

NSGO Inclusive Communications Plan 2022

National Sea Grant Communications Team (Brooke Carney, Hallee Meltzer, Amara Davis)

Introduction

The national Sea Grant communications effort exists to reach all relevant audiences with information about Sea Grant’s work and opportunities. Challenging ourselves as professionals to ensure we reach all relevant audiences takes intention and focus. This plan outlines the background, rationale, and approaches for the national Sea Grant communications team’s efforts to intentionally and actively work to ensure Sea Grant’s messages are reaching all relevant audiences in appropriate, convenient and accessible ways.

Inclusive science communication can be defined as the following.

“Inclusive science communication (ISC) departs from traditional science communication practices by prioritizing inclusion, equity, and intersectionality as both central parts of the process and as desired outcomes.” ([National Science Foundation](#))

Background

The most recent [national Sea Grant strategic plan](#) includes diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as a cross-cutting principle covering all Sea Grant does. Specifically, the plan states that Sea Grant will “enhance diversity, equity and inclusion by seeking and integrating diverse perspectives to advance cultural understanding and enable the network to pursue its vision and mission for all audiences. Bringing a range of perspectives, values and tools together to find solutions that are more innovative, creative and responsive to tackling the complex problems facing coastal and Great Lakes communities will help us be successful in doing this.”

The last three Biennial Reports to Congress from the National Sea Grant Advisory Board have also emphasized DEI activities by Sea Grant in their recommendations for the program.

The Sea Grant DEIJA Vision and Action plan, titled [Reaching Outward and Looking Inward](#), was initially published in 2018 and updated in 2021. The plan calls on the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) to advance several specific goals, many of which directly connect to NSGO communications. The relevant goals are stated below.

Research Goal 1: Sea Grant addresses issues of diversity and underrepresentation of its research reviewers, panelists and awardees.

Strategy: In coordination with [Sea Grant] programs, NSGO clearly communicates broadening participation practices within SG.

Output: Communication products that raise awareness of SG research opportunities to [underserved and underrepresented] communities.

Research Goal 2: Sea Grant takes a leadership role in stimulating research and scholarship to address topics of value to diverse communities.

Output: Communication products that raise awareness of SG research to UU communities.

Education Goal 2: Sea Grant trains a coastal and marine workforce that represents the demographics of the locations where Sea Grant programs operate.

Output: Summary of SG-funded programming, fellowships, internships, and research assistantships that specifically encourage UU student participation.

Output: Communication products that raise awareness of coastal and marine [science, technology, engineering and mathematics] STEM career pathways to UU communities.

Rationale

The NSGO communications team recognizes the critical role communications plays in advancing DEI goals. As communicators for a national program, there are opportunities to advance the goals of Sea Grant, NOAA, the federal government and broader society to increase DEI in all aspects of society. By embracing these concepts, the NSGO Communications team can add value to the efforts of others through storytelling, outreach, multimedia, digital and other communications methods.

The concepts, principles, and approaches in this plan are also influenced by the resources and conversational exchange provided by the [Inclusive SciComm](#) community of practice, a program operated by the MetCalf Institute at the University of Rhode Island, as well as from resources developed by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The [NSF Inclusive SciComm Starter Kit](#) includes three goals that align with the goals of the NSGO communications team for inclusive communications. They are:

- seek and value a wide variety of perspectives,
- recognize how a person's multiple identities might affect their relationships with STEMM, and
- yield equitable outcomes that build and sustain trust.

Approaches

Intentional

With every story, social media post, funding announcement, outreach opportunity, summary report and development of a new plan, we are intentional about being more inclusive and accessible by representing a broader diversity of perspectives and individuals in our communications products, by working to reach broader audiences and listening to audience feedback.

Thoughtful

Rather than operating on auto-pilot, for each message, post, story, or product, we are committed to pausing to think about the intent and impact of our messaging and communication products.

Reflective

As we develop communications products, we are committed to asking ourselves the following questions

- Are we achieving our goals to be more inclusive and accessible?
- Are we being intentional and thoughtful about our approaches and the audiences being reached?
- Are we continuing to learn about groups and individuals different from ourselves through formal and informal channels?
- Are we learning from constructive criticism from the groups and individuals we work with and implementing thoughtful changes?

Expanding

We will implement frequent assessment of the methods, styles, language, and outreach efforts employed to ensure we are reaching new and different audiences, addressing questions such as the following

- Who would like to know about the work of Sea Grant?
- Are there groups or individuals who could benefit from receiving this information that we have not explicitly targeted with communications?
- How do we improve and enhance the accessibility of our messages to these audiences?

Measures of Success

The national Sea Grant communications team is committed to revisiting and revising this plan to incorporate the feedback and perspectives of Sea Grant, NOAA and inclusive science communications professionals. As this plan is implemented, the national Sea Grant communications team will consider methods and metrics for measuring the success of the plan's implementation to further advance DEI goals.