

**Support System for Scientists' Communication and Engagement  
Workshop II: Associations, Societies & Other Professional Organizations  
February 28 to March 1, 2018 at HHMI (Chevy Chase MD)  
Draft workshop summary outline**

Leaders from scientific societies, associations and professional organizations, researchers who study communication and learning, funders and other experts gathered for two days to explore how scientific societies can advance a sustainable system that supports scientists' communication and engagement efforts.

The group:

- Discussed the landscape report by Shupey Yuan, John Besley and Anthony Dudo (attached)
- Explored the larger system of engagement and communication, including the need for scientists to listen and open themselves up and the importance of audiences coming first
- Acknowledged the challenges with the culture of science in supporting, rewarding and incentivizing communication and engagement

The priority conversations the group wanted to have included:

- How do we effectively link research and practice?
- How do we support scientists to more effectively *listen* to and understand the needs and desires of the publics?
- How do we involve the community that we're trying to impact or that we want to be led by, so that scientists and the community have a chance to co-create?
- How do we prepare a common menu of options for scientists, and inform them what their options are and what their expectations should be, when they seek out communication and engagement support?
- How do we identify the leverage points that we should pull in the system? There are so many things we *could* focus on, so how do we prioritize?
- How do we establish common language and framing for this work?
- How do we empower scientists to show vulnerability, and say "I don't know"
- How do we empower societies and associations to create programs that support scientists to communicate and engage effectively?
- Science communication and engagement... to what end?

The group discussed ways scientific societies are uniquely positioned to support scientists. Societies can:

- Connect scientists to the larger world
- Connect scientists to each other
- Connect scientists to the communication training space
- Provide a broad palate of venues and experiences for scientists to communicate in and through
- A national structure that represents scientists and has their back
- Provide a stamp of approval, validation, add credibility
- Offer communication and policy expertise at the national level
- Recognize the components of the invisible infrastructure
- Create awards that recognize scientists, and departments
- Try to influence the academic culture

- Gather like-minded people under a credible brand
- Guild skills
- Give opportunities to apply those skills
- Recognize effectiveness
- Be more nimble than universities
- Have steady connections with scientists
- Publish journals
- Access key influencers in different fields
- Break down institutional silos
- Build a collective identity that transcends institutions
- Help scientists bring their whole selves to their professions
- Advocate for funding and programs

Societies are especially good at:

- Training
- Awards
- Networks of support
- Mainstreaming public engagement within professional societies (journals, conferences)
- Mainstreaming public engagement within the profession as a whole
- Convening meetings that bridge scientists with the public
- Advocacy

The group focused on four discussions they now want to move forward:

Advancing Incentives for Engagement: Can societies coordinate advocacy to affect funding decisions (government, industry and private) that bring more resources to this support system? Can they also coordinate advocacy efforts with other stakeholders (university administrators, chairs, etc.) to seek more money and support to sustain these professionals in a sustainable way?

Linking Research and Practice: Can societies build networks of support between researchers, scientists, and practitioners? Associations represent a nexus where multiple disciplines and practitioners can come together.

Building the Network and the Field: The Power of Connection: Can societies build relationships, share learning and collaborate on action in a sustained way. Can we create a functioning network that fosters shared purpose?

Advancing Listening: Can societies change the culture of science so that scientists truly listen and can find their way to places where meaningful engagement can happen?

A number of workshop participants shared their willingness to lead these ideas moving forward.