PORTAL TO THE PUBLIC

BRIEF OVERVIEW
(based on discussion with L. Russell, July 2010)

PERSONNEL

Dennis Schatz, PSC Senior VP for Strategic Programs
Lauren Russell, Portal to the Public Project Manager (full-time)
2 full-time staff

FRAMEWORK

1. **Portal to the Public-Core Staff** (above)

2. **Museum Collaborator(s)-** each develops partnerships with at least 3 local science research orgs committed to working collaboratively

3. **Advisory Team**- 11 expert advisors (across institutions and fields of expertise (science, communication, education), 5 advisors representing a museum user group. Monitors progress/there to advise when needed. Meets twice each year to synthesize learning/best practice, feed into framework for next steps

4. **The Institute for Learning Innovation**- Responsible for formative evaluation: the effectiveness of modules and program framework, achieving its intended goals of helping scientists translate their message to public on their own specific work (looking at impact on scientists, museums themselves and the public)

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5. **Consultant Firm (Carey Tisdal)**- responsible for summative evaluation (looks at eval. of expansion portion of project, e.g. how expansion has worked, how it could be most effectively undertaken reaching and incorporating more institutions, sharing of information, etc)

PROGRAM KICK-OFF
PARTICIPATION OF MUSEUMS/SCIENCE CENTERS

- Had 1 rep from each museum on advisory team who helped write proposal

- Wrote these 5 institutions into original grant

- Each 5 filled out application to explain their work in outreach/science field and vision, purpose for participation/collaboration in program

- Mandatory- asked institution to attach letter from CEO of commitment to program including a name of personal contact within org to be chief contact with responsibility to program

- Once formally accepted, asked museum to reiterate commitment

- "Pre-approval" process above lead to small stipend allotted to train 2 monitors on site on modules for prof. development

- Received dissemination package (modules/framework for program)

- Recruitment of scientists begins

RECRUITMENT OF SCIENTISTS

- Each museum contacted local science research orgs in their own way

- Each museum asked different things from the scientists depending on their context/subject (e.g. come back 3 times per year to do x for museum, produce x number of new activities, etc.)

- Based on experience: best results when use formal application process, simple, statement of interest and commitment for follow-through

- Best result in recruiting scientist participation= stress professionalism in field of communication and education (how people learn, communication techniques, etc.) huge response and drive to learn these new areas to help themselves professionally, see real value. Pitch it at high level, participants at high level

- Receive certification after completion of professional development

- Many bridges between institutions and individuals

EVALUATION

Indicators of Success
Indicators for each site varies depending on their own personalization of the modules. Set in advance. Integrated into the below to verify:

Means of verification
1. Records of participation (numbers!)
2. Survey Results (scientists/museums/public)
3. Interviews (scientists/museums/public)
4. Audio Recordings
5. Focus groups
6. Journal articles and publications of findings
7. Synthesis meetings with advisory board (produces meeting doc)
8. Summative eval published in each location by eval team.

OUTREACH
- 2008 Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) conference –offered extended session titled "critical Issues in Building a Portal to the Public for Current Science Research"

- 2009 ASTC Conference - Pre-Conference workshop on Prof Dev for Scientists

FUTURE DIRECTION

- Network is robust and growing! Vision to have many more members in network collaborating and implementing program. Some day have specializations in the prof dev, e.g. offer media trainings, etc.

- Meeting to be held in September 2010 to discuss lessons learned and future directions

- Discussing practicalities of sharing information. Considering pay per download of modules, personal login on website, etc.