

Summer 2018  
Newsletter

# AEJMC ComSHER

Communicating Science, Health, Environment, and Risk Division

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***By Sol Hart  
Division Head***

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## **ComSHER is headed to the Capitol!**

We are very excited about the upcoming ComSHER program at AEJMC! It is jam packed with great panels and research sessions. We also have an awesome field trip organized by Chris Clarke to visit offices of members of Congress and their staff to talk about science communication. I am happy to report that ComSHER received the most paper submissions in its history this year and we continue to innovate with novel approaches to conference sessions.

Our top paper session will be on Wednesday, August 8, from 5:15 – 6:45pm. Immediately following the top paper session, please make sure to come to our business meeting. We will recognize all of our award winners – Top Faculty Papers, Eason Award for top student paper, SHER published article of the year, and the top poster award. This will be followed by our social at the Tap Room right next to the hotel.

At the business meeting we will also vote on new officers! For those interested in leadership, the process according to our bylaws is as follows: The officers of ComSHER are Head, Vice Head/Program Chair, Vice-Head Elect, and Research Chair. Typically officers will progress in order for stable succession (e.g. the Research Chair will become Vice-Head Elect). Individuals interested in being an officer should plan on running for Research Chair. Nominations (including self-nominations) to stand for election to Research Chair must be sent to me ([solhart@gmail.com](mailto:solhart@gmail.com)) no later than two days (48 hours) prior the annual meeting. Anyone wishing to run must have completed one year of service for the Division in a leadership position and two years of paper reviews for Division paper competition. These officers will be elected at the annual meeting by a majority of those in attendance.

We also have a number of appointed leadership positions (Professional Freedom and Responsibility Chair, Teaching Chair, Secretary, Newsletter Chair, Social Media Chair, Website Chair, Membership Chair, Grad Student Liaison). These positions will be appointed by the elected ComSHER officers. Up to two people can be appointed to each of these positions to facilitate transitions to new chairs and involve more people in Division activities.

All ComSHER members are eligible to serve in appointed leadership positions; however, students may only serve in the capacity of Student Liaison, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Website Editor and Social Media Editor. Members interested in being appointed to a leadership position should send an email to me ([solhart@gmail.com](mailto:solhart@gmail.com)) at least 2 days before the annual meeting.

I have enjoyed serving as an officer in ComSHER over the years. The strength of our division, which is one of the very best at any conference, is driven by all of the wonderful people who contribute to its success. Thank you everyone for all of your work to help ComSHER grow and thrive every year.



*By Avery Holton, Vice-Head*

## ComSHER Announces 2018 Article of the Year!

More than a dozen articles were nominated for this year's ComSHER Article of the Year Award, which was selected after two rounds of peer-review. The winners, along with their paper titles, are listed below. We would like to thank all of the reviewers—seven in total—who helped with this year's process. Their feedback was invaluable.

This year's first-place paper was, "[A Meta-Analysis of Factors Predicting Cyberbullying Perpetration and Victimization: From the Social Cognitive and Media Effects Approach](#)" by Liang Chen, Shirley S. Ho, and May O. Lwin. The study appeared in *New Media & Society* and "identified 16 predictors of cyberbullying perpetration and victimization and examined the magnitude of the effects of these predictors by meta-analyzing 81 empirical studies, which represented a total sample of 99,741 participants and yielded 259 independent correlations."

Other Article of the Year winners included:

### Second Place

- **"Do Hostile Media Perceptions Lead to Action? The Role of Hostile Media Perceptions, Political Efficacy, and Ideology in Predicting Climate Change Activism"** in *Communication Research*. Lauren Feldman, Sol Hart, Anthony Leiserowitz, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf.

### Third Place

- **"Examining Differences in Audience Recall and Reaction Between Mediated Portrayals of Mental Illness as Trivializing Versus Stigmatizing"** in the *Journal of Health Communication*. Jessica Gall Myrick and Rachelle L. Pavelko.
- **"Perceived Conflict of Interest in Health Science Partnerships"** in *PLOS One*. John C. Besley, Aaron M. McCright, Nagwan R. Zahry, Kevin C. Elliott, Norbert E. Kaminski, and Joseph D. Martin

**Congratulations**  
**to all the winners!**

*By Sara Yeo, Teaching Chair*

## **Teaching Panels in DC!**

Please join us at our **teaching panels** at the 2018 Annual Conference. Both panels are on **Tuesday (Aug 7, 2018)** and the information is provided below. We look forward to seeing you there!

