

2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Argonne National Laboratory

Initiating the National Laboratory Women of Color Community Forum

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Organizational Change: Leveraging the strengths of distinct stakeholder groups and creating partnerships between them

Description of Work

Motivation:

In 2022, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine published *Transforming Trajectories of Women of Color in Tech* [1], summarized below:

Despite years of efforts to increase the diversity of the tech workforce, women of color have remained underrepresented, and the numbers of some groups of women of color have even declined. Even in cases where some groups of women of color may have higher levels of representation, data show that they still face significant systemic challenges in advancing to positions of leadership. This report uses current research as well as information obtained through four public information-gathering workshops to provide recommendations to a broad set of stakeholders within the tech ecosystem for increasing recruitment, retention, and advancement of women of color.

As a follow-up to the release of this report, Argonne National Laboratory organized a virtual event open to staff from all national laboratories and DOE to discuss the report. The event included a summary of the report by the report committee co-chairs and a panel discussion. One of the recommendations resulting from the panel discussion was the need for a system-wide community to build community among women of color in STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). The National Laboratory Directors' Council (NLDC) endorsed the chartering of the development of a National Laboratory Women of Color Community Forum

Program Development:

The [National Laboratory Women of Color Community Forum \(NLWOC\)](#) was chartered by NLDC to:

- Cultivate a system-wide community to foster networking, support, and informal mentoring for women of color at the national laboratories;
- Increase integration with DEI efforts at the national laboratories;
- Provide a venue for information exchange;
- Serve as a resource for the NLDC and its working groups.

The kick-off meeting for NLWOC was held October 26, 2022 and featured Paul Kearns, Director of Argonne National Laboratory and Asmeret Berhe, Director of the Office of Science for the Department of Energy (DOE). In addition to 20 people at Argonne, including Dr. Berhe, the meeting was attended by

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375 virtual participants. From the polling, approximately 60% of the participants identified as women of color, while the remaining 40% identified as allies. Further, 37% identified as early-career, 30% as mid-career, 24% as senior career, and 8% as senior management (defined as division director or higher).

During this first meeting, one of the main recommendations to disaggregate demographic data from an intersectional lens was discussed. Currently, all national laboratories make public demographic data from an intersectional lens.

The second virtual meeting was held January 26, 2023 and featured Kim Budil, Director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Chair of NLDC, and Shalanda Baker, Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity at the Department of Energy. The meeting was attended by 250 women of color and allies. The meeting also included breakout sessions to get some valuable feedback from participants for the forum.

The virtual meetings are now held quarterly, with a focus on providing opportunities to share narratives to build stronger communities. Another suggestion was to hold in-person meetups at major conferences or among national labs in geographical regions. Such events provide an opportunity to launch informal mentoring among early-career and senior-level staff.

The NLWOC forum aligns well with strategies for preventing sexual and gender harassment by promoting a more inclusive environment that extends system-wide.

Website for further information (if applicable): <https://blogs.anl.gov/nlwoc/>

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References:

[1] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2022. Transforming Trajectories of Women of Color in Tech. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26345>