

AAAS Leshner Leadership Institute for Public Engagement with Science

FACES *of the* FELLOWSHIP

The **AAAS Leshner Leadership Institute**, part of the AAAS Center for Public Engagement with Science, was founded in 2015 and operates through philanthropic gifts in honor of CEO Emeritus Alan I. Leshner's commitment to public engagement with science. The Leshner Leadership Institute empowers cohorts of scientists and engineers to lead high-impact public engagement and advocate for institutional changes to support public engagement by scientists. Leshner Fellows have collectively engaged tens of thousands of people through hundreds of online and in-person public events, participated in hundreds of media interviews, and authored dozens of op-eds and articles. In addition to individual engagement efforts, fellows are encouraged to foster support for public engagement at their institutions and as a result, the program's impact extends to fellows' scientific disciplines, networks, communities, and hundreds of their students and colleagues. As the Institute celebrates its fifth anniversary, AAAS will be developing resources to share broadly on public engagement and institutional change during the COVID-19 pandemic and on addressing structural racism in scientific institutions and civic society. With future cohorts, AAAS will dedicate even greater attention to the institutional and cultural changes needed to support public engagement, creating cohorts that bring together small groups to collaborate in driving change at their institution.



KIRSTEN SCHWARZ

University of California, Los Angeles

*Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Environmental Health Sciences, Leshner Class of 2018-19
(Food & Water Security)*

Schwarz **started a "soil money" project** to build relationships between community members and university researchers, and worked with community members from lower-income neighborhoods in Northern Kentucky to increase green space and reduce flooding.



MIKEY KANTAR

University of Hawaii at Mānoa

*Assistant Professor of Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences,
Leshner Class of 2018-19 (Food & Water Security)*

To help fellow crop scientists communicate about their work, Kantar and collaborators paired scientists and graphic artists to **create a series of infographics** on complex, societally relevant subjects within biology, food, and agriculture. Kantar described this project in **a Nature commentary**.

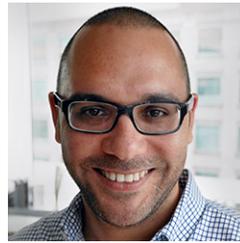


LAURA SCHMITT OLABISI

Michigan State University

Associate Professor of Community Sustainability, Leshner Class of 2018-19 (Food & Water Security)

Schmitt Olabisi **partnered with FoodPlus Detroit** to create a field school for scientists and community leaders on using human-natural systems modeling to provide information for local decision-making.



LUIS MARTINEZ

University of Florida

Associate Professor of Microbiology, Leshner Class of 2017-18 (Infectious Disease)

Martinez worked with AAAS to write **an op-ed** on science funding in the federal budget. His **UPS delivery person recognized him as the op-ed's author**. Before the fellowship Martinez felt like he was "singing and no one was listening." Now he says, "having a global organization like AAAS backing up what you are doing is amazing."



SYLVIE GARNEAU-TSODIKOVA

University of Kentucky

Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Leshner Class of 2017-18 (Infectious Disease)

Garneau-Tsodikova **challenged herself to create a Twitter account** during her fellowship orientation. Thanks to Twitter she received donations of lab supplies for her K-12 engagement program. She now has more than 8,000 Twitter followers.



MARIA ELENA BOTTAZZI

National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine

Associate Dean, Leshner Class of 2017-18 (Infectious Disease)

As a dean and professor, Bottazzi has **engaged policymakers and members of the public** in conversations about vaccines and public health – particularly in Latin America – and most recently has taken part in **a variety of podcasts** about her lab's work on a coronavirus vaccine.



KAFUI DZIRASA

Duke University

Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Leshner Class of 2019-20 (Human Augmentation)

Dzirasa has **called for public engagement with brain technologies** through op-eds and by incorporating it into the National Institutes of Health Brain 2.0 Initiative. He has also engaged with public discussions of structural racism, sharing his own experiences within and outside of the science community.



