

Communications / Engagement

A Report from NOAA's
National Sea Grant Advisory Board

August 2009

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Appendix 1. Report Committee Background

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Chapter 1 Executive Summary

The National Sea Grant Advisory Board, at its 2008 Baton Rouge meeting, established a Communication/Engagement Committee. The original charge is contained in Chapter 2.

The Committee charged with writing this report has extensive experience with the issues, and includes three previous Sea Grant Advisory Board Panel chairs and the current Advisory Board vice-chairman, as well as the Board's current Communication liaison and the Board's current and past Extension liaison, and a member of NOAA's Science Advisory Board. Appendix 1 contains the background of the committee members.

Over the last decade the federal funding of Sea Grant has decreased in terms of buying power. The National Sea Grant office has decreased in FTE staff from 23 in 2005 to 15 today. In the areas of Communications and Extension the decrease is even more pronounced: communications FTEs have decreased from three, in 2005, to one currently; extension and education FTEs have decreased from three in 2005 to one in 2009. This is a 67% decrease.

The NSGO staff is overloaded with diminished staffing along with increased NOAA and OAR requirements. **Sea Grant cannot continue to perform all of its current activities at its reduced staffing and funding levels. The NSGO and Sea Grant Advisory Board should review the full range of NSGO activities and determine which could be terminated, so new opportunities could receive investments.**

This report includes a series of short term and long term recommendations which could enhance the future of Sea Grant.

This report includes ten (10) recommendations in the area of communications:

<u>Recommendation Type</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
Short	1. Technology efficiency	NSGO, SGA
Short	2. Added communications staff member	NSGO
Short	3. Overall NOAA investments	NSGO, NOAA
Short	4. Added Knauss Fellow	NSGO
Short	5. "Friends of Sea Grant"	NSGO, Board, SGA
Short	6. University identification	NSGO, NOAA, SGA
Short	7. Collaboration	NSGO, SGA
Short	8. Network wide system	NSGO, Board, SGA
Short	9. NIMS	NSGO, SGA

Long 10. Reestablish Media relations office NSGO, SGA

This report further includes the ten following recommendations in the area of engagement.

<u>Recommendation Type</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
Short	1. Staff SAB engagement report urgent	NSGO, OAR
Short	2. Added Knauss Fellow	NSGO
Short	3. Climate Extension	NSGO, Board, OAR
Short	4. Regional priority	NSGO, Board, OAR
Short	5. SAB engagement demonstration	NSGO, Board, OAR, SGA
Short	6. Annual administrator report/meeting	NSGO, Board, OAR
Short	7. NOAA services	NSGO
Short	8. Cost effective alternatives	NSGO
Short	9. Modify regional grants	NSGO
Long	10. Re-establish engagement staff	NSGO

In closing, our committee believes that the implementation of the recommendations above are critical to the long term viability of Sea Grant.

Chapter 2 Committee Charge

The Communications/Engagement Committee, a “Board initiated Task Committee” of the NSGAB, was established by the Board at its fall 2008 meeting. Membership includes Frank Kudrna, chairman, Peter Bell, John Woeste, Jeff Stephan and Nancy Rabalais.

The committee is charged with reviewing and utilizing previous reports, including, but not limited to: the Byrne Report, the Alden Report, the SAB EOE Report, the Steve Whitman Report, and the communications engagement portions of the Duce Report.

The Committee will make short term recommendations based on currently available resources and long term recommendations based on future potential resources. The Committee will have two to four conference calls and two face-to-face meetings, and then provide a final report to the full NSGAP for adoption at their Aug/Sept meeting in Seattle.

The report will answer these questions:

Q. What recommendations from previous reports are still appropriate and unmet?

Q. How can Sea Grant become fully engaged within NOAA?

Q. What specific steps should Sea Grant take to implement the SAB Extension/Outreach/Education report within Sea Grants current budget? What additional steps could be taken if new resources become available?

Q. How should Sea Grant at its current budget level invest in Communications and Engagement?

Q. At future increased levels of funding, how should Sea Grant expand Communications and Engagement activities and what are the priorities?

The committee was further charged with interviewing Jack Dunnigan and Jack Hayes, AA’s respectively of NOAA’s NOS and Weather Service, to determine in what areas and under what circumstances they would participate and cost share various activities.

Additionally the Committee chose to interview Gordon Grau, SGA President.

Chapter 3

Previous Reports, Recommendations and Outcomes

The Communications/Engagement Committee of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (NSGAB) was charged to: (1) review and utilize several reports that previously reviewed and evaluated a broad range of issues, constraints and opportunities that are associated with the goals of extending the impacts and benefits of the many research, education, outreach, communications, engagement and extension products and services of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP) and NOAA; (2) ensure the growth and sustainability of the political and financial support for the NSGCP; (3) review and, to the extent possible, determine the disposition, implementation and outcomes of the recommendations and observations of these prior reports.

The reports reviewed and considered by the Communications/Engagement Committee included the following:

“A Mandate to Engage Coastal Users: A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE EXTENSION PROGRAM AND A CALL FOR GREATER NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT”; November 2000; The National Sea Grant Extension Review Panel [Byrne Report]

http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/GreenBook/gb_documents/pdf_otherfiles/byrne_report.pdf

“Building Sea Grant: The Role of the National Sea Grant Office”; June 2002; The National Sea Grant Office Review Committee of the National Sea Grant Review Panel [Duce Report]

http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/GreenBook/gb_documents/pdf_otherfiles/ducereport.pdf

“Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan 2003-06”; Steve Wittman; March 2003 [Wittman Plan]

http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/other/positioning_sea_grant_an_integrated_national_communications_plan_2003.pdf

“Communicating for Success: A Review of the National Sea Grant Communications Activities”; December 2004; Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force [Alden Report]

http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/GreenBook/communicating_for_success.pdf

“National Sea Grant Office Response to: Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan (“Wittman Plan”)”; No Publication Date; National Sea Grant Office [NSGO Response To Wittman Plan]

“NSGO Implementation Plan for Summary Recommendations of the Sea Grant National Communications Task Force”; No Publication Date; National Sea Grant Office [NSGO Response to Alden Report]
http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/GreenBook/nsgoresponse_torecommendations.pdf

“Engaging NOAA’s Constituents: A Report from the NOAA Science Advisory Board; Putting the pieces together to create impacts” (August 2008; NOAA Science Advisory Board Extension Outreach and Education Working Group) [Engaging NOAA’s Constituents SAB Report]
http://www.sab.noaa.gov/Reports/EOEWG/EOEWG_Final_Report_03_20_08.pdf

I. “A Mandate to Engage Coastal Users: A REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE EXTENSION PROGRAM AND A CALL FOR GREATER NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO ENGAGEMENT”; November 2000; The National Sea Grant Extension Review Panel [Byrne Report]

The National Sea Grant Review Panel (NSGRP) in consultation with the then Director of the National Sea Grant College Program, Dr. Ronald J. Baird, requested a review of the National Sea Grant College Extension Program in early 2000. This review was the first of its type in Sea Grant’s 31-year history, and was viewed as one of the most important activities that the Sea Grant community would undertake. Dr. John V. Byrne was appointed in February 2000 as the Chair of the National Sea Grant Extension Review Panel (Panel). The report entitled “A Mandate to Engage Coastal Users Review Of The National Sea Grant College Extension Program And A Call for Greater National Commitment To Engagement” (Byrne Report) was submitted to the NSGRP and the NSGCP Director in November, 2000.

In his November, 2000, letter of transmittal of the Byrne Report to the NSGRP and the NSGCP Director, Dr. Byrne indicated, “The Panel reviewed the organization, administration, and management of the Sea Grant Extension Program (SGEP) within NOAA, the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO), and its university partners. The Panel considered the placement of Sea Grant within NOAA and the need for NOAA to improve its contact with its user community. The Panel recommends improving the role of Sea Grant within NOAA, improving NOAA’s organization with respect to its engagement with the public, and improving NSGO, SGEP, and their university partners.”

