Neuroscience Advocacy Training

Canadian Neuroscience Meeting Satellite Workshop

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Be An Effective Advocate for Science:
Be Involved & Tell Your Story

Presented by

Melanie Woodin,
Chair of the advocacy committee

Michael Heintz,
Director, Advocacy and Training,
Society for Neuroscience

Julie Poupart,
Advocacy Officer,
Canadian Association for Neuroscience

CAN-ACN
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

SfN SOCIETY for NEUROSCIENCE

Dear Advocacy Training Participants:

Welcome to the first CAN-SfN Advocacy Training Workshop. Thank you for being here.

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience has been increasing its advocacy efforts over the last few years, in response to declining success rates in research funding competitions in Canada, and this workshop aims to increase the reach of our efforts by disseminating the approaches and strategies developed by our colleagues at SfN, adapted to the Canadian reality. Advocacy has been a strategic goal of the Society for Neuroscience since its founding, so they have many years of expertise in this area.

The future of research funding depends on the active engagement of those who support science both sides of the US-Canada border, and our partnership with SfN has been critical in building our advocacy strategy. Our aim is to promote strong and widespread support for investment in science in Canada, and we benefit tremendously from SfN's expertise. We are therefore very happy to present this workshop today in collaboration with them.

Sharing your science, research, and education stories with policymakers is critically important as scientists and advocates. It is through the efforts of each of you that we can collectively make a strong impression on elected officials and convince them of the importance of the governmental support of science through increased funding. Advocacy is most effective when it is a collaborative effort and our message has the biggest impact when we work together as a community.

The importance of science and fact-based policymaking must always be highlighted, regardless of political climate, and of which party is in power. We must work to ensure that scientific research continues to be part of policy conversations. To that end, all of us need to commit to sharing advocacy messages at our home institutions, with our SfN chapters, and among our network of fellow scientists. These messages must be brought to the ears of the public and elected officials.

In this booklet, you'll find information specifically curated for today's training. At can-acn.org/advocacy, you will find opportunities to get involved in advocacy. Through sfn.org/advocacy and Neuronline, you'll find tools, resources and articles written by your peers detailing their advocacy experiences.

Again, thank you for taking the time to participate in today's training. We hope you will remain involved and look forward to hearing from you at advocacy@can-acn.org.

Jaideep Bains,
President
Canadian Association for Neuroscience

Melanie Woodin,
Chair of the Advocacy Committee,
Canadian Association for Neuroscience

Overview of agenda and goals for the workshop

- Welcome and introductions
- Why this is training being held
- Goals of the training
    - Why advocacy matters
    - What advocates can do
    - Scientists role in educating policy makers
    - Budget primer / Canadian budget 101

Why and how to engage in advocacy

- Federal issues greatly impact brain science research
- A new budget is issued every year – it affects your research and your funding
- Effective member engagement can impact how legislators look at research funding
- Stories that highlight research/lab work can put a "face" on the issue
- Advocacy has been part of SfN's mission since its founding
    - How CAN and SfN collaborate in advocacy
- All scientists should be educating and engaging with the public, as well as lawmakers
- Advocacy doesn't have to be partisan or politicized – how to stick to the facts and not "take the bait"

Activities that have a powerful impact on lawmakers (and why your story is so important, especially how your work is funded)

- Member of Parliament engagement
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Coffees
- Town halls
- Lab tours
- Social media
- Office visits to your MP in Ottawa and in their ridings
- Earned media (letters to the editor, op-eds)

Importance of coming together with others in the community

Q&A

Next steps and continuing your advocacy education

Table of Contents

Why your advocacy matters

Discussion and decisions about the federal budget take place all year long, depending on the priorities that are determined in part by the concerns and issues that matter to Members of Parliament (MPs). In an election year, the electoral program of each party is developed in the months preceding the launch of the campaign. The more MPs hear about a topic, the more likely they are to talk about it in Ottawa. Talking to you MP about scientific research funding puts that issue on their radar.

Your MP is your representative in Ottawa. Showing him or her that basic research funding matters to his or her constituents makes this issue relevant to them.

Initiating a discussion with your MP is a good way to establish a relationship that could bring your representative to turn to you if questions about research come up.

You are as much of a resource for your MP as he or she is a resource for you. Most MPs welcome discussions with their constituents, and you can learn a lot about decision making in Ottawa through your discussions with elected officials.

