

## **Overview**

### **The Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion Program**

AAAS established the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program in 1995 to facilitate communication between scientific and religious communities. DoSER builds on AAAS's long-standing commitment to relate scientific knowledge and technological development to the purposes and concerns of society at large.

Through such dialogue, members of the scientific community can gain a richer understanding of the cultural context within which science operates, and become more sensitive and responsive to societal questions and concerns that emerge from scientific discovery and technological development. AAAS provides a uniquely credible forum for such engagement because of its public visibility and disciplinary breadth.

### **The Engaging Scientists Network**

In consultation with the AAAS Center for Public Engagement, the AAAS DoSER program's "Engaging Scientists in the Science and Religion Dialogue" project seeks to support scientists in becoming more effective ambassadors for their research interests, their disciplines, and science as a whole with a broad spectrum of publics- particularly with religious communities.

Scientific research and its applications impact environments, communities, and individuals. New advances have and will continue to have implications for understanding(s) of what it means to be human, our place in the universe, and our understanding of the world around us. The social, ethical and philosophical dimensions of science are also of great interest and concern to society at large.

According to a 2015 Pew Research Center survey, most Americans identify as religious or spiritual. However, many scientists are unclear about how to effectively engage with religious perspectives and worldviews. This project helps scientists develop strategies and skillsets for constructive and culturally competent public science engagement, including on topics that intersect with faith and religion.

The Engaging Scientists Network is intended to facilitate contacts between scientists, engineers, health professionals, educators, and public science communicators with religious communities, organizations and institutions. In doing so the program seeks to foster constructive, inclusive dialogue on science, technology, and society topics. The specific goals of such dialogue may include education, community or civic action, interdisciplinary collaboration, or simply to enrich discussion around "big questions" facing humankind as a whole that is inclusive of diverse cultures, backgrounds and worldviews.

### **The Process**

Through the Engaging Scientists Network, the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program will facilitate public science engagement activities between scientists, engineers, health professionals, and science communicators with religious communities, organizations and institutions. The process will involve the following steps:

- 1) Potential volunteers complete our on-line registration forms. Volunteers can sign up as a "Science Ambassador," as a "Community Representative," or both (as two separate registrations).

- 2) DoSER staff receive, process, and review volunteer submissions.
- 3) After identifying potential matches of Science Ambassadors and Community Representatives, DoSER staff will arrange for a telephone interview with prospective volunteers to gather further details and to determine actual suitability, and may request one or more references from volunteers to assess their qualifications, experience and suitability for the Engaging Scientists network.
- 4) Upon receiving these recommendations, DoSER staff may introduce Science Ambassador(s) to Community Representative(s).
- 5) Final decisions on further activities rest with the community representative of the community, organization or institution.
- 6) DoSER staff will follow up with both the Science Ambassador and the Community Representative to learn of any impacts resulting from the introduction, including events and collaborations.
- 7) DoSER staff may also contact volunteers unsolicited, to alert them to potential engagement opportunities in their geographic area or field of expertise.

## **Policies and General Expectations**

### **Policies**

#### *Expenses and compensation*

By joining the network, scientists, engineers, and science communicators (“Science Ambassadors”) and Community Representatives in the Engaging Scientists network signal an interest in engagement with religious publics and institutions on science and technology topics. By joining the network, Science Ambassadors and Community Representatives become “volunteers” in the network. The AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program makes no commitment to provide any funding to such volunteers or their host organizations/institutions. All costs associated with the work in question are the responsibility of volunteers and host organizations/institutions.

#### *Use of personal information*

The only personal information we request is that which we need to make appropriate matches of Science Ambassadors with Community Representatives. This information will be entered by potential volunteers into a database that is not accessible by the public. Information will only be provided to third parties (e.g., committee members, relevant experts) for the purposes of facilitating partnerships and if we are legally required to do so. We will not provide personal information of volunteers to any party outside of AAAS or the Network without the prior consent of the volunteer.

#### *Ethics and conflicts of interest*

Volunteers should understand that they bear a responsibility to any organizations they collaborate with through the network, and the ethics rules guiding that organization. It is important that volunteers adhere to this principle and avoid any conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Volunteers who wish to accept speaking engagements or publish materials based on their work as part of Engaging Scientists must receive prior permission from their host organization, and comply with the non-disclosure, confidentiality, and other policies of that organization.

### **Expectations for Volunteers**

Engaging Scientists provides volunteers (whether science ambassadors and community representatives) with an opportunity to participate in and/or facilitate inclusive, respectful dialogue on science topics with religious communities, organizations and institutions. Such dialogue provides opportunities for participants to share knowledge and expertise, to explore areas of mutual interest, and identify areas of potential collaboration, as well as enrich public discussions of “big questions” related to science and society from multidisciplinary and multicultural perspectives and paradigms. Toward those ends, all volunteers are expected to:

- Ensure their database profile is up-to-date, including changes to contact information.
- Communicate with DoSER staff and potential activity partners in a responsive and timely manner, including details on event or activity logistics, restrictions, timelines and other matters;
- Maintain a professional attitude towards DoSER staff, partners and potential partners;
- Abide by all relevant policies of the host institution and organization, including those relating to confidentiality, non-disclosure, and copyright;
- Respond to requests for input and feedback in the long-term evaluation of the Engaging Scientists network;
- Help share information about On-call Scientists among colleagues, within their organizations, professional associations, and elsewhere.

