

Perspectives from the National Science Foundation

Jennifer Wade (Program Director, National Science Foundation)

My path to writing this letter started way back in the early days of the predecessor program, MARGINS. I was a fresh faced graduate student, drawn into weeks of field work tacked onto a workshop in Heredia, Costa Rica. It was 2001, and this was my introduction to the Subduction Factory. More importantly, it was my introduction to a community of scientists committed to multidisciplinary shoreline-crossing research, and I was hooked.

Ten years later, I was one of a team of Program Directors at NSF managing the decadal program that followed: GeoPRISMS. I could spend my allotted space in this last newsletter highlighting the incredible science that has been done, the discoveries made, and accomplishments too long to list. But the most remarkable part of the GeoPRISMS program is the people who do the science. For twenty years, this community has collaborated, argued, traveled the world, answered questions, and asked a hundred more. You have found ways to connect geochemistry to geodesy, you have found commonality across tectonic settings, and developed new ways to collaborate with each other in the field, using tools across all kinds of platforms. All of this you have done while supporting each other and your students so well that this program is held up as an example within NSF of what community science can be.

During MARINGS and GeoPRISMS, the programs have funded over 300 awards, 30 workshops, and numerous postdocs. We have directly supported over 1100 individuals, and the percentage of early career principal investigators involved in these projects has increased fivefold. I am particularly proud of the engagement of early career researchers in this program, and of the way more senior scientists

have not only embraced that, but enabled it. I am also proud of the collaborative relationships that have developed internally at NSF. Managing a program at the boundary between Earth and Ocean Sciences requires good communication, mutual respect, and trust - all of which we in EAR have with Debbie Smith, Candace Major, and others in OCE with whom we have partnered in this program. The team at NSF that developed from GeoPRISMS continues to work hard to promote cross-coastal research well into the future.

NSF hasn't managed GeoPRISMS alone. Juli Morgan, Peter van Keken, and now especially Demian Saffer have been astounding partners as Office Chairs. Each Chair has different styles, yet each was perfect for whatever faced the program while they were at the helm. I am so grateful to them for that. It is not easy to be the liaison between an ambitious community of scientists and a federal agency, but these three made my job better. And while the office changed hands over the years, the one constant has been Anaïs Férot. None of what we read in this issue, or have experienced at a meeting, or see on the website would have been possible without her. Every community should be so lucky as to have her driving it forward.

I hope you all see this as I do - not as the end of an era, but the start of something transformational. I am not the only MARGINS kid who grew up to be involved in GeoPRISMS, and now that I'm nearly twenty years on from that first trip to Costa Rica I can see with such clarity how learning to do science in a way that is inherently collaborative and cross-disciplinary leads to progress. The community has built a foundation of scientific discovery and has nurtured visionary scientists that will carry this spirit forward into everything that comes next, and I cannot wait to be a part of it. ■

From left to right, top to bottom. Nodal seismometers installation in the crater of Mount St Helens, following the GeoPRISMS-funded iMUSH deployment in 2014. B. Students presenting their research at the AGU GeoPRISMS Townhall Meeting. C. Participants of the 2019 TEI for Synthesis & Integration in front of the Alamo in San Antonio, TX; D. Participants of the 2015 TEI for the SCD Initiative in California; E. Research Cruise participants preparing MT receiver for deployment during the 2015 GeoPRISMS-funded field campaign to the Aleutians; F. Program Director Jennifer Wade addressing the GeoPRISMS Community during the 2019 GeoPRISMS Theoretical & Experimental Institute.





Photo by A. Feroi



Photo by K. Key



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