



One of the major takeaways from the day was that we have a lot of great ideas that require follow through in order to be successful. Some of the major action items are listed below. There are some activities you can focus on by yourself but many would be best accomplished by working as a team. If any of the items below interest you, consider starting/joining a committee or initiating a discussion on the Project Bridge Slack Workspace ([projectbridgeco.slack.com](https://projectbridgeco.slack.com)).

## In the words of Dr. Daniel Pham, BE THE ONE TO STEP UP!

### ACTIVITIES YOU CAN DO ON YOUR OWN

- Contact/get to know your representative by subscribing to their newsletter, following them on social media, and/or attending their events. ★
- Don't be afraid to bring an issue to a legislator, but do so in an effective way by preparing first. Distill your knowledge into a concise elevator pitch or one-page summary that you can present to your rep or their staff. ★
- Join advocacy groups and professional societies - they already have many resources.
- Be there! Attend meetings, offer to testify, visit the capitol, etc. ★
- Apply for a policy fellowship. AAAS is the most well-regarded, but other options are available.

### ACTIVITIES YOU CAN COORDINATE WITH THE GROUP

- Start a newsletter to share upcoming legislative proposals and other policy news. ★★
- Help create SciAlly (pronounced like Jai Alai). The brain child of Dr. Erin Golden, the goal of SciAlly is to bring organizations together by making a centralized calendar and resource dock. ★
- Generate a Colorado Policy Tracker (see Duke SciPol for a model). ★
- Plan monthly meetings, possibly coordinating between organizations through video conferencing.
- Organize workshops (e.g. how to testify, how to advocate, etc.).
- Generate protocols and standard operating procedures for your group.
- Encourage your friends and colleagues with whom you have a personal connection to volunteer. ★

### BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

We discussed some issues that can get in the way of advocacy and the first step to addressing those items is to name and identify them. Some of the issues are listed below and are labelled with a symbol, which is in turn used above to note the action items that mitigate those problems.

- ★ Lack of wide participation, diversity, international voices, & non-science allies
- ★ Difficulty knowing the policy issues that will be at the center of upcoming legislation
- ★ Lots of great ideas, but not enough follow through
- ★ Becoming a trusted source that legislators consult



# Morning Session Notes

## DIANA DEGETTE (@REPDIANADEGETTE)

- "Ms. Science" in the US House of Representatives, Rep. Degette discussed her push for evidence-based legislation in the vaping industry and environmental policy, as she did previously with the use of stem cells in research.
- She stressed the importance of showing the fiscal cost of implementing policies not grounded by science and crafting the language around an issue to a concise but effective elevator pitch.
- She noted that we, as scientists, "are going to have to work with people like [her] because it's so important for people like [us] to be advocates."
- She personally works closely with doctors and scientists and encouraged us to find out who our elected representatives are and to get to know them and/or their staffs.
- She encouraged us to let elected officials know why our research is important and worth protecting, and when we see things that deserve a legislative fix we should make that known.
- She believes partnerships are very important between legislators and scientists.
- Finally, she noted the importance of reaching out to those who disagree with you; instead of speaking into an echo chamber, yell into the void and you never know when something that you're doing will help - *don't give up on anybody!*

***"seems self evident that we should be relying on science."***

## LEGISLATIVE ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP WITH SAM LICHTIN

- Brainstorm on things we can do to get involved:
  - **As citizens:**
    - Vote
    - Attend rallies/town halls
    - Write letters/op-eds
    - Visit DC
  - **As scientists:**
    - Run for office
    - Contact reps
    - Canvass
    - Work with Project Bridge
  - **As citizens:**
    - Testify
    - Make yourself known
    - Build community trust
    - Organize events
- We discussed Colorado state government and performed a role play exercise in which we acted out talking to a representative about policy. This role play started out in the context of a relaxed situation - a casual chat with a lawmaker - and ended with a complex situation - the last day of the legislative session when there are hundreds of other bills on the floor. The exercise helped us recognize the multi-factorate complexity of enacting legislation.
- **TIPS: Offer to send information and offer to find experts.** As scientists we often feel like we have to have all of the answers, but the important skill we offer is knowing how to find the answers. Don't be afraid to step up just because you aren't the most expert-expert!



# Afternoon Session

## Notes (1 of 2)

### DANIEL PHAM, PHD (@DPHAM20)

- Practical tips for effective advocacy:
  - Define your goal, make it attainable (broad stroke vision)
  - Identify the affected community and make sure the community members actually care
    - LISTENING IS IMPORTANT
  - Find other organizations working on similar goals and work together (don't reinvent the wheel)
  - Learn more about the issue and whose jurisdiction it is under
  - Make actionable goals and decide what success will look like; be realistic about the timeline
  - Identify possible barriers to success, such as government opposition, and how to mitigate them
  - Build relationship with a community so that you are trusted
  - Recruit allies and build a better network - share resources *and* struggle
  - Contact the people who are in opposition to give them your perspective
  - Do a lot of work before planning events and be prepared for a chance encounter
- Ways to get involved as a career:
  - Policy fellowships; 100s available including, but not limited to, the AAAS fellowship
  - Put yourself out there because it's part serendipity and part being ready to say yes
  - Be wary of non-profits - check tax forms to make sure you aren't boarding a sinking ship

### GEORGE SPARKS, DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

- The Institute of Science and Policy at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science serves to be a convener and honest broker - not an advocate or partisan - in order to get science a respected seat at a policy table.
- Mr. Sparks stressed a balance between the "aspirational poet" and the "pragmatic engineer" in order to strive to achieve lofty scientific goals in a practical way.
- He also noted that the road to science-based policy is often blocked by biases, values, and self interests. Understanding the barriers and practical concerns inherent to science-based policy is essential to achieving goals.



