

Graduate Student Committee Report
SC meeting, SBC LTER, La Jolla, CA May 13-14, 2009
Submitted: April 27, 2009

A brief overview of the activities of the last year:

1. In May 2008 Chelse Prather (LUQ) succeeded John Kominoski as graduate student committee co-chair, alongside Amber Hardison (VCR).
2. John and Chelse co-hosted a graduate student mixer at the Ecological Society of America (ESA) annual meeting in Milwaukee, WI, in August 2008. Twelve graduate students and two postdocs attended the mixer where students learned about the LTER Network Office (LNO) and the services it provides, and also had opportunity to talk with graduate students from other sites.
3. We are planning the 3rd LTER Graduate Student Symposium to be held September 13, 2009 in Estes Park, Colorado. We have recruited an energetic planning committee consisting of Jessica Savage (CDR), Kristen Schwarz (BES), Michelle Romolini (BES) and Luke Cole (VCR). The tentative schedule consists of a series of informational seminars covering the LTER, the LNO and the Decadal Plan (Bob Waide, Henry Gholz, Terry Chapin), a collection of short graduate student research talks highlighting examples of collaborative research within the LTER (Becky Ball, Marko Spasojevic, and Brian Voigt), a career panel consisting of former LTER students (Todd Crowl, Sherry Johnson, Meredith Knauf and others), and a block of concurrent workshops in the afternoon. All student and non-student speakers have been confirmed, and the committee is working on filling the career panel. Also, a call for workshop proposals was recently sent out, already resulting in one proposal.
4. We submitted an article featuring graduate student updates across the network for the spring 2009 Network News.
5. In June 2008, a survey was sent to the graduate students to gauge their satisfaction with and knowledge of LTER and LNO, and to solicit comments and suggestions for improvements. Of the 93 students who responded to the survey, 74 per cent said they were satisfied with their overall experience as LTER graduate students. We have shared the results of the survey with the students and the LNO, and we have used the results ourselves to guide the planning of the graduate student symposium.
7. We wrote and distributed informational guides for new LTER graduate students and graduate student site representatives. We hope that these guides will be posted on our student website when it is completed.

Please contact Amber Hardison (amber@vims.edu) and Chelse Prather (cprather@nd.edu) for additional details.