Dr. Diane Urista—music theory faculty and core curriculum division head—earned a PhD in music theory from Columbia University, Master of Music degree in music theory from Northwestern University and Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance, cum laude, from Concordia College. She received her Dalcroze Eurhythmics certification from the late Robert Abramson of The Juilliard School.

Urista currently serves on the editorial board for . Her research focuses on the symbiotic relationship between performance and analysis, embodied musical understanding and aural skills pedagogy. Recently, she contributed an essay on embodied music theory pedagogy for , W.W. Norton 2018. Her book was published by Oxford University Press in 2016. Her most recent research focuses on the use of keyboard in the music theory curriculum for instilling theoretical concepts. She has presented at numerous international, national and regional conferences, including the Society for Music Theory, New York State Music Theory Society, Music Theory Midwest, College Music Symposium and Second Annual Cleveland Music and Medicine Symposium.

Urista is the recipient of many awards and fellowships, including the American Dissertation Fellowship from the Association of University Women, Mellon Foundation, President's Fellowship from Columbia University and teaching and research grants from Oberlin College-Conservatory. In 2010 she was nominated for the Carl F. Wittke Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching at Case Western Reserve University; in 2001 she was nominated for a teaching excellence award by the School of Education, New York University; in 1997 she was awarded a fellowship from the Mellon Foundation for excellence in teaching at Columbia University. Before her CIM appointment, Urista was an assistant professor of music theory at the Oberlin Conservatory; she also taught music theory at New York University and music humanities at Columbia University.

She is a member of the Society for Music Theory, New York State Music Theory Society and Dalcroze Society of America. Urista was appointed to the CIM faculty in 2008.