

Carlie Wiener

Director of Communications and Engagement Strategy for Schmidt Ocean Institute



What is your current occupation?

Schmidt Ocean Institute is a non-profit organization that was established in 2009 by Eric and Wendy Schmidt to advance oceanographic research through the development of innovative technologies, open sharing of information, and broad communication about ocean health. Our organization operates Falkor, a philanthropic research vessel that is made available to the international science community at no cost.

I am fortunate enough to serve as the Director of Communications and Engagement Strategy for Schmidt Ocean Institute. In this position, I oversee core communications for the organization including content development, media relations, strategic program planning, global partnership building, and stakeholder engagement.

What is your educational background?

I have a PhD in Environmental Studies from York University and an undergraduate degree in Communications. Additionally, I received a graduate diploma in Sustainability Education.

A key message for students is that the geoscience workforce is dynamic, and boundaries between sectors and occupations are fluid. How has this been true in your career?

Yes, I would absolutely agree that the geoscience workforce is dynamic. There are many different paths to apply your skillset, and numerous ways to remain in the geosciences outside

academia. For me, communicating about geoscience and ocean sciences has been a wonderful way to apply my experience and continue to learn about new things. Out of my Master's degree, I moved to a new country and began to work learning about the Hawaiian Islands in a position first with the state, and then with the University of Hawaii. Each role I took exposed me to a new geography and area of science, and different ways to communicate about research with unique stakeholders and public. This has continued to evolve with the development and invent of new communication tools, use of social media, and technology.

Where do you see your sector moving in future years? How would you advise students to prepare to be competitive job applicants and successful employees?

Science communications has really evolved in the last twenty years, becoming an independent field of study and training. Outreach to communities is no longer an afterthought, but an area that uses professionals and has consideration from the onset of research projects. My advice to students interested in this field is to get as broad of a skill set as possible, from video editing, writing, teaching, and participating in research. It is also important to volunteer or intern whenever you can. Meeting many people and getting a feel for what they do will help you determine what is of most interest to you.

What is the role of networking in your sector? Do you have advice for a student who is just beginning to build their network? What is the best way for students to get their foot in the door?

In my opinion, networking is critical in any sector. Having connections to those both in and outside of your industry will help you along your career path in many ways. My advice is to build relationships whenever the opportunity presents itself, and start early by engaging with your classmates and professors. Having a short pitch about your research or goals is nice to have. A funny or interesting story that makes you stand out will also help. Many organizations will host early career networking events and opportunities, these are great places to practice your skills and get to know people. Meeting people and making a good impression is the best way to get your foot in the door.

What does a “typical” day of work look like for you?

There are no “typical” days in my position, which is what I love about it. My position allows me to meet with all kinds of people from scientists, to industry partners, to graphic designers. I have the opportunity to collaborate with an amazing team, sharing ideas, accomplishments and thinking about the next expedition or project.

What is the best part of your job?

The best part of my job is getting to share with the world all of the incredible underwater discoveries and helping to bring attention to the beautiful and surprising deep sea species.

There are so many aspects of my job that I love. All of the exposure to new science and technology keeps me engaged and learning. Meeting new and interesting people is a bonus as well. And of course, I love traveling to new places and connecting with people from the many places that our research vessel, Falkor operates in.

Do you have any other comments or advice for students looking to enter your sector of the geoscience workforce?

Take the time to speak to people working in the field you are interested in, and make sure you are excited about the work. If you aren't passionate from the beginning, then it is best to find something else.

Connect:

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Learn More:

- [This is how we can inspire people to feel connected to the ocean.](#) World Economic Forum.
- [Fast Five: Quick Questions with Dr. Carlie Wiener.](#) Australian National Maritime Museum.
- [How deep sea research uncovered underwater upside down lake.](#) World Surf League Podcast.
- [Three of the world's top female ocean explorers talk trailblazing & discovery.](#) Alta Sea, Virtual.
- [The Ocean Summit # 3 live from Newport, \(@4:23\).](#) The Ocean Race, Virtual.
- [Hearing on Ocean Exploration.](#) U.S. House of Rep. Committee on Sci., Space & Tech., Wash, D.C.
- [All Hands on Deck National Ocean Exploration Forum,](#) MIT Media Lab, Boston.