### **Expectations for AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion Staff**

The mission of the AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program has been to support and facilitate constructive science engagement with religious communities and institutions. Accordingly, across its many and varied initiatives, DoSER works to encourage scientists, engineers, and health professionals to participate in dialogue on science and technology topics with diverse (and especially with religious) publics, with sensitivity to and respect for a range of cultural backgrounds and worldviews. DoSER’s role in the Engaging Scientists network is primarily as facilitator, providing the framework and opportunity for volunteers willing to give of their time and expertise to be matched with communities, organizations and institutions seeking to participate in such dialogue.

In regards to the Engaging Scientists network, AAAS DoSER staff are expected to:

- Respond to queries from potential and actual volunteers and hosts in a timely manner;
- Ensure timely consideration of requests for volunteers and expressions of interest from volunteers;
- Maintain the Engaging Scientists website and database;
- Conduct ongoing evaluation of the project.

## **Terms and Conditions**

**THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO YOUR USE OF THE AAAS ENGAGING SCIENTISTS DATABASE AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ENGAGING SCIENTISTS NETWORK.**

**BY CHECKING THE “I ACCEPT” BOX IN THE REGISTRATION PROCESS, YOU AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND ABIDE BY ALL OF THE RULES AND POLICIES SET FORTH HEREIN. IF YOU DO NOT AGREE TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS, DO NOT REGISTER ON THE AAAS ENGAGING SCIENTISTS DATABASE.**

AAAS, through its Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program, owns and operates the AAAS Engaging Scientists database (the “Database”) and manages the Engaging Scientists network (the “Network”) via the Engaging Scientists Web site (the “Site”). Your participation in the Network and use of the Database are subject to the following terms and conditions (the “Terms”). AAAS may modify these Terms at any time without notice to you by posting revised Terms on the Site. Your use of the Database or participation in the Network following the modification of these Terms shall constitute your binding acceptance of and agreement to be bound by those modified Terms.

Individuals and organizations wishing to participate in the Network must register on the Database and provide full and accurate information as requested. AAAS cannot verify volunteers’ identities or the credibility of organizations, and makes no warranties, and expressly disclaims all warranties, with respect to the validity of the requests or offers made or provided.

AAAS has no control over, and shall bear no responsibility in connection with, the truth or accuracy of any information posted on the Database, the qualifications of anyone who may volunteer through this Network, or the ability of volunteers to perform the services requested.

AAAS is not in any way involved in or responsible for any of the organizations’ projects, the capabilities or performance of any volunteer, or for transactions or any other interactions between participants in the Network.

Participants in the Network shall solely be responsible for arranging all aspects of any dealings between themselves, including but not limited to arrangements for travel, event organization, and transmission of data or information. AAAS shall not be responsible for any costs whatsoever in connection with participation in the Network.

### **Disclaimer of Warranty/Limitation of Liability**

You expressly agree that use of the Database and participation in the Network are at your sole risk. Neither AAAS, its affiliates, nor any of their respective employees or agents, make or give any warranties, whether express or implied, with respect to the Site or any information, services, products, materials or other matter listed therein.

This disclaimer of liability applies to any damages or injury caused by any failure of performance, error, omission, interruption, deletion, defect, delay, communication line failure, theft or destruction or unauthorized access to, alteration of or use, whether for breach of contract, tortious behavior, negligence or under any other cause of action. You specifically acknowledge and agree that AAAS shall

not be liable for the defamatory, offensive or illegal conduct of users of the Database and participants in the Network or third parties, and that the risk of injury from the foregoing rests entirely with subscriber.

In no event will AAAS, its affiliates or any of their respective employees or agents be liable for any damages, including without limitation direct, indirect, incidental, special, consequential or punitive damages, even if they have been advised of the possibility of such damages, arising from, relating to or connected with the use or inability to use the Database or participate in the Network, or any other matter arising from, relating to or connected with the Database, Network, or these terms.

You hereby release and forever discharge AAAS, its affiliates and any of their respective employees or agents, from and against any and all claims, actions, suits or demands, of every kind and nature, at law, in equity, whether contractual, tortious, created by statute, rule or otherwise, whether known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected, disclosed or undisclosed, arising out of or relating to your use of the Database and participation in the Network.

These Terms constitute the entire agreement between AAAS and you with respect to the subject matter hereof, and supersede any previous oral or written agreement between us with respect to such subject matter. These Terms shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia, without regard to the conflicts of law provisions thereof.

## **CONTACT US**

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