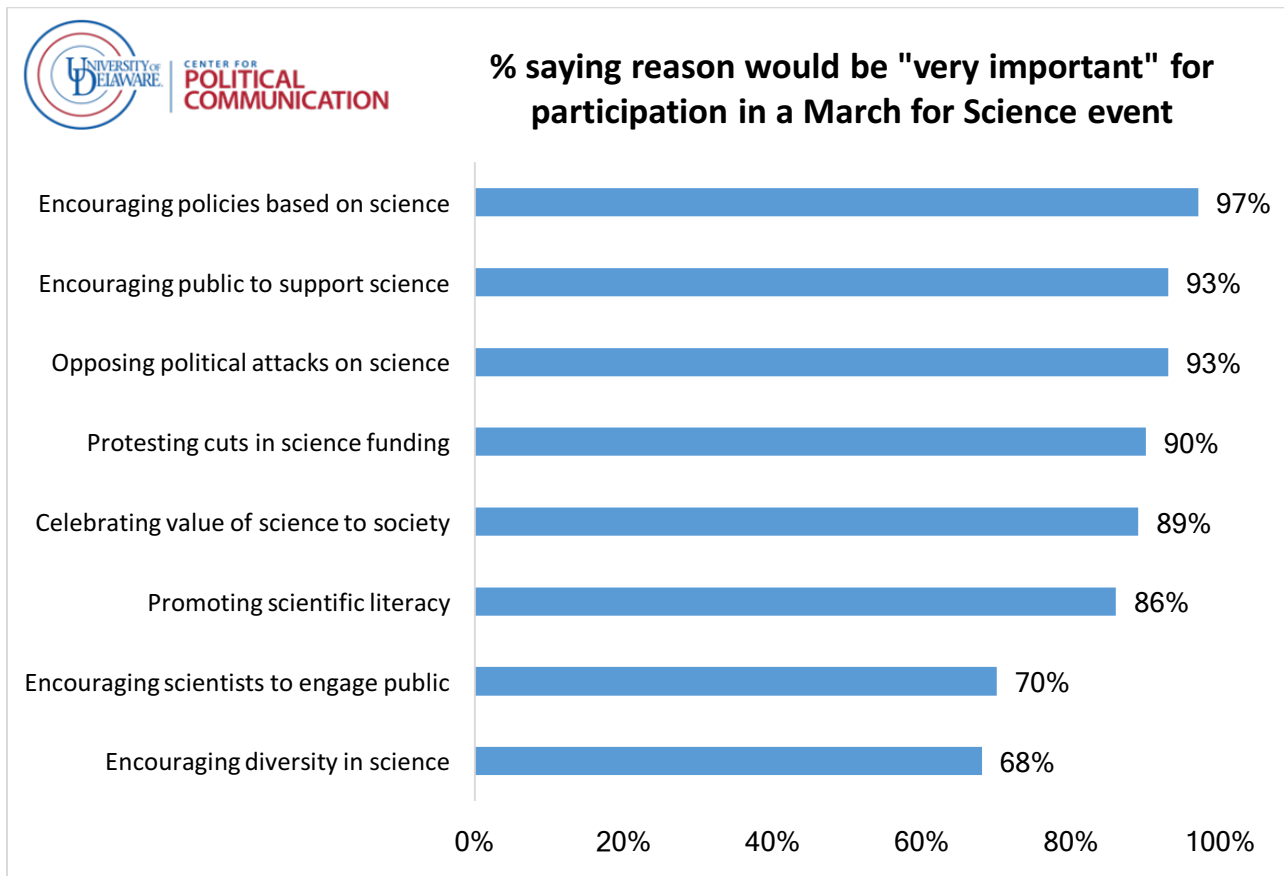# March for Science participants seek evidence-based policies and public support for science

Defending science from political attacks is as much of a motivator for March for Science participants as proactive measures such as encouraging science-based policies and fostering public support for science, according to a new University of Delaware Center for Political Communication survey.

The study, conducted from March 31 to April 18, 2017, surveyed 1,040 members of March for Science Facebook groups or pages about their reasons for marching in April 22 events across the United States and around the globe.

