

# ASU brings 'Science @ Scale' to AAAS meeting in Phoenix

**Dozens of experts will share on a range of fields, from dementia to energy to Indigenous science**

By Penny Walker, ASU News  
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When the American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting takes place this month in Phoenix, Arizona State University will be well represented.

Dozens of ASU researchers — whose expertise ranges from technology for older adults living alone to water insecurity solutions — will speak at the event, whose theme this year, Science @ Scale, aims to highlight the importance of research's value for the public good.

"The AAAS Annual Meeting is a prime opportunity to share the breadth of innovation at ASU with the scientific community," said Sally C. Morton, executive vice president of ASU Knowledge Enterprise. "The theme, Science @ Scale, echoes the purpose of our broader AAAS + ASU Collaborative, to focus on scientific research that creates public good, for all people."

That [collaborative](#) is a five-year partnership, announced last year, in which the AAAS and ASU work together to amplify and advance the role of science in society, with an emphasis on research that confronts our most complex challenges today.

As part of the partnership, ASU developed a prize with AAAS and the society's flagship peer-reviewed journal, Science, to be given to early-career researchers whose work is solutions-focused. The inaugural recipients — [who use AI to help farmers and trafficking victims](#) — were announced Thursday and will be recognized during the AAAS Annual Meeting.

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## Learn more

The AAAS Annual Meeting is Feb. 12–14 at the Phoenix Convention Center. View the schedule and register at [meetings.aaas.org](https://meetings.aaas.org).

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The [AAAS Annual Meeting](#), which is open to the public, runs Feb. 12–14 at the Phoenix Convention Center. In addition to a full programming of panels and workshops, the event includes a daily expo where the university's research and initiatives will be featured at "ASU Avenue" with tabling and more than 30 speakers giving 15- to 30-minute talks. Topics range from sea turtles to foreign policy to valley fever to generative AI. Find the full list of topics on the [expo schedule page](#);

look for those labeled “ASU Avenue.”

The expo hall will also feature a special experience for event-goers: the Dreamscape Learn mobile classroom, [used in Phoenix K-12 schools](#) to engage students in interactive, virtual reality biology labs. Dreamscape Learn’s immersive STEM curriculum, co-developed [to great success](#) with ASU and utilized in the university’s biology and chemistry courses (with more topics in development), combines cinematic storytelling with proven active-learning techniques to deepen engagement and improve outcomes.

On the event’s first day, ASU President Michael Crow will give welcome remarks before Thursday evening’s Plenary AAAS Presidential Address by Theresa Maldonado. In addition to her role with AAAS, Maldonado is the systemwide vice president for research and innovation at the University of California.

Here’s a look at ASU scholars and researchers who will be taking part in panels and workshops. Find the full schedule on the [AAAS website](#).

## Thursday, Feb. 12

**9 a.m.–noon: “Courtroom Science Communication” special session** — This workshop includes watching a mock trial with lawyers, judges and scientists to learn how science communication skills can support judicial decision-making. [Jay Famiglietti](#) of the College of Global Futures is a co-presenter.

## Friday, Feb. 13

**10–11 a.m.: “From Discovery to Impact” lecture** — [Sally Morton](#) will share a practical framework for beyond the lab to deliver benefits to society. Drawing on ASU’s experiences, she will highlight how the Phoenix Bioscience Core has both accelerated medical breakthroughs and revitalized downtown Phoenix through city-university-industry collaboration and describe how ASU’s engagement with the CHIPS Act has spurred rapid development of the semiconductor ecosystem, strengthened the workforce pipeline and enhanced employment.

**10–11 a.m.: “Filling the Gap: How STEM Professionals Can Support Local Communities” workshop** — This workshop will provide people of all STEM backgrounds with the skills to build community relationships and an opportunity to practice identifying local opportunities for engagement. [Darshan Karwat](#) of the Rob Walton College of Global Futures and [Raj Pandya](#) of Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching and Learning Innovation are co-leading.

**11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: “Bridging Ideological Divides in Science” panel** — Scientists who study communicating about culturally controversial science topics to politically, religiously and racially diverse audiences will describe cutting-edge work on successfully reducing conflict with the most contentious science topics in society. [Sara Brownell](#) of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is a panelist.

