

## 2019 NSE Grantees Conference

### Societal Aspects

#### Larry Bell

Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives, Museum of Science, Boston



**Abstract:** The Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network worked from 2005 to 2017 to build the capacity of informal education organizations and university-based research centers to engage public audiences in learning about nanoscale science, engineering, and technology. Over 600 organizations and over 2,700 professionals were involved with the Network. A total of 1650 kits of educational materials were distributed, and 93 copies of the "Nano" exhibition were placed at locations throughout the country, reaching over 10 million members of the public each year. At the end of its funding for nanotechnology, the NISE Net rebranded itself as the National Informal STEM Education Network, and acquired funding to develop informal educational materials and activities on other topics, some closely connected to nano. Network leaders adapted practices developed for informal nanotechnology education to such topics as synthetic biology, chemistry, sustainability, and space and earth science.

NISE Net's website ([www.nisenet.org](http://www.nisenet.org)) continues to provide access to hundreds of nano educational materials. NISE Net's signature "NanoDays" event is scheduled through 2023. NISE Net encourages NanoDays kit materials to be used throughout the year and the website identifies educational activities from the nano collection suitable for use in nearly 70 special events ranging from World Water Day, World Health Day, Earth Day, and National Engineers Week, to Valentine's Day and Halloween.

**Bio:** Larry Bell has worked at the Museum of Science in various roles since 1971. He led the Museum in a long-range plan employing constructivist learning experiences to provide visitors with practice in science thinking skills. He is interested in public engagement with societal implications of science and technology, activities that engage the public in dialogue and deliberation about socio-scientific issues, and how research in the science of science communication can inform informal education practices. He was the Principle Investigator for the NSF-funded Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network from 2005 to 2017, working to build the capacity of informal education organizations and university-based research centers to engage public audiences in learning about nanoscale science, engineering, and technology. Over

600 organizations and over 2,700 professionals were involved with the Network. A total of 1650 kits of educational materials were distributed, and 93 copies of the "Nano" exhibition were placed at locations throughout the country, reaching over 10 million members of the public each year. At the end of its 11 years of funding for nanotechnology, the NISE Net rebranded itself as the National Informal STEM Education Network and acquired funding to develop informal educational materials and activities on other topics, some closely connected to nano. Network leaders adapted practices developed for informal nanotechnology education to such topics as synthetic biology, chemistry, sustainability, and space and earth science. NISE Net's website ([www.nisenet.org](http://www.nisenet.org)) continues to provide access to hundreds of nano educational materials. NISE Net's signature "NanoDays" event is scheduled through 2023. NISE Net encourages NanoDays kit materials to be used throughout the year and the website identifies educational activities from the nano collection suitable for use in nearly 70 special events ranging from World Water Day, World Health Day, Earth Day, and National Engineers Week, to Valentine's Day and Halloween.