

A FUTURE FOR US

2023

STEM *Noire* CONFERENCE

POWERED BY GINKGO BIOWORKS



JUNE 22-25, 2023 • SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

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“

MAE JEMISON:

**NEVER BE LIMITED
BY OTHER
PEOPLE'S LIMITED
IMAGINATIONS.**

”

STEM *Noire* PLANNING COUNCIL



Kilan C. Ashad-Bishop, Ph.D

Postdoctoral Fellow
University of Miami Miller
School of Medicine



Jeressa M. Alexander

PhD Student
The University of the West Indies



Kelly Knight

Associate Professor
George Mason University



Korie Grayson, PhD

Science & Technology Policy Fellow
American Association for the
Advancement of Science



Elissia Franklin, PhD

Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Silent Spring Institute &
Northeastern University



Daphney Cherry, PhD

Innovation Ecosystem Lead
Northrop Grumman



Malika Grayson, PhD

Program Manager
Northrop Grumman



Shenell Tolson, PhD

Biologist
United States
Environmental Protection Agency



Olivia Geneus, PhD

Associate Director
Medical Affairs-Neuroscience
Eli Lilly & Co.



Racheida S. Lewis, PhD

Assistant Professor
University of Georgia
College of Engineering

STEM *Noire* 2022-2023 AMBASSADORS



Tiara V. Hinton

PhD Candidate
Pharmaceutical Sciences



Jauryn Dargan

Incoming Medical Student



Kristeena (Teena) Wright, Ph.D.

Sr Process Engineer



Kiddist Yihunie

Incoming PhD Student



Sade Luwone

Sr Specialist Systems Engineer



India Sandles

Forensic DNA Analyst



Eposi Elonge

PhD Student
Pharmaceutical Health
Services Research



Kacla Makins

PhD Student
Biology and Biological Sciences



Sedania Julmis

Chemist & STEM Educator



Ambericent Cornett

Program Manager/First Sergeant
PhD and DrPH Candidate

WELCOME TO STEM *Noire* *A Future For Us.*

Dear Esteemed Guests,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we extend a warm welcome to all of you attending the STEMNoire 2023 Research and Wellness Conference. This highly anticipated event is a gathering of brilliant Black women from around the globe, united by a common passion for inclusive research, innovation, and technology.

Under the theme "A Future For Us," we are privileged to host an extraordinary array of distinguished speakers, experts, researchers, and entrepreneurs who will share their personal journeys, groundbreaking ideas, and transformative discoveries.

Kilan & Teressa



THURSDAY, JUNE 22 | 6:00PM - 9:00PM | LAS OLAS

4:00 PM - 8:00 PM:

Registration Open

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM:

All-White Welcome Reception
Sponsored by George Mason

8:00 PM - 9:30 PM:

Bonfire

***this
place
is for
us***

FRIDAY, JUNE 23 | 7:30AM - 7:00PM | LAS OLAS

7:30AM - 7:00 PM

Registration Open

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Networking Breakfast

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM

Welcome

8:30 AM - 9:15 AM

Opening Plenary Session: **From The Hood, To The Hood: My STEM Journey**

Speaker: Dr. Malika Jeffries-El; Associate Dean of the Graduate School in Arts and Sciences; Professor of Chemistry and Materials Science, Boston University

9:15 AM - 10:00 AM

Ginkgo Bioworks Presents: Making Biology Easier to Engineer

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM

AM BREAK AVAILABLE

10:15 AM - 12:15 PM

Oral Research Presentations

Session A: Immortal Life: Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Session B: Hidden Figures: Data and Computer Sciences; Engineering and Technology

Session C: Pathways: STEM Education, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

LUNCH BREAK

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Poster Session

Immortal Life: Biological and Biomedical Sciences

Hidden Figures: Data and Computer Science; Engineering and Technology

All Around Us: Earth and Environmental Sciences; Population and Epidemiology Studies; Social Sciences

Pathways: STEM Education, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATIONS

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

The **National Cancer Institute** Presents: Beyond the Research, Moving Toward a Diverse STEM Workforce

