

its greenhouse-gas emissions by 30% below the 2005 level by 2030. Many also see that emissions goal, set by Harper, as lacklustre.

And Trudeau has not broached harder subjects, such as fulfilling a campaign promise to phase out fossil-fuel subsidies. “The Trudeau government has squandered an opportunity for effective national action,” says Douglas Macdonald, an environmental-policy expert at the University of Toronto.

### RETHINKING SCIENCE SPENDING

The prime minister’s first budget, released in March, brought good news for scientists: an increase of roughly Can\$95 million for the country’s research councils — more than twice the 2015 boost (see ‘Budget boost’). But there are still grumbles about how research councils’ funds are apportioned. “A lot of money is going to large institutions,” says Walsh. “Your everyday scientists in everyday labs are still struggling.”

Earlier this year, health scientists cried foul over reforms to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) system for awarding grants. Researchers complained that the measures, including a switch to online peer review, made reviews less effective and put early-career scientists at a disadvantage. More than 1,000 researchers signed a letter demanding changes; in September, the CIHR launched an international review of its grant processes.

A broader examination of the government’s science-funding system, called the Fundamental Science Review, began in June. Science minister Kirsty Duncan says that the government has received more than 1,200 public comments, and a final report on the review is due by early 2017 at the latest.

The Trudeau government is also re-examining Harper’s changes to fisheries



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has yet to tackle some of the thorniest science-policy issues in Canada.

and environmental-assessment laws, with recommendations due by early 2017. In the meantime, controversial projects such as a natural-gas plant on the British Columbia coast are receiving government approval. “There is a rush by companies to get hearings over and the necessary papers in place before [environmental assessment] regulations are strengthened,” says David Schindler, an ecologist at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Trudeau’s main campaign promise to scientists was to reinstate evidence-based decision-making. To that end, jobs are being restored to some government research departments after a loss of roughly 1,800 positions during the Harper administration — 344 of those at the agency Environment Canada alone. Now,

the department of fisheries and oceans is hiring 135 scientists. And the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, a union that represents government workers, wants the administration to hire 1,500 extra scientists next year.

Many researchers are waiting for Trudeau to deliver on his promise to install a chief science officer to keep science at the heart of governance. That position is still in the planning stage, and Duncan would not comment on when an appointment would be made.

“We’re kind of still in the honeymoon period,” says Dufour. “Everyone is willing to give the government some long string. But at some point they’re going to have to take some actual action.” ■

### SOCIETY

# @ScientistTrump will make science great again

*Creator of Twitter parody account spotlights issues in science and academia.*

BY SARA REARDON

As the US presidential election grinds into the final stretch, there is one version of Republican nominee Donald Trump that is laser-focused on research. The Twitter account @ScientistTrump showcases a fictional “Donald Trump, PhD”, who does the biggest, best science anywhere in the world. He hounds “weak” leaders of funding agencies

and the “failing” academic journals that don’t endorse him. “Only I can Make Science Great Again,” he tweets.

The man behind @ScientistTrump — ecologist Emilio Bruna at the University of Florida in Gainesville — is no stranger to social-media antics. Last year, as editor-in-chief of the ecology journal *Biotropica*, he instigated rap battles with the Twitter accounts of other science journals. Bruna started the Trump parody account

in July after joking with fellow editors that they should review papers as the presidential candidate would.

The feed went viral immediately and has amassed more than 6,400 followers. Bruna aims to amuse, but the account is also a tool for him to point out real problems in science and academia, including sexual harassment. @ScientistTrump frequently praises journal paywalls and expensive proprietary ▶



A composite image of ecologist Emilio Bruna, creator of the @ScientistTrump parody Twitter account.

► software. “If Donald Trump likes it, it’s probably something we’d like to change about our profession,” Bruna says.

The ecologist runs the account alone, closely monitoring the real Trump’s prolific Twitter feed and speech transcripts. Bruna modifies the candidate’s remarks only slightly to preserve Trump trademarks, such as frequent upper-case text and his braggadocio. “I feel like I know this person’s brain intimately, and it’s really not cool,” says Bruna.

The ecologist finds Trump’s comments repulsive, particularly those that disparage minorities and promise to deport immigrants. Bruna, who is a US citizen, was born in Mexico, and his wife is a US resident alien. He says that his 11-year-old son has come home from school crying, worried that his mother would be deported under a Trump presidency. “I don’t think this election is funny any more,” he says.

Bruna plans to continue tweeting from the @ScientistTrump account, regardless of the election’s outcome. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, although he receives occasional hateful tweets from people who, presumably, don’t realize that it’s a joke.

Bruna has parlayed @ScientistTrump’s notoriety into a political-action committee (PAC) that can collect donations for candidates or

causes. His plans for the ‘Make Science Great Again’ PAC include supporting science education and ecology organizations. The PAC website collates the real Trump’s tweets about science, and will offer ‘Make Science Great Again’ bumper stickers for sale. He has not received any donations so far.

In the final weeks before the election, Bruna expects that the real Trump will keep him particularly busy. “These days, it’s been a killer because he just won’t put his cell phone down,” Bruna says. “I wish he’d do that because I’ve got a manuscript to work on.”

#### THE STATUS OF SCIENCE

*Nature* caught up with @ScientistTrump to get his thoughts on the state of US science — in character, of course. The interview has been edited for length and clarity. The Trump campaign did not respond to a request for comment for this article.

#### What do you think about the state of science in the United States?

US science used to be great, but now it’s a disaster. You know it, we all know it. NIH [National Institutes of Health] and NSF [National Science Foundation] are imploding, they’re very bad. We are facing the threat of Radical Open Access. Also so many in

the Postdoctoral-American community are doing so badly, they’re living in Hell — poverty & rejections way up, jobs & grants way down, tremendous problems. Only I can Make Science Great Again.

#### As president, what will you do to Make Science Great Again?

The first thing I’m going to do is build a huge paywall around Open Access journals and make PLoS pay for it. And then we are going to publish lots of papers because of all the grants I have created ... people are going to get tired of how many papers they have! Only I can do this — I have a very rich lab, and I have a huge H factor. I’ve been building my H factor all my life with only a small number of citations from my adviser to get me started.

#### What makes you a better candidate than your opponent?

My opponent has never been a data creator, and won’t ever say the words “Radical Open Access”. Her former collaborator also \*did\* far worse things with his graduate students than I ever said to mine. It was just lab bench talk, I’m not proud of it. I’ve apologized to my lab group.

#### As president, who would you appoint as director of the NIH, NSF and NASA?

I am looking to appoint agency directors very much in the mould of Dr. Oz or Senator James Inhofe (Republican, Oklahoma). I’ve actually picked ten candidates already — highly thought of, and actually very beautifully reviewed by just about everybody. Tremendous scientists.

#### What do you think about the news that China just built the world’s biggest telescope? Is the United States falling behind?

I love NASA. Space is terrific. But right now, we have bigger problems. We’ve got to stop the flood of scientists coming into our country. When Mexico sends its scientists, they’re not sending the best. They’re bringing data. They’re Bayesians. Not all are terrible — some are nice people. I have had dozens of Mexican postdocs work for me & they like me very much.

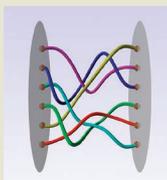
#### What do you think of the new Nobel laureates?

Several of them spoke at Mar-A-Lago years ago. I didn’t attend because they’re boring & often wrong — total dopes! ■

ANDREW STANFILL/NATURE

  
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