Prof. Stephen Curry, Imperial College London

*Strength in Diversity: thinking differently about who gets to work in STEM*

Academics are keen on freedom, at least of the academic variety. But according to 20th Century philosopher Isaiah Berlin, the opposition between freedom and equality is an “intrinsic, irremovable element of human life.” Are universities, which have long been extremely hierarchical organisations, therefore destined to be centres of inequality? For many women, that is precisely their experience. The same can be said for many academics who are from ethnic minorities, who are disabled, or who are not heteronormative.

Does this matter for science? What do molecules or the laws of physics care for the machinations of human society? To the extent that science matters for society, society should matter for science. That means that as influential and progressive civic institutions, universities and research institutions must strive to represent the societies they serve and to challenge, rather than to mirror or exacerbate, the structural inequalities that degrade the daily experiences of so many. This is a difficult task, but not one that can be delegated to specialists, however valuable their expertise. It must be embraced by the whole scientific academy. In my talk, I will discuss how we are attempting to tackling inequalities at Imperial College London.

Stephen Curry is a Professor of Structural Biology in the Department of Life Sciences at Imperial College where he also serves as Imperial’s first Assistant Provost for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. As a researcher he has worked for over three decades on molecular aspects of protein-drug interactions and on the replication of RNA viruses. His transition into the Assistant Provost role in 2017 was the culmination of a burgeoning interest in the social and culture of science. Stephen has written regularly on his Reciprocal Space blog and at the Guardian, covering a wide range of topics including open access, research assessment and science policy.

An active campaigner, Stephen was a founder member of Science is Vital and from 2012-18 he served on the board of the Campaign for Science and Engineering, organizations that make the case for public investment in R&D. He was a member of the UK government-convened group which in 2015 produced the Metric Tide report on the use of metrics in research assessment. He is currently chair of the steering group of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) which is actively promoting reform of research assessment worldwide.

Registration

Please register [here](#) by Wednesday September 20, 2022 or send an email to facultyclub@ers.rwth-aachen.de

Please note that a [contribution](#) of 10 Euro for lunch, snack and beverages will be requested on site. Based on your registration, we make a binding order to the catering company. We therefore ask for your understanding that the cost contribution is due unless you cancel your registration by noon of the previous day at the latest.