The Byrne Report included 20 recommendations to increase the effectiveness of University-based extension services in coastal and marine areas; to guide the NSGCP in considering its future activities, role and responsibilities; and to advise NOAA senior management with respect to the Agency’s emerging need for

greater engagement with its constituents and the public, and Sea Grant's readiness, capacity and capabilities to lead such an initiative.

The Byrne Report provided the following summary of its 20 recommendations (pp. 8-9):

Recommendations: A Summary

NOAA should

1. Create a new Office of Outreach, Education, and Public Engagement. The office would be at the deputy assistant secretary level and would include three functional elements: (a) the National Sea Grant College Program; (b) a Division of Internal and External Liaison; and (c) a Division of Educational Affairs
2. Review its engagement with users with the aid of the engagement test prepared by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities
3. Increase the number of SGEP specialists who provide a critical role in maintaining the coastal and ocean resources of this nation
4. Reallocate resources and staff to enable the Sea Grant program to discharge its duties to its user communities

NSGO should

5. Explore and pursue appropriate partnership opportunities
6. Add one additional extension staff person with responsibility for the development and administration of partnerships
7. Establish regional extension programs
8. Establish procedures for individual Sea Grant programs to report accomplishments and project milestones (preferably in electronic form) to the NSGO
9. Store information in a database that allows easy retrieval
10. Add an additional person whose responsibilities include the development and maintenance of a data management system for SGEP
11. Avoid constraining the distribution by universities of funds according to a fixed formula, but rather require appropriate explanation and justification for any distribution of less than half the federal funds to peer-reviewed activities

University programs should

12. Develop formal principles to guide the use of outside funds in the support of program priorities and needs at the strategic planning level
13. Develop a formal role for the Sea Grant program director in hiring the SGEP leader and evaluating his or her performance
14. Clearly state in extension specialist job descriptions and letters of appointment the formal reporting and performance assessment relationships with the extension program leader
15. Include the SGEP leader as a full member of the program management team
16. Require graduate degrees of all new extension specialist hires
17. Encourage all SGEP staff to be actively engaged in self-directed professional development planning and implementation
18. Allocate travel support for specialists to attend at least one professional meeting or event each year

Implementation by the NSGRP

19. Develop an implementation plan for the recommendations and follow the implementation to completion
20. Engage both the Oceans 2000 Act Commission and the Pew Oceans Commission as it develops and implements the plan

II. "Building Sea Grant: The Role of the National Sea Grant Office"; June 2002; The National Sea Grant Office Review Committee of the National Sea Grant Review Panel [Duce Report]

The Duce Report identified six "major issue areas" that required an in-depth evaluation to address the Charge given to the Duce Committee. These issue areas also embraced some themes that are similar in context to elements of the Charge given to the Communications and Engagement Committee, including "communications and marketing" and "partnerships, both in and out of NOAA." (p. 18) Significant topics of attention in the Duce Report included "Enhancing Congressional Awareness and Funding;" (p. 20) "Enhancing Partnerships," including "Opportunities for Joint Initiatives," "Developing Regional Programs," and "Expanding Extension Opportunities;" (pp. 25 to 27) and "Strengthening Communications and Public Awareness" including "Promoting Sea Grant," "Generating an Information System," and "Enhancing the Sea Grant Web Site."

(pp. 28 – 30) Moreover, many of the 21 recommendations from the Duce Report addressed topics that are relevant to elements of the Charge to the Communications and Engagement Committee. The Duce Report summarized its 21 Recommendations in 6 elemental points, including that “The NSGO must . . . Provide leadership in communicating the national Sea Grant agenda, the achievements, and the opportunities of Sea Grant to Congress, the Administration, and the public,” and “Continue to seek adequate funding to effectively carry out the functions of the National Sea Grant Office utilizing the findings of this report.” (p. 41)

Four of the eight “Key responsibilities of the NSGO” as described in the Duce Report relate to Communication and Engagement and include: (p. 17)

“Information and Communication. The NSGO is responsible for gathering, synthesizing, and disseminating both management and programmatic information. This information must be presented in a variety of forms to a variety of audiences, including the state programs and program participants, a broad range of scientific and educational interests, NOAA/DOC, other federal agencies, Congress, the media, and a wide range of other external clientele;

“Marketing. The NSGO must actively promote Sea Grant. This is a key ingredient for ensuring the long-term viability of Sea Grant while also providing a necessary feedback mechanism. Coordination with the individual state programs is essential to meet this responsibility;

“Capacity Building. The NSGO must be continuously concerned with the vitality of the Sea Grant enterprise. In some cases this involves identifying problems at a state program level and assisting in remedial efforts. More often it is the sharing of best management practices and providing workshops and training in areas of program-wide need. The NSGO must be constantly focused on building the capabilities of the network as a whole as well as each component within it;

“Broad Support and Service to NOAA and DOC. The NSGO has a broad support and service function for its line office in NOAA, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), as well as for NOAA and the Department of Commerce. At a modest level, this service is both appropriate and healthy for the NSGO and for its personnel. It also is a function that can be easily misused.” (p. 17)

Key recommendations of the Duce Report associated with elements of the Charge to the Communications and Engagement Committee include: (p. 41)

Recommendation 2: The NSGO, in partnership with NSGRP, SGA, and NOAA, should continue to develop a cohesive, coherent strategy to raise the awareness and deepen the appreciation of Sea Grant by Congress and the Administration.

Recommendation 5: The NSGO, in consultation with the SGA, should continue to develop joint national initiatives with the NOAA Line Offices that will focus expanded university efforts on critical marine issues central to NOAA's current and future needs. The NSGO should also seek opportunities to develop joint initiatives.

Recommendation 6: The NSGO also should seek opportunities to develop joint initiatives with other federal agencies, professional scientific organizations, and foundations with strong marine science missions.

Recommendation 7: The NSGO should consider the potential for major regional initiatives by [1] Synthesizing the principal results from the recent reports and plans in this area and [2] Developing a strategy for new funding resources.

Recommendation 10: The NSGO should continue to take an active leadership role, with the SGA and the NSGP Communicators, in the development and aggressive implementation of a comprehensive and marketing strategy for promoting the NSGCP.

Recommendation 11: The NSGO, in partnership with the Sea Grant network, should provide leadership and support for the development and utilization of a network-wide data and information system for cataloging and tracking technical information, accomplishments, and general information about Sea Grant investments in research, outreach, and education.

Recommendation 12: The NSGO, in partnership with the state programs, should provide leadership in developing and maintaining a web site that is attractive, easily navigable, readily accessible, up to date and highly informative about the NSGCP.

Recommendation 17: Sea Grant should remain within NOAA/OAR, and NOAA should specifically charge OAR with broad responsibility for education and extension activities.

The Duce Report concludes that "If the recommendations in this report are to be carried out successfully, a number of significant changes will be required – changes not just in administrative structure or in the ways that tasks are carried out, and not just in the operations of the National Sea Grant Office. Perhaps most importantly this will require changes and improvements in the overall approach within the entire National Sea Grant College Program and the individuals who comprise it. The satisfactory implementation of these recommendations requires that all the essential partners in Sea Grant - the National Office personnel, the critical science, education, communications, and extension personnel at the state programs, the National Sea Grant Review Panel, and the administrators and staff within NOAA and DOC - work together in

a cooperative and proactive manner with a common goal." (p. 41)

The NMRP was conceived and was in operation prior to the Duce Report.

