Advocacy Panel – Influencing Policy

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Notes for Presentation

• Asked to share tips and ideas on how researchers can influence policy
  o Make it accessible
  o Make it relevant
  o Make it timely
  o
• Lessons learned
  o Accessibility
    ▪ importance of communicating research in a form and language that is accessible to policy makers. Avoid acronyms and jargon.
  o Relevant
    ▪ Lesson from Dr. David Turpin – ask the policy maker what is the most pressing issue on their mind – engage them where they are
  o Timely
    ▪ get the information to policy makers when they need it and in form that recognizes they do not have the time to read (use one pagers, executive summaries)

• Case study #1
  o My favourite story of scientists influencing policy
  o Written up by Peter Haas (1989) who introduces the concept of epistemic communities
  o Shares the story of how the science community around the Mediterranean where able to forge consensus through focusing the discussion on the scientific facts and what they suggested about the necessary policy action
  o Moved it out of the forum of socio-political dialogue between the developed and developing countries that framed the Mediterranean
  o From the shared scientific consensus, the foundation was built for a Mediterranean ocean policy

• Case Study #2
  o Example of less impact
  o CHONe conference 2015
  o My key observation was the disappointment of the community of ocean scientists that their years of ocean research were having no impact on government policy
  o Around the room – leading Canadian marine biologists, oceanographers etc but no one with a background or knowledge in government, public policy or public administration
  o They assumed they understood how to influence government policy and did not recognize it as something that might require specialized knowledge or background
  o Benefit of a multi-disciplinary approach