacies toward Indigenous people, Johnson hopes to eventually see the development of a coalition of leaders in these types of advisory roles. Through such a group, institutions could share insights and raise awareness of pressing issues for Native American communities.

“Creating a dialogue among universities, I think, would be a great step forward,” he says. “Developing best practices for this type of relationship-building with tribes all comes down to respect and listening.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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After a Decade of DACA, the Fate of Undocumented Young People Still Hangs in the Balance

By Mariah Bohanon
On June 15, 2012, President Barack Obama announced the creation of a revolutionary new program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) to protect undocumented young people brought to the U.S. as children from deportation. The program was to serve as a temporary solution until Congress could develop and agree upon legislation that would provide these individuals with a pathway to citizenship — something it had failed to do multiple times since the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act was first introduced in 2001.

“Now, let’s be clear — this is not amnesty, this is not immunity,” Obama said during his announcement. “This is not a path to citizenship. It’s not a permanent fix. This is a temporary stopgap measure that lets us focus our resources wisely while giving a degree of relief and hope to talented, driven, patriotic young people.”

A decade later, more than 700,000 individuals are currently enrolled in DACA — allowing them to legally attend school and obtain jobs in the U.S. without the threat of deportation. Despite this success, the program has been at the center of near constant legal battles, and its future remains far from certain. Many advocates for immigrant rights say that this 10th anniversary is a sore reminder of the nation’s failure to come up with a more permanent solution, and that now is the time for Congress to finally act.

Under DACA, undocumented young people who were brought to the U.S. as children are protected from deportation if they meet the following basic criteria:

- Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012
- Came to the U.S. before their 16th birthday
- Have continuously resided in the U.S. since June 15, 2007
- Are currently in school, have a high school diploma or equivalent credentials, or are a military veteran
- Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety

Individuals who enroll must reapply for DACA status every two years.

The program has been lauded for making it possible for hundreds of thousands of young people to earn college degrees, start careers, and help support their families. Roberto Gonzales, a University of Pennsylvania professor who studies DACA recipient outcomes, recently called it “indisputably the most successful policy of immigrant integration since the 1980s,” explaining that “it is really the American Dream put into reality at a scale of hundreds of thousands.”

Yet multiple challenges to the program’s legality by conservative politicians, most notably those in the Trump administration, have meant that these individuals, often referred to as DREAMers, have had to live in constant fear that the lives they have built in the U.S. could be upended by deportation. Research by the Center for American Progress shows that the average DACA recipient has resided in the U.S. since the age of 7, and the majority are now more than 26 years old. Many are raising children who are U.S. citizens, and tens of thousands work in overburdened industries such as education and health care.

Furthermore, DACA’s requirement for recipients to have lived in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, means that many teenagers today do not qualify. Most of the approximately 100,000 undocumented individuals who graduated from U.S. high schools in 2022 are ineligible for the program’s protections because they immigrated to the U.S. after this date, according to the advocacy organization FWD.us. This significantly impedes their ability to enroll in higher education, receive financial aid, or apply for jobs — all while college enrollment continues to drop nationwide and the economy struggles with unprecedented workforce shortages.

For now, the fate of DACA and the more than 700,000 people under its protection continues to hang in the balance. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit is currently considering the program’s legality after the Biden administration challenged a federal judge in Texas who ordered the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to stop approving new DACA applicants last year. The court is expected to make a decision in the fall, and experts say it is likely that the case will eventually reach the Supreme Court. The justices previously ruled in favor of preserving the program in June 2020, but advocates are concerned that the court’s present conservative majority does not bode well for
History of DACA

- **April 2001:** Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) first introduce the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act to provide undocumented people brought to the U.S. as children with a path to citizenship. The legislation leads to this population becoming known as DREAMers, but fails to pass Congress even with bipartisan support.

- **June 2012:** President Barack Obama announces the creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to protect undocumented young people from deportation after Congress fails to pass multiple versions of the DREAM Act.

- **August 2012:** U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, a division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), begins accepting applications for DACA. Over the next four years, more than 700,000 individuals enroll.

- **November 2016:** Donald Trump is elected president after making immigration a focal point of his campaign, including pledging to immediately terminate DACA.

- **September 2017:** DHS announces the rescission of DACA, asserting that the Obama administration exceeded its authority in creating the program. In response, multiple states and organizations, including the University of California system, file lawsuits against DHS and other federal entities.

- **January 2018:** William Alsup, a federal judge in California, orders a nationwide injunction to halt the repeal of DACA. In accordance, DHS resumes accepting applications for renewal of DACA status, which recipients must file every two years.

- **February 2018:** The Supreme Court declines the Trump administration’s request that it review Alsup’s injunction.

- **April 2018:** John D. Bates, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., rules in favor of maintaining DACA protections, but grants DHS 90 days to provide better evidence for canceling the program.

- **August 2018:** Bates upholds his previous decision, stating that DHS failed to prove that DACA is unconstitutional, but partially stays the order for the program to continue accepting new applicants. Individuals already granted DACA status are still protected from deportation and allowed to continue applying for renewal.

- **June 2019:** The Supreme Court announces that it will issue a decision on DACA’s legality during its next term.

- **June 2020:** The justices rule 5-4 that the Trump administration acted improperly in terminating DACA.

- **December 2020:** The District Court for the Eastern District of New York orders the government to accept first-time DACA applications and renewal requests.

- **January 2021:** On President Joe Biden’s first day in office, he issues a memo ordering DHS to preserve and fortify DACA.

- **July 2021:** Andrew S. Hanen, a federal judge in Texas, rules that the program is illegal and orders DHS to stop approving new applications. He determines that individuals currently enrolled in the program, however, are to remain protected under DACA status.

- **September 2021:** The Biden administration appeals Hanen’s ruling.

- **July 2022:** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit begins oral arguments for the Biden administration’s appeal.

DACA’s future.

Many immigrant rights activists, however, say that the next step must be to replace DACA altogether by providing a path to permanent citizenship for DREAMers. In Congress, legislators on both sides of the aisle blame their opponents for repeatedly failing to develop and pass a solution despite numerous polls showing bipartisan support for this demographic to become U.S. citizens.

Many DACA recipients now report feeling frustration and burnout after years of advocating for this right while bearing the emotional burden of being undocumented. In June, some of these individuals testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety during a special hearing to commemorate DACA’s 10th anniversary and to push for lawmakers to pass the latest iteration of the DREAM Act.

Dalia Larios, a Boston-based physician and the first DACA recipient to graduate from Harvard University Medical School with honors, spoke to the committee about the impact of this legislation. She stated that the thought of deportation is “exceptionally painful” because it would separate her from everyone and everything she knows, and shared how the health care and medical community would be affected by losing thousands of DREAMer employees. Larios also noted that finding a way to help all undocumented immigrants safely live and work in the U.S. should be a moral and economic imperative for lawmakers.

“I personally don’t consider myself more deserving than anyone else,” she told the subcommittee. “I think that Congress should approach this in a comprehensive manner, thinking about the fact that lives are at stake here.”

Mariah Bohanon is the managing editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. To learn more about DACA, the DREAM Act, and how you can encourage lawmakers to take action, visit rememberthedreamers.org.

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To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the passage of Title IX in June, the U.S. Department of Education released long-awaited proposed changes to the legislation that will alter the way educational institutions must respond to reports of sexual misconduct and discrimination.

While the proposed amendments feature a slew of major revisions, one of the most notable is the extension of the law to prohibit discrimination against students based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The new rules are intended to "make clear that preventing someone from participating in school programs and activities consistent with their gender identity would cause harm in violation of Title IX, except in some limited areas set out in the statute or regulations," according to a statement by the Education Department.

Title IX experts say they have anticipated these changes since President Joe Biden first issued a March 2021 executive order mandating that the department conduct a review of the law’s policies to ensure its guidelines included protections for LGBTQ+ students. What was unexpected, however, was the government’s decision to maintain several regulations established under the Trump administration that provide more rights to individuals who have been accused of sexual misconduct.

“The proposed regulations are trying to strike more of a balance,” says Tanyka Barber, JD, a partner at TNG Strategic Risk Management Solutions, which oversees the Association of Title IX Administrators. “Under the Obama administration, [Title IX guidelines] were heavily focused on victims. In response to concerns from respondents, the Trump administration really shifted the needle to focus on due process protections. One of the things I really like about the new regulations is they’re trying to take us more to the middle.”

Some of the Trump-era mandates that the department plans to keep require schools to presume respondents are innocent until the grievance process is completed and to allow informal resolutions of complaints if both the accuser and the accused agree to them.

For colleges and universities, the most significant change to Title IX would be eliminating the requirement for live hearings in sexual misconduct cases — a win for many institutions that previously expressed concern about this mandate.

The new regulations would, however, change the current guidelines in several key ways. For colleges and universities, the most significant change to Title IX would be eliminating the requirement for live hearings in sexual misconduct cases — a win for many institutions that previously expressed concern about this mandate, Barber says. “[Colleges that] don’t want to incorporate a live hearing or who are not required to, to sexual harassment, even if such behavior takes place outside of the program or outside of the U.S. They would also increase protections for pregnant students and employees by requiring schools to provide reasonable accommodations, such as adequate break times and access to private lactation spaces. The proposed regulations do not include guidelines on what type of accommodations colleges should provide to students regarding abortions — an issue that will likely rise to the forefront for
Title IX offices as more states move to ban the procedure in the wake of the overturn of Roe v. Wade.

One concern not addressed is the question of transgender students participating in school sports. The Education Department stated it would conduct a separate rule-making process on this issue, although no date for that has been announced. Meanwhile, the topic continues to be the subject of heated national debate, with at least 19 states having banned or limited transgender students from sports in recent years.

For now, however, the proposed Title IX regulations would serve as a foil to other recent anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, including Florida’s “Don’t Say Gay” law.

“Title IX, being a federal law, would take precedent over state law,” Barber says. “So institutions would be bound by these broader protections for LGBTQ+ students.” Schools that ban students from accessing the restrooms consistent with their gender identity, for example, would be in direct violation of Title IX and could potentially lose federal funding and face other penalties, she says.

The proposed regulations are currently undergoing a 60-day comment period, after which the Education Department will review and respond to these comments before issuing a final rule. Barber says the turnaround will likely be a lot quicker than was seen during the last Title IX rule-making process. She estimates that the final version of the amendments will be released by spring 2023, though they will probably undergo some modifications and could potentially face challenges in court.

In the meantime, Barber encourages colleges and universities to begin thinking about the changes that need to be put in place to adhere to future policies and procedures. As for Title IX coordinators, she says, many of the provisions in the proposed regulations were considerations that were already on their radar — although she does highlight that there is more explicit language around coordinators’ obligation to monitor and address barriers to reporting harassment and discrimination.

“[Title IX professionals] have always had an obligation to stop discrimination and harassment, prevent it from happening in the future, and provide appropriate remedies to complainants,” she says. “Part of monitoring your campus environment goes into that prevention piece.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
In the Wake of Political Roadblocks, Researchers at Colleges and Universities Look to Address the Gun Violence Epidemic

By Lisa O’Malley
In response to ever-growing demands for action, Congress passed the first gun control legislation in nearly 30 years in June. Although the bill, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, provides some of the most significant firearm safety measures to date, many activists and experts say it still falls short of the response needed to rectify this public health crisis.

One of the main obstacles to finding solutions is a lack of fundamental data, as federal funding to support research on the topic was stunted for more than two decades by the Dickey Amendment, a provision to a 1996 omnibus bill. Lobbied for by the National Rifle Association and other gun rights advocacy groups, the amendment prohibited the CDC — and later the National Institutes of Health (NIH) — from using funds to advocate for gun control. Congress eventually clarified in 2018 that the CDC is allowed to direct money toward research on gun violence, but the amendment already had its effect on the field, ultimately resulting in a lack of vital information, including data on the number of people in the U.S. who own firearms.

Despite these setbacks, experts have remained committed to the cause. Over the last two decades, a handful of universities have partnered with groups such as Arnold Ventures, a nonprofit, and the RAND Corporation, a public policy think tank, to secure funding for firearm research. Both organizations were involved in establishing the National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research (NCGVR) in 2018, which has since raised $22 million from private donors to support a range of projects. While these efforts have helped bridge some of the information gaps, the lack of federal support has impeded researchers from conducting the large-scale studies necessary to sufficiently tackle the issue.

The good news is that the funding freeze appears to be thawing. Over the last three years, federal legislation has been passed to allocate support for the CDC and NIH to study gun safety, providing a much-needed boost to academics in the field. In light of this increased financial backing, colleges and universities around the nation are amplifying their efforts to find answers to one of the most urgent challenges of our time.

