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Agenda

Clear and Credible Information from Social and Behavioral Science To Improve Societal Outcomes:

Current Approaches and Future Directions

A Seminar of the Roundtable on the Communication and Use of Social and Behavioral Sciences

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
NAS Building, Room 120
2101 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20418

January 21, 2016

Seminar Description: Many private and public policy decisions involve issues that are in the realm of social and behavioral science (SBS). While SBS has a long history of useful application, decision-makers can struggle to obtain clear and credible information from SBS that is relevant to their needs. This seminar will convene producers, communicators and prospective users of SBS whose work covers an array of social issues (education, behavioral health, affordable housing, and economic mobility). Together, participants will exchange information and perspectives on:

- 1) needs for information from SBS, methods used to access research, and the challenges;
- 2) ingredients of successful synthesis and communication of SBS research for decision-making;
- 3) options for strengthening the communication of research to improve societal outcomes.

A goal of the seminar is to identify specific actions that researchers and intermediaries could take to address the challenges experienced by potential users of social and behavioral research.

A video recording of the seminar will be available on the SBS Roundtable website and disseminated broadly to researchers and students in the scientific community and to intermediary organizations that communicate social and behavioral research.

9:00-9:10 Welcome

Arthur Lupia, Roundtable Chair
About the SBS Roundtable
Introductions

9:10-11:40 Current Approaches to Communicating SBS on Pressing Societal Problems

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Moderator: Hon. Brian Baird, Roundtable Member

Guiding Questions: What challenges arise when potential users of SBS attempt to access available research and evaluate its implications for their purposes? What are current approaches to aggregating and communicating SBS research, the ingredients for success, errors to avoid? What are the greatest challenges, opportunities and needs for the future? What actions that if taken by the scientific community and intermediaries could increase the impact of SBS on decision-making?

Speakers will provide the following in a brief introduction to their approaches

(see Academes' SBS roundtable website for additional details)

- mission
- type of entity (e.g., type of NGO or government; if government how situated with respect to the various branches, etc.)
- issue areas
- intended audiences and purposes for communicating
- governance and funding
- process for topic selection or assignment
- methods of synthesis and communication
- policies that guide synthesis and communication
- examples of impact
- other entities that synthesize research on the same topic; how similar or different; how cross-communication or coordination occurs

9:15 Erika Poethig, Urban Institute

9:30 Richard Laine, National Governors Association

9:45 Shawna Mercer, Centers for Disease Control

10:00 Q&A and Discussion

10:20 Break

10:35 Robert Boruch, University of Pennsylvania

10:50 Gary VanLandingham, Pew Charitable Trusts

11:05 Vivian Tseng, William T. Grant Foundation

11:20 Q&A and Discussion

11:40 *Lunch (informal group discussions of themes and future directions)*

12:40-1:40 Summary of Themes and Future Directions

Moderators: Arthur Lupia and Brian Baird

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Many producers of research lack sufficient incentives or experience in producing information that is highly valuable to non-academics. Given what we have heard, what are possible solutions to the main challenges of obtaining relevant, clear and reliable information from SBS research? For example:

- (1) What advancements in the synthesis and communication of SBS would be most useful to the potential users of research? How might parts of the SBS community further organize with intermediaries who communicate research to meet these needs and provide clear and credible information of value? What enhancements to existing approaches or new approaches could be useful (e.g., for synthesis, development of communication products, building of relationships and networks, or other supports?)
- (2) Would greater coordination of the entities that communicate with policymakers and the public help to address challenges of accessing clear messages from research and assessing the state of knowledge? If so, what form might such coordination take, and for what purposes?
- (3) How could the scientific community be continually informed about and incentivized to fill gaps in the knowledge needed?