

Future of Science Journalism, Erika Check Hayden, University of California, Santa Cruz

Check Hayden started off by saying that science communication does attract top talent. Young professionals are attracted by the:

- mission
- colleagues
- atmosphere
- opportunity to use science and journalism training
- opportunities to grow skills and networks
- opportunities to advance
- geography
- salary
- stability
- work-life balance

Because the training offered at UCSC is based in the principles of journalism, it leads to many possible career paths.

In the UCSC program, students do real-world work. They do internships at newspapers, news offices, radio stations, and online news outlets. This enables them to build professional networks and portfolios.

Students are motivated and eager. Even though the traditional, early career trajectories (newspapers) and the numbers of jobs has declined dramatically, students are forging new pathways: digital native publications (such as Live Science, which syndicates out news articles), new media roles at old institutions, public media, and institutional communications.

Check Hayden said she sees shifts in mid-career science writers; more of them go into institutional communications roles and freelance writing.

Students come from science, engineering, and other research disciplines. These students don't see themselves as leaving "science"; they see science communication as using their scientific background to make an impact. They believe science communications provides a greater good than staying in their science/engineering/research careers. They see a universe of opportunity.

To set the next generation of science communicators up for success, Check Hayden said we need to increase diversity in the field of science communications. We also need to accept that the field and today's opportunities look different to those just now entering the field. Ultimately, the key is to give them the tools and get out of the way.