In just the last few months, a multitude of higher education institutions have organized conferences, initiatives, and other projects centered on gun violence prevention. In June, Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy — located in Houston, just over four hours from Uvalde — invited researchers, community leaders, and doctors to a symposium to discuss policies and procedures being implemented at the local level.

Tulane University in New Orleans recently began an initiative to provide gun safes to the public. And in the Washington, D.C., region, 16 university presidents announced in July the launch of a six-month collaboration to study and offer...
“There have just been too many brutal murders of Black LGBTQ+ people in Detroit, yet they have been largely invisible in the larger body of literature focused on firearm violence and prevention.”

Kristi Gamarel, PhD

recommendations on how to resolve this national epidemic. Entitled the 120 Initiative, the project is named in honor of the approximately 120 people who die from gun violence every day.

University of Michigan
One institution that has been a leader in this work is the University of Michigan (U-M). Home to the nation's largest collection of data sets on firearms, it has secured more federal funding to study the issue than any other U.S. college or university.

In 2018, U-M received an NIH grant to form the Firearm Safety Among Children and Teens Consortium with 25 faculty members in various disciplines — including public health, medicine, social sciences, engineering, public policy, and the arts — from 12 universities. It also launched a special initiative on gun violence in 2019, which would subsequently lead to the creation of the U-M Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention last year.

While one of the major focuses of the institute is finding prevention strategies and measuring their effectiveness, U-M researchers are also looking at the ways in which this problem affects marginalized populations.

One current project, led by Kristi Gamarel, PhD, an associate professor of health behavior and health education at the U-M School of Public Health (U-M SPH), examines the factors that influence gun violence against LGBTQ+ youth and young adults of color in Detroit. The idea came from Gamarel's work as a founding member of the Love Her Collective, a community-academic partnership between U-M SPH and the nonprofit organization Trans Sistas of Color Project, which aims to better understand and meet the needs of Black and Brown transgender women. Based on feedback from the collective’s community partners and organizers, Gamarel knew this was a critical area of study.

“There have just been too many brutal murders of Black LGBTQ+ people in Detroit, yet they have been largely invisible in the larger body of literature focused on firearm violence and prevention,” she wrote in an email to INSIGHT.

Although still in the early stages, Gamarel's project ultimately seeks to identify the oppressive structural, social, organizational, and psychological factors that contribute to firearm violence against these groups; create a method to measure their exposure to firearms; and discover strategies that will improve data collection on LGBTQ+-related gun violence.

“We hope that the findings from this pilot project will help us to answer questions about intersectional oppression and firearm experiences among LGBTQ+ communities of color,” Gamarel says, “so that we can inform community-based interventions that are not just effective at reducing firearm injury but are most appropriate and have real-world utility.”

Columbia University
Another institution where researchers have taken a strong stance on firearm safety is Columbia University. In the summer of 2020, faculty members from the university’s Teachers College (TC) and Mailman School of Public Health held a meeting for researchers across campus who were interested in the subject. From there, the Columbia Scientific Union for the Reduction of Gun Violence (SURGE) was born. The group — made up of 40 faculty members from six Columbia schools as well as staff, graduate students, and alumni — is primarily concerned with “generating new evidence, interdisciplinary collaborations, and creative ideas that, they hope, go beyond traditional solutions to gun violence,” according to a university news release. Thus far, SURGE has organized seminars and other events, including an annual Gun Violence Action Week on campus, to bring awareness to such topics as gun politics, intimate partner violence, and suicide prevention. The group’s members are actively involved in research projects that approach the issue from a variety of angles, including examining the links between alcohol and gun violence, firearm injuries and the health care system, and more. The SURGE website also highlights courses at Columbia that touch on this topic and ways that students can get involved. In addition,
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1 of 7 institutions nationally to receive the honor for a decade straight

National Research Conference on Firearm Injury Prevention

This fall, NCGVR, U-M, and Columbia are joining the RAND Corporation to host the first-ever National Research Conference on Firearm Injury Prevention.

“The main goal of the conference is to bring together firearm injury prevention researchers of all levels, backgrounds, disciplines, and focus areas to highlight the current state of the science and research in this field across the lifespan,” Kate Barnes, a communications specialist in the U-M Office of the Vice President for Research, wrote in an email to INSIGHT.

The conference, which will take place November 29 through December 1 in Washington, D.C., will enable scholars to share best practices and expand the reach of their studies both within the field and to external audiences. The event is still in the planning stages, but Barnes says organizers have been met with great enthusiasm.

“We are seeing many researchers — both early career and established researchers, as well as trainees — from numerous academic institutions interested in attending or presenting, which is exciting,” she says.

Along with the recent influx of federal funding, the conference may be a sign that the country is facing a turning point in the field of gun violence scholarship. While more government support and resources are still needed to adequately address this national crisis, the interest already being generated shows just how passionate researchers are about the topic.

“The array of registrants thus far is showcasing how much this field of study is growing,” Barnes says, “and why a conference like this is critical to ensuring researchers have the resources they need to continue their work.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity. For more information about the 2022 National Research Conference on Firearm Injury Prevention, visit ncgvr.org.
LGBTQ+ Students Lead the Charge for Equal Rights at Religious Colleges and Universities

By Greg Evans and Mariah Bohanon
For religious schools.

Department because of its exemptions were dismissed by the Education Many filed Title IX complaints that classmates, and campus leaders. forms of discrimination from faculty, facing verbal harassment or other institutions. Other plaintiffs allege groups that have not been recognized as official organizations by their colleges when it comes to guaranteeing equal rights.

One of the most significant efforts to date is a class action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education filed by the Religious Exemption Accountability Project (REAP) on behalf of 46 current and former LGBTQ+ students at more than 20 Christian colleges and universities. The suit, Elizabeth Hunter, et. al. v. U.S. Department of Education, argues that the government cannot make an exemption to Title IX — the law barring gender and sexual discrimination in education — for any institution receiving federal funds, regardless of religious status.

Plaintiffs in the case include students who have been expelled or faced other disciplinary action because of their LGBTQ+ identity and members of LGBTQ+ campus groups that have not been recognized as official organizations by their institutions. Other plaintiffs allege facing verbal harassment or other forms of discrimination from faculty, classmates, and campus leaders. Many filed Title IX complaints that were dismissed by the Education Department because of its exemptions for religious schools.

“REAP’s lawsuit asserts the constitutional and basic human rights of LGBTQ+ students, seeking to end the sexual, physical, and psychological abuses perpetrated under the religious exemption to Title IX at thousands of federally funded schools, colleges, and universities across America,” REAP’s website states. “The Constitution guarantees equal rights for all Americans, holding space for religious belief and practice, while ensuring that religion does not serve as a government-funded vehicle to harm racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, or other minorities.”

Filed in March 2021 with 33 plaintiffs, the suit has expanded and gained national attention while awaiting a judge’s decision over the past 16 months. Paul Southwick, director of REAP, recently told the news agency Baptist News Global that the case has faced delays due to the courts being backlogged during the pandemic, but a ruling on preliminary issues could come in the next several weeks or months. The organization appears optimistic, especially since the Biden administration has decided to launch investigations into six of the schools named in the suit, including Liberty University — one of the nation’s most prominent evangelical institutions.

Meanwhile, students and employees at Seattle Pacific University (SPU), which is affiliated with the Free Methodist Church, have made national headlines for their continuous efforts to guarantee equitable employment. Campus community members have taken multiple steps to protest SPU’s Employee Lifestyle Expectations Policy, which prohibits “sexual behavior that is inconsistent with the university’s understanding of biblical standards, including cohabitation, extramarital sexual activity, and same-sex sexual activity.”

In April 2021, 72 percent of SPU faculty approved a vote of no confidence in the university’s Board of Trustees after its members declined to change the policy. In response, a campus work group was formed to study the school’s approach to sexual orientation and gender identity. Despite the group’s recommendations for changes this spring, the board once again voted against revising the Lifestyles Expectations Policy in late May.

“While the board has landed on a decision that reflects a prayerful and sincere commitment to the wellbeing of SPU’s identity as an orthodox, evangelical, Wesleyan, and ecumenical institution of faith and learning, there is also sober acknowledgement of how this news will be received,” SPU said in a statement. “The board acknowledges that there is disagreement among faithful Christians on the topic of sexuality and identity.”

Approximately 200 students and faculty members participated in a walkout following the board’s announcement, and students organized a campus sit-in that lasted the entire month of June. Multiple graduating
seniors expressed their disdain for the policy by handing interim President Pete Mejares a Pride flag during their commencement ceremony, rather than shaking his hand.

“The reality is that the culture at SPU is loving and accepting, and it looks like [the sit-in protest in June],” one student told Fox 13 Seattle, “but the problem is that there are a few members of the board who hold all the power to do something.” The student protesters gave the board until July 1 to reverse its decision. When that date passed with no action from the trustees, they called an end to the sit-in and announced that they would be filing a lawsuit. “The board has elected to refuse our demands, meaning we will be moving forward with litigation. This is not a decision that we take lightly, but it is a decision we believe will protect the future of our university,” the Associated Students of Seattle Pacific said in a statement. Their actions appear to have garnered the attention of government authorities, as Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson recently announced an investigation into SPU’s employment practices. “Seattle Pacific University admits that it refuses to hire gay faculty and staff,” Ferguson said in a statement. On July 28, the university filed a lawsuit against Ferguson’s office, alleging that the investigation violates its “freedom to choose employees on the basis of religion, free from government interference or intimidation,” according to an SPU press release.

Now, with so many legal decisions hanging in the balance, LGBTQ+ students, employees, and allies across the U.S. are left with uncertainty regarding their future at religious institutions. While multiple Christian colleges have instituted policies that affirm the rights of this population, advocates say that true equality must be guaranteed under the law. “Religious exemptions to civil rights statutes come at a price,” REAP states. “The price is paid by the young and vulnerable who find themselves at the mercy of religiously affiliated, taxpayer-funded social service and educational institutions that often turn them away or force them into the closet.”

Greg Evans is a contributing writer and Mariah Bohanon is the managing editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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“Metaversities” Offer New Possibilities for Education, but Some Experts Urge Campuses to Be Mindful of Potential Risks

By Mariah Bohanon

As the popularity of the metaverse continues to expand, it is no surprise that colleges and universities are beginning to explore the educational possibilities of virtual reality (VR) environments.

In April, 10 higher education institutions announced that they would participate in one of the most ambitious metaverse projects to date with the help of VictoryXR, a company that produces VR educational tools. With funding from Meta, the company formerly known as Facebook, VictoryXR is creating digital versions of each of these institutions so that students can attend class, socialize, and explore an exact replica of campus from the comfort of home using a VR headset. Many of the schools participating in the project say they will begin offering courses through their digital campuses starting this fall.

Known as “metaversities,” these 3D environments will present a broad range of opportunities for teaching and learning and are expected to become common across the higher education landscape in coming years. Yet some experts remain cautious about the potential drawbacks of making this technology mainstream and have unique concerns regarding the consequences for colleges and universities.

How Metaversities Will Work

In 2021, VictoryXR created its first metaversity when it developed a digital replica of Morehouse College, a historically Black institution for men, with the intention of creating a more immersive and engaging online learning experience amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Promotional videos for the project show an exact replica of the Morehouse campus and classrooms, where students and professors roam about via their self-created avatars. They also highlight more imaginative digital environments, like a 19th century battlefield where a digital professor delivers a lecture to his students’ avatars as they stand among Napoleon’s army. In an anatomy lab, students explore giant 3D replicas of human organs.

The Morehouse project caught the attention of Meta, which agreed to fund further development, according to a report on EdSurge.com. The project is just one aspect of Meta’s $150 million investment in immersive learning spaces “that build skills and create content related to virtual environments,” the report states. Each participating school also receives a limited number of the company’s VR headsets. The following institutions are participating:

- Alabama A&M University
- California State University Dominguez Hills
- Morehouse College
- New Mexico State University
- Northern Illinois University
- South Dakota State University (SDSU)
- Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC)
- University of Kansas School of Nursing
- University of Maryland Global Campus
- West Virginia University

SWOCC plans to offer VR classes in forestry, microeconomics, and more. SDSU said it will offer two science classes this fall through its metaversity. Students...
attending class remotely will receive loaner VR headsets in the mail. Some of the participating colleges will have headsets available for on-campus students to attend class in the metaverse, and all students can explore a 2D version of their digital campus using regular computers.

Proponents of this technology say this innovative form of online learning offers more than simply a futuristic experience. Remote students can experience the unique architecture and culture of a physical campus while connecting with peers in a format that some say feels more personal than other online systems. In a recent Stanford University study, for instance, students enrolled in a VR class over a span of 10 weeks reported increased feelings of connection with their classmates and engagement with course material. Once students got used to attending class through a VR headset and became adept with the technology, they reported mostly positive experiences, according to the researchers.