# Afternoon Session

## Notes (2 of 2)

### STATE LEGISLATIVE PANEL

#### Dafna Jenet (@dafnaforHD30)

- Rep. Jenet welcomes scientific consultation, but asks that we:
  - a. show how we can save money for the other side
  - b. provide a short (2-3 page, 15 minutes talk) explanation of what we know
- Suicide prevention is her main issue; she welcomes scientific insight on suicide rates in Colorado
- **Rep. Jenet suggested we subscribe to her newsletters, attend meetings, and follow her on social media.**

#### Leslie Herod (@LeslieHerod)

- Rep. Herod stressed the importance of stories; data will only get you so far, put a human face and a story on it - those stories carry bills across the finish line.
- She also pointed out that we all have privilege and should use that privilege wisely!
- She feels that we do too much to protect the system and working within the system prevents people from getting the help they need. So, she tries to pull out the "Jenga blocks" one at a time and use those blocks to rebuild a new system. Once the established system finally crumbles, she will have a new, better system in place.
- **Rep Herod recommended joining advocacy groups to stay up to date on legislation, following her on social media, and attending her events.**

**Together they reminded us that they work for us. Continue to push them and get involved! Don't wait for them to develop legislation - propose to them a change you'd like to see.**

### LEONARD SLOSKY, FORMER SCIENCE ADVISOR

- Mr. Slosky built on the theme that you can get involved and you can make a difference.
- He suggested reaching out to agencies and the executive side, which don't have the time constraints of the legislative session.
- He compared science policy to bench science - sometimes you don't have the right tools or your premise is incorrect, but you need to be able to adapt and adjust after you observe an outcome.
- He described his serendipitous career in government and suggested we just **get involved** - there's no protocol for getting a job so put yourself out there and an opportunity may come.



# Advocacy Round Table & Final Thoughts (1 of 2)

## Q1: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES/BARRIERS IN SCIENCE ADVOCACY?

- We see the same people at all the events; how do we pull people out of the woodwork? How do we convince people - especially PIs - that it's worth our time?
  - We are funded through taxpayer dollars so we should feel some obligation to the public, though our contracts guarantee little to know service requirement.
  - It is helpful to talk to colleagues on a smaller level - like within a lab group - to inform them on a personal level; targeting individuals can make a difference.
  - We need to make opportunities for people to come to you and an important skill is knowing what gaps need to be filled in order to make people feel involved and needed.
  - Be sure to give people agency - don't just do everything yourself.
- We are all under a lot of pressure for our personal and professional time.

## Q2: WHAT RESOURCES HAVE YOU USED? WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE?

- Great admins like Bruce Mandt and other mentors who can help navigate the systems.
- If you consistently find yourselves at activities such as this summit, recognize what that means about your interests and passions - *accept* that you want to leave the lab.
- Some of the resources at Anschutz are not yet available at CSU - there are gaps to be filled.
- ***Don't let a lack of initial funding stop you from starting something.*** Science in Action started out without funding and secured \$2000 this year.

## Q3: WHAT DOES A UNIFIED ADVOCACY GROUP IN COLORADO LOOK LIKE?

- Open lines of communication at all levels; having a network to leverage
- More representative, including minorities, international researchers, MDs/MPHs, non-scientists, etc., and including more unique faces to avoid burnout in the serial volunteer-ers.
- Reducing redundancy in organizations; consolidating available resources and having a central location/body to bring together all of the state's organizations.
- Regular meetings, journal clubs, happy hours, letter writing campaigns etc.; see California for a model.
- There is money available to support these activities, but it needs efforts and diversifying leadership.
- We are working on starting the SciAlly, with shared responsibilities of increasing represented voices. This group would have a shared calendar/website to find each other and connect.
- Our science training has taught us to claim space and be critical of others - that mentality needs to shift.
- We can't expect legislators to find us if we can't find each other. We are siloed on our campuses.



# Advocacy Round Table & Final Thoughts (2 of 2)

## Q3 CONT.

- We need more formalized pathways for scientists to get involved.
- Starting a bill tracker to see what stage bills are in (as done by Duke SciPol and the Union for Concerned Scientists) could be helpful. It could also be integrated into a weekly digest sent to subscribers.
- Maintaining activities will take time and energy - we see many great ideas that are great for a month or two, but fizzle out. These activities require great commitment.
- Coming up with protocols and operating procedures, as well as having someone that sticks around for more than 1 or 2 years (like a faculty advisor) is important.

## Q4: WHAT CAN WE ACCOMPLISH?

- Regular meetings
- More inclusion
- Formally recognized scientific advisory board at the government/state house; creating a group that reps know to consult
- Generating specific workshops (e.g. how to testify, how to advocate) and career training
  - *Some things are currently in the works by Project Bridge and government officials; they haven't been announced but be ready to take those opportunities*
- Colorado is being noticed for efforts such as ours - things are happening and we should be involved!

## Q5: WHAT ADJECTIVES WOULD DESCRIBE THE IDEAL ORGANIZATION?

- Funded
- The place to find an expert (for government) and the place to get career training (for scientists)
- Representative; more diverse and international than the current group

## FINAL COMMENTS

**We are hoping to set up a follow up meeting in a month; using video conferencing to connect. We are all encouraged to be the one to step up - don't wait for someone else to take charge!**