



DUPONT SUMMIT 2013

..... Pressing Issues, Economic Realities

December 6, 2013 * Historic Whittemore House, Washington, DC

The Policy Studies Organization

Speakers

Richard G. Boehm- *The Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, Texas State University*

Carmen P Brvsch- *National Geographical Society*

“Online Professional Development as a Pathway Toward an Informed Citizenry: Water Management Issues in Texas”

Launched in 2010 by the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, “Geography: Teaching with the Stars” (“Stars”) is an online series of professional development programs for geography, social studies, and Earth/environmental science teachers. While recognizing the vitality that traditional forms of professional development continue to play in the professional development of teachers “Stars” allows for anytime, anywhere access and flexibility of use. Therefore, potential for dissemination is maximized. Two of the current “Stars” programs (Watershed Management and Tidewaters; available for free at www.geoteach.org) focus on water, an issue that is critical in the State of Texas.

It is well known that teacher knowledge of a certain critical issue or subject area directly impacts student learning. The concept behind “Stars” is that quality professional development for teachers is the pathway to changing attitudes and values in classrooms, as well as, the most efficient way to create knowledgeable and responsible environmental citizens of the future. In order to maximize outreach potential, the Grosvenor Center has built on early success with “Stars” by developing the Learning Cluster Model (LCM) which uses a hybrid approach for dissemination, therefore, reaching thousands of teachers and millions of students.

Ongoing policy issues and debate on water issues will benefit from a better informed citizenry. Success with the LCM and with the “Stars” online series, leads the Grosvenor Center to the conclusion that an online system of professional development holds great promise for strengthening teacher knowledge with an ultimate goal of impacting student learning on major policy issues.



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Biography

Dr. Richard G. Boehm currently holds the Jesse H. Jones Distinguished Chair in Geographic Education at Texas State University, is Director of the Gilbert M. Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education, and is Co-Director of the National Center for Research in Geography Education. Boehm has been honored by the highest awards given by the Association of American Geographers, the National Council for Geographic Education, and the National Geographic Society's Geography Education program; Grosvenor Honors, George J Miller Award for Distinguished Service, and Distinguished Geography Educator, respectively. Boehm has recently been developing an online professional development series, Geography: Teaching with the Stars (www.geoteach.org) (Boehm et al. 2012). He is currently working on developing the Learning Cluster Method, a hybrid dissemination method for Stars. Recent NSF works includes the evaluation of an international teacher education plan using a geo-capabilities approach. All of these efforts are designed to promote a national research agenda involving early career professionals.

Carmen P. Brysch, (Geography Education Ph.D. candidate Texas State University), received her Bachelor of Science degree in geography and a Master's of Applied Geography degree in geography education from Texas State University-San Marcos. Carmen is currently serving a one year appointment as the Grosvenor Scholar at National Geographic Society's Education Foundation. At NG she works on policy initiatives and education outreach in order to increase the quality and quantity of geography education K-12 and beyond. Prior to coming to NG, Carmen served as the Senior Research Assistant in the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education at Texas State and remains involved in many of the Grosvenor Center's major projects and initiatives. Her dissertation research focuses on the efficacy of the online professional development system, Geography: Teaching with the Stars (www.geoteach.org). As an outgrowth of this research, she is currently, with Dr. Richard G. Boehm, developing the Learning Cluster Method, a hybrid dissemination approach for Stars which expands the concepts of developing and enhancing teacher leadership skills while also building professional learning communities through the use of online forums. She has published in geography education's flagship journal, the Journal of Geography.