



Report on the Sixth Anniversary Year Societies Consortium Annual Convening

A Hybrid Convening Hosted by the American Geophysical Union – October 28 - 29, 2024

This convening was sponsored by:



The Sixth Annual Societies Consortium Hybrid Convening brought together a diverse group of thought leaders, innovators, and advocates to advance a bold vision for safety, equity, and excellence within the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine) ecosystem. With a focus on fostering inclusive, equitable, and harassment-free environments, this year's convening aimed to navigate the complex social, political, and legal challenges facing DEAI (Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion) efforts in STEM. Participants reflected on the lasting impacts of recent societal shifts, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, artificial intelligence advancements, and attacks on reproductive justice, while co-developing innovative strategies to build a more resilient and equitable future. Through collaborative discussions, workshops, and expert insights, the convening encouraged attendees to drive transformative change, ensuring that all individuals in STEM can thrive and contribute to scientific, technological, and cultural progress.

- 1) On Day 1 we focused on the evolving landscape of equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion within the STEM ecosystem.** We heard about the critical role of philanthropy, federal agencies, and legal frameworks in shaping a more inclusive and equitable future for STEM fields. Philanthropic organizations were recognized for their efforts in addressing gender and racial inequities while enhancing safety and well-being in STEM environments. Attendees learned how to leverage philanthropic resources to drive change and promote excellence across all disciplines. Federal agency leaders shared their work in breaking down systemic barriers, fostering educational opportunities, and creating environments where innovation thrives, offering practical guidance on how to partner with these agencies to empower change. The event also explored the implications of the Supreme Court's Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) ruling, with legal experts and DEAI leaders discussing how STEM societies can navigate the ruling's impact while maintaining their commitment to inclusive practices. Participants shared their desire to continue to collaborate to find and create actionable strategies for adapting their DEAI initiatives to the evolving legal and social landscape, ensuring that STEM fields remain accessible and equitable for all.

Participants also had the opportunity to hear from experts and each other during concurrent workshop sessions. Those session's themes were Cultivating the Power and Leadership of Early Career Professionals, Gaining Buy-in for DEAI Policies from Your Organization's Leadership, Improving Investigations, Supporting State and Regional Affiliates with Advocacy Strategies Amid Anti-DEI Attacks, Fostering Integrity and Inclusivity in Journal Publications, and Understanding the Battles Over Title IX.

Marc Beebe from IEEE shared key member updates, including the new dues relief policy and new dues structure. If a Member Society is experiencing financial hardship or extraordinary economic challenges, it may request relief from paying dues from the Societies Consortium's Executive Committee. If approved, the relief will reduce or eliminate the Member Society's dues obligation for the year in which the request was made. The Member Society must return to its scheduled, full dues payments the following year. This policy goes into effect on January 1, 2025. The new dues structure is as follows: Tier 1 at \$10,000; Tier 2 at \$7,000; Tier 3 at \$4,500; Tier 4 at \$2,000; Tier 5 at \$1,000; and Tier 6 at \$500.

- 2) Day 2** brought together leaders from advocacy organizations, academic institutions, and professional societies to explore strategies for advancing equity and inclusion in STEM. Participants delved into the latest research and shared best practices for fostering safer, more

inclusive environments that prioritize the well-being and success of all individuals, particularly early-career professionals and emerging leaders. Panelists underscored the critical role of robust policies, effective implementation, and cultural transformation in creating spaces where everyone can thrive. We hope attendees left with practical tools and actionable insights to champion meaningful change within their own organizations and communities, driving progress across the STEMM landscape.

In the days leading up to the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election, representatives from EducationCounsel, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and USC's STEM Center provided a comprehensive analysis of the election's potential impact on STEM policy, funding, and research. The session explored various electoral outcomes and their implications, offering attendees valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that may arise in the post-election landscape. We hope participants left with a clearer understanding of how to strategically adapt their priorities and initiatives, ensuring they remain well-positioned to navigate shifts in policy, funding, and training in the coming months.

