

July 2014 PTRAs Director's Report
Submitted by Karen Jo Matsler

Objectives for 2013-2014

- 1) Support current institutes and workshops*
- 2) Promote a few fees for service workshops*
- 3) Increase the social media presence of PTRAs via Facebook, webpages, Instagram, and twitter.*
- 4) Prepare 2014 summer leadership institute to focus on modification of current PTRAs resources to include learning cycles, engineering projects, and NGSS correlations.*

1) Current Institutes/Workshops

- Bob Powell, Project director at University of West Georgia was asked to present at the Math Science Conference (MSP) in Washington DC during the annual conference in September. UWGA were recognized as one of the outstanding sites in the nation. Dr. Powell and Karen Jo were invited to present.
- Institutes that are currently funded include: APEX, UWGA, Frostburg, Idaho State, and Oklahoma. UWGA has experienced some hurdles due to the illness of Bob Powell, however Ann Robinson has been diligent in keeping things running and wrote the grant proposal for the summer of 2015. Thanks to Ann for taking the initiative to do this huge undertaking. Idaho State has also submitted another proposal, which will have a stronger research component if funded. I have worked with both of these sites in submitting their proposals.
- PTRAs presented short workshops at several state science conferences and physics section meetings and NSTA physics strand days at the regional conferences. These sessions are typically free of charge and important to future marketing as they provide quality support to classroom teachers. Jan Mader presented at the Portland NSTA regional meeting and Elaine Gwinn presented at the regional Colorado meeting. AAPT and PTRAs shared the cost of travel and hotels for presenters at these sessions.

2) Fee for Service Workshops

- As a trial of fee for service workshops, Lowell McCann and Earl Blodgett at the University of Wisconsin River Falls set up a 2-week institute utilizing a PTRAs (Elaine Gwinn) as the facilitator/trainer. The institute allowed participants to receive graduate credit and focused on content as well as engineering principles of design. There were initially 5 participants but only 3 attended, which was disappointing. However, all of the participants were so impressed with the workshop that they said if they would do it again on another topic they would come again and would bring at least one of their peers with them. The plan is to try it again and see if we can increase the number of participants. The university used outreach funds to pay for most of the PTRAs expenses so the deficit had a minimal impact on the continuation funds. No monies were contributed to the continuation fund for this institute, but we believe the positive feedback was justified, particularly if the number increases next summer.
- Another fee for service workshop was planned but did not happen because no one signed up. This workshop was set for Altoona University (Alice Flarend) and was to use CASTLE as the content.

- Central Pennsylvania Section (Pat Callahan, Dave McCachren) sponsored a two-day fee for service workshop that did have a net profit, which was put into the continuation fund.

I would like to also propose setting up at least 2 more sites (in addition to UWRF) at different locations using a similar format, fee for services. Once we get the engineering activities and NGSS standards infused into the PTRA resources, I feel this type of institute will not only be justified but will be successful. However, in order to do this we will need to promise support for sites that may not have the number of participants we typically require for a workshop. Lee College, University of Dallas, and Mesquite ISD have volunteered to host the workshops.

3) Increase Social Media Presence

- All summer sites were asked to have their participants use social media venues to promote what was being taught at the workshops. UWGA, ISU, UWRF, and Oklahoma all did a fantastic job of getting their participants involved and sending in pictures for the website and facebook. I encourage others to do the same, regardless of the size of the workshop.
- Instructions for engaging participants in the social medial push were sent to each site director and leader prior to the workshop/institute. The instructions are also posted on the website. #physicsfun2014
- The Facebook page has been a useful way for participants to post pics of workshops. However Twitter and Instagram still need more followers. @aapt_ptr
- The aaptptr.com website is designed to facilitate and promote past and current workshops. The website has photographs for all of the leadership institutes since 2003 as well as photographs of recent workshops (those that were submitted). Posting of pictures can be done easily by granting workshop leaders and even participants access to the website since it is a WordPress website, similar to the type of website set up for Section Representatives. The website is a continuation of the website that was in place since 2003 during the Rural PTRA institutes and serves as a way to display media and information to promote workshops. The aapt.org website has a different functionality in that it is more of the logistics of PTRA and the affiliation of AAPT and PTRA. I have maintained the website without compensation for domains or other expenses for over 10 years as a service to the PTRA community.

4) Summer 2014 Leadership Institute

- 32 PTRAs attended the 2014 summer leadership institute. Participants learned about new products from Vernier, PASCO, Texas Instruments, and Perimeter in addition to spending time working on revising the current PTRA resources to include learning cycles, have engineering activities and NGSS infused into the activities. The modules created will be useful in helping advertise how PTRA can provide a variety of professional development opportunities for teachers in districts and schools. These modules cover grades 3-12 and the content areas of kinematics, energy, momentum, and waves.
- A huge thank you to the vendors who spent time and money to come to the PTRA institute and continue to support us throughout the year.