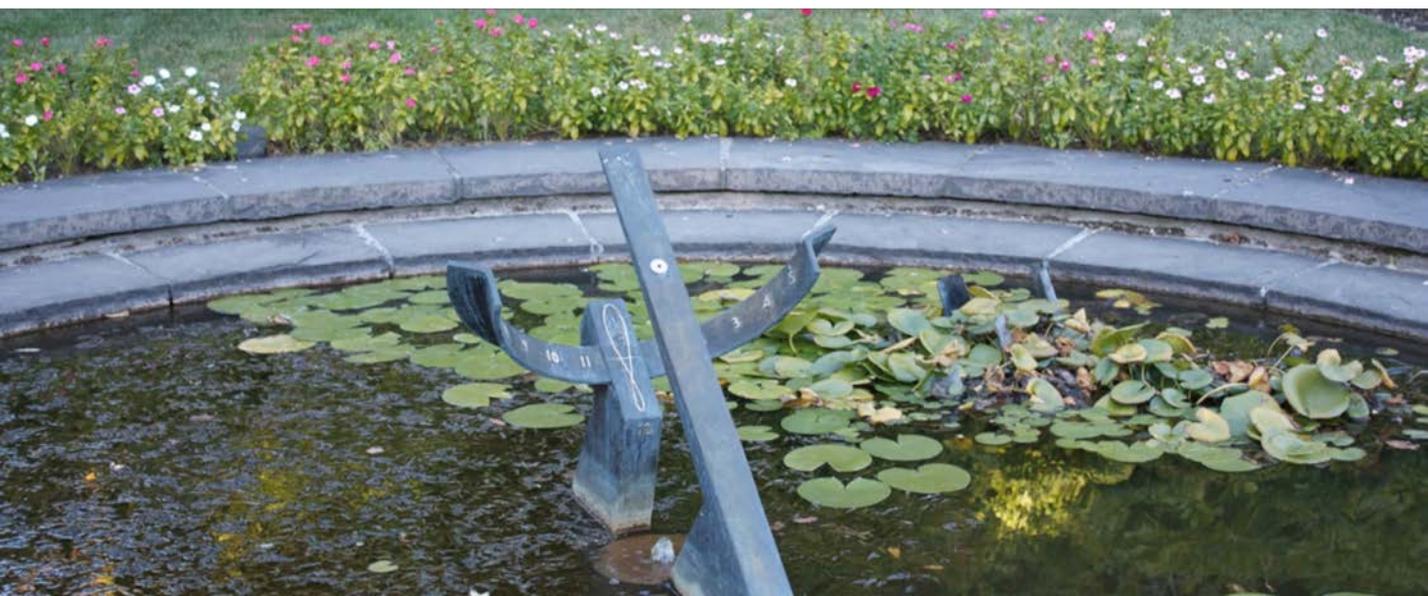




# **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Lamont 2008-2019**

## **A Report of the Office of Academic Affairs & Diversity**

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | EARTH INSTITUTE





October 2019

Dear members of the Lamont community,

As the Office of Academic Affairs & Diversity completes eleven years, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all of you. Promoting a culture of inclusion needs active participation from the community, and your support and involvement have been crucial in helping this office carry out its work and mission. Areas that the office handles – diversity, equity, inclusion, search and hiring processes, salary equity, appointments, promotions, campus life, mentoring, harassment, bias, Title IX – are sensitive and delicate, evoking strong reactions. These topics are highly subjective and emotionally charged, and some issues are so divisive that people will never be in agreement. Yet it is important to keep moving forward. It is against this backdrop that this office functions every day.

Despite these challenges, serving as Lamont's Diversity Officer is deeply meaningful and rewarding. I am especially thankful for the strong and steadfast support I have received from so many of you over the years. Long-term change, including shifting mindsets, takes time and often happens in incremental steps – these things cannot be fast-tracked. Yet it is heartening to see that the whole is often greater than the sum of its parts. And our goal is to continue these steps, never losing sight of the big picture.

A special note of thanks to our graduate students and postdocs: your energy, your drive, your readiness to jump in and tackle thorny issues – all these make you an asset to Lamont and we are very lucky to have you. It is comforting to think that many of you will go on to becoming tomorrow's leaders and role models.

