

# Promoting Speaker Diversity with a Database of Databases

## 2018 Georgia Tech Diversity and Inclusion Project



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### Introduction:

Invited talks at conferences and departmental seminars offer scientists important career advancement opportunities – publicity for their research as well as networking and fostering collaboration. Studies, however, have found gender disparities in invited talks in STEM fields:

- Women are less likely than men to be speakers at major scientific conferences (e.g., Casadevall and Handelsman, 2014), as well as colloquia at top universities (Nittrouer et al., 2018)
- Even after adjusting for the lower proportion of women in STEM fields, men are still 20% more likely to be invited colloquia speakers than women (Nittrouer et al., 2018)
- Surveyed female professors were not more likely to decline speaking invitations due to family obligations, a widely-held myth (Nittrouer et al., 2018)

Since women and people of color remain largely underrepresented in STEM fields, implicit biases often lead to invited speakers lists that are predominantly white and male; the problem has become so pervasive, it sparked use of the term “manel” (short for ‘all male panel’).

To promote gender parity in STEM speaking invitations, we have aggregated available databases of female scientist speakers, along with a YouTube video examples, where available. It is our hope that this resource will be useful to conference and seminar organizers to increase diversity among invited speakers.

### Survey:

We solicited anonymous feedback from a small (n=4) group of users across career stages – a graduate student, professor, and professionals from both academia and industry.

Respondents were asked to use our database and answer the following questions:

	Yes	No
In 2-3 minutes, were you able to identify a speaker to invite?	3	1
Would you use this resource in future speaker searches?	4	0
Would you recommend this resource to colleagues?	4	0

### Suggestions to increase user-friendliness:

- Organize using bulletpoints
- Add “current of MM/YYYY” so users know how recently lists have been updated
- Add a search bar or dropdown menu with filter options (e.g. subdiscipline)

### General feedback:

- For major conferences where you are looking for a high-profile speaker, this was great for getting ideas
- The search is easy and gives many ideas quickly
- It's nice to have a collated list

**Summary:** Plenaries, keynotes, seminar speakers, and panelists are predominantly white and/or male. Often, implicit biases lead organizers to choose white and/or male speakers, reflecting the demographics of their networks. Resources are urgently needed to quickly and easily locate diverse speakers, as well as samples of their speaking prowess. As 2018 Diversity and Inclusion Fellows, we produced a web resource where organizers can quickly locate diverse STEM experts to speak at their event. We have also created a YouTube Channel for organizers to view sample talks, and are requesting feedback to improve these resources.

### Database:

This “Database of Databases” currently contains 40+ lists of minorities and white women speakers in biological sciences, physics and astronomy, chemistry, geosciences, neuroscience, mathematics, engineering, policy and media, computing, and technology, as summarized in the table to the right.

