

## NRCEN 2C/D Notes

April 13, 2007

Rita Tavilla –

How you can best use images to communicate your message, look in very different places to find relevant images, color, metaphors, etc. Feel free to contact her [IIC.harvard.edu](mailto:IIC.harvard.edu)

Marvin Coyner –

ACS, What do you have to offer to the public? Who are you trying to reach? Why should they care? Relevance. Know the media – what do they want from you? Relationship.

Shannon Swilley –

Content

Navigation/Organization

Accessibility

Marni helped us in the planning of this session

Dan – Director of Education Outreach for MRSEC, ERC, USAMI, etc.

Get better at communicating what we do, building better website, better highlights, using images effectively, we're learning from you, too

Bob – STC, MRSE Involved with ACS, public relations committee, interested in communication, education director for a MRSEC – how do we communicate our work, specific emphasis in this session.

This session is going to focus on 2 major areas

Product of a highlight (fka nugget) what makes a good highlight, what elements are ideal

Write your name, affiliation, and question on sheet

Deliverable – shared across groups and centers, manual or guide that will help NSF education directors for highlights, include first principles related to public relations and images, how do we create the products

Mary Poats – to talk about highlights of research and education highlights

The bulk of this session – looking at highlights to work on them to make them more effective

Guide will incorporate all these elements – you will be included in this guide as a contributor

Mary Poats

Colleagues: Margaret Tolbert, Jeff Nesbitt

What are highlights, fka nuggets. Jeff's fault it's not nuggets anymore. First thing he suggested when he joined.

Primary source of information that NSF provides to advisory committee for Government Performance Assessment, meets 1/year to evaluate NSF programs, is NSF achieving performance goals, write report on the overall foundation performance.

Tell our advisory committees what's going on.

COV – Committee of Visitors – mandated to evaluate each divisions activities every 3 years, how they manage the review process, etc.

Office of management and budget – tells the tax payers what we're funding

Essence of the research and education activities, hopefully convey the excitement of the projects

Emerging challenges that we want to highlight

Why are they necessary?

Annual report on performance and accountability

Use them for presentations, speeches, congressional testimony

OLPA uses them to develop discovery postings on the NSF site, very interesting, very visual

Promoting public understanding of science

Getting the word out to the public and especially kids

Pursuing careers in science & Engineering

What is the role of a program officer in getting the highlights together?

Write descriptions of accomplishments or highlights based on what the centers provide them

Capture essence of research and education, convey excitement

Reporting period is March –March

Program Officer (PO) contact in Dec/Jan to send them highlights on the programs, usually in Dec/Jan, instructions for format and content, can send them any time, but will send reminders in Dec/Jan

PO reformats into their template

Not necessarily posted unless approved, needs to have all the components, approval lead to addition to database for GPA's report

Other directorates may access these highlights for budget submissions, etc. Not unique to one directorate. Seen by the whole foundation

How to tell your story (research and education)

Clear and concise

Written for the public; Jeff says What you would see in a newspaper. Mary says, "Yes, like USA Today."

We read very closely, we make the decision whether it's too technical

Jeff: there is a very active highlights committee, once a month meetings, very active screening process for last 6-9 months

Images – very important to have compelling images in highlight, very interesting visuals

Not just one or two paragraphs necessarily, they will edit it down, Jeff: Benchmarks of Innovation making highlights available in different products?, right now especially looking those with Economic Impact, all new, latest highlights, grouped by impact? Jeff says these Benchmarks will become availability... early stages

Writing highlights: news up front, impact of research!

Title is very important, grabber, first couple of sentence grabbers, as well. Want the highlight to be selected for database,

Identify PI, but not a list of everyone who worked on it, lead institution

Not necessarily going to be read by a scientist or engineer

Describe the problem or issue that motivated the research, results, impact on scientific knowledge

Outcome, impacts are very important, (see slides)

Help the general public and advisory committees understand the importance

Images – not required, but very important, without an image it may not even be saved from the email. Got a lot of really poor highlights, dull, no images, no nothing, Mary gives feedback, if she sees something that has potential, she'll work with the PI to try to get images, she'll let you know if it sucks,

Really try to get images and needs caption and must give credit for image – won't use without knowing they have permission

Benchmarks of Innovation – has 25 best highlights

Must have permission from parents to use images of children and web, web is a special case

Jeff – new multimedia gallery and has permission process

Bob – would like an example

Jeff – there is an example of the permission slip

Mary will give Bob information about this Benchmark development – breaking news

Participant brought up school permissions different – big problem, sometimes just not get their faces in the shot, time consuming, but can't necessarily use them, in Jeff's office, there are 2 people who work full time getting permissions, submit the image to Jeff's office and they may be able to help.

