

**Chemical Engineering Colloquium
~Trailblazer Lectureship ~**

September 25, 2024

12:00 PM – 12:50 PM Salisbury Labs, Room 115

Donna Riley, Ph.D.

Merit, Rigor, & the View from Nowhere: Addressing Root Causes of Engineering's Homogeneity, Exclusivity, and Inequality

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Engineering has long recognized the imperative of broadening participation, yet has largely failed to remove barriers, extend access, create belonging, or welcome new epistemologies and ontologies that could substantively change who does engineering, and who benefits from it. As we prepare a new generation of learners to confront global sociotechnical challenges like climate change, AI, and automation, all amid eroding social institutions and the rise of authoritarianism worldwide, engineering must become accountable to marginalized communities. Accountability could entail authentically reckoning with engineering's past injustices, creatively engaging public values in professional life, and addressing root causes of systemic inequality within the profession itself and its processes of engineering formation. By understanding how commitments to meritocracy, rigor, and a disengaged objectivity have maintained a homogeneous, exclusive, and unequal profession, we can begin to develop a more responsive and participatory engineering practice. Examples from a planned Center for Engineering Equity at the University of New Mexico will illustrate some possible ways forward.



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