Read a leading edge commentary published in Cell a few years back, still very relevant: The obligation of biologists to commit to political advocacy (available at https://can-acn.org/documents/cell-advocacy.pdf)

Identify and Contact Your Policymakers

Members of Parliament want to hear from their constituents on matters that are important to them. You play a critical role in informing them and their staff. When you weigh in, they take notice!

To find your Member of Parliament, you can visit the official Parliament of Canada website and use the search tool here:

https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies/FindMP

This site lists contact information, roles (including membership in parliamentary groups and interparliamentary associations), and their most recent interventions and votes in the current session of Parliament.

Scheduling Meetings with Policymakers and Staff

It is more efficient to contact your MP's office by phone than by email. Most offices will only respond to constituents, so let them know that you are a neuroscientist that lives or works in their riding.

Tell the staff member who answers the phone

1. Who you are,
2. How your work is funded by the federal government,
3. That you would like to first thank your MP for this funding, and

4. That you would like to meet your MP to show him/her the research that is being done with these federal funds in his or her riding (or by one of their constituents, if your research laboratory is outside the riding).
5. State the dates of your desired meeting
6. Be upfront about the issues you want to discuss
7. Always accept a meeting with staff if that is the only appointment offered. Staff members advise policymakers on issues.

Note that your MP's staff will most likely be the people you will be interacting with the most. These are very important people, who talk to the MPs every day about the requests and conversations they have with constituents.

Thank the staff member and offer to serve as a resource on any neuroscience-related questions the office encounters in the future.

Do your homework: learn about your MP

You can visit https://openparliament.ca/, type in your zip code, and find the link to your MP's official website for contact and biographical information, policy positions, and legislation they've sponsored. This site allows you to search within an MP's interventions for specific text. For example, you could see how many times your MPs has mentioned science in the past. Note that this site is not an official governmental site.

The https://openparliament.ca/ and https://ourcommons.ca websites also shows your MP's voting record, which may inform your messaging.

Browse your MP's social media accounts to learn more about him or her, and to find ways to connect to them.

SfN has great online resources for advocates – you can review them at sfn.org/advocacy for additional details on how to engage with your policymakers through letters, phone calls, and in-person meetings. You can always reach out to advocacy@can-acn.org or advocacy@sfn.org if you need further assistance.

When should you contact your MP?

It is always a good time to talk to your MP. However, summer is particularly good time, as most MPs are back in their ridings for the summer months. It is also the time when the first chance to influence the next budget occurs. An MP that you meet in his/her riding is more likely talk about research funding to his or her colleagues when they return to Ottawa in the Fall, when the major orientations of the budget are being defined.

In an election year, bringing research funding to the forefront of your MPs thoughts could help get your issue in the party's electoral platform.

What message should you convey to your MP and elected officials?

You can show you MP that you are working for all Canadians. Here are some talking points you could use. You can use examples from your own research laboratory experience to make this more relevant. How many highly qualified employees have

you trained, where do they work now? What discoveries have you made? What does your research aim to understand?

- Innovations and cures for disease, benefiting our entire society always start with fundamental research.
- Fundamental research Is among the highest-yield investments in Canada's future that our government can make
- Fundamental research in Canada drives the discoveries that fuel an innovative economy.
- Reinvestment in fundamental science today is critical to maintain Canada's hard-won reputation as a nation of scientific excellence.
- Science goes hand in hand with training of the highly qualified personnel that contribute to Canada's innovation economy. It is an investment in the next generation of leaders required so that Canada can lead the world in the new knowledge-based economy.
- Research is how we understand the natural world and society, what problems we face, and develop the knowledge and tools to address them.
- Reinvigorating fundamental science would require investing a very small percentage of our GDP in the future of a highly educated workforce and fuel a discovery pipeline which is the bedrock of an innovative society.

What objectives should you reach for when you contact elected officials?

Your objective should be to build a relationship with your MP. You may not convince your MP during your first meeting to become a champion for science but showing openness to understand their point of view is a first step in building a lasting relationship.

Science advocacy is a long game. You can not meet with your MP once, and consider the job done. There is a new budget every year, and funding changes based on different priorities identified throughout the year.

A long-term objective is to make sure science funding remains a priority independently of the party in power. MPs are up for election every four years.

