



EDITORIAL

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: A NEW ERA



▲ Edward W. Lempinen

During the busy days of the 25th TWAS General Meeting, away from the main stage and mostly out of sight, a large room served as a bustling hub for global science communication. In press conferences and interviews, journalists from Oman, China and the U.K. spoke with science leaders from around the world. Their discussions ranged across the spectrum, from new research and science policy to the cultural conditions required for science to thrive.

The energy and hard work among the large contingent of Omani science communicators were particularly inspiring. Newspaper, television and digital journalists all were there, along with media staff from the Ministry of Higher Education. With every interview and every story, they reinforced an overarching impression: Science, engineering and innovation are critical to the future in Oman and the Gulf region. Journalists everywhere could learn much from their interest in science.

But given the complex, interconnected global challenges of the 21st century, more and better science communication will be essential in the developing world, and in the developed world, too. Not just better science journalism, but more effective communication by researchers and their institutions, and by science policymakers and political leaders.

Without sustained commitment to science communication, policymakers and the public will lack a forum for learning about challenges and possible solutions. Understanding will suffer; consensus on complex challenges will be harder to reach. Progress, inevitably, will slow.

TWAS has long been a leader in communicating science and science policy to the developing world. But we recognize that the landscape is being reshaped by new technology and new strategic thinking, and we're evolving rapidly to keep pace.

We've redesigned the *TWAS Newsletter* to revitalize the content and create a lighter, more

contemporary look. In the future, we'll explore high-priority science issues, and we'll feature the expertise of our Fellows, Young Affiliates and partners.

More than ever before, we see digital communication as the driver of our strategy. In early 2014, we redesigned our website – www.TWAS.org – to make it more powerful and user-friendly. We gave TWAS fellowships, research grants and other career opportunities greater visibility.

At about the same time, we made a stronger commitment to social media. In the past year, our Facebook community has more than tripled to over 4,580. Our Twitter followers have more than doubled to approach 1,400.

We helped to produce a documentary on TWAS in 2013, and with the support of the Chinese Academy of Sciences [CAS], we'll soon release a new promotional film on the five ambitious CAS-TWAS Centres of Excellence in Beijing. Further, we expect to publish an electronic bulletin in the months ahead.

The goal is to use all of these media to dramatically expand the audience for news about research, policy issues and opportunities of interest to TWAS's global community.

Technology is always changing, but human nature is fairly constant, and that means that word-of-mouth is still the king of effective communication. So, please, we're relying on you to talk to your colleagues, your students and friends. We want them – and all the world – to know about the good work that TWAS is doing to advance science and prosperity in the developing world.

Edward W. Lempinen, Editor