

Inclusion and Advancement of LGBTQ+ People in STEM Fields Symposium

May 30, 2023 | Washington, DC



Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) individuals interested in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) experience longstanding challenges to their pursuit of education, mentorship, and employment in STEM fields. Current research finds that LGBTQ+ people are not only underrepresented in STEM professions, but that those in STEM professions are also more likely to experience workplace harassment and more likely to consider leaving their jobs compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers.

This Symposium is the first to bring together federal funding agencies, the White House office that advises the President on science and technology, and the researchers shaping our understanding of how LGBTQ+ people navigate education and employment in STEM fields. Our goals are to educate attendees about the current landscape impacting LGBTQ+ people in STEM, to share the personal and professional experiences, and to offer real and actionable ideas for addressing disparities.

Speakers at the public event include representatives from the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing (ISGMH).

Researchers will present the most current data and key points related to the challenges and disparities faced by LGBTQ+ high school students, college students, and employees in or seeking to join the STEM workforce. Government leaders focused on STEM and LGBTQ+ workforce initiatives will present opportunities and challenges related to federal policy for LGBTQ+ researchers in STEM fields. Scholars at different stages of their career trajectories will discuss specific challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, personal experiences of barriers to career advancement, and the role of mentorship in promoting inclusivity and diversity in STEM workplaces.

1:00pm **Opening Remarks**

Brian Mustanski, PhD

Director, Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing
Northwestern University

1:10pm **Evidence of LGBTQ+ Challenges and Disparities in STEM**

Presenters will review research, data, and key points related to the challenges and disparities faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM fields. The discussion will focus on the reality in STEM workplaces and the impact of homophobia and transphobia has on the careers of LGBTQ+ individuals.

Moderator

Jon Freeman, PhD
Columbia University

Presenters

Reginald Blockett, PhD
Auburn University

Joel Mittleman, PhD
University of Notre Dame

Stephanie Farrell, PhD
Rowan University

Tom Waidzunas, PhD
Temple University

Bryce Hughes, PhD
Montana State University

Christine Wood, PhD
Northwestern University

2:45pm **Leading the Way: LGBTQ+ Mentorship in STEM Fields**

Panelists will share positive experiences of mentoring that have resulted in the advancement of LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM fields. The discussion will focus on the importance of mentorship in promoting inclusivity and diversity, as well as the specific challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM fields and strategies for overcoming them.

Moderator

Jagadīśa-devaśrī Dācus, PhD
Northwestern University

Panelists

Brittany Charlton, PhD
Harvard Medical School

Sharon Milgram, PhD
Office of the Director
National Institutes of Health

3:15pm **Break**

3:35pm

Navigating Identity and Career: LGBTQ+ Perspectives

Panelists will focus on the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM fields, including the challenges and barriers they face in pursuing and advancing their careers. The panelists, who are also researchers in the field, will share insights from their own research on the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM fields.

Moderator

Cindy Veldhuis, PhD
Northwestern University

Panelists

Luis A. Leyva, PhD
Vanderbilt University

Carlos Rodríguez-Díaz, PhD
George Washington University

Bali White
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
National Institutes of Health

4:25pm

Federal Policy for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in STEM: Opportunities and Challenges

This panel discussion will explore the current policies and practices in place to support LGBTQ+ individuals in these fields, as well as identify areas for improvement and potential future policy initiatives. The panelists will draw on their own experiences working in federal agencies, as well as their expertise in STEM fields, to offer insights into the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ scholars and how these can be addressed through policy.

Moderator

Travis T. York, PhD
American Association for the
Advancement of Science

Panelists

Meghan Maury
White House Office of Science and
Technology Policy

Karen L. Parker, PhD
Sexual & Gender Minority Research Office
National Institutes of Health

Charles Barber, PhD
National Science Foundation

5:15pm

Closing Remarks

Jagadīśa-devaśrī Dācus, PhD
Associate Director, Institute for Sexual and Gender Minority Health and Wellbeing
Northwestern University

5:20pm Reception

All attendees and speakers are welcome to join us for a reception with food and drinks immediately after the symposium.

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