

Dione Rossiter

Executive Director of Science at Cal at UC Berkeley



What is your current occupation?

I am currently the Executive Director of Science at Cal at UC Berkeley. Science at Cal's broad goal is to share the excitement and relevance of UC Berkeley research with public audiences. We serve the Bay Area broadly, utilizing researchers across UC Berkeley in a suite of community-facing programs like lectures, street fairs, festivals, and more. I also run UC Berkeley's Broader Impacts Office. In this role, I work with scientists across campus to build sustainable and impactful science outreach collaborations with community and campus partners. Science at Cal is managed by the Lawrence Hall of Science, UC Berkeley's public science center. I serve on The Lawrence's senior management team.

What is your educational background?

I received my bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and PhD from UC Santa Cruz, both in Earth & Planetary Sciences.

A key message for students is that the geoscience workforce is dynamic, and boundaries between sectors and occupations are fluid. How has this been true in your career?

I have worked in the science engagement, outreach, and communication space since finishing my PhD. I began my career journey "away from the bench" as an AGU Mass Media Fellow in Washington, D.C. while in my last year of graduate school. I have worked in non-profits, scientific societies, research institutions, academic institutions, and local government.

I was previously the Scientific Programs & Outreach Manager at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, DC. In this role, I provided independent leadership of science programs, outreach, and special initiatives intended to broaden the reach of scientific research, both within the worldwide scientific community and with the general public. My duties also included managing all partnerships between Carnegie Science and other research institution, government agencies, nonprofits, media outlets, and corporations.

Before beginning at Carnegie Science in 2015, I was a Project Director within the Education Directorate at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Within this role, I was the Director of the AAAS Mass Media Science and Engineering Fellows Program, a 45-year-old Fellowship that places advanced science student in news outlets across the country to work as science reporters. In addition to managing long-standing, high-profile programs, I organized public outreach and engagement events, particular those aimed towards under-served communities, and promoted and encouraged women and historically underrepresented minorities (of which I am both) in science.

I also worked as a Lecturer at San Jose State University within the Meteorology & Climate Science Department where I taught classes that address the causes and negative effects of global climate change and incorporate solutions through mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Finally, I host science communication and career seminars, lectures, and workshops across the country and internationally.

Where do you see your sector moving in future years? How would you advise students to prepare to be competitive job applicants and successful employees?

There is more and more attention on diversity and equity, community engagement, and broadening participation work. Focus on getting a broad breadth of experiences while in graduate school. Understand how to market and promote yourself and your work. Learn proper communication skills (*this takes time, practice, and patience*). Ask for help and take advice. Being aware of your transferrable skills will be critical in helping you transition from a bench/field scientist into any other role. Watch my lecture here (<https://vimeo.com/578297470>) to learn more.

What is the role of networking in your sector? Do you have advice for a student who is just beginning to build their network? What is the best way for students to get their foot in the door?

Networking is very important. Don't be shy. Blind emailing folks for an informational interview is totally acceptable. If someone doesn't reply, follow up after one week. If they don't reply after that, move on. Let people know you are on the job market. Join every listserv possible because you will find more opportunities through your networks than through LinkedIn job posts. If you are interested in working in public engagement, communication, and outreach, email me!

What does a “typical” day of work look like for you?

A typical work day is spent in meetings about strategic planning across the University and The Lawrence; replying to emails from partners, participants, and stakeholders; prepping scientists for our lectures; writing grants; and a lot of marketing for our events.

What is the best part of your job?

Interacting with people from across demographics. Post-event high. Being organized while managing large, complex projects. Having autonomy. Feeling productive at the end of each day... something that was very rare as a bench scientist (no offense, ha!).

Do you have any other comments or advice for students looking to enter your sector of the geoscience workforce?

Get started now. We need you!

Connect:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dionerositer/>

Learn More:

My website: <https://www.sciencedee.com/>

Google my name, you'll find a lot!

Science-Self-Fandom: How to Promote Your Science and Your Worth:

<https://vimeo.com/578297470>