

CSU PHYSICS COLLOQUIUM

“Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) for STEM Departments”

Dr. Jennifer Burris

Appalachian State University

Monday, March 22nd at 4:00pm

Virtual via Zoom (see announcement for link)

Abstract

Not only should valuing diversity and inclusive excellence be the goal of any fair and just society, but a campus environment that values diversity produces better student learning outcomes, the ultimate goal of any university. Diversity, inclusion, and equity are critical to the implementation and success of our mission as scholars. In addition, it is diversity of experience and thought that catapults advancements in science. By better understanding our individual bias and the systemic racism and sexism within our universities and departments, we can better support diverse learners and our colleagues from underrepresented populations. This talk will give a brief overview of why DEI matters in STEM; discuss how working on our individual bias and recognizing our privilege is crucially important to our mission as scientists; and give examples of some initiatives from an NSF ADVANCE funded grant at Appalachian State University that aims to recruit and retain women and underrepresented populations of women in STEM with a focus on intersectionality.

Biography

Dr. Jennifer Burris currently serves as the department chair in the Physics & Astronomy Department at Appalachian State University and as the chair of the Council of Chairs. She previously served as an associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences and as the director of the Engineering Physics Master’s program at Appalachian. Burris is deeply committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion and is currently the PI on a \$1M National Science Foundation ADVANCE program grant aimed at creating systemic institutional change to enhance recruitment and retention of women faculty in STEM, with a focus on intersectionality. In 2020, Burris received an international award from The Optical Society (OSA) for her diversity and inclusion advocacy. Burris is also currently the PI on a \$300k PhysTEC consortium grant aimed at growing the physics secondary education program to enhance opportunities for students. She also deeply values student experiential learning, mentoring or co-mentoring nearly 80 undergraduate students and over 20 graduate students in her research lab during her 13 years at Appalachian. In recognition of her dedication to students, both in and out of the classroom, she was the 2015 University of North Carolina System – Excellence in Teaching Award recipient for Appalachian State University. She received a B.S. in Applied Science from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Physics from Colorado State University.