



Dear Colleague,

We are delighted to announce a new NSF-supported program to UW-Madison, "Portal to the Public." This program helps researchers and STEM professionals share science with the public to promote appreciation and understanding of current science research. Portal to the Public focuses on enhancing face-to-face interactions between you and a few people rather than emphasizing mass communications.



The Portal approach has been designed and refined through NSF and IMLS funding to the Pacific Science Center (PSC). The original principal investigator Dennis Schatz is a UW-Madison alum in astronomy and a member of the Wisconsin Union Directorate as a student. That combination presaged no small part of Dennis' career: he was for many years Vice President for Education at PSC in Seattle, Washington. He is still on staff at PSC even as he serves as an NSF program officer. When Dennis proposed Portal in 2007, he envisioned it as a way for researchers at universities to connect to the resources of science museums & science centers as places to engage the public. Many of us here at UW-Madison share Dennis' combination of a passion for science as exploring the unknown and a commitment to sharing science with learners of all ages.

You can find out more about Portal to the Public on their [website](#).

Early in September UW-Madison became a member of the Portal to the Public network. The UW Portal team includes Tom Zinnen, [Biotech Center](#); Megan Madsen, [WIPAC](#); Sara Kobilka, [Institute for Chemical Education](#); Kevin Niemi, [WISCIENCE](#); Travis Tangen, [WARF](#); and Dolly Ledin, [WISCIENCE](#).

We are delighted to note that UW-Madison is a pioneer in Portal to the Public: the other 35 institutions have all been science museums, science centers, zoos, arboretums, and nature centers, some within universities. We look forward to the opportunity to find ways to adapt the Portal approach of connecting researchers to public audiences to the particular environment of public land-grant research universities. Portal can enhance the already remarkable resources that strengthen the commitment to the Wisconsin Idea and to work in the public service mission of UW-Madison.

Portal to the Public at UW-Madison will be implemented through [Science Alliance](#) and will be called the Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellows Program. Researchers and STEM professionals of any age and at any career stage will be encouraged to participate.

Fellows training will build on their prior experience and extend their talents. By providing structured, short-term training and long-term connections, the Wisconsin Idea STEM fellows program uniquely expands the array of training already available on campus, such as the CIRTL course for graduate students and post-docs, the WISCIENCE course for undergraduates, and volunteer training sessions provided, for example, by the Arboretum and Town Center.

Training involves a total of 10 hours over three sessions. The first session will be repeated three different times to accommodate the schedules of a wide range of researchers.

THE WISCONSIN IDEA STEM FELLOWS
PORTAL TO THE PUBLIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Those dates and times are:

- Session 1: Monday, October 27 from 9:30 to 11:00 am; rm 3280 (3rd Floor teaching lab, Discovery Building)
- Session 1: Tuesday, November 18 from 7:00 to 8:30 pm rm 4280 (4th Floor teaching lab, Discovery Building)
- Session 1: Wednesday, December 10 from 3:30 to 5:00 pm; rm 3280 (3rd Floor teaching lab, Discovery Building)
- Session 2: Wednesday, January 7 from 10 am to 2pm; (location, to be announced)
- Session 3: Wednesday, January 14 from 10 am to 2pm; (location, to be announced)

Following the training, fellows will commit to three public programming events. Fellows will engage the public through Exploration Stations or public presentations at events such as UW Science Expeditions, Wisconsin Science Festival, Engineering Expo, Science Cafe, Nerd Nite and more. Through their training, fellows will develop their stations and presentations with the help of the training team.

We ask your help in spreading the news about the opportunities that Portal offers researchers and STEM professionals at UW-Madison. Please nominate colleagues or associates whom you think would benefit from and contribute to the Portal training and program by replying to this email. As this is the first training, there are a limited number of spaces but additional trainings will be held in the future.

We would be delighted to respond to any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

- Sara Koblika, Institute for Chemical Education;
- Dolly Ledin, WISCIENCE;
- Megan Madsen, Wisconsin IceCube Particle Astrophysics Center (WIPAC);
- Kevin Niemi, WISCIENCE;
- Travis Tangen, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF);
- Tom Zinnen, Biotech Center