I have outlined below various activities this office has been involved in over the years – there is still work to do, but we can take comfort in knowing that we have shifted many of our baselines towards greater inclusivity. I hope you all feel a sense of pride in all that we are doing to build a more supportive and inclusive community together.

With gratitude to all,

Kuheli

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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, many 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.

### **LGBTQ+ Inclusivity: Lamont Pride Social**

The Lamont Pride Social was held in June 2019, where we celebrated our LGBTQ+ friends and colleagues, and honored the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. Graduate student *Julian Spergel* and Research staff assistant *Hannah Sweets* co-hosted this event, which was attended by several members of the Lamont community. This is expected to become an annual event.

### **Racial Bias Awareness**

Following a racist email attack on our students in May 2019, a town hall forum was held at Lamont, attended by around 150 people. It included representatives from the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences (GSAS); Office of University Life; and EOAA. A series of Racial Bias Awareness sessions were held, and were attended by more than 200 people. These sessions aimed at providing a deeper and nuanced understanding of race and its relevance in predominantly White fields like geoscience.

### **Race Talk Coffee Hour**

Led by graduate students *Lorelei Curtin*, *Carly Peltier*, and *Kailani Acosta*, this initiative is a book discussion group aimed at discussing racial bias and racism. Named after the first book discussed, *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence* by Derald Wing Sue, this book discussion group aims to promote conversations and dialogues on race. This book group is open to the entire Lamont community.

### **Womxn's Networking Event**

Lamont was a sponsor of the Womxn's Networking Event held at the IUGG Conference in Montreal in July 2019. The term *womxn* includes transgender and non binary women, and the goal of the event was to create a welcoming and inclusive space for all women, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, and to discuss possible next steps to support and build community among *womxn* geoscientists.

### **Gender & Diversity Coffee Hour**

Led by graduate student *Maayan Yehudai*, this is a monthly gathering to discuss gender and diversity issues in STEM. As *Maayan* gets ready to graduate, fellow graduate student *Lucy Tweed* will take charge of this initiative. Discussions include gender diversity and inclusion, imposter syndrome, work-life balance, sexual harassment, dual career couples, and definitions of masculinity. The Fall 2019 series included a session on mental health issues, led by postdoc *Jennifer Middleton* and graduate student *Bridgit Boulahanis*. A session on transgender inclusion is expected later this fall.

### **Navajo Nation Outreach**

Facilitated by graduate student *Clara Chang*, this is an effort to include interns from Navajo Nation in Lamont's summer intern programs. Discussions are still ongoing, and the hope is that every year there will be 1-2 students from Navajo Nation as summer interns at Lamont.



### Cayuga Center Visit

Organized by IRI postdoc *Diego Pons*, this event was held in May 2019 where several Central American children from the Cayuga Center in New York visited Lamont for the day. The goal of the event was to chat with these children about science, especially weather and climate. Several members of the Lamont community participated in various short talks and guided tours of labs. We expect this to become an annual event.

### Guide to Inclusive Meetings and Conferences

Following a 2018 workshop hosted by the Aspen Global Change Institute (AGCI) held at the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) about diverse, inclusive, and equitable scientific meetings, this office participated in the creation of a resource for the larger scientific community, titled “*Inclusive Scientific Meetings: Where to Start.*” This effort was led by 500 Women Scientists and the Earth Science Women’s Network.

### Implicit Bias Awareness and Training

This office has conducted implicit bias trainings for broad audiences. Within Columbia these include: Lamont; Earth Institute; Center for Global Energy Policy; Bridge to PhD Program; Climate & Society Program; GSAS New Faculty Orientation; and Columbia University Medical Center (CUMC). Externally these include: NSF-ADVANCE National Conference; American Geophysical Union (AGU); American Meteorological Society (AMS); National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)/ Aspen Global Change Institute (AGCI); Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC); International Society for Optics and Photonics (SPIE); American Society of Association Executives (ASAE); and University of Southern Denmark.

### Women in Leadership: Columbia Global Center, Rio

This office conducted a half-day leadership workshop session on *Women in Leadership: Fighting Gender Bias* for the Women’s Leadership Program of the Columbia Global Center, Rio de Janeiro. This session was part of a week-long intensive workshop module held in New York in July 2019. Attendees were Brazilian women in high-level leadership roles, and included a judge, a federal attorney, a national superintendent of a government bank, the former Minister of Planning, and other high-ranking state and federal public officials in Brazil.