### **11:45 – 1:15 pm: Communication and Media Relations Training in Risk and Crises** (co-sponsored with Small Programs)

This round-table style panel will discuss practical approaches to teaching crisis communication. Audience members will be provided with ideas about how to merge theory and real-world practice from a variety of perspectives. The suggested best practices are grounded in industry experience, curriculum development, personal experience, and student success. Attendees will learn about creating impactful lesson plans, the opportunities and challenges involved in using a service learning approach, and teaching students how to create a crisis communication plan in one semester.

#### **Panelists:**

John Besley, Michigan State University  
Michelle Baum, Metropolitan State University of Denver  
Kristi Gilmore, Texas Tech University  
Chuck Lubbers, University of South Dakota  
Michelle M. Maresh-Fuehrer, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

### **3:15 – 4:45 pm: Tips and Techniques for Teaching Online and Hybrid Courses** (co-sponsored with Political Communication)

This panel will help instructors manage two colliding trends in the modern classroom: How do you handle class lectures and discussions that cover scientific issues that are potentially politically contentious? And how do you do so in an environment in which institutions are encouraging instructors to make use of online tools to facilitate learning, including a greater emphasis on hybrid and online classes? The panelists will offer resources, tools and tips that can be used to navigate the challenges these issues present. Panelists will also highlight resources for teaching these topics. As institutions of higher education continue to encourage the use of online learning tools (e.g., Instructure, Moodle, Desire2Learn, social media), panelists will offer helpful tips and techniques for best practices.

#### **Panelists:**

Asheley Landrum, Texas Tech University  
Linda Pfeiffer, Purdue University  
Kate Roberts Edenborg, University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Avery Holton, University of Utah  
D. Jasun Carr, Idaho State University

*By Timothy Fung, PF&R Chair*

## **Professional Freedom & Responsibility (PF&R) Panels at the DC AEJMC Conference**

Our Professional Freedom & Responsibility (PF&R) panels at the upcoming AEJMC conference will feature an exciting slate of ComSHER-sponsored PF&R panels. Below are the information about our three excellent sessions. Mark these on your calendars!

### **Session #1**

Monday, August 6

**11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.**

### **Public Relations and Communicating Science/Health Risk Divisions**

**“Natural disasters and publics: Strategic crisis communication in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma”**

**Moderator:** Jen Vardeman-Winter, University of Houston

**Discussants:** Erica Ciszek, University of Houston

### **Panelists:**

Krista Rouse, The Weather Company

Gina Eosco, NOAA

Scott McBride, US Coast Guard

Lucinda Austin, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Brian Houston, University of Missouri

Kim Golombisky, University of South Florida

This panel will explore communication before, during, and after natural disasters Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. These natural disasters resulted in record urban catastrophes. The hurricanes also brought forth some new contexts through which to understand crisis communication. For example, Hurricane Harvey devastated communities from all socioeconomic levels, and as such, communicators must understand how to send meaningful messages to different publics. Furthermore, as social media are ubiquitous platforms, to what extent were social media able to better provide non-discriminating information to affected publics? Also, how do different publics perceive the different social media platforms as credible? This panel questions existing theoretical and empirical boundaries by proposing new theories that examine social media, crisis, and publics.

### **Session #2**

Tuesday, August 7

**10 to 11:30 a.m.**

### **Communicating Science/Health Risk and Participatory Journalism Interest Groups**

**“Localized Fear: Communicating Science and Risk At the Community Level”**

**Moderating/Presiding:** Katherine Rowan, George Mason University

**Panelists:**

Jessica Myrick, Penn State  
 Janet Yang, University of Buffalo  
 Brian Houston, University of Missouri  
 Meghna Tallapragada, Clemson University  
 Bruce Hardy, Temple University

Coverage of complex science and risk-related issues, especially at the local and community level, presents a number of challenges and opportunities. Using theoretical and practical approaches as well as case study examples, this panel will broadly approach how such reporting works, to what means, and how such reporting might be improved. Specifically, this panel discusses how engagement with the public within these communities and through multiple channels (e.g., social media, traditional media) can improve such reporting and its impact.

**Session #3**

Thursday, Aug. 9  
 12:45 to 2:15 p.m.

