

Editorial Call to Action

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No matter what our political affiliations or leanings, I think we can all agree that this is a very rough time for academia and science. Every day is a new article in the newspaper about conflicts between the current administration and an academic institution or national funding agency. Many days also include worried emails from a colleague or a student, or from our institutions about funding cuts, contingency plans or statements of policies. We worried that the positive impacts we have achieved especially in the areas of inclusion will be undone. These challenges come on top of an already stretched faculty who with their students are recovering from the pandemic and facing increasing issues of new technologies and academic realities. We all know the challenges, but I have a few ideas about how we might respond in these difficult times.

First, we need to support each other. I feel like this neuroscience community is a family and as a family we are all suffering. We need to recognize these bonds and personally support each other. In the coming year, we have both the annual SfN meeting and a FUN summer workshop where we can share our challenges and reaffirm the value of what we do. We can continue to support colleagues with letters for promotion that verify their value to the neuroscience community and emphasize the challenge of the moment. We can mentor junior colleagues actively in framing their work in the context of the times we are living through. We can be supportive and gentle with people when they are struggling. I am happy to create space to chat with any of you or to create a neuroscience educator happy hour zoom where we can talk and share. Let me know if you are interested.

Second, we should advocate at a local, state and national level for support of science and education. I am sure many of you are engaged in these efforts. Protests are a way of showing solidarity for ideas and support for other like-minded people, but I feel that they are unlikely to make much political impact. I also think that phone calling politicians that oppose our values on science and education are unlikely to have much political effect. I like the idea of writing letters or making phone calls to thank our representatives for advocating or voting for support of science and education.

One way I do think that scientists can have a large impact is through our scientific professional organizations. We need to engage with our professional societies to use the voices of those they represent. FUN has a Public Policy and Governmental Affairs Policy committee (contact chair Kitty Hartvigsen sarah.c.hart@richmond.edu). They currently have an ongoing *Careers in Science Policy and*

Outreach virtual workshop series to make members and their trainees aware of careers in this area. SfN has an advocacy section of its website including a statement and suggested actions in response to the current situation (<https://www.sfn.org/advocacy/advocacy-response-recent-actions>). I found this section of the website very powerful in thinking about my political actions. I found other professional societies have opportunities for action and engagement. At a recent fly meeting sponsored by Genetics Society of America (GSA) there was a session dedicated to calling our representatives to advocate for basic research. They have a policy and advocacy page (<https://genetics-gsa.org/policy/>) and they have several committees where you might work to advocate for your values in science (<https://genetics-gsa.org/committees/>). American Psychological Association has a website section on advocacy (<https://www.apaservices.org/advocacy/>) as does the American Physiological Society (<https://www.physiology.org/career?SSO=Y>). I urge you to get involved no matter what professional society you identify with. Our voices speak louder when we speak together.

Now it is more important than ever that we communicate with the public about science and its value to their lives. Although many of the readers of this journal have been actively engaged in outreach to their students and communities, we need to advocate in a larger way to return to the idea of colleges/universities as community resources. At some level, I believe that the scientific ignorance and denial of expertise that is plaguing our country has been helped along by academia and scientists. We are viewed as elitists who speak and think in a language that is unintelligible to our neighbors. Some of us work at institutions where our neighbors wouldn't be able to send their children. We tend to work a lot and have less time to engage outside of our family commitments and workplaces. I believe the extensive workload that academia has demanded of us has pulled us away from integrating with our communities. I would like to see us brainstorm and workshop on how to make our institutions understand the importance and benefit of better community partners. I believe that scientists as a group need to frame the benefit of this work to our institutions and this work needs to be rewarded by our institutions. I am not suggesting we give a few more community lectures about neuroscience or do a once-a-year brain awareness week event, although these are helpful. I am suggesting that we advocate to our institutions to integrate into our communities and allow us to

do the same. As part of that integration, we can talk to our neighbors about science in a way that is person to person rather than lecturer to audience. Unless the citizens of this country learn from us, their friends and neighbors, about the value of science and education, I worry about our future.

Finally, this is my last issue as editor in chief of JUNE. It is a good issue, filled with ideas that you can implement into your teaching. I have enjoyed working with so many people in our neuroscience education family. Thanks for sharing all your brilliant teaching and ideas with me and our community. Thanks to all the reviewers and for your service especially given all the demands on your time. Thanks to the JUNE board and the former editors of the journal who were always willing to listen, suggest and help. This community has been tremendously supportive of me and this journal. Thanks to

Rachel Maddock, our production manager for her years of service. I will be turning over the reins to Dr. Ashley Juavinett from University of California, San Diego. Ashley has ideas and goals to continue the movement of the journal forward and to ensure our success in the future. As part of this path forward, the journal will be starting to use an online journal management program in the fall and developing a new website for the journal. Stay soon for all the FUN!

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