



Agenda

2023 AAAS Science, Technology and Human Rights Conference

Virtual component: October 16-20 (Zoom)

In-person component: October 23-24 (AAAS Headquarters, 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20005)

All times are Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16-FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 (Online only)

The virtual component of the conference will include the below events. The Zoom links for these sessions (and to access the conference livestream the morning of October 23) will be sent to all registered participants a few days before each event.

Monday, October 16

10:00 a.m.

The State of the Right to Science

The right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (often called just “the right to science”) has garnered more recognition in recent years. In this panel, experts will discuss what they see as the main issues to address to make the right to science real, including what the right means for the Global South, issues of scientific freedom, the challenges posed by misinformation, and the role the global scientific community can play.

Janvier Gasana, Kuwait University

Helle Porsdam, University of Copenhagen

Alexandra Xanthaki, UN Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights

Nate Weisenberg, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice
(Moderator)

11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. **Virtual Networking**

Join us for a post-webinar discussion and meet other conference attendees.

Tuesday, October 17

12:00-1:00 p.m. **Human Rights and The State of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in 2023**

Central to the human right to science is the notion that everyone should be able to access, and participate in, science – but making that happen requires dealing with many real-world obstacles. Today, colleges and universities, scientific membership associations, and the private sector are reckoning not only with backlash against diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) efforts, but also with the day-to-day challenges of implementing DEIA efforts within their institutions. How can we continue to make change on the ground and support systemic transformation in the sciences and beyond? Panelists will share the challenges they have observed and reasons for hope as we work to catalyze a more just scientific enterprise.

Adrian Coles, American Statistical Association/Bristol Myers Squibb
Stacie East, Entomological Society of America
Darla Thompson, AAAS SEA Change
Dorothy Phillips, American Chemical Society (Moderator)

Wednesday, October 18

12:00-1:00 p.m. **Disability Inclusion, Accessibility, and Human Rights**

This plenary will provide an overview of disability status and human rights, the psychological science on disability, inclusion, and intersectionality, and conclude with highlights from the American Psychological Association (APA)'s efforts to address disability issues within its equity, diversity, and inclusion framework. Panelists will address:

1. The main points of human rights law for persons with disabilities according to international human rights law.
2. The psychological science that addresses the importance of disability inclusion and accessibility, as well as the impact of discrimination and ableism.

3. Issues that intersect with disability status and the impact of disability inclusion and accessibility on these issues.
4. APA's contributions to disability inclusion both within the association and within the field of psychology.

This session will include CART (realtime captioning) and ASL interpretation. If you require additional accommodations in order to participate in the webinar, please contact Nate Weisenberg (nweisenberg@aaas.org).

Kathleen Bogart, Oregon State University
KJ Conner, Alliant International University
Kelley Haynes-Mendez, American Psychological Association
Emily M. Lund, University of Alabama, Ewha Women's University
Meggin van der Hilst, American Psychological Association

Thursday, October 19

12:00-1:00pm

How is the Right to Science Being Applied in Different Contexts?

Speakers at this session will highlight examples of how the right to science is currently being used around the world. These include:

- (1) the Academic Freedom Index, which assesses how well States around the world meet their obligation in practice “to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research” (Article 15, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights);
- (2) how the right to science, if properly understood and unpacked in its many components, can add further weight to the arguments of climate change activists, and why States have an obligation to fight climate change because of the right to science;
- (3) examples of the relationship between the right to science and scientific responsibility;
- (4) the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s work on science, technology, and innovation in Africa and on freedom and safety of scientists.

Andrea Boggio, Bryant University
Katrin Kinzelbach, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg
Ângela Melo, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Cesare P.R. Romano, Loyola Law School
Theresa Harris, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice (Moderator)

Friday, October 20

2:00 p.m.

Students Advancing Science and Human Rights: The Coalition FutureGen Scholars

[SciTech and Human Rights FutureGen Scholars](#) is an annual program of the Science and Human Rights Coalition that supports undergraduate and graduate students carrying out innovative projects at the intersections of science, technology, and human rights. Hear from students who have undertaken projects in fields ranging from DEIA to forensic anthropology to geospatial technology to oral history and environmental justice.

Julia Bauer, Davidson College (2022-23)

Hana Kamran, Davidson College (2022-23)

Sierra Laveroni, Virginia Commonwealth University (2023-24)

Margaret Sanders, Georgia Tech (2021-22)

Hamza Woodson, Williams College (2021-22)

Nate Weisenberg, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice
(Moderator)

3:00-4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meetup for Students/Early Career Individuals

All students and early career individuals attending the conference: please join us after the FutureGen Scholars' presentations and meet others passionate about science and human rights.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23 (in-person; livestream available 9:00 a.m-12:30 p.m.).

The Monday plenary sessions (9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) will include CART (realtime captioning) for both in person and remote attendees. If you require additional accommodations in order to participate, please contact Nate Weisenberg (nweisenberg@aaas.org).

8:30 a.m. **Registration and Breakfast**

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome and Setting the Stage (in-person and livestreamed)**

Theresa Harris, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice

Theresa Harris, director of the AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice, will welcome attendees and frame the goals of the conference.

9:30 – 10:45 **The East Marshall Street Well Project: Community Driven Research to Restore Identity and Dignity (in-person and livestreamed)**

Content warning: This session describes how medical researchers treated human remains – primarily of African Americans – in an unethical, egregious, and disrespectful fashion, denying these individuals the dignity everyone deserves after death. No pictures of identifiable individual remains will be shown, but attendees/viewers may find the content disturbing. Descendants and community members are actively engaged in the ongoing research project.