III. Wittman Plan "Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan 2003-06"; Steve Wittman; March 2003 [Wittman Plan]

The first of the five "Objectives" of the Wittman plan is to provide Sea Grant with a blueprint for excelling in communications. That is, "To enhance Sea Grant's internal/external national communications capability to ensure coordination among NSGO, NOAA, SGA, NMRO and Sea Grant network communications efforts, and provide timely, consistent messages to targeted audiences on a sustained basis." (p. 9)

The "Situation Analysis (2002)" that influenced the Wittman Plan indicated "A comprehensive federal/national strategy for conveying the Sea Grant story is long overdue . . . By clearly articulating the Sea Grant story and conveying a unified vision, Sea Grant has the opportunity to greatly increase its stock with a variety of national audiences . . . In sum, Sea Grant must strive to demonstrate and communicate its relevance and effectiveness in addressing critical ocean, Great Lakes and coastal issues and opportunities, and how this benefits the rest of the nation. This will require a cohesive, consistent, timely and sustained national-level program marketing effort involving contributions from all elements of the Sea Grant network. This involves three interrelated considerations of national communications capability." (p. 6)

The key recommendations of the Wittman Plan are listed here to document the history, significance and principles of this initiative:

"• *Sea Grant needs to establish a national-level capability to collect, synthesize and deliver program and issue-oriented information.*

Individual Sea Grant programs produce an abundance of information on program activities and accomplishments that is generally very effectively communicated within their respective states or region, yet this information often fails to get assimilated and communicated at the national level. Moreover, much of this information has already been compiled and summarized in the briefing books prepared for Program Assessment Teams (PATs) over the past four years. This goldmine of information has yet to be tapped. (p. 6)

"• *Sea Grant needs a centralized online program information database capable of searching and compiling information from multiple programs and summarizing it by topic.*

Today's congressional staffers, federal agency and Administration officials, national news media, NGOs, and interested constituents are increasingly likely to turn first to the Web for information on

any organization or topic. All state Sea Grant programs, the SGA, National Sea Grant Library and the NMRO have Web sites, and currently the NSGO is developing its own Web site (formerly hosted by Maryland Sea Grant). Recently, the NSGO inaugurated a long-needed search capability that provides access to more than 25,000 Web pages of Sea Grant information network-wide. However, the somewhat random resulting list of information is likely to be of limited usefulness to national-level audiences." (p. 7)

"• The NSGO needs to initiate a comprehensive review and evaluation of the cost effectiveness of its present national communications efforts and project expenditures and implement necessary changes. Over the years, Sea Grant has attempted—with varying degrees of success—to establish national vehicles for effectively communicating the program's activities, products and accomplishments both internally and externally." (p. 7)

IV. "Communicating for Success: A Review of the National Sea Grant Communications Activities"; December 2004; Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force [Alden Report]

"In April 2003 the Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force (Task Force) was appointed by the Chair of the National Sea Grant Review Panel and the President of the Sea Grant Association. The Task Force was charged by Dr. Ronald C. Baird, Director of the National Sea Grant College Program (NSGCP), to conduct a strategic review of three national communications activities of the NSGCP: the NMRP, the NSGL and the Sea Grant Abstracts. The Task Force was asked to examine the relevance of each of the programs in fulfilling Sea Grant's mission in law: The prompt dissemination of knowledge as defined in Sec. 1211(b) and Sec. 1123(c)(4)C of the Sea Grant Act of 2002. Dr. Baird requested that the Task Force review:

- ways to improve the cost-effectiveness and delivery of each of these products and services;
- how to better integrate the projects with network operations including place in the organization, funding, grant responsibility, management and accountability;
- whether additional technical reviews (TATs) of specific operations would be helpful; and
- make any other recommendations about the projects and their value added to Sea Grant." (p. 9)

The following 23 "Summary Recommendations" are taken from the Alden Report: (pp. 45-46)

Summary Recommendations

Sea Grant National Communications Task Force

General

1. The Task Force recommends that the Sea Grant Network institutionalize a process for periodic updating and modification of the 2002 National Communications Plan "Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan 2003-2006."
2. The Task Force recommends that the National Sea Grant Office designate one person to be responsible for effective national communications.
3. The Task Force recommends that continued priority be given to using the one percent money in the Sea Grant budget to fund the National Sea Grant Library and the National Media Relations Program.
4. The Task Force recommends regular outside review of both the National Sea Grant Library and the National Media Relations Program.
5. The Task Force recommends that the Sea Grant Association's national communications activities be closely coordinated with the Network's national communications program.

Sea Grant Abstracts and National Sea Grant Library

6. The Task Force recommends cessation of the publication *Sea Grant Abstracts*.
7. The Task Force recommends that the Communications Steering Committee, aided by the National Sea Grant Office national communications leader, develop and implement a transition plan for publicizing the Sea Grant Network's products after the cessation of the publication *Sea Grant Abstracts*.
8. The Task Force recommends that the National Sea Grant Office national communications leader and the Chair of the Communications Steering Committee lead a re-examination of the Network's projected long-term needs for national communications products.
9. The Task Force finds that the National Sea Grant Library provides an invaluable service to Sea Grant and to the users of Sea Grant information.
10. The Task Force recommends that National Sea Grant Office national communications leader provide the National Sea Grant Library with a point of contact, advocacy and integration into the overall activities of the national communications program.

11. The Task Force recommends that attention be given to the management structure and positioning of the National Sea Grant Library within the University of Rhode Island library system.

12. The Task Force recommends that a National Sea Grant Library Advisory Committee be formed.

13. The Task Force recommends that the membership of the Communications Steering Committee should be expanded to include the National Sea Grant Library Manager.

14. The Task Force recommends that National Sea Grant Library staffing be increased both for fulltime employees and for contracted services as needed to meet the additional responsibilities that result from cessation of the publication *Sea Grant Abstracts*.

15. The Task Force recommends that the Sea Grant Network put a high priority on complete and timely submissions to the National Sea Grant Library so that its collection reflects the comprehensive products of the National Sea Grant College Program.

16. The Task Force recommends that an upgrade of the National Sea Grant Library website be given a high priority.

17. The Task Force recommends that a technology audit be undertaken of all National Sea Grant Library computers, peripheral equipment and software and that a high priority be given to implementing necessary technology upgrades.

National Media Relations Program

18. The Task Force concurs with the Technical Panel's recommendation that a media relations function for the National Sea Grant College Program is important.

19. The Task Force recommends that a National Media Relations Program to serve the National Sea Grant College Program be re-established at the earliest possible moment.

20. The Task Force recommends that the National Media Relations Program be located in the office of a non-governmental organization in the metropolitan Washington, DC area.

21. The Task Force recommends that a National Media Relations Advisory Committee be reestablished.

22. The Task Force recommends that responsibility for the National Media Relations Program be shared by the National Media Relations Director, the National Sea Grant Office and the host non-governmental organization with advice and guidance from the National Media Relations Advisory Committee.

23. The Task Force recommends that a National Media Relations Director and an Administrative Assistant be hired for the National Media Relations Program.

The "Conclusion" of the 23 "Summary Recommendations" of the Alden Report indicated (p. 46) "If the recommendations made in this report are implemented, the Sea Grant story in all its dimensions will be able to be told – and to be heard. The Sea Grant story will be put forward in many ways: through good online access to scientific results, through organizing and participating in media events and through factual and professional stories in a myriad of media for the general public."

V. "National Sea Grant Office Response to: Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan ("Wittman Plan")"; No Publication Date; National Sea Grant Office [NSGO Response To Wittman Plan]

The NSGO Response to the Wittman Plan indicates the initiatives that have been undertaken by the NSGO to implement the various provisions and recommendations of the Wittman Plan. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reasonably ascertain the extent, degree, effectiveness, magnitude, variability or success of such implementation. Therefore, given contemporary circumstances that affect the future of the NSGCP, it is important that a joint review of the NSGO Response to Wittman Plan, and a joint evaluation of the implementation of the Wittman Plan provisions and recommendations, and of the Alden Report recommendations, should be accomplished at an early opportunity through a joint effort of the Sea Grant Communications Network and the NSGO.

