

I am a recognized leader in current efforts to advance equity and inclusion in astronomy, with years of experience in spearheading efforts to increase the diversity of our community and significant time invested in formally and informally mentoring diverse groups of students. As a researcher, educator, and mentor, my goal is to recognize and reward the wide range of strengths that all aspiring scientists bring with them. Because my experience differs from so many of the students I interact with, the work that I do to advance equity and inclusion in the field begins with seeking out their perspectives: listening to and validating the experiences of students who encounter barriers that were invisible to me. I spend significant one-on-one time mentoring students across the country from underserved populations. I prioritize spending time to help students prepare and improve their applications for bridge programs, graduate school, and postdoctoral fellowships, and to share knowledge that I have accumulated to help prepare for and succeed in different career stages. In doing so, I also work to be a champion for the excellence these students already possess: I take time to celebrate students accomplishments, and to nominate them for career opportunities.

I have led numerous interdisciplinary initiatives to increase equity and inclusion in the field, from teaching in local prisons to running a summer research and year-round mentoring program for undergraduate STEM students from traditionally underserved populations¹. As a result of this work, I will bring with me significant experience supporting diverse learners through a wide range of career stages, a large network of connections for recruiting and supporting a diverse population of students, and a goal-oriented approach to increasing equity and inclusion at Wisconsin. One goal of my work is to connect students with a network of mentors. I am not a role model for every student nor can I relate to all aspects of my students backgrounds. In the past, I have arranged a Diversity Speaker Series to connect students to colleagues who can serve as additional role models and sources of advice specific to the intersectional backgrounds of my students. At Wisconsin, I will continue to use my professional contacts, the seminar series, and my presence at conferences actively networking on behalf of students to connect undergraduate students with an array of mentors who can help create a community of support.

Finally, a primary goal of my work is to prepare students for future careers by building lasting relationships between students, mentors and role models. These are critical for providing students with targeted professional development, and creating a safe community for the discussion of challenges and roadblocks to equal representation. In running the NAC summer program at NRAO Socorro, I addressed these goals by training local advisors in effective mentoring techniques, implementing a weekly summer seminar that complements students research experience, and having significant extracurricular interaction (dinners at my home, camping and rafting trips). Additionally, I continued year round mentoring of summer students via monthly Skype seminars. At Wisconsin I plan to continue applying this community model by making regular conversation spaces like a monthly equity, inclusion, and social justice journal club, in which students and faculty can discuss these topics and learn from each other.

¹<http://eacmills.com/equity.html>