A short-term objective is to get your MP to view the positive value of investing in scientific research in the next budget, as this has positive fallback in his or her constituency.

Your MPs will submit a letter to the Dept. of Finance with specific budgetary asks for their riding. You can ask your MP to include science funding in this letter.

What should you talk about with your MP?

Thank your MP for the federal funding you have received and explain what you do with this funding.

Share your story. Present you research in general terms, highlighting your main objectives. If your MP is interested and asks for this, give more details. This should not be a lecture, but more of a conversation.

Your MP's background may be very different from yours, so he or she may not know how research is conducted or funded. Explain what you do.

Explain where your funding comes from, and what this pays for – how many people you employ, for example, or what the equipment you buy allows you to achieve.

You can highlight the jobs your students and trainees landed after leaving your laboratory.

If you order from local businesses, mention them.

If your research has links to a brain disease, you can talk about the Canadians that your work has the potential to help.

Inviting your MP to visit you in your lab is a good way to allow him or her to meet members of your laboratory and see where the funding goes.

If you receive federal funds, you work for all Canadians. Explains how you do this by making it relevant to your MP.

If you MP is Liberal, explain how Science's 'win' in the 2018 budget will translate to improvements to their constituents; share stories of how the increase in the last budget will benefit Canadians; MPs need to learn from their constituents what that increase in science funding has done for them.

Your MP should leave the meeting feeling positive about scientific research.

How should you follow-up afterwards?

As your goal is to build a relationship with your MP, make sure to write a thank you letter or email after your meeting, thanking him or her for the meeting and inviting them to contact you again in the future, or to visit your laboratory. You should do this on the evening of the meeting, or the next day.

The person who will answer your email will most likely be a staff member of your MP, rather than your MP. Staffers are important people to know and to talk to. They are the ones who talk to the MPs every day, and who help define their schedule.

What benefits will you get from this?

By meeting your MP, you will make him or her more aware of the impact and importance of research for Canada and make them more inclined to support increased federal funding of research. Building this relationship will also give you more insight on the work of elected officials, and the way decision are made in Ottawa.

The level of support for scientific research in Ottawa will have an impact on the amount of money that will go towards funding research in the federal budget, year after year.

Report on your meeting and let us know how it went

Let us know how your meeting went! Send us an email at advocacy@can-acn.org. Let us know what worked, what did not, so that we can improve this workbook for next year!

Other ways to engage with your MP in his/her riding.

To engage your policymakers and their local staff members:

- Discuss what you are doing to make a positive impact on the community.
- Attend local events with your policymaker or their staff to build and maintain a relationship with the office.
- Invite the policymaker and local staff for a tour of your lab or institution.
- Ask the policymaker to attend an event or ceremony at your institution. For example, a Brain Awareness Week event or a morning coffee meeting with you and your colleagues. Be sure to coordinate large scale or institution wide events with your Institution's communication and government relations team.
- Lab tours are particularly effective at showcasing the benefits of federally funded neuroscience research. While scheduling lab tours may require extra follow-up, they successfully inform policymakers about the benefits of neuroscience that is happening locally and provide an opportunity to build a personal relationship with the office. For more information, view SfN's resource "Hosting a Lab Tour for Your Policymaker."
- Offering policymakers a role at a local event, such as speaking at a seminar, can help to garner their support while simultaneously raising public awareness about your issue. For policymakers who are particularly supportive, consider publicly recognizing their support — this also helps to ensure their attendance at an event.

As with all advocacy work, follow-up is critical. Remember to:

- Provide the office with additional information if requested.
- Write thank-you letters to the policymaker and staff members that highlight the positive experience and accentuate the importance of the policymaker's commitment to neuroscience.
- Engage local media around events by engaging on social media or writing an op-ed.

Make Effective Storytelling Your Advocacy Ally

Sharing your personal story with policymakers is influential because it puts a "face" on an issue and will resonate more than simply sharing facts and figures. Constituents who take the time to carefully craft a concise, compelling story have the best chance at being remembered by policymakers and their staff.

