

I AM STEM

Ebony Hood

Ebony Hood is the newly-appointed director of the [NeoSTEM Ecosystem](#). Ebony has degrees in biology and sustainability from [Baldwin Wallace University](#), and a master's degree in education from [Kent State University](#). In this conversation, Ebony discusses the impact of family support, community support, and mentorship on her STEM journey.

Can you describe the family and community support you had to get to where you are now?

Well, like many families, I would definitely be classified as a first generation college student. But with that came a ton of support. My mom and dad were like "rah-rah, git er done, make it happen!" And luckily, I also have a sister who has gone through the college journey along with me, and we tend to be each other's backbone. So, if she knows something, she shares it. If I know something, I'll share. We have our dream of getting doctoral degrees and walking across the stage together! You have to be a role model for your community to show that it's possible.

What obstacles have you encountered throughout your career?

Sheesh, a million obstacles, STEM fields can be challenging. It's so easy to get involved with TikToks and stuff like that, and not give learning the time it deserves. You need to have dedication. I used to call myself the "flashcard queen." I would go around with stacks, just to get that foundational base of learning. The next thing, is the idea of finding mentors. You have to be vulnerable, you have to open up...tell folks you need help. I even ask people, what is it that I don't know to ask in order to help myself along this journey? You don't know what you don't know, ask!

Feel confident enough to bridge that gap between you and teachers, or counselors, or folks in the community that you know that may be doing STEM that can help you.

**"STAY
CURIOUS.
KEEP
FOLLOWING
THAT PATH,
AND KEEP
GOING."**



The NeoSTEM Ecosystem is a collaboration of organizations throughout Northeast Ohio who partner to improve STEM educational opportunities for all students. Formed in 2014, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem's goals are to improve meaningful STEM learning opportunities for all students in the Northeast Ohio region. As one of 94 ecosystems operating as a part of the STEM Learning Ecosystems Community of Practice, the NeoSTEM Ecosystem holds regular virtual and in-person meetings to learn about what community educational needs are and to develop solutions for those needs. For more information, please contact us at info@neostem.org.

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