Database	Fields Covered	Groups Included	Search/filter by	Database Size	Ease of use	Submissions Open?
Women Speaker Initiative	All	Women	Name, Topic, City, State, Country	461	High	Yes
AcademiaNet	All Academic Disciplines	Women	Academic Discipline	2700+	Medium-High	Yes
Request a Woman Scientist	Science	Women	Name, Keywords, State, Country, City, Degree Status	Hundreds-Thousands	High	Yes
Diverse Sources	Science, health, environment	Underrepresented groups	Name, Type Expertise, Organization, Language, Time Zone	452	Medium	Yes
CAISE List	STEM (many)	Historically marginalized individuals	Professional Availability, HMI Identifier, Name, Google Scholar Link, Terminal degree, Subdiscipline	68	Medium	Yes
STEMM Role Models database	STEMM	Underrepresented	Keywords, Location	8	Low	Yes
Diversify EBB	Ecology and Evolution	Underrepresented minorities & white women	Name, Affiliation, Current Stage, Subfield, Keywords, Country, Underrepresented Group, Discipline, Interest	1640	Medium	Yes
Expert Women in Life Sciences (WILS)	Life Sciences	Women	Career Stage, Discipline, Country, Keyword/Name	879	Medium-High	Yes
Women in Microbiome Research	Microbiome	Women	Name, University, City, Country, Position, Research interests	511	Medium-High	Yes
Women Researchers in Fungi and Oomycetes	Fungi and Oomycetes	Women	Name, Institution, Region, Research Areas, Keywords	268	Medium-High	Yes
Women Speakers in Evolution and Behavior	Evolution and Behavior	Women	Name, Institution, Department, Keywords	386	Medium	Unknown
Women in Soil Science	Soil Science	Women	Name, University, City, Country, Position, Research interests	301	Low-medium	Yes
Women Virologists	Virology	Women	Name, Institution	598	Low-medium	Yes
List of Female Speakers with Fruit Expertise	Fruit	Women	Name, affiliation, field, fruit focus, location	143	Low-medium	Unknown
Women in Cell Biology (WICB) Speaker Referral List	Cell Biology	Women	Name, keywords, institution	394	Medium-High	Yes
Women in Engineering Biology	Synthetic Biology	Women	Name, Institution, Location, Keywords	50	Medium-High	Yes
R-Ladies Directory	R code	Women	Country	Unknown	Low-medium	Yes
Anne's List of Female Systems Neuroscientists	Neuroscience	Women	Subject Matter, Seniority	Hundreds	Medium	Yes
American Physical Society Women Speakers List	Physics	Women	Name, keyword, state, country, field, subfield	435	Medium-High	Yes
American Physical Society Minority Speakers List	Physics	Hispanic/African/Native Americans	Name, keyword, state, country, field, subfield	120	Medium-High	Yes
Outlist of LGBTQIA Astronomers	Astronomy	LGBTQIA	Out/Ally, Name, Rank, Affiliation, Date Joined	160	Medium	Yes
Women in Medicinal Chemistry	Chemistry	Women	Name, institution, title, research areas, country	89	Medium	Yes
Diversify Chemistry	Chemistry	Historically marginalized individuals	Name, Institution, Country, Career Stage, Subfield, Keywords	202	Medium	Unknown
ACS ChemDiversity	Chemistry	Minorities	Name, Institution, Categories	15	Low	Yes
Women in Theoretical/Computational Chemistry, Material Science, Biochemistry	Chemistry	Women	Last Name	Hundreds	Medium-Low	Yes
Association for Women Geosciences Distinguished Lecturers	Geosciences	Women	N/A	43	Medium-Low	Yes
Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN)	Geosciences	Women	N/A	51	Medium	Yes
Women Leaders in Fire Science	Geosciences	Women	N/A	62	Medium-Low	No
Women in Machine Learning (WIML) Directory	Computing	Women	Name, Position, Affiliation, Keywords	Hundreds	Medium-High	Yes
1000 Women in Tech	Tech	Women	N/A	1000	Low-medium	No
21 Technical Women Speakers	Tech	Women	N/A	21	Low-medium	No
Fempire	Tech	Women	Country	Hundreds	Medium	Yes
Women in Tech Sweden	Tech	Women and allies	N/A	42	Medium	No
2018 WIDS Conference Speakers	Data Science	Women	N/A	15	Low-medium	No
100+ Women Strong Guest Speaker Database	Engineering	Women	Topic, Background/degree, Notice required	100+	Low-medium	Yes
Lesbians Who Tech	Tech	Lesbians and Allies	N/A	Hundreds	Low-medium	Unknown
Women Talk Design	Design	Women	Keywords, discipline, topics, industry, location	270	High	Yes
Association for Women in Mathematics Speaker Database	Mathematics	Women	Location (state), Main Research Area, Research Sub-Areas	51	High	Yes
Women in Number Theory Directories	Mathematics	Women	Research area, Region, Current Postdocs, Graduating PhDs	Hundreds	Medium	Yes
UCI Diversity in Math	Mathematics	People of color and white women	N/A	47	Low-medium	No
Womens Media Center	Media	Women	Keyword, Expertise, Location (US), Language, Location (International) Name, data, expertise	1300	High	Yes
Women Also Know Stuff	Government & Public Policy	Women	Research Interest, Name, University, Country, Country of Interest	Thousands	High	Yes
The Brussels Binder	Government & Public Policy	Women	Name, Sector, Areas of expertise, Regions of expertise, Languages, Country of Residence	Thousands	High	Yes

**Future directions:** Our database will continue to grow as more lists become available. It is currently hosted on [Jennifer Glass' website](#), with the ultimate goal of transferring to a GT link for hosting. We suggest that more databases integrate example video presentation clips as examples of the speaker's work.

### References

Casadevall, A. & J. Handelsman (2014) The Presence of Female Conveners Correlates with a Higher Proportion of Female Speakers at Scientific Symposia, *mBio* 5(1):e00846-13.

Nittrouer, C.L., M.R. Hebl, L. Ashburn-Nardo, R.C.Trump-Steele, D.M. Lane & V. Valian (2018), Gender disparities in colloquium speakers at top universities, *PNAS* 115(1), 104-108.