

Advocacy in the Atmospheric Sciences

Summary of Findings The “Advocacy” Team Project

Team Members:

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Overview

- The Advocacy Challenge
- Team Experience
- Advocacy in the Atmospheric Sciences
- Elements of Effective Advocacy
- Summary and Recommendations

The Challenge – Current Situation

- Limited **public appreciation & understanding** of science, the **value** of atmospheric science
- **Funding** for the atmospheric sciences flat or declining and heavily competed for
- Institutional **changes in Congressional appropriations** process

The Challenge – Within NCAR/UCAR

- “Science in Service to Society”
- **Recognized advocacy need**
 - **Where** to focus efforts?
 - **How** to be most effective?
 - What **other resources** can be tapped or leveraged?
- ... and do so within the **constraints of law** and **ethics**

Our Approach

- 16 **interviews** using appreciative inquiry
- **Literature and web site** searches
- **Presentation to LA** on advocacy & budget
- Team **discussions**
- **LA tools** on leadership & management

a snapshot of insights, skills, perspectives

Relevant Team Experience

- Program manager at **NSF** & participated in **interagency committee** involved in advocacy
- Experience in national and international **community outreach & K-12 science education**
- U.S. **House of Representatives Science Committee**
- Coordinated and participated in advocacy efforts of **Union of Concerned Scientists**
- Co-founded a **private advanced weather services company**
- Science Operations Officer for the **National Weather Service**

12 Team Meetings

- **February 10:** Team formation during “Effective Teams” class; select topic, discuss group outcomes, and develop initial group norms
- **February 24:** Introduction to & discussion of Appreciative Inquiry
- **March 2:** Discussion of interview subjects and protocol
- **March 7:** Team interview with Jack Fellows
- **March 16-17:** “Level 3 Leadership” module; multiple team activities
- **March 22:** Focus on building consensus on project scope
- **April 1:** Focus on team process, identifying team member interests
- **April 18:** Focus on defining end product, deciding on next steps
- **May 4:** Focus on developing detailed report outline
- **May 11:** Focus on team experience, report outline
- **June 2:** Focus on project report and presentation
- **June 14:** Finalize report and presentation

Challenges of Team Work

- **Time** limitations
- Extensive **scope** of topic
- **Dual focus** on process and outcome
- Team member **absences** (within small team)
- **Diversity** of perspectives and interests
- **Unclear** end product & expectations
- **Introduction of tools** & fit with working style
- And ...did we mention **TIME**?

Lessons Learned from Team Work

- **Dual attention** to human & business system
- **Diverse** experiences and interests
- Creating **safe environment** for people to express different perspectives
- **Adapting LA techniques** to personal styles
- Introducing new ideas & tools **with vision & context**
- **Iterative matching scope to time and resources**
- **Transferability** to other teams/situations in UCAR and beyond

Definitions & Perceptions of “Advocacy”

Provide expertise
to decision-makers

Improve
people’s lives

Influence
public opinion

Outreach/
Education

Foster
professional
communication

Take positions/
promote policies

Media Work

Lobbying

Support

The Advocacy Process

- 1) Why
- 2) To whom
- 3) Saying what
- 4) By whom
- 5) Through what channels
- 6) With what resources
- 7) What are the barriers
- 8) Where to begin
- 9) How to evaluate

