Title: The philosopher of science is by necessity a social animal

Abstract: At the 2018 Philosophy of Science Association, I identified what philosophers of science consider to be the greatest challenges facing philosophy of science today: balance, communication, disconnection, public engagement, & diversity. In this talk, I explore one potential solution to these challenges, being the rethinking of the kind and quality of social engagement of the philosopher of science. I argue that calls to action for philosophers of science to “connect with,” “communicate with,” and “talk with” other philosophers, scientists, historians, and the public suggests that addressing the greatest challenges of philosophy of science requires emphasizing the highly social role philosophers of science must take. I explain precisely what I mean by “highly social,” what this looks like in practice, and how it differs from what is currently being taught and/or valued in the philosophy of science community. I recommend particular graduate and early-career training on the social dimensions of philosophy of science, explore difficulties in socially engaging across disciplines, and point to model scenarios of social engagement by current working philosophers of science. I discuss possible modes of being “highly social” that include engagement in one’s own discipline, one’s institutional life, and on social media, and the advantages and disadvantages of each. I stress the importance of building and maintaining relationships, expanding one’s professional network to include those outside of one’s discipline, and even venturing outside of academia to connect and collaborate with those in scientific industry. I also respond to criticisms of the “highly social” characterization, relating them to concerns of a cultural bias toward extroversion. Ultimately, I hope to show that the relationship between philosophy of science and the sciences, and the knowledge produced through the successful interaction of members of their respective communities may be strengthened if we recognize that philosophers of science are, by necessity, social animals.