

Beyond Compliance: Promoting the Success of People with Disabilities in the STEM Workforce

Committee

Bonnielin Swenor

Chair

Dr. Bonnielin Swenor is an associate professor at The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and holds joint appointments at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She is the founder and director of the Johns Hopkins Disability Health Research Center, which aims to shift the paradigm from 'living with a disability' to 'thriving with a disability'. Dr. Swenor's research is motivated by her personal experience with disability, as she has low vision. Her work aims to advance equity for people with disabilities by focusing on three areas: (1) developing novel methods to quantify the inequities impacting disabled people, (2) testing innovative strategies to reduce these inequities, and (3) promoting disability inclusion in higher education, STEM, and research. Dr. Swenor received a BS in Microbiology and Biochemistry from Pennsylvania State University, a MPH in Epidemiology and Biostatistics and a PhD in Epidemiology from Johns Hopkins.

Emily E. Ackerman

Member

Dr. Emily Ackerman is a postdoctoral researcher in the Systems Biology department at Harvard Medical School. As a disabled researcher, Dr. Ackerman is devoted to activism surrounding disability justice both inside and outside of academia with a particular interest in the interaction between disability, technology, and education. She currently holds a second appointment with the HMS Systems Biology department as a Disability Advisor where her responsibilities include leading projects to enhance accessibility and cultivating community for disabled researchers across the school. In addition, Dr. Ackerman serves on the board of directors of Future of Research and co-leads the Labor Task Force, a project aimed at assessing and improving the labor conditions of academic workers. She completed her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh where she was supported by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as a Gilliam Fellow.

David (Dave) Caudel

Member

at Vanderbilt University. He is a neurodivergence advocate, speaking to a variety of organizations, including the U.N. and autism conferences internationally. He serves on the advisory committee for the Center for Discovery, Innovation, and Development (CDID) at Children's Specialized Hospital in New Jersey, the Clinical Advisory Panel on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities for BlueCare Tennessee, the Vanderbilt University Diversity Council and the All Access Inclusion Network, and is a founding member of the Vanderbilt Autism and Neurodiversity Alliance. Dr. Caudel has had a number of careers, including videographer, soldier in the U.S. Army, journalist, photojournalist, magazine editor, public affairs specialist, truck salesman, and corporate stints from customer service to loss prevention. He received his Ph.D. in Physics at Vanderbilt University in 2017.

Michele L. Cooke

Member

Dr. Michele Cooke is a Professor of Geosciences at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a fellow of the Geological Society of America. Dr. Cooke has served in leadership roles for the Southern California Earthquake Center, the Geological Society of America's Structural Geology and Tectonics division, the international analog modeling community and the Subduction Zones in 4D research collaboration network. Dr. Cooke was awarded the UMass Amherst Distinguished Academic Outreach Teaching Award in 2010, earned the UMass Amherst College of Natural Sciences Outstanding Research Award in 2018, and was awarded the International Association for Geoscience Diversity Inclusive Geoscience Education and Research Award in 2020. She holds a PhD in Earth Sciences from Stanford University.

Logan Gin

Member

Dr. Logan Gin is the Assistant Director for STEM Education in the Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University. He currently works on initiatives related to STEM graduate student and postdoc teaching professional development. Prior to arriving at Brown, Dr. Gin was an NSF Graduate Research Fellow at Arizona State University and served as the Program Manager for an NSF S-STEM program focused on involving community college transfer students in undergraduate research. He received a B.S. in Biology and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and holds a Ph.D. in Biology from Arizona State University.

Andrew J. Imparato

Member

Mr. Andrew Imparato is the Executive Director of Disability Rights California and a member of the National Advisory Committee Health Policy research Scholars Program. Andrew has held a number of key leadership roles, including President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities, and Senior Counsel and Disability Policy Director for Chairman Tom Harkin on the US Senate Committee on Health Education, Labor and Pensions. His perspective is informed by his lived experience with bipolar disorder. He has helped numerous Fortune 500 companies develop their disability inclusion strategies and has led the planning for four global conferences on disability employment attracting participation from more than 40 countries. Mr. Imparato holds a JD from Stanford Law School.

Mona Minkara

Member

Dr. Mona Minkara is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Bioengineering and an Affiliate Faculty in the Chemistry and Chemical Biology Department at Northeastern University. As a scientist who is blind, Dr. Minkara is committed to making science more accessible and inclusive by designing tools for blind scientists. She leads various initiatives, including the international Science in Braille campaign, uniting blind expert scientists, and working to transform the societal perception of disability. Before joining the Northeastern University faculty, she held a postdoctoral appointment at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities Chemical Theory Center with the National Academies Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship. Dr. Minkara received a B.A. from Wellesley College and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Florida.

Jordan R. Rodriguez

Member

Mr. Jordan Rodriguez is a Civil Engineer in Training working in the project management of industrial water. Mr. Rodriguez has multiple disabilities that shaped his understanding of the barriers disabled people face in the STEM workforce. He is legally blind, has ADHD, scoliosis, and TMJ. Mr. Rodriguez is committed to improving accessibility and inclusion of disabled people at his employer. He co-leads document accessibility training to numerous business lines to make company deliverables more accessible. Mr. Rodriguez has also provided a disability perspective on several infrastructure projects to improve the inclusivity of civil infrastructure design. Mr. Rodriguez is on the D&I committee of the AZ chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA). He has also led a team that developed a new holistic intern program that emphasizes more inclusive hiring practices to better reach the next generation of talent. Mr. Rodriguez holds a MS in Civil Engineering from Arizona State University.

Anita M. Stone Marshall

Member

Dr. Anita Stone Marshall is a Lecturer and researcher in the Department of Geological Sciences at the University of Florida, Gainesville and serves as the Executive Director of the International Association for Geoscience Diversity. Her research focuses on improving access for people with disabilities in the geosciences with ongoing projects including the GeoSPACE Accessible Planetary Geology field course, a Culture Change project focusing on disabled geoscientists in professional settings, and the ASCEND research coordination network for creating more inclusive cultures in geoscience professional societies. She is actively involved in the DEI community of geosciences, sharing her expertise and personal experience in STEM as a person with disabilities and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Dr. Marshall has 17 years of undergraduate teaching experience designing inclusive and accessible courses in community colleges and R1 research institutions in a range of modalities - in-person, hybrid and online. Dr. Marshall received a BS in Earth Science and MS in Geology from the University of Arkansas and a PhD in Geology from the University of South Florida.

Rupa Valdez

Member

Dr. Valdez is an Associate Professor with joint appointments in the School of Medicine and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at the University of Virginia. She also serves as core faculty for Global Studies and the Disability Studies Initiative. Her research lies at the intersection of human factors engineering, informatics, cultural anthropology, and health equity. She works with historically marginalized groups to co-design and evaluate systems-oriented solutions to managing health and wellbeing in home and community spaces. Dr. Valdez has received numerous awards, including the Jack A. Kraft Innovator Award from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and the Forward Under 40 Award from the Wisconsin Alumni Association. She recently testified before Congress on the topic of bridging health equity gaps for people with disabilities. Among other appointments, Dr. Valdez is a board member of the American Association of People with Disabilities and the American Health Information Management Association Foundation, and an advisor for the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute and the National Committee for Quality Assurance. She also serves as Associate Editor for Ergonomics and the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association Open. She received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Rian Lund Dahlberg

Staff Officer