To get started:

• Explain who you are, what you do, and where you work and/or live in their riding

• Share a one–two-minute description of:

- Your connection to neuroscience and your current work; be sure to avoid using jargon or extremely technical terms. This is a good place to share your personal story. For example, sharing why you got involved in neuroscience or your specialty, the impacts you've seen as a result of your research, how you have connected with patients or families in your research, and the real impact of research and discovery on human lives.
- Why the issue of scientific research funding is important to you and how it would affect your work and/or the people you care about. You may also mention how you are part of a global community of neuroscientists and share that the entire community of researchers and their work is as valuable as yours and also benefit or suffer under those policies.

• Always thank policymakers for their leadership and attention to issues that are important to research and science as part of your story — look for a way to make a connection with issues they already have been vocal about.

Your Turn: Tell Your Story

Please take a few minutes to craft a concise, compelling story to share with legislative offices.

1. Introduce yourself
2. Connect your work to the riding
3. Share how your work benefits human health
4. Explain why federal funding is important to your work
5. Thank them if they are supportive of issues related to neuroscience

Avoid using jargon or extremely technical terms

Write it out and then practice!

My name is _____(1), I do research on _____(2) at

_____(3) in _____ (4).

(1-name, 2-topic, 3-institution, 4-riding)

Describe your connection to neuroscience, why you got involved in neuroscience, or your specialty:

_____

_____

_____

_____

State the impacts you have seen as a result of your research or how you have connected with patients/families in your research:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe how research funding from the federal government is important to you and how it affects your work:

_____

_____

_____

_____

If they're on the record as being supportive of science priorities, thank the legislative office for their leadership and helping you to achieve neuroscience discoveries:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Letter Writing Is a Powerful Advocacy Tool

Writing a personal letter or email is an important form of communication between constituents and elected officials. Below are several tips for writing an attention-grabbing letter to your policymaker:

- Introduce yourself, including that you are a constituent and neuroscientist living or working in their riding.
- State in the first paragraph your reason for writing. For example, that you are asking that they support increased funding of scientific research through CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC.
- Tell your story — explain how the funding relates to your work and how it will affect their constituents. Members of Parliament are looking for the human element and a connection to the community, so personalizing your story will make your message more memorable.

Keep it succinct and limited to one page.

Address a separate letter to each of your legislators.

Find your policymaker's contact information here:

https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies/FindMP

All MPs can be reached by mail, no postage required, at this address:

First Last name
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

How to address dignitaries and elected officials.

https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/protocol-guidelines-special-event/styles-address.html

Prime Minister of Canada

The Right Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P.*
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

Note: the term "Mr. Prime Minister" should not be used

* The Prime Minister may have other post-nominals letters, such as Q.C.

Cabinet ministers

For a Member of the House of Commons:

The Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P.
Minister of _____
House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Minister of State

The Honourable (full name), P.C., M.P.
Minister of State (Portfolio)
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Note: Members of the Ministry are members of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and retain the title "Honourable" for life, using the initials P.C. after their name.The term "Mr. Minister" or "Madame Minister" should not be used. The term "Mr. Minister of State" or "Madame Minister of State" should not be used.

Members of the House of Commons

Mr. John Smith, M.P.
or
The Honourable John Smith, P.C., M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Note: The members of the House of Commons who are members of the Queen's Privy Council retain the title "Honourable" for life and use the initials "P.C." after their name.
M.P.: Member of the House of Commons
P.C., M.P.: Member of the Privy Council and Member of the House of Commons

Example Letter

Letter to encourage increased investment in fundamental research

(Adapted from http://www.acechr.ca/summerofsciencecan.html - original letter with more examples here: http://www.acechr.ca/uploads/7/8/5/1/78517024/summerofsciencecan_brief_en.docx)

Dear Mr. Full Name,

As a constituent and a scientist, I am writing to encourage you to support increased investment in fundamental research by the government of Canada. Research funded by the three federal granting councils of Canada, CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC plays a vital role in keeping Canada healthy, innovative and driving the Canadian economy.

Fundamental research is a major employer in *full riding name or abbreviation*. Fundamental research funding directly employs tens of thousands of highly qualified staff and students in good, middle-class jobs and provides students with a reliable path to join the middle class. In *my one lab/our [count] labs alone*, *I/we* employ:

- ### technicians or research associates
- ### postdoctoral fellows
- ### graduate students
- ### undergraduate students

Studies show that fundamental research helps local economies thrive. For example, here in *place name*, *local business name here* depends on researchers to buy their products and services.

