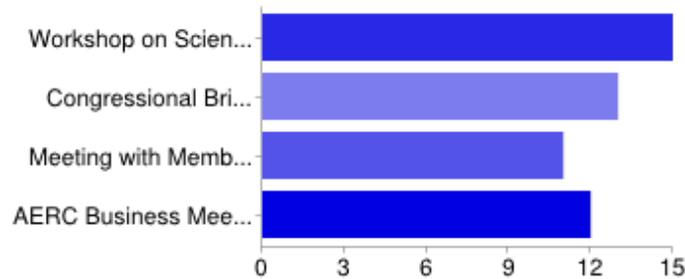


# 20 responses

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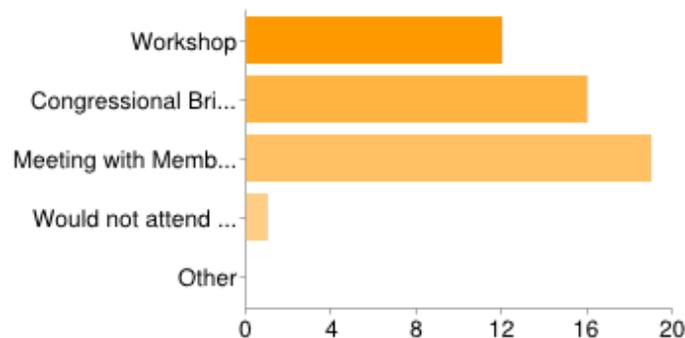
## Summary

### 1. Which of the following AERC meeting activities did you find beneficial?



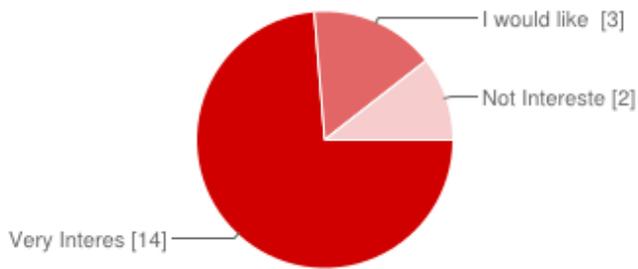
Workshop on Science Communication	<b>15</b>	29%
Congressional Briefing	<b>13</b>	25%
Meeting with Members of Congress	<b>11</b>	22%
AERC Business Meeting	<b>12</b>	24%

### 2. If you were to attend next year's meeting, which of the following activities would you participate in?



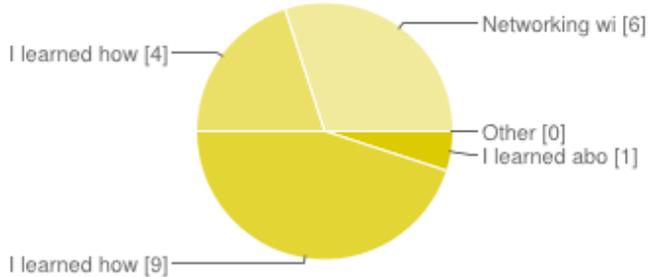
Workshop	<b>12</b>	25%
Congressional Briefing	<b>16</b>	33%
Meeting with Members of Congress	<b>19</b>	40%
Would not attend next year	<b>1</b>	2%
Other	<b>0</b>	0%

### 3. Would you be interested in attending next year's AERC Business Meeting?



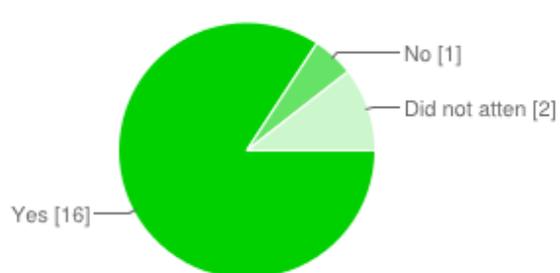
Very Interested	<b>14</b>	74%
I would like to see how the workshop goes and then decide	<b>3</b>	16%
Not Interested	<b>2</b>	11%