Speakers: Dr. Dominiqua Griffin; AAAS S&T Policy Fellow | Dr. Chanelle Case Borden; Associate Director of Training Programs | Dr. Jennifer McGee-Avila; Cancer Prevention Postdoctoral Fellow

3:00 PM - 3:45 PM

Resume Bootcamp: Crafting Compelling Content to Convey Your Charisma and Competence

Speaker: Dr. Shanique Edwards; Assistant Director of Research Operations · Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

3:45 PM - 4:30 PM

How to Build and Maintain a Personal Advisory Board

Speaker: Felicia Smith; Founder and Certified Leadership Coach, S.O.A.R Coaching

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM

PM BREAK AVAILABLE

5:00 PM - 5:45 PM

STEM Stories: Transforming Your Research Into Narratives That Resonate

Speaker: Dr. Angela Patterson; Media Psychologist, Fielding Graduate University

5:45 PM - 6:45 PM

Building Your Village: Developing & Leveraging a Professional Support System Throughout Your STEM Career

Speakers: Dr. Margaret-Avis Akofio-Sowah; US Vice President, Project Management, WSP Global | Dr. Janille Smith-Colin; J. Embrey Lindsay Trustee Assistant Professor, Southern Methodist University | Dr. Stephanie Amoaning-Yankson; Business Transformation Consultant, AECOM

6:45 PM - 7:00 PM

Closing Session

END OF OFFICIAL DAY 1 ACTIVITIES



**Success is liking yourself,
liking what you do,
and liking how you do it.**

-Maya Angelou

SATURDAY, JUNE 24 | 7:30AM - 6:30PM | LAS OLAS

7:30 AM - 6:30 PM

Registration Open

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Breakfast

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Flash Talks & Panel

Speakers: Joy Chambers; Senior Global Technology Mgr & Agile Coach, Citrix Systems Inc | Leneka Rhoden; Director of Energy System and Conservation, Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology

Moderator: Dr. Malika Grayson; Founder, STEMInist Empowered

9:00 AM - 9:45 AM

Opening Plenary Session: **It's More Than Just Hair**

Speaker: Dr. Astrid Williams; Environmental Justice Manager, Black Women for Wellness

9:45 AM - 10:15 AM

AM BREAK

10:15 AM - 12:00 PM

Oral Research Presentations

Session A: All Around Us: Earth and Environmental Sciences; Population and Epidemiology Studies; Social Sciences

Session B: Pathways: STEM Education, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

LUNCH

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
TROPICAL A

MentorLite: STEM Won't Break My Soul
Speakers: Dr. Taylor Lightner; Research Coordinator/Doctoral Student, QEM Network/Virginia Tech | Dr. Brianna McIntyre; Engineering Education Postdoctoral Research Associate, Virginia Tech

CAREER EXPLORATION SEMINARS

1:30 PM - 2:15 PM

Empowering Innovation: Entrepreneurship in Life Sciences

Speakers: Dr. Geraldine Ezeka; Associate / EVP of Culture, Flagship Pioneering / Nucleate | Desnor Chigumba; Co-managing Director, Nucleate

CAREER EXPLORATION SEMINARS

2:15 PM - 3:00 PM

Dietary Risk Assessment for Antimicrobial Compounds

Speaker: Dr. Shenell Tolson

3:00 PM - 3:45 PM

Leveraging My Public Health and Clinical Research Expertise in Data Analytics

Speaker: Ludmilla Paul, MPH; Director of Client Solutions Data Strategy, Meritain Health, an Aetna and CVS Health Company

3:45 PM - 4:15 PM

PM BREAK

4:15 PM - 5:00 PM

Engineering Real Value

Speaker: Cristi Haygood, DEng; CEO, Alyse Engineering Innovations, LLC

5:00 PM - 5:45 PM

Secure the Bag Sis: Research Grant Writing from a Soulful and Scientific Approach

Speaker: Dr. Rhoda Moise; Assistant Professor, University of Miami

5:45 PM - 6:00 PM

Research Award Ceremony

6:00 PM - 6:10 PM

GROUP PHOTO

6:10 PM - 6:30 PM

Closing Session

END OF OFFICIAL DAY 2 ACTIVITIES

The background of the image is a light purple color. It is decorated with several thick, wavy lines made of multiple parallel purple strokes. These lines are arranged in a pattern that resembles a stylized 'S' or a series of connected curves, creating a sense of movement and flow. The lines are positioned in the top-left, middle, and bottom-right areas of the frame.

