Empowering the Next Generation of Science Communicators

Nathan Sanders
ComSciCon Leadership Team
The public overwhelmingly demands engagement from scientists.
Who are the community ambassadors for science?

Graduate students are the **broad base** of scientific research.
How do we impact this culture?

A bottom-up approach means targeting graduate students.
Are grads supported to engage the public?

“How supportive do you perceive the following groups to be towards...activities that engage the general, non-specialist public?”

Among graduate students self-selected for engagement in science communication:

Grad students are receptive to public engagement, but many faculty are not supportive.

ComSciCon’17 student attendee survey
Does the public trust leaders in science?

Systematically under-represented groups have less faith in scientists.
Grad Student Case Study: Sid & Joyce

• Students directing Flint Water Study with Marc Edwards
  • PhD candidates in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Virginia Tech

• ComSciCon’16 panelists

Siddhartha Roy
Joyce Ni Zhu
Lessons from Sid & Joyce

Graduate students are spectacularly effective community liaisons.
Lessons from Sid & Joyce

Graduate students are more connected to and more representative of our communities.
Grad Student Case Study: Flip Taneduo

- ComSciCon’13 attendee
- Now faculty in Physics at UC Riverside
- Founder of Particlebites
- Speaker at ComSciCon-SanDiego

@FlipTanedo writes: "@ComSciCon gave me a strong sense of agency in how I chose to do my science—including how I weave public engagement into my science. #scicomm"
Lessons from Flip

Graduate preparation programs have impacts on faculty in just 2-4 yrs
What can societies do?

• Support graduate student professional development
  • Support graduate student entrepreneurship
• Increase connectivity between research and society
  • Enable graduate students to bring their experience back to their local community
• Graduate student writing collaborative
• Reader’s digest of the astrophysical literature for undergraduates
• Science Bites collective operating across ten disciplines & languages
About ComSciCon

• Science communication workshop series for graduate students, by graduate students
• Free of charge for attendees

Supported by:
ComSciCon National Workshop

- 6th national workshop in Boston this June!
- Free of charge for accepted attendees
- Attendees selected for potential for entrepreneurship in science communication
  - 1000 applications for 50 spots

A leadership empowerment program for young scientists
ComSciCon Regional & Specialized Franchises

• Franchises organized by ComSciCon student alums
  • Executed using ComSciCon Franchise Kit
• 30 events nationwide to date

A broad-based training program with telescoping reach
ComSciCon-AIP Society Partnerships

• Program goals:

  1. Bring ComSciCon franchise workshops to member societies
  2. Online programming in science communication for student members

Contact nathan.sanders@comscicon.org for information

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Email nathan.sanders@comscicon.org for information!