

# Female Science Professors Discuss Inclusive Classrooms at SUNY Conference

MAY 13, 2024



Inclusive STEM classrooms lead to efficient problem solving.

On April 25, two faculty members from the [Department of Science and Math](#), spoke at the Vanguard Award Ceremony, held during the [Nontraditional Employment and Training Conference](#). Deborah Berhanu, an associate professor who specializes in materials science, and Evelyn Rynkiewicz, an

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« SEPTEMBER 2024 »						
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MON  
TUE  
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pm

the award, which recognizes eight outstanding post-secondary students across New York State who excel in a field of study that's nontraditional for their gender.



Evelyn Rynkiewicz.

"It's very important to realize many careers are still gender-based, which you wouldn't think," Berhanu observes. Men traditionally dominate STEM classrooms. But, Berhanu adds, "FIT is already majority female, so here 'more inclusive' means creating diverse examples, being a face for women and underrepresented folks."

As science educators at FIT, the professors teach about ways that science elevates design. In the classroom, their students learn about "materials and their life cycle, natural dyes versus synthetics, and how to create systems for recycling garments," Rynkiewicz explains. The goal is to help students see that science plays a critical role everything from no-waste patternmaking to the incorporation of bacteria-killing nanotechnology into textiles.

"It's become urgent for



21 September 18  
September 21

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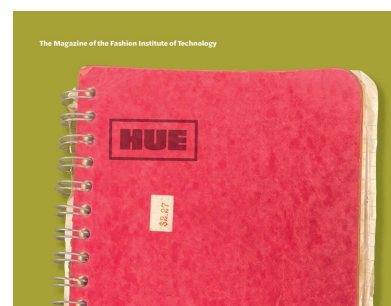
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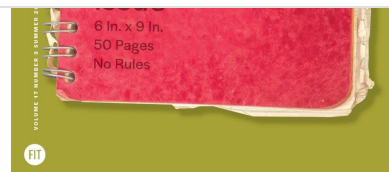
in fashion.  
It's about  
rethinking,  
not just  
adapting  
designs, but  
changing  
your whole



Deborah Berhanu.

understanding of fashion," Berhanu says. "Preparing students to tackle the great challenges ahead requires answers from many different voices, so they dive into this new work with optimism."

To meet the future with confidence, students need skills and knowledge. "We teach them to analyze data and find solutions, rather than just giving up," Rynkiewicz adds. "It's not helpless. There are a lot of places to make a big difference."



Check out the summer 2024 issue of *Hue*, featuring sketchbooks from current students, alumni, and faculty! Now online at [hue.fitnyc.edu](https://hue.fitnyc.edu).



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227 West 27th Street  
New York, NY 10001

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