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The Governance of Science

The science-society relationship is complex, at times volatile, and always a mix of hope and hype. In modern times, science has become inextricably intertwined with major political, social, national security, and economic interests. Science and scientists are subject to competing claims from an expanding number of stakeholders who see the relevance of research to their core concerns. It is in this context that debates about the governance of science take place.

Most scientists today would agree that their work does not exist in isolation from the larger community, and most would acknowledge society's prerogative to regulate their work. Yet, the relationship is not one-sided. The scientific community has successfully argued that regulations can be a blunt instrument for dealing with an endeavor that by its very nature is a "journey into the unknown," and that "overregulation" can impede innovation. The governance of science presents many challenges for scientists and the larger society. Dealing with complexity is never easy. Finding the "right" balance involves negotiating with many competing interests over the boundaries of scientific freedom and responsibility.

This talk will examine the changing landscape of scientific freedom and responsibility and what it might mean for the integrity of science in the context of increasing international collaborations among researchers.