

SCIENCE & POLICY EXCHANGE
DIALOGUE SCIENCES & POLITIQUES

IN REVIEW

2022-2023

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About Science & Policy Exchange

Who we are

Science & Policy Exchange (SPE) is a Montréal-based non-profit organization led by next generation researchers, primarily graduate students and postdoctoral researchers. We aim to be the leading organization in Québec and Canada in amplifying the voices, and promoting the inclusion of, next generation scientists and researchers as stakeholders in science policy.

What we do

We provide next generation researchers the platform and opportunity to exchange science policy ideas and perspectives, to develop their network and skills, and to explore new solutions to emerging and persisting issues at the interface of science, policy, and society.

We strive to:

1. **Support and build capacity for tomorrow's leaders in science policy.**
2. **Produce and disseminate resources for and from the next generation of scientists and researchers.**
3. **Engage stakeholders and rights holders in science, policy, and society to amplify and promote the inclusion of next generation voices.**

As a next generation researcher-run bilingual organization, SPE is unique in its capacity to bring this demographic's voice to science policy matters at provincial, federal, and international levels.

Partners and Sponsors

We are thankful to work with outstanding stakeholders in the Canadian science policy space. In particular, we are grateful to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO for funding throughout 2023.

We are also grateful to volunteers from across Canada who contributed to, and led, the *Support our Science* campaign this year. In addition, we were pleased to collaborate with the Ottawa Science Policy Network, the Toronto Science Policy Network, and the Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars. Finally, we are grateful for invitations for SPE representatives to present at the Acfas annual conference, and would also like to thank the Institute for Science, Society and Policy for the opportunity to provide feedback on their initiatives.



Co-Presidents' Message

As this year comes to an end, it is with great pleasure that we look back on what has been accomplished by our amazing volunteers.

This year, SPE volunteers disseminated knowledge, contributed to the public debate on several important issues, and collaborated with other organizations to fight for better living conditions for the next generation of researchers. They used various media to make their voices heard in the science policy field and beyond, including (but not limited to) writing blog posts and memos, producing a podcast, contributing to parliamentary works, attending protests, organizing events, engaging experts in discussions, and participating in committees and panels.

Our organization is entirely volunteer-run, which can be a challenge, as we all have limited time outside our work and/or school commitments. Fortunately, our experience has been that SPE volunteers are passionate and curious about Canadian science policy. These volunteers are undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral researchers, and other early-career professionals who commit a significant amount of their time and energy contributing to SPE's mission and learning about science policy. They come from different backgrounds, provinces, and even countries. Their research fields are diverse, ranging across the natural, health, and social sciences, as well as other fields. Some strive for a career in science policy, while others will continue in a research career equipped with a better capacity to transfer their knowledge to policymakers and the general public.

This diversity of experiences, the enthusiasm of our volunteers, and their commitment to our mission are key features that make SPE unique. We dedicate this report to them and hope that SPE will keep doing what it does best: connecting members of the next generation of scientists and helping them work together to improve both society and the search for knowledge in Canada.

Antoine Zboralski & Gavin Douglas

2022-2023 Co-Presidents



The 2022-2023 Team

Executive Committee

Co-Presidents	Gavin Douglas and Antoine Zboralski
Treasurer	Thuy Nguyen
VP Administration	Nadine Wellington
VP Communications	Theodora Georgakopoulou
VP Editor	Julia Messina-Pacheco
VP External Relations	Jonathan A. Caballero
VP External Relations - Francophonie	My An Nguyen
VP Marketing	Mary Jialu Chen
VP Member Relations	Kaitlyn Easson
VP News	Cissy Suen

Lead and General Volunteers

Project Lead - Food Security Café with CCUNESCO	Farzaneh Barak
Project Lead - Panel on barriers facing international researchers	Niharika Dighe
Project Lead - Public Forum on Patient-Oriented Research	Keith Misquitta
Project Lead - EDI panel	Maïa Dakessian
Podcast Lead	Jonathan A. Caballero
SOS Representatives	Antoine Zboralski, Tim Xue
General volunteers	Panuya Athi, Kulpreet Cheema, Anson Ho, Kayona Karunakumar, Zoe Kearney, Noa Kemp, Gloria Lau, Madhura Lotlikar, Adel Malek, Soledad Miranda, Titus Olukitibi, Hannah Shusterhyman, Tarasha Sharma, Brian Tam, Momoko Ueda, Monica Vaillancourt, Jan Xue, Anna Zeleny