VI. "NSGO Implementation Plan for Summary Recommendations of the Sea Grant National Communications Task Force"; No Publication Date; National Sea Grant Office [NSGO Response to Alden Report]

The NSGO Response to Alden Report indicates the initiatives that have been undertaken by the NSGO to implement the 23 recommendations of the Alden Report. Nevertheless, it is difficult to reasonably ascertain the extent, degree, effectiveness, magnitude, variability or success of such implementation. Therefore, given contemporary circumstances that affect the future of the NSGCP, it is important that a joint review of the NSGO Response to Alden Report, and a joint evaluation of the implementation of the Alden Report recommendations, and of the Wittman Plan provisions and recommendations,

should be accomplished at an early opportunity through a joint effort of the Sea Grant Communications Network and the NSGO.

The following is excerpted from the “NSGO Response to the Alden Report”:

**NSGO Implementation Plan
For Summary Recommendations
of the Sea Grant National Communications Task Force**

“NOAA’s National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) is pleased to present the Implementation Plan for the Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force report *Communicating for Success*. (http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/other/greenbook_doc/communicating_for_success.pdf). The Report presented findings in three areas: the National Sea Grant Library, the Sea Grant Abstracts, and the National Media Relations Program. The final document was informed by two Technical Panels that conducted a review of the three national communications activities funded by Sea Grant. One panel reviewed the National Sea Grant Library and the Sea Grant Abstracts while the other panel reviewed the National Media Relations Program. (p. 1)

The NSGO is grateful to the Task Force for their leadership in reviewing the three national communications activities. The implementation of the report’s recommendations will increase the visibility and utility of Communications within the Sea Grant network and improve the management, structure, and efficiency of the three national communications projects. (p.1)

VII. “Engaging NOAA’s Constituents: A Report from the NOAA Science Advisory Board; Putting the pieces together to create impacts”; (August 2008; NOAA Science Advisory Board Extension Outreach and Education Working Group) [Engaging NOAA’s Constituents SAB Report]

This report was prepared for NOAA overall. However, it is important to capitalize on the fact that Sea Grant is the NOAA line office with significant proven capacity, knowledge, an experienced work force and a successful record of accomplishments in engagement. The recommendations of the *Engaging NOAA’s Constituents SAB Report* provide an enormous opportunity for Sea Grant to support NOAA-wide engagement. The report has been well received by NOAA. They are currently drafting a full response to the detailed recommendations and have already accepted and are implementing several of them.

The report includes eight (8) findings and a series of recommendations included below:

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Finding #1: A strategy for public engagement is missing.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 NOAA should review and revise its strategic plan, mission, and vision statements to include the importance of an informed and engaged public consistent with the new authorization language. There needs to be a shift in focus to a more engaged organization providing products and services, as well as science, to the American people. NOAA must work to change the organizational culture as well as its process and procedures to encourage, promote, and reward engagement.
- 1.2 NOAA should develop a strategy for public engagement that provides a roadmap for coordination of all extension, outreach, and education programs in the agency.
- 1.3 NOAA should develop a coherent set of informational products and tools, including appropriate evaluation strategies, for use by all NOAA employees when engaging their stakeholder communities. NOAA also should acknowledge the importance of the involvement of NOAA employees in engagement, and this should be communicated and rewarded at all levels of NOAA management starting in the highest administrative offices.
- 1.4 NOAA should include a climate science component for non-coastal programs to deal with atmospheric and climate change issues.

Finding #2: There is no coordinating body to implement public engagement strategy.

Recommendations:

- 2.1 NOAA should expand the mission and membership of the current Education Council to become an Engagement Council, chaired by the NOAA Education Director, to administer a NOAA-wide program of extension, and outreach. The expanded Council must be given appropriate administrative and budgetary authority, and leaders of NOAA programs in extension, outreach, and education, as well as the Office of Communications, should be represented on the Council. For example, the National Sea Grant Extension Leader should be a member. The Council should have as its mission to seek ways to combine strengths, leverage as appropriate partnerships established by any NOAA activity for the benefit of all, and refine and modify NOAA engagement programs as needed to address national and/or regional needs.

- 2.2 The Engagement Council should be charged with development of the NOAA engagement strategy.
- 2.3 The Engagement Council should maintain an inventory of all extension, outreach, and education activities across NOAA. The Council should review NOAA's engagement with consumers and clients with the aid of the engagement test prepared with support from the Kellogg Commission. The Council should also establish guidelines for best management practices in all NOAA extension, outreach, and education programs. The Council should also define metrics for success and ensure that the required data are collected.
- 2.4 The Engagement Council should report annually to the NOAA Administrator and, when appropriate, to the SAB to provide an update on progress of programs of engagement, an assessment of their effectiveness, challenges, and plans for the future.

Finding #3: There are insufficient resources for engagement.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 The Working Group recommends that at least 10% of the NOAA budget be committed to engagement. This funding recommendation was based on percentage of funding spent on extension, outreach, and education in NOAA programs that the Working Group determined to have strong engagement programs (including Sea Grant and National Marine Sanctuaries Program, which spend 36.3% and 20% respectively), (Figure 2). The proposed Engagement Council should periodically evaluate the adequacy of the 10% funding recommendation. Efforts to enhance NOAA's extension, outreach, and education programs are too critical to wait for new money.
- 3.2 NOAA's program managers, researchers, and other employees, where appropriate, should have, as a starting point, a commitment of 5% of their time to engagement in their position descriptions, performance plans, and programs. The NOAA Engagement Council should assist NOAA employees in engaging the public. NOAA employees and associates should be given basic information about NOAA science and services and points of contact within the organization to allow them to get additional information on topics of interest. This will allow NOAA employees to acquire and present a broader and more integrated view of NOAA. The Engagement Council should highlight activities that allow NOAA employees to discuss their research or programs with the general public, policy makers, community groups, school groups. The Council also should highlight events where NOAA programs are focused on such as beach clean-ups,

lectures, and storm watcher training. Identifying the best practices in this area will help improve and expand these efforts. The Engagement Council should reach out to individuals across NOAA to sponsor the development of communications materials that provide insightful visual material (videos, search engines, or data displays) or compelling written descriptions of NOAA issues.

Finding #4: Organizational culture in NOAA is not conducive to engagement.

Recommendations:

Under the direction of the Engagement Council, all NOAA programs:

- 4.1 Should review their operational plans to ensure that they include the “one NOAA” vision and expectation that extension, outreach, and education are essential components of, and expectation for, success and performance.
- 4.2 Should identify resources to allow them to consistently implement NOAA strategies identified in the engagement plan to integrate extension, outreach, and education in the delivery of their products and services, and in their interaction with consumers and clients.
- 4.3 Should establish an agency-wide engagement training program for all current and future employees. More extensive training programs in translational science should be developed for the 600 extension, outreach, and education professionals to equip them to be the interface between NOAA’s scientists and its consumers and clients.
- 4.4 Should consistently incorporate performance benchmarks, indicators of performance or other similar means of establishing the expectation across all programs and personnel that the successful implementation and incorporation of engagement is important to NOAA management, and to achieving NOAA’s mission and vision.

Finding #5: The public is not fully aware of NOAA and its services.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 Extension, outreach and education efforts need to be coordinated across organizations to assure that the results will be greater than the sum of their parts. The public should easily be able to identify services, products, and programs funded by or associated with NOAA; all services, products, and programs should display the NOAA logo.
- 5.2 NOAA should establish a mechanism to regularly monitor public awareness, knowledge, and use of its services, products, and programs.

