

Connecting

I have some homework for you, but first let me tell you about how we spent the last three days. As many of you know, in addition to being editor-in-chief of *ACS Nano*, I am also director of the California NanoSystems Institute (CNSI) at UCLA. For the last three days, we hosted a workshop on communicating science¹ run by the Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook University² and Alan Alda,³ in partnership with friends at the Annenberg School of Communications at USC, notably including science journalists K. C. Cole and Judy Muller. A number of aspects of the workshop will be available online (thanks to the generous support of the Camille & Henry Dreyfus Foundation).



Dan Geschwind (left) and Alan Alda (right) at the Kavli-CNSI Workshop in Communicating Science, held at the California NanoSystems Institute at UCLA.

The workshop focused on helping individual scientists become more effective at connecting at a human level with multiple audiences across multiple platforms, on why this is important, and on building a community of interested scientists and institutions. It included improvisational training as a way to connect and as a means to come up with alternate ways to communicate (it is amazing what one can get across without words or even sounds). There were also writing and interview exercises. Participants ranged from students to faculty to communications officers and others. Authors K. C. Cole and Greg Critser spent an evening discussing their experiences in writing and blogging about science. Filmmaker Valerie Weiss screened her new film *Losing Control* and had a panel discussion in which the actors and science advisors shared their takes on how their lives, passions, work, and setbacks were remarkably similar. In this issue, you will find a Conversation with Alan Alda on the motivations for holding these workshops and his take on scientists engaging the public.³

Now, for your homework. Select someone to whom you are close, who is not a scientist and who does not really know what you do; it could be a member of your family, a friend, or anyone you choose. In two minutes or less, explain to them why you are a scientist and why you are excited about what you do. From there, see what happens. I look forward to hearing the results. You can send them to me at my new editor's email address: editor@nano.ucla.edu.

Paul S. Weiss
Editor-in-Chief

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. *Kavli-CNSI Workshop in Communicating Science*, July 13–15, 2011, California NanoSystems Institute, UCLA.
2. Center for Communicating Science, School of Journalism, Stony Brook University, www.centerforcommunicatingscience.org.
3. Weiss, P. S. A Conversation with Alan Alda: Communicating Science. *ACS Nano*, **2011**, DOI: 10.1021/nn202925m.

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