### 4. What was the most beneficial information you obtained during the AERC meeting?



I learned about AERC's mission and history	<b>1</b>	5%
I learned how to speak to media and decision makers	<b>9</b>	45%
I learned how important it is for an ecosystem scientist to be familiar with policy	<b>4</b>	20%
Networking with colleagues and learning what they are doing	<b>6</b>	30%
Other	<b>0</b>	0%

### 5a. Did you find the first day's communication workshop helpful?



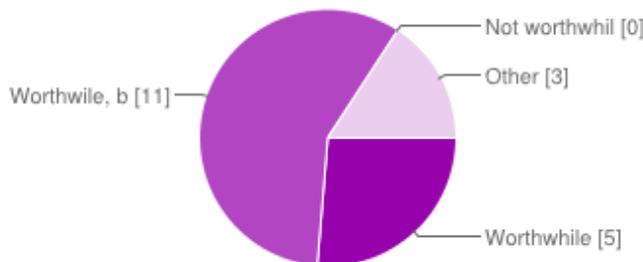
Yes	<b>16</b>	84%
No	<b>1</b>	5%
Did not attend	<b>2</b>	11%

### 5b. What was helpful about the first day's communication workshop?

They workshop was well prepared. It was a challenge to prepare the policy one pager. It was very helpful the guidance of AERC senior members I thought that Rob and Julie really focused their presentations

on very practical, how-to sorts of skills. It was a fine workshop, but it was much more useful to actually go do the meetings with someone who had done them before. (students from Virginia went to meetings with Dave Smith, watching him lead off and conclude the meetings was the most useful part of the event). Simple in approach using 3 talking points with 3 transitions between each of them. Had a chance to focus on clear messaging and to participate in a mock interview. It was most helpful to sit down with my partner for the hill meetings and work out what our strategy was going to be. I learned how to package my pitch in an explicit and concise manner. Hearing from people with real experience communicating science to policy makers. Learning which terms commonly used in scientific discussions are not understood by people outside the field. Getting personal feedback about how to improve my presentation so it had maximum impact. Mock interviews. Becoming aware of strategies that journalists use when conducting interviews. Learning how to drive home a message with three supporting points. Learning what to expect in conversations with congress people. I liked the small group work. being able to communicate science was good practice. Scientists typically lack social skills. There were a lot of gems of information, for communicating with the media and with congress. There was a lot of overlap, and great, simple exercises to stay on message. The three talk points that Robert provided were very helpful, and scientific funding from Julie was very useful as well. Met up with researchers in the same field and the interaction are always encouraging!! What is expected when communicating with media and policy makers

**5c. The time spent developing the policy one-pager and mini presentation for the communication workshop was:**



Worthwhile	5	26%
Worthwhile, but with additional guidance, I would have prepared a better policy one pager and presentation	11	58%
Not worthwhile	0	0%
Other	3	16%

**5d. What suggestions do you have to improve the usefulness of the communications workshop?**

See below. arrange longer time to allow people to talk about the mini-talk and one-pager, and more interaction is need. More guidance on the focus of the message to give congress people would be helpful. For example, should the focus be directly related to our ecosystem research or on current politically relevant ecosystem research. Participants should be encouraged to familiarize themselves with ecosystem research topics that are currently important in politics. Provide a guidance document to suggest how to prepare the policy one pager. I think some of us were surprised that our pager was not that good. It would have been helpful to be given the communication triangle worksheet before the

workshop so I could have prepared my mini presentation based on that worksheet and gotten personal feedback on that. Give us more instruction for creating the one-pager. There wasn't a lot of time to make use of the one-pager and presentation. I was very much geared up to talking to policy makers for this workshop and it wasn't clear to me how I should modify the message that I prepared for the policy makers to the media. We were supposed to practice our 1-3 min talk early on during the media portion, but it seemed out of place at that time and most folks just introduced themselves and their research. It came out more like a 30 sec intro. I think the overall workshop could have been improved by the development of a clear message that would be similar throughout the whole group. We are meeting with Congress as a group and therefore should have a unified message. It came out later as we got frustrated what to say, but it should have been introduced early on. "We support sustained funding for biological research from Congress, especially efforts to improve ecosystem research." more facilitators available to cover each group. it was awkward to just begin strategizing with a bunch of strangers. more time for people to present and critique 1-pagers and elevator speeches perhaps for this workshop focus entirely on communication with policy-makers and leave out material about the press? Spend more time improving people's presentations and one-pagers. More time for all participants to go through exercises rather than just one within the breakout group. I wish that we had been able to role-play a little more. Perhaps there was time to do so but not so much willingness on the part of workshop participants. Overall, though, I thought the workshop was really good. More detail on how to improve the policy one pager and presentation, longer, more time to work on communication individually Only attended the business meeting, and that by telephone.