### Keynote: Yale Women in Geoscience Symposium

This office provided the invited keynote address at the Women in Geoscience Symposium at Yale University in April 2019. Titled “*Diversity, Inclusion, and Identity in the Geosciences: Where Do We Go From Here?*” this presentation focused on the need for institutional responsibility to promote diversity and inclusion in STEM academia. Attendees were from Yale Geology & Geophysics; Yale Astronomy; and Yale Physics.

### Broader Representation on Executive Committee

Lamont’s Executive Committee (ExCom) is the primary and largest policy making body at Lamont. While there is broad representation across divisions, students and postdocs have traditionally been excluded. As of Fall 2019 ExCom membership has been expanded to include student representatives (*Carly Peltier, Una Miller*) and postdoc representatives (*Renata Constantino, Naomi Saunders*). While these representatives will not participate in confidential discussions pertaining to internal promotions, they are expected to participate in the broader conversations at ExCom.



### Excellence in Mentoring Award

In order to promote inclusivity, this award, which was originally limited to LDEO/DEES, was opened up to all units on the Lamont Campus. Also, letters of support can now be submitted by anyone from the Columbia community (not limited to just Lamont). The scope has been further widened to acknowledge different types of mentoring. As of 2019, we now have two awards, one for scientific mentoring, and the other for technical/administrative mentoring, in order to honor and acknowledge two very different but crucial types of mentoring that happen at Lamont.

### Earth Institute Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Following the appointment of Director *Alex Halliday*, this office has been closely involved in working with the Earth Institute (EI) leadership to develop diversity and inclusion efforts at an EI-wide level. Currently, efforts are under way to conduct an EI-wide diversity and inclusion climate assessment survey, elements of which have been modeled after Lamont's own Campus Life and Work Environment Survey of 2015-16.

### Resource: Avoiding Implicit Bias in Recommendation Letters

A condensed and easy-to-read guide, *Avoid Implicit Gender Bias in Recommendation Letters*, was created in July 2019 as a quick reference on how to avoid implicit gender bias when writing letters of recommendation. This was circulated among various professional networks in the geosciences, such as the Earth Science Women's Network, and 500 Women Scientists. It has also been listed on the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Ethics & Equity website, under Leadership Practices for Diversity and Inclusion.

### Postdoctoral Symposium

This initiative, a biannual symposium, is aimed at promoting the visibility of our postdoctoral scientists and fellows, highlighting their valuable research. Earlier limited to just LDEO postdocs, as of 2019 this event has been opened up to postdocs from IRI and the Earth Institute. This all-day event allows members of the Lamont community to learn about the work of our postdocs, and gives our postdocs a chance to present their work (in the form of talks and posters) to the larger Lamont community.

### LGBTQ+ Inclusivity: "You are Welcome Here"

This 2015 initiative aims to raise awareness on LGBTQ+ issues and create a safe and inclusive space. Following a blog by former graduate student *Kyle Frischkorn* published in *Scientific American*, rainbow stickers with the phrase "You are welcome here" have been made available to the entire Lamont community to post in their spaces around campus, promoting a message of LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

### 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, started in 2018. Sessions have included: having difficult conversations in the workplace; gender bias in the geosciences; engaging men in gender equality; bystander intervention training; implicit bias training; LGBTQ+ awareness; racial and ethnic diversity in STEM; harassment in the field; and transforming workplace culture in the geosciences.



### Search Procedures

Search procedures for professional officers of research were modified in 2009 to promote more diverse and inclusive searches. These included: advertising in targeted venues including minority venues; guidelines on avoiding implicit bias in recommendation letters; providing information to search committees on best practices and the role of implicit bias in evaluating applicants; providing information on the demographics of the applicant pool, and comparing it to the national available pool using NSF and NORC data.

### Campus Restrooms Signage

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

### Lamont Senior Staff

Originally limited to tenured DEES faculty and senior members of the Lamont Research Professor (LRP)/Doherty track, starting in 2012 the Lamont Senior Staff began to include senior members of the Research Scientist (RS) track, the rationale being that members of the RS track conduct valuable scientific research that contributes to Lamont's scientific output. Newer bylaws were also created in 2012, which clearly defined the overarching framework within which Lamont operates with respect to professional officers of research.

