**NJIT Murray Center for Women in Technology**

**30th Anniversary**

**WOMEN DESIGNING THE FUTURE CONFERENCE**

***Looking Back, Moving Forward***

**7 MARCH 2025**

**DATE:**   7 March 2025

**TIME:** 8:30 am – 4:00 pm (doors open at 7:45)

**VENUE:**  NJIT Campus Center Ballrooms

**AMENITIES**: Continental breakfast. Buffet lunch. Complimentary on-site parking

**REGISTER NOW AT** [**EVENTBRITE**](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/women-designing-the-future-looking-back-moving-forward-tickets-1231651034399?aff=oddtdtcreator)

***Take a guided tour of the near future with experts in***

***artificial intelligence, climate change, Hollywood film and more!***

**CONFERENCE THEME****:**

Murray Center’s 30th anniversary *Women Designing the Future Conference* arrives at a crucial inflection point in the history of technology—a time of excitement and anxiety in equal measure. To mark the occasion, we’ve invited experts in a variety of fields to help us track what has changed over the last three decades--and then to give us their vision of what the world will look like 30 years from now. Speakers include data scientists and AI pioneers; ecologists and environmental policymakers; high-tech entrepreneurs—and a computer scientist who uses code to make Pixar animations come alive!

**CONFERENCE SPONSOR:**

The 2025 WDF Conference is being hosted by NJIT’s Murray Center for Women in Technology, which, for three decades, has worked to connect women from a wide range of backgrounds to each other and to the resources they need to succeed in STEM careers. The WDF conference series highlights innovative, high-impact work by women that integrates the domains of scientific research, technological design, and the humanities and social sciences.

**SPEAKERS INCLUDE:**

**DANIELLE FEINBERG, Visual Effects Supervisor at Pixar Animation Studios**

Feinberg, who has a computer science degree from Harvard University, began at Pixar in 1997 doing technological problem-solving on the film *A Bug’s Life*. She went on to work on films such as *Toy Story 2*, *Monsters, Inc.*, the Academy Award-winning *Finding Nemo*, and *The Incredibles.* She directed the lighting for the Academy Award-winning films *Wall•E, Brave,* and *Coco*—and supervised the visual effects for *Turning Red.* In addition to her work at Pixar, Feinberg speaks widely, encouraging teenage girls to pursue their interests in math, science, and technology.Her TED talk “The Magic Ingredient that Brings Pixar Movies to Life” has over 3 million views**.**

**RHIANA GUNN-WRIGHT, Former Director of Climate Policy** **at the Roosevelt Institute**

At the Roosevelt Institute, Gunn-Wright led research on the intersection of climate policy, public investment, racial equity, and public power. She started her career in public policy after graduating from Yale*magna cum laude* in 2011. In the summer of 2013, she served as a White House policy intern in First Lady Michelle Obama’s Office and then went on to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship where she obtained an MPhil in Comparative Social Policy. Later, as the policy lead for the New Consensus think tank, Gunn-Wright was one of the intellectual architects of the Green New Deal. She is the author of the critically acclaimed essay “The Green New Deal for All of Us,” and is currently working on a book about the climate crisis.

**JAMIE PAYTON, Dean of NJIT’s Ying Wu College of Computing**

Payton comes to NJIT from Temple University where she was Chair of the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems. Her research interests include pervasive computing systems for smart health and well-being, broadening participation of historically excluded groups in computing, and evidence-based approaches to improving computer science education. She is the Director of the STARS Computing Corps, a national alliance of over 70 colleges and universities with a shared mission to develop department, faculty, and student leadership in broadening participation of historically excluded groups in computing.

**ANN QUIROZ GATES, Senior Advisor to the Provost for Strategic STEM Initiatives at the University of Texas at El Paso**

Over the course of her career at UTEP, Gates has served as chair of the Department of Computer Science, Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Projects, and Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. She is a founding member and lead of the Computing Alliance of Hispanic Serving Institutions (CAHSI), a nationally recognized network of more than 60 colleges, universities, and stakeholders that focus on the recruitment, retention, mentorship, and advancement of Hispanics in computing. She is also a founding member of the National Center for Women in Information Technology.

