

The Institute for Environmental Communication  
Annual Report  
2010-2011

1. Executive Summary (1 page max)

The Loyola University Institute for Environmental Communication (IEC) is a program of Loyola's Center for Environmental Communication (LUCEC). It is unique in its design, and no other organization in the U.S. does specifically what IEC accomplishes. IEC targets people engaged, both professionally and as volunteers, in environmental pursuits. Stakeholders routinely recruited include government employees, industry, advocates, community groups, teachers (in both formal and informal settings), lawyers, not-for-profits, and many more. Meeting 12-14 times each fall, each three hour session includes one or more speakers on an important environmental topic followed by discussion among participants in the program.

Upon completion, participants are designated Fellows of IEC, and they are subsequently linked with others via a listserv and periodic meetings. As in LUCEC, all of IEC's efforts are focused on spreading the word about the environmental issues facing Louisiana and beyond.

2. Unit Identification or Profile Summary (1 page max)

2.1 Official name of the unit and the mission or purpose statement of the unit

The Institute for Environmental Communication (IEC)

Building on the scholarly resources of Loyola University New Orleans and its host, the Center for Environmental Communication, the Institute for Environmental Communication convenes a diverse group of citizens (environmentalists, scientists, journalists, industrialists, Brown Field community people, politicians, government employees, teachers, business persons, and the like) for 12 or so evening sessions to discuss issues of vital environmental importance to the region and nation. The IEC Fellows Program is modeled after the highly regarded Institute of Politics that has been offered by Loyola University since 1968. The IEC's first sessions began in fall 1999, and to date well over 200 people are Fellows.

The website is <http://www.loyno.edu/lucec/institute-environmental-communication>.

2.2 General statement and descriptive information concerning the unit

See the mission statement above.

IEC's public programming is primarily outreach into the communities in the region, but it draws attendees from as far away as Baton Rouge and Lafayette.

### 2.2.1 Headcounts of full-time and part-time staff

Presently the director is the only full time faculty. The speakers are prominent in their fields and many have taught in IEC for 10 years or more.

### 2.2.2 Headcounts of faculty (if appropriate): tenured, tenure track, full-time extraordinary, and part-time adjunct

The director is tenured. The others mostly guest lecturers, but Dr. Rob Verchick is a tenured professor in the Law School.

Advisors of LUCEC, thus are involved in IEC:

Don Baker, Perez, Baker & Associates, Kenner, a.

Gerard Braud, Braud communications, Mandeville, La.

Paul Davidson, Executive Director, Black Bar Conservation Committee, Baton Rouge, LA.

Jim Detjen, Knight Chair in Environmental Journalism, Professor and Director, Knight Chair in Environmental Journalism, Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Luz Marie, Hunter, Belize Outdoor Adventure Travel Services, Robert Moreau, Ph.D., Director, turtle Cover Research Center, and Professor of Environmental Business, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, La.

### 2.2.3 Headcounts of full-time and part-time undergraduate students.

It is customary to allow two Loyola undergraduates per year to participate in IEC.

### 2.2.4 Headcounts of full-time and part-time graduate students.

N/A

### 2.2.5 Retention rates of full-time degree-seeking students by program: fall-to-fall and fall-to-spring.

N/A

### 2.2.6 Graduation rates for entering students by cohort year by program.

N/A

## 3. Assessment (2 pages max)

### 3.1 General statement on how assessment is conducted within the unit (The unit's assessment plan should be posted to its Intranet site)

IEC has been gathering information on how the knowledge of the participants has changed over the duration of their initial contact with the program. An instrument was developed that measures, using a Likert Scale, the participant's reaction to the following three parameters for a number of different environmental challenges: interest in, activities working toward a solution for, and knowledge of the challenge.

The same instrument is administered in the first session, the last session, then mailed six months after the last session. This, it is hoped, will give an estimation of how these parameters have changed as a result of the person's involvement in IEC.

During the coming year, these analyses will be performed.

- 3.2 Outline the unit's program goals for the previous year (include how these goals are strategic to both the unit's and the university's mission; these should be based on the unit's strategic plan)

The goals from year to year are the same: to stimulate communication among a group of environmentally active professionals and volunteers who would not normally meet one another, yet they would presume to know how and why the other thinks and reacts the way they do. The purpose is to enlighten the participants and encourage a dialogue that may result in a quickened path forward in reaching solutions to important environmental challenges.

- 3.3 Outline the unit's student learning outcomes for the previous year

The following summarize the thrust of LUCEC and its academic and communication programs.

**COURSE GOALS:**

- To demonstrate why different people may view the same information differently;
- To illustrate how agenda setting influences the use of information
- To elucidate the difference between sound and anecdotal science
- To educate about differences among the approaches of a variety of scientific applications
- To teach about environmental resources that are available and how to access them
- To cover the application of environmental information by the manufacturing industry, activists, scientists, politicians and policy wonks, government agencies, and advertising and public relations/government affairs agencies.
- Bottom-line: to show how environmental information may be well analyzed and applied, and to demonstrate the many ways that it is misunderstood and misapplied.