**Communicating Science/Health Risk and International  
 Communication Divisions**

**“Communicating environment, health, and science related risks across  
 sociocultural contexts”**

**Moderating/Presiding:** Timothy Fung, Hong Kong Baptist University

**Panelists:**

Dominique Brossard, University of Wisconsin  
 Jianbin Jin, Tsinghua University, Beijing  
 Dean Cummings, Georgia Southern University  
 Francesca D. Carpentier, University of North Carolina

Global risk-related issues (e.g., climate change, influenza pandemic, nanotechnology) have a political, social, and ethical impact on society that often transcend cultural and national boundaries. Addressing the risks of global health, environment, and science issues requires international action. However, the sociocultural environment has a contextual influence on how people from different societies and countries make sense of the risky issues and on how they form their decisions to address the risks. Therefore, communication plays an important role to mobilize the international effort to deal with the risks. This panel showcases the challenges faced by communicators such as journalists, public officials, advocates from non-profit organizations, public relation specialists to communicate global risks across cultural and national boundaries. Through comparative research on the risks related to environment, health, and science issues, panelists will discuss the role of the media in the communication process. The panelists will also discuss the implications for researchers and scientists to reach out global audience.





## Talking Science Communication with Congress: An AEJMC Field Trip to Capitol Hill

Monday, August 6, 2018; 2-5:30 p.m.

*By Chris Clarke, Secretary*

### OVERVIEW

Wherever science and policy intersect on Capitol Hill, examples of science communication abound. Congressional committees recruit scientists to explain complex science at hearings, (hopefully) using terms that elected representatives will understand and that are pithy enough that the media will cover. Congressional staff members converse with industry, non-profits, federal agencies and labs, and academic institutions to identify science pertinent to legislation. And members of Congress communicate about science to the public in their statements to reporters, at town hall meetings, and through social media.

Also, because of the importance of federal decisions to the future of science-related research, policy, and education in the U.S., Washington, DC is home to government relations representatives of academic institutions and some of the world's largest science organizations. These groups monitor the federal government's policies on science, communicate with legislators and their staff to promote its funding and use in decision-making, and train scientists to engage in this political sphere.

This event offers a unique opportunity for participants to learn about how science communication operates in the halls of Congress. In particular:

- What are some of the typical ways that scientists interact with policymakers on the Hill, and what are some of the best practices in preparing for these visits?
- How can science communication scholars and practitioners help congressional staff—and members of Congress - more effectively practice science communication to the public, with stakeholders, and internally within Congress in science-related policy domains such as health and the environment?

Participants will start the field trip at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center for an introductory, hands-on preparatory briefing related to addressing the questions above. Representatives from the American Association will host this part for the Advancement of Science. Conference attendees will then visit with offices of members of Congress and a House or Senate committee to learn/discuss how they operate as well as how science communication plays a role in their day-to-day committee work (also drawing on the questions mentioned above).

### REGISTRATION

**\*\* Space is limited to the first 25 registrants and will fill up fast. The deadline to register is Monday, July 9<sup>th</sup>.**

\*\* To register, please visit: <https://aejmc2.wufoo.com/forms/comsher-field-trip-to-capitol-hill-signup-m1oiv0806gyfh9/>

Registration is free, except the cost of transportation to/from the Hotel. The group will meet in the hotel lobby and depart promptly at 130 pm. We will either take a taxi/Uber/Lyft or Metro to the Hill.

*\*\* This session is sponsored by the ComSHER Division of AEJMC, with additional co-sponsorship from Congresswoman Barbara Comstock's office (Virginia's 10<sup>th</sup> District); George Mason University's Department of Communication and graduate program in science communication; and the American Association for the Advancement of Science's (AAAS) Office of Government Relations and Center for Public Engagement with Science and Technology.*

### ***A Commentary on This Year's Sundance Fest***

#### **Searching for Environment Themes at Sundance 2018**

***By JoAnn M. Valenti, Emerita Professor (Brigham Young University) and AAAS Fellow***

At the opening of the only panel listed under last year's "The New Climate" logo, Sundance Film Festival director John Cooper acknowledged the lack of climate films this year. Finding relevant environment messages for SFF 2018 did indeed prove elusive. Denouncing "a White House run by climate change deniers" the panel's moderator introduced three speakers from indigenous communities as representative of those who strive to reframe climate change as "a people, a human issue".

Bart Powauke works as the Water Quality and Environment Director for Utah's Nez Perce/Ute tribe. Tashka Yawanawa, tribal chief from Acre, Brazil, has lead a doubling of territory and cultural reinvigoration by building innovative business partnerships. Former president Anote Tong of Kiribati, one of the many threatened low-lying Pacific island nations, who has taken his plea to the U.N., the Vatican and spoke alongside President Obama at the Paris Climate Accord sessions, politely admitted, "I'm running out of smiles," during the photo shoot.

