

25th Anniversary Event Welcoming Remarks

Good Afternoon everyone. I am Mohan Ramamurthy and I am Director of Unidata.

It is my distinct honor and high privilege to welcome you all to this 25th Anniversary event to celebrate an important milestone in Unidata's history.

I want thank you all for taking the time from your busy schedules (or retired life!) to join us for this occasion. It is so wonderful to see and be in the company of so many friends, colleagues, and the wise sages of the atmospheric science community.

We have planned an exciting program for you that includes reminiscences from founding fathers, early community activists, our sponsors, our partners in agencies and academia, and the leadership in UCAR and NCAR, along with reflections on what the community created a quarter of a century ago and what Unidata means to many of you.

Some of you know that I am fond of borrowing a phrase from Abraham Lincoln's historic Gettysburg address but applied in the Unidata context: Unidata, a program of the community, by the community, and for the community. Over the next two days you will come to understand and appreciate what I mean.

With all humility I would like to add that, what started as a modest project by a cadre of visionary academics, which they called the University Data Project, or Unidata for short, has today become a quintessential facility for the atmospheric and related sciences, one that embodies the community spirit and ownership in its purest form.

Today, Unidata has over 25,000 users from over 150 countries on every continent, including Antarctica, representing nearly 1500 academic institutions and 7000 organizations in every sector of the geoscience enterprise and every geoscience discipline (atmospheric sciences, geography, hydrology, oceanography, geology, and beyond) that are registered with Unidata and use its products and services. [It is not just what we do, but more importantly how we do it.](#)

Over the years and particularly over the last few weeks as our community heard about this event, many have shared their thoughts about Unidata and offered heartfelt testimonials.

I don't have time to read all of them, but I do want to read one from my dear friend, Paul Ruscher, from Florida State University.

Paul and I started our faculty careers about the same time to oversee synoptic meteorology programs and curricula at our respective universities. Paul writes...

"I faced this decision with a fair amount of trepidation. Unidata (and COMET) helped me to overcome my initial doubts and fears with their workshop for synoptic meteorology instructors in summer 1988.

"But it [Unidata] totally transformed my thinking about what I wanted to teach and how I wanted to teach synoptic meteorology and introduced me to a new community that reached across the entire US. It helped our department at FSU develop an early computer lab implementing Unidata technologies (data streams, hardware, software, networking), and a more modern approach that transformed our curriculum. We've embraced the Unidata packages and philosophies, and I have tried to give back through my participation in workshops, User's Committee and the Policy Committee. Although I can't make the meetings and celebrations this week, I want to add my testimonial to the notion that Unidata has had a truly transformational impact on me and my institution, much to (I believe) the benefit of our students here at FSU. Unidata is often invisible to them...but not to me!"

I know that many of you synoptic and mesoscale meteorology professors feel likewise. I certainly did when I was a professor at the University of Illinois.

There are several ways you can share your thoughts and reminiscences: Open Mic periods, an online comments page, and a Guest Book that is on a table where you got your name tags. We would appreciate it if you can provide your thoughts or testimonials about Unidata.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the UCAR community for creating Unidata and helping to shape its work over the years.

I thank NSF and its program officers over the years for sponsoring, continued support, and guidance.

I thank the Unidata staff for their work that has contributed to Unidata's success over the past 25 years.

And finally, I thank the Unidata governing committees for guiding the program and sage counsel.

I want to acknowledge my staff that has worked tirelessly to make this event possible. In particular, I want to recognize Linda Miller, Jo Hansen, Terry Mitchell, Ginger Emery, Tina Campbell, and Ben Domenico for their efforts.

TGIF will have a whole new meaning come tomorrow afternoon!

Let's have a wonderful celebration!!!