



FIRST2 NETWORK

Heather Arnett, Ph.D. named new First2 Program Coordinator



Heather Arnett, Ph.D. has been named the First2 Network Program Coordinator. Heather taught biology and zoology at universities for eight years. Originally from Maine, Heather worked at the University of Maine focusing on cross system introductory biology and at Unity College which specializes in wildlife and sustainability. Heather recently worked for the University of Charleston and helped establish the First2 program there.

Heather's research with undergraduate students has focused on acid mine water in West Virginia and she has also worked with trophic interactions. Heather is enthusiastic about this role where she can continue to support students and expand her experience with First2 programming. Welcome Heather!

First2 Student Director Updates



Above: University of Charleston students in Washington, D.C.

Fairmont State University – Fairmont’s First2 Club has newly elected officers; President Landon Brewer, Vice President Karlena Boyce, Treasurer Javi Khaaliq, and Secretary Janayah Michaels. The club will be hosting monthly events called “First2 Fun Nights”; September’s Fun Night theme is “Board Game Night!” The club has been looking into planning events for club meetings such as scheduling representatives from Financial Aid to discuss FAFSA changes and First2 Scholars are working on addressing campus accessibility. First2 Student Director Cooper is looking forward to starting their genealogy research.

West Virginia University Institute of Technology – WVU Tech’s campus club is planning a graduate school tour at Virginia Tech as well as a trip to Thurmond, West Virginia. They are planning to hold a research conference later in the semester. The club partnered with WVU Tech’s Student Activities Board to go hiking as a team building exercise. They are creating a campus club Whatsapp to streamline communication between their members and they have scheduled club make-up meetings. They are focusing on PDSA work related to campus resources and are looking into facilitating a faculty engagement activity such as a board game event. They are considering volunteer opportunities with the Raleigh County Humane Society as well as the possibility of a cross-campus activity. Several club members participated in campus events for Diversity Week and they are now planning activities for First-Gen Week.

University of Charleston – Three University of Charleston students traveled to

Washington, D.C. to attend the AAA-S-STEM Conference and then information about this conference was shared with students at University of Charleston's first First2 campus club meeting. They are starting to plan their BINGO PDSA and they are also planning a surprise lecture club meeting where they are going to invite professors to present the surprise lecture the First2 students prepared.

West Virginia University – 17 students attended West Virginia University's first First2 campus club meeting and the club facilitated a tabling event at WVU's student organization fair. They recently had a PDSA onboarding, are on their way to finalizing their fall event and are planning to start their PDSA with Michelle Paden. Abigail Judy is going to the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Parade in New York! Garrett Bender and Oscar Enriquez volunteered with High Rocks Educational Corporation's Back to School Overnight event. They are planning a trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo for October 21st and plan to share lots of pictures!

Glennville State University – Glennville's First2 campus club is considering a plan for an ice cream social between faculty and students to help students get to know their professors more.

Blue Ridge Community and Technical College – BRCTC held their first First2 campus club meeting and announced a community-building social gathering for their PDSA; their PDSA is now planned and they will be sharing the details of this at their next club meeting. They are also going to a VR Escape Room. They are still planning an institutional meeting date.

Marshall University – Hannah Padlock from the Corps of Engineers was a guest speaker for Marshall University's First2 campus club meeting September 22. She gave a presentation to the club members about her experiences and life through college and answered questions about college, internships and job advice. They are continuing to work on their campus club, networking dinner, and peer mentoring across institutions PDSAs. They are planning to volunteer with an American Chemical Society youth outreach event at Heritage Farm.

On the Road with First2

Erica Harvey, First2 Network PI and Institutional Team Coordinator, represented First2 Network at the [NSF Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES Aspire Alliance Summit](#) held July 19-20, 2023 at the UCLA Luskin Center. From their website, <https://www.aspirealliance.org/>, "Aspire's overarching strategy is to effect change by aligning and reinforcing both professional development and hiring practices of STEM

faculty.” The conference provided connections to a number of exciting initiatives for faculty practice and professional development, as well as a chance to share experiences with leading systemic change efforts.

[Read more about Harvey’s experience at the Summit here.](#)

Student Spotlight: Rachel King

First2 Student Director Rachel King is a junior at West Virginia University majoring in Physics and Computer Science. She learned from her First2 Summer Immersion experience at the Green Bank Observatory in 2021 that she wanted to do astronomy research and she is planning to pursue a graduate program in astronomy in the future. Rachel has been interested in science for as long as she can remember; “I was a little kid and I had this pink telescope that we used to look at the moon.”

