

Transforming Academia: Advancing Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in the Geosciences

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Efforts to diversify geosciences faculty over the recent past have led to modest advances; however, transformational change has been elusive. This talk will discuss an innovative new approach that advances a framework for equity grounded in an intersectional understanding of both identity and social structures.

The centerpiece and innovation is an immersive ADVANCE faculty development seminar, which involves a 60-hour immersion experience for administrators and influential faculty, provides a lens through which institutional practices can be evaluated, and catalyzes participants to alter policies and practices that form barriers to the inclusion of women and others from under-represented groups. Ambitious Action Plans emerge from a comprehensive understanding of the challenges to recruitment, retention and success of faculty, and the development of cohorts helps efforts to scale up and out. The seminar is embedded within a program to support implementation, monitoring and integration of Action Plans.

The approach has been effective at shifting personally held ideologies and also at promoting behavioral change as well as institutional/structural transformation. Outcomes of the ADVANCE seminar include significant institutional changes around hiring practices and reward structures. However, broader barriers exist that cannot be removed one institution at a time. These will challenge us to examine our profession as a whole and imagine a transformed future that is welcoming and affirming to individuals from all marginalized groups and offers everyone an equitable and socially just academic environment.