

About President Gilda A. Barabino

Gilda A. Barabino is the second president of Olin College of Engineering. A chemical engineering pioneer in the field of medicine and global health, she has pursued an equity ethic across her interdisciplinary career.

Under her leadership, Olin College has increased its representation of women and people of color among faculty and students under its mission of “Engineering for everyone,” where engineering is open to all, and engineering is done in service of everyone. Aware of visibility and invisibility when it comes to education, she continues Olin’s integration of the arts and humanities into STEM education as a way of examining the world through different perspectives. She is an internationally recognized thought leader on race/ethnicity and gender in science and engineering, with a particular focus on creating cultures and climates that support a sense of belonging.

Growing up in a military family, Dr. Barabino moved schools frequently. She was accustomed to being the first or only Black woman in academic spaces for her childhood and beyond: as the first African-American in the graduate chemical engineering program at Rice University and the fifth Black woman to receive a PhD in chemical engineering in the country. Her desire to give back to her community led her to sickle cell anemia, which disproportionately affects Blacks. Her groundbreaking research in the areas of sickle cell disease and orthopedic tissue engineering informed current technologies and formed the basis for novel therapies. Through her subsequent work in global health and interdisciplinary research and education, Dr. Barabino pioneered new engineering approaches to problems in medicine.

Prior to becoming president of Olin College, Dr. Barabino served as Dean of the Grove School of Engineering at the City College of New York. She established the Master’s in Translational Medicine program, which addresses unmet clinical needs through the integration of engineering, medical innovation, and entrepreneurship. She has also held academic and administrative appointments at Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, and Northeastern University.

Advocating for equity and justice throughout her career, Dr. Barabino was the inaugural vice provost for academic diversity at Georgia Tech and vice provost for undergraduate education at Northeastern. She leads initiatives to foster cultures of belonging in STEM education, including as the founder and executive director of the National Institute for Faculty Equity. She co-chaired the National Academies study and report on Advancing Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in STEMM Organizations.

Dr. Barabino is the board chair and a past president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world’s largest interdisciplinary scientific society. In advancing science, engineering, and innovation, she and AAAS are committed to science for and by all and engineering for everyone. She is also a past president of the Biomedical Engineering Society and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering. She serves on the Defense Innovation Board, the NIH National Advisory

Council for Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, the congressionally mandated Committee on Equal Opportunities in Science and Engineering, the VentureWell Board, and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Committee on Women in Science Engineering and Medicine which she chairs.

Dr. Barabino is an elected member of the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Medicine, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, as well as a past president and fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, and the Biomedical Engineering Society. She is a recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring Award, the Pierre Galletti Award from the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering, and two honorary degrees from Xavier University of Louisiana and from Dartmouth College.

Dr. Barabino received a B.S. from Xavier University of Louisiana and a Ph.D. from Rice University.