

# The Communicating Science Workshop 2013 Executive Summary



## ComSciCon'13

Fifty graduate students in all fields of science and engineering gathered in Cambridge, MA on June 13–15th, 2013 for the Communicating Science workshop (ComSciCon). This first-of-its-kind event, fully organized and operated by a team of nine graduate students, empowered young scientists to act as ambassadors for their fields by learning from experts, workshoping original writing pieces, and interacting with their peers. The attendees were selected from more than 730 applicants based on their achievement and enthusiasm for communicating science to diverse audiences.



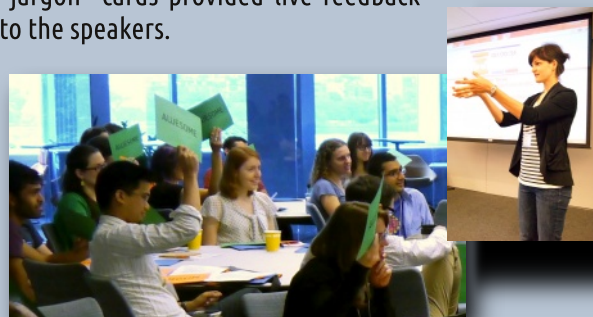
## Expert panels

Twenty-one expert science communicators from theatre, journalism, publishing, and more discussed their work and answered questions from attendees during seven panel sessions. Amanda Martinez, a writer for The Atlantic and others, advised attendees that her favorite writing "accorded me the basic human dignity of allowing me to draw my own conclusions."



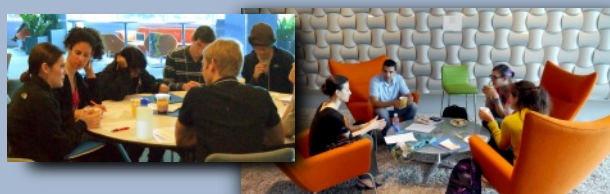
## Pop talks

Truly a highlight of the workshop, every ComSciCon session opened with 1 minute "pop talks" from attendees about their research. Attendees wielding "awesome" and "jargon" cards provided live feedback to the speakers.



## Write-a-thon

On Thursday night attendees wrote two-page articles using the ideas from the day's sessions. On Friday, small groups of students dished out comments and then met with experts for deep reads and thoughtful feedback.



## Poster session

ComSciCon attendees shared the many unique communication and outreach initiatives they are leading at locations around the country using video and web content on digital poster boards.

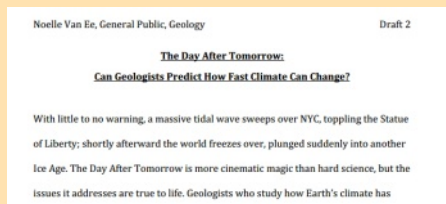


As we issue this report, the list of accomplishments by our attending students is already long. With the connections now established between these fifty young leaders in science communication, and new collaborations already formed, this list will continue to grow in the coming months.



## Writing

All fifty attendees created a new, original piece of science writing during the workshop and performed two rounds of revision based on peer and expert feedback. Their pieces ranged from profiles of comet hunters to retrospectives on the public reaction to climate change research to op-eds about state investment in higher education.

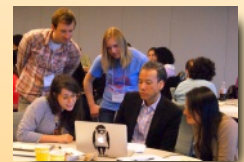


## Publishing

Many students sought publication for their writing in one of several outlets which have committed to accepting submissions from ComSciCon attendees. Eleven student pieces have been published to date by our partner outlets:



**Professor Rob Lue (Harvard):**  
*"Anything that weaves science a little more closely into the fabric of the world is worthwhile."*



**Attendee Flip Tanedo (Cornell):**  
*"The workshop was really fantastic in ways that I didn't even expect...a unique and rare gem of an event..."*

## GeoSciBites

Saturday's technical session featured a tutorial for starting new Astrobites spin-offs. Within an hour, ComSciCon attendees had founded the first spin-off site to be born from the workshop: GeoSciBites, focusing on undergraduates in the geological sciences. Other attendees are launching -bites sites for particle physics, ocean ecology, and STEM education.



## Survey

ComSciCon organizer Susanna Kohler is performing a 6-month study of science communication activities and perceptions among graduate students using responses from ComSciCon attendees. Her study has been approved by an Institutional Review Board and will form part of her Ph.D. thesis.



Thank you!



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Office of the  
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