



CONNECTIONS

Linking EEO, Diversity and Science

Issue #46

EEO/Diversity Newsletter for NOAA Research

DECEMBER 2020

Dr. DaNa Carlis - From Howard University to NOAA Providing Opportunities for Students at NOAA's Cooperative Science Centers

Dr. DaNa Carlis, Deputy Director for the Global Systems Laboratory in Boulder, CO, is a proud alumnus of Howard University and a strong advocate for providing opportunities for students from NOAA's Cooperative Science Centers (CSCs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). He completed his Master's and Ph.D. in Atmospheric Sciences at Howard University through the [NOAA Educational Partnership Program with MSIs \(EPP/MSI\)](#) NOAA Center for Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology (NCAS-M). NCAS-M is one of four [NOAA CSCs](#) established at MSIs through NOAA cooperative agreements.

Once he decided that he would attend college, DaNa knew that he wanted to attend a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). Originally, he planned on attending Jackson State University but that changed when an alumnus of his high school gave a talk to his high school marching band about Howard University. DaNa was intrigued by his invitation to visit Howard, so during Christmas break, he and four friends visited Howard University. "I fell in love with Washington, D.C. and Howard University. It was one of the most inspiring places I had ever experienced. There were so many highly educated and talented people who looked like me that were interested in solving the world's problems. At Howard, I was hanging out with the cream of the crop."

In his senior year, Drs. Vernon Morris and Joshua Halpern from the Chemistry Department, encouraged him to consider a Master's Degree and apply to a new program, the Howard University Program in Atmospheric Science (HUPAS). It is through HUPAS where he was exposed to NOAA scientists and careers. It is also where he learned about the EPP/MSI program. Through that program he changed his focus from Atmospheric Chemistry to Meteorology and became the second African American male at Howard University to obtain a PhD in Atmospheric Science.



Photo: Dana Carlis, NCAS-M EPP/MSI Alumnus, flying with the NOAA Hurricane Hunters back in 2006 on the NOAA G-IV plane during a reconnaissance mission over the Central Pacific Ocean. Their mission was to collect weather information by releasing dropsondes from the plane flying at 38,000 ft above the ocean. The weather information was sent and used by the National Weather Service to improve their forecasts.



Photo: Dana Carlis receives his PhD in Atmospheric Science from Howard University.

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Providing Opportunities for CSC Students (Con't)

“The NOAA’s CSCs are conduits for people of color to gain opportunities and get their name out there who would not have otherwise been exposed or recruited to NOAA. There are so many CSC students who are talented, tenacious and hungry for a chance to prove themselves.”

The [NOAA Experiential Research & Training Opportunities \(NERTO\)](#) program allows graduate students the opportunity to gain valuable experiences at NOAA. To make for a successful internship experience, DaNa recommends that mentors take a holistic approach. “A research mentor is important but you also need a career coach to be there to share what it means to develop one’s career and what life is like in the scientific community.” He also recommends bringing in a group of students so they don’t feel isolated. The next step is to create a pathway to Federal employment. DaNa said that using the Pathways program and developing strong partnerships with NOAA’s contractors and Cooperative Institutes is important to recruiting the students to NOAA.



Photo: L to R: Craig McLean, DaNa Carlis, Stu Levenbach. Dana received the NOAA Research Employee of the Year Award – Leadership, 2018.

DaNa’s journey from Tulsa, OK to Howard University to NOAA is a success story and an example of the importance of providing opportunities to students at NOAA’s CSCs. “Growing up in Tulsa, OK, I heard about the National Weather Service because of the Oklahoma tornadoes but I did not know about NOAA until I went to Howard University. I was always interested in math and science because I liked solving problems and I had a mentor who inspired me to follow my passion in math and science. It is an honor and privilege to be where I am at today.”

For more information about the Office of Education EPP/MSI programs and its components, please visit their website at <https://www.Noaa.Gov/office-education/epp-msi>

OFFICE OF EDUCATION EPP/MSI PROGRAMS AND ITS COMPONENTS

COOPERATIVE SCIENCE CENTERS (CSCs)

CSCs are designed to create collaborative partnerships with academic institutions. Each CSC must conduct education and research that directly supports NOAA’s mission. The centers recruit, train and graduate students, particularly from underrepresented communities, to create a pool of diverse candidates from which the agency and others may select its future workforce. CSC scientific research supports and stimulates interest in STEM disciplines that are aligned with NOAA’s mission, strategic plans, objectives and outcomes.