Board of Directors

External Directors	Nicole Arbour, Tina Grusso, Rachael Maxwell, Madison Rilling
Internal Directors	Maïa Dakessian, Gavin Douglas, Shawn McGuirk, Thuy Nguyen, Anh-Khoi Trinh, Antoine Zboralski



Events

Building a Sustainable and Inclusive Food System in Canada

An SPE Café | *Un Café DSP*

Building a Sustainable and Inclusive Food System in Canada

Moderated by | *Modérée par:*

March 22, 2023
Le 22 mars 2023
6:00 - 7:30 PM (EST)
18h00 - 19h30 (HNE)
Interpretation in French
Traduction simultanée en français

Sign up here | S'inscrire ici:

Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer
UNESCO Chair on Food Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies; Professor, Wilfrid Laurier University
Chaire UNESCO d'études sur la biodiversité alimentaire et la durabilité; Professeure, Wilfrid Laurier University

Dr. Monika Korzun
Postdoctoral fellow in sustainable agriculture, Dalhousie University
Chercheuse postdoctorale en agriculture durable, Université Dalhousie

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unesco
Canadian Commission
Commission canadienne

Advertisement for the event.

This SPE café occurred in March 2023 with the support of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. It focused on the policies relevant to solving food insecurity in Canada. Dr. Alison Blay-Palmer provided her expertise on this topic, in conversation with the moderator Dr. Monika Korzun. Live interpretation was provided during the event. After an initial discussion, all attendees were invited to join Zoom breakout rooms for a discussion of these questions:

1. What is a sustainable food system?
2. What is the link between the food system and food security?
3. Why do policies need to include community voices?
4. What are some examples of successful community practices?
5. What are the gaps in building a just and inclusive food system in Canada?

A summary report of the discussions will soon be available on the SPE website. You can also watch the discussion period between Dr. Blay-Palmer and Dr. Korzun [here](#).

This event was made possible thanks to the participation of several SPE volunteers, including Maïa Dakessian, Gavin Douglas, Christine Ha, Kayona Karunakumar, Soledad Miranda, Keith Misquitta, Cissy Suen, Jan Xue, and Antoine Zboralski.

Empowering Patient Voices: Policy Change for More Inclusive Health Care Research



An SPE Public Forum | *Un public forum DSP*

Empowering Patient Voices: Policy Change for More Inclusive Health Care Research

Moderated by | *Modérée par:*

					
Dr. Heather Shearer, DC Senior Research Associate, Cerebral Palsy Resource Chargé de recherche principal, Cerebral Palsy Resource	Annie-Danielle Grenier Advocate and patient partner Sensibilisation et partenariat patient	Claudio Del Grande Research Officer, CRCHUM Agent de recherche, CRCHUM	Marcel Saulnier Health Policy Associate, Santia Health Associé en politique de la santé, Santia Health	Dr. Keith Misquitta Research Administration Coordinator, Ontario Brain Institute Coordinateur de l'administration de la recherche, Ontario Brain Institute	My An Nguyen Complaints Delegate, CIUSSS Déléguée aux plaintes, CIUSSS

June 21, 2023 | Le 21 juin 2023
5:30 - 7:00 PM (EST) | 17h30 - 19h00 (HNE)
Interpretation in French and English | *Traduction simultanée en français et en anglais*

Advertisement for the event.

This SPE public forum took place in June 2023. It aimed to foster discussion on how to better include patient voices in health care research. This event gathered francophone and anglophone stakeholders with differing perspectives, including representatives of the patient partner, researcher, and health policy perspectives. Two SPE volunteers working in the health field, Dr. Keith Misquitta and My An Nguyen, moderated this event. Live interpretation was provided during the event. The following questions were discussed:

1. What are the benefits of engaging patients in the entire lifecycle of research?
2. What are the barriers to patient engagement?
3. What practices can enhance the collaboration between researchers and patients?
4. How does the government prioritize health policy issues? Where do you think patient engagement currently ranks among health policy priorities in Canada?

A summary report is available [here](#) (and [here](#) in French). The recording of the event is also available on our YouTube channel [here](#).

This event was made possible thanks to the participation of several SPE volunteers, including Maïa Dakessian, Adel Malek, Keith Misquitta, My An Nguyen, Titus Olukitibi, Hannah Shusterhyman, and Antoine Zboralski.




