

COSEE-FL to Benefit from Expertise of Pinellas County School Teacher Winnie Wilson

Ocean Science has been my passion since fifth grade. This confirms findings that marker experiences at that age often have very strong influence over future decision making. Why? Because I experienced the profound beauty of pristine tropical waters off the southeastern shore of Cuba snorkeling for the first time! I remember it so clearly: the first sea fan, the first parrot fish, and later, tasting my first conch cooked right on the beach.



What excites me now is lending a hand inspiring the generation of teachers now taking the helm and encouraging them to share the excitement of the unfolding mysteries of the ocean. I want to sidestep what can become the “isolation” of the classroom teacher by building effective bridges for teacher-researcher collaborations and mentorship.



Winnie Wilson
Education Activist

While currently glad to be labeled an “Education Activist”, my first focus after earning a B.S. in Zoology from Tulane University, was on medical research and physical therapy. With time however, after a taste of teaching labs at Canal Zone College, the lure of the classroom and launching young lives became compelling. Settling in Florida in 1982, and wanting to learn from veteran teachers passionate about ocean education, I joined The Florida Marine Science Educators Association (FMSEA) even before teaching my first classes. I experienced personal growth and was able to mentor beginning teachers informally, then later supervise a total of six interns. Mentoring teachers, classroom teaching, and being in leadership positions in FMSEA, FAST and NSTA taught me the value of professional associations and meaningful communication. After two years of very rewarding volunteer experience representing the voice of teachers among other stakeholders in COSEE-FL’s Community Building Courses, I now understand ways to develop successful teams and generate the trust and mutual understanding that leads to valuable productivity.

As a teacher on an approved Professional Leave from Pinellas County School District, I will be assisting our director with COSEE’s multifaceted education and networking initiatives, including facilitating and pilot testing COSEE-FL initiatives in Pinellas County. These possibilities are exciting for someone like me who enjoys thinking and working “outside the box” and loves marine science. I look forward to working with all our COSEE constituents.

Boats, Buoys, and Science Teachers: A Great Success!

The SEACOOS summer physical science workshop for teachers set sail June 7 with four middle and high school teachers and a university science educator participating. These teachers represented a cross-section of skill levels from true preservice, beginning teachers to veteran teachers with more than 20 years teaching experience.

The workshop opened with an introduction to buoy technology as educators met with Dr. Robert Weisberg for a preview of SEACOOS science followed by guided tours of the Ocean Circulation Group’s labs and the Center for Ocean Technology at the USF College of Marine Science in St. Petersburg, Florida. Participants toured the labs and yard areas where they spent one-on-one time interacting with research scientists.

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Boats, Buoys, and Science Teachers (cont.)



During this portion of the workshop, participants learned about various aspects of the coastal ocean observing systems from initial planning, instrument development, and buoy fabrication to the societal implications of the system. The afternoon was filled with excitement as the participants learned more about the coastal ocean observing systems initiative and were treated to a tour of

the Pier Aquarium in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Participants boarded the RV Suncoaster on day two for a three day cruise to off-shore buoy sites. During the cruise, educators observed buoy retrieval and deployment, and interfaced with scientists to learn more about the details of data gathering and monitoring. They experienced real-world problem solving as the scientists fought waves and darkness during a routine instrument exchange. In addition, time was spent with the ship's crew learning about the daily workings aboard a research vessel. The teachers also used cruising time to interact with each other, share ideas, and build support groups for their return to the classroom as they watched the setting sun and dolphins playing in the surf. A tired but happy group returned to port at 7:00 AM on Thursday, June 10.



The final day of the workshop brought the experiences together. Teacher participants visited the new facilities at Campbell Park Elementary School in St. Petersburg, Florida. Here they took full advantage of the modern technology lab at this marine science magnet school. The day was spent reviewing pertinent websites, using data, discussing effective teaching practices, generating lesson plans, and giving feedback on preliminary SEACOOS educational products. Brainstorming opportunities highlighted teacher creativity as they explored lesson ideas that would incorporate SEACOOS science and data into

classroom experiences. Teachers came away with ideas ranging from the need for lightning diffusers attached to buoy frameworks to using SEACOOS data to explain surfing conditions.

A good time was had by all!



Teachers indicated that they had a much better understanding of SEACOOS science and data and felt confident that they could develop exciting lessons using this information. They were amazed at the reach of their experiences commenting that they could easily make connections to many of their science lessons through the SEACOOS information. Teachers also enjoyed building a community with the scientists and other educators and remarked that there is no substitute for an authentic research experience. Scientists enjoyed learning directly from the teachers about the classroom environment and the school atmosphere. As a result of this positive interaction, all involved are looking forward to setting sail again next year!



Learn more by visiting :
<http://www.seacoos.org>

Video clips of buoy deployment, retrieval, instrument exchange, and teacher interviews will be posted soon!



Many thanks to all those who made our first SEA-COOS physical science workshop a success!

SEACOOS
COSEE-Florida

USF College of Marine Science Ocean Circulation Group
USF College of Marine Science Center for Ocean Technology

Florida Institute of Oceanography
The Pier Aquarium
Campbell Park Elementary School
Crew of the RV Suncoaster

Educator Participants:

Chin-Tang Liu USF St. Petersburg College of Education

Scott Lewis Buchanan Middle School Tampa, FL

Cyndy Leard SEACOOS
Workshop Developer

Winnie Wilson Beta Academy
Gibbs High School
St. Petersburg, FL

Frank Digga Bay Point Middle
School St. Petersburg, FL

Lita Weingart Lakewood High
School St. Petersburg, FL