BILL WUEST

Emory University

GRA Distinguished Investigator & Associate Professor of Chemistry, Leshner Class of 2019-20 (Human Augmentation)

Wuest's practice interview with a **AAAS Mass Media Fellow** at his fellowship orientation led to **a string of media appearances** following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as his research on soaps and disinfectants became highly relevant to the public.

As part of the Institute's focus on institutional change, the fellows also work on broadening support for public engagement at their home institutions and in the communities they're a part of.



SHEENA CRUICKSHANK
University of Manchester

Academic Lead for Public Engagement and Professor of Immunology, Leshner Class of 2017-18 (Infectious Disease)

Cruickshank conducted a review of **how institutions like hers** adjusted promotion and tenure to include public engagement. She was also part of a team that **earned the university a Gold Engage Watermark** from the UK's National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, a recognition of excellence.



JESSICA HELLMANN
University of Minnesota

Director of the Institute on the Environment and Professor of Ecology, Leshner Class of 2016-17 (Climate Change)

Hellmann incorporated AAAS material on public engagement into **the fellowship program for pre-tenure faculty** at her Institute. In addition, several other fellows have started science communication and engagement courses within their departments.



TESSA HILL
University of California, Davis

Associate Vice Provost for Academic Programs in Public Scholarship & Engagement, Professor of Earth & Planetary Sciences, Leshner Class of 2016-17 (Climate Change)

In a **Medium.com post**, Hill described motivating scientists to engage by both "pushing and pulling" ("pushing" through training and building confidence, and "pulling" through incentive structures). She was then asked to help formalize how faculty and students are rewarded for public engagement at UC Davis, and has now incorporated public engagement into her official position.



WENDY JEPSON
Texas A&M University

University Professor of Geography and Associate Director of the Texas Water Resources Institute, Leshner Class of 2018-19 (Food & Water Security)

Jepson created a new **public engagement award** at her college to celebrate those who are doing good work in this area and incentivize others to participate.



ENZO SAUMA
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Professor of Engineering, Leshner Class of 2016-17 (Climate Change)

Sauma succeeded in **changing the promotion and tenure guidelines** at the university level to include public engagement.



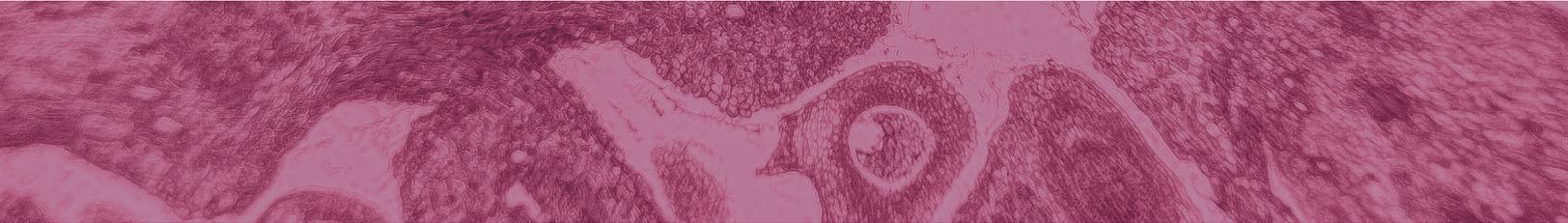
JIN MONTCLARE
New York University

Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Leshner Class of 2019-20 (Human Augmentation)

Montclare organized a **four-day workshop** with The Op-Ed Project for female and underrepresented minority faculty and staff at her school, seeking to increase representation of their views in the media.



Leshner Fellows call for more institutional support for public engagement in an article, **Universities Can Lead the Way Supporting Engaged Geoscientists**, published in Eos.



Each cohort of AAAS Leshner Fellows focuses on an area of science with an important and timely relevance to society, including climate change, infectious disease, food and water security, human augmentation, and artificial intelligence. In its first 5 years, the Leshner Leadership Institute has trained and supported 67 fellows from 60 different institutions, including participants from 28 states and 6 countries.

For online profiles of all Leshner Fellows, AAAS news stories about the fellows, and links to their media coverage, visit www.aaas.org/LLI, and to support this work, visit www.aaas.org/LeshnerLeadership.

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