Finding #6: NOAA is developing a new regional structure, although its place within existing NOAA regional structure is not clear.

Recommendations:

- 6.1 NOAA should recognize that while it currently has many very valuable national audiences, consumers and clients that it must continue to foster, its greatest growth potential is in further development of, and engagement with, local audiences, consumers and clients.
- 6.2 NOAA should utilize its newly formed regional collaboration structures to create opportunities to become fully engaged with local consumers and clients on national issues. While the majority of extension, outreach and education specialists in NOAA reside in Sea Grant, in many regions it is not clear how fully these capabilities are being leveraged by NOAA teams. For example, the Gulf of Mexico Region may be a leader in including Sea Grant and other partners in regional activities and thereby leveraging the power of those organizations. The proposed pilot project with Sea Grant in the Gulf of Mexico (see Appendix IX) could be a good test case for expanding this synergy.
- 6.3 NOAA should coordinate its existing extension, outreach, and education networks at the national, regional, and local levels to better engage consumers and clients at all levels. At the national level this coordination should be through the proposed NOAA Engagement Council (See Finding #2).
- 6.4 NOAA should assure that its newly created regional structures, and those of NOAA Sea Grant, are well integrated and coordinated. Local engagement should be accomplished by nationally and regionally coordinated programs inside and outside of NOAA, including Sea Grant, NERRS, NWS, Coastal Zone Management, Coastal Services Center, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, museums, aquariums, etc. This would also address recent requests for better coordination of coastal programs from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- 6.5 NOAA should use its regional structures to address pressing issues, such as climate and energy, through its extension, outreach, and education programs in both coastal and non-coastal states with a variety of partners (e.g. universities, K-12 education, and professional associations).

Finding #7: NOAA should better utilize partnerships in engagement.

Recommendations:

NOAA should commit to utilize its existing partnerships, including the university community, other federal agencies, the informal science education community,

industry partners, vendors, professional societies and mass media to extend the engagement NOAA has with the public. NOAA should support these partnerships by:

- 7.1 Funding regional pilot projects (see Finding #6) with selected partners to learn how broad engagement activities, representing all of NOAA and clearly identified as NOAA, could take place.
- 7.2 Funding similar regional pilot projects with universities, informal science education institutions, the weather and climate enterprise partners, and others that are not currently NOAA partners, to learn how new partners can be enlisted in the most cost-effective manner.
- 7.3 Continuing and expanding diagnostic assessment activities to learn which of these partnerships produces the largest return on investment. Those findings in turn can be used by NOAA to decide where future pilot and implementation projects should be undertaken. The evaluation of "Science on a Sphere" is a good example of such assessment practices.
- 7.4 Documenting the value of partnerships (for NOAA, OMB, and the Department of Commerce) by recognizing cost-share coming from partners, both cash and in-kind, including volunteered hours by paid NOAA staff.
- 7.5 Deepening existing partnerships by listening to partners, soliciting regular feedback from them on the partnership, and demonstrating that their ideas and concerns are heard, appreciated, and acted upon whenever possible.
- 7.6 Taking leadership to include environmental issues in the next generation of science education standards through working with formal education partnerships.

Finding #8: NOAA needs to institutionalize a public accountability system.

Recommendations:

- 8.1 NOAA should establish a program to determine (1) baseline public understanding and recognition of NOAA, its mission, products, and services; (2) baseline public understanding of core STEM principles upon which NOAA's work is based; (3) NOAA-wide outputs, that is, numbers of people being reached in various segments of the population, and descriptions of the duration, topics, and depth of that outreach; and finally, (4) impact evaluations on the baseline measures of samples of NOAA-operated or NOAA-supported activities in extension, outreach, and

education. This program of data collection, which should use both qualitative and quantitative methods as appropriate, should also be used to provide direction to NOAA staff and partners in designing public engagement activities that are responsive to the perceived needs of key audiences and stakeholders.

- 8.2 These measures should reflect national focus, regional direction and local relevance. NOAA should also consider a performance evaluation system that rewards senior NOAA managers and field workers for effective impacts, yet reward systems must be very carefully developed to avoid skewing the portfolio toward impacts that are most easily quantified and measured.
- 8.3 Impact evaluation should be developed with the full participation of NOAA staff or NOAA-supported staff.
- 8.4 Baseline data and output information should be collected across NOAA's programmatic efforts.
- 8.5 NOAA should use established best practice techniques for overall planning and evaluation of its extension, outreach and education programs. These techniques include the use of "logic models" and "backward-design strategies," specific to each program, because individual programs will have their own target audiences and desired impacts.
- 8.6 NOAA should use the most rigorous practical methodology to provide the best data on project and overall program effectiveness.

Chapter 4

National Sea Grant Staff Roles (Prepared by NSGO)

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and its Program Officers and core staff are central to the National Sea Grant College Program's ability to administer grants. Program Officers work closely with state Sea Grant programs on strategic planning, accountability and assessment processes. Other functions of the NSGO critical to the successful operation of the National program include: facilitation, coordination, and integration of state extension/outreach and education efforts; focus team leadership and coordination; national-level communication; administration of fellowship and national strategic investment programs; support of NOAA program development; and meeting the performance and accountability requirements expected of all NOAA and Federal programs.

NSGO Priorities

In 2006, NSGO leadership reorganized the National Office. In the face of steady budget declines, the constraints of the five percent administrative cap, and a new approach to the organization's program planning, implementation and evaluation processes (based on a National Research Council report), leadership re-positioned existing NSGO staff to focus on grants administration, accountability and assessment process. This paradigm shift has resulted in less emphasis on, and fewer resources allocated to, national communications and outreach activities.

Diminished Resources

Increased efforts to enhance national visibility are highly challenging at current funding levels because current staff must focus on core "keep the trains running" tasks. At the local level, Sea Grant programs are highly successful in their involvement with state and local agencies in addressing coastal issues, and local staff typically serves in leadership roles for these activities. However, the NSGO is not able to complement this approach at the national level and within NOAA for the benefit of the entire network.

Within NOAA, Sea Grant functions in a competitive environment. Almost all staff time devoted to participating in NOAA activities is for the purpose of increasing the organization's visibility and value within the Agency. Direct participation in these activities has resulted in additional funding for state Sea Grant programs through programs such as the NOAA Charter Ship Time Program, coastal storms initiative, the lead role in allocating NOAA aquaculture research and outreach funds, and numerous pass-through programs.

Current Workforce Status and Recent History

The NSGO had 20 FTEs and three contractors as recently as 2005 (refer to Table 1, below). The budget cuts in the national program of the last four years have resulted in a corresponding loss in capacity of the NSGO. The NSGO has responded to this capacity loss by: (1) reducing the amount of time spent on lower-priority activities while preserving, to the extent possible, the capacity to perform its highest-priority activities (providing Program Officer support to state programs and responding to NOAA and Federal program requirements); (2) partnering with other NOAA programs (e.g., Aquaculture, Invasive Species) to achieve goals common to both programs at reduced cost; (3) using contractors, detailees or more junior Federal employees for tasks that had previously been performed by more senior Federal employees.

When compared to similar NOAA granting programs (Ocean Exploration and Research, Office of Coastal Resources Management, Office of Education, Climate Program Office and Coastal Zone Management), the NSGO has about one-quarter the number of FTEs per dollar of grants managed than these five programs combined. Given that many NSGO duties are prescribed by legislation, the workload is arguably higher and more complex than many other NOAA programs.

