

To: CCSF Directors
From: Warren Allmon, Dave Wolfe, and Lee Humphreys
Re: "Outreach" Topical Lunch Report

March 4, 2010
12:00 – 1:00 PM
300 Rice Hall

RSVP's - Updated 3/4/10

Host, Warren Allmon, wda1@cornell.edu
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Notes from the discussion

Warren Allmon presented on the importance and value of engaging in outreach:

- Outreach can be defined as “programs that help to solve real-world problems by linking people with Cornell’s rich resources”.
- Researchers need to see the value in outreach in order to devote time and energy towards it.
- There are many resources at Cornell for outreach but lots of researchers don’t know about them.
- We should encourage partnerships and funding for outreach activities.
- Outreach can stimulate broader interest in and action on sustainability
- Why should researchers engage in outreach?
 - As a university, we have moral obligation to share our resources with society.
 - As a land-grant institution, we are charged by the State with applying our research and knowledge towards improving the lives of citizens of New York.
 - Increasingly (though not uniformly), outreach is necessary for federal and state funding as part of a “broader impacts” criterion.
- Resources for outreach at Cornell include:
 - Cornell Cooperative Extension www.cce.cornell.edu
 - CCSF www.sustainablefuture.cornell.edu
 - “Outreach at Cornell” www.cornell.edu/outreach/
 - PRI www.priweb.org

Lee Humphreys presented on new communication tools that can be used for outreach.

- Social media, like Facebook and Twitter, are increasingly popular with 400 million and 75 million users respectively. Researchers might want to leverage some of the popularity of these tools as a way to engage with the public, press, and community of researchers.
- It is important to be strategic in using social media as part of an outreach program.
- Planning of social media for outreach should take into consideration:
 - Tone and content of information shared: Personal vs. professional
 - Degree of interactivity one wants to engage in through social media
 - How sustainable and scalable the outreach activities are – regular but less frequent may be better than more frequent but less regular.
- Depending on the research, social media may be only a supplement to other outreach activities.

Dave Wolfe presented on the various kinds of outreach that researchers can engage in.

- In addition to trying to get our information directly out to the public, outreach can also include outreach to media and outreach to policy makers.
- Media can allow researchers to extend their outreach to many more people. Helping scientists get more comfortable talking to the media is an important part of outreach. There are workshops to train scientists to better engage with journalists.
- Policy change can be an important way to connect society with the resources and research here at Cornell.

Group Discussion:

- Need to better share resources about outreach
 - Perhaps include listserv about outreach to K-12
- Before using social media for outreach, identify who your target audience is and see if it makes sense to use social media.
- Get started using social media for outreach by identifying other people/organizations/centers who you are connected to - find pre-existing networks to tap into.

Additional shared resources:

- Cornell's description of Facebook:
<http://www.cit.cornell.edu/policies/socialnetworking/facebook.cfm>
- Cornell Cooperative Extension's presentation on Social Media 101:
<http://treadwell.cce.cornell.edu/fbtwt/>