The following are key takeaways from both days of the Convening. Recordings of plenary sessions can be found [here](#). Materials from the convening can be found [here](#).

Also, the Consortium has received certification as an organization offering ASAE CAE credit for its instructional programming, including the Annual Convening.

Key Takeaways from Day 1

On Day 1, we gathered to share insights, reflect on our work, and reaffirm our new mission and infrastructure changes. The mission of the Societies Consortium is to advance equity, excellence, and integrity in the STEMM ecosystem by eradicating the systems that create and support harassment.

We emphasized the need to co-develop a vision for the future of our fields, anchored by law, policy, and practical guidance for remaining resilient when faced with assaults on diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion. Participants noted the need and desire to engage in community collaboration, discuss tools and resources, and work with experts and leaders to champion a future vision for safety, equity, and excellence within their organizations and in the STEMM ecosystem.

In our first plenary, Funding the Future: Philanthropy's Role in Building a Safer, Equitable, and Excellent STEMM Ecosystem, Errika Moore from the Stem Funders Network emphasized, "I would encourage you to have the courage to engage in a conversation with philanthropy that says, 'We need you at the table with us.'"

During Day 1's second plenary, Empowering Change: The Role of Federal Leadership in Shaping a Stronger and More Inclusive Future in STEMM, Dr. Michael Lauer from the National Institutes of Health highlighted a practice at the University of Maryland where if someone is being considered for an employment position and that person makes it to the short list, they have to fill out a form to indicate whether or not they have been subject to investigation for some kind of professional misconduct or

violation. If they have, they have to explain what that misconduct or violation is. Dr. Lauer explained that if other institutions had this practice, it would make a significant difference in federal leadership's ability to deal with the problem.

In our third plenary of the day, *Leading with Purpose: Staying Committed to Gender and Racial Equity While Navigating the Student for Fair Admissions Decision and Political Challenges*, Art Coleman from Education Counsel emphasized, "We have got to do a better job of elevating the educational and scientific rationale behind the power and importance of our commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion."

Day 1 Featured Experts and Panelists

Funding the Future: Philanthropy's Role in Building a Safer, Equitable, and Excellent STEMM Ecosystem

Sean Buffington, Interim President, The Henry Luce Foundation

Sindy Escobar Alvarez, Medical Program Director, Doris Duke Foundation

Errika Moore, Executive Director, STEM Funders Network

Alfred Mays, Chief Diversity Officer and Strategist, The Burroughs Wellcome Fund

Blanton S. Tolbert, Vice President of Science Leadership and Culture, Howard Hughes Medical Institute

Andrew Black, Chief of Staff, American Association for the Advancement of Science and Co-Chair of the Societies Consortium's Executive Committee

Empowering Change: The Role of Federal Leadership in Shaping a Stronger and More Inclusive Future in STEMM

James Moore, Assistant Director, National Science Foundation

Michael Lauer, Deputy Director for Extramural Research, National Institutes of Health

Yvette Seger, Chief Science and Workforce Development Officer, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology and Societies Consortium Executive Committee Member

CONCURRENT POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHOPS

Ijeoma Kola, CEO, Cohort Sistas & Assistant Professor, University of Notre Dame

Joanne Kamens, Scientist, DEI Consultant, & Board member of Cohort Sistas and Association of Women in Science

Marcia Lesky, Senior Director, Foundation Programs & Diversity Strategy, Optica

Sara Kropf, Co-Founder, Moseley PLLC

Sarina Neote, Director of Public Affairs, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Matthew Giampoala, Vice President for Publications, American Geophysical Union

Meredith Gibson, Chief Executive Officer, Association for Women in Science

Leading with Purpose: Staying Committed to Gender and Racial Equity While Navigating the Student for Fair Admissions Decision and Political Challenges

Art Coleman, Co-Founding Partner, EducationCounsel

Travis York, PhD, Director of Inclusive STEMM Ecosystems for Equity & Diversity, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Sunu Chandy, Senior Advisor, Democracy Forward

Jamie Lewis Keith, Distinguished Senior Law and Policy Fellow, EducationCounsel

The Future of the Societies Consortium: Management Updates, Member Benefits, and Community-Building

Marc Beebe, Senior Director for Strategic Research, Public Imperatives, and Corporate Development, IEEE and Societies Consortium Executive Committee Member.