TOGETHER WE CAN SHIFT OUR NARRATIVE

SUNDAY, JUNE 25 | 7:30AM - 12:30PM | LAS OLAS

7:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Information Table Open

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM
HAMMOCK GARDEN

Oceanfront Yoga

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Breakfast

9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

Open Floor: Closing Reflections

Keynote Speakers



Dr. Astrid Williams currently serves as a Manager for the Black Women for Wellness Environmental Justice Program. As an expert in public health, Dr. Williams has a wide range of experience in chronic disease, maternal and reproductive health. She is particularly passionate about women's health issues and how they relate to women. A significant portion of her work involves developing public policies that address community-level health and social issues using evidence-based practices. Dr. Williams advocates for beauty justice and works to phase out toxic chemicals in Black haircare and beauty products.

2023 STEM *Noire* CONFERENCE



Malika Jeffries-EL is the Associate Dean of the Graduate School in Arts and Sciences and Professor of Chemistry and Materials Science at Boston University. Dr. Jeffries-EL's research focuses on the development of organic semiconductors—materials that combine the processing properties of polymers with the electronic properties of semiconductors. She is a Fellow of the American Chemical Society (ACS), fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and has won numerous awards including the ACS Stanley C. Israel Regional Award for Advancing Diversity in the Chemical Sciences.

Workshop and Panel Speakers



Dr. Angela Patterson is a writer and communicator with more than 15 years of experience in journalism, marketing, public relations and corporate communications. A former newspaper reporter, Angela transitioned into corporate communications, working at Fortune 500 companies in the automotive space before moving into the nonprofit world. Currently, she serves as the head writer and editor at Springtide Research Institute, a sociological organization that studies the religious and spiritual lives of people under 25.



Desnor Chigumba is a major voice in science communication (SciComm) with a particular focus on drug discovery, public health, chemical biology, and women in STEM. Alongside her research work as a PhRMA Foundation Predoctoral Fellow in Drug Discovery and Ph.D. Candidate in Chemical Biology at University of Michigan, she also serves as the Co-managing Director of the Ann Arbor chapter of Nucleate.



Chanelle Case Borden, PhD is the Assistant Director of Training Programs at the National Cancer Institute, where she supports postbacs and graduate students and leads science outreach and student recruitment. Dr. Case Borden received her Ph.D. in Molecular Medicine from George Washington University in partnership with the NIH in 2012. She continued her training in the NCI as a postdoc in the Experimental Immunology Branch. Her passion for science education and outreach led her to join the Center for Cancer Training as an administrative postdoc in 2016, where she became a Scientific Program Specialist in 2018.

Workshop and Panel Speakers



Dr. Cristi A. Haygood is the CEO of Alyse Engineering Innovations, LLC, the premiere organization that amplifies Engineering Management and Value Engineering skills that elevate Technical Professionals to become dynamic leaders who innovate real value in their companies. Dr. Cristi is a graduate of Tuskegee University with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, University of Phoenix with a MBA, and George Washington University with both a Master of Science in Engineering Management and a Doctor of Engineering (D.Eng.) degree.



Dr. Dominiqua M. Griffin works at the National Institutes of Health-National Cancer Institute in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics as an AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow. In 2017, she founded BlackWomenPhDs®, a small business that highlights the achievements of Black Women scholars and provides resources for current and future doctors. She understands the importance of representation in career choice and works to create opportunities for historically excluded and underserved groups.



Felicia Smith is a Certified Leadership and Life Coach who works with high-achieving women of color to develop critical skills to become an executive. Felicia has worked for the Department of Defense for 13+ years and has held numerous positions such as Senior Manpower Advisor, Staff Director, Senior Risk Manager and Deputy Chief. Felicia is a certified leadership coach, staff director, and risk manager. She is a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), Project Management Institute (PMI), and the American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC).