### LDEO Salary Study

Following the 2009 salary study conducted by the Office of the Provost, this office conducted a salary study on our professional officers of research (Doherty scientists, Research scientists, postdocs). The study compared salaries at different ranks and titles with respect to gender and race. The results of the study were disseminated to the Lamont community.

### Postdoctoral Paid Maternity 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 often bearing a disproportionately higher burden of familial responsibilities. Lamont's Postdoctoral Parental Leave Policy, created in 2013, commits to covering the salary of female postdocs (including externally funded postdocs) during maternity leave if their regular funding source does not allow for paid leave.

### Women in Science at Open House

Aimed at promoting visibility of Lamont's women scientists, at the 2018 Open House this event highlighted the work and accomplishments of our women scientists, and included women across various ranks and titles. Individual components of this event included screening a slideshow to visitors at Open House, as well as a panel discussion on women in science. The slideshow has been used to promote Lamont's female scientists, and an updated version will be displayed in the 2019 Open House.



### Campus Life & Work Environment Survey

This survey, organized jointly with the Campus Life Committee in 2015-2016, 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, the survey included questions on diversity and inclusion, and was open to all members of the Lamont community. The aggregated survey results were disseminated to the Lamont community.

### Lamont Code of Conduct

The 2019 Lamont Code of Conduct outlines community standards and expectations for the Lamont community and its visitors. In addition to outlining behavioral expectations it offers guidelines for fieldwork and research cruises, advisor-advisee relationships, Columbia procedures for reporting and investigating complaints, and a glossary of terms relating to workplace misconduct.

### Media Coverage

Research activities of this office have received media coverage, including venues such as: Nature, Science, NPR Science Friday, New York Times, Scientific American, Eos (AGU), Huffington Post, El Español, Smithsonian, Inside Higher Ed, Time, Ars Technica, Physics World, and others.

### Lamont Diversity Plan

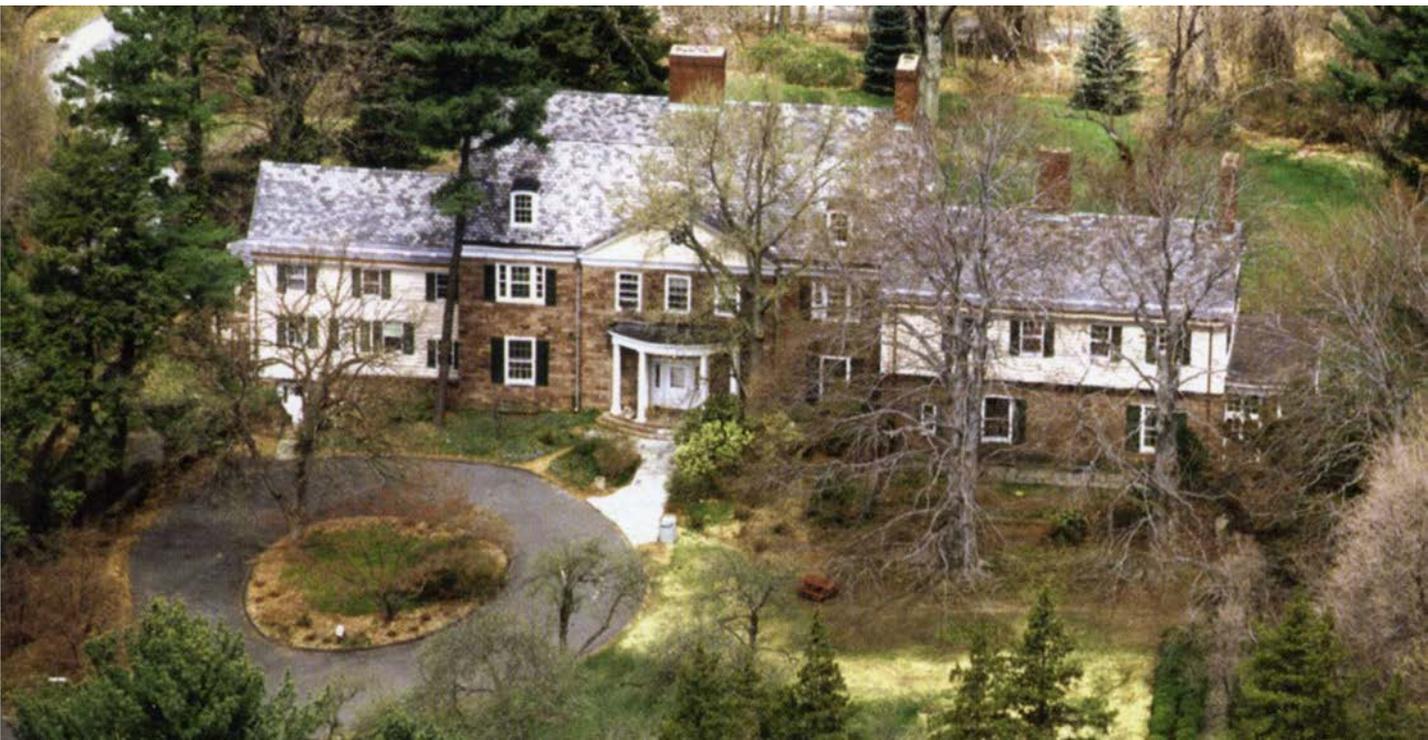
Following a report by this office on diversity initiatives over the period 2008-2011, a task force was set up to create a strategic plan on diversity for Lamont for the period 2011-2014. The plan identified topics and activities pertaining to greater institutional awareness and proactive efforts for diversity and inclusion, and covered several topics, including search and recruitment procedures, institutional research, and others. Currently, there are plans to create a LDEO-DEES Diversity Plan for the period 2020-2023.

