Natasha Haycock-Chavez
Community Engagement & Outreach Coordinator
Arctic Data Center

► MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
► OPEN SCIENCE
► INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANIZATION

> " At the core of collaboration is the question of how to build relationships. "

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

My name is Natasha, everyone calls me Tash, and I am the Community Engagement and Outreach Coordinator for NSF's Arctic Data Center and the Permafrost Discovery Gateway. I work with Arctic researchers and research organizations to help build community, facilitate meetings and workshops, and create content that is helpful for the community. As the primary repository for the National Science Foundation's Arctic program, the Arctic Data Center works with Arctic researchers to help publish their data in a way that not only meets NSF's publishing requirements, but also contributes to open science. Our data curation team communicates with researchers to make their data available for anyone to use and helps other researchers find data that advances their goals. Beyond data publishing, the Arctic Data Center also holds courses that are geared towards data management skills and facilitates workshops for specific Arctic research issues, such as the 2020 Arctic Social Science Working Group.

Recently, I was invited to also work for the Permafrost Discovery Gateway, which is an ongoing collaborative project to map permafrost in the entire Arctic in a way that is easy to use for researchers, teachers, and really anyone interested in permafrost.

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

In April, 2021, I graduated with my master's degree in geography from Memorial University of Newfoundland, where I worked on a conservation research project. Specifically, I was invited by the Inuit community of Sanikiluaq in Nunavut to conduct a spatial analysis of a protected area they were developing. It was an incredible project to be a part of, and my love for the Arctic and the people there grew even stronger. After graduating, I looked for opportunities to continue supporting Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic, and that's when I came across the Arctic Data Center.

I have had no official training in project coordinating or management, and I have had to do a lot of learning on the job. But the skills I learned from my previous work in the Arctic and my experience engaging with researchers and local communities have definitely been helpful.

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

I wear many hats, but the umbrella above these hats is communication and project coordinating. Some of my tasks include:

- **Writing curricula and teaching** data management courses
- **Creating engagement and outreach strategies** to better engage with the community
- **Creating website content and resources** for Arctic researchers
- **Facilitating networking** within the Arctic research space
- **Facilitating and organizing meetings** for different Arctic research working groups
- **Making the website** more user friendly
- **Creating a space on the website** specifically for Arctic social science researchers
- **Collaborating with other community managers** in the Arctic research space on projects and community needs
- **Creating a collaborative survey** to elicit feedback from Arctic researchers on their data sharing perspectives and networking activities

For each of these projects, I coordinated and facilitated meetings, created and contributed to the content, and helped manage logistics planning.

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KEY

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

ⓘ TASH'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 Tash used over the last 12 months.

▶ For more information, see the CSCCE skills wheel.

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

When I was looking for jobs, I knew I wanted to continue working in the Arctic research space and, ideally, I wanted my work to continue supporting Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic. This job allows me to do that through integrating data ethics and Indigenous Data Sovereignty into a lot of the content that we produce. Recently, we held a 5-day in-person course to introduce data management skills and I helped develop the sections on data ethics and data sovereignty. I really enjoyed having time to dedicate to learning about these topics, as well as discussing them with Arctic researchers.

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

Our team is very small, and everyone has multiple responsibilities. We have two data project coordinators who focus on data curation and help guide the data interns. I lead the team's outreach and communication activities with the guidance of the project's PIs, and I oversee the projects our data fellows are working on. While I am the only one whose time is dedicated purely to communication activities, everyone provides feedback and input on the content I create and on my outreach strategies.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT BEING A COMMUNITY MANAGER?

I really enjoy thinking outside of the box and trying to be creative and thoughtful in terms of engagement and outreach. Coming up with effective outreach and engagement strategies is challenging sometimes, however it's one of those challenges that is enjoyable and very rewarding. I also love that every day is different and that my tasks are always evolving and changing.

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?

I think the biggest challenge is that I don't have explicit training in community management. I've gained so many of my community management skills by learning on the job on an ad hoc basis. Being relatively new in this position, I am still getting to know the community and their needs. It can be stressful at times to come up with ideas and strategies of how to effectively engage with the community, but when things come together it is incredibly rewarding. For the Arctic Data Center, communication and outreach is all about engaging with the community, and creating content and activities that fulfill the needs and desires of Arctic researchers, while at the same time aligning with open science and ethical data practices. While this aspect is definitely challenging, it also keeps things interesting and exciting.

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

I think community managers really help strengthen and facilitate collaboration, which is such a huge part of science (especially open science). At the core of collaboration is the question of how to build relationships. I like being part of the relationship stage of collaboration, as well as helping to facilitate collaboration. There's little better than being part of a project from the beginning as a facilitator and watching the project grow and evolve.

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