Table 1: NSGO Workforce Decline

Year	FTEs	Contractors
2005	20	1.8
2009	11	3

As of the third quarter of FY 2009, the NSGO currently has 15 staff (11 FTEs, three contractors, two Knauss fellows, and one detailee paid for by NMFS) dedicated to Sea Grant. In addition, there are three other individuals who spend about 20% of their time on Sea Grant activities, but whose salaries are largely supported elsewhere. With the current budget, NSGO cannot support a staff dedicated to the Sea Grant of more than 14 FTEs. The current workforce level does not give the NSGO sufficient capacity to effectively carry out all tasks necessary for most successful running of the National program.

NSGO Outreach Capabilities

Until FY 2007, the NSGO supported one extension leader, one education leader, and three communications staff. When one communications staff member departed and another transferred to another position within the NSGO, the vacant communications positions were not filled due to budget constraints and the new priorities mentioned above. The remaining communications position assumed a number of operational responsibilities, leaving half time for communications activities. Consequently, much of the partnership development (internal and external to NOAA), communications leadership and writing and editing capabilities were severely impacted. Presently, the NSGO supports one

Extension and one Communications position. These positions, as detailed below, are not dedicated exclusively to extension and communications activities.

NSGO Extension and Communication Responsibilities
--

1) Extension Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

The position is responsible for setting extension policy and for coordinating extension activities among Sea Grant programs, NOAA and other constituents. The position also....

2) Communications Coordinator (1.0 FTE)

The position is responsible for maintaining all aspects of communications between Sea Grant programs, NOAA, the NSGO and constituents. The position also sets policy for and manages information management, including data management and reporting, Internet presence and records retention.
--

The implications of NSGO staff erosion are significant. In addition, workload is a major concern that has led to the departure of several employees. The increased volume of work was so significant that the employees were constantly frustrated by their inability to perform any single task well. This situation will undoubtedly result in more departures by key personnel.

Chapter 5

Recommendations for Sea Grant Communications

Communications is an essential instrument for raising the awareness and understanding of the products, services, contributions, impacts, accomplishments, benefits and value of the National Sea Grant College Program; to providing the foundation of an adequate and stable funding and political base; to better extending the utilization, application and reach of Sea Grant's products, services and science; and to engaging support from Sea Grant's existing and potential consumer and client base, and from those who possess the authority and influence to determine the survival, growth and success of Sea Grant.

Several committees and individuals have organized around an examination of how to best utilize the tools, science and machinery of communications to promote and advertise the Sea Grant Story to relevant, important and influential audiences, and to achieve the Sea Grant mission.

These committees and individuals produced a variety of reports that confirm the need of the Sea Grant Network to fund and implement a significant, multidimensional, comprehensive and coordinated Network-wide communications strategy. The reports conclude that the existence and results of successful Sea Grant investments in research, engagement, extension, outreach and education are not sufficiently known or understood, and that recognition of such reports is not achieved, especially in contemporary and anticipated competitive appropriations and political environments, unless delivered by means of a well thought-out communications strategy and associated implementation plan.

The Duce Report ("Building Sea Grant; The Role of the National Sea Grant Office"; Prepared by The National Sea Grant Office Review Committee of the National Sea Grant Review Panel; June 2002) observed "[The] national agenda for Sea Grant should be communicated widely . . . Of particular importance is the promotion of Sea Grant to Congress and the Administration . . . This will require a . . . cohesive and coherent strategic approach . . ." (p.10), and "Communicating the importance of Sea Grant is central to the future health, effectiveness, and sustained growth of Sea Grant . . . Of particular importance is enhancing the understanding and support of Congress. For Sea Grant to meet its Congressionally mandated expectations, it is necessary for Sea Grant to expand this base support in Congress, the Administration, other interest groups, and a larger fraction of the general public. Sea Grant must become more widely recognized as a national network that funds important research, educates the citizenry, addresses real world problems, and pays for itself in tangible economic benefits." (p. 11) The Duce Report recommends that "The NSGO, in partnership with NSGRP [National Sea Grant Review Panel, now named the National Sea

Grant Advisory Board], SGA, and NOAA, should continue to develop a cohesive, coherent strategy to raise the awareness and deepen the appreciation of Sea Grant by Congress and the Administration." (p. 10), and "The NSGO should continue to take an active leadership role, with the SGA and the NSGP Communicators, in the development and aggressive implementation of a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy for promoting the NSGCP." (p. 11)

The Wittman Plan ("Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan 2003-06"; Steve Wittman, March 2003) was based on a communications needs assessment conducted during June-August 2002 by Wisconsin Sea Grant communicator Stephen Wittman and the results of a September 2002 communications planning retreat involving broad participation from the Sea Grant Network, NOAA, NGOs and private sector marketing experts. The Goal established in The Wittman Plan is "To effectively demonstrate the need for and value of the National Sea Grant College Program to Congress, NOAA, the Department of Commerce (DOC), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the White House, national non-governmental organizations, national news media, and other relevant partners and audiences." (p. 9) The Wittman Plan observed that "The success of this effort depends largely on the strength of commitment and continual support given to it by the entire Sea Grant community. It will require all components of the program to give high priority to presenting our branding message and 'the Sea Grant story' as part of a consistent and persistent campaign over the next four years to position and market at the national level. This is essential if we are to increase national support for the program by its next reauthorization and reverse a 20-year decline, in real dollars, of its federal funding base. This decline has begun to diminish the program's capability for addressing critical ocean, Great Lakes and coastal issues. Clearly, Sea Grant's continued viability depends on generating greater national support for the program." (p. 3)

The Alden Report ("Communicating for Success: A Review of the National Sea Grant Communications Activities"; Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force, December 2004) asked "Can Sea Grant capture the opportunity available from well-run national scale communications?" The answer was, "Yes, but Sea Grant must be attentive to coordinating, organizing and administering the diverse array of communications activities that define Sea Grant communications at a national level." (p. 9) The Alden Report observed ". . . that more attention to integration and coordination of national communications is needed . . . [To] enable Sea Grant to release the power of its scientific information and its education and extension activities to further its mission and the program's growth." (p. 9) The Alden Report recommended that ". . . the Sea Grant Network institutionalize a process for periodic updating and modification of the 2002 National Communications Plan 'Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan 2003-2006.'" (p. 17), and that ". . . the Sea

Grant Association's national communications activities be closely coordinated with the Network's national communications program." (p. 21)

There is a great need for Sea Grant to build awareness, recognition, support and respect for the many impacts, contributions and accomplishments that result from the Sea Grant investment. It is critical that Sea Grant successfully communicates the promise that Sea Grant offers in addressing job creation, competitiveness, economic development, scientific investigation, and sustainable solutions to opportunities, challenges and needs that exist in ocean, Great Lakes and coastal environments. This can be achieved only if the current communications planning, operational and implementation structure is enhanced and expanded, and only if such improvements occur with respect to the interaction, collaboration, efficiency and effectiveness of all of the Sea Grant internal elements and program entities.

A. Short Term Recommendations

1. The NSGO should increase efficiency and reduce costs through technology. With a diminished National Office budget it is critical that the National Office find ways to increase its communication efficiency and effectiveness. Traveling to face-to-face meetings, in light of reduced airline schedules, flight delays, and extended pre-boarding times, expends a great deal of staff time and resources. Communications can be the leader to effectively utilize webinars, conference calls and various new digital conferencing technologies, as well as design web pages to help make the National Office staff and resources available to more people.

