



Request for Proposals: Engaging Scientists in Dialogue with Diverse Publics

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) seeks competitive proposals from U.S. universities interested in holding a science communication and engagement event on their campus, with hosting expenses for the event to be covered by AAAS. The primary goal of these events will be to explore challenges, opportunities, and effective strategies for constructive dialogue about science by scientists and engineers with diverse (and particularly with religious/spiritual) publics, drawing on existing AAAS expertise and recent peer-reviewed research in science communication. Each proposed full-day event will include:

- 1) A science communication workshop for scientists and engineers (by registration only) focused on engagement with religious publics but with relevance to public science engagement in general, moderated by AAAS staff and open to university-affiliated graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and faculty in the sciences (50 participants total);
- 2) A contest to recognize ongoing or prospective science engagement activities in the university's community by affiliated graduate students, postdoctoral researchers and/or faculty, with four awards of \$1000 each;
- 3) A guest speaker (or speaker series), chosen collaboratively by university representatives and AAAS staff, to speak on science engagement with religious and spiritual publics; and
- 4) A catered reception for workshop participants and speaker event attendees.

All degree-granting accredited U.S. public or private universities ranked at R1, R2 or R3 by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education are eligible to apply. Colleges and universities ineligible to apply directly are encouraged to be co-applicants with an eligible institution in their region (such a co-application should be noted in the proposal; see below).

The submission deadline is 11:59pm EST on FEBRUARY 9th 2018. Submissions should be made by e-mail according to the instructions below. A minimum of five selected universities will be contacted by AAAS no later than **MARCH 31st 2018.** The campus events will be scheduled in consultation with the host institution in academic year 2018-2019.

Background and Overview

The proposed campus events are a component of the AAAS "Engaging Scientists" project, sponsored by the Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) program in collaboration with the AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology ('the Center'). These events will support scientists and engineers interested in becoming more effective public ambassadors for their research interests, their disciplines, and for the scientific enterprise as a whole, particularly with religious communities.

Beyond the direct impacts of new scientific advances and discoveries, the social and philosophical implications of science are of great interest and concern to society at large. Accordingly, many scientists and scientific institutions recognize the importance of public engagement in science scholarship. However, while studies suggest that scientists are generally seen as competent and credible by the general public, and scientific research seen as a net benefit, the perception that scientists hold different values, beliefs, and priorities than other stakeholders can be an impediment to public support for science initiatives, science funding, and science-informed policy. For example, according to a 2015 Pew Survey most Americans identify as religious or spiritual, yet many scientists are unclear about or uncomfortable with effective engagement with people with diverse religious perspectives and worldviews. Accordingly, these events will help scientists develop strategies and skillsets for constructive and culturally competent public engagement, including on science topics that touch upon the interests and concerns of religious communities.

Each campus engagement event will be facilitated by representatives from the DoSER program and the Center, in collaboration with the host institution. For each event AAAS will contribute funds to cover or defray expenses associated with hosting up to three guest speakers, facility use, A/V services, marketing/promotion, and catering. In addition, AAAS will cover the full costs of 1-3 guest speaker(s) and workshop facilitator travel, meals and lodging. A contest will recognize ongoing or prospective public science engagement by affiliated graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and faculty working in or beyond the university community, with four \$1000 awards available per institution. Specific project eligibility and evaluation guidelines will be determined by AAAS and representatives of each selected host institution. Prizes will be awarded by a panel chosen by AAAS and the host institution, with input from event attendees.

For more information on the “Engaging Scientists” program and funding specifics see here <https://www.aaas.org/page/engaging-scientists>

Details on the AAAS-DoSER program can be found here: <https://www.aaas.org/DoSER>
Details on the AAAS-Center for Public Engagement can be found here: <https://www.aaas.org/pes>

Criteria for Selection

Institutions will be selected by AAAS and an external advisory committee based on the following criteria:

- 1) A demonstrated institutional interest in, and commitment to, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural dialogue, particularly on issues at the intersection of science, faith, and society.** This could include examples of relevant courses from the institutional curriculum, active interdepartmental research collaborations, networks with student or staff organizations, partnerships with local community organizations, religious institutions or faith leaders, on-campus lectures open to the public, or other events.
- 2) A commitment to graduate and postdoctoral research in the sciences,** as demonstrated by recent, high-impact, peer reviewed publications, presentations at

institutional, regional, national and international academic meetings, and successful external funding awards to support graduate, postdoctoral and early career scientist research.

- 3) **A demonstrated institutional commitment to broadening access and inclusion to science, engineering, and mathematics for a broad spectrum of US publics,** including members of traditionally underserved communities and cultural groups.
- 4) **Institutional capacity to host a public lecture or colloquia, a half-day science communication workshop for 50 people, and a reception event.** This should include a brief overview of campus facilities suitable for the event.

Submission Instructions

A complete proposal should include the following, assembled as a single pdf file:

- a) A proposal letter (no more than three pages long) that includes a brief description of the institution and its desire and suitability for the proposed event, including details addressing each of the criteria above. The letter should describe why such an event is important for the public engagement goals and efforts of the institutional science faculty, students, and staff. If co-applying with another institution, please note this as well.
- b) A separate biography and CV (no more than two pages) of the university faculty member, postdoctoral researcher, or administrator submitting the proposal, and who will serve as the primary AAAS point-of-contact if the university is selected. For co-applications, please include these details for a contact for each institution.
- c) A letter of support (no more than one page) for the proposal from either the institution's president or a relevant dean. For co-applications, please include one letter from each of the two institutions.

Proposals should be submitted to doser@aaas.org with “Engaging Scientists Proposal – [INSTITUTION NAME]” as the subject heading. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted. Questions about the program can also be directed to this email address.