

Dr. Lauren Birney, Spotlighted By Influential Women, Connects STEM Education With Real Environmental Science Learning

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Distinguished Professor and STEM
Education Leader Promotes
Experiential Learning, Mentorship, and
Equitable Educational Opportunities
and Industry Partnerships

New York, New York – Dr. Lauren Birney is a Distinguished Professor of STEM Education at Pace University and Executive Director of The STEM Collaboratory NYC®. A nationally recognized educator, researcher, and leader in STEM education, she has dedicated her career to innovative teaching practices, environmental science education, and equitable access to learning opportunities. With more than three decades of experience

spanning K-12 and higher education, Lauren prepares future educators through graduate teacher preparation programs while fostering meaningful connections between science, technology, and community engagement.



Before joining Pace University, Lauren spent 18 years as a biology teacher and science internship coordinator in the San Diego Unified School District. During that time, she developed programs that connected students with real-world STEM experiences and encouraged experiential, project-based learning. Her academic background includes an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California Rossier School of Education, an M.A. in Counseling from Point Loma Nazarene University, an independent study in Liberal Arts from St. Clare's, Oxford, and a B.A. in Biology and Chemistry from the University of San Diego.

Throughout her career, Lauren has drawn inspiration from her studies at Oxford and her belief

that education should be engaging, accessible, and transformative for all learners. She holds multiple California credentials and certifications in science education, counseling, administration, and language development, reflecting the broad scope of her work in education.

As Executive Director of The STEM Collaboratory NYC®, Lauren leads initiatives that integrate technology, environmental restoration, and community-based learning. She also serves as Principal Investigator of the NSF-funded Curriculum + Community Enterprise for Restoration Science (CCERS) project, which engages teachers and students in hands-on environmental science and restoration efforts throughout New York Harbor. Through these efforts, she fosters connections between classroom learning, scientific exploration, and community engagement.

Lauren's commitment to education is also reflected in her focus on mentorship and professional relationships. She attributes her success to the mentorship, recommendations, and support she has received throughout her career, particularly from her father, Dr. Thomas H. Birney, and husband Todd Stimmel. Persistent networking, following through on commitments, hard work, resilience, and learning from rejection have helped her create opportunities and continue growing both personally and professionally. Her training as an All-American swimmer has assisted her in navigating a very competitive culture in New York City. Tenacity, perseverance, courageousness all epitomize what it takes to find success in such an aggressive environment.

The career advice Lauren values most is to forge an individual career path by actively meeting people, building meaningful professional relationships, and maintaining a strong network. She believes professionals should take responsibility for creating opportunities rather than waiting for them to appear. She carries this philosophy into her guidance for young women entering the industry, encouraging them to proactively create and nurture professional networks while remaining authentic, innovative, and original.

Lauren also emphasizes compassion, kindness, and thoughtfulness when interacting with others. She encourages emerging professionals to be the person who reaches out, follows through, and leaves a positive impression. For her, professional relationships are strengthened through genuine connections and consistent actions.

In education, Lauren sees strong demand for educators as an important opportunity, particularly amid the ongoing teacher shortage, which creates pathways for career growth and entry into the profession. She also recognizes teacher burnout and retention as significant challenges, with many educators leaving the profession early. Additionally, women can face greater obstacles in reaching leadership positions, making strong communities of support particularly valuable.

A recipient of Pace University's Distinguished Professor designation, Lauren also serves as an Executive Board Member of Earth Codes Observatory and previously served as Chair of the Advisory Board for the Biomimicry Institute. Across these roles, she continues to emphasize collaboration, advocacy, meaningful connections, and educational equity.

The values that guide Lauren in her professional and personal life include compassion, kindness, honesty, follow-through, meaningful connections, advocacy, and maintaining a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal well-being. Through her work in STEM education, environmental science, and teacher preparation, she continues to support educators and learners while encouraging the next generation of scientists, educators, and community leaders.

Learn More about Dr. Lauren Beth Birney:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/drlauren-birney> or through Pace University, <https://www.pace.edu/news/marine-maven-lauren-birney-edd>

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