Sharing Science

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Prepare Your Message
“Know Thyself”

Think about the following:

- How do you define yourself in the scientific enterprise?
  - student, engineer, educator, technician, researcher, manager, ...

- What is the context of your work?
  - enable the function of the physics department/lab
  - pursue original research to earn a degree in science
  - develop hardware/software to drive frontier science
  - study subatomic/fundamental particles

- What is the “big picture” - what excites you?
  - Origin of space, time, energy, and matter
  - The laws that govern the functioning of the universe
This image is not real. Thanks to Swagato Banerjee for taking the picture. Governor's photo from www.electabel.com
“The Elevator Speech”

A 30-second introduction to what you do and why it's important

- Make it interesting – if you get out on the same floor, you want them hooked so they keep asking questions
- Make it the start to a potentially larger conversation
- Answer the following:
  - Who are you? (engineer, staff, technician, scientist...)
  - What do you do? (develop/design/maintain frontier scientific tools...; manage business office at a physics laboratory...; study matter/antimatter interactions...)
  - What is the most exciting thing about your work?

Such a speech is handy in all kinds of social situations!
The Conversation
(what to do after the elevator speech)

- Fill the relationship with substance
  - Explain your work (no jargon) and how it's supported
  - How is your work beneficial?
    - Addresses compelling questions that interest Americans
    - Science and community (outreach, education, employment)
    - Science and the economy (education pipeline, innovation)
- What do I ask for?
  - Invite them to see your lab or university
  - Generally for their support for science
  - More detailed: talk about active legislation (if you know of any)
Connect to Government
Congress Merge: Online Congressional Directory

Before contacting your member of Congress you may wish to read our Guidelines on Communicating with Congress

This webpage can be used to search for members of Congress in the following ways:

- Click on the map to the left to list all the members of Congress from that State.
- In the form below, select only a state to get a listing of all the members of Congress from that state.
- Enter an address (with a ZIP code or without) to match that address to a Congressional district.
- Enter city and state (without a ZIP code) to get all the members of Congress representing that city.
- Type in just a 5 or 9 digit ZIP code to match that ZIP code.

Street Address:

City: 

State: Alabama

Zip Code: 

Click on the above graphic or your state name below:


Stephen Sekula
Getting in Touch

Who should you talk to?

- By phone, fax, or in-person, ask to speak with the office staffer who handles science or technical issues

Making contact (most preferential to least)

- Walk into the local office, or call ahead for an appointment
- Phone
- Fax
- Hand-written letter (VERY slow, due to screening)
- E-mail

Have a conversation, don't give a lecture
Measuring your impact

Government communication is relationship-building
- The most fulfilling relationships take time to evolve and involve communication in both directions

Short-term benefits
- Raise awareness of their scientific constituency
- Bring immediate issues to their attention ("the rule of 3")
- Personal satisfaction in being part of the democratic process

Long-term benefits
- Advisory on issues, input into policy
- A realization of the depth, breadth, and humanity of science
Maintaining the relationship

How do you keep in touch?

- Send occasional reminders about yourself and your work
  - If a discovery happens on your experiment, at your lab, in your field, etc. send them a fax/e-mail and point it out
  - Send your thesis, most recent paper, etc. (might appear in reports!)
- Raise awareness about current scientific pursuits and policy
  - engage them for their opinions and insight
  - they might want your opinion, too!

Is it important? (some anecdotes)

- Rep. Schiff and the “Dear Colleague” letter
- Rep. Baldwin's office
Staying Informed
Office of Public Affairs

Research Funding

- FY 2007 "Dear Colleague" Letters
  - 70 Senators sign DOE Office of Science Letter: Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Jeff Bingaman (D-NM) [Download Letter]
  - 139 Congressmen sign DOE Office of Science Letter: Representatives Judy Biggert (R-IL), Adam Schiff (D-CA), and Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) [Download Letter]
  - 164 Congressmen sign NSF Letter: Representatives Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) and Rush Holt (D-NJ) [Download Letter]
- FY 2006 "Dear Colleague" Letters
  - 68 Senators sign DOE Office of Science: Senators Alexander and Bingaman [Download Letter] [Press Release]
  - 121 Congressmen sign DOE Office of Science: Representatives Biggert, Schiff, and Tauscher [Download Letter]
  - 167 Congressmen sign NSF: Representatives Ehlers and Holt [Download Letter]
- 12/15 Press release: Bush Nominee for DOE Secretary good for Science, say APS Leaders [Download Report]
- Moon Mars Report [Download Report]
- 55 Senators Support DOE Office of Science [Download Letter]

Energy and Environment

Nuclear Energy

- APS Panel on Public Affairs, issues a report on proliferation resistance. [Download Report]

Hydrogen Initiative

- The House Energy and Water FY 05 Appropriations Bill fully funded increases for basic research at DOE Office of Science for hydrogen storage research. The bill also requires that the funding for proposed Hydrogen Research Centers be "competitively bid" and peer reviewed. [Download Report]
- APS Panel on Public Affairs, issues an assessment of Administration's Hydrogen Initiative [Download Report]
- Eisenberger Testifies to House Science Committee [Download Report]
- APS Report Profiled on NPR [Link to Report]
FYI summarizes science policy developments in Washington affecting the physics and astronomy community. Summaries are approximately one page long and are issued two or more times every week. FYI subscriptions are free; they are provided by AIP as a service to the science community.

Latest FYIs:

- Update on Commerce Department Actions on Deemed Export Controls
- U.S. Physics Team Honored by Members of Congress
- United States Initials ITER Agreement
- House Appropriations Committee Report Language: GNEP
- House Passes Bill to Encourage Hydrogen Fuel Breakthroughs

Any questions about science policy developments or pending legislation can be directed to fyi@aip.org.
scienceaction.org gives you access to current legislation, bulletins, etc. It's meant to be a community site, with news and issues posted to it by the scientific public.