

It is with great pleasure that I accept the SCAR Medal for Excellence in Antarctic Research. As all of us who work in the Antarctic realize full well no individual is able to conduct Antarctic research without the support and involvement of many others – researchers, expedition teams, station support, government agency personnel, friends, and family. Antarctic research is the ultimate team activity. The process of conducting research, in particular internationally shared research, has been notably elevated by the existence of SCAR. As evidenced most recently by the advent of the SCAR Open Science Workshops and both the impressive attendance and quality of science at these meetings it is clear that SCAR is accelerating and leveraging its ability to act as an umbrella for Antarctic science. The need for an organized, internationally based approach to Antarctic science has never before been more appropriate or necessary.

Scientific perception of Antarctica's role in the global system has changed dramatically over recent decades. Until the discovery of the ozone hole over Antarctica it was assumed that it was perhaps just an extremely remote, relatively disconnected portion of our planet and that it was unlikely to experience change over centuries to millennia much less over years to decades. Today, of course, we understand that this region plays a key role in global scale climate change, ocean circulation, and biodiversity. Further, we now recognize that the potential for change, even dramatic change of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean environment, exists as a real and potentially globally significant possibility.

To understand past, present, and future change that can impact the Antarctic and Southern Ocean and in return have regional to global scale implications it will take more than individual researchers and individual countries. Antarctica and the Southern Ocean offer us the potential to unravel important scientific mysteries and with hard work, good planning and some luck to foresee what might otherwise have been environmental surprises. Those of us who work in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean are extremely fortunate to be able to experience its beauty, pristine qualities, and to use it both as a working laboratory and as an archive of past environments. We must also realize that by the very nature of not only the dimensions of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean and its challenging environment, but now more than ever by the magnitude and significance of scientific questions posed for this region, that team work is essential if we are to continue to advance our understanding of this region and the planet.