CU Boulder Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE)
Annual Science Communication Symposium

The purpose of the WiSE Science Communication (SciComm) Symposium is to expose WiSE members and the CU research community to useful methods for communicating scientific achievements and ideas to a general audience. Moreover, the SciComm Symposium will allow participants to get first-hand testimonies from speakers and workshop facilitators to broaden alternative experiences in scientific training and open them to a diverse range of career paths.

The goals of the SciComm Symposium are to:
- Showcase WiSE members’ research in a TED-talk style format.
- Provide interactive workshops to teach attendees how to distill their scientific message.
- Promote diversity and inclusiveness in STEM.
- Facilitate networking opportunities and build a stronger scientific community at CU.
- Highlight the importance of science communication within diverse career paths by inviting a Keynote Speaker to share how communication skills have been central to her career. Last year, we invited Dr. Abigail Watrous. She traveled from Washington D.C. to speak about her experiences as a Fulbright Fellow, AAAS Congressional Science Fellow, and an employee of the U.S. Department of Energy. This year, we have invited Dr. Madeline Sofia who will also travel from Washington D.C. to discuss her transition from academia to Assistant Producer at the NPR (National Public Radio) Science Desk and co-host with Joe Palca for “Joe’s Big Idea.”

In April 2016, the first annual SciComm Symposium had over 70 registered participants from across diverse departments and career stages (watch the highlights video). Exit surveys showed that 85% of participants planned to attend the 2017 SciComm Symposium, and feedback suggested adding a more comprehensive science communication workshop.

Photos of the 2016 WiSE SciComm Symposium
A. Dr. Mike Klymkowsky speaks of first-hand science communication experiences.
B. Participants distill their scientific message using the activity “My Simplified Thesis.”
C. Networking with the Keynote Speaker, Dr. Abigail Watrous, following the Symposium.
D. Dr. Shannon Capps describes her research in TED talk format.
**2017 SciComm Symposium**

WiSE will expand the 2017 SciComm Symposium to a full-day event this year, with a 3-hour morning workshop session followed by an afternoon session of short interactive workshops, TED talk-style presentations by WiSE members, and two women in STEM speakers who will illustrate how science communication continues to play an important role in their careers.

Feedback from the 2016 SciComm Symposium suggested including a more in-depth workshop to give participants the skills to relay their research to a diverse audience. Therefore, the 2017 SciComm Symposium is excited to invite Dr. Steve Zeisler to facilitate his “Messages with Impact: Creating a Compelling Story” Workshop, a professionally developed communication program designed to give up to 50 participants the tools to 1) learn to identify and engage different audience through stories, 2) understand the elements of and effective techniques for impactful stories, and 3) practice creating compelling stories about their work that convey its importance and value.

Following the workshop, the afternoon Symposium will serve as a platform to highlight the impressive contributions of women in STEM at CU, increasing the visibility of successful female scientists and helping to recruit and retain women in science, a primary goal of WiSE. In combination with the fun and interactive activities, these TED talk-style research talks will give participants real-world experiences on how to distill their scientific message.

The afternoon session will also include two STEM speakers who use science communication as an integral part of their career. Our Introduction Speaker Dr. Aisha Morris will kick off the afternoon session, speaking of her experiences as a scientist, AAAS Congressional Science Fellow, community engagement specialist, as well as her dedication to promoting diversity and inclusion in STEM at UNAVCO. Our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Madeline Sofia will provide insight on how she incorporated important science communication experiences into her graduate training, and how she used these experiences to transition from working in the laboratory as a microbiologist to speaking to millions of listeners at the NPR Science. These first-hand testimonies of women in STEM will allow participants to see what a career in science journalism, policy, and outreach is like, and the social hour following the symposium will allow participants to connect with these speakers and tap into their professional network of policy experts, science journalists, and outreach specialists.

**Helpful Links**

- Dr. Aisha Morris, UNAVCO RESESS Program: [https://www.unavco.org/highlights/2013/resess.html](https://www.unavco.org/highlights/2013/resess.html)