YOU DON’T LOOK LIKE A GEOLOGIST – A CONVERSATION ON DIVERSITY (OR THE LACK THEREOF) IN OUR PROFESSION

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Too many times as a young geologist I was told, “You don’t look like a geologist,” often by clients and even by my own company’s managers. I haven’t heard that comment in some years, and I hope that speaks to the fact that more women are studying geology and going on to careers in our field, so the face of a geologist isn’t necessarily male anymore. According to statistics from the American Geosciences Institute (AGI) in the Status of Recent Geoscience Graduates report (Wilson, 2017), at least forty percent of geology graduates are women. However, we are still an overwhelmingly white profession (the same report indicates less than twelve percent of geology graduates identify themselves as belonging to underrepresented minority groups). There will be some statistics, but they’ll be a starting point to talk about why there is so little diversity in our field. Increasing diversity would expand the points of view team members bring to projects, and enrich the perspectives we use to solve the problems facing us. There is science that shows diverse teams do better work. Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our workplaces is not only the right thing to do (which, of course, it is), it is also the smart thing to do. This presentation will be a conversation in which we all participate, exploring the reasons why the geosciences are the least diverse of the STEM fields in the U.S.