Manual for Being the
Virginia Coast Reserve – Long Term Ecological Research
(VCR-LTER)
Graduate Student Site Representative

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Introductory Information

Congratulations on becoming the new Virginia Coast Reserve – LTER Graduate Student Site Representatives (VCR grad site reps)!

Within the LTER Network there are many different committees, including the Graduate Student Committee. It is headed by two graduate students who serve as co-chairs. They are elected from the body of all LTER graduate students every fall. The Graduate Student Committee is comprised of one (or two) graduate student(s) from EACH site within the LTER Network. These are the site representatives.

The information contained in this manual is a supplement to the manual put together by the Co-Chairs of the Graduate Student Committee. This manual has information specific to being the Graduate Student Site Representative for the VCR-LTER.

The website for the LTER Graduate Student Committee is:
http://intranet.lternet.edu/committees/grad_student/
At this time, this website is not regularly updated, but there is still helpful information on that page.

There is also a website for the LTER Network graduate students. Some of the graduate student pages are under construction:
http://student.lternet.edu/

The main topics in this manual include:
1. Adding new graduate students to VCR Personnel Directory.
2. Making sure new graduate students are added to the LTER Network Personnel Directory by the data manager (John Porter, jhp7e@virginia.edu).
3. Making sure new graduate students update their entries in both of the personnel directories.
4. Keeping the record of current graduate students up-to-date.
5. Representing the VCR at the ESA annual meeting.
6. Being the liaison between the Graduate Student Committee Co-Chairs and the graduate students at the VCR and between the PIs at the VCR and the graduate students at the VCR
7. Planning VCR graduate student meetings.
8. Monitoring the VCR graduate student website
9. Who's who of the PIs (Primary Investigators) and Staff

Below are the email list serves for the PIs and the graduate students:
vcrpi04@mail.evsc.virginia.edu
vcrgrad04@mail.evsc.virginia.edu

Once we have fully transitioned, I will email the Graduate Student Committee co-chairs, the VCR PIs and the VCR graduate students announcing you as the new site representative(s).

John Porter is the main person with whom you will need to communicate since he is in charge of the website. Karen McGlathery is the other PI with whom you will be in contact as she is the Lead PI for the site.

I will forward you the main emails that I send out every year so you have templates from which to work.

At the beginning of your term as VCR Graduate Student Site Representative, you will receive the current list of students and other information. I recommend that you keep both electronic and hard copies of all of this information (e.g. current VCR-LTER students, the list of all the VCR people from the VCR personnel directory, and the list of all the VCR people from the LTER Network personnel directory).

I have also found it helpful to save all emails to do with being site representative in a separate folder in your email and copy yourself on all emails you send (or save a copy of sent messages if your email is capable of doing that). It is much easier to re-send a message than rewriting the same thing over again and it is a good way of keeping records of communications.

Keeping the Student List Up-to-Date
Every September and January, email the PIs and ask for the names, email addresses, and degree programs (MS or PhD) of their NEW students, and if any of their students graduated in the previous semester. Once you have a list of new students you can add them to the spreadsheet (save it as a new spreadsheet every semester 'VCR-LTER Graduate Students, Fall 2004' etc.). One page of the spreadsheet is the alphabetical list, and the other page is a list created from the alphabetical spreadsheet with the students listed by PI.

Some PIs are pretty bad at responding to emails; many respond within a day, a few within a few days and some just don't respond. After about a week, I remind the PIs to respond to my first email. After another week, I usually send an email listing the current students listed by PI (the reason for making the other page of the spreadsheet) for them to check if all of their students are listed—this is typically when most of the PIs finally reply! Since some students are co-advised some are listed twice in this email and spreadsheet (highlighted in different colors on spreadsheet). When sending PI's list of students or any other information, I recommend that you do not send it as an attachment for them to open, but rather send the information directly in the email so they can read the email and respond right away.

One trick that you may not know in Word and Excel is if you type someone's email address and it becomes a hyperlink (which often you don't want) you can right click on it and one of the options is 'hyperlink' and under that there is a command 'remove hyperlink.'

VCR-LTER Personnel Directory
Once you have compiled the final list of new students; you add them to the VCR Personnel Directory. (Some professors occasionally tell their students to add themselves to the directory. When you try to add them their ID will already be in use and you will see that you don't need to add them.) Then you email these new students telling them that they were added to the directory, and that they must update their entry. I will send you the email with the instructions

on how they update their entry. The text of this email can also be found at the end of this document.