Some education technology experts say that metaversities will allow students to enjoy a more traditional college experience — attending virtual events on campus, socializing with peers between classes, and more — despite geographic barriers. Monica Arés, head of Immersive Learning at Meta, has said that these colleges will move from a hybrid model of education — with courses offered both online and on campus — to a “tri-brid” model, with classes taking place in person, in traditional online formats, and within the metaverse.

**Concerns about the Metaverse**

Others have cautioned that this new educational structure could lead to socioeconomic segregation, rather than expanded access. Nir Eisikovits, an associate professor of philosophy and founding director of the Applied Ethics Center at the University of Massachusetts Boston, recently wrote about this concern for *ASBMB Today*, asking, “Will these technologies offer a compelling educational experience for a lower cost, or will they just usher in a new digital divide — a two-tiered system consisting of elites who can pay for brick and mortar schooling and those who must make do with the virtual counterpart?”

Questions of accessibility are far from the only apprehensions regarding the advent of VR education. While Meta is providing funding and free headsets to help expand access to courses within the metaverse, critics of the company point out that its long history of problems with protecting user data and privacy should make colleges and students cautious about participating. Some, including Eisikovits, say that colleges and universities should also consider whether academic freedom and educator autonomy will be supported by the private companies operating metaverse education platforms.

Furthermore, a growing number of scholars and advocates have raised alarms about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues in the metaverse in recent months. Reports of anti-LGBTQ+ and racist hate speech, sexual harassment, and even sexual assault in various Meta platforms have proliferated in the media. VR experts and psychologists have noted that such incidents, while taking place in a virtual space where the user may be physically safe, can still cause extreme psychological distress.

Breigha Adeyemo, a PhD candidate in communication at the University of Illinois Chicago, examined some of these
issues in an article titled "I'm a Black Woman and the Metaverse Scares Me — Here's How to Make the Next Iteration of the Internet Inclusive," which was published by multiple websites in December. Just as the internet and social media have given rise to new forms of discrimination against marginalized people, so too does the metaverse present opportunities for new ways to spread hatred and inflict harm in an environment where safety settings and reporting measures have already proven to be flawed, Adeyemo writes. "Ensuring that the metaverse is inclusive and promotes democratic values rather than threatens democracy requires design justice and social media regulation," she states. "Design justice is putting people who do not hold power in society at the center of the design process to avoid perpetuating existing inequalities."

Multiple tech experts and DEI advocates have issued similar calls urging Meta and the organizations working to develop the metaverse to make diversity a priority. A VictoryXR representative told EdSurge.com that the company made an effort to include historically Black and Hispanic-Serving Institutions in conducting outreach for its metaversities project. The 10 selected schools include those with large numbers of low-income and underrepresented students.

“We want to make sure that not only are we preparing the future workforce to interact with these technologies," Arés has stated, “but also to build them.”

Mariah Bohanon is the managing editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
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Ria Salway is a 2022 recipient of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship, the most prestigious scholarship awarded to undergraduates in marine sciences. Ria is a junior honors student, studying biological sciences with a concentration in marine biology.

“Environmental justice and combating the climate crisis are important to me. I love the work that the NOAA is doing, and I would be interested to see how I can make an impact. I am hopeful that participating in this program will help me cement my future career goals, which may lead me back to the NOAA in the future.”

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JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF FEARLESS EXPLORERS
A new study by University of Michigan sociology professor Erin Cech has found that men who are straight, White, and able-bodied receive better treatment in STEM fields, which could have an impact on the ability to recruit and retain diverse professionals. The privileges afforded to this group include better pay, more career opportunities, social inclusion, and general respect, according to the study report, titled “The Intersectional Privilege of White Able-Bodied Heterosexual Men [WAHM] in STEM.”

“These results have important theoretical and empirical implications for STEM inequality scholarship,” the report states. “They show that the benefits in workplace inclusion, respect, and rewards that WAHM enjoy cannot be fully (or even mostly) accounted for by differences in education level, sector, field, job characteristics, or work effort. Thus, these privileges cannot be dismissed as merely meritocratic rewards for more training, greater work devotion, or divergent employment circumstances among WAHM compared with their peers.”

The study examines 32 demographic characteristic combinations of 25,000 full-time STEM professionals in the U.S. and how they factor into the following six categories:

- Average annual salary
- Career advancement opportunities
- Experience of harassment at work
- Experience of professional respect at work
- Persistence intentions
- Social inclusion in the workplace

WAHM ranked highest in each category, while LGBTQ+ Black women scored lowest in almost all of them. Latinx and Native American women who are LGBTQ+ ranked lowest in average annual salaries.

STEM organizations and institutions should use the findings to re-examine their diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies, according to the report. When evaluating their policies, these employers should not look at disadvantaged workers in a vacuum but rather from the position that one group’s overwhelming privilege leads to negative outcomes for every other demographic.

“From a policy perspective, efforts to address STEM inequality must tackle mechanisms of privilege as well as disadvantage,” Cech writes. “Most organizational and institutional efforts to reduce inequality seek to address disadvantages faced by marginalized and minoritized persons in STEM as though they were variants from a neutral baseline, without explicitly attending to the cultural, structural, and institutional systems that may unfairly advantage WAHM over all others.”

“I think what is being recognized now is that we cannot remain competitive globally, as a nation, without considering the diversity of our population.”

Sonja Montas-Hunter, PhD, director of the National Science Foundation’s Hispanic-Serving Institution Program Network Resource Centers and Hubs, in “Federal Agencies Strengthen Ties to Minority-Serving Institutions Through New STEM Programs” on page 42
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The recently passed CHIPS and Science Act promises billions of dollars in funding to support science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) research and production at government agencies, private companies, and colleges and universities across the U.S. While the legislation’s primary goal is to boost the nation’s ability to compete with China when it comes to cutting-edge technology and manufacturing, it also includes provisions to increase diversity in STEM education and the workforce and to promote socioeconomic development for underserved communities.

“If we are going to lead in science and innovation, we must create and support a STEM workforce that represents the diversity of our nation,” states a U.S. House of Representatives fact sheet about the act. “This legislation supports policy reforms, research, and data collection to identify and lower barriers facing women, minorities, and other groups underrepresented in [STEM] studies and research careers.”

Some of the specific provisions that address these goals include the following:

- Government agencies will be required to collect comprehensive demographic data on the merit review process and on STEM faculty at U.S. colleges and universities
- Government agencies are to increase their efforts to ensure all researchers have equitable access to funding for their work
- Colleges and universities are to be supported in conducting research on participation and career trajectories and the implementation of best practices for increasing the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students and faculty

In addition, the act boosts funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) by $81 billion and requires the agency to create a chief diversity officer position. NSF grants and other sources of federal support for STEM research have historically advantaged White men, but supporters of the new legislation say it will devote more funding for underrepresented scholars and Minority-Serving Institutions.

The bill also contains multiple programs designed to boost STEM participation and careers in underserved areas. “These spatially targeted initiatives seek to promote a more equitable geography of growth across the nation,” according to Mark Muro, a senior fellow and policy director for the Brookings Institution. Prior research by Brookings has revealed that half of all innovation jobs in the U.S. are located in just 41 counties, “underscoring the need to better distribute innovation inputs across the country,” he states.

“As an engineer myself, I believe strongly that I want people who know the human condition to be in charge of using and deploying technology, and that’s the vision driving the AI.Humanity effort.”

Ravi Bellamkonda, PhD, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Emory University, in “Universities Are Making Ethics a Key Focus of Artificial Intelligence Research” on page 46

By 2025, the U.S. will need to fill an estimated 3.5 million STEM jobs, according to research by the National Association of Manufacturing and Deloitte.

According to a 2019 federal report, only 20 percent of college-bound high school students in the U.S. are prepared for the coursework that is typically required of STEM majors.
AI algorithms don't correctly identify Black and brown faces.

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Learn more about why equity-centered engineering is important.
Federal Agencies Strengthen Ties to Minority-Serving Institutions Through New STEM Programs

By Erik Cliburn

Federal agencies have a long history of partnering and cooperating with higher education institutions to advance research in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Yet many Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) have traditionally been overlooked or dismissed when applying for federal research grants or partnerships with government entities.

In 2018, only 3 percent of federal STEM-related funding to colleges and universities was awarded to MSIs, even though these schools constitute 14 percent of eligible institutions, according to the American Society for Engineering Education. In recent years, however, more agencies are working with MSIs to build their research capacity and expand diversity in the STEM workforce.

“Expanded financial investments in MSIs are critical for cultivating the continued success of these institutions and their students, particularly in STEM disciplines,” a 2019 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report states. “To support greater investments in MSIs, current funding methods need to be re-examined and new, innovative models explored.”

In the past year alone, numerous government agencies have launched new programs and funding opportunities to create a more equitable STEM workforce. Although many of these initiatives are designed specifically to address long-standing inequities, they are also vital to ensuring that the U.S. stays on the cutting edge of research and technology, says Sonja Montas-Hunter, PhD, director of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) newly formed Hispanic-Serving Institution Program Network Resource Centers and Hubs (HSI-Net).

“The landscape at our [higher education] institutions, specifically among student populations, is changing,” says Montas-Hunter. “I think what is being recognized now is that we cannot remain competitive globally, as a nation, without considering the diversity of our population.”

The NSF announced the launch of HSI-Net on June 22 as part of its overarching Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: HSI Program, which was established in 2017 to increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates for Hispanic and Latinx students. Through the new initiative, the organization will dedicate $29 million to bolster STEM education and research at HSIs nationwide.

The funding will support the creation of two collaborative centers that will be housed at the NSF: the Center for Community Coordination (HSI-CCC) and the Center for Evaluation, Research, and Synthesis (HSI-CERS). The HSI-CCC will bring together HSIs from across the country, including schools that are not NSF grantees, to work on STEM projects. The HSI-CERS will produce impact reports about various research projects that can be useful to different HSI STEM programs and help institutions evaluate their grant application processes to ensure competitiveness when applying for funding. Both centers will also be responsible for creating regular community engagement opportunities, such as webinars and workshops. This will ultimately help participating HSIs build their research capacity and become more competitive when applying for federal grants, says Montas-Hunter.

“One of the gaps that we see is that the voices of those [HSI] communities are normally not present,” she says. “They’re not at the table. HSI-Net is about bringing those communities together, bringing authenticity to those partnerships, and making sure that voices are heard.”

The new initiative will also select five HSIs to be program hubs that will “serve as resources for innovative initiatives organized around key issues that are designed to effectively serve the HSI community and its stakeholders,” according to the NSF. The specific focus of each will be determined by the institutions, which Montas-Hunter says she hopes will be located across the U.S. to reflect the diversity of Latinx populations.

“The hubs are really knowledge-producing entities that we hope come from the communities and that these communities decide and identify
New solutions for equity in engineering are essential.

Our Equity Action Plan serves as a map for all members of the Penn State College of Engineering community; an inclusive process for engaging stakeholders that we hope can become a model for many engineering programs across the nation.

We invite you to learn more about the actions we are taking at Penn State to address this critical societal challenge.
“Through programs like these, we can engage with researchers at institutions that have been historically underrepresented in our portfolio,” Nilsen wrote. “They bring new ideas and perspectives along with their robust expertise, and that’s what will spur innovation in clean energy technology.”

Participating schools are a mixture of Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and HSIs. The individual projects will research specific aspects of solar energy, such as developing methods for growing crops under solar panels.

Expanded research capacity, however, is just one of the key components to improving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the STEM workforce.

Another important aspect is creating interest and opportunities in these fields for underrepresented student populations. One federal initiative that addresses this is NASA’s Minority University Research and Education Project (MUREP), which recently awarded $680,000 to 10 HBCUs and predominantly Black institutions to increase STEM engagement for students in pre-college summer programs.

“These proposals are designed to reach students at that critical transition point between high school and college when their future plans are really coming into focus,” Kelly Martin-Rivers, acting MUREP project manager, said in a news release. “We’re excited to be able to support the next generation of the STEM workforce.”

MUREP also recently developed a collaborative pipeline project with Drake State Community & Technical College, an HBCU in Alabama that offers two-year degrees. The project connects students with research internships at four-year colleges that focus on various aspects of space exploration systems, including the design and testing of lunar landing pads.

These types of investments in MSIs from federal agencies will be crucial to having a robust STEM industry in the U.S., says Montas-Hunter. She and other officials across numerous departments are encouraged to see the rise in nationwide initiatives committed to advancing DEI across multiple STEM disciplines.

“I’m super excited about it, and I think it’s a step in the right direction,” she says. “It’s about equity and social justice, making sure that institutions are doing the right thing, and providing resources for those institutions to do the right thing.”

