

# James Collins

---

**Board of Directors, Chair**

**Institution:** Arizona State University

## Biography

Dr. James Collins received his B.S. from Manhattan College in 1969 and his Ph.D. from The University of Michigan in 1975. He then moved to Arizona State University where he is currently Virginia M. Ullman Professor of Natural History and the Environment in the School of Life Sciences. From 1989 to 2002 he was Chairman of the Zoology, then Biology Department. At the National Science Foundation (NSF) Dr. Collins was Director of the Population Biology and Physiological Ecology program from 1985 to 1986. He joined NSF's senior management in 2005 serving as Assistant Director for Biological Sciences from 2005 to 2009. NSF is the U.S. government's only agency dedicated to supporting basic research and education in all fields of science and engineering at all levels. Within the Biological Sciences Directorate Collins oversaw a research and education portfolio that spanned molecular and cellular biosciences to global change as well as biological infrastructure. He coordinated collaborations between NSF and other federal agencies through the President's National Science and Technology Council where he chaired the Biotechnology Subcommittee and co-chaired the Interagency Working Group on Plant Genomics. He was also NSF's liaison to NIH and served as coordinator across NSF of all environmental research and education. Dr. Collins' research has centered on the causes of intraspecific variation. Amphibians are model organisms for field and laboratory studies of the ecological and evolutionary forces shaping this variation and its affect on population dynamics. A recent research focus is host-pathogen biology as a driver of population dynamics and even species extinctions. The role of pathogens in the global decline of amphibians is the model system for this research.

The intellectual and institutional factors that have shaped Ecology's development as a science are also a focus of Dr. Collins's research, as is the emerging research area of ecological ethics. Federal, state, and private institutions have supported his research. - Dr. Collins teaches graduate and

undergraduate courses in ecology, evolutionary biology, statistics, introductory biology, evolutionary ecology, and professional values in science. He has directed 35 graduate students to completion of doctoral or Masters degrees. Collins was founding director of ASU's Undergraduate Biology Enrichment Program, and served as co-director of ASU's Undergraduate Mentoring in Environmental Biology and Minority Access to Research Careers programs. - Honors include the Pettingill Lecture in Natural History at The University of Michigan Biological Station; the Thomas Hall Lecture at Washington University, St. Louis; Distinguished Lecturer in Life Science, Penn State University; President's Science Symposium Address, Bowdoin College; and serving as Kaeser Visiting Scholar at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. ASU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences awarded him its Distinguished Faculty Award. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, a Fellow of the Association for Women in Science, and Past President of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS). Professor Collins is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the National Ecological Observatory Network, and is on the Board of Delegates for Oxford University Press. Dr. Collins has served on the editorial board of Ecology and Ecological Monographs as well as Evolution. He is the author of numerous peer reviewed papers and book chapters, co-editor of three special journal issues, and co-author with Dr. Martha Crump of Extinction in Our Times. Global Amphibian Decline (Oxford University Press, 2009).