

Sharing UW-Madison Research with the Public

The [Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy](#) (WISL), invites your participation in a major effort to help connect scholarly research with society. WISL's program, *Communicating UW-Madison Research to the Public*, encourages UW-Madison PhD students and postdocs to write a chapter in their thesis—or in the case of postdocs, a stand-alone article—explaining their scholarly research to general audiences. The public supports our research enterprise. Let us tell them what we are doing and why. WISL will provide guidance from a seasoned editor and, once the written piece is successfully completed, a cash award of \$250.00

Public sentiment is everything.

With public sentiment, nothing can fail;

without it nothing can succeed.

—Abraham Lincoln

Support of scholarly research is facing what some have characterized as a perilous threat. We should connect properly with elected officials at all levels and especially with everyone outside our own highly specialized areas. We have what is essentially a social contract with society that enables great intellectual achievements but comes with mutual expectations of benefiting the human condition and protecting our planet. We must always be responsible, doing our research ethically and sharing the importance of our scholarship with the general public.

Writing about your research

I invite you to write a thesis chapter or article in which you tell the general reader (for example, a family member, friend, neighbor, community member, elected official, taxpayer, or donor who provides support) what your research is about, its significance, and potential value to society. These are to be personal statements, using a storytelling approach. Not a summary, nor is it written for presentation in a scientific seminar or at a professional conference. You are to write in the first-person style. Use “I” not “we.” Avoid wording commonly used in professional publications such as “it was shown/found/concluded” or similar. Chapters and articles should aim to have the reader develop a sense of appreciation rather than a deep understanding of the intricacies of scholarly work. Both the content and the style should engage readers and urge them to continue reading. When finished, these pieces will be posted on the WISL website:

- [Thesis Chapters](#)
- [Postdoc Articles](#)

How to participate

To express your interest, please send an email message to Cayce Osborne at cosborne@chem.wisc.edu, indicating your department, the subject of your research, and, if you're writing a thesis, your approximate defense date. We will reply with more information about the first steps and guidelines. You can find more information on our website about how to write these [thesis chapters](#) or [articles](#).

I and the WISL staff look forward to hearing from you at cosborne@chem.wisc.edu, and assisting you in sharing your UW-Madison research with readers beyond your area of specialty. Long live the Wisconsin Idea in the 21st Century!

- Bassam

Professor Bassam Z. Shakhashiri
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