Leading Practices for Improving Accessibility and Inclusion in Field and Laboratory Science: A Conversation Series

Committee

Rory A. Cooper

Chair

Rory A. Cooper is Associate Dean, Distinguished Professor, and FISA Foundation and Paralyzed Veterans of America Professor of Rehabilitation Engineering in the School of Public Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. He also holds appointments in the Departments of Mechanical Engineering, Bioengineering, Orthopedic Surgery, and Computer Science (Robotics Institute). He is Founder, Director, and CEO of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Human Engineering Research Laboratories at the University of Pittsburgh and Senior Research Career Scientist and Research Center Director for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. From 1997 to 2018, he served as Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology at the University of Pittsburgh. His research has centered on the engineering, invention, design, evaluation, and transfer of assistive technologies, including wheelchairs, robotics, and smart devices. He has authored more than 350 peer-reviewed journal papers and 10 books in the field of rehabilitation science and engineering and holds more than 20 patents. Among his many honors, he has been named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Royal Society of Medicine, National Academy of Inventors, and Biomedical Engineering Society. He was a member of the NASEM Committee on the Use of Selected Assistive Products and Technologies in Eliminating or Reducing the Effects of Impairments. Dr. Cooper earned a B.S. and M.S. in electrical engineering from California Polytechnic State University and a Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Emily E. Ackerman

Member

Emily Ackerman is a postdoctoral researcher in the Systems Biology department at Harvard Medical School. As a disabled researcher, Emily is devoted to activism surrounding disability justice both inside and outside of academia with a particular interest in the interaction between disability, technology, and education. She has published writings and spoken publicly on her identity as a disabled woman in computational science and her experience with the way science and technology fields exclude disabled voices. In addition, Emily serves on the board of directors of Future of Research and co-leads the Labor Task Force, a project aimed at assessing and improving the labor conditions of academic workers. She recently completed her Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, where she was supported by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute as a Gilliam Fellow.

Christopher L. Atchison

Member

Chris Atchison is a Professor of Geoscience Education in the School of Education and Department of Geology at the University of Cincinnati, and the Founder of the International Association for Geoscience Diversity. Atchison advocates for a more accessible and inclusive shift in traditional methods teaching and learning where students and geoscientists with disabilities are provided opportunities for active engagement and participation along accessible pathways to the geoscience workforce. His research is based on the intentional development of inclusive communities of learning in classroom, laboratory, and field studies and the implementation of universally designed instructional strategies. Dr. Atchison has served on several national diversity, equity, and inclusion boards including the University Corporation and National Center for Atmospheric Research (UCAR/NCAR) Diversity & Inclusion External Advisory Committee, American Geophysical Union (AGU) Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, the Smithsonian Science Education Center Zero Barriers in STEM Education project Advisory Committee, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) EntryPoint! Advisory Committee, and the American Meteorological Society (AMS) Culture and Inclusion Cabinet. Atchison received a Ph.D. in geoscience education from the Ohio State University, and a B.A. and M.S. in geology and education from Wright State University.

Julian Brinkley

Member

Julian Brinkley is an Assistant Professor of Human-Centered Computing at Clemson University and the director of the Design and Research of In-Vehicle Experiences Lab (DRIVE Lab). His research is focused on the intersection between user experience, highly and fully automated vehicles, and accessibility. Through experimental and experiential research Dr. Brinkley explores how autonomous vehicles may be designed in a manner that would render them accessible for users with a range of abilities. Beyond automotive research, he also explores how technology broadly may be leveraged for the social good, public safety, and entertainment. His work has been recognized with awards from the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, and most recently by a semifinalist selection within the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Inclusive Design Challenge for autonomous vehicle accessibility. Dr. Brinkley completed a Ph.D. in Human-Centered Computing at the University of Florida, holds an M.S. from East Carolina University in Software Engineering and a B.A. from the University of North Carolina – Greensboro.

Sheryl Burgstahler

Member

Sheryl Burgstahler, Ph.D., is the Director of Accessible Technology Services and an Affiliate Professor at these University of Washington. Her research interests include accessible IT, inclusive design of online learning, and impact of universal design practices. She has published many books, including the newest, Creating Inclusive Learning Opportunities: From Principles to Practice (2015), both published by Harvard Education Press. She and her projects have received many awards, including the Diversity in Technology Leadership Award from the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE), the Professional Recognition Award from the Association for Higher Education and Disability, the National Information Infrastructure Award in Education, the US President's Award for Mentoring, the Golden Apple Award in Education, the Harry J. Murphy Catalyst Award, the Frances Pennell Economic Opportunity Award, and the induction into the Susan Daniels Disability Mentoring Hall of Fame. She has a Ph.D. in Administration of Higher Education, a Master's Degree in Mathematics and a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Washington.

Caroline M. Solomon

Member

Caroline Solomon, Professor of Biology and Director of the School of Science, Technology, Accessibility and Mathematics and Public Health at Gallaudet University, is an aquatic ecologist and a mentor for STEM deaf and hard-of-hearing students. She has obtained 5 federal grants in the past 8 years for efforts to support deaf and hard-of-hearing students in STEM through providing authentic research opportunities and fostering vertical mentoring. Her work has been featured in numerous reviewed papers, conference articles, invited presentations, news releases and a short biography in K-12 science textbooks. Dr. Solomon's contributions have earned her teaching and education awards from the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography, Gallaudet University, National Public Radio (50 great teachers) and several features in prominent education media. In addition, she was invited to speak at the 2017 National March for Science in Washington D.C. Her latest publications include An Often Overlooked Element of Diversity: Disability (2021, ASLO Bulletin) and Meeting Frameworks must be even more inclusive (2021, Nature Ecol Evol). Dr. Solomon obtained her B.A. in Environmental Science and Public Policy from Harvard University, M.S. in biological oceanography from the University of Washington, and Ph.D. in biological oceanography from the University of Maryland.