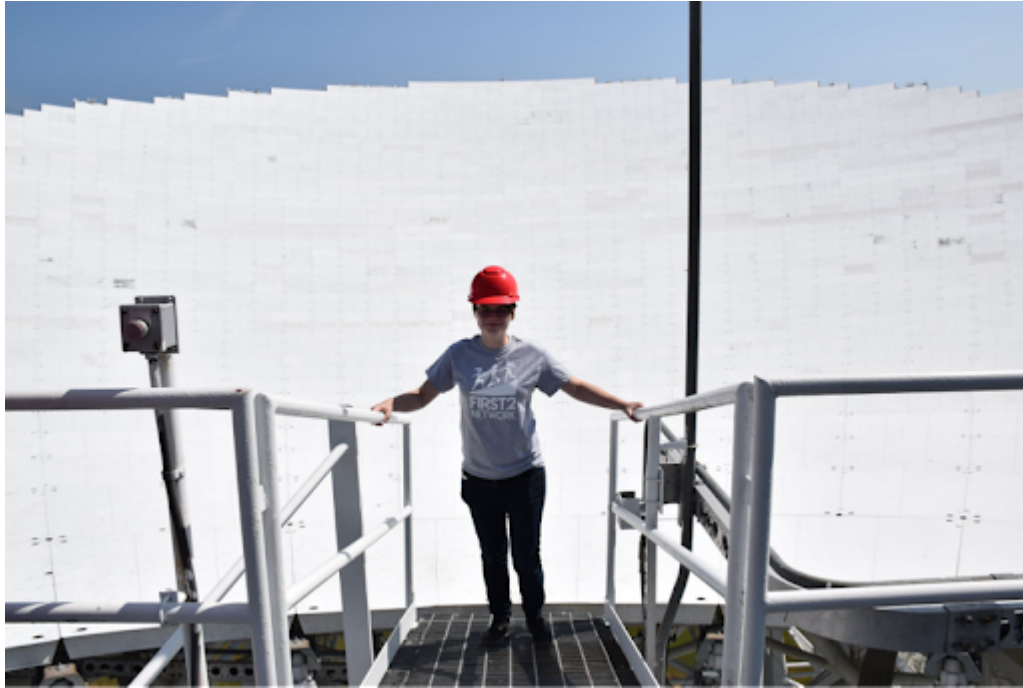
This past summer, she attended the International Pulsar Timing Array Meeting for two weeks in Australia after learning about the opportunity through her research mentor. Rachel said that, “at the time, I had never been on a plane before, but I was like, ‘I have to say, yes, I’m going, that’s amazing.’” She spoke about how the first week of the conference focused on teaching related to foundational astronomy and pulsars and that even though this content was geared towards graduate students she learned a lot from this experience. She discussed how the second week, “all these collaborators from across the globe shared their up-to-date data and projects that they’re working on; and I think in addition to learning so much more about my potential field of study in the future, one of the highlights was getting to meet and make friends with graduate students, learn more about what their experience is like and sort of see that it is genuinely what I want to go into.”

Rachel presented on the student panel at the First2 Network Conference this past May and spoke about how that experience was memorable for her because, “it wasn’t even just like being at the conference itself, but sort of like the culmination of being in a place where I’m able to present to a big group of people. In high school, I was very shy and then at the conference, I’m in this room in front of mostly professors from all these institutions that I’ve never met before and I was able to present confidently to them; and I think First2 has really helped me develop that.”

When asked what advice she might offer to students planning to major in STEM fields, she said, “Don’t worry about feeling imposter syndrome. Everyone feels it, I even feel it now, I’m kind of at the top of where I could be as an undergraduate in astronomy research at this point and I still feel like I see all the other undergraduate students and I’m like, ‘Oh, I’m

not doing nearly as well as they are' when I know objectively, that's not true."

This year Rachel is looking forward to helping plan a series of professional development workshops with her campus' First2 club in addition to helping plan other engaging club programs.



Above: Rachel during her First2 Summer Immersion experience at Green Bank Observatory in 2021.

Upcoming Opportunities and Events



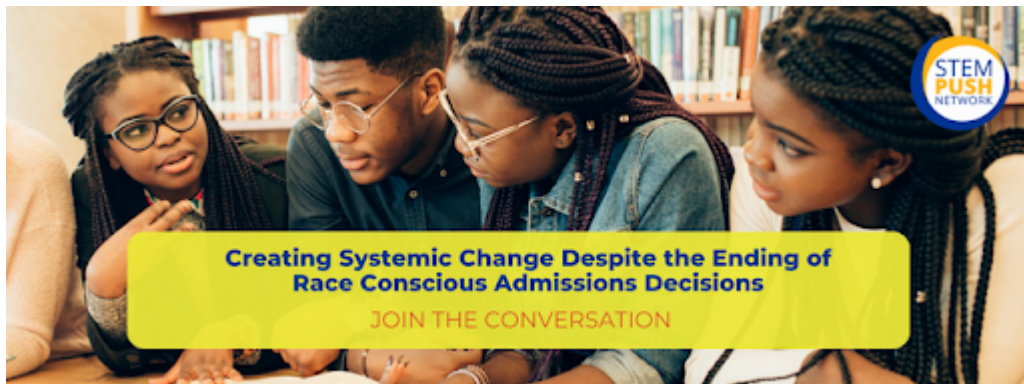
The Inclusive STEM Teaching Project, a NSF Improving Undergraduate STEM Education program, is hosting a FREE six-week Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) from October 2 - November 21, 2023 via edX.

