

## Communicating Research & Policy: Learning From Experts in Government and University Organizations

The [Monthly Connect](#) is a series of virtual panel discussions on topics relevant to partnerships among state government, colleges/universities and other research institutions, philanthropy, and others. Monthly Connects are open to anyone interested in attending.

### SESSION AT A GLANCE

Panelists from government, universities, and other research institutions shared their experiences and perspectives on communicating research and policy to a broad audience. They described the importance of information sharing, how strong communication can impact better decision-making, and offered recommendations for how to communicate effectively.

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Collaboration is key** - Partnership and coordination strengthens communication.

- It is incumbent on researchers and communicators to work together. Doing so as early as possible in the research process can not only build awareness and interest, but can increase impact.
- Find others inside and outside your organization who are doing similar work or who can benefit from collaborating on communication efforts. Coordinate to amplify and align messages.
- You don't have to be a subject matter expert to do effective research communication. Diverse perspectives can help ensure that messaging will resonate with broad audiences.

**Know your audiences and how to reach them** - Make it as easy as possible for your audiences to understand the research and why it matters.

- Consider how using multiple communication outlets can maximize your reach. It can be most effective to start with local news coverage before pursuing state, national, and international coverage.
- Think expansively about any audiences you may wish to reach and how they can benefit from the research communication.
- Audiences are likely to include, but not be limited to, multiple branches of government, research organizations, and the general public.
- For any audience, research communications is most effective when it is concise and focused on findings that speak to pain points and solutions.

### What is research communication?



Panelists described research communication as the sharing of complex and often highly technical information. The purpose of research communication is generally to share progress and findings, increase transparency about the research process, and build trust with audiences. Effective research communication makes technical information accessible to diverse audiences so they know what the work is and why it matters.

**Focus on people and relationships** - The human elements of communication are often the most compelling and relatable.

- Spotighting researchers can bring a more tangible understanding of the work you are seeking to share.
- Focus on the people you are communicating with; building direct relationships provides opportunities for increasing trust to share evidence-based information.
- Given the seemingly endless possibilities for what to communicate about research, be strategic in prioritizing what is relevant to whom. Consider creating a structured approach to finding out what types of research and projects are taking place so that you are aware of all the stories you can tell.

“*Being able to cut through the buzz words, cut through the tensions, and provide actionable research and actionable insights is important to policymakers and the public.*”  
- Marie Spear, RTI International

“*There is a lot of dot connecting and turning things into accessible language.*”  
- Matthew Chamberlin, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

## SPEAKERS

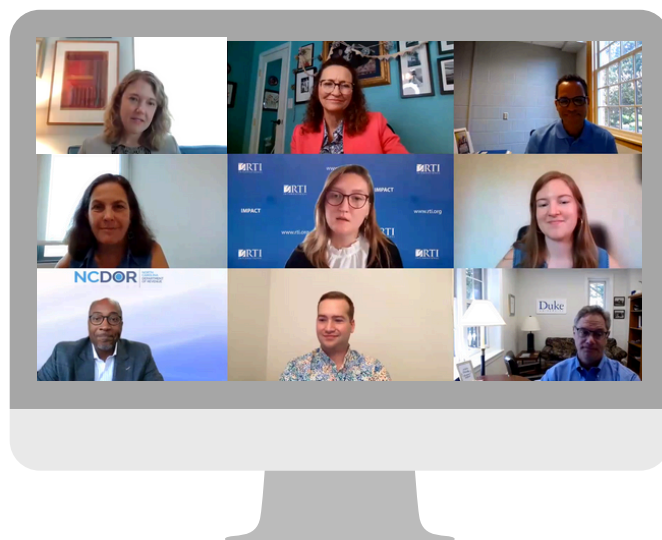
**Karl Bates**, Director of Research Communications, [Duke University](#)

**Matthew Chamberlin**, Associate Dean for Communications and Marketing, [Gillings School of Global Public Health](#), UNC Chapel Hill

**Beth Gargan**, Deputy Communications Director, [NC Department of Information Technology](#)

**Marie Spear**, Government Relations Manager, [RTI International](#)

**Noelle Talley** (moderator), Deputy Chief of Staff, [Office of Governor Roy Cooper](#)



Click [HERE](#) to watch the full session.

Click [HERE](#) for a list of additional resources.

**The North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP)** develops, launches, and enhances partnerships between state government and North Carolina’s research and philanthropic sectors.

OSP works with state government and non-governmental partners on priority issues, develops and convenes networks of public sector and research experts, and provides learning and engagement opportunities. These efforts help to deepen connections between North Carolina state government and external research experts and to increase state government’s internal capacity to generate and use evidence to improve policies and programs.



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