



Dear members of the Lamont community,

Just like that, ten years have gone by. Looking back at the journey of the Office of Academic Affairs & Diversity, I would like to take a moment to thank you all for your support and involvement over the years. Without your participation this office would not be able to carry out its work and mission.

Areas that the office handles – such as diversity, inclusion, search committees, appointments, promotions, salary, campus life, mentoring, Title IX – are sensitive, delicate, and often controversial, evoking strong reactions. Unlike scientific inquiry, which is governed by scientific principles and an objective orientation, these topics are highly subjective, with strongly held and often widely differing views. Some issues are so divisive that people will never agree on the best way forward. And yet move forward we must. It is against this backdrop that this office functions every day.

Despite these obvious challenges, the past ten years have also been rewarding and fulfilling in many ways, and continue to remind me why this office was set up in the first place. Long-term change often happens in incremental steps. What seems like a few minor changes here and there, when taken together and sustained over time, result in the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. I have outlined for you below some key activities of this office over the years – while there still remains work to do, we have shifted many of our baselines towards greater inclusivity, and these changes are here to stay.

Promoting a culture of inclusivity needs active participation from all members of the community. And over time, whether people stay on at Lamont or move to other places, the hope is that we all work towards making our little corners of the world a better place everyday. Thank you for all your participation and support. I hope you all feel a sense of pride in the changes that we are making as we build a more supportive and inclusive community together.

With gratitude,

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The Office of Academic Affairs & Diversity was created following the recommendations of the NSF-ADVANCE program at the Earth Institute at Columbia (PI and Director: Robin Bell; Co-PIs: Mark Cane, Stephanie Pfirman, Patricia Culligan, John Mutter). Since its creation, this office has been involved in several activities and initiatives, some of which are listed below. While some of these activities are recurring and others are one-time, they are all aimed at promoting inclusivity, raising awareness, and creating a better work environment at Lamont.

Excellence in Mentoring Award

Originally limited to LDEO/DEES, this award was opened up to all units on the Lamont Campus. Further, starting in 2019, there will be two awards, one for scientists/faculty, and the other for technical/administrative staff. The rationale for this is that the job descriptions of technical/administrative staff often do not have the same breadth and scope as those of scientists/faculty, putting them at a comparative disadvantage.

Harassment Awareness

Various activities and events, open to the whole campus, are aimed at promoting awareness on topics such as harassment in the workplace. These include flyers around campus with information on Title IX resources, and series of events during Harassment Awareness Month, including sessions on: gender bias in the geosciences; engaging men in gender equality; bystander intervention training; bias training; LGBTQ awareness; and harassment in the field. Currently efforts are under way to create a Lamont-wide code of conduct.

Gender & Diversity Coffee Hour

Started by graduate student Maayan Yehudai, this is a monthly gathering, typically on a Friday morning, to discuss gender and diversity issues in STEM. Discussions touch a wide range of topics, from academic research on diversity and inclusion to imposter syndrome to work-life issues.

Postdoctoral Parental Leave Policy

Postdoctoral years account for the largest leak in the academic STEM pipeline. Besides challenges such as a chilly climate and implicit bias, postdoctoral years tend to be family forming years, with women bearing a disproportionately higher burden than men. Lamont's Postdoctoral Parental Leave Policy covers the salary of women postdocs (including externally funded postdocs) during maternity leave if their regular funding source does not allow for paid maternity leave.

LGBTQ Inclusivity: "You are Welcome Here"

This initiative aims to raise awareness on LGBTQ issues and create a safe and welcoming space for all. Following a blog by former graduate student Kyle Frischkorn in Scientific American, rainbow stickers with the phrase "You are welcome here" were made available to the entire Lamont community to post in their spaces around campus, promoting a message of LGBTQ inclusivity.

Campus Restrooms Signage

With assistance from Lamont Facilities, gender-neutral restrooms at Lamont are now clearly marked. A list of all gender-neutral restrooms is available on the Lamont campus map. All single-gender restrooms now have QR codes on the door, which can be scanned on a smartphone to show the locations of all gender-neutral restrooms on the Lamont campus.



Campus Life & Work Environment Survey

This survey, organized jointly with the Campus Life Committee, was aimed at getting a sense of the Lamont community's overall satisfaction with their work environment, especially those aspects pertaining to campus climate and campus life. In addition to topics like work environment, working conditions, facilities and conveniences, we also included questions on diversity and inclusion. The survey was open to Lamonters of all ranks and titles, and the aggregated results were disseminated to the Lamont community.

Postdoctoral Symposium

This initiative is aimed at promoting the visibility of our postdoctoral scientists and fellows, and highlighting their research. This biannual all-day event allows members of the Lamont community to learn about the work done by our postdocs, and offers our postdocs a chance to present their work to the Lamont community.

