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End of Summer FURSCA Report

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Over the course of the summer I have been reading and analyzing literature and databases relevant to trust and distrust in scientific institutions, specifically environmental science and climate change. Over the course of the last several years, we have seen trust in scientific institutions plummeting and obviously this is a problem. Not that distrust itself is inherently the problem, it's the INCREASE in distrust that is.

To solve the problem, it must first be understood. To begin, I spent the majority of my summer reading literature about trust, distrust, and why the subject at hand matters. This is an extremely important step in the process of this research, that will eventually be written into my honors thesis. Reading about the foundational information will allow me to think about the greater picture while also being able to think about and rearticulate the arguments and ideas of others, so that I may be able to fit in my own. Having this robust background knowledge opens the gate for me to start thinking deeper on the subject, allowing me to write my own papers and analysis, while also honing in and articulating my research question further, ensuring its relevance. Now that I have obtained this background knowledge of the subject, I will do just that.

The next step in my research is to hone in on the specific problem at hand, rising distrust in environmental science and climate change. Using what I have gained so far I will be able to do a lot of thinking and writing on the matter, allowing myself to come up with solutions and fitting my work into the work of others. This year, thanks to the Albion College AmeriCorps Program & The Gerald R. Ford Institute for Leadership in Public Policy and Service, I will also be launching a civic education program. This program will serve as a hands-on local effort in establishing a relationship between science and the public, helping to eliminate distrust in scientific institutions.

This work has been very enjoyable and skill sharpening, I am very thankful to have had this extraordinary opportunity. I'd like to thank my research advisor and guide, Dr. Bill Rose, as well as my thesis committee members, Dr. Thom Wilch, Dr. Midori Yoshii, and Dr. Milkessa Gemechu. None of this would've been possible without the lovely Renee Kreger & Elizabeth Palmer, as well as the FURSCA Foundation, so I'd like to thank them as well.