Key Takeaways from Day 2

Day 2 mainly focused on potential impacts on Societies Consortium priorities depending on the outcome of the U.S. Presidential election, with an expert panel led by Nathan Arnold from EducationCounsel. During that plenary, Kendrick Davis from the University of Southern California STEM Center reminded folks that while this is an uncertain time, the future should be about what we as organizations *can* and *should* do, not what they can't do. Following that plenary, participants had the opportunity to engage in Table Talks about the election, specifically on which challenges and/or opportunities affect their work or organization the most; what policies and funding opportunities they are hoping to see after the next presidential administration, no matter the outcome; what the Biden Administration did for the STEMM ecosystem that participants hope to see more of and what it did not do that you wished it had; and what their worries and hopes are.

When Jamie Lewis Keith led a discussion on an update on the Ethical Transparency Tool Pilot Program at the start of Day 2, Felice Levine, Executive Director of AERA said, "How could we not join something at the intersection of creating a more supportive environment at the intersection of education and research?"

Cynthia Prieto-Diaz of the Alameda County Public Health Department and 500 Women Scientists, during the plenary on Ending Harassment and Exclusion in STEMM: Perspectives on Policy, Practice, and Culture, said, "It's in all of our best interest to continue to inspire women and gender-diverse individuals to go into STEMM, but also to not only go into STEMM, but stay in STEMM and thrive in these sectors, for the betterment of our society.

Stacie East closed out the Convening with these powerful words: "I practiced criminal defense for over 25 years and all criminal defense attorneys know the Lenny Bruce quote, "In the Halls of Justice, the only justice is in the halls." In this, Lenny Bruce acknowledged the resources spent to create systems and structures that look like justice but really create oppression. The system Lenny Bruce referred to ensure justice for "just us" and oppression for others. True justice presents in many ways. Equity is a form of justice. To be free from sexual harassment is a form of justice. To be safe in the lab, in the field, during office hours, at conferences, is a form of justice...If we imagine power and invulnerability as a series of concentric circles, with the invulnerable being in the innermost circle and the most vulnerable being in the outermost circles, those in the outermost circle are most likely to suffer sexual harassment. Which of these women do you truly believe made it to the inner circle? Which of these scientists would be free of sexual harassment today during their academic and professional journeys? For me, my answers to these questions make the Societies Consortium and its legal updates, ethics policy templates, and Ethical Transparency Tool more valuable."

Day 2 Featured Experts and Panelists

Pilot Update: Ethical Transparency Tool

Jamie Lewis Keith, Distinguished Senior Law and Policy Fellow, EducationCounsel

Stacie East, Director of Equity and Grants, Entomological Society of America and Societies Consortium Executive Committee Member

Felice Levine, Executive Director, American Educational Research Association and Co-Chair of the Societies Consortium's Executive Committee

Michelle Tellock, Deputy General Counsel, Vanderbilt University

Ending Harassment and Exclusion in STEMM: Perspectives on Policy, Practice, and Culture

Cynthia Prieto-Diaz, Principal, Alameda County Public Health Department and Advisor, 500 Women Scientists

Ijeoma Kola, Executive Director, Cohort Sistas

Morteza Mahmoudi, Associate Professor, Michigan State University & Co-Founder, Academic Parity Movement

Sarina Neote, Director of Public Affairs, American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

What's at Stake? Assessing the Potential Impacts of the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election on the STEMM Ecosystem

Travis York, Director of Inclusive STEMM Ecosystems for Equity & Diversity, American Association for the Advancement of Science

Kendrick Davis, Director, USC STEM Center

Nathan Arnold, Principal, EducationCounsel