NAAS Leadership Summit

Building Stronger State Science Ecosystems

Friday, July 24 – Saturday, July 25, 2026
Chicago, Illinois

Friday, July 24

Time	Agenda	Notes
Day 1: Leadership, Innovation & Networking Location: Hotel Lincoln		
3:30 - 4:00 PM	Arrival & Informal Networking	Reconnect with colleagues from across the country while meeting new academy leaders over light refreshments.
4:00 - 4:30 PM	Welcome & Opening Remarks	An overview of the Summit, its goals, and opportunities for collaboration throughout the weekend, including connections to the National Conference of State Legislatures and partnerships that strengthen the role of state academies in science and society.
4:30 - 5:45 PM	Lightning Talks: State Academy Innovation	Hear short presentations from academies across the country highlighting innovative programs, successful partnerships, emerging initiatives, and lessons learned. This fast-paced session offers opportunities to discover new ideas that can be adapted in your own state. Topics may include: ● Junior Academies of Science ● Science policy initiatives ● Public engagement ● Member development ● Partnerships ● Fundraising and organizational sustainability

5:45 - 6:00 PM	Networking Break	
6:00 - 6:30 PM	Dinner Service	
6:30 - 7:30 PM	Dinner & Fireside Conversation: Strengthening Science in the States	A moderated conversation featuring academy leaders discussing how state academies can expand their impact, engage policymakers, strengthen scientific communities, and respond to emerging opportunities.
7:30 - 8:45 PM	Networking Reception	Continue conversations with colleagues while exploring opportunities for collaboration across states. Participants will help identify priority topics that will shape Saturday's peer exchange discussions.

Saturday, July 25

Time	Agenda	Notes
Day 2: Strategy, Collaboration & Professional Development Location: Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum		
8:00 - 8:30 AM	Breakfast	
8:30 - 9:45 AM	Peer Exchange Roundtables	Interactive discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges facing state academies. Participants will rotate among small-group conversations to share best practices, identify common needs, and explore opportunities for collaboration.
9:45 - 10:00 AM	Group Photo & Break	
10:00 - 11:00 AM	Mapping the State Science Ecosystem	An interactive workshop examining the organizations, institutions, and partnerships that shape science within each state. Participants will explore how academies can strengthen their role within this broader ecosystem and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

11:00 - 12:00 PM	Strategy Session: The Future of State Academies	Participants will work together to identify shared priorities for the coming years, discuss opportunities for national collaboration, and help shape the future direction of the National Association of Academies of Science. Discussion topics include: ● Shared priorities across state academies ● Resources that would strengthen academy capacity ● Opportunities for interstate collaboration ● Building stronger partnerships across the science ecosystem
12:00 - 1:00 PM	Lunch	Following lunch, participants will transition to the NASEM Workshop.
1:00 - 2:00 PM	Welcome	NAAS & NASEM
1:20 - 2:40 PM	Engagement with States and Communities	Many national organizations have ongoing or new initiatives relevant to state and local policymakers. This session highlights examples from four national science institutions that provide assistance to policymakers through different mechanisms of engagement.
2:40 - 3:00 PM	Networking Break	
3:00 - 4:30 PM	Identifying Science Gaps in Agriculture and Energy Policy	State governments and communities have policy goals in agriculture and energy that would benefit from scientific research. In this session, state and local actors identify how science has helped achieve policy goals and what scientific results are still needed to advance policy further.
4:15 - 5:15 PM	Fireside Chat	Institutions Supporting State and Local Policy
5:15 - 5:30 PM	Closing Remarks	
5:30 PM	Reception	

NAAS Leadership Summit Attendees

*Indicates NAAS Board Members

Maria Agapito*
President, NJ Academy of Science
Wayne, NJ
magapito@caldwell.edu

Hamed Benghuzzi
Executive Director, Mississippi Academy of Science
Madison, MS
benghuzzi@bellsouth.net

Susan Booth
VJAS Director, Virginia
Newport News, VA
director@vjas.org

Ellen Buckner
Trustee, Alabama
Birmingham, AL
ebbuckner@gmail.com

Laura Corey
President Elect, Illinois
Jacksonville, IL
laura.corey@ic.edu

John Doucet*
President, Louisiana Academy of Sciences
Thibodaux, LA
john.doucet@nicholls.edu

