

ABOUT AGU

Print Journals to Continue in 2011

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Since all AGU journals “went electronic,” in 2002, subscriptions to the print versions have declined rapidly. Many academic and corporate libraries have replaced their print subscriptions with subscriptions to the electronic versions, sometimes retaining a print subscription for archiving purposes. Individual subscribers have moved to the electronic versions rapidly, but many readers also rely heavily on their institution to provide access in lieu of personal subscriptions. Since then, the electronic version has been the version of record because of features such as links to citations and embedded objects that are impossible to produce in a print version.

There are still places in the world, however, where access to electronic versions is limited or unreliable. In some cases, a national government restricts access either by time or by the number of users; in other cases, the local infrastructure doesn’t support continuous access. There is also a small demand for print in developed countries for archiving purposes. The recent announcement that AGU is now participating in the Portico archiving program may reduce those subscriptions further, but it is not likely to eliminate them entirely.

AGU will continue to distribute products in print as long as the demand persists, at a price that provides a reasonable return for our efforts. Customers may decide, for many reasons, that they no longer require the print

version; when the number of institutional subscriptions declines to a point where there are too few to support a title, we will consider additional steps, including converting a title to electronic only.

AGU staff continue to investigate printing options to reduce our carbon footprint and still deliver a useful print version of the journals. We have moved many of the titles to digital presses, which allows us to print only the number of copies ordered; sheet and web-fed presses have minimum numbers of start-up and runoff copies. We have also begun investigating ways to reduce the size of a page to print fewer pages per issue but still remain legible to readers. These actions are necessary as fewer subscriptions are available over which to spread the fixed costs of preparing the journals for publication. We are determined to reduce printing costs to keep subscription price increases as low as possible.

—BILL COOK, Director of Publications, AGU

AGU Congressional Science Fellow Update: Tips for Scientists

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After being selected as the AGU Congressional Science Fellow in March 2009, I packed my bags and moved from sunny Colorado to steamy Washington, D. C., in late August. By mid-September I had completed an intensive 2-week orientation program for incoming Science and Technology Fellows organized by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). If I was feeling somewhat breathless at that point, it was nothing compared with the experience of searching for a congressional office in which to spend my year.

Congressional Science Fellows are funded by their societies, so they are a source of free expertise to members of Congress and congressional committees. Science and Technology Fellows are in high demand, but the quality of the experience for both the fellow and the office depends on finding the right match of interests and personalities. The matchmaking process can take several weeks—and a lot of agonizing—but by the end of September, I was a member of Senator Byron Dorgan’s (D-N. D.) energy and environment team.

Senator Dorgan is a major figure in all aspects of national energy policy. He is the second-ranking Democrat on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, which determines energy and natural resource policy. He chairs the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, which allocates funding for much of the nation’s energy research and development. His state, North Dakota, has economically significant fossil

fuel and renewable energy resources. Senator Dorgan’s staff includes energy policy experts, and I am privileged that they are mentoring me in the ways of Congress, the intricacies of policy formulation, and politics at all levels.

My main realization after 6 months on Capitol Hill is that I am only now beginning to grasp how national policy is actually made. I had a reasonable theoretical background in policy before coming to Washington, but the reality is more complex than is often presented. I can, however, make several concrete observations about how to effectively communicate your views to a member of Congress or congressional staff. Meetings are an important way for scientists to participate in the policy process, and they can have a significant impact. That impact, however, can be good or bad.

The following tips may help AGU members to avoid common pitfalls when presenting their science or relevant policy opinions in a congressional setting:

Define your message: Expect that you will have 5 minutes to make your point. Be able to deliver your main message in 2–3 minutes.

Target the right audience at the right time: Meet with representatives or senators on the committee with jurisdiction over your issue. Schedule your meeting when policy is being developed; do not wait until a vote is being taken, as there may be no scope for change at that point. At least one member of your group ideally should be a constituent of the member you are meeting; this makes it more likely you will get an appointment. If you feel it is important that you meet directly

with a member, contact his or her scheduler in the office by phone or e-mail to make an appointment. It is often more useful to meet with a member’s personal staff or with relevant committee staff. Find out the name of the staff member dealing with your issue (inquire at the main phone number for the member’s Washington, D. C., office, contact a district office, or ask AGU’s public affairs staff if they have this information) and set up an appointment. It is usually easier to meet with staff on Mondays or Fridays because Congress is less likely to be in session then. It is often possible to meet with members on their visits back to their district or state.

Before the meeting: E-mail the scheduler and/or staffer a list of the people who will be attending the meeting, their affiliations, and a summary of the issues you will be raising. If you are meeting with a member, it is customary for staff to prepare a memo for him or her with background information on the topic and details of your group and interests. The information you provide will help focus the meeting agenda and provide for a more meaningful dialogue.

