



Partnership for Research and Education in Materials (PREM) Retreat

La Jolla, CA

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Discussion on Program Evaluation

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What is evaluation?

Evaluation - Evaluation can be seen as synonymous with tests, descriptions, documents, or even management. Evaluation is systematic investigation of the worth or merit of an object.

This definition centers on the goal of using evaluation for a purpose. Accordingly, evaluations should be conducted for action-related reason, and the information provided should facilitate deciding a course of action.

-Evaluation allows projects to tell their story and prove their worth.

-Evaluation provides information for communicating to a variety of stakeholders (NSF, 2002)



Two major types of evaluation:



Formative Evaluation - Assesses ongoing project activities.

Summative Evaluation (also called impact or outcome evaluation) - Assess a mature project's success in reaching its goals. Information is collected about outcomes and related processes, strategies, and activities that have led to them.

*"When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative;
When the guests taste the soup, that's summative"*

(NSF, 2002)



Why tell you about this?



You are a key partner in the evaluation of PREM
and your participation in this process is essential.



Why are we evaluating PREM?



- It helps us document the program (i.e. tells the story of the program)
- Provides data for us to improve the program from year to year. (e.g. identifies successes and areas of improvement)
- Provides data for us to make some conclusions about the program at the end of the funding period
- Provides data for reporting to the funding agency (NSF)
- Provides a basis to learn from other PREM sites.
- Provides data for renewal



PREM Evaluation Activities



- We are going to do what is practical and within the limits of our resources
- We will collect information that will be useful for the purposes described on the last slide.
- We do not want to take you away from your research more than is necessary



PREM Evaluation Activities



Activity 1: Personal Statement (Due: Fri 11 August 06)
(Suggested length 5 pages typed, 12pt font, 1" margins all sides)

Describe and Discuss:

- Your academic and career interests
- Your previous research experience
- Your working environment including interaction with your colleagues
- Describe how doing research has influenced your academic and career interests.
- Describe how your mentor played (is playing) a role in your experience as a researcher.
- Describe how your mentor has influenced your academic and career interests.



PREM Evaluation Activities



Activity 2: Research Abstract (Due: 25 August 06)

- 250 words maximum
- Follow ACS style guide
- Should be in publishable condition



PREM Evaluation Activities



Activity 3: Site Visit (Images/Interview) (Due: 01 Sept 06)

- Gather images in your research environment
- Short interviews (30 minutes maximum)



PREM Evaluation Activities



Activity 4: Outreach Activity (Due: 31 Dec 06)

- Devise a small outreach activity that shares science with a group of non-specialist K-Gray Audience
- You may work in groups

You must:

- Submit a short plan of your activity by 01 Sept 06
- Document the activity (images, short descriptions of outcomes)



PREM Retreat Evaluation



Think about and respond to the following questions by email (Due: Monday 24 July 06). Please send responses to Bob at: rdegroot@caltech.edu

- What were your expectations for this retreat? Were those expectations met? Why or why not?
- Comment on the “approach” of the retreat.
- If this retreat were offered next year, what aspects of it would you change (e.g. add/delete)? What would you keep the same?
- Please give Bob a copy of your presentation .ppt before the end of the meeting (you may convert into a .pdf). Presentations will be placed on the PREM website.



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