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Vice President for Research

Introduction to Research Impact for Communicators

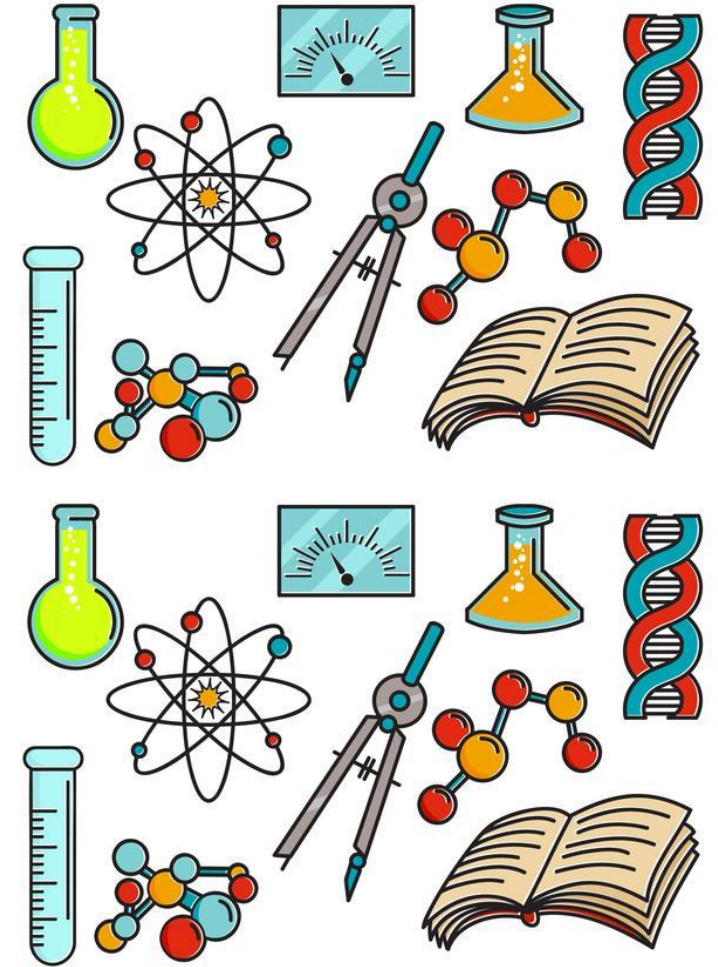
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Sr. Associate Vice President for Research, Emory University



Why Is Communicating Research Impact Important?

- Rebuild trust in science
- Help the public understand how research improves their lives
- Help legislators understand how research is improving the economy, national security, and other aspects of society
- Help taxpayers understand their return on investment or benefit when public funding is used for research and scholarship
- Combat stereotypes about academia
- Position Emory University as a valuable asset to Atlanta, the state of Georgia, and the country



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What Is Research* Impact?

*Research, scholarship, and creative activities

“Research impact is the provable effects (benefits) of research in the ‘real world.’” – Julie Bayley

“... how things outside of academia are somehow different because of research.” – Julie Bayley

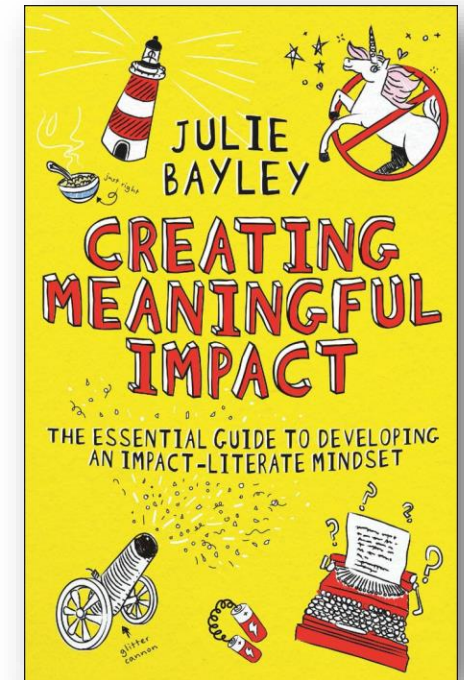
“...using research to make a difference to the world in which we live...” – Julie Bayley

