# Stanford



## Megan J. Palmer

Adjunct Professor, Bioengineering

### Bio

#### BIO

Dr. Megan J. Palmer is the Executive Director of Bio Policy & Leadership Initiatives at Stanford University. In this role, Dr. Palmer leads integrated research, teaching and engagement programs to explore how biological science and engineering is shaping our societies, and to guide innovation to serve public interests. Based in the Department of Bioengineering, where she is also an Adjunct Professor, she works closely both with groups across the university and with stakeholders in academia, government, industry and civil society around the world.

In addition to fostering broader efforts, Dr. Palmer leads a focus area in biosecurity in partnership with the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies (FSI) at Stanford. Projects in this area examine how security is conceived and managed as biotechnology becomes increasingly accessible. Her current projects include assessing strategies for governing dual use research, analyzing the diffusion of safety and security norms and practices, and understanding the security implications of alternative technology design decisions.

Dr. Palmer has created and led many programs aimed at developing and promoting best practices and policies for the responsible development of bioengineering. She currently co-chairs the World Economic Forum Global Future Council on Synthetic Biology and in a member of the Council of the Engineering Biology Research Consortium (EBRC). For the last ten years she has led programs in safety, security and social responsibility for the international Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) competition, which in 2019 involved over 6000 students in 353 teams from 48 countries. She also founded and serves as Executive Director of the Synthetic Biology Leadership Excellence Accelerator Program (LEAP), an international fellowship program in biotechnology leadership. She advises and works with many other organizations on their strategies for the responsible development of bioengineering, including serving on the board of directors of Revive & Restore, a nonprofit organization advancing biotechnologies for conservation.

Previously, Megan was a Senior Research Scholar and William J. Perry Fellow in International Security at the Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC), part of FSI, where she is now an affiliated researcher. She also spent five years as Deputy Director of Policy and Practices for the multi-university NSF Synthetic Biology Engineering Research Center (Synberc). She has previously held positions as a project scientist at the California Center for Quantitative Bioscience at the University of California Berkeley (where she was an affiliate of Lawrence Berkeley National Labs), and a postdoctoral scholar in the Bioengineering Department at Stanford University. Dr. Palmer received her Ph.D. in Biological Engineering from M.I.T. and a B.Sc.E. in Engineering Chemistry from Queen's University, Canada.

#### **INSTITUTE AFFILIATIONS**

• Faculty Affiliate, Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI)