



NCSE Science Policy Communication Training and the Academic Federal Dialogue

Thursday, January 25, 2018, 8AM-5:30PM

Purpose

The National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE) will offer a daylong science communication training, in partnership with COMPASS and New America, to help scientists practice tools and build skills to use science effectively in policy discussions and policymaking. The training will be designed specifically for scientists, researchers, deans, and directors to address the common challenges they share in increasing the use of science in decision-making.

Process and Strategy

The training is designed to include policy experts and a journalist as facilitators and coaches. With a strong mix of policy perspectives integrated throughout the day, participants will learn the basics of science communication and have the opportunity to practice their newly learned skills. The schedule is as follows:

Agenda

8:30 AM **Registration Opens**

8:45 AM **Table Talk Discussions with Federal Agencies**

University deans, director, and faculty have informal, interactive discussions with federal agency officials.

9:50 AM **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Sharon Burke, International Security Program & Resource Security Program, New America
Michelle Wyman, Executive Director, National Council for Science and the Environment
Erica Goldman, Director of Policy Engagement, COMPASS

10:00 AM **Opening Panel: NCSE Academic Federal Dialogue**

This panel will feature three principals from federal agencies to provide updates on program priorities, current research, funding opportunities, partnerships with higher education institutions, and technical resources available. This panel will explore connections between federal funding, the budget process, and the role that policy plays in setting agendas for research and development. The discussion also allows attendees to ask questions and establish connections with the aim of advancing stronger collaborative opportunities between the federal government and the academic community working on science and the environment.

Moderated by David Malakoff, Deputy News Editor, *Science Magazine*

Panelists:

- Dr. Gary Geernaert, Ph.D., Director, Climate & Environmental Sciences Division, U.S. Department of Energy
- Dr. C. Suzanne Iacono, Ph.D., Head, Office of Integrative Activities, National Science Foundation

- Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Ph.D., Director, National Institute of Food & Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture

- 11:00 AM** **Break**
- 11:15 AM** **Setting the Stage for Policy Engagement**
 Research relevant to policy and communication, but only published in academic journals, misses and opportunity to inform the public dialogue. How do people process scientific information and use it in decision-making? This will be an overview of current research on the science of science communication and the science-policy interface, with ideas for how scholarship can be applied to actual practice.
- 12:00 PM** **Communication Tools in Action: Finding the “So What?” of Your Science**
 Distilling the main message of your science can help you craft an effective grant proposal, clarify why your science matters, and improve the impact of your communications. This session will introduce simple yet powerful tools for identifying and framing scientific messages for various audiences. The ‘Message Box’ will serve as a building block and provide an opportunity for scientists to practice how they talk about their research with specific audiences.
- 1:00 PM** **“Welcome to My World”: Bridging the Worlds of Science and Policy**
 This lunchtime panel will include short spotlights and interactive conversation to tease out and share the varied landscape of policymaking and the role that science can play. This will include bipartisan policy staff from Capitol Hill, and diverse representation from federal agencies and current and former administrations.
 Moderated by David Malakoff, Deputy News Editor, *Science Magazine*
 Box lunch provided
- 2:00 PM** **Practice in Breakout Groups with Policy Expert Facilitators**
 COMPASS staff, along with journalist and policy experts, will work as facilitators and coaches for scientists in small groups for the afternoon sessions. Participants will break into small groups, each moderated by a policy expert, to practice and receive constructive peer feedback.
- 3:00 PM** **Mock Meetings and Real World Scenarios**
 Scientists and trainers will engage in scenarios of typical scientist/policymaker interactions, such as small group meetings. Scientists will have an opportunity to focus in small groups on targeting a specific audience, thinking about why their audience should care about their message, and how to use their Message Box tools to engage in dialogue and exchange.
- 4:00 PM** **Break**
- 4:15 PM** **Applying New Skills: Science and Policy Meet**
 Participants will reconvene as a whole group for a final, structured exercise that will provide an opportunity for participants to hone their skills. Scientists will briefly review examples from their colleagues of effective communication and engagement. The group will reflect on lessons learned and other opportunities for ongoing improvement in how scientists engage in the public discourse about the environment.
- 5:30 PM** **Training Concludes**
- 5:45 PM** **Networking Reception**

NCSE is partnering with COMPASS, who will lead the training. Since its founding nearly two decades ago, COMPASS has honed skills and approaches for helping scientists to effectively navigate the science-policy boundary, build durable relationships, and catalyze transformative outcomes for the environment. COMPASS brings key relationship capital in the policy space to this training—including Congress, diverse federal agencies, and the Executive Office of the President. This training will bring academic leaders together to learn how to effectively engage with policy makers at all levels of government.

Training Workshop Outcomes

- 80-100 scientists, researchers, and faculty participate in the training and learn concrete skills in science communication
- New relationships/connections made between policy experts/policy makers from all levels of government, and scientists, researchers, deans, and directors from institutions of higher education
- Possible cohort of participants who complete the training and can return to their respective campuses to share what they have learned with peers and students

Of note, NCSE and COMPASS hope to offer a more intensive summer training opportunity that builds upon the one-day workshop detailed here. This workshop will be offered at least annually, possibly more frequently depending on value and demand.

About NCSE

The National Council for Science and the Environment is a nonprofit organization that increases and advances the use of science in environmental policy- and decision-making. Established in 1990, NCSE is widely recognized as a nonpartisan science organization that focuses on making the most updated scientific research, data and analysis on the broad range of environmental issues, challenges, and opportunities available to policy and decision makers. NCSE specializes in programs that foster collaboration between the diverse institutions and individuals creating and using environmental knowledge, including research, education, environmental, and business organizations as well as governmental bodies at all levels. NCSE works collectively with its community to strengthen the role of science and higher education in policy.

About COMPASS

COMPASS supports a productive public discourse about people and environment by empowering scientists to engage with society. We do this through coaching scientists to be more effective communicators and connecting them to key people and conversations. Since 1999, COMPASS has trained thousands of scientists to more effectively engage with society, and brokered hundreds of relationships for scientists with their peers, journalists, and policy makers, helping them reach places like the front page of the New York Times, the halls of Congress, and the Executive Office of the President. Our approach to our work also positions us as a knowledgeable, neutral intermediary that policy makers and journalists can turn to in order to connect to scientists with the most relevant information. COMPASS works to break down disciplinary, geographic, and institutional silos among scientists, leading to greater relevance and more coherent communication by the scientific community as a whole. We support scientists to share their knowledge by helping them navigate how, when, and with whom to effectively engage. We believe that when scientific knowledge and insights are at the table where decisions are being made, the solutions that emerge will be robust and benefit both society and the environment. Engaged scientists also ask more timely and relevant questions that better address societal needs; investing in empowering scientists to engage is therefore also an investment in the relevance of future research.

Date and Location

When: January 25, 2018

8:30AM—5:30PM

Reception to follow.

Where: New America
740 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

Leads

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