

Perceptions of Science Communication by Professional Communicators

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INTRODUCTION



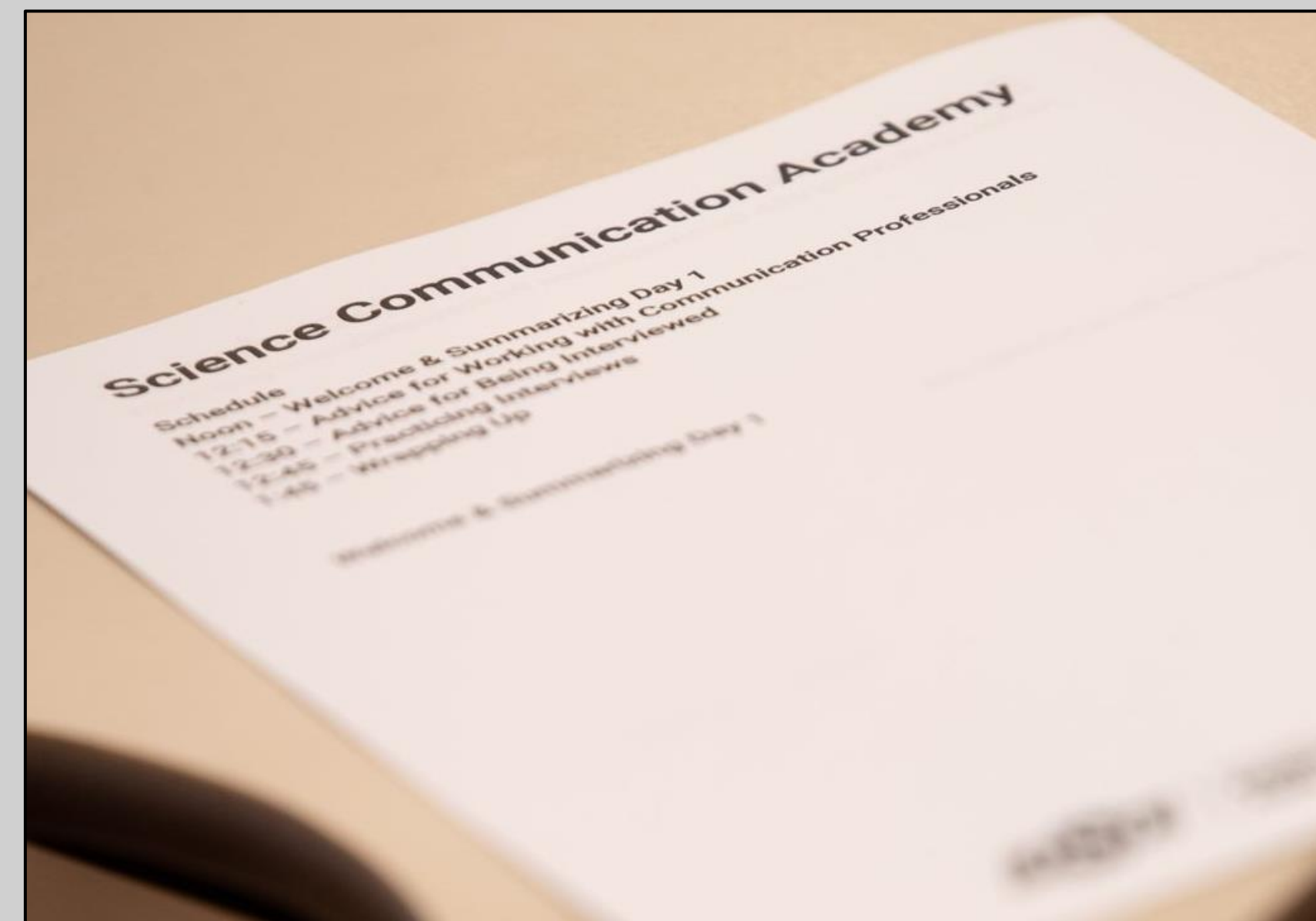
CONDENSED ABSTRACT

Science communication needs to improve, and one of the areas to be addressed is the lack of training and resources available to new researchers (Bankston & McDowell, 2018). Science communication training sessions were held for student researchers along with multiple participating communication professionals. Interviews held with the communicators afterwards proved to be valuable, granting insight into their views of scientific literacy in the U.S., and their motivation for participating in training efforts such as this one.

BACKGROUND

Scientific progress by itself is not enough to move society forward. As an example, measles was basically eradicated in the United States, only to make a comeback because of declining vaccination rates (Patel et al., 2019). As the number of news outlets and journalists continue a decades-long decline, there is a need for science communication from reputable sources (Brownell et al., 2013; Simis et al., 2016).

RESEARCH



Credit to Caley Mayo

METHODOLOGY

Three two-hour science communication trainings were held in January 2023, targeting student researchers at OSU in the Ferguson College of Agriculture. Communication professionals were brought in as a part of the training so students could receive feedback from those actively engaging in science communication in their day-to-day work. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with communication professionals who participated in the sessions to get their perspectives on science communication and the trainings. The interviews were recorded to ensure accuracy. Statements of similar nature made by communicators were grouped together, allowing for the analysis of common themes and views held.

RESULTS

There were four key common themes from the interviews:

- **Defining science communication:** translating scientific developments to educate general public necessitated by assumption of broad scientific illiteracy
- **Importance of science communication:** research institutions are obligated to effectively educate the general public in order to maintain a healthy, sustainable society
- **Serving the science community:** built skills and experience in their field fed communicators' desire to serve next generation of scientists
- **Potential of science communication trainings:** undergrad and graduate researchers need resources to develop scientific communication skills that are increasingly needed in current society



Credit to Caley Mayo

CONCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Emphasize narrative approach to explaining research, as opposed to only providing evidence
- Market and expand scope of the Science Communication Academy to encompass students from all disciplines at OSU
- Expand attendance options for the Academy

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