Anne Kornahrens
Director of Community
Hertz Foundation

► INTERDISCIPLINARY
► SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
► FUNDER

> " *As a scientist, I love experimentation, evidence, and iteration.*
> *Applying these principles to community engagement is important since we owe it to ourselves*
> *and future generations to do this work thoughtfully.* "

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

My name is Anne Kornahrens and I'm the Director of Community at the Hertz Foundation: a philanthropic organization that funds graduate students studying science and technology. I work with the community of 1,200+ grant recipients, or Hertz Fellows, to create career-enhancing opportunities, to allow networking within the community and externally, and to increase the positive impacts these science and technology experts have on pressing issues facing the nation.

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

I earned bachelor's and PhD degrees in chemistry, and then pivoted to science policy through the AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship (STPF). As an STPF fellow, I focused on STEM education funding and programs around diversity, equity, and inclusion. Later, I worked to support women in science and educational initiatives through a role at the American Physical Society, the largest US professional society for physicists. My current role combines the expertise I gained through these past positions. When I look at my career, I realize that I was concerned about - and investing in - communities throughout my training and early career stages. Back then, my efforts took the forms of volunteer work and advocacy. Having the language of community engagement and formalizing this work through community manager roles has been incredibly fulfilling.

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

I oversee the strategic engagement and mobilization of our community, build connectivity among members, fuel collaborations, and grow their capacity for solving the problems of tomorrow. In practical terms, this looks like identifying opportunities to connect community members of various career stages via event programming such as an annual summer workshop and mentoring sessions held on Zoom. We are looking for more ways for the community to connect online, and one of the things we're considering as part of our new strategic plan is increasing our use of a platform such as Slack. I work closely with the team at the Hertz Foundation, with community volunteers, and with other community members. I've only been in this role for six months, but already I have been able to work with key stakeholders to develop a community strategic plan, managed the committee that's planning our signature summer event, and supported our Fellowship and Programs Council.

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

A key first step in developing the strategic plan for the Hertz Community was to hold a series of 1-on-1 or small group listening sessions with community members. It was inspiring to hear directly from community members about the value of the community for them, what programming they hoped to see, and what modes of engagement would work best for them to connect with others. Translating this into strategic goals approved by the board, and now into engagement opportunities for the future, will turn these listening sessions into action.

KEY

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

ℹ **ANNE'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 Anne 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 have a small but wonderful team of colleagues that I work with (just 11 people!). Though I am the only one explicitly managing the community, I rely on collaboration with my colleagues who work closely with the community members and manage the Foundation's branding and communications, philanthropic efforts, technology tools, and constituent database. I also rely on our community volunteers, most critically our council members, who bring inspiration, motivation, and enthusiasm to the work we do together to serve the wider community.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

It is a lot of fun! I get to bring my passions to my work, which was a key motivator in making the switch from bench research to science programs. I am a people person, so nothing is better than knowing I get to work every day to help make the Hertz Fellows be the best they can be and enhance their impacts on the world!

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?

Being a people person, the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was tough, personally and professionally. Doing community work when your community is in crisis requires a high level of awareness to assess and serve their needs, but even connecting and learning about my community's needs was tough during this period. Collaborating with, and learning from, other community managers helped me get past these challenges. I drew from other colleagues at my work and on the project I was working on, people I met through CSCCE, and folks I have in my network all over the world who were dealing with similar challenges. Learning by doing and by working with others are my favorite forms of professional development, so the community I've built from my networks is key to my success.

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

As a scientist, I love experimentation, evidence, and iteration. Applying these principles to community engagement is important since we owe it to ourselves and future generations to do this work thoughtfully. For me, this has involved working closely with social science experts, piloting and improving programming based on data, and pivoting when something doesn't work based on our goals.

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