**EXPECTED PARTICIPANT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively, and independently;

- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions (especially environmental information);
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes addressed;
- Speak correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences, and purposes addressed;
- Critically evaluate one's own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness; and
- Be motivated to life-long learning.

### **COURSE VALUES & COMPETENCIES**

At the conclusion of the course students will be able to meet these competencies:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to environmental communication.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society.
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communication professions in which they work.

3.4 Describe the previous year's assessment activities, both of internal (within Loyola) and external (outside Loyola) factors affecting the unit

See 3.1 above.

3.5 Describe the assessment of community-based learning, community-engaged activities, or community-related goals (if applicable)

N/A

3.6 Briefly describe the results found through the assessment of the previous year's program goals, student learning outcomes, and any community-related goals

All indicators are favorable. Incremental improvements that result from the informal, but focused, assessment program are well received. Adjustments are continually made throughout various programs.

4. Summary of Achievements (1 page max)

4.1 Unit as a whole

IEC routinely produces/adds about 20 Fellows to the program.

#### 4.2 Faculty achievements/service

Dr. Robert A. Thomas successfully offers the program.

#### 4.3 Staff achievements/service

No staff during the year.

#### 4.4 Student achievements

N/A

#### 4.5 Community engagement achievements

A broad audience of stakeholders is served by IEC. Although it has a fee, these costs are waived for people who cannot afford them and for personnel who work in the not-for-profit world. Many of the topics are relevant to community needs.

#### 5. Budget for previous year and upcoming year's goals (2 pages max)

In the absence of major grants, there has been little to budget. Most of what is listed herein is done by the director as his normal course of doing business.

Academic Year: 2010-11

Director – normal university salary

General operations (snacks, trophy at conclusion) \$2500.00

Student worker 500.00

#### 5.1 Previous FY salary, operating, and total budgets.

The same.

#### 5.2 Upcoming FY salary, operating and total budgets. Provide expected budget if the unit's budget hasn't been finalized.

The same.

#### 5.2.1 Upcoming FY budget discussion (Provide a narrative of the upcoming year's budget and expected spending, including an assessment of the adequacy of the budget to 1) support and operate the unit and 2) support the unit's strategic goals.)

Fixed costs are the same.

6. Planning and goals for the upcoming year (2 pages max)
- 6.1 General statement describing the process of strategic planning in the unit and how the strategic plan has informed the development of the upcoming year's goals. (The current strategic plan should be posted on the unit's Intranet site.)

Environmental communication needs in the Greater New Orleans area are overwhelming. The director is always in touch with those engaged in these efforts, and he focuses IEC's programs strategically in areas where the IEC's or his expertise can make the best contribution. This management/planning style is possible due to IEC's small size, but broad capability and capacity.

- 6.2 Describe how the unit's strategic plan supports the mission or strategic goals of the university.

IEC's mission builds on the scholarly, community service, and social (environmental) justice resources of Loyola, serving to strengthen the "men and women for others" concept and to foster critical thinking skills in students and audiences throughout the community.

IEC serves the basic needs of the community, helping it become informed on issues whose understanding are essential to citizens living well and making good choices.

The purpose of IEC – to foster communication among stakeholders who may rarely if ever talk to one another – creates an atmosphere where solutions to complex and important issues may be found.

- 6.3 Describe the program goals for the upcoming year. (Indicate how assessment during the previous year has been used to inform the development of the upcoming year's goals.)

IEC will continue its practice of attempting to improve communication of complex, important environmental issues. Many of those affect human health, and most affect the local and national economies. As is normal, the topic list will be reevaluated in terms of what is critically important in the region before IEC launches in the fall. In the event of the emergence of a crisis, it is easy to adjust the schedule to meet the communication needs of the group.

- 6.4 Describe the student learning outcomes for the upcoming year. (Indicate how assessment during the previous year has been used to inform the development of the upcoming year's goals.)

N/A. But see the information covered in 3.3 above.

- 6.5 Description of planned involvement of non-Loyola community in strategic goals or the activities planned to achieve those goals, such as community-based learning, community-engaged activities, or community-related goals (if applicable)

We will continue to consult local experts in relation to our programming.

#### 6.6 Description of the resources that will support the goals for the upcoming year

The faculty, advisors, and research associates of LUCEC will help accomplish the goals. The director constantly attends meetings and seek input from other environmental professionals in the region and nationally.

#### 6.7 Assessment plan for upcoming year's goals

As stated numerous times above, this is an informal process that has a long record of success. This is adjudged by the excitement audiences express about LUCEC programs and the public image and demand for time for the director and LUCEC programs.

### 7. Appendices

- 7.1 Data collection tools for student data (Provide a copy of any tools that the unit uses to collect data about student achievement, such as senior exit exams, student learning outcome rubrics for courses, interview protocols for graduating seniors, etc.)
- 7.2 Data collection tools for other data (Provide a copy of any other tools the unit might use to collect data not listed in 7.1)
- 7.3 Assessment reports (At the unit's discretion, provide a copy of any assessment reports that the unit has generated as a result of the previous year's assessment activities)
- 7.4 Any supporting documentation the unit sees fit to include in the annual report