Erik Cliburn is a senior staff writer for INSIGHT Into Diversity.

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Few embody this mindset more than UT Arlington mathematics Professor Minerva Cordero, who earlier this year was honored by President Joe Biden with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring. Throughout her career, Dr. Cordero has helped students discover their passion for STEM and encouraged them to break barriers wherever they encounter them.

She is passionate about diversifying participation in STEM—and so are we.

The national #IfThenSheCan exhibit featuring a statue of Professor Minerva Cordero was on display at the Smithsonian Institution earlier this year.
Universities Are Making Ethics a Key Focus of Artificial Intelligence Research

By Lisa O’Malley

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more commonplace in our lives, many activists and academics have raised concerns about the ethics of this technology, including issues with maintaining privacy and preventing bias and discrimination.

**These concerns have spread** throughout the AI field, leading even large corporations such as Microsoft to develop internal guidelines for using this technology. In June, the company publicly shared its new “Responsible AI Standard” framework that is aimed at “keeping people and their goals at the center of system design decisions and respecting enduring values like fairness, reliability and safety, privacy and security, inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability,” according to a Microsoft blog post. As a result of these standards, the company phased out an emotion recognition tool from its AI facial analysis services following criticism that such software was discriminatory against marginalized groups and not proven to be scientifically accurate.

Businesses are not the only organizations looking to solve ethical questions about AI. Multiple colleges and universities are also creating research centers, educational programming, and other efforts that will help develop a new generation of scientists and engineers who are dedicated to using this form of technology to better society.

One of those institutions is Brown University, home to several innovative projects intended to bolster ethics in AI development and usage.

“The subject of ethics and justice in technology development is incredibly urgent — it’s on fire,” Sydney Skybetter, a senior lecturer in theater arts and performance studies at Brown, explained in a recent university news release. Skybetter is one of three faculty members leading an innovative new course titled Choreorobotics 0101 in the computer science department. The class allows students with experience in computer science, engineering, dance, and theater to merge their interests by learning how to choreograph a 30-second dance routine for a pair of robots provided by the company Boston Dynamics. The goal of the course is to give these students — most of whom will go on to careers in the tech industry — the opportunity to engage in discussions about the purpose of robotics and AI technology and how they can be used to “minimize harm and make a positive impact on society,” according to the release. “I feel it’s my job to help students understand the implications of the technology we create now and in the future, because they are the future,” Skybetter said. “I can’t resolve the issues we’re exploring, but my hope is that maybe they can.”

Brown is also home to the Humanity Centered Robotics Initiative (HCRI), a group of faculty, students, and staff who seek to address societal problems through robot technology. One of its projects involves developing “moral norms” for AI systems so that they “can become safe and beneficial contributors to human communities if they — like all beneficial human contributors — are able to represent, learn, and follow the norms of the community,” according to the HCRI website. To develop these

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**From INSIGHT’s Archives:**

To understand where the biases in [artificial intelligence] originate, it’s important to know how AI technology works. As the AI Now Institute, a research center housed within New York University, explains on its website, “[AI] systems ‘learn’ based on the data they are given. This, along with many other factors, can lead to biased, inaccurate, and unfair outcomes.”

When the majority of the individuals creating AI systems are White and Asian American cisgender men, the data used in those systems will accordingly match their perspectives, which often include implicit biases about gender, race, and sexual orientation.

— “Universities Are Using Innovative Learning Programs to Tackle AI’s Diversity Problem,” INSIGHT into Diversity September 2020 issue
norms, researchers are examining the processes humans use to understand and adhere to common values within society and applying them to AI. These include observation of the environment and community members’ behavior, as well as learning from explicit instruction.

Another HCRI project focuses on creating robotic technologies that can provide elderly adults with emotional support and assistance with daily tasks. The initiative is collaborating with toy manufacturer Hasbro to design a new version of its animatronic Joy for All Companion Pet Cat that will have advanced cognitive, communicative, and sensory capabilities to better respond to the needs of elderly users.

One of the most expansive efforts to apply ethics to AI is taking place at Emory University in Atlanta. In early 2022, the school launched the AI.Humanity Initiative, a campus-wide project designed to create a cross-disciplinary community dedicated to integrating this technology in fields beyond the sciences.

“We want [AI] embedded [across disciplines] just like we would with math,” explains Ravi Bellamkonda, PhD, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Emory. “We have math departments, but math shows up in physics, astronomy, chemistry. It shows up in medicine, in economics. We think of AI in that sense, that it is in the service of a number of ideas.”

To achieve this goal, the university plans to hire 60 to 75 new faculty members specializing in AI over the next three to five years. Instead of being siloed in the computer science department, these professors will be placed throughout all nine of Emory’s schools to promote faculty collaboration and increase knowledge of the technology across four general areas, including:

- Arts and humanities
- Business and free enterprise
- Human health
- Law and social justice

The initiative has already resulted in nine new hires. New faculty include Kristin Johnson, the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Law, whose research focuses on how AI can be used to protect legal rights, and Anant Madabhushi, the Donnell Institute Professor of Biomedical Engineering at the Emory School of Medicine, who plans to utilize AI to improve patient outcomes and address health inequities.

Although it can be difficult to attract AI experts to higher education when tech companies often offer significantly higher pay, the university’s success in recruiting faculty thus far is due to the fact that many AI scholars have a passion to make a difference, says Bellamkonda.

“All of us, in some way, seek impact and meaning,” he says. “Emory positioning AI in the context of things that [scholars] care about, I think, is resonating in our first year of hiring.”

As part of AI.Humanity, Emory is also in the process of conducting an international job search for a new endowed position, the James W. Wagner Chair in Ethics; this person will lead the multidisciplinary conversations and collaborations in AI happening across campus.

A faculty task force is also working to develop a slew of educational programming on AI and ethics, including major and minor specialties, co-curricular activities, workshops, research opportunities, and more that will be open to all students. In addition, faculty have been conducting a lecture series and other seminars featuring AI experts to help raise awareness around the initiative.

The ultimate hope, according to Bellamkonda, is that students will receive enough exposure to AI education and training while at Emory to understand the importance of ethics when using this technology later in their careers. In this way, the university will be able to effect change far beyond campus.

“There is an idea that technology will come in and save the world,” Bellamkonda says. “I disagree. As an engineer myself, I believe strongly that I want people who know the human condition to be in charge of using and deploying technology, and that’s the vision driving the AI.Humanity effort.”

Lisa O’Malley is the assistant editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
By Mariah Bohanon

As the climate crisis continues to worsen, Indigenous peoples across the globe have become leaders in the fight to protect natural environments and mitigate the detrimental effects of climate change. As populations whose livelihoods are often closely tied to the land and sea, Indigenous peoples tend to be disproportionately impacted by these effects while at the same time possessing valuable traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) that Western science has long ignored.

TEK, also called Indigenous knowledge or Native science, is defined by the U.S. National Park Service as “the on-going accumulation of knowledge, practice, and belief about relationships between living beings in a specific ecosystem that is acquired by [1]Indigenous people over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment, handed down through generations, and used for life-sustaining ways.”

While historically dismissed by mainstream science as illegitimate or irrelevant, TEK has gained attention thanks to the efforts of Indigenous advocates who argue that researchers and policymakers must take this knowledge into account when attempting to study and protect the environment. A growing number of activists and scientists now support the concept that incorporating TEK with Western science is key to improving our relationship with the natural world, promoting environmental justice, and developing effective measures to fight climate change.

In November 2021, the Biden administration released a memorandum to initiate the U.S.’s first federal guidance on incorporating TEK into government policy decisions. The document formally recognizes Indigenous knowledge as “one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to the scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements of the United States and our collective understanding of the natural world.” It also states that a new federal working group will begin developing guidance for government agencies on elevating TEK “with tribal consultation, Native community engagement, as well as agency, expert, and public input.”

“Tribal and Native communities have stewarded these lands since time immemorial,” Brenda Mallory, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, said in the release. “Their voices and their expertise are critical to finding solutions to address the climate crisis, an issue that disproportionately affects Tribal and Native communities.”

Some colleges and universities have supported this argument in recent years and developed TEK-focused courses, research efforts, and more. Northwest Indian College, a tribal institution in Washington state, offers one of the world’s only four-year degrees in this subject. Its Native Environmental Science program teaches students to understand “the changing world around them by working with Indigenous Knowledge Systems and utilizing cutting-edge scientific methods, technology, and tools,” according to its website.

A growing number of state flagship schools — including the Universities of Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, and Washington — include TEK courses as part of their broader ecology or Native American studies programs. Other institutions, such as the University of Kansas, which is home to the Center for Indigenous Research, Science, and Technology, are creating special research projects dedicated to the topic.

One of the oldest and most prominent university endeavors dedicated to TEK is the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment (CNPE) at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF). Founded in 2006 by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a distinguished teaching professor at SUNY-ESF and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, the center is designed to serve as a bridge between TEK and Western scientific approaches to environmental

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) includes “the relationships between people, plants, animals, natural phenomena, landscapes, and timing of events for activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry. It encompasses the world view of a people, which includes ecology, spirituality, human and animal relationships, and more. ... Indigenous peoples as well as non-Indigenous peoples who are long-term (hundreds of years) residents, e.g., Appalachian communities or Spanish land grant communities, can also provide TEK.

TEK is different from user knowledge and local knowledge. User knowledge is one person's experience over a lifetime or less. Local knowledge is more than one person's experience aggregated, showing a trajectory, but not yet time tested. Individual users sharing knowledge with other local users and elders, and then time-testing this new knowledge, is part of the evaluation and validation process for TEK.”

— U.S. National Park Service
Say the word “mentor” and many STEM students at Rochester Institute of Technology will mention this name: Dr. Robert Osgood. He is an associate professor of microbiology in the College of Health Science and Technology. He has been a mentor to students ever since he first stepped on campus 14 years ago. He quickly created the Osgood Power Lab and continues to engage and mentor underrepresented students from RIT, Rochester area high schools and students from LSAMP alliance-associated institutions. He created the RIT CBET Bioscience Exploration Summer Camp for high school students. He is a Co-principal Investigator of the Upstate Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (ULSAMP) and is the 2022 recipient of RIT’s Isaac L. Jordan Sr. Faculty Pluralism Award which recognizes faculty who are making significant contributions to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion.

“I have learned that other than generational changes and access to technology and information, students have not changed very much. They are much like me and my colleagues when we were in college. They are in need of guidance, they need encouragement and many of them are first generation students, so they don’t have a lot of educated or experienced support at home. I have also learned that they expect us to help them learn how to be successful beyond the classroom.”

RIT is the third largest producer of undergraduate STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) degrees among all private universities in the nation. We’re lucky Dr. Osgood is just one of many here who thrive on ensuring student academic success.

As we like to say at RIT, “STEM is in Our DNA”.

For more information on our STEM undergraduate and graduate programs visit our website at www.rit.edu/study-stem-designated-degrees
sustainability. Its wide range of projects include outreach and collaboration with Native American communities as well as the recruitment and support of Indigenous students. The center advances the concept that TEK “has value not only for the wealth of biological information it contains, but for the cultural framework of respect, reciprocity, and responsibility in which it is embedded,” the CNPE website states.

One of the center’s newest efforts, the Haudenosaunee Forest Principles Project, supports research on and education about forestlands of the Haudenosaunee people of northern New York. Specific goals include bringing together Indigenous leaders to consider the ways that Haudenosaunee forest protocols and traditions can be applied to contemporary forest management practices and developing lesson plans for Indigenous young people based on the TEK of Haudenosaunee elders. CNPE is co-hosting a series of forums for these elders and other practitioners to share their knowledge in this area.

“As a forestry student, it’s always a privilege to have the opportunity to learn about the forest from Indigenous knowledge holders,” said Bradley Thomas, a SUNY-ESF graduate student, in a CNPE blog post about the project. He added that, as a Native American student, it is an honor to be able to hear these perspectives. “Aside from the influence this will have on my work with the forest, my biggest takeaway from this meeting was the resilience of our elders to pass on knowledge after being under attack for hundreds of years.”

Mariah Bohanon is the managing editor of INSIGHT Into Diversity.
The University of Louisville is home to a community of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Working together, we address global challenges and drive needed change to build a better world here and beyond.

The world’s problem-solvers often are STEAM-powered, proficient in science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics — but not everyone traditionally gets a head start in those areas. UofL, Toyota and other select Kentucky higher education institutions launched a powerful partnership to help underrepresented students earn engineering degrees.

Full-tuition scholarships to UofL’s J.B. Speed School of Engineering combined with mentoring from engineers employed by one of the world’s largest automakers and paid co-ops ensure students gain hands-on experience so they can help diversify the high-tech workforce.

