

LTER ASM 2015 - Working Group Final Report

Working Group: Facilitating the communication of LTER graduate student research with the public using online tools

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Sessions: Session 2 - Monday, August 31, 1600-1800

Session 5 - Tuesday, September 1, 1600-1800

Session 1: Monday 8/31/15

Summary:

Our goals for the first session were to solidify our goals and vision for the blog. The biggest step forward during this session was the idea to include the all LTER network sites with the help of the LTER Network Communications Office. There was general consensus to focus the blog posts on the daily research experiences and challenges of graduate students in the LTER network for an audience made up of the general public and students. The posts will be short and engaging, while remaining informative and accessible to people with little science knowledge and experience. The posts are intended to give a glimpse into how research science is done by graduate students and hopefully encourage a sense of diversity and interest in STEM work at our sites.

In addition to solidifying the goals and audience of the blog, the attendees of the working group also brainstormed a long list of potential topics to aid students trying to write blog posts of their own. We agreed that consistent weekly or biweekly posts on the blog would be the best method to maintain a successful blog, so we asked all attendees who were interested to contribute content to the site in advance so that a stockpile of posts would be available when the site goes live. The blog will also be connected with Twitter and Instagram to reach a larger audience and allow subscribers to choose their preferred method. Other useful ideas to make the blog more dynamic and interactive included:

- Ability to submit questions to other sites about their research that can then be answered with a blog post
- Link our blog posts to related posts on pre-existing blogs at LTER sites to promote communication and discussion among communities
- Propose making the blog coordination and scheduling an official responsibility of grad student site reps, possibly during monthly online meetings
- Include REU, post-docs, and alumni graduate LTER students when possible as contributors to the blog

Session 2: Tuesday 9/1/15

Summary:

We began by recapping our progress during the first session for new attendees. We then discussed the specifics of blog posts (length, tone, audience, content) and gave examples of possible ideas for blog posts. We also shared our discussions with Carol Blanchette of the LTER Network Office who was excited about the blog and interested in helping with logistics.

The organizers and attendees used part of the working group time to begin writing up example blog posts and a blog mission statement for dissemination to graduate student site

representatives and outreach coordinators in the LTER network. We agreed to send out example posts and instructions to attendees within a week of the ASM meeting and have attendees send us their first blog posts by the end of September.

Working group accomplishments and plans for moving forward:

1. Established what the site will be (goals, content, contributors, audience) and created a short mission statement with guidelines for blog contributors
2. Gaged interest among LTER graduate students and sites in participating and extended the blog participation to be network-wide
3. We created a list-serv of interested graduate students at multiple sites who are interested in contributing to the blog
4. Made contact with Frank Davis and Carol Blanchette at the LTER Network Communications Office (LNCO) to coordinate the logistics of setting up the blog site and contacting graduate student representatives and outreach coordinators at each site