Nathaniel Draper
Executive Director, Virginia
Montpelier, VA
ndraper@vasem.org

Renske Dyedov
Director of Programs, Washington State Academy of Sciences
Seattle, WA
renske.dyedov@washacad.org

Emadelden Fouad
Associate Professor, Florida Academy of Science
Sarasota, FL
efouad@floridapoly.edu

Lisa Frazier
Assistant Director for Research, Ohio
Columbus, OH
frazier.202@osu.edu

Amanda Fuller
Executive Director, Kentucky
Louisville, KY
executivedirector@kyscience.org

Donna Gerardi*
President, NAAS
Seattle, WA
donna.riordan@wsu.edu

Jennifer Hackney*
Past President, Arizona-Nevada
Phoenix, AZ
jennifer.hackney.1@asu.edu

Terrence Henry
Executive Director, Texas Academy of Medicine, Engineering, Science and Technology (TAMEST)
Austin, TX
thenry@austin.utexas.edu

Aparna Kapale
Executive Secretary of ISAS, Illinois State Academy of Science
Macomb, IL
isasexecutivesecretary@gmail.com

John Kaup
SCJAS Executive Director / NAAS Liaison, South Carolina
Greenville, SC
john.kaup@furman.edu

Julianne McCall
CEO, California Council of Science & Technology (CCST)
Sacramento, CA
jmccall@ccst.us

Katherine McCarville
President, North Dakota Academy of Sciences
Minot, ND
katherine.mccarville@minotstateu.edu

Monica Metzler
Executive Director, ISC, Illinois
Chicago, IL
MMetzler@IllinoisScience.org

Jessica Moon
President, Kentucky Academy of Sciences
Murray, KY
jmoon8@murraystate.edu

Jeffrey Orszak
Executive Director, Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering
East Hartford, CT
jorszak@ctcase.org

Rachel Owen
Managing Director, NAAS
Champaign, IL
rachel@rkoconsultinggroup.com

Yogen Panta
Editor, West Virginia
Beckley, WV
ympanta@mail.wvu.edu

Marius Pelmus
Science Program Chairman, New Jersey Academy of Science
South Orange, NJ
mariuspelmus@yahoo.com

Katherine Polokonis
Executive Director, Academy of Science of St. Louis
St. Louis, MO
kpolokonis@academyofsciencestl.org

Dan Poole*
Past-President of UAS
NAAS Board/AJAS Chair, Utah
Salt Lake City, UT
daniel.poole@slcc.edu

Vinay Raj*
Past President, Arkansas Academy of Sciences
Pine Bluff, AR
rajv@uapb.edu

Amanda Roe
President-Elect, Nebraska Academy of Science
Ashland, NE
aroe@csm.edu

Kevin Sands
Executive Director, Minnesota Academy of Sciences
St. Paul, MN
director@mnmas.org

Kerri Schnase-Berge*
Executive Director, Nebraska Academy of Sciences
Lincoln, NE
kschnase-berge2@unl.edu

Liz Subrin*
Executive Director, Indiana Academy of Sciences
Indianapolis, IN
director@indianaacademyofscience.org

Chris Thomas*
STEM Instructor and Director, NC Student Academy, North Carolina
Durham, NC
thomas@ncssm.edu

Hallie Thompson
Outreach Director, NAAS
Boonville, MO
hallie@radiclestrategy.com

Lindsay Thompson
Operations Manager, NAAS
Greenville, SC
lindsay@rkoconsultinggroup.com

Michelle Tucci
Journal Chief Editor, Program Chair and Council Member, Mississippi Academy of Science
Madison, MS
Mtucci@umc.edu

Philip Winchell*
NAAS Archivist, NAAS
Enon, OH
sessohio@woh.rr.com

Gifford Wong
Senior Policy Advisor, California
Sacramento, CA
gifford.wong@gmail.com

Michael Woytek*
Executive Director, The Ohio Academy of Sciences
Dublin, OH
mwoytek@ohiosci.org

Lei Zhang*
President, North Carolina Academy of Science
Raleigh, NC
zhangl@wssu.edu