→Instructions on how to add a NEW Graduate student to the VCR Personnel Directory:

> Go to the VCR homepage: http://www.vcrlter.virginia.edu
> Under 'Information' Click on 'People'
> Click on 'Other Functions' at the bottom
> If you were going to add John Doe to the directory you would--
> Click on 'Add a New Entry to the Directory'
> In the first line you put YOUR email address (it records that you were the one to make the changes to the directory)
> Then you fill out:
> Last Name (Doe)
> First Name (John)
> ID (jdoe)
> SITE (drop down menu to pick 'VCR')
> Affiliation with LTER (drop down menu to pick 'Student-Grd')
> Put the ID of their advisor (tjefferson)
> Then Click 'Add this Information'
> It will give you a list to check that you filled it in correctly.
> And you Click 'CONFIRM'.

Really the students could add themselves and fill in this on their own information, but that is how we "lose" students because they often won't do it. One of the responsibilities of the site representative is to make sure this directory is up-to-date, so it works best if you start the ball rolling and check to make sure that the students update their entries. A few notes-- if the student doesn't put in 'VCR' from the drop down menu for the 'Site' they can get "lost" in the system. Also, if they don't put their 'affiliation with LTER' (grad student) from the drop down menu, then they don't get on the grad student email list serve.

Then the students update their entry. They will fill in their:
Office address (never home)
Office phone (never home)
Fax
Email
Specialty
Web page URL (if they want)
URL of their university
Etc.
Are you currently an active researcher with the LTER? (yes)

And then they submit the information and confirm it. Most people shouldn't have any trouble doing this.

*In order for the students to be added to the email list serves, you need to let John Porter know *once they have updated their entries* in the VCR directory!*

To check that students have updated their entry, go to ALL in the personnel directory it gives you the current list of all the people in the VCR. Once a student updates his or her entry and puts their email address in then you can see that they updated it.

For Active vs. Inactive Students (e.g. Graduated Students):
Below the list of current people working at the VCR, is the list of people who are no longer affiliated with the VCR.

If you go to 'Update an entry in the directory' and Click 'All' you will get a list of all the people from all the sites and it will have an 'UPDATE' button by each name. It also has a column for if the person is active or not. Sometimes if you add someone they show up as not being active, and then you have to go to this page and Click on 'UPDATE' and Click on 'yes' for 'currently active' and then 'add this information' and 'confirm'.

When you get the list of people who have graduated from the PIs, you also update their entry on the personnel directory and Click on 'no' for 'currently active'. This removes them from the current list and puts them on the inactive list; they will then be removed from the email list serve automatically.

LTER NETWORK Personnel Directory
You also need to send the list of names and email addresses of the new graduate students to John Porter; he adds them to the LTER Network Directory (since he is data manager he is the only one with access to update and change this directory). You also give him the names of people to be deleted from the directory if they graduated.

As you should know the LTER main homepage is:
http://www.lternet.edu/

But where you can update your entry in the personnel directory is on the LTER intranet:
http://intranet.lternet.edu/

Once Porter has updated the LTER Network directory (give him ~1 week), you send all those students an email telling them that they have been added to the LTER Network Directory and that they must update their entry. I will send you the email with the instructions on how they update their entry. The text of this email can also be found at the end of this document.

After all the new students have received both emails about updating their entries you need to check periodically to see who still needs to update their entry. If one-two weeks pass and people still have not updated their entry, then you will need to resend the emails to these people urging them to update their entries.

It is kind of a pain to do this, but usually there are less than 10 new people and it doesn't take very long to check if they updated their info and to resend the email instructions to the ones who haven't done it yet.

To check if they have updated their info on the LTER Network Personnel Directory go to the LTER Network home page:
http://www.lternet.edu/
Click on 'Personnel Directory'
In the drop down menu at the top Click on 'VCR' and then Click 'Search'
You will see the list of ALL people affiliated with the VCR who are in the Network Directory. Then you can Click on the names of each new student one by one to see if they updated their entry (this is a bit more time consuming than for checking the VCR directory, but it really doesn't take that long. If they have updated their entry it will have their address (office) and their Areas of Expertise and Interest. It will also probably say 'Last modified Date, Time by their ID'. (e.g. Last Modified Sep 17 2004 01:44PM by akozak) Sometimes someone will need Porter to alter something in this directory for them if there is a glitch, then the entry will say modified last by 'jporter'.