"Participants in this course will examine issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education; reflect on their own and their students' identities and experiences; question their assumptions about all aspects of instruction; identify and implement learner-centered structures and strategies; apply principles of evidence-based inclusive teaching; use their student learning data and feedback to inform pedagogical and curricular choices." Register at [The Inclusive STEM Teaching Project | edX](https://www.edx.org/course/inclusive-stem-teaching-project) to join a community of almost 10,000 faculty,

postdocs, graduate students, and staff.

If you are interested in joining an optional learning community to accompany the course, please express that interest here: [Join a Learning Community](#).

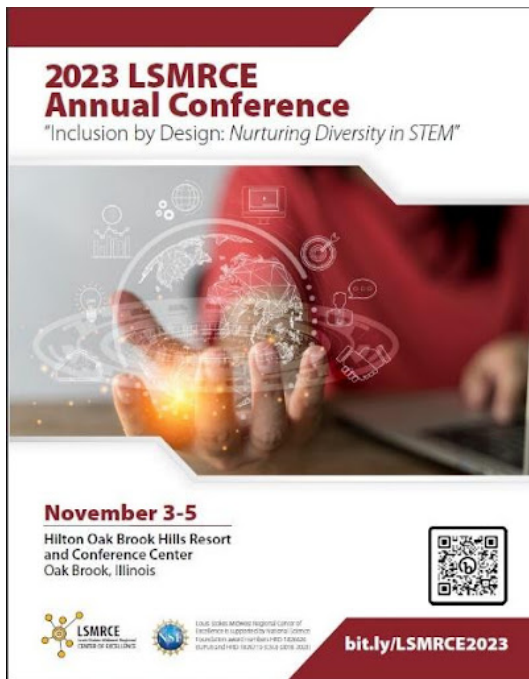
First2 Leadership Training will be held October 14-15, 2023; stay tuned for further details!



The STEM PUSH Network will be hosting a conversation, “PUSH-ing Toward a More Equitable Future in College Admissions & Stem,” which according to the their event registration page will discuss, “more equitable, race-conscious ways to increase the number of Black, Latina, and Indigenous students in post-secondary STEM” on October 21, 2023 at 1 pm EST. [Click here to register for this FREE virtual event.](#)



The [AAC&U Transforming STEM Higher Education website](#) states, “AAC&U and its Project Kaleidoscope (PKAL) invite proposals for the annual Transforming STEM Higher Education Conference, a seven-star professional development experience that advances undergraduate STEM education reform by providing a national platform for the diverse perspectives and experiences of STEM faculty, particularly those from historically marginalized groups and institutions, to be inserted into national STEM reform discourse. This conference offers attendees a chance to disseminate curricular innovations, build community, co-learn, and gain capacity for manipulating the many levers of change that can positively influence institutional and individual transformation. All presentations will be delivered in-person.” [Click here for more information.](#)



"The 2023 Louis Stokes Midwest Regional Center of Excellence (LSMRCE) conference, "Inclusion by Design: Nurturing Diversity in STEM," will be held November 3-5, at the Hilton Oak Brook Hills Resort and Conference Center, Oak Brook, Illinois. This event offers students, faculty mentors, educational researchers, and program administrators a platform to exchange knowledge and cultivate a community of practitioners and scholars in broadening the participation of underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)."

[Click here for more information about this conference.](#)

The West Virginia Science Teachers Association 2023 Annual Conference, "Science: It's All Good!" will be held October 26-28 at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, WV. "This year's conference embodies the idea of interconnectedness with science, whether pertaining to our daily lives or the disciplines of science. This invitation is for anyone teaching science, regardless of grade level or science discipline."

[Click here for more information and/or to register.](#)

News from the INCLUDES National Network

Check out the INCLUDES National Network blog post about highlights from NSF's 2023 Eddie Bernice Johnson INCLUDES National Network Convening, ["Strengthening the Movement to Broaden Participation in STEM."](#)



Copyright © 2023 First2Network, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

