Dr. Amy E. Slaton is a professor of history at Drexel University. She holds a PhD in the History and Sociology of Science from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on the history of technical expertise and work, seen through the lens of historical ideas of human difference. Her most recent book, *Race, Rigor and Selectivity in U.S. Engineering: The History of an Occupational Color Line* (Harvard University Press, 2010), follows racial ideologies in engineering higher education since the 1940s. Her current book project, *All Good People: Diversity, Difference and Opportunity in High-Tech America* describes the limits of American commitments to equity around race, gender, LGBTQ identities, and disabilities as those are expressed in the training of the nation’s industrial workforce. She is co-editor with Tiago Saraiva of the journal *History & Technology*.

**Abstract**

As many Silicon Valley leaders, AI entrepreneurs, and other authoritative voices in the tech sector today promise a stronger economy and better lives for Americans through high-tech innovation, a strong message of inclusion and diversity often shares the stage. We are told that wherever STEM talent is to be found, corporate America will find it, thus bringing long-excluded creative women, people of color, disabled people, and people of LGBTQI identities into the inventive fold. It may sound new, but the idea that innovative R&D and inclusion go together is actually generations-old at this point. What has made this promise so compelling, for so long in the United States? And can the 2019 version do any more to correct the nation’s inequities than have those older, and obviously, less than successful, invocations?