

NER-COSEE: Strategies to Involve Research Scientists in Ocean Science Education

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Abstract- The New England Regional Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence (NER-COSEE) – a partnership between the New England Aquarium, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the University of Massachusetts - seeks to strengthen the region's capacity to develop and provide high-quality ocean science education in both formal and informal settings. During its first year of operation, the partnership has been working strategically in three main areas: 1) fostering interactions between the research and education communities to build a regional network, 2) development and evaluation of various workshop models to determine best practices in ocean science education, and 3) creation of a resource center to provide support and follow-up to our community as needed. The NER-COSEE partners have also initiated a coordinated set of activities to promote researchers' involvement in ocean science education. While many people recognize the need to incorporate the work of ocean science researchers into high-quality education programs and materials, we believe that it is necessary to first understand the underlying motivation for current participation in ocean science education as well as the constraints that may be preventing researchers from contributing to education efforts. In order to identify and examine these issues, the NER-COSEE is querying the ocean science research community through various survey techniques, focus groups and workshops. Here we present an overview of the NER-COSEE, focusing on the results of our needs assessment, strategies for involving researchers in ocean science education, and highlights of how these results have influenced the future directions of this partnership.