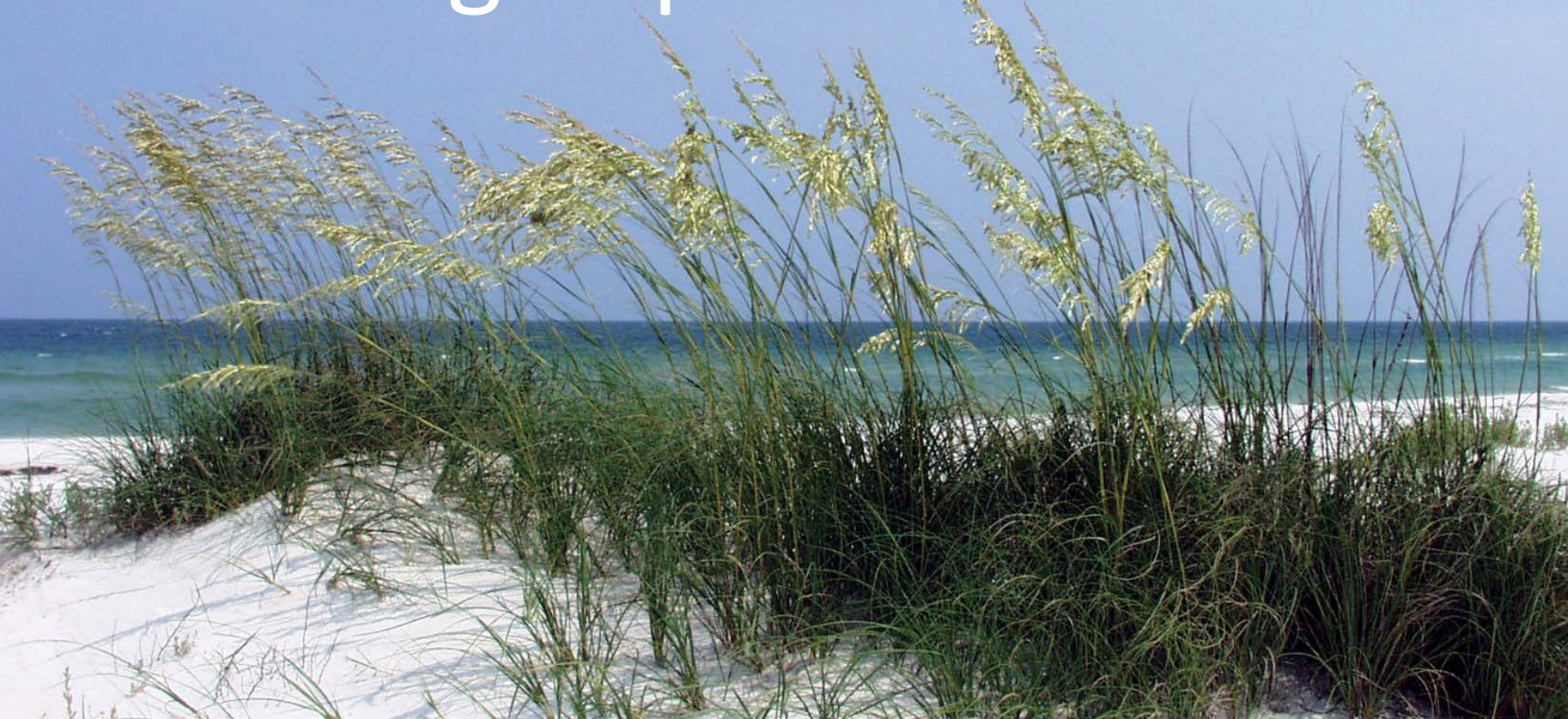# Writing Impact Statements

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National Sea Grant College Program
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Purpose and Scope

This webinar: provide guidance and tips on writing strong impact statements

NOT this webinar: info on using PIER, performance metrics, any other info on annual reports

Questions about PIER will not be addressed during this webinar.

Other information

Susan Holmes is hosting two more Q and A webinars:

- Wednesday April 26 at 5-6 pm Eastern
- Friday May 5 at 1-2 pm Eastern

Annual reports are due June 30.

Descriptive reporting

- Three components
  - Projects
  - Accomplishments
  - Impacts

Why?

Impacts help decision makers and constituents understand how our programs are making a difference, and enable the Sea Grant network to reflect on and improve our work.

Why?

The National Sea Grant Office uses impact statements for the following purposes:

- Communicate value of Sea Grant's work
- Talking points for Sea Grant and NOAA leadership
- Inform legislative activities
- Demonstrate ability of Sea Grant to take advantage of new opportunities

Why?

Impact statements are used as part of program evaluations.

In the last PRP cycle, "The panels found that the impact statements vary considerably in terms of relevance, detail and substance. As a result, the PRPs recommended additional guidance to help programs write stronger, more effective statements."

