



Meeting Summary

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On Wednesday, October 25, 2023, the National Laboratory Women of Color Community Forum held their fourth quarterly meeting with women of color and their allies from the national labs and the Department of Energy. In addition to over 100 participants logged in virtually, with local watch parties were held at a few of the national laboratories.

Following a brief welcome, Forum Chair Valerie Taylor (ANL) and Vice Chair Sandra Begay (SNL) provided a recap of the discussions from the July 2023 Forum meeting which were around *storytelling*. Breakouts were generally unstructured at the meeting to allow participants to get to know each other and they were encouraged to share stories related to advice they would give to their younger selves. Some themes that emerged from the breakout group stories included:

- “Remember that everyone is a duck” (i.e., everything looks calm on the surface, but underneath we are frantically paddling)
- Multiple people’s advice to their younger self would be, “Just believe in yourself.”
- “We all have so much to share. Share things about different facets of yourself with others.”
- “Go in with your eyes open and ask more questions.”
- “Move towards those who open doors for you; move away from those who do not support you.”

Feeling inspired by the stories shared in the breakout sessions, Valerie and Sandra invited meeting participants and forum members to continue to inspire each other (and beyond) by sharing stories on various topics of interest to forum membership:

- Advice - <https://forms.office.com/g/zEz5SA9nLp>
- Mentoring - <https://forms.office.com/g/ujAatKezut>
- Identity - <https://forms.office.com/g/wutMrtycXq>

Following brief updates since the last meeting, meeting participants then assembled into breakout sessions to discuss useful qualities in mentors and sponsors for girls of color and their allies. Active listening, willingness to advocate for mentees and the importance of being truthful (although sometimes uncomfortable) were common themes among the breakouts. One breakout group discussed pressure on women of color in more senior positions to take on diversity efforts

and mentoring of people in less senior positions which could be considered as a topic for a future quarterly meeting.

About the Forum:

Following an event ("Achieving Equitable Representation for Women of Color at Our National Labs") held in March 2022 that drew over 500 registrants from across the laboratory system, the National Laboratory Directors' Council (NLDC) endorsed the chartering of this forum 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.

Doing world-class science depends on building a competitive, diverse workforce that can apply a variety of talents and perspectives. This forum focuses key issues affecting women of color at the national laboratories and similar institutions.

<https://blogs.anl.gov/nlwoc/>