

# **Science Journalism and Communication**

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Careers in Science & Engineering Symposium

August 29, 2020

# A bit about me...

- Born and raised in Lexington
- Focused on science in HS, college
- Migrated toward science writing over several years; took the plunge in 2012 with master's program and several internships
- Full-time freelancer for almost 7 years
- Write for large variety of publications, from specialized to general-interest

# Why science journalism / communication?

- Think about, talk about, write about science
- Don't actually have to *do* science!
- No obligation to hyper-specialize or focus on one field or topic
- Write in more fun ways than standard academic journal article
- Chance to help public better understand science (hopefully) and play an important role in society

# What do science journalists do?

- Read papers, go to conferences, these days listen to online talks
- Interview scientists.. Lots and lots of scientists (and other folks)
- Write
- Edit
- Pitch
- Promote and publicize work

# What do science communicators do?

- Much of the same, but sometimes different audiences
- Video, infographics skills increasingly useful
- Often work for one institution and help that institution shape its message and reach the public
- Sometimes less emphasis on story-telling and more emphasis on clear, actionable communication of scientific concepts

# Pathways into the profession

- Bachelor's in science, master's in science communication or writing
- Advanced degree in science, AAAS or other fellowships/internships
- Traditional journalism route
- Freelancing

# Where are the jobs?

- Journalism
  - Newspapers (few)
  - Magazines (mostly editing)
  - Websites, new media, etc.
- Communication
  - Universities
  - Government
  - Nonprofits
  - Professional organizations
  - Corporations
- Freelance

# Some issues facing science journalism / communication today

- How to handle politically charged or controversial topics: climate change, vaccines, GMOs, coronavirus
- Diversity and inclusion
- Shifting media landscape
- How much to promote / cheerlead for science versus hold scientists / scientific institutions accountable



# Questions?

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- My website: [www.gabrielpopkin.com](http://www.gabrielpopkin.com)
- To learn more about science and environmental writing: National Association of Science Writers, Society of Environmental Journalists