

Follow-up with the Scientists after the ASLO/TOS Conference

It is very important to follow-up with your students and with the scientists after the conference. The assignments you give your students will allow you to see how much they gained from the experience. As was mentioned earlier, oral reports on specific topics they choose to research after the conference are also a highly valuable learning experience for the entire class.

In order for the scientists to appreciate how much students gain from their interactions, it is especially helpful to follow-up with them. When I took my students to the conference, I summarized their reports in emails to each scientist whose posters my students viewed. Attached you will find some examples of the notes I sent to researchers and their responses. I was amazed by the responses I received! The scientists were very positive and seemed to truly enjoy their interactions with the students. The combination of the response of the students and the scientists is what encouraged us to repeat the event at this conference.

The benefits to you of reaching out to the scientists after the conference are:

- you may get additional scientific information if you and your students have questions
- you will make contacts with researchers for possible future collaborations on projects or field trips
- some scientists may offer to come into the classroom to talk to the students further about their research
- you are increasing the chances that other teachers and students will be able to benefit from the same experience you had.

It was very time consuming for me to summarize all of the student reports in emails to the researchers. If you choose not to take this time, you can have the students compose the emails directly. Researcher email addresses can be found on their poster and/or in the abstracts in the program or online. I can also help you find them, if you have difficulty. Students should work in groups so that the researcher does not get 15 emails that say the same thing. The emails should thank the researcher for sharing their work at the conference, and then say what the students learned from the poster and any questions they still have. Please copy me on emails sent and responses and/or save copies of the emails for my files.

For the scientists who participated in the panel discussions, it would be wonderful if you could have the students all make or sign a thank-you card after the conference and send it to them. It is also helpful to send a thank-you note to the conference co-chairs who agreed to waive the entrance fee and include the students in the conference: Russ Moll from California Sea Grant Program (rmoll@ucsd.edu) and Chuck Trees from the Center for Hydro-Optics and Remote Sensing at San Diego State University (ctrees@chors.sdsu.edu).