

**SPOTTED**

# Standing tall; defying bullies; stronger together

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## WEEK OF NOVEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

### Standing tall

The results of Tuesday's election were hard for some scientists to swallow. Donald Trump has called climate change a "hoax," criticized the National Institutes of Health and pledged to ban certain people from entering the United States. This might not bode well for research funding or for recruiting skilled scientists from abroad.

But rather than despair, **researchers should rally**, says **Andrew Rosenberg**, director of the Union of Concerned Scientists in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"Scientists need to stand up and be heard," Rosenberg, former senior official at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, told *Science*. "They can't just hunker down in their labs and say that they won't get involved because the election didn't go the way they wanted it to."

During his campaign, Trump said that the federal government should "**invest in science, engineering, healthcare** and other areas that will make the lives of Americans better, safer and more prosperous." How he will do this is unclear, but one of the first steps will be to **appoint a science advisor**.

"In thinking about who might suit Donald Trump's personality," engineering professor and former White House staffer **Deborah Stine** told *Science*, "a candidate close to retirement or retired from business and industry, who has the respect of the scientific, engineering, and innovation community and is interested in undertaking the challenges of public service, might be the best choice."

#### SOURCES:

**Science** / 09 Nov 2016

Here's some advice for you, President Trump, from scientists

<http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/11/here-s-some-advice-you-president-trump-scientists>

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## Defying bullies

Peer review is a crucial part of the scientific process that typically unfolds behind the scenes. But some researchers are critiquing published studies on social media in hurtful ways, according to **Susan Fiske**, professor of psychology and public affairs at Princeton University.

In a blog post for the Association for Psychological Science (APS) last week, Fiske argues that it's time to change **science's culture of shaming**.

"Our field has always encouraged — required, really — peer critiques," writes Fiske, past president of the APS. "But the new media (e.g., blogs, Twitter, Facebook) can encourage a certain amount of uncurated, unfiltered denigration. In the most extreme examples, individuals are finding their research programs, their careers, and their personal integrity under attack."

Fiske says these science bullies are a minority with an outsized impact. They have caused young researchers to abandon academia and encouraged senior faculty to retire early.

"Ultimately, science is a community, and we are in it together," she writes. "Science has achieved much through collaboration, but also through responding to constructive adversaries who make their critiques respectfully. The key word here is constructive."

### SOURCES:

**Association for Psychological Science** / 31 Oct 2016

A call to change science's culture of shaming

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/a-call-to-change-sciences-culture-of-shaming>

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## Stronger together

Women in science collaborate **more than their male counterparts**, according to a study published last week in *PLOS Biology*.

The researchers found that women are less likely than men to pen two or more papers with the same collaborators. Interestingly, having varied collaborations correlates with producing work of greater impact, according to the study.

The study also looks at the representation of women across certain fields. It calls out genomics as a discipline dominated by men. Other fields, such as telomere research, are more balanced. The researchers attribute this balance to a small group of prominent scientists that “supported female scientists at a time when misogyny was widely accepted.”

**SOURCES:**

**PLOS Biology** / 04 Nov 2016

Differences in collaboration patterns across discipline, career stage, and gender

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27814355>

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## Gut reaction

There is mounting evidence that the billions of microbes that reside in the gut play a role in a range of brain conditions, including autism. *Spectrum* took a close look **how microbes might shape autism** last fall.

A review published this week in *Cell* explores the **role of gut bacteria in brain development**. Lead author **Sarkis Mazmanian**, professor of microbiology at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California, has compared an individual’s microbiome to a fingerprint. “We’re all very different,” he told *Spectrum* last year.

**SOURCES:**

**Cell** / 03 Nov 2016

The central nervous system and the gut microbiome

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27814521>

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## Hope in humor

If you need a lift this weekend, watch the trailer for “**Asperger’s Are Us**.”

The documentary follows a comedy troupe made up of four young men on the autism spectrum. The film, which premiered at the South by Southwest Festival in Austin, Texas, in March, hits iTunes 15 November.

**SOURCES:**

**Asperger’s Are Us** / 03 Nov 2016

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<https://www.spectrumnews.org>

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Asperger's are us

<https://www.facebook.com/aspiecomedydoc/>

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## Job news

Making a career move? Send your news to [jobmoves@spectrumnews.org](mailto:jobmoves@spectrumnews.org).

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