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Atmospheric Science

KEEPING FACULTY AND ALUMNI UP TO DATE ON CURRENT ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE EVENTS...

Chair's Corner

It has been nearly six months since I started as Chairman of the Atmospheric Science Department. I've received congratulations, sympathies, and the cynical 'Why would you want to do something like this?' I know that Dr. John Christy, the interim chair, was more than relieved to hand over the chair duties to me because his email subject line to the faculty read: "Free at last!"

Jokes aside, our students and faculty continue to do excellent research and remain in the forefront of many areas. A former student, Dr. Zhang, won the PECASE award in 2009, and Dr. Rahul Ramachandran won the award this year, providing back-to-back honors for the department. Dr. Knupp was elected an AMS fellow, and other accolades keep coming. Our students are NASA fellowship winners who, recruit students to our program diligently, and continue to impress faculty and staff. I'm fond of this statement, and I believe this to be true: The quality of our program will be judged eventually

by the quality of our students.

Soon after I started as chair, I was given the responsibility to write a proposal for a Master's program in Earth System Science. It is truly a learning experience, and one that has taken a lot of my time. We have opened up two new faculty positions at the Assistant Professor level, one in the area of lightning and the other in dynamics/climate. These faculty members will start (hopefully) in Fall 2011. To make matters interesting, Dr. Ronald Welch decided to retire as of December 31, 2010. We are now in the process of looking for a top notch candidate at the mid to senior level to fill that position.

Finally, the 4th floor Atmospheric Science area has been revamped. There is now a reception area with couches and some really nice photographs of severe weather. We even have our own conference room right next to my office. So, all you alumni out there – make a trip out to Huntsville when you can and check it out.



STUDENT NEWS

Aaron Naeger completed a summer internship at NASA Langley. Ken Leppert won the outstanding College of Science GRA award. Sandy Lacorte and team pulled off a fantastic Weatherfest event at the Shelby Center. Elise Schultz won best paper award at the NWA Annual Meeting.





More Student News

Chris Schultz selected for NCAR's Graduate Student Visitor Program.

Congratulations to Chris Schultz, PhD student in the Atmospheric Science department at UAHuntsville for his selection to NCAR's Graduate Student Visitor Program.

Chris will be implementing an operational version of his lightning jump algorithm into NCAR's Autowcaster system to monitor convective growth and decay with the help and guidance of Dr. Wiebke Deierling (NCAR, UAHuntsville Graduate) and Dr. Walt Petersen (NASA-MSFC), his dissertation advisor. Rapid increases in total lightning (in-cloud + cloud-to-ground) have been observed prior to the onset of storm intensification and severe weather manifestation. This four month test will use total lightning observations from the 3 Dimensional lightning mapping arrays here in Huntsville and at White Sands, NM to improve operational nowcasting of convection and weather safety for the Redstone Arsenal Test Center and White Sands Missile Range. This visit will also allow Chris to analyze the current lightning jump algorithm's performance in a real-time setting. To this point, the algorithm has only been tested in a post event setting. This evaluation period will identify strengths of the algorithm, and weaknesses that need to be mitigated prior to the algorithm's proposed implementation into the GOES-R Geostationary Lightning Mapper Datastream. Chris' visit will hopefully develop/enhance the partnerships between UAHuntsville, NCAR, NASA-MSFC, and the Redstone and White Sands Army installations. This work will complement ongoing GOES-R Risk Reduction projects at UAHuntsville.

The Graduate Student Visitor Program is designed to provide NCAR staff opportunities to bring graduate students to NCAR for 3 to 12-month collaborative visits with the endorsement of their thesis advisors and in pursuit of their thesis research. These visits have the goal of enhancing NCAR partnerships with other public and private institutions. http://www.asp.ucar.edu/graduate/graduate_visitor.php

Faculty News

Dr. Kevin Knupp is an AMS fellow. If you are in Seattle for the JANUARY 2011 AMS conference, make sure you congratulate him.

Dr. Mike Newchurch is on a sabbatical, but I see him in his office working on GEOCAPE issues and – I am sure – writing proposals! Robert Griffin has signed on to teach a series of GIS and Remote Sensing courses at the undergraduate level. Dr. Welch is retiring at the end of December 2010. UAHuntsville is investing in collaborations with research initiatives in Panama and Germany. I am a part of this initiative to foster and grow these collaborations.



Dr. Kevin Knupp preps a research weather balloon for launch outside Cramer Research Hall at UAHuntsville on Sunday night. Knupp and a team of scientists and students studied the snow storm as it passed over North Alabama.

Program News

By the time you read this, we will have launched a new web site. We will be offering a new course called Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System (AWIIPS) in conjunction with Mike Coyne and his team at the HSV weather service.

When I took on this job, I promised to revamp our brochures, website, and spell out various policies in detail. We now have 'glitzy' ATS and ESS postcard-format brochures, and the departmental policies have been written out in detail (yes, you have to pass all 6 questions in the preliminary exam). The ESS program continues to grow. We have more than 50 ESS majors, and we completed a successful study abroad program in Panama (summer 2010). Plans are under way for the summer 2011 program with Dr. Sever will be leading this effort.

2010 GRADUATES:

Cody Kirkpatrick – Ph.D

Vani Starry Manoharan – Ph.D.

Steve Superczynski – M.S.

Matt Anderson – M.S.

Aaron Naeger – M.S.

Todd Murphy – M.S.

Chris Hain - Ph.D.

Anita LeRoy - M.S.

Mariana Felix Scott - M.S.

NEW STUDENTS:

The following students started their graduate program in the Fall 2010:

Veronica Franklin, Vikalp Mishra, Shihar Ojha, Kelsey Thompson, Tiffany Keeton, Christine Branson, Heidi Owens, and Stephen Cantonwine.

And students joining us in the Spring:

Eric Anderson, Africa Flores, and Narendra Rongali