

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Open to All Meeting Registrants

Wednesday

February 17, 2021

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.



In Pursuit of Equity

Beronda L. Montgomery, PhD

**Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI**

Overview: Our evolving society is facing a number of challenges and changes—including a shifting of United States demographics toward racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in education and many scientific disciplines and a recent resurgence in a recognition of structural racism and other forms of discrimination. Encouraging increased access for and success of individuals from a broad range of diverse backgrounds is facilitated by evidence-based, high-impact practices that focus on building communities of support to advance organizational or institutional priorities and needed transformation. Specific approaches based on facilitating progress through structured mentoring, improving multigenerational understanding and engagement, organizational culture assessment and evaluation, and needed transformation to support the growth and success of a broad range of individuals will be highlighted.

Beronda L. Montgomery, PhD, is Michigan State University (MSU) Foundation Professor in the Departments of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Microbiology & Molecular Genetics. She also serves as Interim Assistant Vice President for Research & Innovation at MSU. Her research group investigates how photosynthetic organisms, including plants, adapt to changes in their environment. Her scholarship extends beyond biology and into studying mentorship, faculty development, and academic leadership to cultivate evidence-based strategies to foster equity and inclusion in academia and beyond. She studies and publishes broadly in the areas of plant biology, plant environment interactions, and mentoring/coaching and leadership development. Her central scholarly interest that spans these areas is to explore how organisms perceive, interact with, respond to, and transform their environment(s). In 2020, Dr. Montgomery was named to the Cell Press CrossTalk 100 Inspiring Black Scientists in America List and Union of Concerned Scientists Science Defender. Dr. Montgomery has been elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology in 2018 and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2020. She often shares mentoring and faculty development issues, including plant biology-based lessons on mentoring, coaching, and leadership (or #LessonsFromPlants) on Twitter at @BerondaM, on her blog found at berondamontgomery.com, and in her upcoming book *Lessons From Plants* (2021, Harvard University Press).