“The demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy.” – UK Research and Innovation

“an effect on, change, or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy, or services, health, the environment or quality of life beyond academia.” – UK Research Excellence Framework

“The contribution that research makes to the economy, society, environment, or culture, beyond the contribution to academic research.” – Australian Research Council

“The societal impact of the [research].” – National Science Foundation

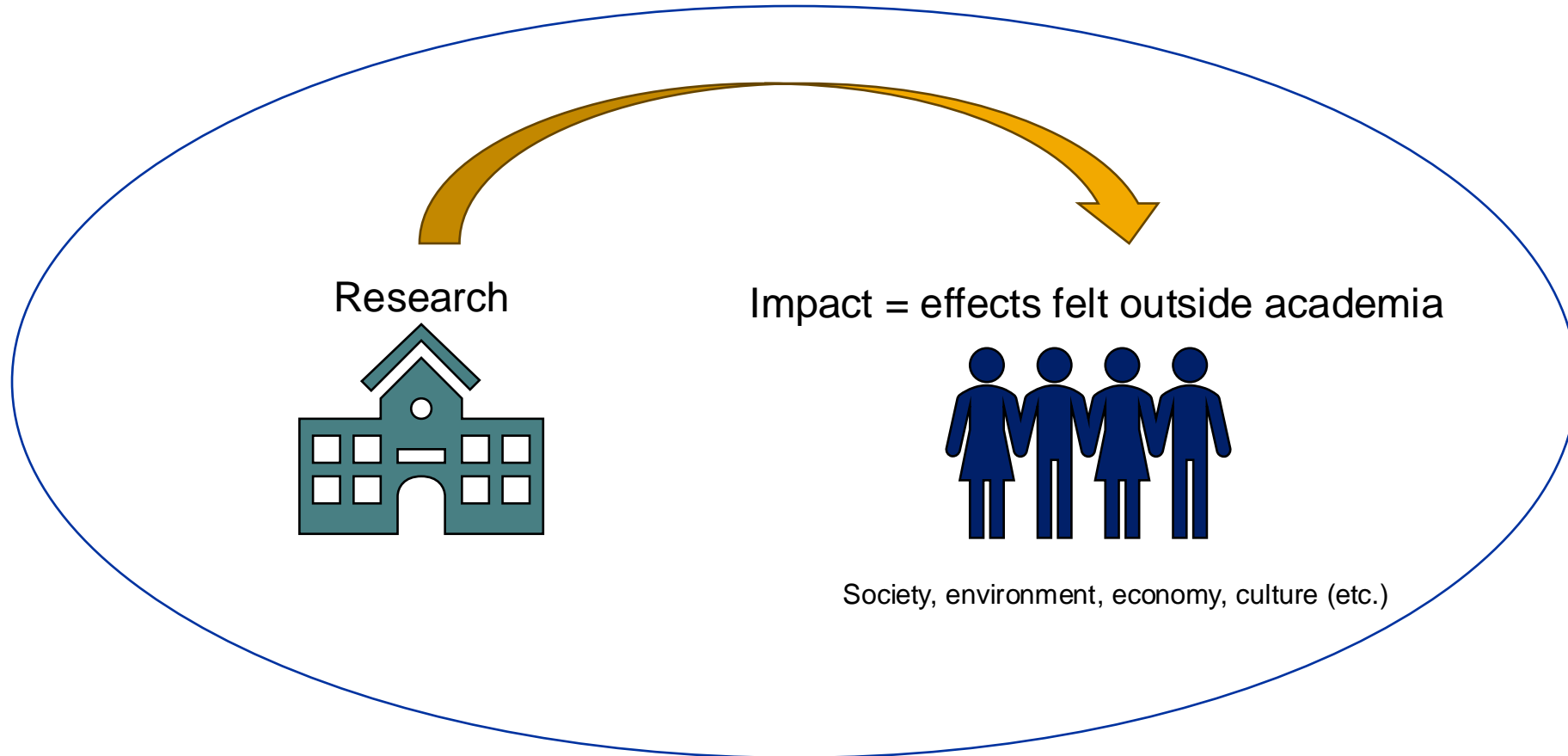


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What Is Research Impact?



