What I Learned from the Public Engagement Fellowship

Buju Dasgupta
Psychological & Brain Sciences

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Brief Intro

• Implicit bias: how it affects judgments of others, and shapes self-concept in achievement domains (academic achievement, career choices, leadership)

• Lab experiments and field studies on implicit bias to identify causes, consequences, and interventions

• This work demands public engagement. Lots of talks to practitioner-oriented talks over 10+ years. But very ad hoc.

• Missing: well-articulated ‘big picture’ plan about types of public engagement I want to prioritize. How does public engagement feed back into my research?

• Enter PEP fellowship...
What public engagement means to me

Theory Development & Revision → Data Collection, New Findings → Research Dissemination

- My academic discipline
- Other disciplines
- Practitioners
- General public
- Business/industry
- Policy-makers (local, state, federal)

New funding opportunities
Test theory-driven interventions in real world settings
New research opportunities. New collaborations. Access to special samples
Increase awareness of research findings and its relevance to real world contexts
Three lessons from the PEP fellowship
#1: Create and nurture long-term relationships with audiences interested in my research

- Instead of one-off conversations with journalists, business leaders, K-12 and university leaders, I now try to nurture those relationships

- Proactively send new research papers (in digestible form, press releases) to interested audiences

- Example: *PNAS* article published last spring during PEP
  - Press release; distributed via UMass
  - Targeting specific science journalists, STEM faculty and academic leaders
  - Bunch of good press: Boston Globe, PBS News Hour, NPR interviews, online articles, podcasts, 100+ tweets
#2: Learn to speak the language of the intended audience I’m trying to reach

- Requires some training to give effective interviews with journalists; to avoid jargon; and give pithy business presentations and policy briefings

- Two types of media training through PEP. TV interview training by Sharon Reis (PR firm in DC)

- Jared Sharpe, Associate News Editor, Media Relations Office. TV interviews at UMass
#3: Proactively connect with experts at UMass in news and media relations

- John Kennedy, Vice Chancellor of University Relations.
- Jared Sharpe, Associate News Editor, Media Relations Office
- Chris Dunn, in Government Relations within Office of University Relations. Connected PEP fellows to policymakers on Beacon Hill
- Jan Lathrop, science writer in the News Office. Connects faculty research with journalists. Press releases.
- Jeff Aron, Executive Director of Corporate & Foundation Relations. Provided help connecting with businesses interested in STEM education
- Jim Capistran, Director of UMass Innovation Institute. To explore businesses that might use and fund research on STEM education
Consider a PEP fellowship for yourself...

• If you have a clear goal about why you want to connect your research to various publics

• If you have a concrete project that is amenable to public engagement. E.g., *PNAS* article which I used to practice the art of public engagement

• If you can make the time to do the work (it’s an “extra” over and above research, teaching, service)

• If you are willing to be proactive in making new connections with people you don’t know on and off-campus