



# CONNECTIONS

*Linking EEO, Diversity and Science*

Volume 1, Issue 20

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

March 2013

## ON THE VALUE OF A DIVERSE WORKFORCE



I appreciate the opportunity to provide a guest column for the *EEO Connections* newsletter.

I've been with OAR for a little over a year now, and I continue to be very impressed with the caliber of people in OAR and your dedication to NOAA's mission. In my first 100 days on the job, I visited all seven of OAR's laboratories

so I could meet as many of you as possible and learn about the outstanding research you are doing. In the coming year, I'm looking forward to additional opportunities to meet more of you and learn about your latest work.

OAR serves a unique, forward thinking role within NOAA. We conduct the research and development that improves NOAA's service and stewardship activities, and enhances the capabilities of a great range of partners in the public, private, and academic sectors. One of OAR's greatest strengths is the diverse range of scientific expertise, technical knowledge, and administrative skills we possess within our laboratories and programs, in our staff offices, and with our Cooperative Institute partners and University grantees across the country.

We all take great pride at being the best at what we do. I believe that the more diverse a workforce we have, the more likely we are to look at problems

from unique perspectives, and build a stronger and more vibrant intellectual atmosphere within OAR. A diverse workforce can improve performance, motivation, success and interaction with others. It also can help us ensure a workplace in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

We still have a significant way to go towards building the kind of diverse workforce across OAR that we would like to have. The programs supported through the EEO Office are very important in this regard. However, ultimately we will only be successful in fostering and growing a diverse workforce in OAR if each of us values diversity in our day-to-day activities and decisions. I encourage each of you to make this commitment.

I'm very proud to be a part of OAR and thank each of you for your work every day in making OAR the outstanding organization it is.

Dr. Robert Detrick, OAR Assistant Administrator

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## Special Emphasis

### March is National Women's History Month: Graduate Students Meeting the Technical and Leadership Needs at OAR

**Lori Sentman**, NOAA's Physical Scientist at the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory (GFDL) in Princeton, was selected for the OAR Graduate Studies Program (GSP) for 2012-2013. This program is intended to



Lori Sentman

meet the technical and leadership needs of OAR by growing an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities, and raising performance in their occupational fields. The GSP is aimed at providing funding and formal periods of work, study and structured classroom training for graduate studies.

At GFDL, Lori's focus is on carrying out NOAA's mission to understand and predict changes in climate, the impact of ecosystem changes on climate, the impact of climate changes on ecosystems, and to share this knowledge and information with others. While studying to obtain a doctorate degree in Atmospheric Science at Rutgers University, Lori plans on developing an Earth System Model (ESM) configured to simulate

a paleoclimate event which will help us to better understand how climate changes in the future. Investigating the impact of the closing of the Isthmus of Panama on the physical climate system will provide a better understanding of the processes of climate change. In particular, a focus may be on the role of the ocean response and its relationship with climate variability (e.g., El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)). Understanding how these processes respond and interact will provide a foundation for increased understanding and prediction of future climate change in that both may change in the future as climate changes. Furthermore, the utilization of an ESM for these studies allows us to investigate how the biogeochemical processes respond and interact with changing climate. This test allows us to evaluate the model in a very different climate framework and will yield significant understanding of how future climate change will impact ecosystems, as well as provide important information for decision-makers.

"My professional goals for the future include strengthening my skills for conducting independent research and improve communication of my research findings. Obtaining these skills will enable me to better perform the tasks necessary for carrying out NOAA's mission and the 5-year research plan by improving our understanding of climate processes, and clearly articulating future climate change research findings to the scientific community and the public."

*(Continued on page 3)*

**DID YOU KNOW? Federally Employed Women (FEW)** is a private membership organization working as an advocacy group to improve the status of women employed by the federal government and by the district of columbia government. For information on chapters in your region visit [www.few.org](http://www.few.org) and click on Find Your Chapter. Two active chapters with NOAA employees include:

- Rocky Mountain Chapter #014 (Boulder, CO) Contact Shannon Mahan at 303-236-7928
- Seas and Skies Chapter (Silver Spring, MD) Contact Nicole Mason at 301-734-1279

**R**ita Jacobs, a native of Wilmington, DE, is an intern with the Director of the Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR)/Office of Air and Weather Quality



Rita Jacobs

(OWAQ). Her mentor is John Cortinas. Rita assists in managing the social science projects that were funded for FY12.

Rita is a graduate student working on her Master's in Sociology at Howard University. Her future career plans include getting her Ph.D. in Sociology so that she can teach

Sociology on the collegiate level and work as a social scientist. Rita learned about the NOAA internship program through her mentor, Dr. Terri Adams-Fuller, an Associate Professor of Sociology at Howard University. Dr. Terri Adams-Fuller is also a social scientist at Howard's National Center for Atmospheric Sciences (NCAS).

