

Science n.0

Author: Stafford, Susan G.

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A Forum for Integrating the Life Sciences
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Science *n.0*

The new millennium ushered in Web 2.0: a game changer. Virtual sharing, connecting, communicating, and collaborating change the way we connect as people in a global community and are profoundly changing the way we practice our science. The field and its professionals are evolving: embracing collaborative and social opportunities; diving into increasingly accessible volumes of data; adopting new technological tools that increase efficiency and make data more visual and revealing; building relationships no longer separated by geographic or political boundaries; engaging citizens across the nation and the world to contribute in the collection and analysis of information, in policy, and in collective action. Far past Science 2.0, we are evolving quickly toward the science of tomorrow and of future tomorrows—one of unforeseen possibilities—Science *n.0*.

Although technology is advancing us toward a future of great possibility, our nation struggles with bridging an ever-widening chasm between political ideologies, and science finds itself curiously caught in the middle. The irony is that with ubiquitous communication and technology that enables unsurpassed levels of connectedness, our political leaders have great difficulty finding common ground. Economic policy debates and aggressive political battles fought today will determine the course for our nation and our science for many years—if not decades—to come. Arbitrary cuts to federal research programs will slow innovation, hinder economic growth, and limit the creation of skilled jobs in the future. New economic opportunities are born from investments in science and research.

Not surprisingly, various constituencies are working in our nation's capital to ensure that lawmakers understand the impact of their decisions on different trades and professions. I am pleased to say that AIBS is working aggressively to protect and promote the interests of the biological sciences. We must not allow informed decisionmaking to become a lost art.

AIBS is responding to the changing technological, sociological, and political forces that are pushing and pulling at the edges of our field. This year, the organization launched a new strategic plan that redefines the role and mission of AIBS while still hewing to its original purpose. The plan, which launched in October of this year, speaks to many of the changes we have undergone in recent years to strengthen our position as an influencer on behalf of the field, to redefine our success, and to imagine a stronger biology bolstered by a collaborative community.

It is clear that the challenges ahead for biology are not ones that we can address in isolation. My call to action for biology in the coming years is that we, as a body of professionals, think big and be bold about the imperative for a stronger, more adaptable, and more responsive field for tomorrow. We must seize the opportunities offered us by the latest technologies to advance the practice of science as it is emerging (Science *n.0*) while simultaneously thriving in and embracing this emerging scientific landscape with its open, collaborative, and enabling nature.

It has been a great privilege to serve as president of AIBS during this dynamic period.

SUSAN G. STAFFORD
President, AIBS

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