Understand the logistics of meetings: Be on time, and be prepared to wait. Many members’ days are very tightly scheduled; if you miss your slot, it can be difficult to reschedule. Do not arrive with unannounced people. Small groups (two to four) are usually more effective because they don’t waste precious time on introductions and can fit into a smaller meeting room. Most meetings with members last a maximum of 15 minutes, and may be much shorter. Action on the House or Senate floor, in committees, and elsewhere can take precedence over meetings, so do not be upset if the member misses your meeting entirely; you will still get to meet with staff. Meetings with staff are usually 15–30 minutes long. Printouts of slides work

well. If possible, do not use computer presentations or audiovisual equipment; if you feel it is essential, coordinate in advance with the office. Ask permission to take any photographs. Have copies of a short (one- to two-page) summary of your main points to leave with staff. Do not overload staff with material.

Focus on impacts: Have a clear message and an “ask”—why are you telling people this information, and what do you want the office to do about it? You are talking with policy makers, so make your presentation relevant to policy. Always be respectful to the people you are meeting, and explain your ideas clearly. Blinding your listeners with science is not effective. The science can be used as evidence of a reason for an action, but you should not leave staff wondering, “So what? Who cares?” If you are asking for money, know something about the program you are asking about. What federal agency is it in? How much was

requested for it in the president’s budget request? Which appropriations committee has jurisdiction? Why are additional funds necessary? Why and how would this funding meet a certain need?

Be positive: Highlighting problems is important, but you are likely to get a more sympathetic ear if you also bring solutions to the table. You almost certainly know more about some aspects of your issue than the person you are speaking with, and they will appreciate constructive suggestions. You do not have to know all the policy angles, but it helps if you can outline your ideal outcome.

Politics is the art of the possible: Remember that there are many players in every policy issue who hold their views as fervently as you hold yours. State your case, but understand that it is rare to achieve everything you want.

Scientists are generally highly regarded by Congress, but as with every other interest

group that comes to the Hill, what they say may be regarded skeptically. Do not be surprised if your data and interpretations become just one element in a mix of reference points for the decision-making process.

It is critical to make your views known to Congress—decision makers need and value your input and knowledge—but it really helps if you make it easy for busy, multitasking members and staffers to grasp the relevance of your point without needless distractions. You will convey your message more effectively if you pay attention to logistics and details.

—MAEVE BOLAND, AGU Congressional Science Fellow

Maeve Boland is working in the office of Senator Byron L. Dorgan (D-N. D.). This article reflects her personal views and does not represent the opinions of Senator Dorgan or his office.

Kahn and Salawitch Receive 2009 Yoram J. Kaufman Award for Unselfish Cooperation in Research

Ralph A. Kahn and Ross J. Salawitch received the 2009 Yoram J. Kaufman Award for Unselfish Cooperation in Research at the 2009 AGU Fall Meeting, held 14–18 December in San Francisco, Calif. The award is for “broad influence in atmospheric science through exceptional creativity, inspiration of younger scientists, mentoring, international collaborations, and unselfish cooperation in research.”

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Response From Ralph A. Kahn

I am grateful to the committee for this honor. It is an award for mentoring and for collaboration. Mentoring and collaboration are not things that one does alone. There are many students, colleagues, and former students who are now colleagues, who I have to thank for this. I am fortunate to know, and to have worked with, so many good-hearted and multitasking colleagues, of which Yoram Kaufman was certainly one.

On the subject of collaboration, I also want to mention the intensive field campaigns that have become a key part of my research program. They represent cultural as well as scientific events, bringing satellite and suborbital experimentalists together with each other, with modelers, and with some enlightened and forward thinking managers, for intense, collaborative efforts. For an important segment of the atmospheric research community, these campaigns have actually created the kind of multidisciplinary environment that was spoken about in the abstract for years, and that is essential for making real progress on the immensely challenging and critically important climate change issues we face. I look forward to many more years of good collaborating and mentoring.

Thank you again for this honor.

—RALPH A. KAHN, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, Md.



Ralph A. Kahn

Response From Ross J. Salawitch

It is with a sense of pride and humility that I accept the Yoram J. Kaufman Award. It is wonderful to share the award with Ralph Kahn. The award Web page states that Yoram “advised and mentored a large number of students and junior scientists and was known for his quick insight, great heart, deep wisdom, and outreach to national and international collaborators.” These are lofty attributes that I aspire to one day achieve!

Like Yoram, I have been inspired by a large number of young scientists with whom I have been fortunate to collaborate. Our



Ross J. Salawitch

efforts, often led by junior scientists, quantified the effects of human activity on atmospheric composition with tremendous benefit to society. The findings resulted in a sharp decline of anthropogenic emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), leading to stabilization of stratospheric ozone depletion. Perhaps more important and certainly less appreciated, declining levels of CFCs and related halocarbons have had a beneficial effect on the surface radiative forcing that drives climate change, due to the large global warming potential of these compounds.

Recently, we’ve quantified the “climate penalty factor” for air quality, showing that removal of nitrogen oxide emissions from coal-fired power plants results in significant improvements to air quality downwind of plants as well as a reduction in the likely impact of climate change on air quality. Our next major endeavor is the measurement of CO₂ from space with an accuracy and precision sufficient to address outstanding issues in global carbon cycle science and perhaps future treaty verification. It has been a great pleasure to work with so many outstanding young scientists during various field campaigns, satellite mission planning and