

Invention Ambassadors Program

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and The Lemelson Foundation have joined forces to create the AAAS-Lemelson Invention Ambassadors Program designed to celebrate and highlight the importance of invention and inventors.

Through our partnership, we strive to help cultivate a new and diverse generation of inventors and increase global understanding of the role of invention in creating new products and building new businesses, and the importance of inventors and invention education in building economies and fostering innovation.

Understanding the need for invention, the knowledge that invention helps to create and the dual and complementary roles of invention and innovation for 21st century public problem solving is critical—every aspect of our problem solving requirements must be considered and acted upon including talent creation; the skill-set, aspirations and inspiration from our inventors; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) basic research; and the innovation ecosystem.

When Bill Gates stated in Wired magazine, *“I believe that every life is valuable, that we can make things better. That Innovation is the key to a bright future. That we’re just getting started.”* he was challenging us to invent in order to make the quality of life better everywhere in the world. While invention has often been the silent partner of innovation, in reality invention makes innovation possible. In the back of our minds, we know that Steve Jobs needed an array of inventions to create products and a brand; we understand that DARPA’s radical innovation spirit depends on invention; and we know that the Mayan temples, pyramids and palaces, were made possible by the invention of stone tools. Invention is the backbone, the inspiration and the conduit for innovation, entrepreneurship and a society’s quality of life. We believe that invention should be better understood, supported and highlighted due to its role in helping to address the challenges of the 21st century.

GOALS

- Celebrate and highlight the importance of invention and inventors.
- Increase societies’ understanding of the critical role of invention in improving our quality of life.
- Get more people excited about supporting or becoming inventors.
- Help cultivate a new and diverse generation of inventors.
- Increase global understanding of the role of invention, inventors and invention education and the need for a robust invention ecosystem in building economies and fostering innovation.
- Heighten awareness of invention’s vital role in addressing the global challenges of our time.
- Celebrate inventors who insist on improving and sustaining our earth’s environment.

Proposed initially as a three-year pilot, the AAAS-Lemelson Invention Ambassadors Program will:

HIGHLIGHTS

- Select approximately 15 Ambassadors over two classes who are prepared to be leaders and change agents in promoting invention, invention education and a robust ecosystem for driving inventions to products and businesses.
- Generate compelling, evidence-based messaging about the role of invention in creating jobs, strengthening the economy and improving lives.
- Build a cadre of inventor “Ambassadors” dedicated to disseminating these messages among key audiences.
- Position the Ambassadors for dialogue with policymakers, other key stakeholders, and the general public in strategic and visible ways to demonstrate the importance of invention to advancing world economies and improving quality of life for all.

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