

Broader Impacts Group: About

The Broader Impacts Group (BIG) is a student-run organization based at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Mission: The mission of BIG is to build an network and facilitate connections within that network in order to provide graduate students with enhanced resources and enable them to share science with others. The term “sharing science” is used by BIG to broadly refer to science communication to any audience using any communication medium, as well as outreach, educational, and citizen-science activities.

How: The network will be built through networking and mixer activities to which guests with diverse backgrounds and expertise will be invited. This network will be maintained through a list-serve, website, facebook page, and twitter account. These outlets will be used to disburse information about opportunities, activities and resources related to sharing science.



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BIG will facilitate connections by disbursing information through these conduits and by coordinating activities that bring resources and opportunities directly to students. Examples of these activities include a communication workshop with professional communication consultant, a partnership between doctoral candidates and science writing students at MIT, and involvement with the Cambridge Science Festival. Participation and practice is a major part of the action plan for BIG. Alongside any workshop or “talk” delivered by an expert, we will coordinate opportunities to practice strategies and skills learned from that expert. These practical experiences will maximize the benefits gained from workshops by solidifying lessons learned through application.

Why: As science plays an ever greater role in society and policy, it becomes increasingly important for scientists to actively facilitate public understanding of science. In doing so, scientists must take care to maintain an objective and unbiased voice. Conveying both a meaningful and objective message requires careful thought in how that message is articulated. Therefore, there is a need amongst graduate students for training and experience in the public communication of science. There are numerous communications resources available at WHOI and MIT that are not presently utilized by graduate students. The Broader Impacts Group (BIG) will make these resources readily accessible to graduate students in the MIT-WHOI Joint Program and at MIT at large. In short, the mission of BIG is to match existing resources with a present need in order to help graduate students become confident and adept communicators.

And now welcome to our website, where you can help the community of science communicators grow and share within and beyond Woods Hole and Cambridge.

Last updated: June 14, 2013

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