2. The NSGO should invest in an additional staff member (i.e., "NSGO Communications Leader") who possesses significant professional experience, expertise, knowledge and understanding of the tools, science and machinery of the communications field and technological advances. The NSGO should assign the additional staff person to:

(a) "be responsible for effective national communications" (Alden Report; p. 18);

(b) act as "a point person to focus, plan and direct strategic efforts - including internal communications, national Web presence, and potential marketing efforts - on a continuing basis" ("The Sea Grant National Communications Network Strategic Plan 2001-2005");

(c) provide leadership to the Network to "enhance internal communications among all program elements (researchers, communicators, extension staff and educators) as well as among all program entities (SGA, NSGO, NMRO [National Media Relations Office] and NRP [National Sea Grant Advisory Board]) with the objective of improving their interactions, collaborations, efficiency and effectiveness" (Wittman Plan; p. 4);

(d) enhance "Sea Grant's internal/external national communications capability to ensure coordination among NSGO, NOAA, SGA, NMRO and Sea Grant network communications efforts, and provide timely, consistent messages to targeted audiences on a sustained basis" (Wittman Plan; p. 4);

(e) "provide leadership to the network in implementing and annually updating its strategic national communications plan" (Wittman Plan; p. 10);

(f) understand and "know what is happening in each program; collaborate with network communicators to collect, synthesize and package program results and impacts; and work with the SGA, NMRO and NOAA-OAR offices of Public Affairs and External Affairs to disseminate information to appropriate national audiences." (Wittman Plan; p. 10);

(g) incorporate and synthesize the materials, work products and other initiatives of the four Sea Grant Focus Teams that demonstrate Sea Grant's value to the nation, and disseminate such information through press releases, news and media events, publications, etc.;

(h) collaborate with the Sea Grant Communications Network in an initiative to prioritize and implement the objectives, tasks and activities that are outlined in the Wittman Plan.

3. The Director of the National Sea Grant College Program should engage in a series of personal visits with all individual Sea Grant Programs that include scheduled visits, dialogue and discourse with senior executive leadership of the host university institutions in which Sea Grant Programs reside. The NSGCP Director should embark on these personal visits in possession of an institutional endorsement from NOAA, together with the requisite data and information, to permit the Director to represent the whole of the NOAA investment. These important personal visits would seek to institute a standard of communication that would raise the level of appreciation for and visibility of the NSGCP and NOAA, and encourage the willingness of senior leadership at the individual Sea Grant Programs and at the host university institutions to support NOAA and NSGCP program initiatives.

4. Sea Grant Knauss Fellow: The NSGO should host a Sea Grant Knauss Fellow to assist with carrying out tasks and activities that are associated with the communications responsibilities and objectives of the NSGO and the Sea Grant Communications Network. This position would support NSGO and Network communications activities in much the same manner as the two current Sea Grant Knauss Fellows now each support respective Sea Grant Focus Teams. The NSGO should consult with the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, the National Sea Grant Communications Network and the Sea Grant Association to clarify specific qualifications for those prospective fellows. These qualifications should include "individuals who have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting these resources," and who may also have additional interest and expertise in the communications field.

5. Engage and organize a group of individuals, to be referred to as "Friends of Sea Grant", who possess the knowledge, understanding, experience and appreciation of the Vision, Mission, Goals, contributions and benefits of the National Sea Grant College Program. Participation in the Friends of Sea Grant would include: current and prior members of the National Sea Grant Advisory Board (and the prior National Sea Grant Review Panel); current and prior employees of NOAA, the NSGO and individual state Sea Grant programs; current and prior Sea Grant Knauss Fellows; stakeholders of individual state Sea Grant programs; and others who understand, value and support the NSGCP.

6. The NSGAB should approach Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco with the idea that support and appreciation for NOAA and the NSGCP would likely be advanced if the university institutions in which individual Sea Grant programs reside were to be more clearly identified in media, news releases and reports that originate from NOAA and OAR Public Affairs. These media include, but are not limited to, the NOAA Website; "OAR in the Spotlight"; "NOAA World"; "OAR News Updates"; NOAA Administrator Newsletter; OAR Public Affairs weekly news releases; "OAR Hot Items"; other NOAA/DOC leadership newsletters (e.g., "EMT," "Weekly," and others); and Hill briefings, speeches, presentations, etc. Moreover, favorable consideration of such a propitious opportunity would likely be received as a considerate and respectful recognition by the university institutions and would likely bring forth offers of cooperation, partnership, association and assistance.

7. The NSGO should generally endeavor to expand and enhance the interaction, partnership and collaboration with the Sea Grant Communications Network. This collaboration should include a joint review and evaluation of the progress that has been made in implementing the provisions and recommendations of the Wittman Plan and the Alden Report, and a joint review of the two NSGO reports, "National Sea Grant Office Response to: Positioning Sea Grant: An Integrated National Communications Plan ("Wittman Plan")", and "NSGO Implementation Plan for Summary Recommendations of the Sea Grant National Communications Task Force."

8. The NSGO should organize a work group to assess opportunities for increasing public awareness of NSGCP impacts and relevance to national concerns at the national, regional and state levels. With changing media organization structures, new electronic information systems and evolving consumer demands for information, opportunities for creating and capturing program publicity and visibility will be beneficial to the program. This work group would include representatives of the NSGO, the National Sea Grant Communications Network, the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, the SGA and others who have knowledge and experience in the communications field.

9. Accelerate the development of the Sea Grant National Information Management System (NIMS) to serve as a “network-wide data and information system for cataloging and tracking technical information, accomplishments, and general information about Sea Grant investments in research, outreach, and education” (Duce Report; p. 29) and that fulfills the identified need for “a centralized online program information database capable of searching and compiling information from multiple programs and summarizing it by topic.” (Wittman Plan; p. 7)

B. Long Term Recommendation

The NSGO should provide funding and the mechanism to reestablish the Sea Grant National Media Relations Office (NMRO) at the earliest opportunity. The Sea Grant National Communications Network Strategic Plan 2001-2005, the Duce Report, the Alden Report and the Wittman Plan have expressed recognition of the contribution of the NMRO (also referred to as the National Media Relations Program, or “NMRP”) to meeting the Mission and achieving the Goals of the NSGCP. A Sea Grant NMRO is essential to achieving the overarching Goal of the Wittman Plan to “effectively demonstrate the need for and value of the National Sea Grant College Program to Congress, NOAA, the Department of Commerce (DOC), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the White House, national non-governmental organizations, national news media, and other relevant partners and audiences.” [Whittman Plan; p. 4] The NMRO has been recognized in several past examinations of Sea Grant communications as a key element, participant and messenger in the formulation and execution of the tactics and activities that are of strategic importance to achieving the Mission and Goals of the NSGCP, to the objectives of achieving stable funding, and to attracting the interest and attention of those who have the authority and influence to impact the survival, growth and success of the NSGCP.

It is important to note that the Sea Grant Communications Review Task Force convened a National Media Relations Technical Panel that included four external and independent reviewers with extensive and proven knowledge, experience and understanding of media relations, public affairs and communications who recommended that the “The National Media Relations Program should continue.” [Alden Report; p. 38] Moreover, the Technical Panel observed that “The NSGCP is responsible for communicating its common goals to the public, including the importance and results of marine science, education and outreach. In this context, it is also important to note that the public is the customer whose understanding, and financial and political support is necessary for the NSGCP to exist. A media relations effort is an important tool in carrying out this responsibility . . . An effective NSGCP media relations program can reassure policymakers about the benefits and accomplishments derived from their decision to invest public funds and help ensure their continued support.