**CHITRA DORAI, AI Scientist and the Founder & CEO of Amicus Brain Innovations**

Dr. Dorai is a former IBM Fellow and served as the Global CTO for cognitive services in IBM’s Global Business Services unit. She is the co-inventor of 50 patents. After two decades at IBM with a prolific record of peer-reviewed research publications, award-winning patents and global research accolades, Dr. Dorai left to found Amicus Brain, an award-winning digital health company that offers trusted Artificial Intelligence solutions to transform care management for people living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

**OLGA RUSSAKOVSKY, Associate Professor of Computer Science at Princeton University and Co-founder and Board Chair of AI4ALL**

Dr. Russakovsky is the Associate Director of the Princeton Laboratory for Artificial Intelligence. Her research is in computer vision, closely integrated with the fields of machine learning, human-computer interaction and fairness, accountability and transparency. She has been recognized with the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineering (PECASE), the PAMI Young Researcher Award, and the Anita Borg’s Emerging Leader Abie Award in honor of Denice Denton, among many other honors. In addition to her research, she co-founded and currently serves as Board Chair of the AI4ALL nonprofit dedicated to increasing diversity and inclusion in AI.

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**MICHELE ALCAZAR, Head of Human Resources for Prudential’s Global Technology and Operations**

Alcazar is responsible for leading the global talent and workforce strategy to transform the financial services giant into an industry-leading technology-forward firm. She has more than 25 years of experience in human resources and organizational development, focusing on building new talent capabilities for global teams.

**CAROLINE DEVAN, Senior University Lecturer, NJIT Department of Biological Sciences, and Codirector of the Urban Ecology Lab**

Devan received her B.A. from University of Tennessee, Knoxville where she began her career in ecology and climate change research at the Free-Air Carbon Enrichment (FACE) project at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Her NJIT courses incorporate inclusive and innovative teaching practices that provide the next generation of biologists and environmental science professionals with first-hand experiences in scientific research.

**NATHALY AGOSTO FILIÓN, Deputy Chief Climate Resilience Officer at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**

Agosto Filión works closely with New Jersey Chief Resilience Officer Nick Angarone and the Office of Climate Resilience team to accelerate the implementation of statewide resilience policy and programs developed in partnership with the New Jersey Interagency Council on Climate Resilience (IAC). In this capacity, she is the lead staff supporting IAC publication development, workgroups, and the day-to-day operations of the IAC. She was the primary author and process facilitator advancing the development of New Jersey’s Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan. Before joining the DEP, Agosto Filión served as Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Newark.

**MELISSA MILES, Executive Director of the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance**

In addition to heading up the EJA, a statewide organization “building power through education and collaboration with NJ EJ communities,” Miles serves as the Chair of the Environmental Justice Advisory Council to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and as a Steering Committee Member of the Coalition for Healthy Ports. She is also the Co-director of the NJ Reparations Council EJ Committee. Regionally, she serves on the Environmental Justice Advisory Council for the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM). Nationally, she is a Steering Committee Member and former Grassroots Chair of the Building Alignment and Equity for EJ coalition.

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**NICOLE WILEY, Engineering Practice Lead at American Water**

With nearly 29 years of experience in the water/wastewater industry, Wiley’s current role includes actively supporting drinking water facilities by meeting water quality regulations, optimizing treatment, developing treatment design and operating standards for the company, and responding to treatment emergencies. Over the last few years, Wiley has focused on how best to deal with perfluorinated compounds in the water, also known as “forever chemicals.”

**CONFERENCE FLYER DESIGNER: VALERIA GOMEZ**

Gomez is a recent NJIT graduate with a master’s degree in architecture and a minor in Sustainability. With a passion for art, design, and AI, Valeria aims to integrate innovative technologies into sustainable architectural practices. She envisions leveraging AI to enhance design processes and create environmentally conscious structures, while advocating for interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex architectural challenges.

**MARCH 7 WDF CONFERENCE AGENDA**

7:45-8:30 Registration & Coffee/ Light Breakfast

8:30-9:10 **Welcomes:**

**Chief Diversity Officer David Jones**

**Murray Center Director Nancy Steffen-Fluhr**

**Provost John Pelesko**

**SESSION #1: "The Future of AI: Innovation, Inclusion, Impact"**

**9:15 – 9:35          Jamie Payton
9:35 – 10:00          Anne Gates
10:00 – 10:20     Chitra Dorai
10:20 – 10:40     Olga Russakovsky
10:40 – 11:00    Michele Alcazar
11:00 – 11:30     Panel Discussion and Q&A**

**11:30-12:00** **Keynote: Danielle Feinberg**

**12:00-12:15 Q & A**

**12:15-12:55** **Lunch Pick Up and Break**

**SESSION #2: “Unequal Earth: Understanding Disparities in a Warming World"**

**1:00-1:25 Keynote: Rhiana Gunn-Wright**

**1:25-1:40 Q&A**

**1:45-2:05 Caroline Devan**

**2:05-2:25 Nathaly Agosto Filion**

**2:25-2:45 Melissa Miles**

**2:45-3:05 Nicole Wiley**

**3:05-3:25 Panel Discussion and Q&A**

**3:30-5:00** **Anne Wiley Room Rededication and Reception**