**WREN Breakfast: Thursday June 1, 2023**

**2023 AREUEA National Meeting**

**Westin City Center, Washington DC**

COMMUNICATING RESEARCH TO DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

Sponsored by the Furman Center at New York University, the University of Alabama, and Fannie Mae

Panelists:

Jenny Schuetz: Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution focusing on Housing Policy, former principal economist at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, assistant professor at USC and post-doctoral fellow at NYU-Furman.

Martha Galvez: Executive Director of the Furman Center’s Housing Solutions Lab and former Principal Research Associate at the Urban Institute.

Jeffery Lin: Vice-President and Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Co-Director of the Philadelphia Federal Statistical Research Data Center and co-editor of *Regional Science and Urban Economics*.

Moderator:

Lyndsey Rolheiser: Research Assistant Professor of Urban and Real Estate Economics at the University of Connecticut and Research Affiliate at the MIT Center for Real Estate.

**Key Take-Aways**

Know your audience: your style and evidence should be different for academics, policy-makers, reporters and the general public

No one ever HAS to read your work: make the delivery of your results quick, clear, disgestable and actionable—This is not a Columbo episode where the answer is revealed only at the very end!

Communication and research are inseparable and we are in the sales business—build a mental model of what your audience knows, believes and cares about and use that to decide what research to do.

Assume at the beginning that you will need all the distilling materials as part of your work plan and budget for it (time, resources).

Five one-thousand word articles are usually more effective than one five-thousand word article.

Successful op-ed writers are a good resource for style.

Debate training will help your communication skills at all levels

Purposefully work on building your personal brand

Every piece you write should have a disgestable 1,000 word summary: don’t include qualifiers here unless “the evidence is mixed” is the story, and use hyperlinks to sources instead of writing about them in the summary. Practice condensing your research into 1,000 words to see what it takes.

People have to understand your work well enough to critique it, and people want to understand the critiques as well.

**For the public:**

De-jargon, use graphs wherever possible and pitch your wording at the level of college freshmen

Assume your audience has a two-minute attention span

**For policy-makers:**

Arm them with data and results but remember that they have to keep their jobs

Use a Technical Appendix for higher level results and empirics

Imagine that you are preparing your audience for a meeting with people who have an opposing viewpoint.

Interacting with staff is much more effective than interacting with elected officials.

Think about which policymakers you are trying to reach.

What is your intention with your work? Are you trying to push back against a myth or teach something new?

**For reporters:**

Reporters can amplify your message: 400 people might read a paper, 20,000 might visit a website but 500,000 could see an article you are quoted in.

Do some media training *before* talking to reporters and consider having yourself video-taped presenting an idea.

Give reporters their headlines

Write out your key points ahead of time and practice the imagined conversation

Social Media (Twitter) vs. Platforms (Medium and Substack)

**Concluding Comment:**

Someone described reading Raj Chetty’s work as “being carried to the conclusion on a velvet carpet”—a great metaphor and a wonderful guide for writing for any audience!

**Additional Website Resources:**

### what to say

[Picking a research topic](<http://www.columbia.edu/~drd28/Thesis%20Research.pdf>) (Don Davis)

### how to say it

The [introduction formula](<https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/better-beamer-presentations>) (Keith Head)

[Better Beamer presentations](<https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/better-beamer-presentations>) (Keith Head)

[Ten Commandments from Regression Tables](<https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/regression-tables>) (Keith Head)

[Ten Commandments for Figures](<https://blogs.ubc.ca/khead/research/research-advice/figures>) (Keith Head)

[Writing advice](<https://macromomblog.com/2019/09/29/we-need-to-talk-more/>) (Claudia Sahm)

[Public speaking for Academic Economists](<https://mfr.osf.io/render?url=https%3A%2F%2Fosf.io%2Fd8wm9%2Fdownload>) (Rachael Meager)

[Writings tips for PhD students](<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e6033a4ea02d801f37e15bb/t/5eda74919c44fa5f87452697/1591374993570/phd_paper_writing.pdf>) (John Cochrane)

[An economist's guide to visualizing data](<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.28.1.209>) (Jonathan Schwabish)

[How to give an applied micro talk](<https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/shapiro/files/applied_micro_slides.pdf>) Jesse Shapiro

[The discussant's art](<https://chrisblattman.com/blog/2010/02/22/the-discussants-art/>) (Chris Blattman)

[Beamer tips](<https://github.com/paulgp/beamer-tips/blob/master/slides.pdf>) (Paul Goldsmith-Pinkham)

[A graph is worth a thousand citations](<http://www.ericzwick.com/public_goods/1000_citations.pdf>) (Eric Zwick)

### Omnibus advice

<http://www.jdingel.com/teaching/advice.html>

<https://sites.google.com/site/amandayagan/writingadvice>