Health Benefit: Assisted Reproductive Techniques

Based on information provided by a Lamont postdoc on the limitations of the then CU policy on assisted reproductive techniques (such as IVF) for women, we took the issue up to the Provost's Office (via the CU Commission on the Status of Women) with data that allowed us to make a case to change the annual limit to a larger and more flexible lifetime limit. The CU policy benefit for assisted reproductive techniques was subsequently changed from an annual to a lifetime limit.

Search Procedures

Search procedures for professional officers of research were modified and updated to promote more diverse and inclusive searches. These include: advertising in targeted venues, including minority venues; providing information to search committees on best practices for searches, and the role of implicit bias; providing information on the demographics of the applicant pool, and comparing it to the national available pool using NSF and NORC data.

Diversity Seminar

This initiative is aimed at promoting awareness on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the academic workplace. Speakers talk about diversity issues in different contexts – with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, implicit bias, STEM diversity, social psychology, and others.

Lamont Senior Staff

Originally limited to tenured DEES faculty and senior members of the Lamont Research Professor (LRP)/Doherty Research Scientist (DRS) track, the Lamont Senior Staff now includes senior members of the Research Scientist (RS) track. The rationale for this being that senior members of the RS track conduct valuable scientific research that contributes to the scientific output of Lamont. Also related is the creation of the new bylaws, which clearly defined the overarching framework within which the institution operates with respect to professional officers of research.



LDEO Salary Study

Following the 2009 salary study conducted by the Office of the Provost, we did a salary study on our professional officers of research (Doherty scientists, Research scientists, postdocs) comparing salaries at different ranks with respect to gender and race. Results were disseminated to the Lamont community.

Implicit Gender Bias Research

A study on gender differences in letters of recommendation (using 1,200+ letters from more than 50 countries) examined letters for the Lamont postdoctoral fellowship applications to shed light on the language used in letters of recommendation for male applicants versus female applicants. This study has been included with other studies in conversations about gender diversity and inclusion within the larger geoscience community.

U.S. State Department Visit

Following the institutionalizing of the ADVANCE program, Lamont was one of the campuses selected for a site visit by a delegation visiting the US as part of a joint US State Dept./ UN program. The visitors were senior women faculty and researchers from different countries (some representing ministries) to learn about the best practices of our ADVANCE program and its institutionalization at Lamont.

Brochure: Explore A Career in the Geosciences

This is an informational brochure, aimed at providing basic information on the geosciences and Lamont to first generation minority students interested in exploring a career in the geosciences. Disseminated regularly at diversity conferences such as SACNAS, and also given out to SSFRP summer interns and Open House visitors, this brochure outlines different fields of study within the geosciences, and offers career related information.

Women in Science Networking Lunch

At this luncheon event, women scientists from the northeast US region were invited to Lamont to meet with LDEO women scientists, and offer career advice to junior women at Lamont. Approximately 60 women scientists attended this event, which was covered in Eos, the American Geophysical Union (AGU) magazine.

SSFRP: “Notes to My Younger Self”

Aimed at promoting inclusivity and mentoring, this session, for summer interns of the Secondary School Field Research Program (SSFRP), discussed topics pertaining to the first generation college experience. The goal was to arrive at guidelines/advice for high school students (especially minority first generation students) who are considering going to college. Participants shared their own experiences and thoughts, and those collective thoughts and experiences were compiled into a document and disseminated to the newer students.



Bias Training

The office conducts bias trainings, and has made presentations on implicit bias, stereotype threat, and STEM diversity to a broad range of audiences beyond Lamont. These include: NSF-ADVANCE National Conference; CUMC; CU Arts & Sciences New Faculty Orientation; HERC; NCAR-AGCI; SPIE-Optics; Univ. of Southern Denmark; and others.

Women in Science at Open House

Aimed at promoting visibility of Lamont's women scientists, this event highlighted the work and accomplishments of our women scientists. Individual components of this event included screening a slideshow to visitors at Open House, as well as a panel discussion on women in science.

Workshops and Discussions

Over the years we have held approximately 50 events (workshops, symposia, information sessions) for postdoctoral and junior scientists. Topics have included: how to write a grant proposal; mentoring; how to write a diversity statement; non-academic careers in science; work-life issues; career development, talking to the media; and others.

Columbia Wide Initiatives and Efforts

This office participates in Columbia-wide efforts on diversity and inclusion, including the Commission on the Status of Women (a body of the Columbia University Senate), and the University Life Task Force on Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.

Check out our new website: <https://diversity.ideo.columbia.edu> for more information.

