Topics Covered

My background
- Who am I and how did I get here?

What is science policy?
- What is it?
- What do policy people do?

Pursuing a career in science policy
- Skills that transfer from bench to Beltway
- Strategies to develop policy-specific skills
- Jump-starting a career in science policy
About Me…
Educational Background

BA, Ohio Wesleyan University
Zoology (Genetics) and Politics & Government

PhD, SUNY-Stony Brook
Genetics (Hannon Lab, CSHL)
Career Highlights

- **National Academies – Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy**
  Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Fellow
  (Summer 2004)

- **FasterCures** (2004 – 2006)
  Research Associate

  Senior Health Science Policy Analyst
  (Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Genetics, Health, and Society)

- **Discovery Logic/Thomson Reuters** (2009 – 2013)
  Senior Scientific Analyst
  Strategy Associate
  Project Manager/Project Lead

- **Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology** (2013 – present)
  Director of Science Policy
What does FASEB do?

- **Our Mission…**
  - Advance health and welfare by promoting progress and education in biological and biomedical sciences through service to our member societies and collaborative advocacy.

- It is accomplished through Public Affairs activities including…
  - Policy research and development
  - Advocacy and our role as government liaison
  - Coalition building
  - Communication and outreach
Who are we?

- **31 Professional Societies**
- **Over 130,000 Scientists**
What Everyone Thinks I Do…
What I Actually Do…
No really…what do you do?

- Manage the FASEB’s science policy team and portfolio
- Gather information and develop strategy
- Write (a lot)
- Talk (even more, especially on the phone)
- Prepare FASEB’s leadership for speaking gigs
- Develop resources for scientists and the public
- Plan events
- Attend meetings
- Network
What is Science Policy?
Categories of Science Policy

- **Science for Policy**
  - Application of science to develop and drive policy decisions

- **Policy for Science**
  - Government laws, regulations, and policies that affect scientists and the research and development enterprise
Who Drives Policy Development?

- Executive Branch (President, OSTP)
- Legislative Branch (Congress)
- Judicial Branch (Supreme Court)
- Federal Agencies (NIH, NSF, USDA, FDA, etc.)
- Federal Advisory Committees (NAS/IOM, ACD, SACHRP)
- State Governments
- Universities
- Accrediting/Licensing Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Industry
- Think Tanks
- Disease Advocacy Organizations
Step 1: Someone has an idea
Step 2: Collect Information

- Responses to Requests for Information
- Expert Interviews
- Testimony/Public Comments
- Database Combing
- Literature Search
Step 3: Develop Recommendations

- Data and feedback are used to develop recommendations (in theory, this should make everyone’s job easier/keep people safe/decrease costs – but this is not always the case)

…and the process continues…”
Pursuing a Career in Science Policy
Is Science Policy for You?

Do you enjoy…

☐ Learning a little bit about a lot of issues (instead of a lot about one topic)?

☐ Keeping up with current events and issues in science?

☐ Interacting with people and resolving disagreements?

☐ Teaching scientific concepts (explaining scientific information to non-scientists?)

☐ A fast-paced working environment?

☐ Writing for non-scientific audiences?

☐ Working under the pressure of tight deadlines?
Skills that Transfer to Policy

- Understanding of the scientific process
- Subject matter expertise
- Analytical/critical thinking skills
- Ability to interpret and synthesize data
- Framing/communicating results
- Project management/collaboration skills
Skills You May Need to Develop

- **Communication**
  - Convey scientific information and its importance to non-scientists
  - Non-technical writing
  - Public speaking

- **Consensus Building**
  - FASEB statements reflect the views of 31 diverse organizations

- **Networking**
  - Being well-connected and fostering professional relationships
To Postdoc or Not to Postdoc?

- What are your policy interests?
- Are you interested in policies related to a specific area of science?
- How close do you want to stay to science?

**Pro Tip:** ALWAYS go into a postdoc with a PLAN.
Where do you find science policy professionals?

- **Government and government advisory bodies**
  - Congress
  - White House
  - Science agencies (NIH, NSF, etc.) ✔️
  - National Academies ✔️

- **Associations** (scientific societies, disease organizations) ✔️

- **Industry** (pharmaceutical and biotech companies)

- **Universities** (government relations offices)

- **Think Tanks** ✔️

- **Start Ups** ✔️
Pathways to Careers in Science Policy

Great ways to dip your toe into science policy:

- Join and participate in a scientific society or organization
- Stay informed on science issues in the news
- Teach or mentor in your community
- Volunteer at a local science museum
- Contribute articles or letters to local newspapers and/or institution or society newsletters
- Participate in a Capitol Hill Day
- Invite elected officials to your lab
- Network to make contacts outside your field (and keep them)
Pathways to Careers in Science Policy

Great ways to transition to a science policy career:

- Organize policy discussion groups
- Work on a political campaign
- Informational interviews with science policy professionals
- Internships with institutional Offices of Government Relations, Technology Transfer, or Sponsored Research
- Internships with foundations or advocacy organizations
- Established Fellowship programs (AAAS, National Academies, Society Fellowships, etc.)
Reasons to Pursue a Fellowship

- Enrich scientific training with policy experience
- Interest in assisting with the development of policy in a specific area
- Desire to “test-drive” a career in policy
Fellowship Goals

- Increase awareness of the policy process within the scientific community
- Incorporate subject matter experts (e.g., YOU) into the development of policy
- Engage researchers in advocacy activities
- Enhance communication skills of scientists
- Expand career opportunities available for PhD-trained scientists
Finding a Fellowship

- Professional Societies/Associations
- Foundations
- Government Agencies (State & Federal)
- Institutional

FASEB Website: [http://bit.ly/1Y0xuP9](http://bit.ly/1Y0xuP9)

AAAS Website: [http://www.aaas.org/page/stpf/fellowship-resources](http://www.aaas.org/page/stpf/fellowship-resources)
For More Information…

FASEB Office of Public Affairs

Yvette Seger, PhD
Director of Science Policy
yseger@faseb.org
(301) 634-7124