environmental health sciences
research center

GUIDE TO CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM SUMMIT

This interactive 1 day summit brought together journalists, students, and academics to discuss the state of environmental journalism in the region.

Goals of the summit:
- Encourage excitement about the field of environmental journalism and using scientific research in storytelling.
- Foster a network of communicators and researchers to strengthen the capacity of regional environmental reporting.
- Provide information and discussion about relevant environmental issues.

You can access the Environmental Journalism Summit agenda and videos
 bit.ly/UIEJSummit

Tips:
- Host in a community space that is central to the region (we used a library)
- Have a van/bus to drive students from the university of event is out of town
- Hire a videographer to record sessions and possible livestream
- Provide stipends for participant travel or to partnering organizations if appropriate.
- Offer letters of attendance for students that have to miss class.

If you have any questions feel free to reach out to the EHSRC CEC team.
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PLANNING TIMELINE

8 months out- Conduct phone conversations with journalists and media professionals about issues they see in environmental/scientific reporting. Ask what kinds of sessions/topics would be of interest to them, ask if they know of anyone else to talk to and partners who might be interested in the event.

6- 5 months out- Identify a venue, rough agenda, and begin to reach out to speakers (or advertise calls for speakers). Speakers for our event were a mix of scientific experts, working journalists, and academics working in environmental media. Identify potential partners to help pay for event.

4 months out- Create event materials for marketing, we had an event page on our website that listed the location info, rough agenda/speakers, and a link to the online application. Hire a videographer.

2-3 months out- Advertise to participants. Event partners/sponsors were helpful in advertising (especially if they are a journalist organization or journalism department), we advertised around campus using targeted emails and signs, invited college newspapers from around the state. For journalists we sent emails to newspapers all over the region and to specific journalists who had written environmentally focused articles recently. Reserve a caterer if needed.

1 month out- Deadline for application. Reach out to relevant people (we asked our center members) about being included on expert list, we had them self-identify with their areas of expertise.

3 weeks out- Notify participants of their acceptance (we were able to accept everyone who completed an application).

1 week out- Send out final information, agenda, and reading packet with a few articles for the group discussion. (We had speaker bios and printed expert lists for the day of the event).

2 days post event- Send out evaluation survey and ask participants to share any stories about the event or on topics that the event covered. Send reminder at 1 week. Set up google alerts for possible published stories.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

We asked participants to apply to the EJ Summit instead of simply registering. The effort of submitting a short application filtered out attendees that might otherwise register and not show up. It also enhanced the perceived importance of the event. The application was administered on qualtrics and asked for contact info, professional affiliation, dietary restrictions, a 100 word short answer on what the participant hopes to get out of the event, a resume submission, and optional writing sample submission.

EVALUATION

The evaluation survey was a qualtrics survey that asked for quantitative and qualitative feedback. We asked participants to rate each session on a scale of 1-5, and asked them to evaluate how the event met each of the outlined goals using an agree/disagree scale. We also asked how likely it was that participants would write a story about information they learned or use a speaker/expert list for future stories. Finally we asked for qualitative feedback and suggestions using essay boxes.
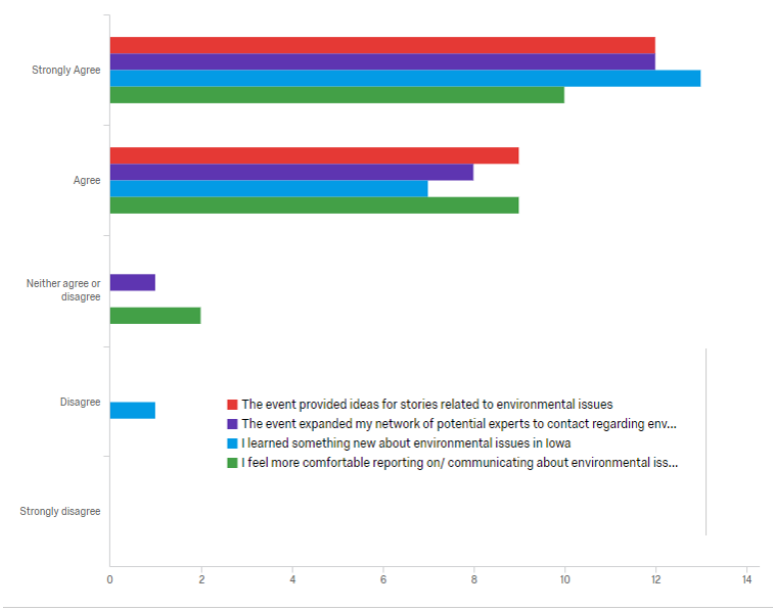
BUDGET

Catered lunch for 45	$500
Catered Coffee	$60
Granola bars and snacks	$30
Crayons, Paper, Nametags	$30
Van rental	$70
Videographer and AV services	$2,000
Venue (library)	Free
Stipend to partner org.	$100
Total	**$2790**