

Postdoc Opportunities in Climate Change Research

By Meg Austin

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED for cross-disciplinary climate change research that includes many different academic disciplines and engagement from diverse communities. Although the atmospheric and related sciences have traditionally drawn white males to the field, there are a number of postdoctoral programs that are actively seeking scientists from diverse backgrounds to take part in climate change research. These include opportunities to conduct research and also to help decision makers develop policies and tools for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The **Visiting Scientist Programs (VSP)** at the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, manages three fellowship programs for federal agencies that focus on climate research and its application.

For 20 years the **Climate and Global Change Postdoctoral Fellowship Program** has been training the next generation of climate researchers, many of whom have become leaders in the field. This NOAA-funded program attracts outstanding recent PhDs in the sciences relevant to the NOAA Climate and Global Change Program, which is a program that focuses on observing, understanding, modeling, and predicting the climate system on seasonal and longer time scales. Postdoctorates are paired with host mentors at U.S. institutions to work in an area of mutual interest.

NASA funds the **Heliophysics Postdoctoral Fellowship Program** to train researchers in the emerging field of heliophysics science. This field embraces all aspects of the sun-earth connection and includes many of the basic physical processes that are found in the solar system and the universe. Two major topics of focus are the science of space weather and of the sun-climate connection. This program also pairs postdoctorates with hosting scientists at institutions throughout the U.S. Typically, applicants have communicated with prospective hosts prior to writing their project descriptions.

Postdocs Applying Climate Expertise (PACE) is a national fellowship program that matches recent climate research PhDs with decision-making and resource management institutions. Each postdoctoral fellow is paired with two hosts, one from a climate research institution and one from the decision-making institution. ■

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The Human Side of Climate Science

By Ernesto Muñoz, PhD

BY THE TIME this column is published I will have started collaborating with scientists at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico. I never imagined I would be doing climate research in affiliation with such a prestigious laboratory. As an entering undergraduate student, I was only partly attracted to traditional “bench” science. But the field of climate science provided an opportunity to match my quantitative interests with my interests in the environment and in science-making.

Back during my undergraduate years, my learning of science from chemistry and physics classes was nicely complemented by my learning of the evolution of science from social sciences courses. The physical science courses were limited to learning about physical phenomena and their corresponding equations. However, in courses that discussed epistemology and sociology of science, I learned about the scientific process as one embedded in, and therefore relative to, a historical context. We learned about how science evolves—about the stumbles and non-