Fundamental research trains the next generation of innovators, the engine of a sustainable, knowledge-based economy. Federally-funded research helps make it possible for thousands of students at *Institution name here* to acquire skills and knowledge.

Fundamental research is a good investment. Multiplier effects of fundamental research and research institutes range from 2.2 to 2.5, meaning that every $1 invested results in $2.20 to $2.50 in direct and indirect economic activity. Estimates of the annualized return on fundamental research investment range from 20% to 67%.3 Health research has been shown to pay for itself and start saving Canadian health care dollars within as little as 5 years.

Finding new technologies, cures and solutions depends on robust funding of fundamental research. We need to support it today.

Yours sincerely,
(your full name) (your title, institution)

(your physical address – to prove constituency)
(your email address and phone number)

Your Turn: Recruit Neuroscience Advocates

Take a few minutes to consider:

Colleagues and students who might be interested in being a neuroscience advocate

_____

_____

_____

Social media opportunities to share your interest in advocacy

_____

_____

_____

Activities you could host to introduce people to your advocacy work

_____

_____

_____

Hosting a Lab Tour for Your Policymaker

Hosting a lab tour for a policymaker or their staff provides a deeper understanding of your research beyond other advocacy methods. Watching science in action and interacting with lab members on-site will give your policymaker a personal look into your work. CAN can provide social media promotion to garner even more support.

To schedule a lab tour:

- Contact your institution's government relations office and tell them you are planning a tour for a policymaker to develop support for biomedical research funding.
- Your institution may want to provide a photographer, guidance, or expand on the advocacy work you are conducting.
- Reach out to your policymaker's office via phone or email:

- Emphasize that you are a constituent, including the town or neighborhood you live in.
- Briefly describe your research.
- Invite them to see firsthand the impressive work made possible through CIHR and/or NSERC funding in their riding
- Plan for a one-hour tour, including discussion and demonstrations or examples of your work.
- If possible, arrange for multiple laboratories to participate.
- If the policymaker is unavailable, they may offer to send a staffer in their place who will report back to the elected official.

Tips for the tour:

- Highlight work relevant to the policymaker's committees/caucuses/interest areas.

You can find this information on the official Parliament of Canada website: https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies/FindMP and on https://openparliament.ca

- Emphasize the value of your research and reinforce the need for robust, predictable public funding to continue this work.
- Make the tour interactive and have demonstrations and hands-on activities if possible.
- Take photos! CAN staff can share these on social media and increase the reach of your event.
- Ask for a selfie with your visitors!
- Post about the visit on social media and tag your policymaker.
- Follow up — offer to be a resource for their office and thank them for their time.

Let CAN know how it went, share photos, at advocacy@can-acn.org.

Example Invitation:

Dear [first name of staffer],

I am a scientist from [city] writing to invite [Mr. XXX] and staff to tour neuroscience facilities at [institution] to see firsthand the valuable research conducted by neuroscientists in our riding.

The tour will last one to two hours and will provide [MP. XXX] the opportunity to meet both established scientists and researchers early in their careers. Our institution is home to researchers who study [include a short scope of work]. Our team has been focused on [more specific scope of work, but still short]. [Include context about how the lab's

work has the potential to impact the riding and how your research has the potential to help people or lead to further studies down the road]. We are confident that a tour of our facility and discussion with our researchers will provide [MP. XXX] with valuable insight on the importance of federal support for basic science and research.

Please contact me by phone at [provide one or two phone numbers] or by email at [email address] with further questions and to schedule the event.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(your full name), (your title, institution)
(your physical address – to prove constituency)
(your email address and phone number)

Leveraging Your Local Media

Take advantage of your local media to raise awareness of neuroscience priorities. Policymakers are keenly aware of local news so there is a high probability they will see this, especially if you mention them by name.

Opinion Pieces

Letters to the editor (LTE) and op-eds can help to inform readers about neuroscience issues and can include calls to action, especially during key moments in an election campaign.

LTE's are written in response to a news article (150-200 words), while op-eds are organic content that stand on their own (700-900 words).

Each newspaper will have different requirements for length and submission process. Look in the "Opinion" section on your local newspaper's website to find a submission form or email the "Opinion" editor directly. When in doubt, call the publication and ask for the appropriate contact person and submission guidelines. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully or your op-ed may be rejected.

