Starting a Geology Student Club  
Public Outreach Program

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Public exchange of geologic information is important for relating consumers of earth's resources to the processes of the dynamic earth that created the resources. This need spans all levels of public; from policy makers and executives to public and community educators. As a student myself, I chose to focus on the most accessible and, in many ways, most impactful of the public: the next generation of public education students. Though, I encourage all students and professionals to become involved in educating the public on geologic information.

Both as an undergraduate and now as a graduate student, I have worked with the University of Oregon Geology Club to create a cohesive outreach program. That being said, it is not yet consolidated.

In nearly three years, the program has reached out to elderly communities, public and private schools grades 1-12, detention centers, community organized free-schools, and across campus.

Some suggestions for students interested in becoming involved in an outreach program:

- Find your campus 'Geology Club' (or similar). If one does not exist, start one through your student government and Geology Department.
- Get involved in the 'Clubs' outreach program. Again, if there isn't one, start one.

Tips on starting and outreach program:
- Look up schools in your area, any level, or any place open for public exchange. Really, the possibilities are endless.
- Design some basic labs, or use some of your introductory course material. Getting people to handle rocks and minerals is one of the best ways to engage them. Ask your department to borrow samples from the teaching collection, or if your club has money to buy a set of teaching samples, do so.

- Contact the schools or specific teacher and ask if you can visit. Send them the labs or outlines you plan to conduct. This will show them you are organized and also give them the chance to suggest changes to the material.

- Go into the classroom with confidence and lots of energy. Always engage the students with eye contact and questions. You are a guest speaker, it is easy for them to write you off and not listen, so keeping them engaged and focused is important.

Our outreach program seems to be moving toward an 8-10 lab curriculum introduced over the course of a full quarter or semester. It has taken a lot of work, but eventually it can be a curriculum that transfers to all of the 7th and 8th grades in our area.

Whatever your interests or profession in geology, it is important to engage the public in your research and results. I encourage all geologists to try their hand at public outreach and education. Please contact me with any questions or comments: scaston1@uoregon.edu

Sammy, SA-2047, is a second year M.S. student at the University of Oregon, conducting structural research in the Southern Black Mountains of Death Valley, CA.

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*As defined by the American Geological Institute, a geological science is any of the subdisciplinary specialties that are part of the science of geology, e.g., geophysics, geochemistry, paleontology, petrology, etc.

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