



Society Civic Science Initiative

doi: 10.5281/zenodo.5028483

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Society Civic Science Initiative is a community of staff and volunteer leaders at scientific societies working to support scientists engaging with diverse audiences. The initiative launched in 2019 with two key goals: 1) create bridges between organizations that support scientists' public and civic engagement efforts to facilitate cross-organizational information exchange; and 2) identify opportunities for collective action where societies can encourage a "culture of civic science," where civic and public engagement are more deeply embedded in scientists' identities and work. Participants join regular events to network and working groups to collaborate on projects. The community is hosted by the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) with the majority of funding coming from the Kavli Foundation.

Website: https://www.societycivicscience.org/

KEYWORDS

Disciplines / skills

- INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
CIVIC SCIENCE

Programming and goals

- KNOWLEDGE GENERATION
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
CAPACITY BUILDING
OUTREACH AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Stakeholder relationships

- SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY STAFF

COMMUNITY BASICS



25 active members
140-person broader reach (almost entirely society staff)



Equally online and offline\*
\*all activities were online during the COVID-19 pandemic



International
Currently, most members are based in Washington, DC, USA



Mostly open - has some open programming but also private activities

COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

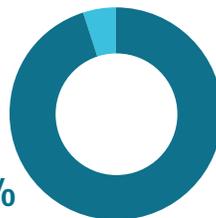
Community Management

Community management is provided by the 1.0 FTE Program Director. Some society staff take leadership roles in the community as well.



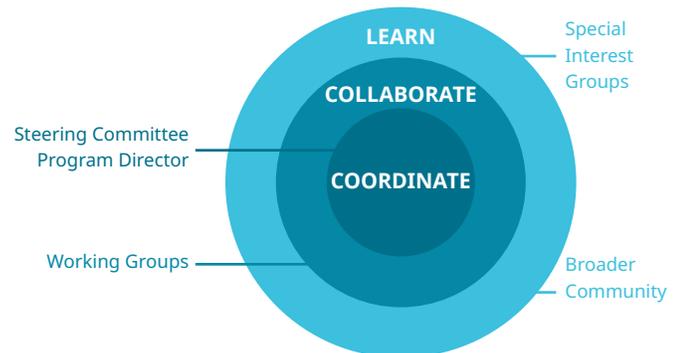
Members

5%
Members / volunteers of scientific societies



95%
Staff from scientific societies

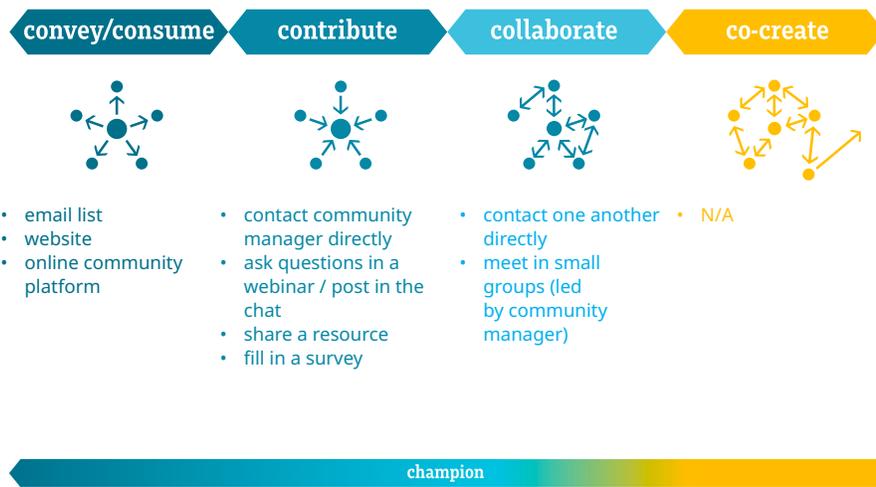
Community Configuration





### PROGRAMMING

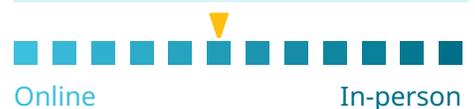
In this community, core programming includes monthly “Learning Exchanges”, 1-hour Zoom meetings with a panel of invited speakers followed by time to network in breakout rooms. One of our two working groups develop ideas for Learning Exchanges and discusses other opportunities for community building/network weaving. The other explores opportunities to leverage scientific societies’ reach and resources to support a faster shift toward a culture in which public and civic engagement are more integrated in science. An additional special interest group focuses on supporting international efforts. There is also a Slack workspace for sharing resources and questions/challenges.



### THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION MODEL

The CSCCE Community Participation Model describes four modes of member engagement that can occur within a community – CONVEY/CONSUME, CONTRIBUTE, COLLABORATE, and CO-CREATE – and one that can occur both inside and outside of it: CHAMPION. All modes may be present at once, with some members interacting in multiple modes – or a community may have member engagement that falls into only some of the modes described. The model enables the mapping of community member behaviors to programming and other infrastructural support that the community manager, convening organization, or funder may provide to the community.

For more information, see the [CSCCE community participation model](#).



### COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

This community does not have a formal champions program. Members may informally act as champions in the following ways:

CHAMPIONS take on additional activities to support or advance the community. They are sometimes described as emergent leaders.

- MAINTAIN**
  - N/A
- GROW**
  - recruit new members
- EVOLVE**
  - participate in a focus group or other means of in-depth feedback
  - serve on a steering committee or other advisory role

### COMMUNITY TOOLBOX

**Communications**  
Email  
Zoom  
Slack

**Productivity**  
Google Drive

**Community platform**  
Slack



## OUTPUTS & EVALUATION

Success looks like a significant number of scientific society staff consistently taking ideas from each other and implementing them in their organizations to improve the quality of their public/civic engagement programming. As a result, more scientists engage more effectively with a wider range of audiences.



### Successes over the last year

The new projects we launched were in response to priorities and needs shared by community members (specifically, understanding the impact of societies' awards for their members) but were mainly led and executed by the Program Director (with external collaborators).

- **Growth** - launched new program or project
- **Growth** - added new members
- **Engagement** - more members acted as champions
- **Activities** - an in-person or virtual event
- **Funding** - solidified existing funding stream
- **Value** - members expressing recognition of the community's value



### Evaluation and Reporting

- Community member surveys
- Reports for leadership



### Opportunities

We're taking the next six months to take stock of what we've learned in the past two years and gather additional perspectives from the community to inform our goals. This is in part because the community is relatively new and in part because COVID-19 has had some effects on societies and our community that may have changed priorities/interests/etc.

- **Growth** - launch new program or project
- **Engagement** - increase member activity
- **Activities** - host conference(s) / workshops
- **Funding** - solidify existing funding stream
- **Value** - more members expressing recognition of the community's value



### Challenges

The goals were very general at the outset, which potentially made it challenging for some people to rally around and see their place in the community. Meanwhile, COVID-19 has slammed societies (as it has so many other communities) because their main revenue streams and programming were negatively affected or had to change. This has resulted in people focusing internally on their organizations and less on collective goals/activities, and also has limited people's bandwidth.

- Low activity from community members
- Lack of clarity about community goals
- Instability in industry

## FUNDING

100%  
Grants



### Funding Streams

- 100% funding from the Kavli Foundation, with a small grant from Burroughs-Wellcome for specific projects

*Society Civic Science Initiative does not currently offer funding opportunities to members.*

## ABOUT THIS PROFILE

This profile is part of a research project conducted by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement (CSCCE). You can find out more about the project, and view more community profiles, [on our website](#).

Information for this profile was submitted by Rose Hendricks, Program Director.

**Last updated:** 24 June 2021

**Cite as:** Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement (2021) CSCCE Community Profile: Society Civic Science Initiative. Woodley, Pratt, Kobilka, and Hendricks doi: [10.5281/zenodo.5028483](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5028483)