

The National Academies of
SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

**Committee on the Science of Science Communication: A Research Agenda
Meeting #2**

February 24-25, 2016

Keck Center, Room 201
500 5th Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Agenda

Meeting Goals:

- Gather information
- Develop key topics, findings and messages
- Develop report outline
- Identify gaps and how to fill them
- Plan for drafting

Wednesday, February 24, 2016

OPEN SESSION

10:15 Public Controversies Involving Science

Much of the available literature related to the communication of science on important societal issues pertains to a single issue area, such as climate change, vaccination, obesity, hydraulic fracturing, nuclear energy, genetically modified organisms, and so on. This panel is part of a larger effort of the committee to gather information across a set of controversies that have involved science in public decisions and debates. Each speaker has been asked to respond to questions below to address the charge:

- What are the main controversies and what is the role of science? What factors (i.e., psychological social, cultural, political, economic, media-related, science-related, communication-related, or other contextual factors) affect how the relevant science is understood, perceived and used (i.e., has affected decisions and other behaviors?)
- What has been learned that could apply to other controversies about (1) practices for communicating science to prevent controversy and (2) practices that are successful or not successful for communicating science in the midst of controversy?
- What are important and empirically researchable questions to inform approaches to communicating science related to controversial societal issues?

10:15 Welcome and introductions, Alan Leshner, Committee Chair

Each presentation will be followed by brief clarifying Q&A, followed by discussion

10:20 Seth Mnookin, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

10:40 Noel Brewer, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—[PRESENTATION](#)

11:00 Ed Maibach, George Mason University—[PRESENTATION](#)

11:20 Discussion

11:45 Lunch

12:15 Adjourn Open Session

Thursday, February 25, 2016

OPEN SESSION

9:05 Communicating Science for Policy Related to Contentious Societal Issues

Much has been written about communicating science for policy. A lot of theorizing, analysis, and advice have been offered, but less research is available to understand how science is communicated and used and how to communicate effectively in policy contexts to support the use of research. The purpose of this panel is to aid the committee in determining what is most important to understand through research about communicating science for policy that pertains to societal issues and decisions that are controversial in the public sphere. In particular:

- Does effective science communication matter for science policy, and if so, how does it matter?
- What are the audiences for science in the policy arena and how should communication differ across them?
- What are trusted sources of information about science for policy and what makes them trustworthy?
- What are the limits of science evidence in the policy arena?
- What are the most important challenges for communicating science related to controversial issues?
- Are there examples of successful communication of science, and examples of approaches that were not successful?
- How should approaches to communicating science differ depending on whether the issue is high in public attention and political sensitivity?

9:05 Welcome and Introductions, Alan Leshner

Each presenter will provide opening remarks followed by discussion

9:10 Rick Spinrad, NOAA
9:20 Bob Inglis, RepublicEn
9:30 Brian Baird, 4Pir2 Communications
9:40 Daniel Sarewitz, Arizona State University
9:50 Rush Holt, American Association for the Advancement of Science
10:00 Discussion

10:45 Break

11:00 Panel: Issues of Social Media and Social Networks for the Communication of Science Related to Contentious Societal Issues

Science communication through social media is increasing rapidly, and yet remains poorly understood. Over the past few years, social media platforms – blogging and Twitter in particular – have provided scientists and other communicators of science new ways of connecting with audiences, having a voice, and directly addressing controversial issues. Given the increasing accessibility, reach, and growth in the use of social media for science communication, this panel brings together researchers of social media, social networks and science communicators to discuss the following questions:

- What is known from research about uses of social media and social networks for science communication related to important societal issues?
- What is likely to be effective or not effective? What is the evidence from the research and from practitioner perspectives?
- What are the roles of social media and social networks related to controversial societal issues such as climate change, GMOs, and vaccines?
- What are important directions for research related to social media and social networks for science communication and for assessing effectiveness and societal impact?

11:05 Dominique Brossard, University of Wisconsin-Madison—[PRESENTATION](#)

11:20 Noshir Contractor, Northwestern University—[PRESENTATION](#)

11:35 Hilda Bastian, National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), National Institutes of Health—[PRESENTATION](#)

11:50 Discussion

12:15 Lunch (informal discussion continues)

12:45 Adjourn Open Session