EPP/MSI UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This scholarship program increases the number of students, particularly from underrepresented minority communities, who attend Minority Serving Institutions and graduate with degrees in fields integral to NOAA’s mission

NOAA Experiential Research and Training Opportunities (NERTO)

Provide value to both the NOAA host offices and the EPP/MSI Cooperative Science Center-supported students. This is a win-win opportunity for NOAA and its academic partners. NERTOs increase the number of CSC-supported students who participate in meaningful NOAA mission-aligned science, technology, engineering, mathematics, policy, natural resource management, and social science research and training at NOAA facilities and earn NOAA mission-aligned postsecondary degrees.

NOAA MENTORS- Hosting an EPP/MSI student

<https://www.noaa.gov/office-education/epp-msi/noaa-mentors>

EEO/DIVERSITY AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE

2020 EEO/Diversity Award For Exemplary Service - Individual Awards

In recognition for their consistent educational outreach and mentorship activities with women and minority communities.



Alejandra Lorenzo, IT Specialist, AOML

Alejandra has represented the OAR EEO office at various outreach events. This year, she participated as a panelist for the NOAA session, *What is NOAA?* at the Women of Color conference. She gave a very inspirational talk on her work as an IT Specialist supporting AOML's research, *Computer Science Opens Doors – Walk Through Them*, at the American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) conference. Her abstract was the only NOAA submission accepted by AISES. For the June EEO newsletter, she wrote about her experience with mandatory telework. Locally, she participated in the Hialeah Elementary School's Career Day, coordinated the schedule of speakers for the South Florida Federal Executive Board's English as a Second Language program at Hialeah Senior and Westland Hialeah Senior High and participated in the STEM Advisory Board meetings of the National Academy Foundation.



Dr. Renellys Perez, Oceanographer, AOML

Renellys's activities include outreach and presentations with the following: University of Miami-Rosenstiel School outreach event "Exploring Marine Science Day" (aka Women in Science Day), rules judge for the South Florida National Ocean (Manatee) Science Bowl, Scientists in Every Florida School, Argentina elementary school students via Skype a Scientist, Manchester University Undergrads and NCAS-M Howard University panelist on NOAA Atmosphere Observations and Technologies. She is also a member of the AOML Diversity, Inclusion and You (DIY) group.



Dr. Lori Sentman, Research Physical Scientist, GFDL

Lori has consistently demonstrated her passion for science by engaging in numerous outreach activities. She was invited by the faculty at Monmouth Junction Elementary School to present a lesson to 3rd graders on atmospheric pressure and barometers. She crafted a lesson, *No pressure! All about barometers*, specifically tailored to the 3rd grade Core Curriculum Content Standards and explained the science behind atmospheric pressure and how it is measured using barometers via discussion, demonstrations, and a barometer design challenge. She was a mentor to a student from Carmel High School in NY, on her research project using climate models and data to find a correlation between climate and Lyme disease cases in the NY region. The research project was awarded entry into the competitive Westchester Science & Engineering Fair.

EEO/DIVERSITY AWARDS FOR EXEMPLARY SERVICE



Elizabeth Smith, PhD, Research Meteorologist, NSSL

Elizabeth Smith is a new member of the EEO Advisory Committee, serving as the NSSL alternate. She is also a member of the NSSL Diversity and Inclusion Sustainability Team (NDIST) and previously served on the CIMMS Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Her outreach efforts reflect a strong aptitude for sharing her science knowledge. She has participated in online SCIENCE-A-THON activities; assisted with an outreach activity at the Oklahoma EPSCoR Women in Science Grade 6-12 conference, and volunteered at the National Weather Festival all day showing CLAMPS or Collaborative Lower Atmospheric Mobile Profiling System. She has also been a mentor to many students including summer REU students which led to presentations at AMS and senior capstone students. She serves on the board of the National Weather Museum and Science Center.



