



AGU

SHARING SCIENCE

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► **CSCCE Community Manager Case Study**

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- GEOSCIENCES
- SCIENCE COMMUNICATION
- SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

“ Science can be a lonely place and communities can help that. But communities don't often just pop up. It's essential to have folks who guide those communities to ensure that members are benefitting fully. ”

COULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO OUR READERS? TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF AND THE COMMUNITY YOU MANAGE.

I'm Shane Hanlon and I manage [AGU's Sharing Science](#) program where we help scientists communicate more effectively with scientific and non-scientific audiences. I manage the Sharing Science Community, an online community of scicomm- and policy-interested science enthusiasts who want to share resources, experiences, and stories to help each other more effectively communicate science. Anyone interested in sharing science can join and members share highs and lows, best practices, stories, and more via an online forum.

WHAT WAS YOUR PATH TO SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT? WERE YOU TRAINED AS A SCIENTIST OR DID YOU COME BY ANOTHER ROUTE?

I have a PhD in ecology, and I came to science communication (scicomm) and the Sharing Science program by way of a John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship through NOAA and a Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship through the National Academies. The Sharing Science Community was initially developed as an email network of experts to connect with journalists and policymakers and morphed into a community of practice for anyone with an interest in scicomm to enjoy.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUR ROLE? HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY SPEND YOUR TIME?

Community management is one of my many roles. I also run scicomm training programs via workshops and webinars and manage our social media accounts, and I'm creating a weekly science podcast for which I'll serve as executive producer and co-host. My time with the community is largely spent providing resources and opportunities to the community and trying to encourage engagement between community members.

LOOKING BACK ON THE LAST YEAR, WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE PROJECT YOU'VE WORKED ON?

My favorite project was probably a webinar series and associated educational materials that we created around the theme of telling science stories. In addition to eight webinars, we created [illustrations, animations, infographics, and TikTok videos](#) to supplement the content. We shared these resources with the AGU Sharing Science community and other outlets, and the content spurred some discussion about how stories are a critical part of effective scicomm.



KEY

- INTERPERSONAL
- PROGRAM MANAGEMENT
- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- COMMUNICATION
- TECHNICAL



SHANE'S SKILLS WHEEL SIGNATURE

The CSCCE skills wheel is composed of five core competencies, with nine skills within each competency. Skills wheels are a common way of visualizing and curating information about skills that also allow for the creation of a job "signature" or "fingerprint" based on the particular skills in use. This wheel is representative of the skills Shane used over the last 12 months.

- For more information, see [the CSCCE skills wheel](#).

DO YOU SHARE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT DUTIES WITH ANYONE ELSE? WHERE DOES YOUR POSITION FIT WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

I am the only community manager for Sharing Science (we are a team of only two - my boss and me); however, there are numerous communities within AGU, like [AGU LANDInG](#), and some of those have dedicated AGU staff who manage them.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

The best moments are when I put up a topic for discussion on our community's forum, walk away, and come back a few hours later to a long thread of comments and interactions. Seeing folks who are mostly strangers to each other share stories and anecdotes to help each other with common problems is really inspiring.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS A SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY MANAGER? ARE THERE WAYS IN WHICH YOUR ROLE COULD BE MADE EASIER – SUCH AS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Getting people to engage with each other is the hardest part. Since folks are mostly strangers it's been difficult to spur conversation. A couple of moves from CSCCE's repertoire have helped boost participation - we established community ambassadors who have spurred conversation and we started thinking about our group in terms of a [Community Participation Model](#). These have been great places to start, but we still need to do more.

AND ZOOMING OUT A LITTLE, WHY DO YOU THINK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS IMPORTANT TO SCIENCE? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN ACTIVE MANAGEMENT IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY?

Science can be a lonely place and communities (no matter their form) can help that. But communities don't often just pop up. It's essential to have folks who guide those communities to ensure that members are benefitting fully.

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This case study is part of a series created by the Center for Scientific Collaboration and Community Engagement.

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