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Emphasizing the importance of exposing all students to exploratory and experiential learning, STEM Cubs seeks to engage elementary students, particularly those historically underrepresented in STEM education and career fields, in hands-on STEM activities.
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) will grow more than twice as fast as all other occupations by 2029. With demand for these jobs continuing to skyrocket, there is also an increasing need to address issues of representation and ensure that diverse students have the academic resources, financial assistance, and social support necessary to pursue successful careers in these industries.

Each year, INSIGHT Into Diversity recognizes colleges, universities, and organizations that have established cutting-edge programs, events, and initiatives devoted to the work of improving diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in STEM. We are proud to present the 77 recipients of the 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award and the unique efforts each has undertaken to welcome individuals from marginalized populations to these disciplines.

Among this year’s winners are programs that engage students in a rich array of educational experiences across STEM. Whether it is providing girls and women with hands-on activities aimed at building an interest in research, assisting underserved students in applying to medical school, or offering enrichment and professional development opportunities to underrepresented faculty and staff, the recipients of the 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award have demonstrated inventiveness and dedication in supporting a new generation of high-achieving scholars and professionals.
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

Dreamline Pathways

The Dreamline Pathways are comprehensive, community-based collaborations that introduce K-12 students to graduate health professions programs offered by ATSU. They include immersion experiences and free educational resources, including the ATSU Classroom Kit, for underrepresented young people across the country. This kit features interactive tools such as a stethoscope, heart rate monitor, skeletal system, lesson plans, and literature in both English and Spanish. With grant assistance and other donations, it will soon include suture kits, IV practice kits, and other medical education resources.

Engineering an Inclusive Computer Science Curriculum

Faculty members conducted an evaluation of the university’s computer science program to better understand how students from every background could receive the best educational experience possible. Based on their results, Adelphi restructured the program’s undergraduate curriculum to be more inclusive of women, people of color, and others who are severely underrepresented in this discipline. Changes included adding an orientation seminar, reducing the number of required courses, and allowing more electives. The new structure has surpassed its recruitment and retention goals, doubling the number of women in the program and increasing the percentage of students of color from 49 percent to 72 percent.

Diversity in the Sciences: A Mentoring Program in Physics for Community Building

Augustana’s physics and astronomy department has developed a student-led, multitiered mentoring program to help build relationships and provide a more welcoming and inclusive environment. Faculty in the department match upper-level students with alumni who can help them in their professional paths. They also facilitate working group sessions for these students to learn about the dynamics of mentoring, including event planning and other responsibilities. These individuals are then paired with first- and second-year students. As mentors, they provide guidance, organize and attend department events, and work to foster a culture of belonging for all individuals.

Center for Educational Outreach

The center prepares students in grades K-16 to meet national needs for a diverse and well-prepared STEM workforce — including in the field of medicine — and increase STEM literacy. It has collaborated with educational institutions across the state to build pipelines from high school through college to medical school. It also supports magnet middle schools that are geared toward STEM and health sciences education and disseminates free teaching resources through its website, which garners 25,000 users annually. These resources include peer-reviewed STEM lessons, videos, slide sets, and more. In addition, the center has partnered with private companies and public organizations, including NASA, to develop and promote STEM activities for underserved children.
Clemson welcomes full inaugural cohort of students into Bridge to Doctorate program.

Established this year with a $1 million grant from the National Science Foundation’s Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation program, along with additional resources provided by the University, full financial support will be provided to the group of 12 incoming underrepresented Ph.D. students enrolled in select programs.

The students will receive a $32,000 stipend for their first two years of education and research through the NSF’s funding, and the University will cover the cost of their remaining three years.

1. Vincent Davidson: Computer Science  
   University of Florida | Statesville, NC

2. Ryan Watts: Chemistry  
   Ball State | Chicago, IL

3. Destinee Cooper: Engineering and Science Ed.  
   Winthrop/Stanford | Anderson, SC

4. Deon Wallace: Mechanical Engineering  
   Clemson University | Columbia, SC

5. Jasmine McKeller: Computer Science  
   University of Florida | Fayetteville, NC

6. Samirah Muhammad: Chemistry  
   Xavier University | New Orleans, LA

7. Jesus Badal: Civil Engineering  
   U. of the District of Columbia | Washington, DC

8. Makayla Headley: Engineering and Science Ed.  
   U. of Maryland Baltimore Co. | Baltimore City, MD

9. Ryan Mbagna-Nanko: Mechanical Engineering  
   U. of Maryland Baltimore Co. | Silver Spring, MD

10. Sevrina Tekle: Bioengineering  
    Vanderbilt University | Atlanta, GA

11. Jakini Kauba: Mathematics  
    UNC Greensboro | Maxton, NC

12. Brandon Sanders: Biological Sciences  
    Claflin University | Marion, SC
Women-in-STEM Mentorship Program

BCC partnered with PepsiCo to develop a mentoring program to encourage and support women students interested in STEM careers. PepsiCo selects for this program high-ranking women employees who work in STEM disciplines, including engineering, computer science, and research and development. These individuals are trained through the Million Women Mentors program on various aspects of successful mentoring, including persistence, problem-solving, and setting and meeting goals. They are then paired with BCC women students who are pursuing STEM fields. Since the program’s inception many of the participating undergraduates have seen great success academically and professionally.

Women Involved in Software and Hardware (WISH)

WISH is a support group for women majoring in computer science, electrical engineering, software engineering, and related disciplines. It focuses on career preparedness, contributes to regional and national workshops and conferences, and inspires a love of technology in young students in the surrounding community. On-campus support includes Mental Health Lean In circles, peer-to-peer discussion, and a safe space for students with guided reflection on socioemotional support in computing fields. Having been in existence for 15 years, WISH has a robust network of members who reach out to support other girls and women across campus and the nation.

The Acceleration Initiative

In 2018, Cal State LA was awarded a $525,000 grant from the Weingart Foundation, which supports racial, social, and economic justice in Southern California. The three-year grant built on previous funding from the NSF and the Helmsley Foundation, allowing the college to develop the Acceleration Initiative, which brought together four existing STEM programs for underrepresented students in middle school, high school, and college. It has since added two programs focused on transfer students and sophomore-level courses, and has garnered support from alumni, corporate partners, and the Ralph M. Parsons Foundation.

Advising for Undergraduate Success/Proactive Approaches for Training Hispanics in STEM (A4US/PATHS)

CSUSB received funding from the U.S. Department of Education through the A4US and PATHS grants to create a Science Success Center and provide holistic academic and career advising, tutoring, and other services to support underrepresented students in STEM. The center connects with community colleges and develops articulation agreements to ensure transfer students can easily transition to campus. It also supports STEM students in creating individual development plans to help them stay on track to graduation. Other efforts supported by these grants include faculty learning communities that advance culturally responsive pedagogy and a chairs learning community that supports faculty in implementing evidence-based methods in the classroom.
OFFICE OF INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Mission
The College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) empowers all individuals to be Bearcat Proud and globally competent to foster an inclusive community.

Values
Inclusivity Equity Civility Empathy (IECE)

Vision
CEAS is the leader in inclusivity for all to succeed

STEM Scholars Program
- Dr. Edward N. Prather Summer Bridge Scholars Program
- Choose Ohio First
- Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)

Emerging Ethnic Engineers
- Marathon Petroleum Scholars
- Co-op and Professional Development preparation
- Coaching and advising support
- Engineering scholarship support

Community Engagement
- GE Next Engineers
- Family Engineering Academy
- Robotics Competition

Women in Engineering (WiE)
- WiE Engineering and Technology Day
- Society of Women Engineers Evening with Industry
- Distinguished Lecture Series

cemas.uc.edu/about/inclusive-excellence-community-engagement
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

Leadership Institute for Women in STEM and Manufacturing

This unique institute is an annual executive education program that provides women in STEM and manufacturing workplaces with powerful tools to propel their careers forward and remain competitive for leadership roles in traditionally male-dominated industries. It equips participants with the skills and networks to make an immediate impact in their organizations through leadership development, one-on-one professional coaching, and more. The institute consists of nine days of online coursework in addition to peer coaching, readings, and engagement through an online platform. To date, more than 240 women have successfully completed this program.

Gender Diversity in Programming and Computational Thinking

Zicklin’s department of information systems and statistics developed a three-pronged strategy to improve gender diversity in the field of computer information systems. This includes redesigning early courses to make them more inclusive, providing early access to computing classes, and creating support structures that encourage women to pursue careers and degrees in this subject. As part of its plan, the school launched the Programming and Computational Thinking course, which aims to increase the number of women seeking computer science degrees through a partnership with Break Through Tech AI, an initiative of Cornell Tech.

COSMIC Mentoring Program

COSMIC began as a recruiting and retention effort to support first-year students of color in science that has expanded to include undergraduate women, LGBTQ+ students, individuals with disabilities, military and veteran students, and more. The program now consists of eight affinity groups that foster community and a sense of belonging for members. It pairs mentees with upper-level students who are also underrepresented in STEM. COSMIC includes a study hall, an awards ceremony, and a service-learning component that allows students to connect with and support local residents.

PEER and WISE

PEER and WISE are dedicated to increasing diversity in science and engineering by supporting students in technical majors. These programs provide mentoring, guidance, counseling, and tutoring. They also offer career development and networking opportunities by pairing students with successful people in their classes and the workforce. Specific offerings include PEER WISE Experience Educational Outreach, a three-week summer program that introduces first-year students to STEM coursework, and Project Wise Summer Program, a one-week event that gives middle school girls hands-on learning opportunities in math, chemistry, and engineering.
NC STATE’S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING IS COMMITTED TO TRUE DIVERSITY

ANGELITHA DANIEL
INAUGURAL ASSISTANT DEAN FOR STUDENT, FACULTY AND STAFF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

DR. JOEL DUCOSTE
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FACULTY ADVANCEMENT

WE “THINK AND DO” THROUGH OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSE LEADERSHIP
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

COA Virtual STEM Program

COA partnered with BioNetwork, a life science training initiative of the North Carolina Community College System, to develop STEM lessons and activities for children and young people in the community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, COA transitioned these resources to its website, revising them to become public Zoom sessions, activity videos, and more. It also began offering free STEM kits for children to use along with online lessons. In addition, the college has worked with local child care and educational organizations to create in-person science presentations and unique programming.

K-12 STEM Virtual Outreach Programs

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) at Mines transitioned their popular community outreach events to virtual programming. Members prepared and shipped at-home STEM kits that were tailored to grade level for K-12 students. These included on-demand video demonstrations or livestreams featuring SWE members, handwritten notes of encouragement, and a dedicated Facebook page where participants could share their experiences. Mines has expanded these kits to classrooms across the state with the intention of broadening outreach to underrepresented young people. The school also offers “virtual classroom takeovers,” which include Zoom sessions with Mines students and interactive STEM lessons.

Mines Diversity, Inclusion, and Access (Mines DI&A) Ambassadors and Advocates Programs

Both of these programs were established to help meet the need for DEI learning and skill development on campus and to foster a safe, inclusive environment for all. Mines DI&A Ambassadors are students, faculty, and staff who are trained in mitigating implicit bias and minimizing microaggressions. They deliver workshops on these topics to various units on campus. Mines DI&A Advocates’ membership began with men committed to taking personal action in support of women and gender equality and has since expanded to include women facilitators and workshop participants.

Bridge to the PhD Program in STEM (Bridge)

This two-year, nondegree program targets college graduates from groups underrepresented in STEM, including women, first-generation students, and others who have faced socioeconomic obstacles in pursuing advanced degrees. It includes a range of activities and initiatives to help Bridge scholars successfully transition to graduate education. Members can take free coursework and participate in professional development workshops and seminars that focus on topics such as improving scientific writing, preparing graduate school applications, and overcoming imposter syndrome. They submit monthly progress reports and meet regularly with the program director to ensure they are meeting their goals.
Engineering the Next Generation (ENG)

ENG targets rising high school seniors from underrepresented ethnic and racial backgrounds to work with engineering researchers and participate in programming to develop their academic and professional skills. Students gain practical research experience and get to collaborate with their peers and faculty. The six-week summer program also provides participants with a stipend, and its outreach program specialist conducts weekly check-ins with members to ensure they are supported. ENG now recruits from more than 30 public high schools in New York City.

Columbia University and Amazon Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) Program

SURE is a unique university-industry partnership designed to build a recruitment path for the university’s graduate engineering programs. Participants are from underrepresented backgrounds and receive free room and board, travel reimbursement, and a weekly stipend during this 10-week experience. The program includes access to in-lab research opportunities with faculty across the university, professional development programming, a site visit to Amazon facilities, mentorship from graduate students, and the opportunity to build community with like-minded peers from across the U.S.
Congratulations to the Northern New Jersey Bridges to Baccalaureate (NNJ-B2B) Alliance Partner College, Hudson County Community College. HCCC is proud to have been named a recipient of INSIGHT Into Diversity Magazine’s 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award!