EDI in Action: Inspiring Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) across the Canadian science policy landscape

EDI in Action: Inspiring Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) across the Canadian science policy landscape

Moderated by:

October 12, 2023
5:30 - 7:00 PM (EST)


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unesco
Canadian Commission

Shweta Ganapati
Senior Policy Advisor,
Natural Sciences and
Engineering Research
Council of Canada

Chelsie Johnson
Health Emergency
Management Specialist,
York Region

Dr. Taylor Morriseau
DLSPH Indigenous
Postdoctoral Fellow,
University of Toronto and
Social Secretariat of Manitoba

Arthi Ramachandran
Polar Science Advisor,
Arctic Basecamp

My An Nyugen
VP External - Francophonie,
Science & Policy Exchange

Advertisement for the event.

This panel was held in October 2023 to discuss the journeys of black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) working in the science policy field with a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). It was supported by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The event centered around the following questions:

1. What is it like for you to work in the science policy field?
2. How do you navigate the science policy space as a BIPOC person and as a woman?
3. What challenges have you had to face in your positions?

A report will be made available shortly on our website. The recording of this panel is available [here](#) on our YouTube channel.

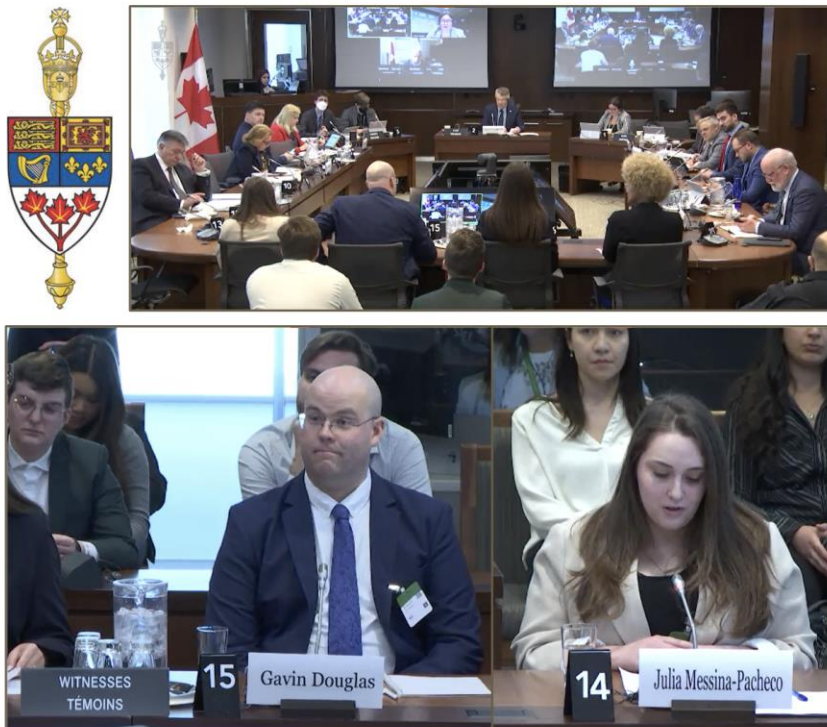
This event was made possible thanks to the participation of several SPE volunteers, including Maïa Dakessian, My An Nguyen, and Anna Zeleny.



Consultation with House of Commons Standing Committee

SPE was invited to appear as witnesses before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research in May 2023. This was in regards to its “Study of the Government of Canada’s Graduate Scholarship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programs” ([link](#)). Our (non-partisan) statements were strongly in support of the Support Our Science campaign’s goals. You can find our [written brief for the Committee here](#), and a [recording of our opening statement here](#).

Evidence for Democracy summarized all witness appearances throughout the Committee’s study, which you can [find here](#). The [Committee’s report](#) was presented to the House of Commons on December 12th, 2023.



SPE Co-President Gavin Douglas and Vice President Julia Messina-Pacheco presenting their opening statement to the Committee.



Written Pieces and our Podcast

Recognizing the Forgotten Workers: Redefining Graduate and Postdoctoral Training

Three volunteers contributed an online editorial to the Canadian Science Policy Centre ([available here](#)) focused on the valuable work performed by graduate students and postdoctoral researchers throughout their training. The authors (Tim Xue, Julia Messina-Pacheco, and Gavin Douglas) argue in favour of the [Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System](#)'s recommendations to increase research funding in Canada, which are highly related to the Support Our Science campaign's goals.



The screenshot shows the article header for 'Recognizing the Forgotten Workers: Redefining Graduate and Postdoctoral Training'. It includes the title, publication date (June 2023), categories (Editorials, Federal Research Support System), and author information for Tim Xue, Julia Messina-Pacheco, and Gavin M. Douglas. There are also three portrait photos of the authors.

