

Thompson Lecture Series 2017

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Science by and for all: Challenges and some possible solutions towards broadening pathways into the atmospheric sciences

Tuesday 23 May 2017, 11:00 am. Foothills Lab Large Auditorium

Abstract:

Like many arenas in the United States, broadening the inclusion of people and perspectives in the scientific enterprise continues to be a hot button issue. Terms like “diversity of thought” have been used, and misused, in the academy as a way of attempting to frame the desired end goal of what it means to have truly representative science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Reaching this desired goal is especially important given the complex nature of the types of questions and problems the atmospheric sciences attempts to address. Issues of diversity and inclusion influences everything from: who is brought to the table to have their needs and questions addressed; what types of questions are deemed acceptable, interesting, or valuable; what areas of expertise are included to appropriately approach questions; the education of the workforce, in terms of scope, teaching styles, and assessment; and who is permitted to advance and how their work is valued.

Through this lens, this talk will focus on four main areas: 1) The meaning of diversity in STEM; 2) The importance of diversity to the successful continuation of the scientific enterprise, and how this affects the atmospheric sciences in particular; 3) Some of the big challenges and barriers that we face in improving the inclusiveness of our field; and 4) Some current efforts underway, and thoughts on what more could be done. Building on the work of NCAR and others over the past 20 years, I will discuss the partnership built between UIUC and the highly successful SOARS program as an example of how to expand best practices developed by SOARS to the university environment.