When making your "pitch" you should include:

- 3–4 clear and concise sentences to capture the reader's attention;
- A local connection about the importance of this topic; why here, why now?
- Your fully written and polished op-ed article pasted directly into the body of the email and attached.
- Your most relevant contact information.

If you don't hear back within 3 business days, follow-up via email or call the publication to determine the best contact person. Request to hear back by a certain deadline before moving on to another media outlet.

If your op-ed is rejected or you receive no response, submit to another outlet. While one publication may not be interested in your opinion piece, another may pick it up right away; this is highly dependent on their readership. While not a perfect science, connecting the piece to the local audience will give you the best chance of being published.

Press Interviews

Journalists need subject-matter experts who can give context and insight for stories related to neuroscience research, trends in the field, and funding issues. By being a source for the local media including print news, radio, and TV, you can garner support for science and establish yourself as resource.

Prior to engaging with the press, work with your institution's Public Relations office if you'll be portrayed as a representative of your institution.

Press Conferences

In the event of a major breakthrough or discovery in your research, consider holding a press conference to discuss the implications. Use the opportunity to discuss how this breakthrough would not be possible without the robust funding of federal agencies such as CIHR and NSERC. Consult your institution's press office, which will be instrumental with coordinating this type of event.

Be sure to email advocacy@can-acn.org to share your success! CAN staff can amplify your reach through social media.

Leveraging Social Media Engagement on Twitter

Using Hashtags

For advocacy on social media, we like to focus on #NeuroAdvocate.

Quick review: On Twitter, we use hashtags to enter an existing conversation topic as well as to carve out our own space to find other members within the community. SfN uses hashtags every year at our annual meeting and at Hill Day, and you may know hashtags from other social contexts (#MondayMotivation, #MeToo, etc.).

Using #NeuroAdvocate in one tweet helps to interact with other groups of science advocates, letting them know that our organization is advocating for stronger federal funding for biomedical and neuroscience research.

You may use other hashtags, but please use this one and consider limiting the use of others, as users do not appreciate tweets comprised primarily of hashtags.

Mentioning (@) your members of Parliament

We suggest mentioning whomever you are meeting while also using #NeuroAdvocate. Various offices will eagerly retweet photographs taken with constituents. Other stakeholder groups and influencers monitor lawmakers' mentions. Essentially, this is another way to amplify your signal.

How to use hashtags and mentions: Quick style guidelines

Tweets that read in the same manner as a person speaking perform the best. Generally, this means avoid using too many hashtags and mentioning too many people. Additionally, think about using mentions and hashtags within the flow of a sentence, such as a well-placed quote.

Here is an example:

It is appropriate to append hashtags and mentions to the end of tweets. While it might deemphasize the focus of a tweet, it still presents a clear message:

Consisting only of hashtags and a link with no commentary, the following tweet is weak, though it does offer items to followers and the community:

Avoid structuring your tweets as shown below:

We do not recommend using more than four hashtags or mentions in any single tweet. Due to text color changes, excessive linking can become visually overwhelming, even when the request is clear:

280 characters are greater than 140. A picture is worth even more.

Metrics indicate that longer tweets do better!

https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexkantrowitz/early-data-shows-longer-tweets-are-a-hit-withtwitters-users

On a platform known for quips, this was surprising, but it's not surprising when you think that the extra length offers more space for a narrative: Focus on the Five Ws (who, what, where, when, and why) and use a first-person perspective to share your experience. The more we can trigger "fear of missing out" in your friends and followers, the more engagement we'll likely get!

To aid that, it is important and valuable to attach photographs and/or videos to our tweets. They help a tweet or Facebook post stand out in a feed, they "show, don't tell" what we are doing and they speak about a thousand words on their own. While few people admit to liking selfies, it is true that we all respond to them.