Prior to the internship, Rita did not know much about NOAA. She said the internship has increased her knowledge about NOAA and she has learned how influential NOAA is to society. "After being here, I learned about NOAA's commitment to increasing understanding and prediction of changes in weather and communicating that knowledge to the public." Rita said that she understands that predicting weather is only a part of what NOAA does, but she relays that message to lay people and they in turn automatically understand a part of what NOAA does.

Rita said a major take-away from her internship experience is learning about the importance of social science in helping NOAA accomplish its mission. "By sharing weather related knowledge with the public and encouraging individuals to conserve and manage

the environment in which they live, social science will help NOAA better communicate with the public that it serves." She said the internship has also greatly increased her knowledge of the use of scientists, i.e. physical, natural, and social at government related entities. "My internship highlights an array of career opportunities that may be available to me once I receive my Ph.D. I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to work and learn at NOAA. This internship is one of hopefully many defining moments in my career."

Rita would highly recommend the internship to other students because it will give them the experience working in a field similar to their research and/or career interests. Outside of her internship and graduate studies, Rita's hobbies include reading, staying up with political and social issues, and watching Shonda Rhimes' shows, e.g. Scandal and Grey's Anatomy.

### Outreach and Recruitment Resources - National Women and Minority Organizations

- American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES)
- American Meteorological Society Board on Women & Minorities (AMS/BWM)
- Association for Women in Science (AWIS)
- Earth Science Women's Network (ESWN)
- Great Minds in STEM
- Mentoring Physical Oceanography Women to Increase Retention (MPOWIR)
- Mathematics Engineering Science Achievement (MESA)
- National Organization for Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE)
- Society of Women Engineers (SWE)
- SACNAS Devoted to Advancing Hispanics, Chicanos and Native Americans in Science
- MAES Latinos in Science and Engineering
- Wyoming Women In Science (WIS)

## EEO/Diversity Across OAR

### AOML



**Howie Friedman (AOML) receives a plaque from Teresa Gulotta-Powers, South Florida FEB Chairperson, for his service as FEB treasurer.**



**Russell St. Fleur (AOML), Jaqui Arroyo, Executive Director South Florida FEB, and Alejandra Lorenzo. (AOML). Russell and Alejandra were recognized for their assistance with FEB's website.**

AOML employees Howie Friedman, Hurricane Research Division and EEO Advisory Member, and Alejandra Lorenzo, Computer Networks and Services Division, are actively involved in the South Florida Federal Executive Board (FEB). Howie was re-elected as the treasurer for the South Florida FEB for fiscal year 2013. He is also a member of their annual Federal Employee of the Year Awards Committee and is currently the co-chairperson of the FEB's Mediation/SNAP (Shared Neutrals-ADR [Alternative Dispute Resolution] Program) Committee.

Alejandra is a member and co-chair of the FEB's Web Council. In FY12, Alejandra and Russell St. Fleur, AOML Hurricane Research Division, were recognized for their efforts in developing a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) between AOML and the FEB that enabled AOML to temporarily host the FEB's website on the AOML server while it awaits migration to a Department of Commerce server. Alejandra also works with the FEB to involve speakers from the various Federal agencies to participate in MAST Academy activities and the Hialeah and Miami High School English as a Second Language programs.

In addition to her work with the FEB, Alejandra participated in the ITWomen 10th annual Gala Scholarship Fund CIO Casino Night. ITWomen is a South Florida grassroots, volunteer-based not-for-profit organization founded by senior women in the field of Technology and Engineering. ITWomen hosts a scholarship fund to support young women who are interested in a STEM career. Currently, ITWomen is supporting approximately 15 women. AOML provides speakers to ITWomen in support of their Role Model Speakers initiative. Learn more about ITWomen at their website: [www.itwomen.org](http://www.itwomen.org)

### ARL/ATDD

Dr. LaToya Myles was co-author of an oral presentation entitled "The Role of Alumni Groups as Pathways to Increasing Diversity Efforts in STEM-Related Fields" during the Building a Diverse Geoscience Workforce session at the fall meeting of the American Geophysical Union (AGU) in early December. The presentation, which was authored by a collaborative group led by Dr. Natasha White (NOS/NCCOS), described the recent formation of the NOAA Graduate Science Program (GSP) Alumni and their efforts



**Dr. LaToya Myles and Science, Engineering and Mathematics (SEM) Link Inc. Executive Director Ms. Tokiwa T. Smith at the poster they co-authored for the American Geophysical Union Conference on December 5, 2012. Photo Credit: Dr. April Croxton (NMFS/NEFSC)**

to promote professional development and expand networking opportunities for former and current GSP fellows.

In addition, Dr. Myles was co-author of a poster presentation “Linking Urban Youth to STEM Research: Outcomes of Educational Outreach in Diverse K-12 Schools” during the Developing K-12 Research Synergies to Inspire Young Scientists session. The presentation described methods of engaging students in hands-on STEM activities and exploration of STEM careers developed by Science, Engineering and Mathematics Link, Inc.