Workshop and Panel Speakers



Geraldine Ezeka, PhD (she/her) is an Associate at Flagship Pioneering. Flagship Pioneering is a life sciences venture creation firm in Cambridge, MA that originates biotechnology startups in human health and sustainability. She is passionate about entrepreneurship/venture creation and uplifting women of color in the biotech/biopharma ecosystem. Raised in Baltimore and based in Boston, she is a co-founder of Fuel the Kids, a community organization that serves youth in underserved communities in Baltimore and is the founding Executive Vice President of Culture for biotech centered nonprofit, Nucleate.



Dr. Janille Smith-Colin Colinis is a J. Lindsay Embrey Trustee, Assistant Professor at Southern Methodist University. She has expertise in infrastructure systems and the built environment, transportation planning and analysis, and transportation performance measurement. Prior to her doctoral studies, Dr. Smith-Colin worked for a state DOT in Intermodal Systems Planning. She therefore has extensive knowledge of the short-range and long-range transportation planning process, the nuances of regional coordination, multi-modal project planning.



Jennifer McGee-Avila, PhD, MPH, CHES, CPH joined DCEG as a postdoctoral fellow in the Infections and Immunoepidemiology Branch in 2021. In addition, she holds a secondary appointment with the Health Systems and Interventions Research Branch in DCCPS. She earned her Ph.D. in Urban Systems from an interdisciplinary program between Rutgers School of Nursing and the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark. She is a 2023 participant of the Health Equity Fellowship for Trainees (HEFT) aimed at cultivating future health equity researcher leaders.

Workshop and Panel Speakers



Ludmilla Paul is an accomplished public health and healthcare management professional. For her undergraduate tenure, Ms. Paul attended Emory University in Atlanta, GA. She earned a bachelor's degree in economics, focusing on health economics and economic development. Ludmilla then completed a fellowship at the State of Georgia Governor's Office. In this role, she was part of a team that assessed the feasibility of health insurance exchanges in the Affordable Care Act. She went on to earn a Master of Public Health from Nova Southeastern University.



Dr. Margaret-Avis Akofio-Sowah is a results-oriented problem solver and a strategic consulting professional with a passion for educating, encouraging, and empowering young women to pursue and thrive in STEM. She is a Global Organizational Change Management Lead for WSP, a civil engineering firm, supporting business transformation initiatives that impact the company's project management and sales communities. As a STEM advocate, Dr. Akofio-Sowah has mentored a broad range of young people, from high schoolers to early career professionals, helping them navigate college and career decisions and providing guidance to support their success in STEM.



Rhoda Moise, Ph.D., CYT (Dr. Rho, she/her/li/ella/elle) is an internationally trained integrative molecular epidemiologist, multimedia artist, and creative educational facilitator with Haitian roots. She earned her Ph.D. in Prevention Science and Community Health from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Additionally, she also completed a 200-hour certification to teach Ancient Egyptian yoga. Dr. Rho's goal is to eliminate inequitable distribution of disease with innovative strategies to catalyze transformation of health systems with stakeholders including patients, providers, and payers.

Workshop and Panel Speakers



Shanique Edwards, Ph.D., is a Bajan scientist and Ithaca College alumna who earned her Ph.D. in Cell & Developmental Biology from Rutgers University - New Brunswick for her work studying TRAF3 deficiencies in B cell malignancies. Her unconventional career path has been defined by wearing many hats to see what suits her, and has developed her skillset in project management, lab management, career development, and scientific communication, as well as her technical skill at the bench. Shanique is currently the Assistant Director of Research Operations at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, and she is passionate about seeing people be the best version of themselves, especially in their professional lives.



Shenell Tolson, DrPH, is a Cell and Molecular Biologist with experience in the research and development of studies in Health Promotion and Prevention Medicine; specifically pertaining to human health and toxicology. With over 15 years of laboratory and risk assessment experience, she is now looking to bring her science background to the global health field. During her doctoral studies, she focused on disease surveillance, capacity building, and the infrastructure development of developing countries impacted by natural disasters.



Dr. Stephanie Amoaning-Yankson has research and practice experience in providing management solutions to the transportation industry. She has worked on industry and research projects spanning transportation resiliency, asset management, transit governance and funding, and strategic planning. Her continued interest is in using transportation asset management as a means of increasing the resilience capacity of transportation systems and incorporating resilience thinking in all aspects of the transportation planning process – from visioning to project implementation.

