

The SciPy Conference began as a 2 day workshop on the Caltech campus in 2002. The workshop had a single track, a handful of speakers, and was hosted before the development of fundamental parts of the SciPy stack. In the 15 years that followed, the conference has expanded with events across the globe and has evolved to serve the needs of the SciPy community and the ever-developing SciPy stack. This year, like every other, we strive to grow the conference to be the best one yet.

Many of our changes this year have been made to support and encourage diversity and inclusivity. A multitude of studies [1] have shown that diverse teams perform better than homogenous teams. There are several reasons for this, including encouraging creativity, building a culture that is respectful, and bringing a broad range of experience and talent to the task at hand. The benefits of diversity and inclusion are not limited to workplaces and academic institutions; they can be directly applied to SciPy the stack, community, and conference. The diversity and inclusion efforts for the 2017 SciPy Conference are due in no small part to the volunteers who organize the conference, especially those on the diversity committee. We'd like to highlight some of these efforts:

- Broaden communications channels to underrepresented/minoritized communities to drive proposals and registration
- Craft guidelines for reviewers to help reduce biases as part of the new open review system. This was done in collaboration with the program committee.
- Revamp the [Code of Conduct](#) to promote the safety of all conference goers and require all attendees to accept the CoC as part of the registration flow
- Request optional demographic information from conference attendees to establish a baseline to measure how the diversity and inclusion efforts are moving the needle
- Provide menstrual products in all bathrooms for the comfort and safety of all conference goers

In addition, the tutorial committee is hosting the first ever SciPy teen track meant for high school students. There the students will learn to use the SciPy stack, tour the Texas Advanced Computing Center, and hear from a diverse group of professionals who use these tools every day. As in years past, we have awarded diversity-based financial aid scholarships. We'll be hosting a diversity luncheon and other events that span a variety of interests. This year, we'll be presenting two BoFs that align with the conference themes. The first will discuss diversity and inclusion in the SciPy community as part of the SciPy Tools track, while the second BOF examines bias in machine learning and how we as a community of scientists and developers can work to minimize it as part of the Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning track.

As with any effort of this nature, there will be growing pains. However, we hope that you will join us in our endeavour to make the SciPy conference the best place for everyone to learn about cutting edge tools, share projects that would not be achievable without the SciPy stack, and to engage with the community of developers, scientists, and users.

We look forward to seeing you in Austin this July!

[1] <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-diversity-makes-us-smarter/>