Fully 97% of respondents said that "encouraging public officials to make policies based on scientific facts and evidence" would be very important to them as a reason for participating in a March for Science event. But "opposing political attacks on the integrity of science" (93%) also ranked near the top, tied with "encouraging the public to support science" as a top priority.
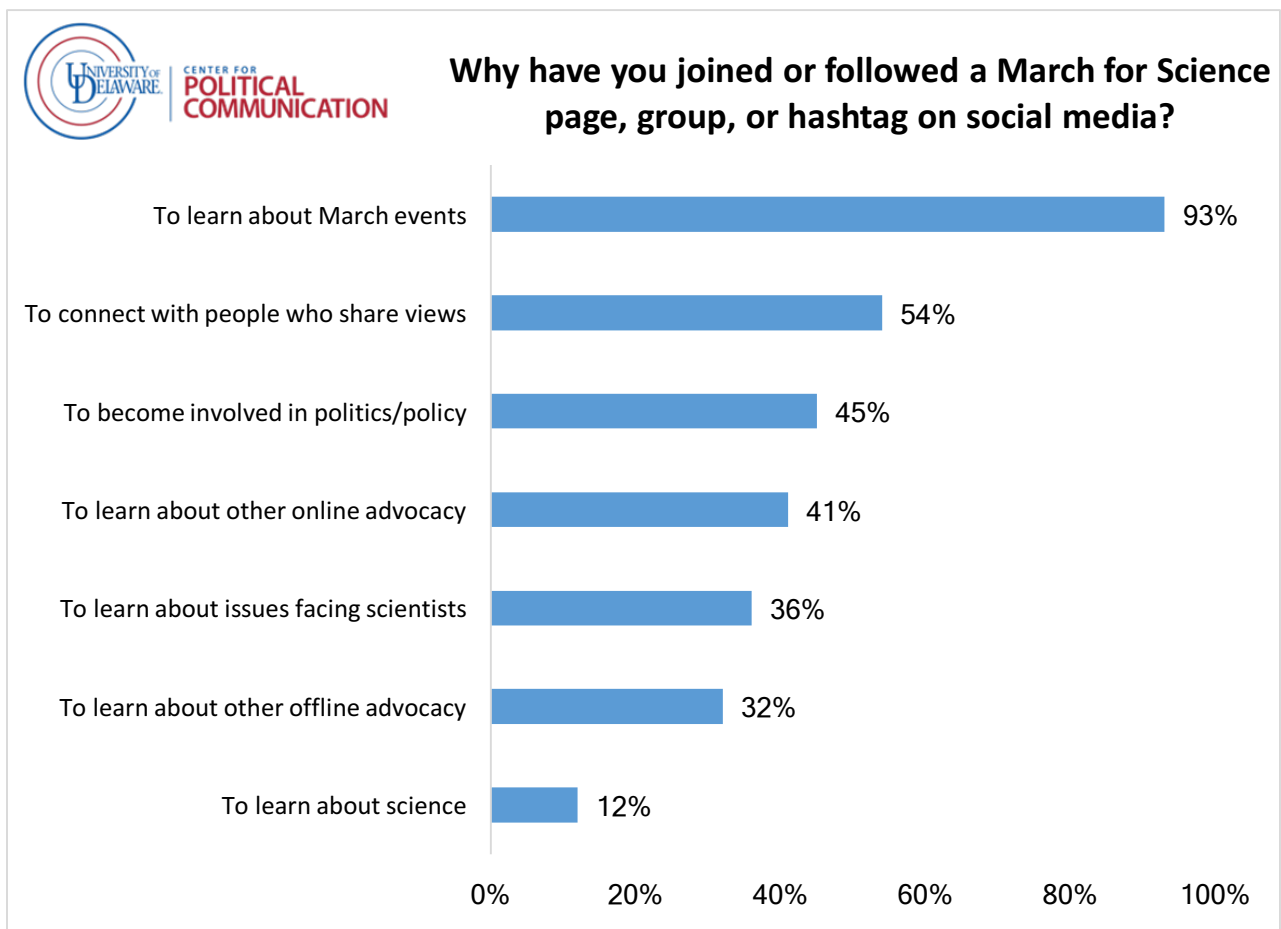
Other reasons that most respondents rated as very important included "protesting cuts to funding for scientific research" (90%), "celebrating the value of science and scientists to society" (89%), and "promoting science education and scientific literacy among the public" (86%).