High Impact Practices:
- Math Bridge Program
- Peer-Led Team Learning
- Undergraduate Research Experiences
- Peer Mentoring
- Career Seminars and Transfer Activities

Learn more at: www.hccc.edu/programs-courses/special-programs/nnj-b2b.html

STEM Guide Program

The STEM Guide Program is intended to support students who have been historically excluded because of their ethnicity or race. STEM Guides are students who have been successful in a STEM course and ideally are also racially or ethnically underrepresented. They serve as paid mentors and teaching assistants in introductory courses across eight departments after completing a practicum course on peer-education techniques and issues related to identity and inclusion in STEM. Faculty participate in development workshops to learn about the program and share best practices for collaborating with guides.

Science Learning Institute (SLI)

The SLI operates several innovative programs designed to advance equity in STEM by supporting underrepresented groups in their academic and career pathways. It also provides internship opportunities that include stipends and prioritize students with demonstrated financial need and no prior internship or company experience. The Program for Readiness and Exploration in STEM (Pre-STEM) helps students discover careers in these disciplines, understand how STEM is connected to social issues, and successfully transition to four-year institutions. The Pre-STEM Summer Institute is a free three-week learning experience for incoming students to gain exposure to data science, calculus, and other college-level subjects.

DePauw University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2018

Foothill College
STEM Division
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2010

INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD
Mathematics Recruitment and Retention Initiatives

The Mathematics Recruitment and Retention Committee organizes activities to attract and support math majors. Examples include student trips to mathematics venues, team-oriented contests, and industry guest speakers. Committee members also lead women and underrepresented students in conducting outreach at various events ranging from middle school presentations to professional conferences. They have successfully applied for multiple grants to support recruitment and retention activities, programs, and research.

Francis Marion University
Department of Mathematics

Level: K-12, Undergraduate, Graduate
Established: 2018

Hudson County Community College (HCCC)
STEM Division

Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2014

Northern New Jersey Bridges to the Baccalaureate Alliance (NNJ-B2B)

HCCC participates in the NNJ-B2B, a partnership between six community colleges in the region and the 84 institutions that make up the Garden State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation. Through the NNJ-B2B, HCCC’s STEM Division has successfully increased enrollment through marketing and outreach efforts, including informational sessions for those interested in STEM careers. Other efforts include NNJ-B2B study groups, monthly program meetings, and research opportunities for students to work alongside faculty at four-year institutions. Students in the program also participate in cross-campus peer mentoring and the Show Your STEM Innovation Challenge, which promotes entrepreneurial problem-solving.

Girls STEM Institute (GSI)

The GSI is a co-curricular, informal STEM education program designed to provide holistic learning opportunities to girls and young women of color ages 9 to 18. It is structured as a four-week summer intensive with monthly follow-up learning experiences throughout the year. Specific goals include engaging girls of color in culturally grounded, inquiry-based, hands-on STEM curricula, instilling an interest and confidence to pursue math and other STEM careers, and empowering them to understand how STEM-related concepts can be used to address inequities in their personal lives and communities.

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
School of Education

Level: K-12
Established: 2013

STEM Scholars Program

The STEM Scholars Program helps students develop their strengths and learn to apply them toward achieving academic and professional goals. It is unique in that membership does not include GPA or ACT/SAT requirements, which have historically placed underrepresented students at a disadvantage. Scholars participate in professional development activities, peer academic support, and staff advising. They also create individualized development plans geared toward their identified career goals.

Black and Latinx employees are underrepresented in the U.S. STEM workforce, accounting for 9 percent and 8 percent of workers, respectively. Asian and White employees, by contrast, are overrepresented in STEM, accounting for 13 percent and 67 percent of workers.
Congratulations to Miami University’s LOUIS STOKES ALLIANCES FOR MINORITY PARTICIPATION (LSAMP) PROGRAM

Recipient of the 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award!

LSAMP Lead PI Carolyn S. Craig thanks INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine as well as all our great faculty, staff, and students for their continued support and hard work to ensure the success of our underrepresented students in STEM. This is the second time Miami LSAMP has been selected to receive the award.

Kennesaw State University
College of Architecture and Construction Management

Level: Undergraduate, Graduate
Established: 2017

Annual EQUINOX Week

At its core, EQUINOX Week supports and creates educational opportunities for diverse students to advance the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, a list of 17 objectives for achieving a more sustainable future, by catalyzing partnerships across colleges and universities, communities, and corporations. Over the last five years, the event has been devoted to empowering young people as emerging future leaders by creating a multidisciplinary platform for exchanging innovative ideas, identifying emerging environmental challenges, and fostering conversations on how to create more equitable communities. Event programming brings together community partners, students, scholars, and policymakers from around the world to highlight groundbreaking research and practices in sustainability.

Kennesaw Women in Construction (KWIC)

KWIC seeks to empower women in the KSU construction management degree program and related disciplines to become successful built environment leaders. It supports and creates various educational, career, and community service opportunities for this demographic. Partnerships with groups such as the National Association of Women in Construction provide networking and educational opportunities, which have led to internships and permanent positions for KWIC members. Additionally, KWIC participates in service activities such as hosting the Kids Build Day with the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta at KSU.

Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center Shreveport (LSU Health Shreveport)
School of Medicine

Level: High School, Undergraduate, Graduate
Established: 2019

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Initiatives

LSU Health Shreveport’s Office of Diversity Affairs implemented an HBCU initiative to address the lack of African American physicians in the U.S. workforce. The initiative uses a team-building model to strengthen relationships with pre-med and STEM advisers at HBCUs and features a host of pipeline programs aimed at increasing representation. Other offerings include American Medical College Application Service workshops to assist students at these institutions with developing competitive medical school applications. In addition, the office hosts an annual conference for Black and Latinx students enrolled at HBCUs in Louisiana.
Early College STEM Academy

The Early College STEM Academy is a partnership between the Madison Metropolitan School District and Madison College. It was designed to expand access to STEM college courses and increase opportunities for high school students to earn free college credit, especially those who are traditionally underrepresented in these disciplines. Through the program, participants can take a full-time schedule of classes at Madison College in their junior and senior years. They also receive holistic support from program advisers both in and out of the classroom, including help with navigating postsecondary processes and systems and building academic confidence.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
School of Science
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2016

Bernard S. and Sophie G. Gould MIT Summer Research Program in Biology (MSRP-Bio)

The MSRP-Bio program provides a 10-week intensive research experience for undergraduate students from institutions with limited research opportunities, helping to increase the number of individuals from marginalized backgrounds entering PhD and MD/PhD programs. It brings undergraduates from smaller schools who are underrepresented, first-generation, economically disadvantaged, or have disabilities to MIT to conduct supervised research and interact with graduate students and faculty. The MSRP-Bio experience is carefully constructed to train participants in research methods, problem-solving and presentation skills, and critical reading of scientific literature. In addition, it focuses on providing quality advising and one-on-one peer mentoring.

Nearly 48 percent of men report being encouraged to pursue careers in technology or IT while in high school, compared with only 39 of women.
At OU, Equity means all individuals and viewpoints are represented and included.

Equity
At OU, Equity means all have access and opportunity to succeed through identified and provided resources.

Inclusion
At OU, Inclusion means all have a sense of belonging in our environment of cultivated respect and care.

Miami University
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2014

Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (Miami LSAMP)

Miami’s LSAMP program provides underrepresented students with a range of resources to ensure their recruitment, retention, and attainment of four-year STEM degrees. Miami LSAMP features an Early Arrival Program that supports first-year students’ transition to college and helps them learn how to meet the rigorous demands that come with studying a STEM discipline. Scholars also receive faculty mentoring and academic success coaching, graduate and professional school preparation, and professional development. In addition, the Stokes Scholars Living Learning Community encourages academic excellence, mutual social support, and a sense of community beyond the classroom.

ASPIRING HEALTH Professions Summer Academy

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center hosts the annual Aspiring Health Professions Summer Academy during the month of July. The Academy exposes underrepresented high school students to all seven colleges on campus: Medicine, Allied Health, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Public Health and Graduate College.

The goal of the academy is to expose underrepresented students to the health, STEM, and research fields.

Biomanufacturing Baccalaureate

The Biomanufacturing Baccalaureate at MiraCosta College is one of just 15 programs in the state to be approved by California lawmakers as part of a pilot project of community college bachelor’s degree programs. One of the stated goals of the legislation that provided for this opportunity was to impact student populations historically underserved by higher education, and this particular degree was also intentionally developed to improve equitable outcomes in college access, degree completion, and STEM employment. Students in the Biomanufacturing Baccalaureate are able to access a dedicated student success specialist, a mentorship program that matches them with professionals in the industry, and other services that help them reach their goals in the growing field of biomanufacturing.

Undergraduate Health Sciences Academy (UHSA)

The UHSA was created in response to the growing need to increase the diversity of health care professionals and biomedical scientists in Georgia and throughout the nation. The program’s goal is to prepare undergraduates to successfully matriculate to medical school and other professional health careers. The UHSA recruits undergraduates from the Atlanta University Center Consortium, which is comprised of Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, and Spelman College. Once admitted, participants are immersed in a wide variety of initiatives designed to inspire them to pursue a STEM career, including summer internship and shadowing opportunities, science-enriched coursework, tutoring services, and more.
Women in Science and Engineering - Atlantic Region (WISEatlantic) Program

WISEatlantic aims to shift gendered stereotypes and empower girls to pursue STEM-based careers. Its two primary offerings are the Girls Get WISE Science Retreat and the Girls Get WISE Junior and Senior Science Summer Camps. Both of these events take place on campus and allow girls in middle and high school to participate in hands-on STEM activities, meet with women role models working in various STEM careers, and more. Since 2011, more than 1,300 girls and young women have participated in these experiences.

Mount Saint Vincent University
Level: Middle School, High School
Established: 2011

Northrop Grumman
Level: High School
Established: 1971

High School Involvement Partnership (HIP) Mentoring Program

Northrop Grumman’s HIP Mentoring Program helps inspire and prepare underrepresented and underserved high school students to pursue STEM pathways and fill future workforce need for diverse, innovative leaders. During the program, high school juniors and seniors engage with Northrop Grumman employees who provide exposure to real-world business environments and hands-on application of STEM to the company’s core capabilities, technology, and business priorities. These experiences contribute to students’ development and enhancement of critical skills necessary for success in their career and beyond.

Nova Southeastern University
Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Allopathic Medicine (NSU MD)
Level: High School
Established: 2021

Stranahan High School STEM Seminar Series

The Stranahan High School STEM Seminar Series is a partnership between NSU MD and Stranahan High School’s Medical Magnet Program that seeks to generate a pipeline of high-performing students from underrepresented backgrounds who are interested in health professions and STEM fields. Participants attend monthly interactive lectures delivered by NSU MD professors in anatomy, biochemistry, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology, and physiology. They also take field trips to the medical school campus, where they get to conduct experiments focused on the basic sciences. In addition, NSU MD faculty provide career advising and mentorship.

The Ohio State University College of Medicine (OSU COM)
Level: High School
Established: 2004

MD Camp

MD Camp is a summer program for diverse high school students interested in medicine. Participants shadow clinicians and researchers at the OSU Wexner Medical Center and at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. The curriculum also teaches campers about taking rigorous science courses in high school, preparing for college, sharing admissions information with OSU, and connecting with mentors through the Community Health Education and Health Science Academies. Ultimately, MD Camp strives to inspire students to pursue a career in medicine by challenging them intellectually and facilitating their academic and social development in the sciences.
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

INSIGHT Into Diversity Presents:
An exciting new recognition for women who are making a difference in STEM fields

INSPIRING Women in STEM

INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs

OSU CEAT’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs are targeted at supporting women and underserved students interested in careers in architecture, engineering, and technology. Specific offerings include a three-week summer residential experience that helps acclimate first-year students from underserved populations to campus while challenging them with course reviews in physics, mathematics, and technical writing. Monthly DEI Company Spotlight events allow industry professionals to connect with students and talk about the importance of DEI in their organizations. Another effort, the DEI Dean’s Student Advisory Board, gives students a platform to be heard by OSU CEAT administrators.

Summer Equity Research Internship Program

The Summer Equity Research Internship Program provides underserved students the opportunity to pursue research tracks based on their interests, including biomedical sciences, dentistry, medicine, nursing, and public health. They collaborate with faculty and clinical mentors for eight weeks and participate in a series of seminars that address a wide range of scientific and ethical issues as well as social and professional development. At the culmination of the internship experience, each participant presents a research paper showcasing their work.

