



Our New Open Seating Policy

How Do You Measure a Lost Opportunity?

Make no mistake about it: As a Participant in The Women of Color STEM Conference, you are valued, and we want to provide you with every possible convenience while you are attending our conference events. Your participation clearly shows that you place a high value on diversity in STEM, and, more important, that you honor the mission of presenting valuable career information and positive role models to young members of the community who may aspire to work in these fields.

The Women of Color Awards Gala & Dinner and the other conference events are a large part of that mission. Here, successful women professionals, who, more often than not, work in relative obscurity, are praised as exemplars and lifted up as beacons of hope where such light is sorely needed. The great demand for tickets to these events – far exceeding the number of available seats, year after year – is proof positive of the size of this need.

In the past, we have dealt with the problem of limited seating by issuing tickets for reserved seats. And, each year during the ceremony, we have tallied a heartbreakingly large number of empty seats held for those who, for one good reason or another, did not attend. We also have seen hundreds of meals go to waste, while student participants in the conference were turned away.

This year, in an attempt to strike a balance and to make sure that every seat is filled, we have instituted a new seating policy: Your seat will be held through the first 20 minutes of conference programs or events. Any seats not taken by that time will be filled upon request by a college or high school student, a teacher, parent, community leader, or child. We want to ensure that no opportunity is missed.

This conference, as you realize, is a life-changing event for many of the students who travel long distances by bus to be here. Your choice to take the high road to success through diversity deserves to be rewarded with the best. And we hope that our new seating policy provides the best answer for all concerned.

Thank you.