% saying reason would be "very important" for participation in a March for Science event

Reason	%
Encouraging policies based on science	97%
Encouraging public to support science	93%
Opposing political attacks on science	93%
Protesting cuts in science funding	90%
Celebrating value of science to society	89%
Promoting scientific literacy	86%
Encouraging scientists to engage public	70%
Encouraging diversity in science	68%

Fewer respondents ranked "encouraging scientists to engage the public" (70%) and "encouraging diversity and inclusion in science" (68%) as highly. Nevertheless, solid majorities said these reasons were very important.
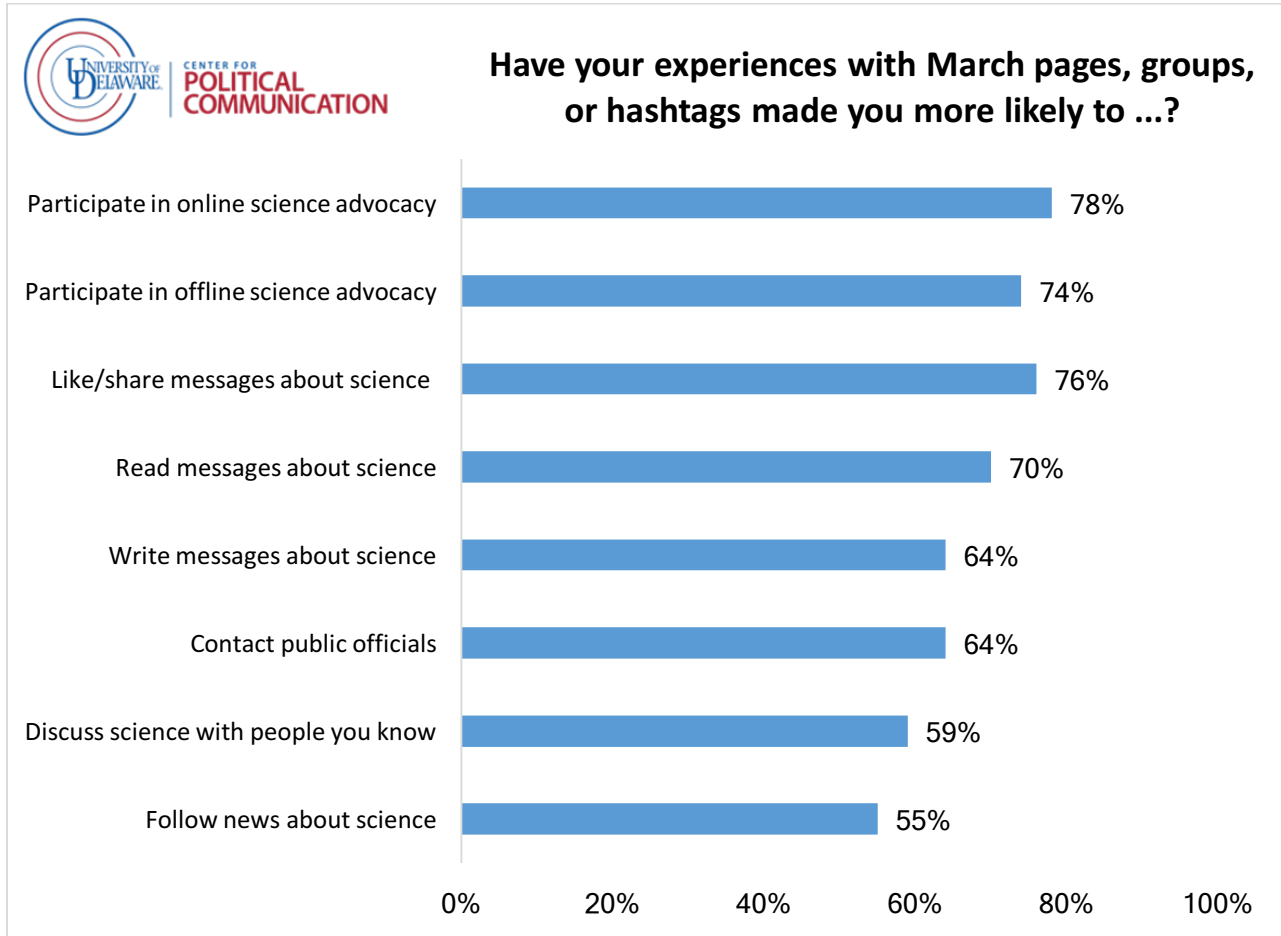
The survey also asked respondents why they had joined or followed March for Science pages, groups, or hashtags on social media. Not surprisingly, the top reason was "to learn about March for Science events" (93%). A majority (54%) also said they joined "to connect with people who share my views."

