

Call for Applications

Chemistry Communication Leadership Institute

September 15-19, 2009

Seattle, Washington

⇒ *An intensive, hands-on communication experience for postdoctoral researchers in chemistry*



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This week-long course will prepare early-career scientists to communicate with general audiences, journalists, and policymakers about **chemistry—the central science**.

Enhance the success of your scientific career by learning to communicate more effectively with diverse audiences: granting agencies, industry leaders, management, and students.

- *Learn new techniques to communicate the excitement of what chemists do!*
- Interact with leading science communicators. Guest speakers include:

Ivan Amato, *Chemical & Engineering News*

Robert Service, *Reporter for Science*

Alan Boyle, *Science Editor, MSNBC.com*

Sampler of Topics:

• <i>Media interviews</i>	• <i>Writing a press release</i>
• <i>Pitching a freelance story idea</i>	• <i>Radio and podcasting</i>
• <i>Writing for the Web</i>	• <i>Developing an “elevator talk”</i>

Postdoctoral researchers are eligible to apply. Project funds are expected to cover travel expenses and stipend. More information about the course is available at <http://faculty.washington.edu/illman/>

Applicants should send a letter of application describing their preparation to serve as chemistry communication leaders, how the program would further their career goals, a 2-page CV, and a letter from the advisor and/or department chair signaling that the department will be supportive of activities applying the program materials during the following year. Materials and inquiries to: Dr. Deborah L. Illman, illman@u.washington.edu, 206-616-4826, University of Washington, Box 353740, Seattle, WA 98195-3740. Applications received by Aug. 24, 2009 will be given priority. EOE

Sponsored by:



The National Science Foundation -- American Chemical Society -- University of Washington

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Visit <http://faculty.washington.edu/illman/> or Email illman@u.washington.edu

Motivation

The field of chemistry faces formidable challenges in terms of public understanding.

We need to remove “the cloak of invisibility that often conceals the good performance of chemists and chemistry from public appreciation,” says Bruce E. Bursten, Past President of the ACS.

Recently, ACS President Thomas H. Lane urged ACS members to “make a dent in the misperceptions surrounding chemistry, chemists, and chemicals.”

This course responds to that need. **Our goal is to provide early-career chemists with the preparation they will need to serve as champions and ambassadors for chemistry and to mentor colleagues and others now in the pipeline to be tomorrow’s chemistry communicators.**

These same skills will help chemists succeed in their scientific careers. They will be able to communicate more effectively about their research with

- **Granting agencies**
- **Industry leaders**
- **Administrators**
- **Management**
- **Foundations and donors**
- **Students**
- **Community members**
- **Policymakers**
- **Journalists**
- **Media relations officers**

About the Course

The most effective strategies developed over the past decade in teaching communication to science students have been combined into this hands-on, intensive course for a small group of 12 postdoctoral researchers.

The sessions will be led by a chemist and former reporter for *Chemical & Engineering News* in conjunction with nationally acclaimed communicators and science reporters.

The format alternates short lecture and discussion periods with active exercises and communication activities so that participants can apply what they’re learning.

Venue

The institute will be held on the beautiful University of Washington campus (<http://www.washington.edu/>), located just north of downtown Seattle, with easy access to amenities in the city, Puget Sound, Lake Washington, and the Cascade and Olympic mountain ranges for those wishing to explore the area. Participants may elect to stay at the conference hotel near the campus (information to be provided, check the website at <http://faculty.washington.edu/illman/>) or may make their own arrangements.

Travel Expenses and Stipend

Sponsor funds for this project are expected to cover reasonable travel costs for participants. Expenses would be reimbursed for actual airfare, ground transport, lodging, and meals based upon receipts provided and up to a maximum of \$2,000 per participant. Sponsor funds will also provide a modest stipend (\$500) for participants completing the institute activities.

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Course Content—View the Draft Program at <http://faculty.washington.edu/illman/>

The course covers the fundamentals of audience analysis and issues in public understanding of science with particular focus on chemistry. Participants will learn concepts of newsworthiness and how to pitch a story to the general media. We will hear from acclaimed national journalists about newsgathering, news writing, writing for the Web, and using the latest digital media to reach broader audiences. Participants will write a press release based upon a group interview of guest speakers, and they will learn the basics of freelancing. The course will treat issues in gearing messages for general audiences, including structure, clarity, and brevity; strategies for effective explanations; and effective visuals and digital “accessories” for stories. Participants will develop and record a brief elevator talk.

A session on serving as media sources will use role-playing exercises to prepare chemists to interact with journalists. We have enlisted the services of a highly experienced communication firm, called EffectiveArts, which has run such programs for journalism students in the UW Department of Communication and for other clients world-wide.

Finally, a session on mentoring others in communication will provide an orientation to a resource guide and a session to plan follow-on activities at their home institutions. Participants will be expected to engage in follow-on activities during the year after the institute and will furnish mid-year and end-of-year reports to the Principal Investigator.

About the Lead Instructor and Principal Investigator: Deborah L. Illman, Ph.D.

This Institute is part of a pilot project funded by the National Science Foundation and the American Chemical Society and led by Deborah Illman, former Associate Editor of *Chemical & Engineering News*. Based first at the Washington D.C. headquarters and then serving as the magazine's West Coast Bureau, Illman has covered topics in analytical, environmental, and industrial process chemistry in addition to anchoring chemical education.

Illman's recent research and teaching activities at the University of Washington have focused on science communication and media coverage of science and technology. During 2006-09, with funding from an [NSF Discovery Corps Senior Fellowship](#), she has worked on a project entitled "[Team Science](#)," focused on communicating about large and long-term multidisciplinary research efforts using the NSF Science and Technology Centers as a case study. She organized and chaired a symposium at the 2007 annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) on the subject of team science.

Illman teaches a set of three courses for undergraduate and graduate students on writing about science for general audiences as well as a course on scientific writing for graduate students. She is founding editor of an award-winning regional science news magazine called [Northwest Science & Technology](#). Honored with ten awards including three Best of Show awards from the Society for Technical Communication, the magazine has served as a platform for a science and technology news writing curriculum at the UW. Graduates of the UW science writing program have obtained placements at national publications, including *Science*, *Discover*, *IEEE Spectrum*, *Dallas Morning News*, and the *Boston Globe*.

Her professional preparation includes a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Washington (UW) and a doctorate in physical chemistry from the State University of Campinas, Brazil. She is former Associate Director of the UW Center for Process Analytical Chemistry (CPAC), established with a grant from the NSF Industry-University Cooperative Research Center Program. During 1988-89, she served as a Science, Engineering, and Diplomacy Fellow of the AAAS.

Application Instructions

- Applicants should send a letter of application describing
- their preparation to serve as chemistry communication leaders & how the program would further their career goals,
 - a 2-page CV, and
 - a letter from the advisor and/or department chair signaling that the department will be supportive of activities applying the program materials during the following year.

Materials and inquiries should be directed to the Principal Investigator by email or regular mail:

Dr. Deborah L. Illman, Email: illman@u.washington.edu

University of Washington, Box 353740, Seattle, WA 98195-3740

Telephone 206-616-4826

Application deadline is Aug. 24, 2009. Participants are urged to submit applications as soon as possible to receive priority consideration.