

Academic Engagement in Public and Political Discourse

Friday January 24, Michigan League, Room D (3rd floor), 12:00-1:30pm

What do we mean by public and political engagement? In this first of 3 brownbag lunches for winter 2014, we will discuss the various forms of engagement that our faculty conduct; what are considered “appropriate” forms of engagement; where are the lines between being a content provider and being a political advocate; and how these fit with the types of scholarly engagement advocated by others (such as Roger Pielke Jr.’s *Honest Broker*, or Donald Stoke’s *Pasteur’s Quadrant*).

Tuesday February 18, Johnson Rooms, North Campus, 12:00-1:30pm

How does one pursue an academic career that includes public and political engagement? In this second of 3 brownbag lunches, we explore the risks and opportunities (both internal and external)? How do they differ by stage of career or discipline? What are the challenges of engagement, including personal, career, and political ones, and what are the options for meeting them? How can one navigate the multiple roles that are part of the engagement process?

Wednesday March 26, Michigan League, Michigan Room (2nd floor), 12:00-1:30pm

What should be the role of academics in public and political discourse? In the third of 3 brownbag lunches, we will ask normative questions about the rules of academia, the needs of society, what to do if they do not mesh and how can we promote more successful engagement in public discourse? In an increasingly complex and scientifically challenging world, how should we engage the public and political process? What are the rules of tenure, formal and informal, and how should they change and how should they stay the same? How should young scholars manage their careers in ways that may differ from those of their more senior colleagues?

**Donald Stokes (1997) *Pasteur’s Quadrant: Basic Science and Technological Innovation*
(Brookings Institution Press)**

		Considerations for Use?	
		No	Yes
Quest for Fundamental Understanding?	Yes	Pure basic research (Bohr)	Use-inspired basic research (Pasteur)
	No	Taxonomy	Pure applied research (Edison)

**Roger Pielke Jr. (2007) *The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics*
(Cambridge University Press)**

Roger Pielke, Jr. describes four archetypal roles for the academic scholar to play in political debates. This four-part classification is accepted by some, contested by others and clearly worthy of spirited discussion, the starting point for which could be to ask whether this taxonomy is accurate.

The Pure Scientist

- “Focuses on research with absolutely no consideration for its use or utility, and thus in its purest form, has no direct connection with decision makers.”
- “Examples of the Pure Scientist can be found more frequently in myth rather than practice...research results have implications for broader society...even Einstein became active in politics.”

The Issue Advocate

- “Focuses on the implications of research for a particular political agenda...*seeks to reduce the scope of available choice*”
- “Aligns him/herself with a group (or faction) seeking its interests through policy and politics.”
- “Accepts notion that science must be engaged with decision makers and seeks to participate in the decision-making process.”
- “Scientists who take a stand on particular issues, such as a presidential election, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, or the Kyoto Protocol.”

The Science Arbiter

- “Seeks to stay removed from explicit considerations of policy and politics, but recognizes that decision-makers may have specific questions that require the judgment of experts, so has direct interactions with policy-makers.”
- “a focus on positive questions that can, in principle, be resolved through scientific inquiry...avoids normative questions, and thus seeks to remain above the political fray.”
- “take the role of a formal, authoritative committee, such as committees under the National Research Council or a federal agency.”

The Honest Broker

- “Engages in decision-making by ...seeking to explicitly integrate scientific knowledge with stakeholder concerns in the form of alternative possible courses of action.”
- “*seeks to expand the scope of available choice*...seeks to place scientific understandings in the context of the smorgasbord of policy options.”
- “Takes the form of formal authoritative committee, such as the Office of Technology Assessment (terminated in the 1990s).”