Roots to Wings Program

Roots to Wings is a transformative, co-mentoring pathway program for young Native Americans and Mexican Americans that is designed to motivate them to consider careers in health sciences and serve their communities in areas where the need is greatest. The yearlong program addresses health disparities and prepares participants to develop skills in STEM research through both didactic and laboratory sessions. Integral to this curriculum is the incorporation of Native American and Hispanic values and traditions in lessons through the participation of elders, traditional knowledge scholars, and teachers.

League of VetaHumanz SuperPower Pack Program

The League of VetaHumanz SuperPower Pack program offers self-guided educational experiences to underserved children who lack access to veterinary role models. Each pack contains a STEM activity designed to help recipients form a sense of belonging to the veterinary profession, develop self-efficacy, and nurture career expectations. The packs also include collectible cards featuring diverse veterinary superheroes. A postage-paid survey is enclosed so that the university’s Evaluation and Research Learning Center can assess the program’s impact.
EVERY STUDENT DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN A STEM EDUCATION. With a $1.49 million grant from the National Science Foundation, Miami University is making that possible. The grant will fund 132 scholarships for high-achieving students with demonstrated financial need to attend Miami.

Our faculty are working together to erase barriers by streamlining academic courses, building cohorts, providing one-on-one mentorship, offering hands-on research, and connecting students with industry job opportunities.

LEARN MORE
MiamiOH.edu/cec

Regis University
Level: Middle School
Established: 2013

Rangers Empowering Girls in STEM (R.E.G.I.S.) Research Camp

The R.E.G.I.S. Research Camp introduces middle school girls in the Denver metro area to biology, chemistry, physics, psychology, and neuroscience projects over the course of one week each summer. Its goal is to help the campers to see themselves as scientists through hypothesis development and testing and to gain confidence in terms of self-advocacy. Students are recruited through social media and word-of-mouth, and need-based scholarships are provided, giving a more diverse group of girls access to the program.

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFU)
Level: High School
Established: Various

INSPIRE, Science Saturdays, and Camp Med

RFU delivers educational programs that provide underrepresented students with opportunities to work on real-world biomedical research projects. These programs include Influence Student Potential and Increase Representation in Education, or INSPIRE, an eight-week mentoring and applied research experience designed to build the pipeline for Black and Latinx high school students pursuing higher education in the fields of science, medicine, and biomedical research. RFU also offers Science Saturdays, which pairs local high school students with graduate students who guide them in core lab techniques. In addition, the university hosts Camp Med, a health sciences program geared toward local underserved teenagers interested in pursuing medical careers.
The Summer Engineering Seminar (SES) is a five-day immersive summer experience for current high school sophomores and juniors who are interested in exploring the field of engineering.

learn more:
www.scu.edu/engineering/ses

The SES program is designed to motivate young people to pursue science and engineering majors in college so that they can one day join the STEM workforce. It works with the university’s undergraduate admissions office to reach high schools and students from underrepresented populations all across the country and internationally. Participants attend special workshops on a broad range of topics, complete their own engineering projects, and experience life at SCU through afternoon and evening recreational activities.

Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology (RHIT)
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2021

Rose Prime

RHIT created Rose Prime, a two-year pilot program, as part of the Eli Lilly Charting the Future grant to allow incoming first-year students from underrepresented backgrounds the opportunity to hone their math skills before the academic year begins. The program enables students to get a head start on college life, speak with professors, and work through a simulated classroom experience without having to worry about being graded on their assignments. Many participants are first-generation college students, come from rural communities where access to resources is limited, or have never been introduced to calculus or upper-level math courses prior to this experience.
**INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD**

**Science and Math Summer Academy (SAMSA)**

SAMSA is a three-week inquiry-based STEM education program for middle school youth from underrepresented populations in San Antonio. The program recruits undergraduates at SPC to serve as student instructional assistants (SIAs) who act as role models for participants and help foster an interest in STEM disciplines. By enlisting current students, SAMSA supports their academic integration and provides financial support, which has been shown to increase retention. According to a recent survey, 72 percent of SIAs said they felt more confident about learning math and science after participating in the program because they were able to help others learn.

**State University of New York at Binghamton**

**Thomas J. Watson College of Engineering and Applied Science**

**Level:** Undergraduate  
**Established:** 2021

**Watson College Scholars Program**

The aim of this program is to ensure women and underrepresented students receive the proper support necessary to succeed in academically rigorous STEM programs. Participants have biweekly one-on-one meetings with college administrators as well as weekly group sessions dedicated to skills development. These events focus on time management, effective communication, and more. Scholars are also encouraged to pursue the Watson Career Development Essentials micro-credential, which enhances their employability. Other offerings include field visits throughout the academic year to industrial sites that allow students to explore different STEM career paths.

**AMP & CSTEP Community (AC^2) Program**

The AC^2 Program provides academic and professional development support critical to the success of students of color and those from low-income backgrounds in STEM and health-related fields. Incoming first-year students are recruited to join the program and participate in the AC^2 STEM Prep Camp, which helps with the transition from high school to college. During their first year in AC^2, every participant is provided an individualized advising plan based on their academic major and career goals. The program also features a five-week intensive summer research program where up to 12 students work with faculty mentors and gain valuable skills for their future careers.

**State University of New York College at New Paltz**

**School of Science and Engineering**

**Level:** Undergraduate  
**Established:** 1987 & 1996

**Teens In Health**

Teens In Health is a youth-led organization in the San Francisco Bay Area empowering high schoolers to conduct research while connecting with STEM professionals online and in person. Each summer, fall, and winter, the group offers a six-week internship for high school students to pursue a research project on biotechnology or medicine and publish a paper online. In 2022, Teens In Health recruited six past participants as project managers who taught new interns how to peer-review their work. The organization also partners with external institutions and organizations, such as Asian Health Services and the Oakland Public Library, to promote STEM initiatives in the local community.
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

The MUREP Aerospace Academy is a collaborative effort between TSU, NASA, and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. It focuses on providing students in kindergarten through eighth grade with STEM education throughout the academic year. The academy’s primary goal is to educate students and their families about the variety of STEM degrees and careers that are available. Its enrichment sessions use five major strategies, including authentic firsthand STEM learning experiences, technologically rich activities through the Aerospace Educational Laboratory, family empowerment sessions, STEM professional development, and STEM community outreach.

#WhyNotMeSTEM Conference

TTU hosted the #WhyNotMeSTEM Conference in May 2022 to engage multidisciplinary academic and practitioner stakeholders in addressing the low number of women and other underrepresented groups in STEM. The conference highlighted the variables that support or discourage these individuals from pursuing careers in these fields, such as interpersonal relationships, familial support, developmental trajectories, and larger societal messages. It also focused on exploring research themes and methodological innovations that can help identify and execute actionable steps to increase the hiring and retention of diverse professionals in STEM.

NSF TTU-ADVANCE Program

The NSF TTU-ADVANCE program is designed to foster gender equity through a focus on the identification and elimination of organizational barriers that prevent the full participation and advancement of diverse faculty in academic institutions. This project is based on the understanding that any type of intersectionality may lead to obstacles for underrepresented faculty, especially women. After conducting a case study, TTU found several such challenges related to faculty inclusion and implemented strategies to solve them. These include leadership development and mentoring for department chairs, the creation of a data dashboard system to support informed decision-making, and more.

In a study conducted by Microsoft and KRC Research, middle school girls were more likely to report feeling powerful doing STEM activities and schoolwork if they knew women who worked in these fields. Girls’ confidence in their ability to succeed in STEM, however, declined over the course of middle school and high school before increasing in young adulthood.

The Bridges Across Texas - Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Program (BAT LSAMP Alliance)

The BAT LSAMP Alliance seeks to increase the number of underrepresented students earning STEM degrees across Texas through academic advising and support, mentoring, creating access to STEM-focused materials, and social and peer support. As part of the alliance, TTU established a Virtual Tutoring STEM Center, where upper-level LSAMP Scholars tutor their peers in multiple subjects. All scholars participate in the Undergraduate Research Conference at TTU at least once during their time in the program, helping to solidify their choice in majors, expose them to scholarship and presentations, and aid in their development of faculty and peer networking skills.

Tennessee State University (TSU)
College of Education
Level: Elementary, Middle School
Established: 2015

Texas Tech University (TTU)
Level: Faculty, Staff
Established: 2022

Texas Tech University (TTU)
Level: Faculty
Established: 2017

Texas Tech University (TTU)
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2021

In a study conducted by Microsoft and KRC Research, middle school girls were more likely to report feeling powerful doing STEM activities and schoolwork if they knew women who worked in these fields. Girls’ confidence in their ability to succeed in STEM, however, declined over the course of middle school and high school before increasing in young adulthood.
PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT FOR EQUITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS FROM DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS TO ENTER THE VETERINARY PROFESSION AND SERVE SOCIETY BY ADVANCING PUBLIC HEALTH, ENSURING FOOD SAFETY, OR SERVING RURAL AREAS.

purdue.vet/VetUp
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

**MedAchieve Program**

MedAchieve is a two-year science enrichment program serving high school students in the Harlem community who are interested in pursuing a career in medicine. Students engage in medically focused lectures and interactive laboratory sessions after school while being guided by medical student mentors in their academic and career goals. The program is divided into two parts that are designed to mirror the curriculum of medical school. The first year focuses on the foundations of medicine — human anatomy, physiology, and genetics — and the second year studies how the body responds to stress, injury, and disease.

**TU Research Enhancement Program (TU REP)**

TU REP is designed to retain students from all backgrounds who are interested in STEM careers. This is done by introducing these individuals to authentic research in a classroom setting, providing guidance and mentorship, and creating a supportive community to better prepare them for further education and the professional workforce. Though the program is open to all first-year students, TU intentionally recruits and supports those from underrepresented backgrounds by connecting with local high schools and by training STEM professors in inclusive pedagogy.

**Diverse Engineering: A Podcast**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the College of Engineering and Polymer Science was forced to forgo plans for an in-person event to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its Increasing Diversity in Engineering Academics program. In lieu of this event, the college created *Diverse Engineering*, a podcast series that honors the contributions of underrepresented alumni. Now in its third season, the series has resulted in a scholarship campaign in which 100 percent of the donations go toward supporting diverse women pursuing engineering degrees. Thus far, it has raised $56,000 to assist these students in their academic journeys.

Nearly 70 percent of mathematics college faculty in the U.S. are White, 11 percent are Asian, 10 percent are Hispanic or Latinx, and 7 percent are Black. Women make up 29 percent of this profession.
INSPIRE
Our long-term goal of increasing the number of qualified students from underrepresented populations is bolstered by Influence Student Potential and Increase Representation in Education, an eight-week program designed to build the pipeline for students pursuing higher education in the fields of science and biomedical research.

Science Saturdays
Students from high schools in RFU’s surrounding community — including teens from underserved populations — are paired with RFU graduate students who guide them in core lab techniques and other key scientific concepts, putting them one step closer to the skills they will need in college.

Summer Camps
RFU programs, such as Camp Med, Camp Neuro and Camp Cardiac, are designed to help local college, high school and elementary school students explore the possibilities of healthcare careers. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a virtual Camp Pod was designed for students interested in podiatric medicine.
### Transfer Pre-Engineering Program (T-PREP)

T-PREP serves as a bridge program for engineering students transferring from community colleges, particularly those who are women, veterans, ethnically or racially underrepresented, first-generation, or nontraditional students. Participants complete a design project over a three-week period and receive academic support and professional development services throughout the remainder of their tenure at UC Berkeley. Since its formation in 2013, T-PREP has served more than 450 students, some of whom have gone on to pursue master’s and doctoral degrees in engineering.

| University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) | Level: Undergraduate, Transfer Students | Established: 2013 |

### Data Science Transfer Launch Program

This program is designed to help students transferring from two-year colleges successfully transition into UC Berkeley’s data science program. Participants are assigned to a team of transfer mentors who offer a support structure and help them navigate the path to a four-year or advanced degree. The program provides courses designed to build a sense of community among transfer students and support them in internship and employment searches. It also offers various social activities and information sessions to help participating students acclimate to campus.

| University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) | Level: Undergraduate, Transfer Students | Established: 2020 |

### STEM First Year Initiative (STEM*FYI)

STEM*FYI focuses on increasing DEI among STEM graduate students at UC Berkeley. The initiative consists of informal gatherings, workshops, and social events to build a community of diverse scholars and enhance the educational experience of underrepresented, first-generation, economically disadvantaged, and undocumented graduate students. Participants receive two $500 grants to cover professional development and technology costs. They also engage with a cohort of 15 ambassadors across 11 STEM departments who help guide them during their education.

| University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) | Level: Graduate | Established: 2018 |

### Center for Diverse Leadership in Science (CDLS)

The CDLS is the first university-based center for DEI and justice in environmental science. It has supported more than 200 early career fellows since its founding in 2017. The CDLS fellows help each other overcome the obstacles that underrepresented professionals face in pursuing science careers. Participants engage with faculty fellows, mentors, and honorary community fellows to pursue interdisciplinary earth and environmental justice, partner with community organizers, and conduct outreach into local schools and communities to support others.

| University of California, Los Angeles | Level: Professional | Established: 2017 |

| University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley) | Division of Computing, Data Science, and Society | Level: Undergraduate, Transfer Students | Established: 2020 |
Medical Leaders of Tomorrow (MLT)

The one-week MLT program is designed to engage economically and educationally disadvantaged high school students and prepare them to pursue health care and STEM careers. Groups of five MLT students are paired with medical student mentors who help them research and create medical education projects that address specific health issues and disparities in their communities. MLT also works with students and their parents or guardians on the college admissions and financial aid processes.