During the Oak Ridge United Way/Community Shares Campaign, ATDD hosted a presentation by Jill Baker, Director of the Keystone Adult Day Program in Oak Ridge, and Amber Mullins, Event and Volunteer Coordinator with the Humane Society of the Tennessee Valley (HSTV), Knoxville, TN. The Keystone Adult Day Program is a licensed program for adults with functional or cognitive disabilities. Keystone has a professionally trained staff that provides meaningful activities and daily programming that enriches lives. It was established in 1988 to provide people an alternative to institutional care. Keystone is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. The representatives discussed how the United Way and Community Shares supported their programs.

## ESRL/GSD

Thomas LeFebvre judged the science fair at Eisenhower Elementary School in November, a school that is 16% Hispanic and 17% economically challenged. “The projects were done by elementary school students, so they varied widely in their subject matter. Several projects rated consumer products using different trials of various brands of bleach, soap, etc. One project tested the time a parachute remained aloft and correlated it with the areal size of the parachute. Several younger students presented reports on a variety of science subjects such as space or the atmosphere. Some performed a demonstration of some science concept.”

Tom said he always enjoys talking to the students while trying to show them how the science they chose affects their daily lives. He said exchanging ideas with the students is always the most rewarding part of the science fair judge experience.

## NSSL

Bob Rabin attended the 18<sup>th</sup> Inuit Studies conference at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. last October. He was there to support Native Alaskan students giving presentations on weather and climate. The students attended the STEM camp last summer held at the Ilisagvik Tribal College in Barrow, AK. Bob provided activities at the



**Bob Rabin, NSSL Meteorologist and EEO Advisory Member at Ilisagvik Tribal College and University STEM camp**

STEM camp to give the students an opportunity to learn about remote observations, such as satellites, and how they are used in research and weather forecasting.

Bob also continued to mentor students and was featured in the McGill Mentor Program Winter 2013 newsletter article, “Our Mentorship Experiences.” He is currently serving as a mentor for a student enrolled in the Masters of Science program from the (former) NOAA ISET center at North Carolina A&T University, a Historically Black College and University, and students at the NESDIS CREST institute at the City College of New York.

## PMEL

Dr. Robert Embley of the Newport Laboratory participated in a coaching session and presentation to students at Benson Polytechnic High School in Portland, Oregon. The students were preparing for competition in the Oregon Salmon Bowl, a regional competition of the National Ocean Science Bowl.

## NOAA Research EEO/Diversity Program Office

### **CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER**

*Connections* is published quarterly by the OAR EEO Office. The purpose is to share accomplishments and to link Diversity, EEO and Science within all of OAR laboratories and programs.

If you have any newsletter ideas, suggestions and stories, please email to Georgia Madrid  
[georgia.madrid@noaa.gov](mailto:georgia.madrid@noaa.gov).

### **ABOUT US**

**VISION OF EEO OFFICE:** To assist the Agency in creating a diverse workforce that is inclusive and free of discriminatory and retaliatory actions.

**EEO MISSION:** To bring awareness to employees, applicants for employment and management about EEO through the following:

**Empowerment:** Consultation services to employees, managers and applicants for employment.

**Exposure:** Recruitment and outreach activities for short and long-term recruitment.

**Education:** Federal EEO Mandated training, Special Emphasis programs and *Connections* newsletter.

**Evaluation:** Monitor employment statistics to prepare reports for NOAA, DOC, EEOC and OPM.

**Website:**

[www.eeo.oar.noaa.gov](http://www.eeo.oar.noaa.gov)

### **Staff**



Nicole Mason  
EEO/Diversity Program  
Manager  
301-734-1279



Georgia Madrid  
EEO Specialist  
303-497-6732

### **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

#### **EEO COUNSELING:**

Federal law prohibits discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age (40 years and over), physical or mental disability, genetic information, and retaliation for participating in activities protected by the civil rights statutes. In addition, NOAA prohibits discrimination because of sexual orientation.

Employees, NOAA Corps Officers, or applicants for employment with NOAA who believe that they have been discriminated or retaliated against may contact an EEO Counselor. The Counselor will attempt to resolve the matter and furnish information about filing a complaint of discrimination. To preserve your rights under the law, you must contact an EEO Counselor within 45 CALENDAR DAYS of the date of alleged discrimination.

To initiate EEO Counseling or for more information, contact:

**Civil Rights Office, NOAA**

**VOICE (301) 713-0500**

**TDD (301) 713-0982**

**1-800-452-6728**

**Website: [www.eeo.noaa.gov](http://www.eeo.noaa.gov)**

#### **ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:**

NOAA Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Office provides mediation and other services and seeks early resolution.

Voice: 206-526-6171

Fax: 206-527-6928.

Website: [www.adr.noaa.gov](http://www.adr.noaa.gov)