Mentor Life Speakers



Dr. Brianna Benedict McIntyre earned a Bachelor's and Master's of Science in Industrial and Systems Engineering from North Carolina A&T State University and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Engineering Education from Purdue University. She is committed to promoting inclusive excellence and serving others in her academic and local community.

“STEM Won't Break My Soul”: Leveraging Improv to Mitigate the Internal Calculus Triggered by Negative Messages



Dr. Taylor Lightner earned her Ph.D. in Engineering Education at Virginia Tech, conducting dissertation research focusing on Black engineers' pathways to careers that rectify societal inequities. In addition to her research work, she served as a graduate teaching assistant for Disaster Resilience and Risk Management. Her background in Industrial Systems Engineering drives her passion for system dynamics surrounding broadening participation in engineering work beyond academia.

“STEM Won't Break My Soul”: Leveraging Improv to Mitigate the Internal Calculus Triggered by Negative Messages



Leneka Rhoden is a Natural Scientist and Project Management Professional with over 5 years of experience in the fields of Science, Technology, Innovation, and Education/Training. She is currently the Coordinator of the Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network at the Commonwealth Secretariat where she is responsible for overseeing the management of the Network including supporting the 54 national chapters in developing and executing their initiatives.

Career Planning for STEM Researchers and Professionals

Mentor Lite Speakers



Joy Chambers is an IT Professional with over 20 years experience in the Tech Industry. Her current role is a Senior IT Management Consultant for a Fortune 500 company in South Florida. Joy has spent several years in the IT consulting field completing major SaaS & ERP Implementations for Oracle, Citrix, Workday, Aetna, Motorola and other organizations. Her experience spans the realm of Release Engineering, Software Quality, Product and IT Program Mgmt. Joy believes in giving back and has been listed as one of the "Top 100 IT Women" in South Florida.

Leading In The Tech World

Dr. Malika Grayson

International Speaker, Best-Selling Author, Founder of STEMinist Empowered



ABOUT STEMINIST EMPOWERED

Dr. Malika Grayson is the founder of **STEMinist Empowered LLC**. STEMinist Empowered was born from Dr. Grayson's own experiences in academia and industry as a Black woman in STEM. Seeing a lack of representation in the spaces she entered, she was motivated to create a space to empower, support and encourage women of color who pursue graduate degrees. Her goal is to increase the pipeline of women of color, especially Black women graduating with advanced degrees by providing mentorship, community, and resources.



Get to Know Ginkgo Bioworks



Mariah Oliveira-Fossella is an Afro-Brazilian who comes from a diverse professional and academic background, with degrees in biology, chemistry, and materials engineering she has experience in a handful of different and exciting scientific fields. Mariah has worked in the fields of synthetic biology, chemical engineering, R&D analytical chemistry, cannabis science, and quality assurance to help guide decisions based on carefully planned experiments and data. Raised mainly in Boston, Massachusetts, Mariah has moved to Mississippi, California, and the country of Georgia for her work in STEM. Mariah currently leads the Liquid Chromatography Mass Spectrometry scaled delivery team at Ginkgo Bioworks as a Senior Manager in Omics and Analytical Chemistry.



Shelley Gatlin is a Boston native with roots grounded in the south. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Shelley is a seasoned Sr. Executive Assistant with over 15 years' experience supporting C-Suite executives within the biotech and tech industries. Presently, she supports the SVP, Commercial Engineering at Ginkgo Bioworks. In addition to her duties as an executive assistant, Shelley has a heart for diversity and serves in many organizations within her community.



Cornishia Lavelle Cherrie is a native Bostonian who was very interested in the life sciences from an early age. I began my career in the pharmaceutical central state of New Jersey, working for Schering-Plough, Merck, BMS, and Sanofi. I am especially proud of my alma mater Tuskegee University, Alabama, graduating with a BS and MS in Biology. My current role at Ginkgo Bioworks has afforded me the opportunity to lead change and make an impact in this industry. Professionally my goal has always been to add value and purpose to production science.

What will you grow with Ginkgo?



Read *Grow* by Ginkgo, our magazine that tells the unfolding story of synthetic biology.