**6a. Did you find the policy briefing on the 2nd day worthwhile?**

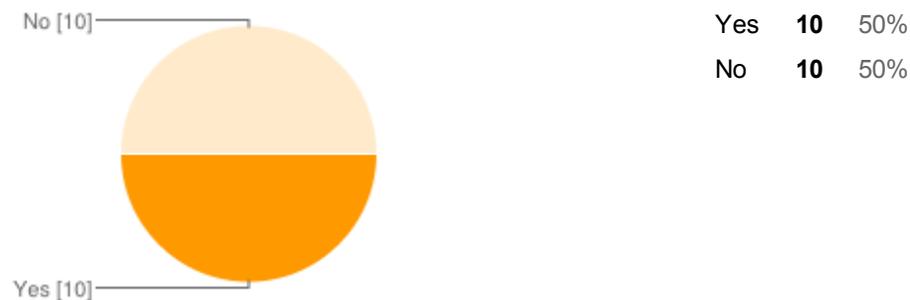


**6b. If yes, why? If no, what would make it more worthwhile to attend?**

I learned a lot about the state of food security in the U.S. Also, I thought it was insightful to see what staffers actually took notes on! Having three speakers present the same topic from three different approaches was instructive on how each approach policy. It was great to hear different experts on the topic of food scarcity. It is always great to see perspectives of accomplished scientists. It's great to hear more profound talks from the leading scientists in the field, and the message they bring to the policy-makers. Good to see the level of staffer attendance. However, I felt that the messaging was highly variable and not really geared toward the audience. simply an interesting experience and good to have a chance to speak a bit with attendees and also see what was presented and what was asked about or otherwise apparently noticed by attendees having the briefing presenters coordinate and cross-reference their talks could better reinforce points -- know AERC always tries to make this happen -- wish we could enforce it better It was good to see how prominent scientists present ecosystem research for a general audience. The question session at the end of the briefing provided a good networking opportunity. It was

helpful to hear what questions the staffers asked because it helped me figure out what types of information intrigue them. This in turn, helped me form my pitch. It was very helpful to see the kind of information provided, and the response. I hope to participate in such briefings someday, and it is great to know what is expected. It was exciting to see scientists present their work at Congress and see how they developed an appropriate message for policy makers. felt like we were making a direct impact on policy. feelings of accomplishment. It was very useful to see how policy briefings are done, and learn what aspects of scientific research need to be communicated to congress Very relevant topic. Knowledgeable speakers who communicated useful and important information. Speakers did a fine job answering audience questions. Legibility and aesthetics of Elena Bennett's slides were excellent and her message was perhaps the best of the three. But all were good. I thought the topic was interesting and the speakers were great