Recognizing the Forgotten Workers: Redefining Graduate and Postdoctoral Training

Published On: June 2023
Categories: **Editorials**, **Federal Research Support System**

Author(s):

Tim Xue Science & Policy Exchange Volunteer	Julia Messina-Pacheco Science & Policy Exchange Vice President - Editor	Gavin M. Douglas Science & Policy Exchange Co-President
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Screenshot of the article header from the Canadian Science Policy Centre website (with unrelated links removed for clarity).



Our Podcast: “SPE Talks”

After a brief hiatus, we re-launched our podcast, *SPE Talks* in 2023. The most recent interview was with Paul Dufour, an expert on Canadian science policy and past (and very valued!) SPE Board Member. He spoke to SPE about his [recent editorial](#) on a 1973 Senate Committee report on Canadian science policy, and how it relates to the field today. More recordings are now in the workflow, which you can check out on the podcast listening app of your choice, or [on our website](#). This was possible thanks to the contributions of various SPE members: Jonathan A. Caballero, Maïa Dakessian, Noa Kemp, Gloria Lau, Madhura Lotlikar, and Cissy Suen.

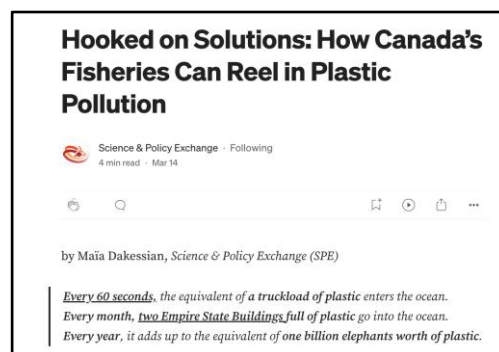


Screenshot of embedded podcast on our website.

Blog posts

SPE members contributed several interesting pieces to our [Medium blog](#) over 2023:

- *Support Our Science: Why Canada Needs to Do More Now* by Yuan Chao (Tim) Xue, Maïa Dakessian, Kaitlyn Easson, Sai Priya Anand, and Bipin Kumar ([English](#), [French](#))
- *Interested in getting into science policy? Keep this expert advice in mind* by Gavin Douglas ([English](#), [French](#))
- *Hooked on Solutions: How Canada’s Fisheries Can Reel in Plastic Pollution* by Maïa Dakessian ([English](#), [French](#))
- *Discussing homelessness in Montreal: during the pandemic and beyond* by Maïa Dakessian ([English](#), [French](#))



Screenshot from our Medium blog.



Collaborations with Other Organizations

Support Our Science

[Support Our Science](#) (SOS) is a campaign that flourished into a new organization aiming to improve federal funding for Canada's next generation of researchers. Their goal is to increase the number and amount of scholarships, fellowships, and research grants awarded by the three granting agencies (SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC). This movement was founded in May 2022 on the initiative of professors and members of the next generation of researchers. It raises public awareness of the next generation's funding issues and lobbies politicians on these issues through petitions, demonstrations, media interviews, appearances before parliamentary committees, and other initiatives.

Science & Policy Exchange became engaged in activities with SOS shortly following its foundation. Our contributions include co-organizing the Montréal demonstrations of August 17th, 2022 and May 1st, 2023 in support of SOS's demands, publishing two texts on the subject (an [editorial](#) for the Canadian Science Policy Center and a [blog post](#)), and participating as witnesses in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research on the [Government of Canada's Graduate Scholarship and Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programs](#). One of our Co-Presidents also represented SPE on SOS's Executive Council from April to July 2023. We are one of SOS's community partners, along with other science policy and next generation of researchers advocacy organizations in Canada.



SPE-supported Support Our Science march in Montréal in early May 2023.



Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars

SPE had a productive collaboration with the [Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars](#), with the common goal of assessing international postdoctoral researchers' experience of applying and obtaining work permits in Canada. Gavin Douglas contributed to the analysis of their 2021-2022 survey data of over 200 international postdoctoral researchers in Canada, in addition to identifying recommendations for policy improvement, and contributing to the written report. This report is in the final stages of completion and we look forward to openly sharing the results and recommendations soon.



Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars
Association Canadienne des Postdoctorantes et Postdoctorants

Gavin Douglas also represented SPE as part of the panel discussion on “Support Postdocs” at the Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars’ Annual General Meeting in November 2023. This was a great opportunity to hear from stakeholders in this space, including several Tri-Agency representatives and postdoctoral researchers from across Canada.