Segayle Thompson, PhD, Formulation and Congressional Analysis, CFO

While at WPO, Segayle Thompson, participated in the UCAR's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion External Advisory committee meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to gain an understanding of the advancements in diversity, equity and inclusion effort at UCAR and provide feedback, suggestions, and recommendations on methods to improve. She attended the 2019 Women of Color STEM conference in Detroit, MI and volunteered at the 18th Annual Alfred Street Baptist Church Historically Black College & University (HBCU) Festival at the Gaylord Hotel and Conference center in National Harbor, MD. It is the nation's largest HBCU festival with attendees from all across the country.

2020 EEO/Diversity Award for Exemplary Service - Program Award: Global Ocean Monitoring Observing Program (GOMO)

In recognition for actively helping to lead and support EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives and in recognition of these employees for their creation and participation in diversity initiatives that have drawn attention to NOAA and the great work and research that women are conducting: Jessica Mkitarian (GOMO), Dr. Emily Smith (GOMO) and Caitlin Valentine (COMMS)



Photo: L to R: Jessica Mkitarian, Dr. Emily Smith and Caitlin Valentine.

Climate Program Office

FY 21 NOFO includes terms and conditions on Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Harassment - by Jennifer Dopkowski, Regina Cain and Ben DeAngelo

OAR's Climate Program Office (CPO), in collaboration with Kelley Bonner, the Director of NOAA's Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Office, created a new term and condition in CPO's FY21 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) regarding sexual harassment and other forms of harassment. The newly introduced language is based on the policy adopted by NSF in 2018, and it specifically specifies that:

"In accordance with NOAA's Sexual Assault Sexual Harassment (SASH) Administrative Order 202-1106 and Financial Assistance Alert (FAA) 18-01, the Climate Program Office (CPO) will not tolerate sexual harassment, other forms of harassment or sexual assault within the agency, at awardee organizations, or anywhere CPO-funded science and education are conducted...requires CPO to be notified: 1) of any findings/determinations regarding the PI/PD or co-PI/co-PD that demonstrate a violation of awardee codes of conduct, policies, regulations or statutes relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault; or 2) if the awardee places the PI/PD, or co-PI/co-PD on administrative leave or imposes an administrative action relating to a finding or investigation of a violation of awardee policies, codes of conduct, statutes or regulations relating to sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, or sexual assault."

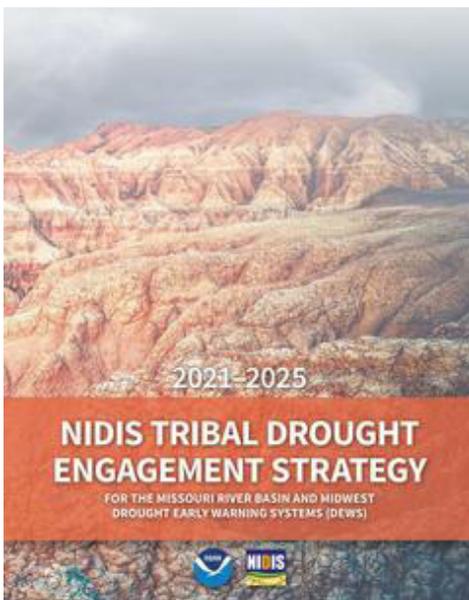
This is the first time that specific language has been included in a NOAA federal funding opportunity to specifically address grant awardee institutions or the grant PIs, particularly those non-federal PIs who are not conducting research in a NOAA vessel or facility.

CPO grant recipients will be directed to NOAA's SASH website (https://www.eeo.noaa.gov/sexual_harassment.html) and hotline for any harassment issue that needs to be reported.

Additional training will be offered for CPO program managers in advance of giving out awards next summer (in response to our FY21 NOFO).

Kelley Bonner and General Counsel welcomed CPO taking on a leadership role on this issue, with the hope and expectation that this will become standard language and policy for all of NOAA's grants.

NIDIS Releases Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy for the Missouri River Basin and Midwest



In order to ensure the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in the implementation of our DEWS, NIDIS launched a Tribal Drought Engagement initiative in January 2019 in collaboration with the Masters of the Environment Program at University of Colorado-Boulder. The project aimed to strengthen relationships with tribal resource managers across the Missouri River Basin and Midwest DEWS regions in order to effectively deliver timely and relevant drought information.

