

# Experiences with Science Policy

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# What is “Science Policy”?

- “Science”: A careful, disciplined, logical search for knowledge about any and all aspects of the universe, obtained by examination of the best available evidence and always subject to correction and improvement upon the discovery of better evidence.

James Randi, "The Mask of Nostradamus", pg.66

- “Science Policy”: the process by which we make decisions that shape how we do science & research and also the process by which we use science and research to make or amend policy.



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# Where Does Science Policy Happen?

- In Washington, DC:
  - Executive Branch: OSTP, OMB and Departments and Agencies (**DHS**, DOD, DOE, USDA, DOC, DOJ, DHHS, NSF, NASA...)
  - Congress – **personal offices, committee offices**, CRS, GAO
  - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – (Red Cross, Drs w/o Borders)
  - Think tanks
  - National Academies
  - **Science Societies**
  - Industry



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# Where Does Science Policy Happen?

- State and Local:
  - State Departments and Agencies
  - State Legislatures
  - Local school boards
  - NGOs, think tanks
  - Advocacy groups
  - Campaigns



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# The Science Policy “Type”

(at least my experience)

- Broad interests both scientifically and politically
- Ability to make science understandable to policy-makers, and ability to make policy and politics understandable to scientists
- “People-person” – networking is key in these fields!
- Most effective if have PhD = instant credibility
- Ability to juggle – and the interest in doing so
- Willingness to act the part – suits, makeup, high heels
- Long hours!!!
- Writing skills – and often no power point presentations in politics
- Quick, frequent and unpredictable job changes – for you and the people you’ll work with
- Idealism sprinkled with pragmatism; pragmatism sprinkled with idealism
- Sense of humor is absolutely key



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# Day in the Life...

## Congress: Making law, policy, and funding decisions

- Hours: 8-7 when in session, 9-6 when out of session
- Job responsibilities: working with other Congressional offices, meeting with constituents, meeting with lobbyists, writing bills, reading/amending other people's bills, preparing for hearings and writing follow-up questions, answering constituent letters...
- Information comes from: CRS, lobbyists, other staffers, NGOs



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# Day in the Life...

## APS Advocacy: Attempting to influence decisions

- Hours: 8:30-5:30
- Job responsibilities: getting scientists involved with the process and ensuring member scientists understand what's going on in Washington, working with other societies toward common goals (coalitions), writing letters to Congress and to Administration, visiting Congress and Administration (agencies, Departments, OMB, etc.), writing op-eds...
- Information comes from: society members, other societies, Federal agencies, AAAS...



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# Day in the Life...

## DHS: Making policy and implementing laws and funding

- Hours: 8:30-7:30 (on a good day)
- Job responsibilities: strategic planning, congressional relations, S&T outreach
- Information comes from: DHS scientists, other DHS Directorates, other Departments and Agencies, Congress, NGOs, individual scientists...



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Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.

- Theodore Roosevelt



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# Contact Information

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