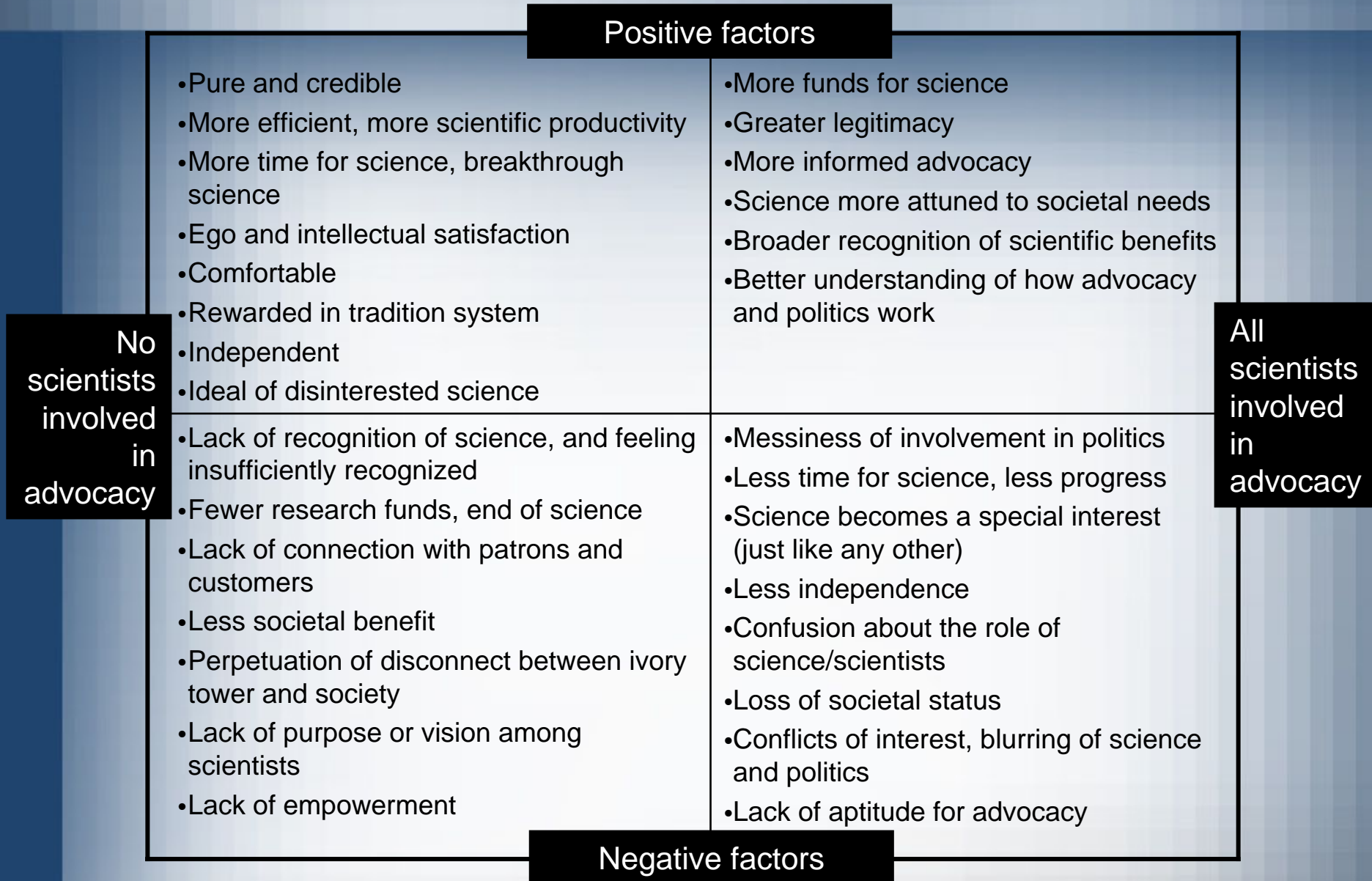
 **No generic answers!**

Need to match these nine components to goals

Advocacy by Scientists?

- Ethical? Conflict of interest?
- Possible activities:
 - public education
 - policy- and decision-making
 - lobbying for specific policies and projects
 - lobbying for funding
- **Polarity Management** TM

Polarity Management™



Elements of Effective Advocacy

- Unifying Vision & Goals
- Advocacy Coalitions
- Resources
- Target-specific Approaches
- Gauges of Success

Unifying Vision & Goals

- **Existing Organization** (Weather Coalition)
“...bring together industry, state and local governments, and academia in an organized effort to urge Congress and the Executive Branch to fund national initiatives ...”
- **LA Exercise**
“Food, fresh water and shelter – basic human needs – are fundamentally reliant on processes in the Earth’s atmosphere...”

Advocacy Coalitions

- **Some characteristics**

- Potentially **more effective** than individual efforts
- **Diverse composition** representing several communities
- Community **partnerships**

- **Examples**

- Weather Coalition
- Potential UCAR/CORE/AMS partnership
- NCAR/AMS 2005 Policy Symposium
- Aircraft Communications and Reporting System (ACARS)

Potential Coalition Pitfalls

- Lack of **common vision**
- Lack of meaningful & persuasive **information**
- Lack of **understanding of funding process**
- **Ineffective communications** between members
- Lack of **commitment** to the joint process
- **Cultural barriers** between partners
- **Inadequate fit** to interests of Congress

Resources for Effective Advocacy

- Time
- Funding
- Training in communication & advocacy
- Interest in contributing
- Connections to the target
- Persuasive information

Gauges of Success – Examples

- **Tally of Accomplished Efforts**

- Types and numbers of activities per year
- Number of NCAR scientists trained in advocacy
- Formation of an NCAR-internal “Advocacy Council”

- **Achievement of Intended Goals**

- Conduct surveys regarding the public’s image and knowledge of what we do & how it benefits society
- Track profitability & health of weather-impacted industries
- Track growth of private sector weather services

Some of Our Recommendations

- **Advocacy**

- Inventory and use **UCAR expertise & interest**
- Consider and manage the benefits & draw-backs of **scientists' involvement**
- Review **coalitions** and consider revisions/diversification
- Increase investment (staff, time, finances) in
 - development and training of **advocacy skills**
 - development of **persuasive information**

Some of Our Recommendations

- **Team Projects as Part of LA**

- Due to the additional time the projects took:
 - (1) **revise the action learning team component**, and/or
 - (2) inform participants of **additional time required**
- Clearly define the project **outcomes, audience, use of results, & commitment to response**
- Work with supervisors to obtain **relief from other work responsibilities**, where possible
- **Raise awareness** of LA skills & techniques at UCAR

Thank you!

- LA initiators, organizers, mavens, trainers, coaches, participants...
- The greens, the blues, and the reds
- Our interviewees
- Our sponsors