Science Policy (‘SciPol’) Tracking Program
Brought to you by Duke’s Initiative for Science & Society (‘S&S’)

SciPol (scipol.duke.edu) is an S&S signature program, designed to better integrate science into policy and legal decision-making. The site provides unbiased updates on rapidly evolving areas of science within the policy landscape, by publishing:

- Original briefs;
- Novel perspective pieces;
- Reposted news articles;
- Calendared announcements of opportunities-to-engage in the governmental policy-making process; and
- Job opportunities within the broad arena of science policy and bioethics.

**Target Audience**
SciPol seeks to engage a broad and diverse user base, including academia, nonprofits, government, industry, and the media.

**Focus Areas**
The program launched in the fall of 2016, with coverage of Genetics/Genomics and Neuroscience; expansion into Robotics/Artificial Intelligence occurred January, 2017, and Nanotechnology in March, 2017. Energy will follow later in 2017. SciPol plans to onboard additional verticals (topics); discussions with potential partners are underway.

**Original Briefs (Government, Industry, Academia, & Other)**
Original nonpartisan government policy development briefs objectively overview a discrete piece of science policy generated by an actor within the executive, legislative, regulatory, or judicial branch of government. Each document summarizes the policy action, explains the relevant science at issue, highlights associated experts, presents endorsements and opposition, relays the policy’s status, and presents other related governmental actions. Every brief is downloadable as a PDF and contains embedded hyperlinks a user can click through to learn more about a topic, if desired. Beginning the summer of 2017, SciPol will also publish other types of development briefs, to cover significant actions by industry and academia, as well as other categorical entities that shape the policy landscape.
Defining “Science Policy”

Expanding the site to incorporate additional brief types reflects an evolution in how SciPol defines public policy—broadening from an exclusive focus on governmental actions toward incorporating the activities of relevant stakeholders from other sectors that significantly influence the policy landscape. As such, SciPol defines public policy broadly:

**Public policy** may be thought of as the processes and players involved in making governmental decisions, the factors that influence their decisions, and the manner in which those decisions are carried out. This definition encompasses the roles of the various players in the process, the factors that motivate them, and the effectiveness of their actions.¹

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**Novel Perspective Pieces**

Balanced perspective pieces on issues within science policy are another nascent content type within SciPol. These posts are generated by contributors, such as students and relevant experts.

**Contributors**

Briefs and perspective pieces are authored by students, who receive edits and feedback to train them in the skills of writing and analysis, as well as ensuring the quality of published content. The drafting and editing process is vertically integrated, including undergraduates, graduate students, post-doctoral students, and faculty. Students will graduate having researched, analyzed, and published on contemporary science policy topics, positioning them to have profound and long-term impacts on science policy.

**How To Get Involved (Individuals & Organizations)**

Both individuals and organizations may become involved in SciPol. Individuals looking to contribute to the site as an author or editor may contact a SciPol team member to discuss contribution opportunities in more detail (SciPol leadership emails are available at scipol.duke.edu/content/about). In the event that all parties would like to proceed with the individual’s onboarding, additional orientation and training materials will be provided.

SciPol partners with other entities to generate site content (e.g., Humans and Autonomy Lab, Center for the Environmental Implications of Nanotechnology, Kornbluth Laboratory, Energy Initiative, and The Mary Duke Biddle Foundation). If you are interested in collaborating with SciPol on an organizational level, please contact S&S Director, Nita Farahany, or Deputy Director, Michael “Buz” Waitzkin (contact information is available at https://scienceandsociety.duke.edu/about-us/people/leadership-staff/).