

KAVLI WORKSHOP FOR SCIENTISTS

# COMMUNICATING SCIENCE

KAVLI INSTITUTE FOR COSMOLOGICAL PHYSICS



**Communicating Science:  
A Kavli Workshop for Scientists**

**September 26-28, 2013**

Join Alan Alda, [The Kavli Foundation](#), and the [Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science](#) for an innovative workshop designed to help scientists more effectively engage reporters, philanthropists, policymakers and the public. Hosted by the Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics (KICP) at the University of Chicago, this limited enrollment workshop will provide exercises and instructions to help you become a better communicator.

Alan Alda  
Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science  
Stony Brook University



*"Good communication is not a luxury and somehow apart from science, but is actually the essence of science."  
- Alan Alda*

<http://kicp-workshops.uchicago.edu/SciComms2013/>

## PROGRAM: TRACK 1



<http://kicp.uchicago.edu/>

Alan Alda Center  
for Communicating Science

AT STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

<http://www.centerforcommunicatingscience.org/>



<http://www.kavlifoundation.org/>



<http://www.uchicago.edu/>

Join Alan Alda, The Kavli Foundation, and the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science for an innovative workshop, September 26-28, 2013, hosted by the Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics (KICP) at the University of Chicago.

As host of the PBS program Scientific American Frontiers, Alan Alda interviewed 700 scientists around the world. Now, as a founding member of the Alda Center at Stony Brook University, he is helping scientists learn to communicate effectively with the public, including public officials, funders, employers, students, the media, and potential collaborators in other disciplines.

The workshop, led by Alan Alda and representatives from the Alda Center at Stony Brook University, will focus on science communication to reporters, philanthropists, policymakers and the public. This is a 3-day program, with two days of required workshops followed by an optional third day for participants who want more intensive practice. Participants will focus first on improving their skills in understanding and connecting with an audience, and speaking clearly about complex material. Then they will work on applying these skills productively in challenging settings, using scenarios and materials tailored to their real-world needs. This will include practice interviews by reporters on video.

The workshop will be run in two tracks - a master class for those with prior experience in public communication, policy or media and shorter introductory track.

## Workshop Leadership

### **Alan Alda**

Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

### **Jay Branegan**

Natural Resources Defense Council, Washington

### **Evonne Kaplan-Liss**

School of Journalism, Stony Brook

### **Steve Marsh**

Department of Theatre Arts, Stony Brook

### **Christie Nicholson**

### **Steven Reiner**

School of Journalism, Stony Brook

### **Elizabeth Bass**

Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

### **Lydia Franco-Hodges**

Stony Brook University

### **Valeri Lantz-Gefroh**

Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

### **Tim Miller**

Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

### **James O'Shea**

University of Michigan

### **Howard Schneider**

School of Journalism, Stony Brook

## Organizing Committee

### **James Cohen**

The Kavli Foundation

### **Michael Turner**

Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics

### **Randall Landsberg**

Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics

**PROGRAM: TRACK 1**

September 26-28, 2013 @ Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, the University of Chicago

**Thursday - September 26, 2013**

**RETHINKING FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS**

*Working on connecting with audiences and distilling messages.*

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

*WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?*

*Alan Alda, Howard Schneider and Liz Bass*

A group exercise in conveying the meaning of complex information so non-scientists can understand.

Location: 901 Penthouse

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

*IMPROVISATION FOR SCIENTISTS*

*Alan Alda, Valeri Lantz-Gefroh and Lydia Franco-Hodges*

Improvisational theater exercises require you to pay close, dynamic attention to others, to read body language and nonverbal cues, and to respond freely. This is not about acting or making things up. It is about shifting your focus from what you are saying to what the other person is receiving. This can help you make a more direct and personal connection with your audience.

Location: refer to attached "Group List" for your room assignment

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

*LUNCH*

Location: 901 Penthouse

1:30 PM - 2:15 PM

*INTRODUCTION TO DISTILLING YOUR MESSAGE*

*Howard Schneider & Liz Bass*

Speaking clearly and conversationally about science, without jargon or "dumbing it down," is a challenge. This interactive presentation suggests tools and examples to help scientists communicate in ways that resonate with non-scientists.

Location: 901 Penthouse

2:30 PM - 5:00 PM

*DISTILLING YOUR MESSAGE BREAKOUT SESSIONS*

Meeting in small groups, we will work on engaging listeners, using different approaches and using the power of storytelling to communicate in memorable ways.