Institute for Science, Society and Policy

We were pleased to continue our collaboration with the University of Ottawa’s [Institute for Science, Society and Policy](#) over 2023. We hold a seat on its Advisory Committee, where Gavin Douglas, Jonathan A. Caballero, and Julia Messina-Pacheco were happy to provide feedback on the Institute’s initiatives and long-term strategy. Its key initiative over the past year was to launch a new Knowledge Mobilization initiative called [Confluences](#). We contributed to a brainstorming session on this initiative, which was recently launched, and we look forward to seeing the first year of science policy pieces published in *Confluences*!



Contributions to Other Initiatives

Acfas' Congress – May 8-12, 2023

We were invited to contribute to two panels in French organized during the annual congress of Acfas, held in Montréal this year. Our Vice President External – Francophonie, My An Nguyen, took part in a [panel discussion](#) organized by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO about the obstacles to multilingualism in science.



The panelists participating in this event. Credit: CC-UNESCO.

One of our External Directors, Tina Grusso, took part in a discussion on highly qualified personnel. This discussion was part of a [colloquium](#) about the report of the [Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System](#) organized by the chair of this advisory panel, Frédéric Bouchard.

11 h 05 à 12 h 25

Panel / Atelier

Le personnel hautement qualifié : comment mieux soutenir la diversité et les trajectoires de carrière?

📍 / 🖥️ Sur place et en ligne

Bâtiment : Université de Montréal - Jean-Brillant **Local :** B-4345
Présidence/Animation : Jane Goncalves (UdeM - Université de Montréal)
Discutant-e- : Jérôme-Olivier Allard (UdeM - Université de Montréal), Isabelle Blanchette (Université Laval), Frédéric Bouchard (UdeM - Université de Montréal), Philippe Després (Université Laval), Tina Grusso (Université McGill), Anne-Marie Thompson (Mitacs)

Résumé de la session

12 h 10 Période de questions

Description of the panel discussion attended by Tina Grusso.



SciPolCanada

SciPolCanada is a Slack workspace for anyone interested in Canadian science policy, which was [officially launched](#) in December 2022. The goal of this space is to encourage discussion, collaborations, and networking among interested parties. It is a tool meant to enhance existing science policy groups, rather than to be an organization in itself. We were pleased to officially adopt the constitution and form the Administrative Committee for SciPolCanada over the 2023 summer, which is represented by SPE (Gavin Douglas), the Ottawa Science Policy Network, and the Toronto Science Policy Network. We look forward to seeing this community grow in the future!

SCIENCE POLICY SERIES

Science Policy Canada (SciPolCanada): A platform for science policy enthusiasts

December 21st, 2022
1:00 PM EST

Presented by:

Moderated by: Bipin Kumar
Program Coordinator,
Canadian Science Policy
Centre

Anh-Thu Dang
VP Admin, Ottawa Science
Policy Network

Kaitlin Kharas
Co-President, Toronto
Science Policy Network

Sarah Laframboise
President, Ottawa Science
Policy Network

Gavin Douglas
Co-President, Science-Policy
Exchange

Sandrine Desforges
Member, Student
Intersectoral Committee of
the Fonds de recherche du
Québec

Madison Rilling
Member, Canada's Chief
Science Advisor's Youth
Council

Co-Organized by:

Advertisement for the launch event.

Tri-Agency Training Strategy External Advisory Committee

In 2023, three SPE members, Tina Grusso, My An Nguyen, and Antoine Zboralski, were part of an external advisory committee on the [Tri-Agency Training Strategy](#), along with 14 other committee members from the Canadian research ecosystem. This committee was formed to improve the new training strategy of the federal granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC, and CIHR). The topics discussed included equity, diversity, and inclusion, evolving career paths, harmonization and streamlining efforts, Indigenous research and training, and international mobility and globalization.



Upcoming Activities for 2024

The new Co-Presidents, Maïa Dakessian and Julia Messina-Pacheco, have several exciting plans for 2024, including a push for more in-person events and initiatives, for both the public and SPE members.

Two initiatives are already being planned for 2024. The first is a public forum on renewable energy technologies and policies in Canada, in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. The second is a series of in-person cafés to discuss which policies could help alleviate sleep issues that Canadians face, which have substantial economic and health impacts.

Our planning phase for 2024 is still ongoing, so now is a great time to form collaborations for future initiatives. If you or your organization have an interesting science policy idea, or simply want to get involved, do not hesitate to connect with our team: we want to hear from you!