In our instructions, the list of strategic outcomes, identify where your project falls in these areas. Frontiers of knowledge, research infrastructure

If you don't give them a good title, they might make one up

Goals are in the new strategic plan, NSF 0648, available on the web

Secondary Strategic Outcome Goal

Enter text from highlight

Does it represent transformative research, if yes, why

Investments – areas

Image and caption, can do more than one image

Does NSF have permission to use the image? Credit

Examples of good highlights are in the handout, a couple are in the presentation as well.

Links can be included in a highlight

In addition to the highlights, Mary's (EEC) division asks them to send a powerpoint slide, use them a lot.

Christine - How would we find out this information outside NRCEN?

We send out formal requests to PIs requesting these highlights, the format, this past year, we've been asking for PowerPoint slide, STC's ask for a slide, too.

The requests are sent to the center directors

Bullets are fine for highlights

Get the word out about what we're supporting

Stay in touch with your Program Officers and Division Directors

Societal, economic impact, get more students interested in the sciences

Contacts: program officers, Josh Chamot – NSF Office of Legislative and Public Affairs, if you can't get a hold of program officer [Jshamot@nsf.gov](mailto:Jshamot@nsf.gov)

Mary lets her grantees know when highlights are accepted or get press

Jeff – Use the highlights for all kinds of projects, Live Science – website that funnels science news to media, highlights can be used, Image of the Day will be launched very soon using highlights' images.

JHU Robotic Surgery – Application and relevance, project team, tools that they used, very nice photo, very readable and grabs you

Sometimes highlights come in and we don't need to edit, most we do some, some

Jeff – Use in online news source, if non technical people can't understand it won't use it or rework it. Tell PI, imagine your congress person reading it.

Bob – It should be pointed out at a directors meeting by the NSF members.

Jeff – we'll even change the graphs if we have to. These are being used by non-technical audiences.

Mary – It's not for their colleagues, it's for the general public.

Dan – does it say that on the NSF site?

Jeff – no it doesn't but I'm going to report this to the NSF committees.

Christine – I think about talking to a bunch of 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Jeff – I'd say that's about the right level.

USC – Learning by Playing Games

IMSC – what is that? Should be spelled out.

Jeff and Mary – Avoid acronyms. Good point

Leyla – What is the measurable outcome? Assessment results are not included. Numbers? Who's going to use it? How many people are going to use it?

Jeff – 3 different major elements:

When we send it to media, should have at least one of the following:

Successfully told the story of what happened

Process behind it, how did you do it?

Impact on society

Hardest part is to put down the process without technical terms

Process can include for example: Chemistry and Engineering knowledge was combined to accomplish a discovery

Highlight: NSU Materials Science & Engineering Is Approved by the State of Virginia

Suggestion – story about one person who participated, group pictures not good

Better to focus on one person engaged in an activity

Dan – have been told that that's not good and it's just anecdotal

Leyla – good to do both

Both group pictures and individual pictures are good.

Lot of play in text and photos - move things around to fit everything

PowerPoint vs. page of text like in Mary's packet

Different limits in length text

Format vs. content?

Always try to include that we're funded by NSF, how can we ensure that the media will get from the highlight that it's an NSF program? Ram it down their throats! But still impossible to guarantee that all the organizations and funders are mentioned.

Eileen Shieu (UofChicago)

Jeff – this doesn't look congress ready, I'm not sure what that would be for

Eileen – our PIs wrote this.

The last sentence should be more prominent. What is spin control? Electronic spin? What's that?

Jeff – there's a new wave in media – visualization, taking the image from highlights and the visualization team has artists that will spiff it up. Science & Engineering Visualization Challenge, with Science Magazine that can tell the story all on its own. Should be a section in the guidelines

\*\*\*Mary – good as part of an annual report.

\*\*\*Two kinds of highlights? One for annual report, one for Jeff's office.

What?!?