



CSIP RESEARCH FORUM

Science, technology and innovation policy is essential in shaping our future. Translating the narrative into clear options, strategies and outcomes is necessary, but far from simple.

Wednesday, March 4
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

USask location: Canada Room,
101 Diefenbaker Building

U of R location: Register by emailing
amanda.white@usask.ca, and join via
Zoom.

Losing faith in science: How beliefs and uncertainty impact the use of evidence in decision-making

PRESENTED BY: Peggy Schmeiser, JSGS Assistant Professor and CSIP Associate Director

In this so-called “post-truth” era, numerous trends are undermining confidence in the nature, credibility and use of concepts like “evidence” and “facts” in policy-making processes. Recent studies on public exposure to mass quantities of information and “fake news” via the Internet and social media illustrate the breadth of material that can now pass as “evidence” at instantaneous, global levels. Public movements that build on assumptions or belief systems that raise doubts or concerns about science illustrate the influence of framing on public acceptance or perceptions of risk in relation to various scientific pursuits and technologies. In addition, government leaders are presented with multiple and often conflicting “expert” perspectives and research that can easily lead to ill-informed policies or a rejection of evidence altogether as unreliable or too complex for a fast-paced, politically charged environment. Meanwhile, discourse within scientific and research communities about the limitations, contradictions and/or politically motivated restrictions in communication surrounding their findings have only compounded the confusion and trepidation surrounding knowledge claims. While “evidence” may be regarded as just one tool or factor influencing decision-making, its role remains paramount in public policy processes. Review and analysis of the various sources of uncertainty and suspicion surrounding the potential deployment and credibility of “evidence” will therefore enable new avenues for understanding, framing and reaffirming the importance of science and research in public initiatives and discourse.

The Centre for the Study of Science and Innovation Policy (CSIP) invites all students, faculty, researchers, and citizens interested in the study of science, technology and innovation policy to participate in a bi-weekly research forum.

