

Biography:

Theodora Pinou has been a member of Sigma Xi for over 20 years. First in her family to go to college, she realizes how important it is for the scientific community to embrace young people from diverse traditional backgrounds and upbringing. Her values and upbringing are what helped her to value diverse viewpoints, and embrace the importance of honesty and ethical research among her peers and team researchers. Her background and supportive mentors reinforced the importance of failure in research, and how to learn and grow to achieve greatness. Today she serves as President of the Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) Chapter, an elected position that she has held for four terms. She has been the major force in invigorating the Chapter's membership and activities. When she transferred membership from Yale University to WCSU, the local chapter membership included science faculty only. Today the chapter includes faculty and regional industry practitioners from math, computer science, psychology, physical anthropology, science education, and the sciences. Members come together for conversation on a regular basis, and students participate in research competitions with Sigma Xi rigor. She worked for 18 months with members of her chapter to organize the 2015 Northeast regional meeting which included over 300 research abstracts, and the 2020 virtual Northeast regional meeting which included a "*Hall of Possibilities*" for guests to visit and discuss career options, and a research presentation on drug design by Pfizer scientists.