**11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.: “Circular Phosphorus Economy to Improve Sustainability of Plant-Based Proteins” panel** — This talk will examine the results of quantifying the environmental benefits from replacing conventionally mined phosphorus fertilizer with urine-derived phosphorus

fertilizer when producing beef and plant-based burgers. [Treavor Boyer](#) of the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering is presenting.

**2:30–3:30 p.m.: “Fostering Religiously-Inclusive Engagement with Science” workshop** — Faith is often perceived as a source of tension in STEM, even though 7 in 10 U.S. adults claim a religious affiliation. This workshop will help participants engage with people of faith respectfully and effectively. **Brownell** is a co-presenter.

**2:30–3:30 p.m.: “Bridges From Community Colleges to Four-Year Interdisciplinary Science Degrees” panel** — The presentation will share effective strategies of the S-STEM Transfer to Interdisciplinary Natural and Mathematical Science project, which supports students from partner community colleges and preparatory academies. [Susannah Sandrin](#) of the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences is presenting.

**2:30–3:30 p.m.: “America’s Pyrocene: Landscape Fire in the American West” panel** — This talk will look at wildfire reforms such as characterizing burning cities as urban conflagrations, not wildland fires, getting the right fire regime for each landscape and ending fossil-fuel combustion. Emeritus Professor [Stephen Pyne](#) is presenting.

**4–5 p.m.: Cassandra L. Jones Lecture, “The Future of Science is Indigenous”** — This session, presented by [Krystal Tsosie](#) of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, envisions how Indigenous nations are transforming genomics, artificial intelligence, machine learning and precision health through sovereignty, stewardship and innovation. Indigenous science and ways of knowing offer essential frameworks for equity, accountability and relationality — extending care beyond humans to lands and other living beings.

**4–5 p.m.: “Scaling the Energy Workforce” workshop** — This workshop will introduce the concept of microgrids, take participants through an interactive exercise and discussion to understand the stakeholders and time frame involved in developing a microgrid, and finish with a collaborative game. [Mindy Kimball](#), [Alexander Mobley](#) and [Marlon Acevedo Rios](#), all of the Fulton Schools of Engineering, will co-lead.

## **Saturday, Feb. 14**

**10–11 a.m.: “Beyond the Tap: Water Insecurity in the United States” panel** — This session will outline a new scale for measuring household water insecurity in the U.S., presenting preliminary findings from both national and site-specific studies that used this tool. [Patrick Thomson](#) of the Arizona Water Innovation Initiative and [Alexandra Brewis](#) of The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are among the panelists.

**10–11 a.m.: “Tech Solutions for Older Adults Living Alone with Cognitive Decline” panel** — Living alone is a risk factor for older adults for accelerated cognitive decline and, in turn, Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia. This discussion will look at behavioral interventions to improve outcomes and quality of life in this population. [Ross Andel](#), [Fang Yu](#), [David Coon](#), [Abigail Gómez-Morales](#) and [Molly Maxfield](#), all of the Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation, are presenting.

**10–11 a.m.: “Who Gets to Belong? Disability, Power, and Participation in Higher Education” workshop** — This event explores how structural support (e.g., disability accommodations process,

teaching resources) and individual response (e.g., disclosure, perceptions of disability) shape the experiences of disabled people navigating ableism embedded in higher education. Visiting scholar [Rachel Figard](#) and [Jennifer Bekki](#) of the Fulton Schools of Engineering are co-presenters.

**10–11 a.m.: “The Path to Trust in Science: A Discussion on Evidence, Values, and the Public Good” special session** — This panel of scholars and practitioners who work in science communication and public engagement will explore some of the reasons behind the diminishing public trust in science and ways practitioners are addressing the challenge. **Pandya** is a co-presenter.

**11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.: “Connecting Ancient Events to Modern Solutions” panel** — This talk will examine ancient tuberculosis spillovers to illuminate modern disease threats; colonial Peru’s catastrophic El Niño response; and historical subsistence transitions, exposing risks of adopting plant-based diets without equity. [Jane Buikstra](#) is moderating, with [Anne Stone](#) as a panelist. Both are with The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

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## Related

[Inaugural ASU–Science Prize winners use AI to help farmers, trafficking victims](#)

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



The upcoming American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting will feature ASU experts from a range of fields, including engineer Alexander Mobley (pictured), who will co-lead a workshop on microgrids. Photo by Samantha Chow/Arizona State University