

2010 Ocean Sciences Meeting

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Attracting Underrepresented Students to Coastal Margin and Ocean Science: A Multi-offering Partnership Approach

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Since 2006 the National Science Foundation Science and Technology Center for Coastal Margin Observation & Prediction (CMOP) has focused its K-12 education efforts on partnerships and encouraging underrepresented students to consider science, engineering, technology, and mathematics (STEM) education and careers choices. CMOP has several education partners, but we will focus on our partnership with Saturday Academy, a non-profit organization specializing in education enrichment. CMOP and Saturday Academy provide STEM based weekend classes, week-long summer camps, and summer internships managed by Saturday Academy's, Apprenticeships in Science and Engineering Program (ASE). We now have three years of assessment data on what has been successful and what has been unsuccessful through the eyes of participating students. Building on this information, CMOP has initiated a school year internship program for high school students. We consider our partnership to be well aligned to the needs of underrepresented students as it relies on the strategy of free-choice learning, where students who participate are self selected, or directed by a parent or guardian. This approach differs from one in which students are in a formal learning environment, although CMOP addresses formal education with its teacher professional development program. During 2009 CMOP hosted a high school teacher who teaches and mentors one of the 2009 ASE interns during the school year. The intersection of the internship program and the teacher development program will also be addressed. All underrepresented students are on scholarship if needed, so the primary obstacle to increasing participation in our educational programs is recruitment. Recruitment strategies with underrepresented communities can be challenging and we will share what have become best practices for CMOP and Saturday Academy, and what our recruitment goals and objectives are to create a sustainable educational experience for underrepresented students.

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