In January, you can also send out an email to all graduate students and PIs encouraging them to update their information on the LTERNET personnel page so that if they are doing new work they can update their interests because collaborations can evolve from people searching this personnel directory for similar interests. It is also important for graduate students to do this periodically in their first few semesters, because they often don't know what they are going to be studying when they start and as their work evolves their interests change.

LTER ASM
Every three years there is an LTER All Scientists Meeting (ASM) for all sites. There was a meeting in September 2006, so the next meeting may be summer or fall 2009.
If you are still the site representative during the next ASM you will be involved in some of the logistics of sending people to the meeting. Deciding on roommates for graduate students, and doing some other stuff.

Representing the VCR at ESA
Also, you are expected to go to the Ecological Society of America (ESA) annual meeting every year unless there is a LTER ASM that year. ESA is usually at the beginning of August; the LTER graduate student site representatives have a meeting during ESA, the Co-Chairs of the Graduate Student Committee organize it and you will get info on it in June or July.
ESA can be found at: http://www.esa.org/

The LTER will pay for your registration, flight, hotel (shared room) and per diem.
Check with Karen McGlathery each year to make sure they have the money to send you.

Being the Liaison and Representing the VCR Graduate Students
You have two jobs as liaison. The first is being the liaison between the Graduate Student Committee Co-Chairs and the graduate students at the VCR (who you are representing). The second is being the liaison between the PIs at the VCR and the graduate students at the VCR.

The Co-Chairs of the Graduate Student Committee, and sometimes other people within the LTER Network, will send emails about various issues to all of the Site Representatives. The PIs at the VCR sometimes have questions about how many students there are working at the site, or other things. There are many different roles that the site representative has depending on what is asked of them.

Bringing the VCR Graduate Students Together
As the VCR Site Representative, you are encouraged to organize a forum for all graduate students who do research at the site to exchange ideas and to tell each other about their work. Ideally, this should happen at least once per year. We recently held a Graduate Student Symposium in January 2007, tacked on to the end of the VCR ASM at the VCR facility on the Eastern Shore. Those students who were present suggested having multiple meetings a year, if possible, so your options are limitless! Because the graduate students come from many different universities and do not all work out of the VCR facility on the Eastern Shore, many of them do not know each other well or have never met, and this is a great opportunity to enhance that interaction. If you plan on organizing a scientific meeting for the VCR graduate students at the Eastern Shore station, you should work closely with the Site Manager at the VCR facility, because the meeting would have to occur at a time when the graduate students could be accommodated, and it would not disrupt other goings on at the facility. Planning a meeting can take a fare amount of work, but everyone will benefit from it.

In the past, I've also tried to get a list together of VCR students who were presenting at various conferences—especially the big ones: ESA, ERF, ASLO—so that everyone could have a specific opportunity to see what other student research was being conducted at the VCR site. I found this particularly helpful in bringing together students from multiple institutions (i.e. I knew other students from VIMS who would be at ERF, but not necessarily those from ECU or UVA).

Graduate Student Website
Hopefully it won't be long until the graduate student page of the VCR website is fully functional. At the January 2007 VCR Graduate Student Meeting, we discussed the need for a website that includes descriptions of each person's research along with their picture and contact information. Having this information available for graduate students could aid in collaboration between students at the VCR who might otherwise not know each other or meet. Once the website is up and running, you should be responsible for making sure that the website is kept up-to-date.

PIs: Who's Who
You will have more to do with PIs who usually have some students working at the shore. I'm sure that you have met these people at the VCR ASMs. The main people are:

Iris Anderson   VIMS (lagoon)
Charles Bachman   NRL   (remote sensing)
Peter Berg   UVA   (modeling)
Linda Blum   UVA   (Brownsville marshes)
Mark Brinson   ECU   (Brownsville marshes)
Bob Christian   ECU   (Brownsville marshes)
Frank Day   ODU   (island uplands)