The NIDIS Tribal Drought Engagement Strategy: 2021–2025 was developed following this project, which included a year of consultations with tribal resource managers across the two regions. These consultations helped identify critical engagement gaps and the actions that could be taken to address them. The engagement in these two DEWS will inform consultations with tribal nations as a foundation for scaling the Strategy to other regions.

<https://www.drought.gov/drought/sites/drought.gov.drought/files/NIDIS-Tribal-Engagement-Strategy-2021-2025.pdf>

Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML)

What a Year for Presentations by Alejandra Lorenzo

It's been quite the blessing to represent OAR at STEM conferences for the past nine years. Walking through the conference venues and interacting with the attendees allows for a fuller and more informed presentation. STEM attendees are usually timid and quiet but passionate about their subject matter. They ask insightful and challenging questions. But this year it has been different. This year it's been virtual and quiet.

How does one connect with an attendee that can't be seen or heard? This was the challenge I faced when I was invited to speak at the Women of Color (WOC) STEM conference and the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) conference.

For the WOC conference, the challenge was to work and collaborate with my NOAA colleagues on a "One NOAA" presentation. Five line offices came together to showcase what NOAA does and how we are interconnected. We each provided slides and linked them together to promote NOAA to new and rising STEM students. As a long winded extrovert, it was hard cutting down Craig McLean's OAR-101 presentation to seven minutes so all five of us could present and take questions. The path I took was to focus on the research done in the field, since that is what I am most familiar with. Thanks Craig.



Photo Caption: A screenshot of Alejandra in the video she presented at the AISES conference. The title of her session was, *Computer Science Opens Doors - Walk Through Them*.

Having previously attended an AISES conference, I was a bit perplexed as to how I was going to connect to the attending students. The dynamics of AISES is one that is based on connecting in person. Connecting to the communities represented and allowing them an avenue to ask questions is key to promoting NOAA and OAR specifically. While meeting with our AOML communications staff, we came up with the concept of making a short video. When you cannot share your story in person, make a video. The communications team and I decided a video showing AOML's laboratories and staff would inform the students of what AOML does. We combined that with a video where I share my story of how I became a computer scientist. The session was titled, *Computer Science Opens Doors – Walk Through Them*.

The lesson: Getting the NOAA, OAR and AOML story out there is key to our future growth as a world class research organization. Virtual presentations highlight just how important it is to have our message ready in all formats so we can better inform our future STEM workforce.

Our future is watching and listening.

ABOUT THE WOMEN OF COLOR STEM CONFERENCE

Since 1995, Women of Color magazine's annual Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Conference has been the premier forum of choice for recognizing the significant contributions by women in STEM fields. The conference offers both valuable career networking opportunities and hosts prestigious award ceremonies, which have earned widespread praise. Attendees have the opportunity to meet and learn from executives representing Fortune 500 companies that are committed to diversity and to the advancement of women in the workforce. College students in attendance are able to meet award winners and learn the next critical steps in forging their own successful careers. www.womenofcolor.net.

ABOUT THE AISES CONFERENCE

The annual AISES National Conference is a one-of-a-kind, three-day event focusing on educational, professional and workforce development! Attendees include American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and First Nation high school and college students, educators, professionals, tribal nations and tribal enterprises, universities, corporations, and government agencies! www.aises.org

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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.

CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

Connections is published quarterly by the OAR EEO/Diversity Program Office. The purpose is to share accomplishments and to link Diversity, EEO and Science within all of the OAR laboratories and program offices. If you have any newsletter ideas, suggestions and stories to contribute, please email Georgia Madrid - georgia.madrid@noaa.gov.



Website: eoo.oar.noaa.gov

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

EEO COUNSELING:

Federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination), age (40 years and over), physical or mental disability, including the provision of reasonable accommodations for qualified applicants and employees with disabilities or genetic information (GINA), gender identity, and retaliation for participating in activities protected by the civil rights statutes. In addition, NOAA prohibits discrimination based on 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:

NOAA Office of Inclusion and Civil Rights
Phone: (301) 713-0500 or 1-800-452-6728
Fax: 301-713-0983

Website: <https://www.noaa.gov/organization/inclusion-and-civil-rights>

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

NOAA's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program provides mediation and other services and seeks early resolution. [Brochure](#)

NOAA CAREERS

<https://www.noaa.gov/work-with-us>

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES:

<https://www.noaa.gov/education/opportunities/student-opportunities>