Public Information & Outreach (PIO)

- Overview -

by McOwiti O. Thomas
Introduction: Roles + Goals of PIO

• Support for LTER mission
  – Provide means for exchanging ideas, information
  – Outlet for highlighting applications/achievements
  – Provide means for communicating with public
  – Provide editorial support (e.g. OUP Synthesis Series)

• Show the public face of LTER
  – Interface with the public/window to LTER
  – Visibility/create public awareness
  – Highlight relevance & scope of LTER research
  – Develop corporate image/enhance LTER brand
Responsibilities

• Public Information tasking
  – McOwiti
    • for plans, strategies, tools, products
  – Patty Bonito (nee Sprott)
    • part time on special projects, e.g., site brochures

• Every member of LTER is an “ambassador”
  – serendipitous (lucky break senator in elevator)
  – Interpersonal (word-of-mouth)/informal meetings
Functions/Activities

- Defined in the Scope of Work
  - i.e., core activities that we must do
- Requests from NSF
  - e.g., for information, photos, etc. (NSF’s BI brochure)
- Requests from LTER sites
  - e.g., acting as liaison for Education Committee;
    clearing house for external requests for information
  - site brochures, posters
- Dictated by local, national, international events
  - e.g., new sites/developments within LTER
Achievements

• Presented LTER to its various publics
  – Exhibited at ESA/INTECOL, SACNAS, NSF Day at UNM, and others
  – Sent PIO material to AAAS, NSF-LTER Mini-symposium

• Updated information materials
  – Traveling display—updated, redesigned
  – Network brochure—new content, format
  – Assisted with NSF’s Broader Impacts brochure
  – Network News—new philosophy, fresh look, new format
Network News
Newsletter of the Long Term Ecological Research Network
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2005 LTER Mini-Symposium a Big Success

Washington's scientific community was all ears recently as the national Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) network held it 5th Annual LTER Mini-symposium at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Arlington, VA, on March 3, 2005. The purpose of the annual mini-symposium is to showcase Washington the relevance and broader impacts of the scientific research undertaken by the LTER network.

The symposium has earned a reputation in D.C. as a "must-attend" event for people from federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, professional societies, private organizational interests, and others in the community interested in learning what LTER scientists and educators are doing and planning.

Each year the LTER coordinating committee announces the following year's theme in the fall and solicits nominations for topics and speakers from within the network. This year's theme was "Long Term Marine Research and the Coastal Challenge in Ecology." This theme provided opportunities for scientists and educators from the LTER's two ocean sites, California Current Ecosystem (CCE) and Mosquito Coast Reef (MCR) in Puerto Rico, as well as scientists from other marine sites, to present their work to a diverse public audience of scientists, policy makers, educators, members of the media, and the general public see Table 1, p. 2.

The event was hosted by NSF's Division of Environmental Biology (DEB) and Director of Ocean Sciences (OCE) and attended over 150 people from across the network's capital and beyond. Participants included representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Academies of Science (NAS), Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC), Capitol Hill (House, Senate), American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), Ecological Society of America (ESA), U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP), Joint Oceanographic Institutions Oceans Research Interactive Observatories Network (JOI-ORION), American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and others. In This Issue

Network News .................. Page 1, 3
Editorial ....................... Page 2
Site News ..................... Page 4
Information News ............. Page 6
NSF News ..................... Page 10
Comings & Goings ............ Page 10
Scientific Report .............. Page 11
Informatics Bits & Bytes ........ Page 13
International LTER News .. Page 16
Publications .................. Page 20
Calendar ..................... Page 24

NSF Director Praises LTER

NSF Director, Dr. Arden Bement, recently spoke to a large audience of scientists and policy makers at the National Council for Science and the Environment's 56th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment, in Washington, DC. Bement praised the LTER network prominently as he referred to the theme of the conference, "Envisioning Environmental Change." He premiered research activities of several LTER sites, spoke about LTER collaboration from several PIs and Principal Investigators, and highlighted the children's book from New Boy, "My River Came from the Mountain," when discussing environmental education and public outreach. His speech also covered other NSF-funded research, cross-agency initiatives, and the information science, cyberinfrastructure, and international education, and future plans for US science.

An excerpt of Bement's speech at page 15.
Achievements (cont...)

• Updated website
  – New structure; updates more frequent, quicker
  – Documentation/archives improved (new structure)

• Implementing new design policies
  – For consistent look and feel
Simple Strategy

• Developing a Communication Plan
  – Need to be *proactive* rather than *reactive*
  – Need to be *targeted & strategic*

Table Of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Rationale for a Public Information & Outreach Plan
3. Current Context of LTER PIO
4. Goals and Objectives of PIO
5. Current Pathways for LTER PIO : A Mini Audit
6. Clients for LTER PIO and Pathways for Reaching Them
7. Suggested PIO Tools and Products
8. The Information/Media Kit
9. Sample Activities and Tasks
10. Budget for Implementation
11. Conclusion
Strategy (cont...)

• Enhanced Communication Tools + Products

[Tools]
• Web, print, interpersonal, electronic (radio, TV), stand-alone audio visual (CDs, DVDs)
• *Earth & Sky* radio—ref. Bob’s presentation

[Products]
• Traveling display, brochures, fact sheets, flyers, etc.
• OUP Synthesis Series
• Information kit
Coming soon...

• More core tasks (scheduled)

• Greater interaction with popular mass media

• Further enhancements to existing tools & products (e.g., brochures, website)

• New tools, products
Conclusion

• Finish communication plan

• Address existing and emerging challenges + opportunities

• Work with the Network Planning Group, sites, the LTER EC/CC, and NSF to enhance the public image of LTER

• Continue fulfilling mandate/providing services to LTER, NSF, ecological community