During construction of a new building on the Virginia Commonwealth University medical campus in 1994, a brick-lined well, or anatomical sink, was discovered containing human remains. Archival research indicates that these individuals most likely were grave-robbled from local cemeteries of enslaved Africans and poor people between 1840 and 1860, used at the medical school for anatomical dissection and amputation practice, and subsequently discarded in the well. Analyses determined that there were a minimum of 54 individuals, including nine children under the age of 16 years, primarily of African ancestry, in the well. As awareness in the community grew, the Family Representative Council (FRC) was established in 2015 to stand in for the descendant community and set research, memorialization, and interment goals for the Ancestral remains. After some seven years of ongoing community consultations, the remains are undergoing DNA analysis to re-associate the bones into individuals and to establish their ancestry, phenotype, and relationship to people living in the community today. The session will

explore the ethical treatment of human remains, the agency of the community in determining the fate of the Ancestral remains and the community's oversight of the research and involvement of scientists. The session will also present the results of the research thus far and the continuing goals of the project.

Kevin Allison, Virginia Commonwealth University

Joseph L. Jones, College of William & Mary and Family Representative Council

Sierra Laveroni, Virginia Commonwealth University/Coalition Future Gen Scholar

Filipa Simao, Virginia Commonwealth University

Baneshwar Singh, Virginia Commonwealth University

Stephanie Smith, Family Representative Council

10:45 – 11:15

Break

11:15 – 12:30 p.m.

The Right to Science 101 (in-person and livestreamed)

We come to this meeting with various levels of familiarity with the right of everyone to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (or the human right to science). The right is outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and most recently, a United Nations General Comment, but tends to be not well-known or understood. This session will be a refresher (or an introduction) to the right to science, why it matters, and how the Coalition and the scientific community can work to advance it.

Tee Guidotti, Independent Consultant/Sigma Xi

Theresa Harris, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice

Natallia Sianko, Clemson University

Rebecca Everly (Discussant), National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine Committee on Human Rights

Nate Weisenberg, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice (Moderator)

All subsequent conference events will be for in-person attendees only.

12:30 – 1:30

Lunch

1:30 – 2:45

Concurrent Sessions

Breaking Down General Comment No. 25

In 2020, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights published [General Comment No. 25](#) on the right to science. While not a perfect document, the General Comment is a capstone in decades of effort – in which the Science and Human Rights Coalition played a significant role – to better articulate what the right to science means and how we can build a world where everyone can enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications.

What are the core obligations outlined by the General Comment, and what comes next? This session will explore these key components of the right to science and lay the groundwork for how the Coalition can take them forward in its work.

John Dale, George Mason University

Mike Frick, Treatment Action Group

Theresa Harris, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice

Lessons Learned from the East Marshall Street Well Project

The East Marshall Street Well Project began as a community consultation forum throughout the summer of 2015, when individuals met in facilitated discussions about the historical significance and fate of the human remains discovered in 1994 during construction of a building on the medical school campus of Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). The Family Representative Council (FRC) was formed to take on the role of the descendant community and, in 2018, presented [final recommendations](#) to the EMSW Project Planning Committee and the Richmond community. These recommendations included memorialization and internment as well as research. Some of the research goals included: DNA and microbial analysis of the Ancestral Remains for the specific purposes of: (1) reconstructing regional genetic ancestry; (2) assessing molecular sex of juveniles; (3) reconstructing health environments; and (4) identifying possible biological relationships with a targeted sample of living descendants. The Ancestral Remains were brought home to Richmond from the Smithsonian Institution in 2019 and received with ceremony. In order to address the research goals, the Ancestors were transferred to the VCU Department of Forensic Science in December of 2021, where attempts to reconstruct individuals from the commingled remains, ascertain genetic ancestry and phenotype, and connect the individuals to the living community are underway.

This workshop will explore the educational, emotional, and spiritual challenges experienced by all East Marshall Street Well Project participants when undertaking the process of this research.

Stephen Davenport, Virginia Commonwealth University

Joseph L. Jones, College of William & Mary and
Family Representative Council

Stephanie Smith, Family Representative Council

2:45 – 3:15

Break

3:15 – 4:45

Taking Action to Advance the Right to Science: Forming New Coalition Working Groups

How will we make the right to science real? Attendees will split into five working groups and begin discussing the actions they could take. The planned groups (subject to change) are:

1. Rapid Response (human rights of scientists)
2. STEMM Culture (diversity/equity/inclusion/accessibility; ethics; actions to promote human rights within STEMM societies and the workplace)
3. Education (developing a community, clearinghouse, tools for connecting STEMM education with human rights education)
4. Advocacy (e.g., action/submissions at the UN)
5. Community Collaborations (bringing together scientific, human rights, and community expertise for mutual benefit)

Each group discussion will be led by a facilitator. By the end of this session, each group will have sketched out some initial thoughts that they will expand upon on Tuesday.

4:45 – 5:00

Reconvene/Wrap-up

5:00 – 6:00

Reception

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Offsite dinners for in-person attendees (optional)

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 (in-person only)

8:30 a.m. **Breakfast**

9:15 – 9:30 **Day 2 Welcome**

Theresa Harris, AAAS Center for Scientific Responsibility and Justice

9:30 – 10:45 **Working Groups Meet**

The newly formed working groups will meet again to build on the discussions from the previous day. By the end of this session, each group should have a roadmap of agreed-upon actions.

10:45 – 11:15 **Break**

11:15 – 11:30 **Wrap-up and Concluding Remarks**

Representatives of each working group will share their planned actions.

11:30 – 1:00 p.m. **Coalition Council Lunch and Meeting (Coalition Council members only)**

1:00 **Adjourn**

Thank you for attending this year's conference!