

TIGER TIPS
RESOURCES FOR AUBURN RESEARCHERS
Communicating Science – “I don’t understand”

Scientists are increasingly requested by their institutions and funding agencies to extend beyond the scientific community and communicate their research directly to public audiences, but traditional scientific training typically does not prepare scientists to be effective public communicators. As a result, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) has developed and maintains a successful communication-skills training program for researchers, “Communicating Science: Tools for Scientists and Engineers.” The program was launched at the 2008 AAAS Annual Meeting in Boston and has since provided more than 220 workshops for over 7,000 scientist and engineer attendees at universities, science society meetings, and government agency labs in the US and abroad.

Following upon discussions with a collaborative organization called [SENCER](#), and our historical awareness of the science communication dilemma, we started a dialogue with [AAAS](#) and concurrently conducted a survey of the Auburn faculty to measure their interest in participating in a workshop on communicating science. Results were very positive with 56 out of 66 respondents indicating they would attend the workshop.

Our dialogue with AAAS was most positive and resulted in AAAS facilitating a [½-day workshop](#) with Auburn faculty and communicators from both the sciences, creative arts and social sciences on August 9th. The half-day workshop involved facilitator led discussions, and team participation in analyzing and discussing case studies and current topics in a diversity of disciplines.

The workshop was well received by the participants who in turn gave the workshop high marks. The Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development will continue to offer workshops and other opportunities for faculty to develop their communication skills as their research is ever increasingly brought to the public forum for discussion in a manner that will address the response of many - “I don’t understand.”

AAAS also provides a [Communication Toolkit](#) to provide guidance and tips to improve communication skills. We hope these resources will be of value!