DEFINING IMPACTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments

Effectively describe the key actions, activities or products resulting from Sea Grant activities.

Reflect ongoing activities or key results that may not yet have had a significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefit, but lay the foundation for one.

Accomplishments

- Accomplishments document important milestones.
- Accomplishments are Sea Grant outputs.
- Accomplishments feed into impacts.
- Accomplishments answer questions of accountability.

Impact Statements

should effectively describe the significant economic, societal and/or environmental benefits of our research, extension, education and communications work

Impact Statements

- Concise - 250 words or less
- Written for a lay audience
- Stand alone

Impact Statements

Answer the "so what?" or "who cares?"

- Change the way a group of professionals does business

- Measurable economic benefit

- Measurable change in fish population due to restoration efforts

- Leveraging funds to receive larger grant

Writing Impacts - How many?

- We recommend up to five outstanding statements per focus area (or to match your effort within focus areas)
- PRPs in 2014 commented that there were too many accomplishments listed as impacts
  - 2014 Impacts – 506
  - 2015 Impacts – 405

Writing Impact Statements

Body:

- Title

- Recap

- Relevance

- Response

- Results

Other details:

- Focus area

- Focus area goal(s)

- Partner(s)

- Associated Project(s)

Writing Impact Statements – 4Rs

Recap:

- A one sentence recapitulation that captures the essence of the preceding three points.

Writing Impact Statements – 4Rs

Relevance:

- Why did our program conduct this effort?

- What needs were originally expressed for this work?

- What was the situation/problem and why was it a problem?

- What aspects of your current implementation plan are addressed?

Writing Impact Statements – 4Rs

Response:

- What did our program do?

- Who were the principal partners, collaborators, contributors?

- What were the key elements?

- Who was the target audience?

Writing Impact Statements – 4Rs

Result:

- What is the social, and/or economic, and/or environmental payoff of our work?

- Who benefitted?

- How?

- What happened as a result of the work described?

- How was information collected to verify the impacts (surveys, observation, etc.)?

- What was the geographic scope of the impact?

Writing Impact Statements for the Web

- Title: Create concise and descriptive titles that are no more than 120 characters (headlines)
- Recap: Clear, one sentence recap in layman's terms (no abbreviations and acronyms), written in 3rd person, that has no more than 500 characters
- Word Count: 250 words or less

"Feature" Impacts

Represent your very best. We go to these first for communication efforts.

- Select up to 20 impacts from 2010 – current
- Impacts can be added at any time
- Change which 20 at any time
- Same guidelines as other impacts

NSGO Review of Impact & Accomplishments

- Program officers review within one month
- Looking for sensitive topics that might call negative attention to Sea Grant, NOAA or other federal agencies
  - Examples: political lobbying, advocacy
  - We expect you to catch typos and grammar issues before submitting

Tips for Writing

- Accomplishments vs impacts
- Verifiable
- Consistent tense
- Time frame
- Defined Sea Grant role
- Lay audience
- Articulate the significance
- Stand alone
- Attach them to relevant project

POP QUIZ!

Impact or Accomplishment?

Sea Grant research leads to first commercial enterprise cultivating edible kelp in U.S.

Impact

Impact or Accomplishment?

Sea Grant supports citizen science programs

Accomplishment

Impact or Accomplishment?

Invasive species research and extension reduces invasive dune plants by 30%

Impact

Impact or Accomplishment?

Devices on crab pots reduce accidental catch of turtles without decreasing crab catch

Impact

Impact or Accomplishment?

Sea Grant offers training course for coastal professionals

Accomplishment

Impact or Accomplishment?

Fish ID workshop held for teachers

Accomplishment

Impact or Accomplishment?

Sea Grant research on fish disease informs billion-dollar dam-removal process in Big River

Impact

Tips

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Transforming Accomplishments to Impacts

Led training program for community members interested in starting an aquaculture business

Aquaculture training program results in three new businesses in region

Transforming Accomplishments to Impacts

Developed hybrid oysters that possess traits important for survival in polluted and acidic habitats

Hybrid oysters with traits important for survival in polluted and acidic habitats assist growers with production success

How to make good impacts better

TITLE: Arizona Direct Seafood

TITLE: Arizona Direct Seafood Initiative increases large desert seafood sales by 100%

How to make good impacts better

TITLE: Multi-trophic aquaculture launched in the Gila River, AZ

TITLE: Multi-species aquaculture in Gila River, AZ benefits fishermen and water quality

Sea Grant Public Search

Additional Guidance

http://seagrant.noaa.gov/NetworkResources/EvaluationandReporting/ImpactStatementGuidance.aspx

Sea Grant Impacts and Accomplishment Search
http://seagrant.noaa.gov/WhatWeDo/ImpactsandAccomplishments.aspx

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HELP US TELL YOUR BEST STORY.

Questions?