The Communicating Science Program ESL Steering Committee held its first meeting on March 21, 2005. Present were Huaqing Cai, Young-Oh Kwon, Katja Matthes, Astrid Maute, Jielun Sun, Agnes Takacs and Veronica Wynne.

Thanks to Astrid Maute for excellent, detailed notes!

The following topics were discussed. Future working sessions and events will be announced in the daily calendar “Today@UCAR” we all receive via email. When available prior to an event, materials will be posted on the CommSci website ESL page at http://www.ncar.ucar.edu/eo/commsci/esl.html.

1) Writing, editing and reviewing papers: First one-hour brown-bag session set for noon on Thursday, May 3, 2005, in FL2-1003

The goal is to learn and review English grammar by parsing sentences and edited portions of papers written by scientists for whom English is a second language. We suggest scheduling brown-bag lunch meetings once a month. At the beginning of each meeting, we will review a grammatical subject and parse part of a paper together. We will discuss why we make changes, how we can improve the clarity of the paper, etc. The paper could be someone’s working paper; you are encouraged to bring sample sentences or paragraphs from your own papers. Mary will help to coordinate this session.

Prior to the meeting, please review the following resources: https://mit.imoat.net/handbook/punction.htm and http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/cmosfaq.html, as well as the sample edited material posted at http://www.ncar.ucar.edu/eo/commsci/esl.html.

2) Proposal writing

ECSA has scheduled a proposal-writing session during its July Forum. Please check updates at http://www.asp.ucar.edu/ecsa/jfff05.html and R.S.V.P. to Paula Fisher (paulad@ucar.edu) if you wish to attend any session. Veronica will look into finding a professional to talk to us on proposal-writing in general, if the Forum presentation does not meet our needs.
3) Pronunciation: One-hour brown-bag session TBA

Brown-bag lunch meetings will be organized for people who want to improve their English pronunciation skills and encourage native speakers to participate. Please bring a tape recorder so that you may listen and practice later. The pronunciation meeting may be held once a month, or can be alternated with the editing/writing meeting at our monthly gathering. Veronica, who has many years of experience in this area, will help to coordinate these sessions.

4) Presentations

We will collect articles on how to make good presentations to be posted on the ESL web site. Anyone who wants to practice talks should email Jielun Sun (jsun@ucar.edu) or Mary Golden (mgolden@ucar.edu) several days in advance. We will set up a time and a place. We can go through the key elements on how to make a good presentation at the beginning of each talk. Video equipments from UCAR Communications will be available to record each presentation. Attendees and speakers will have an opportunity to discuss how to improve presentations. We encourage each of you to talk to your peers and pull together a list of people who will be willing to participate and give you feedback.

5) Structure

Jielun Sun and Mary Golden will serve as co-chairs. Members of the steering committee will set policy.

6) Coaching/Mentoring

There are several people, including Veronica Wynne, who are willing to serve as mentors to help us improve our communication skills. We will develop a list of mentors for our group; in the meantime, please go to the Skills/Learning Exchange at https://www.fin.ucar.edu/sle/slmainmenu.jsp, click “Find Me a Learning Partner” and enter the type of skill you need, e.g., "presentation," “communication,” “writing,” etc. Then contact the people whose names appear. We encourage you to list yourself as a volunteer learning partner to help others as well!

7) Professional editing

In addition to the Skills/Learning Exchange volunteers, there are a few people at NCAR like Mary who do freelance editing. Nevertheless, we believe that the need is great enough to suggest that a professional editorial staff be hired for UCAR/NCAR, although we recognize that budget cuts makes this problematic. (The casual pool that HR provides must be paid by division budgets.) The steering committee will send such a request to HR.

For further information, please contact Jielun Sun at jsun@ucar.edu, ext. 8994, or Mary Golden at mgolden@ucar.edu, ext. 8936.