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Introduction

This year in San Diego, California, we held the first conference of Optics Education and Outreach. This conference focused on activities to share the wonder of science and optics to the formal processes used to educate the next generation of scientists and engineers.

The conference was well attended and included five oral sessions. The oral sessions had titles of: Professional Development, Assessment, K-12 Programs, Informal Education and College Programs. These sessions were held over one day of the entire Optics and Photonics 2010 meeting.

The professional development session covered programs to educate teachers who are beginning to bring optics to their institutions. The assessment session presented talks on methods to measure learning outcomes. The K-12 programs session shared experiences in introducing optics to pre-college aged students while the informal education session gave talks showing programs aimed at audiences outside of any formal structure. The final session on college programs covered undergraduate education in optical sciences.

For the previous four years, a session on optics education was included in the Novel Optical System Design and Optimization conference. The past interest led to the separate conference for 2010. The large number of submissions from a broad range of participants confirmed the need for a forum in this area for community interchange. The speakers included students presenting their first talks to educators reporting new successes to scientists sharing projects reaching out to students directly.

My thanks go to those who helped make this conference a success, especially the authors, audience, SPIE staff, and program committee. The authors share the credit for making this conference an unqualified success. The audience built upon this success by being active and asking engaging questions. The program committee provided excellent assistance to ensure the quality of the content while also presiding over a number of the sessions.

The conference will return in two years. If you would like to assist with the 2012 or later conference please contact me. We look forward to seeing you in 2012!

G. Groot Gregory