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Recreated from Creating
Meaningful Impact by Julie Bayley



What Is Research Impact?



Not Research Impact

- Getting an article published in Nature
- Winning a multi-million dollar grant
- Generating a lot of citations
- Delivering a prestigious keynote
- Applying for a patent
- Having a high H-index
- Disseminating information
- Impacts stemming from teaching and learning (unless research is embedded)



Research Impact

- Building capacity to do something
- Changing a behavior
- Changing public policy
- Increasing awareness of
- Increasing understanding of
- Improving the services are provided
- Changing clinical guidelines or creating a new standard of care

These are still important! Just not research impact.



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...in the real world



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A Not-So-Secret Secret



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Communicators' Tools: Power Up and Passing The Baton



Powering up is the act of mobilizing all or some aspects of your research.

What does your research power up?

What would be different in the world if your research didn't exist?

Mobilizing relevant parts of your research (WHAT), in appropriate ways (HOW) to those who can use it (WHO) for a reason that matter to them (WHY).

Who can pick up the baton of your research?

Who can champion by amplifying your message but might not be in a position to use?

Who can connect you to people who might use your research?

Who can directly use the insights from your research?



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Communicators' Tools: Verbs

What does your research do for them [the stakeholders or impacted group]?

Accelerate

Improves

Amplifies

Offers a new way to

Avoids

Reduces

Consolidates

Simplifies

Creates the opportunities to

Solves

Eliminates

Strengthens

Empowers

Validates

Enables

...in the real world

Enhances

Equips



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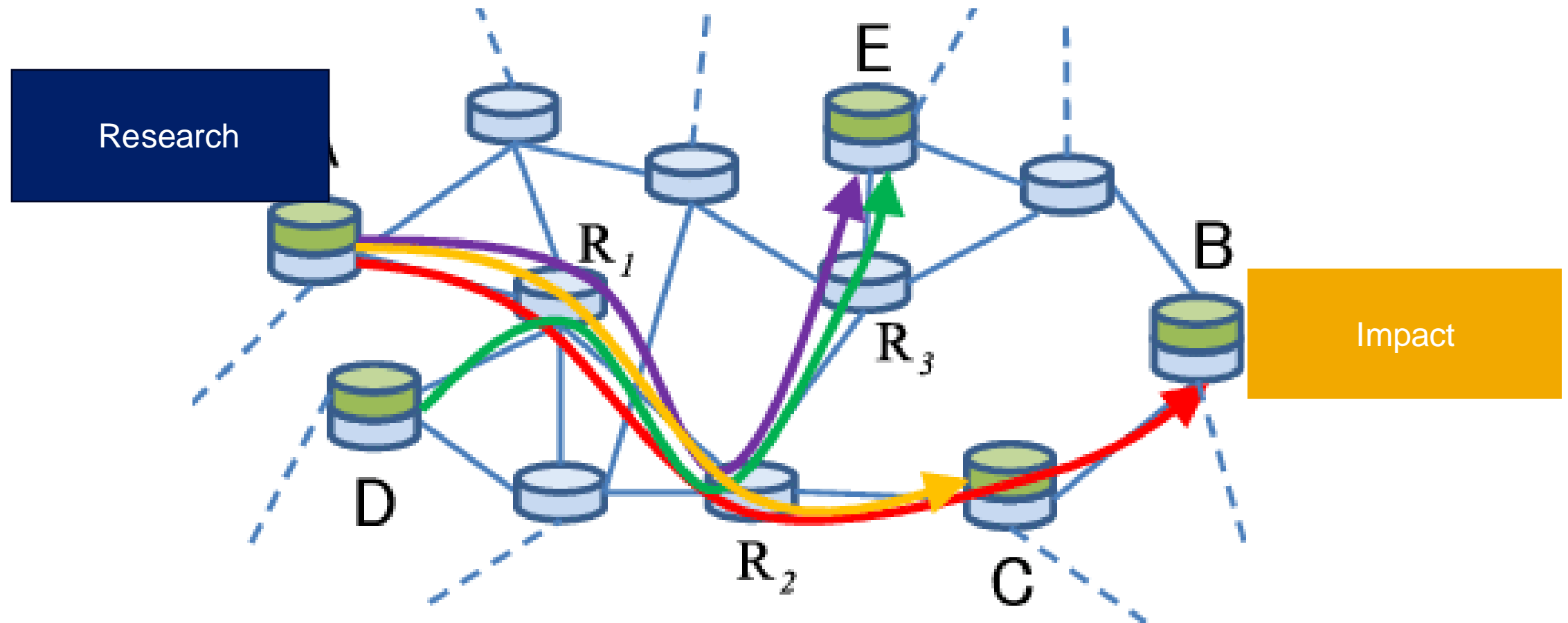
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Communicators' Tools: Problem to Impact

