

Year End Report – Charles Hodgens

External Comms Rep / Ambassador Alliance Secretary (I think that's my title now?)

The past year I continued to serve in my position as the External Comms Rep. Most of my activities this year focused on trialing a program for generating social media content from Ambassadors. I have not done this before, and it was extra challenging as we are all volunteers and generally overcommitted. My original vision had been to have pairs of videos, where one video was an introduction to the Ambassador, and the second was a more in-depth video, most likely an elevator pitch for their own work but flexible if they had other ideas. The goal was to increase connections between Ambassadors themselves and the public through social media.

Overall, the program was a mixed success. We were able to collect introduction videos from 6 ambassadors, as well as a starting batch of templates for Ambassadors to use when generating videos. However, we did not produce a full set of the second videos. Certainly, part of that is on my own management of the project, but I also expect that producing longer videos is too much to ask of everyone right now. One of my goals with this project is to make participation low-stress for Ambassadors, and clearly the longer video was a poor fit with that goal. If we do longer second videos again, I think we need to have other Ambassadors besides me dedicated to managing people and keeping them on task, or we need a very limited series of scientist Q&A sessions/videos throughout the year, one at a time, so that we can build momentum. I'm currently in the middle of editing the videos and should have them ready for posting soon. My hope is that this program gives Ambassadors a way to introduce themselves and interact with the public in a way that is more personal and relatable than simple text posts.

I would like to re-run the program again in the upcoming year in a modified form. I plan to ask newly admitted Ambassadors to record their own introduction videos, as well as try new strategies for the longer videos, and see what form this program needs to take to sustain itself.

Other stuff: One of the ideas that came up in a meeting last year was to try submitting opinion pieces to local newspapers and outlets in the cities that conferences will be held in. The goal would be to expand the reach of the Ambassador program beyond just the scientific community and highlight an upcoming scientific event people might not have heard of. I think this would be a great supplement to the other events the Ambassadors are planning around the conferences. We did not get a chance to do this last year, but I want to make this a goal for the upcoming year for the Ambassadors.