

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
CALLING PLANET EARTH - SPACE OUTREACH TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC (3)

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THE PUBLIC FACE OF SPACE: A SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS FROM ISU'S 14TH ANNUAL
SYMPOSIUM

Abstract

Each year, the International Space University (ISU) organizes a three day symposium addressing a timely topic from an interdisciplinary and international perspective to help both the users and the providers of space-related systems to move forward from the discussion of problems to the formulation of innovative solutions. The full list of titles of previous symposia is at www.isunet.edu/symposium/past.

In recent years these symposia have each attracted close to 200 participants from agencies, industry and academia worldwide and ISU's own Masters students also participate as part of their intensive one-year program. Our most recent symposium, the fourteenth in this series of annual events, took place in mid-February 2010 and addressed space education and promotion in a very broad way under the title 'The Public Face of Space'. These topics almost always find a place in discussions on broader themes at ISU annual symposia such as those described by the author in earlier IAC papers: Exploration as a Central Motivating Theme in Space Education and Outreach. IAC-06- E1.5.03. Space Solutions to Earth's Global Challenges. A Summary of ISU's 2008 Symposium Emphasizing Public Engagement Regarding the Benefits from Space. IAC-08-E1.3.6.

Too often though, education and outreach are treated more as an afterthought, out of the mainstream of space discourse. On this latest occasion we put them centre stage, marking the first time ISU has dedicated its entire three-day symposium to such issues. We devoted an entire day to considerations of public outreach, promotion and awareness. Workforce development and capacity building, potential benefits from space commerce and from space environmental studies were also important elements that featured at this symposium on the 'Public Face of Space'.

It was already clear from the record number of people registering in advance that the subject was popular. In early February, just two weeks ahead of the event, President Obama announced new directions for US space policy and revised budget allocations for NASA. The widespread media coverage of space activities that ensued added still more to the timeliness, relevance and interest in the theme. In this paper we will share some of the key points emerging from presentations and discussions in the sessions addressing Public Outreach, Promotion and Awareness, Space Benefits to Society, and Future Directions