Problem	Example Terms	Impact Goal	Example Terms
An insufficiency	Too little, Too slow Restricted, Limited Low rates Unaware Weak, Lack of	An increase	Increased, More Faster, Widened Higher rates Stronger A new
An excess	Too much Too fast High rates Excessive Wasted	A reduction	Reduced, Lower rates Slower, Better paced Less Conserved Safer
A risk if unaddressed	At risk Unsustainable Unsteady Unaddressed Unsafe	A steadier, more secure or sustainable condition	Sustained Sustainable Maintained Safe
A risk if unvalidated	Unchecked Unvalidated	A checked or safeguarded position, or something being continued or stopped	Stopped, Ceased Verified, Validated Eliminated, Avoided

Communicators' Tools: Research To Impact Pathways



Communicators' Tools: Research To Impact Pathways



Considerations When Communicating Impact

- Impact doesn't happen immediately; need time for impact to happen
- “New” might mean previously untold; not necessarily that it happened yesterday
- May need input from stakeholders and those using the research to implement or create impact
- May need input from those impacted
- Some researchers won't identify with the concept of research impact and that is okay
- We will not always be able to tell the full story; might need to find milestones along the path to impact





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Examples



A Few Examples of Research Impact From Faculty

1. I think the biggest "research impact" of my project so far was the media's communication of the main results from my survey that the URC funded. For example, the AJC reported the results of my survey that focused on the proposed secession of Buckhead from the city of Atlanta. It even made the front page.
2. In terms of additional productivity, our initial serological assessment of pregnant women in Risaralda, Colombia was published in September 2022 (PMID: 35817285). This work provided samples and data that supported a further analysis of epitope-specific antibody immunity among pregnant women in this region of Colombia (DEC 2023, PMID: 37983984). Collaboration among the Emory-based investigators on this award were also able to leverage the analytic tools and framework germane to the URC work for a related application of defining arbovirus seroprevalence and discovering an unappreciated dengue-2 outbreak in western Cameroon (OCT 2022, PMID: 36223421).
3. The goal of this environmental surveillance project was to evaluate whether wastewater sampling might be a viable strategy for identifying Atlanta communities that may be at higher risk of harboring or becoming infected with drug-resistant bacteria. Through this pilot work, we found that concentrations of antibiotic-resistant bacteria significantly vary across Atlanta sewersheds, and after controlling for potential healthcare inputs, we found that some of this variability is explained by sociodemographic characteristics of the communities contributing wastewater to these sewersheds ... We shared these results with wastewater treatment plant operators and workers at the City of Atlanta and Fulton County during an in-person stakeholder meeting this past May. We have a jointly authored publication that is forthcoming and are seeking funding opportunities to expand on this collaboration.