The ATOM Scholars Program and the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Programming at UCA’s Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry focuses on internal DEI goals, such as recruiting diverse chemistry and biochemistry majors and supporting them throughout their academic and professional careers. Among these efforts is the ATOM Scholars program, which provides underserved students with a $10,000 annual scholarship. Recipients also have access to the Mentorship Circle program, which meets monthly to offer career advice and preparation, discuss research opportunities, and tour local and regional facilities.
Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine (TouroCOM) is honored to receive the INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine’s 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM Award! Congratulations to student mentors who, through the MedAchieve Program, are helping show high school students that a career in medicine could be in their futures.

TouroCOM is dedicated to increasing minorities in medicine and to training osteopathic physicians to practice in underserved communities.

Broadening Opportunities through Leadership and Diversity (BOLD) Center

The BOLD Center serves historically marginalized students in pursuit of academic success, community and belonging, professional development, leadership and research opportunities, connections with faculty and staff, and involvement in professional societies. Its nationally recognized endeavors include the Engineering GoldShirt Summer Bridge program and the Leadership and Engagement Scholarship programs. Other offerings include peer mentoring, tutoring, and industry internship connections. The BOLD Center provides a safe space for students to voice their perspectives.

EUROTECH is a dual-degree program supported by UConn’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering. Participants pursue a five-year course of study resulting in a BA in German Studies and a BS in any of the engineering disciplines, and each spends a year studying abroad in Germany. The program is intentional about supporting students from diverse backgrounds and engaging in intercultural dialogues. Through the Intercultural Citizenship project, EUROTECH students select a social problem each semester and try to address it using the knowledge gained in both of their fields of study.

Visit tourocom.touro.edu to learn more
St. Elmo Brady STEM Academy (SEBA)

SEBA is an enrichment program that provides hands-on STEM experiences to fourth- and fifth-grade underrepresented students and their families to increase their interest in STEM subjects. SEBA systematically exposes students to working professionals and students who serve as mentors, most of whom are first generation, Black, and/or Latinx. Evaluations of the program show that 95 percent of SEBA students are more interested in STEM after participating and 91 percent are more confident during science and math lessons. Student mentors are also paid for their participation and have access to corporate sponsors for career support and advice.

Scholar Enrichment Program (SEP)

The mission of this unique program is to offer support to underrepresented students throughout their undergraduate experience by providing academic assistance and mentorships, leadership opportunities for building professional skill sets, and a community where students can feel a sense of belonging and pride. SEP hosts numerous talks and workshops each year that provide safe spaces for underrepresented students to discuss their challenges, learn about career opportunities, and collaborate. SEP also organizes the TC Energy Summer Scholars Academy, a summer bridge experience for diverse students who are interested in STEM but may not meet the academic requirements for these majors.

UHCLTeach STEM Teacher Education Program (UHCLTeach)

UHCLTeach recruits STEM majors and prepares them to become teachers in economically and culturally diverse secondary school settings. It combines demanding STEM content preparation with an emphasis on student-centered inquiry and project-based teaching methods through a rigorous, research-based, and clinically intensive instructional process. Graduates earn both a degree in their STEM discipline and a teaching certificate in four years. The program recently received funding to financially support two underrepresented and low-income graduates for two years if they teach in high-needs schools in Houston.

UIC College of Pharmacy Pipeline Programs

The college runs three pipeline programs designed to raise awareness of the pharmacy career path among underrepresented high school students and undergraduates. The High School Pharmacy Workshop is a virtual event for young people to learn broadly about this field and meet with current pharmacy students. The in-person High School Pharmacy Camp engages older high schoolers by presenting career opportunities, labs, and meetings with field professionals. The interactive weeklong Summer Pharmacy Institute allows incoming undergraduates to tour local pharmacies, engage in hands-on lab activities, learn about medication management, and build relationships with local pharmacists.
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

Universities and Institutions

University of Minnesota (UMN)
College of Science and Engineering
Level: High School
Established: 2022

Biomedical Engineering High School Internship Program

The UMN Department of Biomedical Engineering (BME) developed a comprehensive DEI program that aims to address five goals: recruitment, retention, advancement, health equity, and community engagement. As part of this overarching effort, the department has partnered with various high schools with large numbers of underrepresented students and historically Black colleges and universities. Through the BME high school internship program, students from these institutions have the opportunity to gain paid hands-on research experience in BME’s labs, complete a poster session, and more.

University of Missouri (MU)
Office of Access and Leadership Development (ALD) within the Division of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity
Level: Elementary
Established: 2017 & 2020

STEM Cubs and STEM Cubs @ Home

STEM Cubs at MU utilizes a multitiered approach to increase early exposure, encourage continued engagement, and amplify the existing STEM pipeline among underrepresented elementary-aged students. The ALD hosts three STEM Cubs events per year, each of which consists of two half-day camps that serve up to 480 participants. As the COVID-19 pandemic halted opportunities for in-person outreach, STEM Cubs developed a partnership with STEMed to create STEM Cubs @ Home. This program distributed STEM kits to underrepresented local students and their families, hosted live Zoom sessions, and provided prerecorded videos and worksheets.

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Level: Elementary, Middle, Undergraduate
Established: 2013

NE STEM 4U

The NE STEM 4U program serves the needs of undergraduate students as a pre-professional training program while providing an after-school education experience for K-8 youth using an inquiry-based learning approach. Participants engage in hands-on activities with undergraduate STEM mentors. The program has expanded to three locations across the state since its inception, while aiming to partner with schools that are traditionally underserved in STEM areas and include high levels of socioeconomic need. Over half of the students served through the program are from underrepresented backgrounds in STEM, with more than 8,000 youth and 150 undergraduate mentors matriculating to date.

University of Notre Dame
College of Science
Level: High School
Established: 2018

Mary E. Galvin Science and Engineering Scholars Program (Galvin Scholars)

The aim of the Galvin Scholars program is to provide talented students from underresourced high schools with the support they need to thrive in calculus, chemistry, and physics. Scholars take part in an online summer refresher course and the five-week ASCEND program, which provides grounding in necessary quantitative skills. They review mathematical and quantitative concepts in an online course and join weekly small group video conferences led by current Notre Dame students. The program also provides skills courses throughout scholars’ first three semesters and assistance in finding and funding internships and opportunities in research labs throughout their academic careers.
WHO IS BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR ALL?

At Oklahoma State University, we are committed to preparing the next generation of leaders by facilitating and encouraging excellence in diversity, equity and inclusion. We are dedicated to empowering our students to think and act in ways that embrace a more inclusive world.

OSU’s College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Programs (CEAT DEI) are honored to be named one of INSIGHT Into Diversity’s 2022 Inspiring Programs in STEM for the second year in a row. CEAT broadens the horizons of our students by fostering an environment of connection, learning and growing through 10 DEI student organizations and 35 DEI programs.

OSU and CEAT are committed to excellence in leading inclusivity and strengthening learning and leadership through collaboration.

ORANGE IS THE ANSWER.
INSPIRING PROGRAMS IN STEM AWARD

Aspiring Health Professions Summer Academy

This weeklong academy exposes underrepresented high school students to all seven colleges on the OU Health campus. Throughout the week, students train with OU Health students, faculty, and staff and participate in a variety of courses and activities across multiple health sciences disciplines. Those who attend virtually receive tool kits so they can engage with some of the hands-on experiences. At the end of the week, in-person students observe a trauma/cadaver simulation to see how the various disciplines work together. In 2021, 84 percent of academy participants were from racially underrepresented backgrounds.

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center (OU Health)
Division of DEI
Level: High School
Established: 2019

USC Viterbi K-12 STEM Center

The USC Viterbi K-12 STEM Center develops strategies, builds initiatives, and runs programs to meet the needs of individuals whose race or gender is underrepresented in STEM. Some of these efforts include the BOTS program, which offers professional development in robotics and computer science to teachers in elementary schools that primarily serve students of color. The center also hosts numerous research programs and summer camps that are designed to encourage diverse young people to engage in STEM disciplines.

University of Southern California (USC)
Viterbi School of Engineering
Level: K-12
Established: 2019

Achieving Change in our Communities through Equity and Student Success (ACCESS) in STEM Program

The ACCESS in STEM Program aims to increase the number of underrepresented STEM graduates by supporting marginalized students with scholarships, various skill development workshops, mentorship opportunities, and a living-learning community on campus. Since the program began, STEM graduation rates have increased among low-income, ethnically and racially underrepresented, and first-generation students by 29 percent or more. STEM graduation rates have increased by 47 percent among women overall and by 140 percent among women of color since the program was implemented.

University of Washington Tacoma
Level: Undergraduate
Established: 2018

Summer Opportunities in Academic Research (SOAR)

SOAR encourages high school students of color in the Charlottesville area to pursue careers in science by providing education and mentoring in biomedical research. Students are paired with a mentor for an eight-week course focused on providing a broad introduction to biomedical research and exposure to various STEM fields. At the end of the program, participants give presentations summarizing their research experiences and discoveries. SOAR aims to increase student exposure to STEM fields they otherwise may not consider and provide direct mentorship to foster future academic success.

University of Virginia
School of Medicine
Level: High School
Established: 2021

The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science

The Gatton Academy is a two-year residential program at WKU designed to provide a robust STEM education to underrepresented high school juniors and seniors. Academy students take STEM college courses that are traditionally not offered to high schoolers, conduct research projects, and work with individual counselors who help guide them through the program and adjust to the academic rigors of college. Through state support, grants, and individual gifts, the academy covers the cost of tuition, room and board, and meals to admitted students.

Western Kentucky University (WKU)
Level: High School
Established: 2007
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Collaboration of 50 Colleges and Universities Address Educational Equity

In June, 50 higher education institutions from across the U.S. came together to participate in the 2022 Summer Institute on Equity in the Academic Experience, a three-day series of workshops and discussions that aims to increase access to education and support services for racially underrepresented, economically disadvantaged, and first-generation students.

The institute was organized by a coalition of 11 colleges and universities and the American Talent Initiative, a Bloomberg Philanthropies-supported collaboration between the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program, Ithaka S+R, and an alliance of higher education institutions dedicated to expanding access and support for low- and moderate-income students.

The event had more than 70 teams composed of 250 college faculty, staff, and administrators — double the number of participants at the inaugural 2019 institute. A hybrid format allowed teams to meet in person at individual campuses or regional hubs while also engaging in virtual sessions with other attendees from across the U.S. Participating schools included both Minority-Serving Institutions and predominantly White institutions.

Attendees were split into inter- and intra-campus teams representing diverse personal and professional backgrounds, academic disciplines, and institutional roles. They attended workshops, presentations, and discussions focused on reducing institutional isolation and siloing by building better connected networks with strategic equity goals.

“We realized institutions have projects designed to bridge equity gaps and enhance student success, but that work is disconnected,” Roderick Lee, an associate professor of information systems at The Pennsylvania State University-Harrisburg and member of the institute’s leadership advisory board, said in a press release. “Expanding the ecosystem is an important part of this, because egg-crated silos and isolation impede progress.”

The John Glenn College of Public Affairs team was among six groups from The Ohio State University that took part in the 2022 Summer Institute for Equity in the Academic Experience. Photo courtesy Ohio State News
Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine is seeking qualified physicians to perform clinical and teaching duties that meet the needs of patients, students, and the communities they serve across all three of our locations in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Suwanee, Georgia, and Moultrie, Georgia.

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November 7, 2022

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Christopher King, Ph.D.
Inaugural Dean, Georgetown University School of Health
Author, Health Disparities in the Black Community: An Imperative for Racial Equity

Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D.
Affiliate Associate Professor of Education, University of Washington
Author, White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism

Isabel Wilkerson
Pulitzer Prize winner
Author, Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents

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