Location: refer to attached "Group List" for your room assignment

5:00 PM - 5:30 PM

*FEEDBACK ON THE DAY*

Location: 901 Penthouse

**KEYNOTE (OPTIONAL)**

*RSVP Required*

7:00 PM

*"HELPING THE PUBLIC GET BEYOND A BLIND DATE WITH SCIENCE"*

*Alan Alda*

Why is it important to communicate about science, and how can scientists do it better? What are the challenges for people representing their institutions or presenting their work to public officials, funders, the press and other groups? Alan Alda will share insights and challenges, drawing on his personal experiences.

Open by reservation to the University of Chicago community.

Location: Performance Hall

**Friday - September 27, 2013**

**APPLYING SKILLS**

*We'll apply the lessons of Improvisation and Distilling in more challenging settings. After a warm-up, half the group will do media interviews, while the other half will take Improv II, as described below. In the afternoon, the groups will switch, so all participants will take both workshops. The day will end with an evaluation session.*

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

*WARM-UP, USING IMPROVISATION SKILLS*

Location: Room 601/603

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

**FIRST SESSION**

Location: refer to attached "Group List" for your room assignment

*MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS*

Participants will practice doing a television interview, answering questions clearly and briefly. This is a challenging form of Distilling Your Message. The interviews will be recorded on video for immediate playback.

*IMPROV II - IMPROV APPLICATIONS*

Participants will work on applying the skills of Improvisation and Distilling Your Message in different settings. This includes building physical confidence and using role-playing to help participants deliver their message to their favorite -- and least favorite -- audiences.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

*LUNCH & GROUP PHOTO*

Location: 901 Penthouse

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

**SECOND SESSION**

Location: refer to attached "Group List" for your room assignment

*MEDIA INTERVIEW SKILLS*

Participants will practice doing a television interview, answering questions clearly and briefly. This is a challenging form of Distilling Your Message. The interviews will be recorded on video for immediate playback.

*IMPROV II - IMPROV APPLICATIONS*

Participants will work on applying the skills of Improvisation and Distilling Your Message in different settings. This includes building physical confidence and using role-playing to help participants deliver their message to their favorite -- and least favorite -- audiences.

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

*REFLECTING ON OUR EXPERIENCES*

We look at video from the media interviews and discuss our experiences. What approaches worked better? What choices were productive? Has your approach to communicating changed and, if so, how?

Location: Room 401

5:30 PM

*BEYOND THE WORKSHOP: OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES*

presentation by Julie Peterson, U Chicago VP for communications

Location: Room 401

*RECEPTION*

Location: School of Social Service Administration, 969 E. 60th Street

**Saturday - September 28, 2013 (Optional)****DIGGING DEEPER**

*Participants can extend their work into a third day by taking two additional sessions. Details about these sessions will be sent to registered participants before the workshop.*

9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

**FIRST OPTIONAL SESSION****ADVANCED MEDIA TRAINING**

Participants will have taken the Media Interview Skills session on the second day of the workshop. In this session on the third day, they will get additional interview practice and feedback tailored to their individual needs and experiences. For many, this is likely to focus on the difficult skill of simultaneously being responsive and being in control of an interview. Or it could focus on meeting a particular communications challenge, such as handling hostile questions or explaining risk, or on preparing for a specific kind of media encounter. Participants will be able to download their interviews later to use as they wish.

Location: Rooms 801 & 802

**MAKING THE CASE FOR SCIENCE**

At a time when support for science can seem like a partisan issue, science leaders need to be able to communicate effectively with members of Congress and other policymakers if they are going to build support for their institution, their field, and the overall importance of scientific research and the scientific approach. This session will help participants find common ground (and a common language) with policymakers. The session will be interactive, with role-playing scenarios that can be shaped to the participants' specific needs.

Location: Room 028

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

**LUNCH**

Location: 6th floor foyer

1:00 PM - 3:30 PM

**SECOND OPTIONAL SESSION****DEALING WITH THE PRESS**

With the news industry in turmoil, and many mainstream science journalists gone, science leaders need to be proactive and informed in dealing with the media. This session will provide a crash course in understanding how the media operate, how reporters, producers and editors think, and how science leaders can help them do a better job of covering science and science institutions, including ways to build productive relationships with journalists. Participants are likely to bring to this session experiences - both good and bad - which will serve as a basis for some of the discussion and analysis.

Location: Room 802

**MAKING THE CASE FOR SCIENCE**

At a time when support for science can seem like a partisan issue, science leaders need to be able to communicate effectively with members of Congress and other policymakers if they are going to build support for their institution, their field, and the overall importance of scientific research and the scientific approach. This session will help participants find common ground (and a common language) with policymakers. The session will be interactive, with role-playing scenarios that can be shaped to the participants' specific needs.

Location: Room 801