

UMass Science Policy & Advocacy (SciPol)

Strategic Plan

2019-2024

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MISSION STATEMENT

The University of Massachusetts Amherst Science Policy & Advocacy Initiative aims to bring awareness, provide guidance, and create opportunities for undergraduate students of all backgrounds and majors interested in the field of science policy and advocacy for evidence-based policy and ethical research through legislation.

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

Science and engineering research are at a crossroads today: we have reached a point where advancements in science and technology outpace society's ability to evaluate and regulate the ethical use and impact of these innovations before they are implemented en masse. Furthermore, involvement in science advocacy for evidence-based policymaking making typically begins at the graduate school level and above. We believe that exposure to and experience in the field of science policy and advocacy starting at the undergraduate level will better prepare individuals to lead these efforts as graduate students or early-career scientists and foster the development of more socially engaged researchers.

Our Core Values:

- 1. Engagement and Dialogue.** We strive to build bridges between all groups and walks of life through the synthesis of science and policy. To do this, we stay engaged with and listen to people who are unlike ourselves in terms of background, identity, and experience, fostering constructive conversation for scientific and social progress.
- 2. Social, Scientific, and Political Ethics.** We hold the truth in the highest regard and strive to balance progress with morality in order to ensure that when we move forward, it is in an ethical direction.
- 3. Integrity.** In the face of difficult decisions, or when no one is watching, we do what is right, not what is most beneficial for ourselves or is most expedient.

Five-Year Goals for UMass SciPol

YEAR 1 *Establish UMass SciPol as a sustainable RSO with a strong general body, funding, organizational infrastructure, and leadership capable of carrying the fledgling organization into the future.*

- Establish the first elected leaders of UMass SciPol.
- Recruit a diverse, passionate general body with representation from all backgrounds, experiences, and majors.
- Provide opportunities for discussion, debate, and engagement in the field of science policy.
- Apply for RSO status and funding for events, travel to conferences, and other relevant expenses.
- Accumulate a dearth of science policy opportunities for members, including lists of resources, conferences, contacts, and internships.
- Establish sustainable organizational infrastructure for documentation, finances, public engagement, and recruitment

YEAR 2 *Expanding our footprint on campus and in the community through outreach*

- Continue to develop the organization's infrastructure and foster communication with the general public, as well as specific parties outside of SciPol at UMass and beyond.
- Build connections with local and regional communities through attending workshops and hosting lectures open to the public.
- Provide the opportunity for as many members as possible to attend conferences related to science policy and engage with external organizations.
- Build connections with UMass faculty and departments.
- Continue to develop our pool of opportunities for members of SciPol.
- Open membership to undergraduates from across the Five Colleges.

YEAR 3 *Forming topical groups targeting specific areas of STEM legislation that are relevant to member interests*

- Develop infrastructure for official subgroups of the general body to work together to propose solutions to specific science policy issues.
- Incorporate into our curriculum the study of arts, literature, and society that represents the full range of human experience.
- Continue to find opportunities for SciPol members to engage in science policy outside of UMass SciPol.

YEAR 4 *Developing methods to inform policymakers on key scientific and societal issues*

- Conducting intensive workshops on policy briefing and legislative writing for students to connect their expertise to policy decisions.
- Offering training to new members through the mentorship experienced peers and faculty members on effective scientific communication, particularly through oral and written mediums, to non-expert and lay audiences.
- Continuing to build our presence at regional and national meetings and workshops by sponsoring select members to attend and represent SciPol and the University.

YEAR 5 *Engaging with policymakers in a meaningful manner by taking action*

- Establish regular attendance and presence at regional and national policy meetings.
- Strengthen networking relationships with peer science policy initiatives around the country and provide support for starting similar organizations at other universities.
- Cultivate relationships with representatives and provide substantive support for specific science policy issues on the docket.
- Continue to build connections with parties within and beyond UMass, with a particular emphasis on establishing UMass SciPol as a high-quality source of science-policy experts to support the development of evidence-based policy at the local, regional, and national levels.

DEADLINE

10.17.24

The financial resources that UMass SciPol aims to procure and develop over the next five years is primarily overseen by the Treasurer and the Co-Directors. Sustainable financial health and stewardship will enable members of our organization to gain access to opportunities such as attending regional and national workshops which are otherwise out of reach for undergraduates. We intend to financially support undergraduates in gaining hands-on experience with scientific communication with policymakers and providing training through networking at such conferences. We also hope to maintain a sufficient financial base to invite guest speakers from outside the University on a regular basis and support our own workshops and outreach events. Our funds will be sourced from allocations from the Student Government Association, organization fundraising campaigns, and external or internal grants.

Our Annual Fundraising Strategy

• SGA funding allocations	\$9,000
• UMass departmental contributions	\$1,000
• Internal and external grant applications	\$1,000
• Public online fundraising campaigns	\$1,000

Our Annual Estimated Expenses

1. Conference registration fees	\$1,000
2. Travel expensed for conferences and events	\$7,000
3. Materials for workshops, outreach events, and lectures	\$1,000
4. Food for meetings and other events	\$500
5. Lodging/travel expenses for guest speakers	\$2,500

EXPENSES:

12,000.00

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

UMass SciPol will elect a Communications Chair annually as part of the leadership team. The Communications Chair will be responsible for maintaining the currently active SciPol website, updating it with blog posts detailing meetings and events of SciPol for the general public. In addition, the Communications Chair will be responsible for keeping social media platforms as a method of public engagement and student recruitment. They will also foster relationships with academic departments for the purpose of boosting our public relations and student recruitment efforts to reach beyond what UMass SciPol is capable of alone. The Communications Chair will also be able to appoint ad hoc positions for the specific purpose of recruiting new members, through making our presence known at university events and elsewhere, ensuring that the total number of active undergraduate members never falls below 10 individuals. The Communications Chair will also work with the Co-Directors to foster relationships with external organizations, communities, public figures, legislative representatives, and other science policy organizations.