

Susan Mason joined the National Science Foundation as a Legislative Specialist in 1990, rising to become head of External Affairs in 2000. Among her other achievements, Susan was Director of Congressional Relations at the National Archives & Records Administration, Congressional Relations Specialist at the Civil Aeronautics Board, and early in her career produced and directed a monthly, two-hour, live radio program, organized major concerts, and arranged station promotions and contests for KSON AM & FM in La Mesa, CA. As head of External Affairs for NSF, she audits and plans strategic communications, as well as develops/produces media programs, media relations initiatives, and communication training programs.

Portraying Nanotechnology R&D on Video and Web

Abstract:

Public image of nanotechnology

The public's knowledge and understanding of science and technology varies widely across topics. In 2013, PEW Research Center said that about only 65 percent of Americans in a nationwide survey answered correctly that nanotechnology deals with "small things." Many young people don't enter the STEM workforce simply because they perceive these subjects as too hard or boring. Yet, the future of U.S. investments in science and engineering research – and future researchers – depends in part on public perception. Fortunately, there is an increasing range of formal and informal channels through which to reach Americans, and change knowledge and attitudes about nanotechnology. Attracting young people to science and technology professions and cultivating positive attitudes about the value of science and technology will be important for the United States to remain a world leader.

Disseminating nanotechnology in mass media

Reaching the public via modern, creative pathways is a proven mechanism to successfully engage a large, nontraditional audience in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Nanotechnology, in particular, is a fascinating field that lends itself extremely well to mass media treatment and celebrity involvement and evokes a sense of wonder. Over the past few years, NSF's Office of Legislative and Public Affairs team has developed and managed several nanotech-focused programs that broadly disseminate nanotechnology grounded in NSF-funded research. Learn about how you can get involved in projects like: the **Generation Nano: Small Science, Superheroes** competition, The NBC Learn and NSF video collaboration **Nanotechnology: Super Small Science**, the recent **Discover Magazine "Wide World of Nanotech" online gallery**, and more activities.

