

19 March 2026

Title: I Came For Science: A podcast about the science of sex and reproduction

Issues including those related to climate change and COVID-19 have laid bare the distrust of academic scientists. In our current political environment, this distrust has contributed to dismantling of long-standing scientific processes and institutions. Distrust in scientists and spread of misinformation about science-related topics have been increasing in recent years and have been exacerbated by the speed of sharing through digital media. One way to reduce these problems is through fostering effective and respectful communication between academic scientists and the public.

Although appreciation of the importance of science communication is increasing, science communication has an inclusion problem. Just as people from certain identity groups have been excluded from being involved in scientific research and as the subjects of health-related studies, science communication originally developed as if there was a single homogeneous audience. As a result, some communities are left out as target audiences for scientific information that could enhance their lives and well-being. In recognition of this problem, there is now a push to develop inclusive approaches to science communication.

In response to this call for scientists to engage in inclusive science communication, we launched a podcast entitled "I Came For Science" in February, 2024 (<https://www.icameforscience.org/>). This podcast is about the science of sex and reproduction, the journeys of the scientists who study these topics, and inclusion in STEM.

The Mission of "I Came For Science" is to:

- increase appreciation and understanding of how the science of reproduction can impact our everyday lives
- inspire people from identity groups that have traditionally been excluded from science to become involved in research, especially research that impacts their own lives
- improve trust for science by people from identity groups that have been marginalized by, harmed by, and/or taken advantage of by science
- Share a behind-the-scenes look of a research lab that studies reproduction



The podcast production team is made up of myself and a group of students and alums from The College of Wooster. We are currently in our 5th season of the podcast. In previous seasons, we have covered a range of topics including the science of pubic hair, masturbation, female arousal, sexual assault testing, reproductive loss, and adolescent pornography use.

With the help of the ABS Outreach Grant, we are working to produce a season in which we specifically feature early-career animal behavior researchers from diverse lived experiences who are studying sex and reproduction and/or working towards increased inclusion in STEM. We will focus on animal behavior topics that relate to some aspect of human behavior of public interest to draw in a broad audience and expose them to topics such as mechanisms of behavior and evolutionary approaches to understanding behavior.

We are looking for more guests to feature, so please let us know if you or someone you know would like to participate by contacting Laura: Lsirot@wooster.edu.

