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Todd Kuiken

Dr. Todd Kuiken is a Senior Research Scholar at the Genetic Engineering & Society Center at North Carolina State University. Prior to that, Kuiken was a Senior Program Associate with the Science and Technology Innovation Program at the Wilson Center where he explored the scientific and technological frontier, stimulating discovery and bringing new tools to bear on public policy challenges that emerge as science advances.

He was the principal investigator on the Wilson Center's Synthetic Biology Project, where he had numerous projects evaluating and designing new research and governance strategies to proactively address the biosafety, biosecurity and environmental risks associated with synthetic biology. Dr. Kuiken was recently appointed to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Ad-Hoc Technical Expert Group. He is also the human practices chairperson of the International Genetically Engineered Machines competition and a founding member of its biosafety/biosecurity committee.

In addition, he is collaborating with DIYbio.org on a project to ensure safety within the rapidly expanding community of amateur biologists and the growing network of community laboratories. The initiative is analyzing and developing programs around the potential biosafety and biosecurity threats associated with such a diffuse community. Dr. Kuiken also managed the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, also at the Woodrow Wilson Center, where he focused on public policy and the environmental health and safety aspects of nanotechnology.

Dr. Kuiken has provided expert testimony in front of the U.S. National Security Agency Advisory Board, the U.S. National Academies of Science, the United Nations Bioweapons Convention, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, has been featured on NPR's Science Friday, and is a regular speaker on public policy issues related to nanotechnology and synthetic biology.



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After completing his B.S. in Environmental Management and Technology at Rochester Institute of Technology he worked directly with renowned scientists on the biogeochemical cycling of mercury at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He earned an M.A. in Environmental and Resource Policy from The George Washington University concentrating on the scientific, economic and community development aspects of environmental issues. While there he worked at various environmental non-profits including the National Wildlife Federation where he worked within the Clean the Rain campaign that dealt with the environmental and public health threats associated with mercury pollution. Dr. Kuiken earned his Ph.D. from Tennessee Tech University where his research focused on the air/surface exchange of mercury associated with forest ecosystems. As part of his dissertation he synthesized these results with other studies associated with mercury cycling, public health threats and policy alternatives to bring attention to the threats and need for an improved public policy dealing with mercury pollution.