

Grad student program marketing
 8:30am Friday 1-26-07
 Lead: April Landale

Names of participants	Tracie and Soul – North Cascades Inst., WA Kim – Wolf Ridge Environ Learning Ctr., MN Karla – McCall Outdoor Science School, ID Sara and Jason – Eastern Kentucky PRIDE, KY Bob – Yellowstone National Park, WY Bill – Montana State University, MT Krista – Montana Outdoor Science School, MT Ben – IslandWood, WA Beth – Glen Helen Outdoor Ed Ctr, OH John – Indiana Dunes Environ. Learning Ctr., IN John – Teton Science School, WY Becky – Montana Outdoor Science School, MT
Key questions	“How do you market for graduate students to increase enrollment and quality of applicants?”
Take home messages	See suggestions below

Current marketing strategy:

North Cascades	Web-based, no grad brochure, no travel, nation wide
Wolf Ridge	Web-based, word of mouth, mostly MN, Alum
McCall	Americore support through matching funds
Kentucky PRIDE	Web-based
Yellowstone	No grad program now, working with MSU
MSU	Through department of education
Island Wood	Web-based, word of mouth, nation wide, Univ partners
Glen Helen	Grad intern pgm, part of Antioch, web-based
Indiana Dunes	Through local National Park
Teton Science School	Big web page, mailings to schools of past students, cold calls and booths to universities, alums
MOSS	Word of mouth, web-based, brochures

Suggestions for improved marketing for graduate students:

- Marketing through university web sites/programs
- Close collaboration with Universities – offer approximately 30 credits
- Reduced tuition, financial help with room and board
- Access federal loans
- Alums via contact through newsletters, reunions, job announcements
- Provide one collaborative web page listing all our programs describing differences and options with direct links to sites of individual programs. Provides a platform for cross marketing.
- Partner with other centers and non-profit to formalize job opportunities for outdoor educators. For instance, one center could prepare a graduate for a more permanent position at another residential center.

- Articles in publications: National Geographic (TSS), outdoor magazines, national papers

What did NOT work:

- MSN chat center and invited all alums. No traffic resulted.
- Prayer!
- Poster mailings

What are you preparing the graduate students for?

- Create other programs
- Return on investment – 24 grads teach impact 1000's of kids' education.

Graduate programs typically lose money at a rate of approximately \$2500-3500/student per year. However, this provides 10-20 field teachers instead of hiring fewer, full time teachers for much more money and is therefore viewed as worth the financial loss.

Perhaps there is too little money put toward marketing for graduate students when you think how much every student you get is worth. Most marketing is done for very low cost such as through the web or word of mouth.

Meta Trends affecting graduate student enrollment:

- Number of applicants is noticeably down
- Job market has recently improved drawing applicants away (grad programs provide a nice place to hide away during a slump in the job market)

Pursue or maintain excellent teachers to instruct new grads to teach (ie. Improve credibility of the program you are offering). Residential programs lose graduated students to classroom teaching (approximately 80%?) because it offers reasonable starting salary and health benefits. Grad students are looking for teaching certification.

Marketing consists of two different approaches:

- a) How do you market to fill your program next year? (ie. web site, SCA postings)
- b) How do you market to fill your program 3-5 years down the road? (ie. school visitations, word of mouth, alum)

Website postings:

1. www.gradschool.com

Ways to helping grads financially are attractive:

- Small university grants of approximately \$1500 (Island Wood)
- In house auction to raise funds for next years grad students (TSS)
- Alum donations go into a general account that students can request from for miscellaneous personal costs like plan ticket home for holidays, warm jacket, etc. (Wolf Ridge)

Frustration for teaching certification:

- Unfortunately, environmental education is not a study you can get certified which hurts marketing by pointing to follow-on career opportunities.
- Couple residential education experience closely with certified university programs or Journey school.