



KEY RESULTS OF THE PLENARY TABLE

“PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CIVIC SCIENCE LEADERS”

Panellists: Mariette Dichristina (Moderation)(Boston University College of Communication, US), Dietram Scheufele (University of Wisconsin-Madison, US), Frances Colón (Center for American Progress, US), Avriel C. Epps (Cornell University, US), Narayan Sankaran (University of San Francisco, US), Naledi Saul (University of California, San Francisco, US)

Advancements in science and technology are rapidly reshaping society, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and profound challenges. As scientific breakthroughs increasingly address society’s biggest challenges, it is essential to prepare the next generation of civic science leaders who can bridge the gap between science and society. The aim is to foster futures where all people can shape and benefit from science.

Key issues include the increasing fragmentation of society, the necessity of engaging diverse communities, and the role of scientists in democratising science for the public. As science ventures into areas that question what it means to be human—such as AI, robotics, and neuroscience—the need for scientists to connect with communities becomes ever more critical.

THE EXPERT PANEL ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING CALLS TO ACTION:

Democratise science through accessible communication.

1 — Strive to make scientific knowledge accessible and understandable to all by communicating in ways that resonate with different audiences. This can involve using local media, like community radio stations, and communicating in languages and frames that resonate with specific communities.

Build trust through sustained engagement.

2 — Invest time and transparency to build trust with communities by involving them in the research process. Scientists should take citizens’ feedback seriously and adapt methods accordingly.

Create spaces for public-scientist interaction.

3 — Establish physical and intellectual spaces where scientists and the public can meet to discuss scientific advances and their societal implications. This helps ensure that science addresses the needs and concerns of the broader society.

Institutionalise civic science in academia.

4 — Universities and research institutions should recognize and reward civic engagement by integrating civic science into training programs, providing resources and support for scientists pursuing civic engagement, and rethinking success metrics to value community interaction.

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Engage with diverse communities.

- 5 — Encourage scientists to engage with all communities, especially those feeling disconnected from science. This includes reaching out to groups with differing values and beliefs to foster meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding.

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