

Scientist Engagement Working Group: Case Studies

Enhanced Engagement of Scientists for Broader Societal Impacts is an NSF grant to COSEE Central Gulf of Mexico. It allows all Centers to work together on a series of interactive case studies showcasing the education and outreach efforts of some of the scientists who have worked with the COSEE Network. Five of thirteen case studies are published; click on this link to view them: http://www.cosee.net/engaging_scientists/

Every COSEE Center is represented on the Scientist Engagement Working Group (SEW-G), which oversees the project and approves each case study before it is made public. The development of each case study includes work by the production team, SEW-G and Center representatives, and featured scientists. The production team includes Jessie Kastler (University of Southern Mississippi, COSEE CGOM), Brian McCann (Mississippi State University, COSEE CGOM), Catherine Cramer (COSEE CCO, COSEE OCEAN, COSEE New England), and Lisa Taylor (University of Maine, COSEE Ocean Systems). Dr. Kastler is the project manager, Dr. McCann oversees technological production of case studies, Ms. Cramer writes text, and Ms. Taylor builds each Web page and publishes it to COSEE.net. This team meets weekly via Skype to coordinate progress on the project, from scheduling interactions with featured scientists to developing messages related to each case study.

The production team and SEW-G meet together via telephone conference call once a month, allowing Centers to provide input. Initial meetings were devoted to determining the process for how Centers should select featured scientists; what information each case study should include; and the appearance of the web pages that house the case studies. In recent months, the calls require each Center representative to review freshly completed elements of each case study and provide critical suggestions to the production team.

Each Center is represented in the case studies by a featured scientist, selected by the Center to highlight its unique work with scientists. The Center representative acts as liaison with the featured scientist, coordinating the production team's visit and working closely with the production team in the development of case study elements for that scientist. The production team spends around three days on site interviewing each featured scientist, COSEE colleagues, and students. The team then spends about a month developing the case study.

Each case study includes video interviews and photos of the featured scientist and his or her colleagues. At least one interactive element allows users to explore more information regarding the scientists' research. These multimedia elements are grouped into three sections with descriptive text. "At Work" describes research efforts and "Collaborations" highlights education and outreach efforts. The third section, "Viewpoints," includes insights of the scientists and their colleagues regarding topics of individual concern, e.g., changing the academic culture to reward education efforts or scientists' changing role in educating the public about climate change.

As of this writing, SEW-G is approximately three-quarters of the way through the project. All scientists have been selected and eight of thirteen site visits have been completed. The production team anticipates completing one of the remaining case studies each month until the project is complete at the end of 2011.