



Atmospheric Chemistry
Observations & Modeling

Earth Observing Laboratory

ACOM Seminar

Effective practices of relationship building for community-engaged research

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ABSTRACT

Until recently, scientific research in underserved communities was largely conducted with little or no stakeholder inclusion and participation. Within the last five years however, there has been growing interest in community engagement among academic and health researchers, that gained additional support from a recent Executive Order (EO) to advance racial equity for underserved communities through the Federal Government. The EO allows agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and National Institutes of Health to consult with members of historically underrepresented communities and provide funding for stakeholder engaged research at the national level. Evidence shows that including communities in the design, implementation, and evaluation of research can lead to a deeper understanding of environmental problems and health-related phenomena. Community engagement is a key process in the identification of problems, relevant interventions, policies and system changes necessary to improve human health and the environment. This collaborative process of scientific enquiry occurs along a continuum of engagement activities among nonacademic stakeholders and academic researchers, leading to the formulation and implementation of community-driven solutions. In this seminar, the early phases of the community engagement process for problem identification and research design, as well as the benefits and challenges of community-engaged research will be discussed. This will be done primarily from the perspective of a disadvantaged community in Southeast Queens, New York that is disproportionately vulnerable to environmental health hazards due to long-term environmental policies that have caused greater exposure to major sources of air pollutants and climate change impacts. The seminar aims to help us re-examine how and why environmental scientists should engage members of local communities in scientific research.

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