Paolo D'Odorico	UVA	(modeling, hydrology)
Ray Dueser	USU	(mammals)
Mike Erwin	UVA	(birds)
Sergio Fagharazzi	UVA	(modeling, hyrdrology)
Jose Fuentes	UVA	(meteorology)
Jim Galloway	UVA	(atmospheric science)
Steve Macko	UVA	(isotopes)
Karen McGlathery	UVA	(lagoon, Lead PI)
Aaron Mills	UVA	(mainland creeks)
Nancy Moncrief	Va Muse. Nat. Hist.	(mammals)
George Ortel	ODU	(lagoon bathymetry)
John Porter	UVA	(data manager, small mammals, Lead PI)
Enrique Reyes	ECU	(modeling)
Hank Shugart	UVA	(upland forest) (Biocomplexity project)
Dave Smith	UVA	(fish, Lead PI)
Pat Wiberg	UVA	(sediments)
Don Young	VCU	(island uplands)
Jay Zieman	UVA	(island marsh, general marsh)

Staff Who's Who
There are five staff members who work at the VCR-LTER facility in Oyster on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

Art Schwarzschild	Site Director
David Boyd	Lab Technician
Chris Buck	Lab Technician
Donna Fauber	Fiscal Technician
Kathleen Overman	Lab Technician

Additional Information and Notes
There is also a notebook put together by the Co-Chairs that has information about being site representative and what the graduate student committee is, its goals, and its mission.

When you pass the baton, and someone else becomes the VCR Graduate Student Site Representative, the notebook put together by the Co-Chairs should be passed on to them, as well as this manual. This manual should be updated with any additional information that you deem necessary or beneficial to future VCR site representatives. Karen McGlathery and John Porter should both receive the updated version of this manual when a new site rep takes over.

Please let me (the former site representative) know if you have any questions.

This job is what you make it, now that the student list is really up-to-date, organized, and under control there are many other things you can do to benefit the VCR!

Notes:

Text of Instructions to Email New VCR Graduate Students on How to Update Their Entry in the VCR Personnel Directory:

Hello new VCR graduate students,

To "officially" welcome you into working at the VCR-LTER site on the Eastern Shore, you have just been added to the VCR-LTER personnel directory. All of the students and PIs currently working at the VCR site are listed in this directory. I have added your name and affiliation with the VCR site as graduate students so that you will be added to the various VCR-LTER list-serves. Please add any remaining information to your entry (see below for instructions). Next week you will be added to the LTER-Network directory and you will receive another email.

This just takes a minute so please do it now!

Go to:

http://www.vcrlter.virginia.edu

Click on "People" under "Information" on the left side of the screen.

Select "Other Functions" at the bottom of the page

Select "Update an entry in the directory"

Click on the first letter of your last name

Click on the word "UPDATE" next to your name

It should be pretty self-explanatory from here...

The main thing is to have your email address in the directory so that you get announcements.

Just FYI, I am the graduate student site representative for our VCR site--basically I'm the liason between you and the VCR PIs as well as you and the co-chairs of the Network Graduate Student Committee. So, please let me know if you have any questions about the LTER network, our site, or anything in general. It's also a great idea to peruse our site website as well as the national LTER website, and see all that being involved with the LTER has to offer.
http://www.vcrlter.virginia.edu (our site's website)
http://www.lternet.edu/ (THE Network site)

Thanks for updating your entries very soon!!
Amber Hardison
VCR-LTER Graduate Student Site Representative

Text of Instructions to Email New VCR Graduate Students on How to Update Their Entry in the LTER Network Directory:

Hello again,

As promised, another email from me. This time, you have been added to the LTER-NETWORK directory. (Note that this is different from our VCR-LTER directory!).

Please complete your entry by going to http://intranet.lternet.edu/

Click on the blue "My Contact Information" tab at the top

your id is the first letter of your first name followed by your last name
all in lower case (e.g. tjefferson)

Since you were just added you don't have a password (you may have received
a temporary one by automatic email)--If you didn't receive a password click on "click here to get
your password"

Once you have logged in you will be in "My LTER Profile"

Please fill in your:
-**Personal Info**--on the opening page
as well as the information on the other pages located on the top left of
the screen:
-**Contact Info**--*Use your department address
-LTER Site Affiliations should be filled in already (VCR graduate student)
-***Expertise*** --This is important for others wanting to collaborate or find
people with similar interests. This is important to fill out and update
as you know what you are/will be studying.
Organizational Affiliations--if you have them
Demographics--if you want

Then log out and remember your password.

Also, don't forget to update you VCR profile if you haven't already (I know who you are!!).
Let me know if you have any questions.
Thanks for doing this in a timely manner!
Amber
VCR-LTER Graduate Student Site Representative