

Jenks named associate laboratory director for physical sciences

Media contact: Karen Dunlap, 865.696.5910, dunlapkk@ornl.gov



Cynthia Jenks has been selected associate laboratory director for ORNL's Physical Sciences Directorate. Credit: Argonne National Laboratory, U.S. Dept. of Energy

Cynthia Jenks has been selected associate laboratory director for the Physical Sciences Directorate at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory. She joins the lab April 19.

Jenks comes to ORNL from Argonne National Laboratory, where she directs the Chemical Sciences and Engineering Division, overseeing the contributions of 17 research groups. Prior to her time at Argonne, Jenks served in a variety of roles at Ames Laboratory, including assistant director for scientific planning.

Throughout her career in the national laboratory system, Jenks has developed strong relationships within DOE's Office of Basic Energy Sciences, or BES, one of the nation's largest sponsors of research in the physical sciences. The research she leads at Argonne is also supported by DOE's offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Fossil Energy, and Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy.

"ORNL's expertise in advanced materials, energy generation, energy storage, chemical sciences, nanoscience and physics provides a broad foundation of basic and applied research that impacts all science areas," Jenks said. "I look forward to joining the lab and contributing to its further success."

Jenks is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and her extensive multidisciplinary research has resulted in 123 publications. Her areas of expertise include surface structure and reactivity, surface structure-property relationships, catalysis, chemical conversions for sustainable energy and thin-film growth.

“Cynthia’s broad DOE experience, proven ability to bridge basic and applied research, and background as both a scientist and engineer all prepare her to lead and grow ORNL’s contributions in areas of great importance for clean energy, industry, and US scientific leadership,” ORNL Director Thomas Zacharia said.

Jenks holds a doctorate and master’s in physical chemistry as well as a master’s in chemical engineering, all from Columbia University in New York. Her bachelor’s in chemical engineering is from the University of California at Los Angeles.