Moreover, a NSGCP media relations effort serves to increase public awareness and utilization of the valuable scientific information that flows from the public investment in the NSGCP." [Alden Report; p. 37]

Chapter 6

Short and Long Term Recommendations for Extension

A. Short Term Recommendations

- 1) NOAA is currently developing implementation of the SAB Engagement Report. **TIME IS CRITICAL**. Sea Grant is a natural in the implementation of these recommendations; however, other parts of NOAA with greater resources want to grab this turf and the potential dollars with the engagement plan implementation. Jim Murray chairs the "Engagement Council. However, he does not have adequate available time to spend on the subject and allow the full engagement of Sea Grant. It is recommended that a significant additional block of Jim Murray's time (say, 25%) be freed up allow him to fully engage the SAB Engagement Report Adding this as a duty is inadequate; relieving him by reassigning duties would be required.
- 2) Keep an additional Knauss Fellow in the Sea Grant office, to supplement engagement. This will provide some critical relief for an understaffed NSGO. A call for Knauss Fellows should specifically identify engagement similar to a call for Knauss Fellow communicator.
- 3) Climate extension is a great opportunity for NOAA to integrate an array of units and the Sea Grant college network into a collaborative, multi-unit, synergetic program. Full realization of that vision will depend on strong NOAA leadership. Sea Grant and OAR should negotiate a memorandum of understanding with the other NOAA AAs to clearly identify roles and an operational plan for an enhanced engagement program dealing with climate issues; this plan could then be presented to the administrator.
- 4) NOAA's regional effort is another important opportunity for Sea Grant to expand collaborative engagement activities addressing clientele needs. This should continue to be funded and staffed by Sea Grant as a priority item.
- 5) Implement the SAB Engagement Report's Sea Grant demonstration project. This would show how Sea Grant could more fully engage NOAA assets for greater impact and visibility of NOAA programming on a regional basis. This demonstration could emphasize Climate Change and the public's growing interest in and understanding of weather and climate and the impact they have on their lives. This project could demonstrate

NOAA's capacity to build and lead as the premier organization to address the climate and weather needs of our nation.

Within a two year period we believe NOAA could expect to have a workable role, along with responsibility, funding and accountability agreements to guide effective collaborative work among units within NOAA and other government agencies.

- 6) The Sea Grant Advisory Board should reestablish the formal annual meeting with the NOAA administrator, where the Board provides a written report and Recommendations (why is this capitalized?) to the administrator.
- 7) Sea Grant pays a significant overhead to NOAA. The Sea Grant Advisory Board should do an analysis of the services rendered to the national Sea Grant college program and the priority of those resources to the success of the program.
- 8) Sea Grant should further pursue cost effective alternatives to supplement it staff. This could include use of faculty on sabbaticals, individuals on detail, etc.
- 9) Sea Grant should require \$5000.00 of each of its \$50,000 Regional Grants to be utilized for engagement, including media and communications activities.

Long Term Recommendations

As a result of flat budgets, reduced state funding, required salary increases and inflation, the number of Sea Grant agents have been reduced in a time when growth is needed. As funding returns, these extension and outreach cuts should be reestablished to maintain a vibrant, trusted outreach component in Sea Grant programming.

Appendix 1

Report Committee Background

Frank Kudrna, Jr. (Past Board Chairman)

Westmont, Illinois

Dr. Frank Kudrna is the chief executive officer of Kudrna & Associates, Ltd., a Chicago civil engineering consulting firm. Formerly he was president of Epstein Civil Engineering Company, and prior to that he was director of the Illinois Division of Water Resources and supervising engineer of flood control and planning with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Dr. Kudrna has served for over 25 years on the Great Lakes Commission. He is former vice-chairman of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission and the Ohio River Basin Commission. Dr. Kudrna holds a Ph.D. from the Illinois Institute of Technology and an MBA from the University of Chicago. During 2000, Dr. Kudrna served on the eight-member team that conducted an intensive review of the National Sea Grant College Program's extension efforts that resulted in the report A Mandate to Engage Coastal Users. Dr. Kudrna also serves on NOAA's Science Advisory Board.

Peter M. Bell (Past Board Chairman)

Galesville, Maryland

Dr. Peter M. Bell is a consultant in the fields of geophysics and material science and is adjunct senior research scientist at the Carnegie Institution of Washington's Geophysical Laboratory. In addition, he serves on the Advisory Board of the Materials Processing Center of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Before his retirement, Dr. Bell was the vice president and chief scientist of St. Gobain Corporation and Norton Company. He has served on the Board of Directors of Cerbec Corporation and KuriNorton Company. Dr. Bell has taught at Harvard, Johns Hopkins, the California Institute of Technology and the State University of New York. Dr. Bell was awarded the Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1976, the Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in 1981, and the Guinness Foundation Award in 1981. He was named the Fairchild Distinguished Scholar by the California Institute of Technology in 1983. Dr. Bell received his Ph.D. in geophysics at Harvard University.

Nancy Rabalais

Chauvin, Louisiana

Nancy Rabalais is a Professor at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium. Dr. Rabalais' research interests include the dynamics of hypoxic environments, interactions of large rivers with the coastal ocean, estuarine and coastal eutrophication, benthic ecology, and environmental effects of habitat alterations and contaminants. Dr. Rabalais is an AAAS Fellow, an Aldo Leopold Leadership Program Fellow, a Past President of the Estuarine Research Federation, a National Associate of the National Academies of Science, a member of the Scientific Steering Committee of LOICZ/IGBP, and currently is Chair of the Ocean Studies Board of the National Research Council, National Academy of Science. She received the 2002 Bostwick H. Ketchum Award for coastal research from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and was the Ian Morris Scholar in Residence at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies in 2004. Her work on the causes and consequences of Gulf hypoxia have garnered several citations: the Blasker award shared with R.E. Turner, and a NOAA Environmental Hero, Clean Water Act Hero, and Gulf Guardian award. She earned a Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Texas at Austin in 1983, and her B.S. and M.S. in Biology from Texas A&I University, Kingsville.

Jeffrey Stephan (Past Board Chairman)

Kodiak, Alaska

Mr. Jeffrey Stephan is manager of the United Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc., (UFMA) in Kodiak, Alaska. UFMA is a trade association whose members conduct fishing operations in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands. Mr. Stephan is a member of the Kodiak School District Board of Education, the Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association Board of Directors, and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Fishery Industrial Technology Center Policy Committee. He is Chair of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) International Marketing Committee, and past Vice Chair of the ASMI Board of Directors. Mr. Stephan has served on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, as Steering Committee Chair of the Department of Commerce Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, on the Department of Interior Outer Continental Shelf Advisory Board, as an advisor to the Department of State International North Pacific Fisheries Commission, on the Kodiak City Council and as Kodiak College Council President. Mr. Stephan worked for Eastman Kodak Company, and as a commercial fisherman. Mr. Stephan graduated with a B.A. in Economics from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

John T. Woeste (Board Vice-Chairman)

Gainesville, Florida

Dr. John T. Woeste is professor emeritus and retired Dean of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences. From 1976 to 1995 he served as Director of Extension and the Florida Sea Grant Marine Extension Program. He was frequently recognized for his leadership of both agriculture and marine resource extension programs. In 1987 he received the USDA "Unit Award for Distinguished Service." In 1992 Dr. Woeste won the Mary Nell Greenwood Award from the American Evaluation Association for his sustained commitment to public accountability. In 1997 he was inducted into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame and in 2002 was elected to the Florida 4-H Hall of Fame. He was recognized by the National FFA with an "Honorary American FFA Degree" and the Alpha Gamma Rho fraternity with a "Brother of Distinction" award. He has served on boards for the Southern region aquaculture center and the Sustainable agriculture program. He chaired the National Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP), and co-chaired the Legislative committee for the Agriculture division of the Land Grant University Association while he was a member of the Board of Directors. His international experience includes advisory visits and consulting trips to Ecuador, Cameroon, and Israel addressing agriculture education and technology transfer. Currently he is president of the Florida Rural Rehabilitation Corporation, Inc., Director of the National NARRC, President of the Alpha Gamma AGR educational foundation, and a member of the SHARE-UF Foundation board executive committee. He is a retiring director and past president of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame. In 2002 he was appointed to the National Sea Grant Review Panel.

Appendix 2

Prior Reports, Recommendations and Other References

"Building Sea Grant; The Role of the National Sea Grant Office" (June 2002; The National Sea Grant Office Review Committee of the National Sea Grant Review Panel)

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