### Diversity Seminar

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

### Health Benefit: Assisted Reproductive Techniques

In 2011, based on information provided by a Lamont postdoc on the limitations of the then CU policy on assisted reproductive techniques (e.g., 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.



### Workshops and Discussions

Over the years we have held approximately 60 events (workshops, symposia, information sessions, lunches) for postdoctoral and junior scientists. Topics have included: how to write a grant proposal; effective mentoring; how to write a diversity statement; preparing a CV; 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, and serves on 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.

### Scholarship on Implicit Bias

A 2016 study on gender differences in recommendation letters examined 1,200+ letters (submitted for the Lamont postdoctoral fellowship applications) to shed light on the language used in recommendation letters for male versus female applicants. This study was published in *Nature Geoscience*. Another study using data from CUMC was published in 2019 in *The Lancet*. An opinion piece on diversity and inclusion in STEM was published in 2018 in *Scientific American*.

### GSA Position Statement

This office participated in the creation of a position statement issued by the Geological Society of America (GSA) on *Removing Barriers to Career Progression for Women in the Geosciences*. This position statement was officially approved and adopted by the GSA leadership in 2018 following the annual GSA conference.

### Marie Tharp Fellowship

Named after pioneering Lamont scientist Marie Tharp, this fellowship was created during the ADVANCE program and was offered during 2005-2013, initially by ADVANCE and subsequently by Lamont. This fellowship provided awards to external female scientists to visit Lamont and work with Lamont scientists for a duration of a few months. In addition to scientific learning, this encouraged networking among female scientists.

### AGU: Women in the Geosciences

The book *Women in the Geosciences* was published by the American Geophysical Union (AGU) in 2015 and includes information on geoscience demographics as well as guidelines and suggestions for institutional and individual strategies for change. It also includes an account of Lamont's institutional experience with respect to diversity and inclusion following the ADVANCE program.



**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. First held in 2015, the goal of these meetings 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.

**Women in Science Networking Lunch**

At this 2010 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 AGU magazine.

**Brochure: Explore A Career in the Geosciences**

This brochure, originally created in 2015, provides basic information on the geosciences and Lamont, and is aimed at first generation students interested in exploring a career in the geosciences. Disseminated regularly at diversity conferences such as Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), and also given to SSFRP summer interns and Open House visitors, this brochure describes different fields of study within the geosciences in non-technical language, and offers career information.

**U.S. State Department Visit**

Following the institutionalizing of the ADVANCE program, Lamont was one of the campuses selected for a site visit in 2011 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.

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

