

9th Canadian Science Policy Conference

November 1–3, 2017 | Shaw Centre, Ottawa, ON

CSPC 2017

150 Years of Canadian Science and Innovation – How do we forge ahead?



10:30 – 12:00 GATINEAU 205/207

325 – Scientists as Conveners and Ambassadors for Facts? Evidence Co-creation for a Hyper-complex Post-fact Politics

Theme 3

Panel Organizer: Milena Raykovska | European Commission, Joint Research Centre

A world of a super-abundance of knowledge from sources of variable quality, where complexity has increased exponentially, trust in authorities has diminished and “post-fact” politics appears to be on the rise, creates new challenges for policymakers and scientists who strive towards evidence-informed policies.

The new profession of science advisors requires scientist to be deeply familiar with knowledge at the intersection of policy, democracy and science. To have a policy impact, science advisors need to have the “ability to provide scientific advice in support of policy decisions...effectively addressing the limits of science, the insufficiency of evidence, and appropriately framing uncertainties.”

The session will explore the role of scientists wishing to influence policy in today’s climate of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The session will debate a number of questions, some of which brilliantly outlined by Naomi Oreskes (Harvard University), on the calling and responsibilities of scientists. Do facts speak for themselves? What should the role of scientist be? How to be an ambassador for facts and a convener? Should scientists speak only about problems or also about solutions? Doesn’t it blur boundaries between science and policy, between facts and values?

Sensitising researchers of the necessity to participate in public and political debates and be ambassadors for their research results opens a whole field of questions, which could make scientists very uncomfortable. The session intends to address these and promulgate universal corner stones for developing and communicating science for policy based on responsibility, integrity, independence, and accountability. The linear model of evidence-informed policy-making has proven to be inefficient. There is an increasing need of ‘doing science differently’, notably through cocreation and co-production of ‘evidence’. To have greater policy impact, we need to move from arms-length, one-shot, silo’ed and slow delivery of knowledge to policy towards iterative, intimate, systems/joined-up approach and just-in-time delivery through co-creation in “epistemic communities”.

Moderator



Monica Gattinger
Director, Institute for Science, Society and Policy



David Mair
Head of Unit, responsible for Science advice to policy and the Work Programme, European Commission, Joint Research Centre (the Commission’s science and knowledge service)

Speakers



Kathryn Graham
Executive Director, Performance Management and Evaluation, Alberta Innovates



Jeremy Kerr
Professor of Biology, University Research Chair in Macroecology and Conservation, University of Ottawa



Bob Walker
Retired Senior Executive/ Former President and CEO, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories

The session will go a step further and explore which are the best new methodologies, tools (research synthesis, behavioural insights, citizen/society/ stakeholder engagement, policy labs) and skill-sets (knowledge management and community facilitation, communication, visualization) to fulfill this new role. How do scientists increase impact of science on policies? How to build a lasting relationship of trust, co-creation and co-production with the policymakers? How to establish a position of a convener? The session will draw conclusions on what are the training needs of the actors at the evidence for policy interface in order to be better conveners and ambassadors for facts.