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216625

"Scientists who selfie are viewed as warmer and more trustworthy and as no less competent than scientists posting photos of only their work"

PLOS ONE

PUBLISH ABOUT BROWSE

OPEN ACCESS PEER-REVIEWED

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Using selfies to challenge public stereotypes of scientists

Paige Brown Jarreau, Imogene A. Cancellare, Becky J. Carmichael, Lance Porter, Daniel Toker, Samantha Z. Yammine

Published: May 10, 2019 • https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216625

Article | Authors | Metrics | Comments | Media Coverage

Abstract

Introduction

Background and literature review

Research questions and hypotheses

Materials and methods

Results

Discussion

Supporting information

Abstract

In an online Qualtrics panel survey experiment (N = 1620), we found that scientists posting self-portraits ("selfies") to Instagram from the science lab/field were perceived as significantly warmer and more trustworthy, and no less competent, than scientists posting photos of only their work. Participants who viewed scientist selfies, especially posts containing the face of a female scientist, perceived scientists as significantly warmer than did participants who saw science-only images or control images. Participants who viewed selfies also perceived less symbolic threat from scientists. Most encouragingly, participants viewing selfies, either of male or female scientists, did not perceive scientists as any less competent than did participants viewing science-only or control images. Subjects who viewed female scientist selfies also perceived science as less exclusively male. Our findings suggest that self-portraiture by STEM professionals on social media can mitigate negative attitudes toward scientists.

If you can take a selfie with a member of Parliament, do it!

Sample tweet : how to engage with elected officials

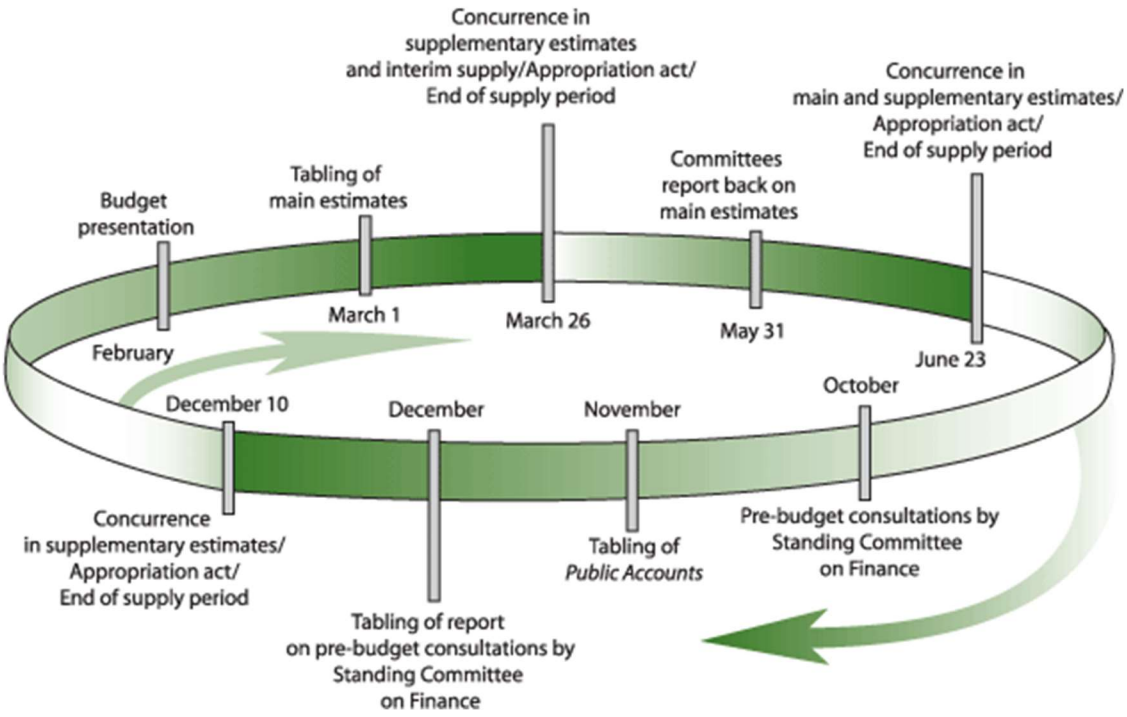
Lisa Saksida
@lisasaksida

'It is an exciting day. It is a historic day.' #DimensionsEDI

Thank you @KirstyDuncanMP @ScienceMin for making this happen. And thank you @Brains_CAN @CAN_ACN for helping to champion this.

