

Research Communications Council Minutes  
May 12, 2017

**College of ACES Communicators and the #askACES Twitter Series**

May's featured guests were Jennifer Shike, ACES Director of Communications and Marketing, and Stephanie Henry, ACES Media Communications Specialist who covers Human Development and Family studies, Food Science & Human Nutrition, and the Division of Nutritional Sciences. Jennifer and Stephanie discussed #askACES, a monthly Twitter chat featuring ACES researchers talking about relevant topics such as nutrition labeling or the science behind relationships.

Some of the things discussed included:

- #askACES started with a problem and a question:
  - Misconceptions about research were being shared on social media
  - Few people were talking about real science
  - University researchers weren't joining the conversation
  - People weren't sure who to believe
  - With limited financial support, the question became, "How can you make an impact with limited support?"
- Goals of #askACES Twitter chats:
  - Connect ACES researchers to media members
  - Provide opportunities for researchers to have conversations with the public
  - Provide accuracy and clarity concerning the science
  - Distill complex research into easily accessible content
  - Feature current topics on social media and in the news that connect to research taking place in ACES, and show the breadth of research throughout ACES
- Challenges of hosting a Twitter chat:
  - Condensing complex research into 140 characters can be difficult
  - Multiple answers may be needed to respond to one complicated question
  - Helping researchers who are unfamiliar with social media feel comfortable
- Things learned through previous Twitter chats:
  - Develop a media plan to promote the event and disseminate the post-chat deliverables
  - Work with researchers to prepare approximately 10 questions/answers, promotion resources, social media graphics, etc.
  - In no one asks questions, wait...don't panic
  - Just say no to some questions, particularly if they'll lead to conversations outside the focus of the chat
  - Consider saving some of the complex questions for the follow-up podcast
  - Don't worry about not getting through every question
  - Great way to build relationships with researchers that may result in content/story ideas down the road

- People may be afraid to ask questions, so it's a good idea to get the conversation going with preplanned questions
  - To help the conversation, it's important not to allow too much time between questions and answers
  - Important to have a team helping you (someone to manage the tweets, someone to help the researcher translate answers into tweets, etc.)
  - [TweetChat's](#) free version may be a valuable tool to help manage the twitter conversation
  - Try to plan a year's worth of chats, and begin scheduling with researchers about six months in advance
- Things aren't finished when the chat is over:
    - Podcasts hosted through SoundCloud and the iTunes store
    - News release
    - Facebook posts with links to podcast
    - Twitter follow-ups
    - Speaker survey
- Benefits of #askACES so far:
    - Brand development
    - #askACES is the most popular content on Twitter for the group
    - 53% increase of followers on Twitter since starting December 2015
    - Podcasts have averaged more than 650 downloads
    - Lots of positive feedback from faculty
    - Relationship and trust building with researchers
    - Source of education and awareness with community members
    - A library of content to repurpose
    - Awareness of fresh topics that our constituents care about

### Updates from the OVCR

- No RCC meetings will take place during the summer. Meetings will resume on Friday, August 11.
- The OVCR's New Research Communications Coordinator, [Tyler Wolpert](#), started on Thursday, April 20. Please send him any communications requests or issues that were previously sent to Andy Blacker.
- CCOs should have received an email containing information about the new Illinois logo and informational sessions on Wednesday, May 17, and Thursday, May 18.
- Crowdsourcing for research projects with VCIA meetings scheduled. Melissa will update the group.
- The NCSA's Blue Waters project released its [economic impact study](#) on Wednesday, May 10. The study found that the project has provided a \$1.08 billion return to the Illinois' economy. Share this story as you are able.
- Searches are ongoing for leadership roles within the OVCR.

- RCC topic ideas are always welcome, so please share any question, topic, or issue you'd like to discuss at future meetings.
- NPR has an [excellent resource](#) for content creators that features advice and best practices for audio, visual, digital, and social storytelling.

## **Updates from the Group**

### **Beckman Institute**

- Jeffrey Moore, the Murchison-Mallory Professor of Chemistry, a professor of materials science and engineering, and a long-time Beckman faculty member, has [been named director](#) of the Beckman Institute.

### **Extension**

- The 2017 [Illinois 4-H State Robotics Competition](#) featuring nearly 500 youths and 75 teams was a success. Visit the competition's webpage for event photos and to see list of winners.

### **IGB**

- [Explore the World of Genomics at The Field Museum](#) in Chicago during a special two-day event presented by the IGB. The exhibit is free with Basic admission on Friday, May 19, and Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The World of Genomics will also be on display during the Members' Nights celebration the evening of May 18 and May 19.

### **News Bureau**

- A media interview is a great opportunity to deliver your story. The News Bureau media relations experts can teach you the [essentials to achieving good press](#). Schedule media training with [Liz Touchstone](#).

### **OCR**

- OCR will be moving in their new office in 528 E Green St. (Chipotle Building) during the first week of July.

### **Technology Services**

- The Technology Services Amazon Web Services (AWS) team is positioned to assist you with the [AWS Cloud Credits for Research Program](#). Through this program, Amazon directly awards researchers credits for the use of AWS to enhance cloud-based research.