### 7a. Did you meet with anyone on the Hill?



### 7b. If yes, how did the meetings go?

Very well The meetings were generally positive. Even though some staffers were less sympathetic to our message they still heard what we had to say and now have a face to connect with issues of research funding. N/A Very well. The staff members were very receptive to our messages. Overall, the meetings went well, and the staffers seemed genuinely interested in what we had to say. There was an apparent difference between republican and democrat offices. In the republican offices, we were told that everyone needs money, and there unfortunately isn't enough to go around. The democrat staffer we met with was aware of the importance of ecosystem research, and already advocated for increased funding. Well. Overall, we were received well at the meetings. The staffers were respectful and had some interesting questions and perspectives. We didn't necessarily get much support as our delegates were all Republican and set on reducing spending, but it seemed like we forced them to consider who it was they were impacting should they choose science as a place to cut funding. The two of us at the meetings were well grouped. I work on agriculture and she works on arctic microbes and engineering with funding from NSF and NASA. We were able to clearly describe the long-term impacts that the shutdown and other government funding cuts costs scientists and grad students. n/a Overall, they went well. One staffer started off disinterested, but there was a point where I was able to get her excited about our meeting by suggesting that she visit our field site. I noticed that the more senior the staffer, the more detail-oriented the questions I was asked about my research. I will plan to meet with Congressional reps next year. Excellent perfect. i had business card ready so now my name is with them. could tell that the republicans don't care about funding science. democrats were appreciative.

### 7c. Did the workshop or policy briefing help you with your Hill meetings? If so, which

## parts helped?

N/A I feel the workshop did not directly help the Hill meetings. The workshops gave an excellent general overview of how to talk to the media or policy makers, but never really nailed down how to apply that general approach to our particular Congressional visit. The briefing was very interesting and a great start to the day. I do believe I used a few insights I gained at the briefings later in my Congressional visits. The workshop was extremely helpful in my Hill meetings. In particular, I liked preparing what I was going to say based on the communication triangle, and being told that repeating myself would be helpful. It was also helpful that we were told that the conversation could stray and that we'd have to steer the attention back to our main message. n/a The workshop helped prepare me for the Hill meetings. The major point of staying on topic and not getting drawn into tangential discussions is important, and easier said than done. It was useful to start thinking about how to distill the message, but actually going into the meeting with someone that had done it before was the most useful part for the Hill meetings gave us a brief scenario before meeting with a total stranger. Yes, particularly the workshop. Getting a framework for the speech was very useful to stay on point. The workshop helped me boil down my research and experience into a brief but informative pitch. Yes, the way we delivered our message and tried to keep the conversation focused on our message was learned in the workshop. The workshop also prepared us for what to expect in the Hill meetings which was helpful and made me feel more at ease about the meetings.

## 7d. What improvements could be made to the workshop to help you handle Hill meetings better?

A slight reorganization of the workshop could be helpful. Advice and suggestions from experts should be presented at the beginning of the workshop, while the latter part of the workshop is reserved for practicing conversational skills in different contexts (e.g. Hill, Media, etc). Beginning the workshop with a practice meeting was not very helpful. Making sure that students are paired with someone more experienced for the Hill meetings (I don't know if this was the case or not, but this was the key part for the people in the Virginia group) In addition to having a shared message to take to the Hill, I think our info sheets could have been better prepared for the meetings. We were told at the workshop that one page front and back is plenty, but there were two of us in the group to the Hill. We each had an info sheet and also had the one from AERC. I think organizing prior to the meetings to condense those three sheets into one would have been helpful. We each get a half page or so and then combine the info at the workshop. Maybe working in pairs would allow more time to share the speech with the partner If we were given time to (or asked before the workshop to) research how our representatives voted on science-related issues. remind people to generate a handout and business cards. maybe some mock meetings? those are very helpful in general n/a Focus more attention on the one-pager. It would be helpful to have a polished product we can hand to the congressional staffers. Examples of policy that resulted from research findings would be helpful to see how was as research scientists can impact policy. Clarify/emphasize what is the main message that needs to be conveyed during the Hill meetings, and how to use our research to support it.

## 8. If you have any additional suggestions or comments, please feel free to share.

Thank you! Please let us know how can we can get copies of the presentations I would have liked to learn more about the Farm Bill. I think that the energy and enthusiasm of the student and postdoc

participants in the events was fantastic and should be tapped into. I believe that through their involvement in assisting and advising the AERC board of directors, and directly working on the Web site, the quality of the modest services that the AERC provides to the ecosystem and environmental research community can be greatly enhanced. The workshop and experience on the Hill was great overall! Thank you AERC! great job overall -- thanks! Thanks very much for the opportunity to work with AERC and AIBS at the Capitol visit this year! shorten the business meetings. or have the student focused topics of the meeting first so that students can leave early and let the seniors talk story.

## Number of daily responses

