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### **ACCESS+ Holds First Annual Convening**

*STEM professional societies explore ways to deepen diversity and inclusion work*

**WASHINGTON, DC, September 14, 2021** – The Amplifying the Alliance to Catalyze Change for Equity in STEM Success (ACCESS+) Initiative held its first annual Convening on September 9-10, 2021.

The goal of the ACCESS+ Initiative, funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE Partnership grant, is to accelerate the awareness, adoption, and adaptation of NSF ADVANCE evidence-based and gender-related diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies, practices, and programs within and across STEM professional societies.

During the Convening, the first ACCESS+ cohort of STEM professional societies explored areas of strength and areas for development, prepared action plans to guide their DEI change work, and established a Community of Practice that supports implementation of action plans through sharing evidence-based policies, practices, and programs, and engaging in professional development to enact effective change.

The members of the inaugural ACCESS+ cohort are:

- The [American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology](#) (ASBMB), which advances the science of biochemistry and molecular biology and promotes the understanding of the molecular nature of life processes
- The [American Society for Cell Biology](#) (ASCB), which is an inclusive, international community of biologists studying the cell, the fundamental unit of life
- The [American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics](#) (ASPET), which supports members who conduct basic and clinical pharmacological research and work for academia, government, large pharmaceutical companies, small biotech companies, and non-profit organizations
- The [Biophysical Society](#) (BPS), which leads the development and dissemination of knowledge in biophysics
- The [Endocrine Society](#) (ES), which unites, leads, and grows the endocrine community to accelerate scientific breakthroughs and improve health worldwide

Action planning took the form of a Force Field Analysis, a framework for analyzing pressures for and against change. Specifically, professional society cohort members identified both the current and desired future DEI states of their professional society, and identified key drivers towards, and barriers against, DEI change. From there, cohort members identified resource investments, prioritized actions, and mapped out steps to take during the next year.

As a product of the Convening, ACCESS+ also launched a Community of Practice. Areas of focus will include collecting and using data, supporting leaders in expanding their DEI knowledge and expertise, disseminating evidence-based practices, and showcasing promising DEI work..

**“The Convening brought together DEI champions from STEM professional societies to become informed about and be supported in the adoption of evidence-based DEI strategies.**

**Moving forward, we're excited to have our cohort members participate in our Community of Practice, supporting each other as they work together for collective change and impact.” says Dr. Gretal Leibnitz, ACCESS+ PI.**

ACCESS+ has a number of other resources to offer its cohort members, such as the *Equity Environmental Scanning Tool (EEST)*, a self-assessment tool designed for use with and by U.S. STEM professional societies to assess and benchmark DEI activity and progress; The *Inclusive Professional Framework for Societies (IPF: Societies)* that can be used to inform equity mindsets, and inclusive relationships for DEI action at individual, and ProS organizational levels in service of members and the discipline; DEI Mini-grants, to offset expenses associated with proposed DEI action plans; and access to expertise about NSF ADVANCE best practices through ACCESS+ partners.

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**About ACCESS+:**

*The Amplifying the Alliance to Catalyze Change for Equity in STEM Success (ACCESS+) Initiative, funded by National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE Partnership grant #2017953, aspires to leverage STEM professional societies to accelerate systemic STEM culture-change to advance gender diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Led by the Women in Engineering ProActive Network ([WEPAN](#)), partners on the grant include the ADVANCE Implementation Mentors ([AIM](#)) Network; the [INCLUDES Aspire Alliance: National Change Initiative](#); the ADVANCE Resource and Coordination ([ARC](#)) Network; and the Alliance to Catalyze Change for Equity in STEM Success ([ACCESS](#)). To learn more, visit [accessplusstem.com](http://accessplusstem.com).*