♡ 39 9:49 AM - May 9, 2019

Timeline for Canadian Budget



Important dates

Budget is tabled in February or March

Canadian Fiscal Year runs April 1 – March 31

Budget engagement process begins at the end of summer

> **FINA – House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**
> FINA is a multipartisan committee which holds consultations in the summer (written)and in the fall (in-person)
>
> http://www.ourcommons.ca/Committees/en/FINA/Members
>
> Written submission can be submitted by individuals or by organisations.
> In 2018, this was launched June 4, deadline August 3.
>
> http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FINA/news-release/9928791
>
> Max 2000 words – a template is provided. For the 2018 budget 493 briefs were submitted

September - FINA announces pre-budget hearings

- Hearings took place Oct 1-18 2018, in 9 cities across Canada

- Each year, they invite specific groups to speak, from the people who submitted briefs.
- There is an open-mic session – simply show up in the morning
- There is an opportunity for informal discussion with committee members at the end of the hearings.

Late Fall, Department of Finance & the Finance Minister pre-budget consultations

https://www.fin.gc.ca/fin-eng.asp

In 2018, the Pre-Budget Consultations were launched Nov 28

http://www.budget.gc.ca/pbc

This usually takes the form of a survey on their website, and the opportunity to send emails.

Top "Take the Bait" Questions

In any meeting, a staffer or member may ask a question (or two) that we would prefer not to answer or otherwise gets us off track. In some cases, it is not appropriate for us to weigh in on a specific question, in others, an office may be seeking "approval" to trade one priority for another.

While this list is far from comprehensive, it does provide the questions you are most likely to hear that you should anticipate and know when to redirect back onto our message.

1) I am already a neuroscience champion, why are you here? You should be using this time to talk to other offices to find new champions.

Suggested answer: Thank you for all your support, we know you have been a significant supporter of neuroscience. We're here not only to thank you but to keep you aware of current information and needs so you can continue representing the scientific community. For example [research example from member].

2) There are so many health-related priorities, how do I choose which effort to support (i.e., help me pick the winners and losers)?

Suggested answer: We understand there are a lot of competing priorities. We are here to urge you to support the funding needed to advance basic science and research. By setting the building blocks for future advances, we can continue working towards breakthroughs like [example from a Member that exhibits the need for fundamental science].

3) I would be happy to support your funding request for CIHR/NSERC, what department/program/federal effort should we cut to keep federal spending from increasing?

Suggested answer: We know there are competing priorities for federal dollars. We believe that by supporting basic/fundamental science and research, the benefits will far outweigh the costs. For example, [example from a Member showing the need for supporting basic science].

4) What thoughts do you have to improve the CIHR review process?

Suggested answer: It is most important that CIHR uses a peer-reviewed process for selecting grants to fund. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to pick between one excellent proposal and another excellent proposal, especially in a tight funding environment. When success rates are too low, excellent proposals can unfortunately remain unfunded.

Increasing the budget of all three major funding agencies in Canada, CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC would alleviate any issues with peer-review.

References / Resources / Contacts

This guide was built based on workbooks developed by SfN for advocacy training in the US. Canadian adaptation of content was based in part on these great resources

http://www.acechr.ca/summerofsciencecan.html

http://www.faseb.org/Science-Policy--Advocacy-and-Communications/Become-an-Advocate/Advocacy-Tool-Kit/Share-Your-Story.aspx

https://supportthereport.ca/resources/

https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/sites/default/files/federal_budget_toolkit_-_e4d.pdf

Canadian Advocacy Groups:

https://www.sciencepolicy.ca/

https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/

http://www.sp-exchange.ca/

http://pagse.org/en/main.htm

https://rc-rc.ca/fr/

Information about elected officials :

https://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies/FindMP

https://openparliament.ca/

CAN-ACN Contacts

Melanie Woodin, Chair of the Advocacy Committee
advocacy@can-acn.org

Julie Poupart, CAN COO and Advocacy Officer
Julie.poupart@can-acn.org

CAN Advocacy webpage
https://can-acn.org/advocacy

Twitter: @can_acn

Facebook: can.acn

Instagram: canneuro

SfN Contacts:

Adam M Katz, Grassroots Advocacy Specialist
akatz@sfn.org

Michael E Heintz, Director, Advocacy and Training
mheintz@sfn.org

Advocacy Team Inbox
advocacy@sfn.org

SfN Advocacy Action Center
www.sfn.org/advocacy

Neuronline, SfN's Online Learning Center
www.neuronline.sfn.org

BrainFacts.org, SfN's Public Outreach and Education Website
www.brainfacts.org

Twitter: @SFNTweets and #NeuroAdvocate