**Anote's Ark**, screened among the World Documentary Features, tells the story of the first climate change refugees and warns of the unstoppable rise of sea level. In the film, Anote surmises, "It's a bit late to reduce fossil fuels," as he prepares islanders to relocate to New Zealand. "We need a miracle," he says as he witnesses the end of his homeland. And yet, in an interview he assures me he has hope. "It's a matter of when and how [it] will happen," he said. "A global consensus is needed, with concrete solutions, especially for front line issues" such as his country faces. He tells me he has not met with Trump. And although he's willing to, he doubts it would change anything. "He [Trump] must have compassion as a human being," Anote said. Then added, "He [Trump] has not yet connected with the issue."

After 10 days in Park City, UT's snow covered mountains, the annual Sundance Film Festival awarded 123 feature-length and 69 short films selected from 13,468 submissions from 29 countries. Gender, race and immigrant issues dominated with a women's rally during opening weekend's first snowstorm and a Code of Conduct enforcement in place with the City. At the opening press conference Sundance Institute founder Robert Redford said, "The role for men right now [is] to listen and think...pay attention."

Addressing the issue of fake news, Redford said, "Journalism always seems to be under threat...because journalism is our means of getting to the truth," and added that getting to the truth is harder and harder in the current political climate.



**A World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award** went to Russian and U.S. editors Maxim Pozdorovkin and Matvey Kulakov for ***Our New President***, a behind the scenes look at Donald Trump's election told entirely through Russian propaganda. Somewhat expectedly horrifying footage from RT (Russian Television) offers a portrait of fake news and the tactics of modern-day information warfare. The actual news clips and BG footage are indeed telling, but the YouTube clips seem staged rather than authentic, if YouTube can ever be considered factual in the first place. RT's global reach is worth pondering.

Two very different films considered the issue of disappearing natural landscape and over development. In ***Leave No Trace*** military vets unprepared to return to normal life prefer living in wilderness encampments only to be chased out by Park Rangers. In ***The Last Race*** elderly owners of a Long Island stock car racetrack struggle to maintain a piece of blue collar America's culture in the face of real estate development.

This year's Sloan Award for Science Narrative—never the more deserving docs, only features qualify—again after last year's AI/VR drama ***Marjorie Prime***, which in spite of Jon Hamm went nowhere theatrically-- focuses on technology rather than anything remotely to do with climate change, nuclear threats or any number of environmental crises. ***Search*** is billed as a "thriller" that tells the story of a father desperate to find his teenager by culling through her laptop. The entire film unfolds solely on computer screen, every frame a computer screen, the new crime solver tool I guess.

Two excellent documentaries far more relevant to environmental issues showcase the largest convening of high school students from around the world for Intel's International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEFF). Gathering annually in Los Angeles, young innovators confront environmental threats in their homelands with new ideas for testing water purity, combating air pollution and arming citizens with needed health information. ***Inventing Tomorrow*** and ***Science Fair*** offer hopeful voices from the generations coming up in our wake.

**A U.S. Dramatic Special Jury Award for Excellence in Filmmaking** was presented to ***I Think We're Alone Now***, an apocalypse story more about human need or lack thereof for companionship rather than what might lead to such a planetary catastrophe. Actors Peter Dinklage and Elle Fanning make the film worth viewing.

One U.S. doc ***The Devil We Know***—not to be confused with a soon to be released motion picture ***The Devil Has A Name***, the true story of a psychotic oil matriarch, corporate greed and environmental apathy—reminds the world of DuPont's W. VA disaster and why the planet's population now carries C-8 in our bloodstreams. Yeah, Teflon. Lawsuits continue today given that the known carcinogen is still being manufactured and used in products. Sitting next to me at the screening, a Salt Lake City TV newsman reported he recently settled with a lawn care company for spraying and killing an entire yard of trees with the toxin, no longer regulated by the EPA. Perhaps this doc will become another in the line of ***Blackfish***, ***Gasland*** and ***Chasing Coral***. One can only hope.



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### ***Stay Connected! Stay Involved!***

As always, we welcome our member's active involvement with the division!

If you would like to share any articles with us or provide feedback, you can reach us anytime via the communication outlets listed below, or by directly emailing us.

Thank you for your continuing support!



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