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Eyes on the Rise Project Summary and Contributors

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Eyes on the Rise

Summary

Eyesontherise.org, which focuses on creating student journalism related to environmental impacts related to sea level rise, emerged as an initiative among four SJMC faculty to raise public awareness of sea level rise through student and community engagement. The project was initially funded by a 2014-2015 \$35,000 Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education grant from the Online News Association.

The collaboration provided opportunities for journalism students from the university and the MAST@FIU magnet STEM high school to work together on creating civic journalism that has changed the discussion and dynamics of political and media discourses about South Florida's future facing rising seas. The King Tide Day event we developed in October 2014 was grounded in crowd hydrology and sensor journalism, as students sampled floodwaters on Miami Beach. They explored how sensors work in the field, became trained how to communicate journalistically about sea level rise and the data that they were collecting, and prepared to speak with media covering the public

events. Speakers included EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, Senators Bill Nelson and Sheldon Whitehouse, and Mayors Philip Levine and Cindy Lerner. Media attention of the collaboration appeared on NBC's TODAY show, the Weather Channel, and in local media, including ABC10, NBC6, WLRN local public radio, WPBT2 local public television, and many other print and online outlets.

Dr. Robert Gutsche led the team's collaboration with MAST @ FIU, working with their principal, Dr. Matthew Welker. His Multimedia Production and Visual Storytelling courses partnered with MAST @ FIU students to promote their work on sea level rise and other educational ventures. High schools have attended college classes and vice versa.

Students in several classes are participating in the development of a Sea Level Rise Toolbox app (<http://eyesonthererise.org/app>) to help residents of South Florida better understand the potential impact of sea level rise on their homes and businesses. Under the leadership of Dr. Susan Jacobson, the app brings together the work of GIS scientists, data specialists, civic technology organizations and FIU journalism students to create technologically and scientifically sophisticated visualizations of sea level rise on South Florida. The next release of the application will include a database of flood reports from government agencies and citizen contributions, and a curriculum module designed to teach K-12 students about the nature of flooding. Future development, depending on funding, will include a tool to help citizens anticipate incidents of what NOAA defines as "nuisance flooding."

Professor Kate MacMillin's classes in Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 were responsible for producing the current webseries (available as weekly segments on WPBT2's UvU channel) and documentary on sea level rise, which will aired in Spring 2015. The webseries garnered several thousand views and is a follow-up to the award-winning and nationally acclaimed

documentary, “South Florida’s Rising Seas,” which Prof. MacMillin and Dr. Juliet Pinto produced in 2014. It was the most-watched online program for WPBT2 for 2014.

Lastly, SJMC faculty not involved directly with the eyesontherise.org project have volunteered to teach sections of high school classes related to digital communication, environmental communication, innovation, and ethics in MAST classrooms. Other collaborations have included sponsorship of MAST efforts to construct an electronic racecar and tell stories about its technology and purpose, as well as trainings of student journalists who work on the high school newspaper and yearbook.

In early 2015, eyesontherise.org was named that year’s recipient of the Innovative Outreach to Scholastic Journalism award by the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The project continues through efforts of individual faculty members and in research that is being published in *Journalism Practice*.

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Eyes on the Rise

Community Partners

Eyes on the Rise couldn't exist without our amazing community partners.

Changing Seas

This national television program, produced in Miami, focuses on issues of climate change and the environment and will provide an online web presence for this project to reach a national audience and to integrate public contributions and student journalism to articulate the effects of sea level rise in South Florida.

The CLEO Institute

CLEO stands for Climate Leadership Engagement Opportunities and provides these opportunities to individuals, schools, businesses, community

organizations, and elected leaders. CLEO's goal is to create an informed and engaged public that is more willing to make changes and support climate resilience efforts locally, regionally, nationally, and globally through varied activities, events, and trainings.

Code for Miami and Hacks/Hackers

Volunteers from both of these organizations will help develop apps and projects for people to access Open 311 and other public data sets.

Fusion

Media company focused on innovation and multimedia storytelling, which is assisting the project with app development.

GIS Center at Florida International University

Staff and faculty from the GIS Center at FIU will help develop interactive regional flooding maps that are searchable by address and will co-teach Web GIS courses for the project.

MAST @ FIU

A Miami-Dade County public school focused on science, technology, engineering, and math that is located at FIU's Biscayne Bay Campus.

South Florida Water Management District

This public agency will provide public data and consultation to create apps that help citizens visualize flood risk.

WPBT2

This local public television station will collaborate with SJMC faculty and students to conduct journalism and community engagement by producing programming and utilizing an interactive, data-gathering community sea level rise app and interactive mapping.

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