Other common reasons for joining or following included "to become more involved in politics or policy-making" (45%), "to learn about other online advocacy and activism opportunities" (41%), "to learn about issues facing scientists and scientific institutions" (36%), and "to learn about other offline advocacy and activism opportunities" (32%). Only a small percentage of respondents said they joined or followed "to learn about science" (12%).

Why have you joined or followed a March for Science page, group, or hashtag on social media?

Reason	Percentage
To learn about March events	93%
To connect with people who share views	54%
To become involved in politics/policy	45%
To learn about other online advocacy	41%
To learn about issues facing scientists	36%
To learn about other offline advocacy	32%
To learn about science	12%

When asked whether their experiences with March for Science social media pages, groups, or hashtags had made them more likely to participate in science advocacy, 78% of respondents said yes for online advocacy and 74% said yes for offline advocacy. In addition, large majorities said their experiences had made them more likely to like or share (76%), read (70%) and write (64%) messages about science on social media.

Almost two-thirds (64%) said their experiences with March for Science social media had made them more likely to contact public officials about science. Majorities also said their experiences had made them more likely to discuss science with people they knew (59%) and to follow news about science (55%).

Have your experiences with March pages, groups, or hashtags made you more likely to ...?

Category	Percentage
Participate in online science advocacy	78%
Participate in offline science advocacy	74%
Like/share messages about science	76%
Read messages about science	70%
Write messages about science	64%
Contact public officials	64%
Discuss science with people you know	59%
Follow news about science	55%

About the study

The study was supervised Barbara Ley, a professor in the Department of Communication and Women & Gender Studies at the University of Delaware, with support from the University of Delaware Center for Political Communication.

The survey was conducted online from March 31 to April 18, 2017. The 1,040 respondents were recruited from 81 different participating March for Science Facebook groups and pages (see below for a full list). The study did not use probability sampling to select respondents; as a result, no sampling error for the study can be calculated, and the results do not necessarily generalize to all March for Science Facebook group and page members. Of the respondents, 82% were residents of the United States and 18% were residents of other countries. A large majority (81%) identified as women, with 18% identifying as men, and 1% as other. Half (50%) of the respondents said they considered themselves scientists.

Please contact Barbara Ley at bley@udel.edu for more details about the survey's methodology.

Participating March for Science Facebook Groups and Pages

Arkansas
Atlanta, GA
Atlantic City, NJ
Baltimore, MD
Berlin, Germany
Boston, MA
Bratislava, Slovakia
Brussels, Belgium
Buffalo, NY
Cape Town, South Africa
Champaign-Urbana, IL
Charleston, SC
Charlottesville, VA
Cleveland, OH
Copenhagen, Denmark
Denver, CO
Des Moines, IA
Duluth, MN
Dunedin, New Zealand
Estonia
Fargo (ND)/Moorhead (MN)
Grand Rapids, MI
Guam
Halifax, Canada
Hamilton, Canada
Houston, TX
India
Indianapolis, IN
Iowa
Irish STEM Solidarity with US
Jackson, MS
Kalamazoo, MI
Kansas City, MO
Las Cruces, NM
Las Vegas, NV
Lexington, KY
Lisbon, Portugal
Lithuania
London, United Kingdom
Los Angeles, CA
Louisiana

Louisville, KY
Luxembourg
Milwaukee, WI
Mobile, AL
Newark, DE
Nigeria
Norway
Oklahoma
Omaha, NE
Panama
Paris, France
Puerto Rico
Philadelphia, PA
Philippines
Phoenix, AR
Portland, OR
Raleigh, NC
Reykjavík, Iceland
Rhode Island
Riverside, CA
Rochester, NY
Rome, Italy
Rutgers at Trenton, NJ
St. Louis, MO
São Paulo, Brazil
San Francisco, CA
Seattle, WA
Seville, Spain
Silicon Valley, CA
South Bend, IN
Space Coast, FL
Sydney, Australia
Taiwan
Tokyo, Japan
Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda
Vancouver, Canada
Vermont
Virtual March for Science
West Palm Beach, FL