

JUNE 2020

ELSI PR OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT FY2019



EARTH-LIFE SCIENCE INSTITUTE
TOKYO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Prepared by Thilina Heenatigala. Edited by Lucy Kwok.
Content provided by Minako Shirakura and Shigeru Masuda.

1. SUMMARY

The ELSI PR Office successfully implemented new workflows for staff management by assigning a specific task area to each member. This increased work efficiency and output. The team also implemented new strategies to streamline and improve press releases and research highlights, website content, outreach activities and methods to evaluate these. As a result, 29 press releases were published, four of which were featured in the top 10 press releases of Tokyo Tech on EurekAlert by views. Weekly articles were published on the website bringing the number of articles to a total of 132. Acting as a hub for science communication, ELSI hosted ten events, workshops and seminars that covered practical topics relevant to researchers and PIOs. Highlights of the year were the Japan Scicom Forum and ELSI Scientific Communication in Practice.

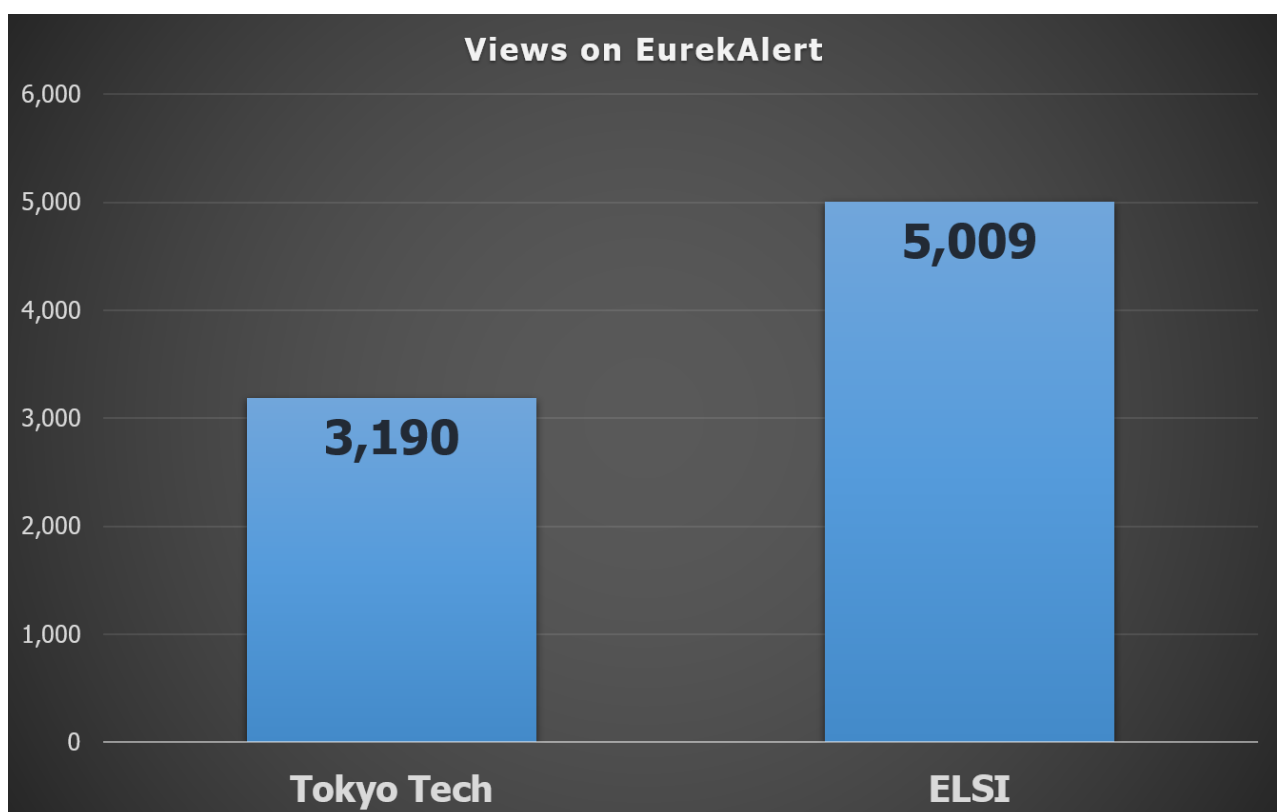
HIGHLIGHTS

- 250 participants attended the ELSI Annual Public Lecture, a record number
- 50% increase in Press Releases and Research Highlights
- 29 Press Releases in English and Japanese
- 4 of ELSI's Press Releases featured in the Tokyo Tech's top 10 Press Releases
- ELSI Science Outreach Evaluation Framework was created
- 430 media articles and channels covered ELSI research activities
- 132 articles were published on the ELSI website, an average of 2.5 per week
- 16 outreach activities were held for the public and students
- 90% of outreach activities were conducted in Japanese to reach local communities
- 10 science communications events, seminars and workshops were organised and hosted
- 58 ELSI seminars were supported by the PR Office

2. PRESS RELEASES AND RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: [1,2]

A new workflow was introduced to streamline the coordination of the press releases and research highlights. English press releases are coordinated by ELSI and the Japanese version is coordinated by Tokyo Tech. The research highlights in English and Japanese are coordinated within ELSI. With an efficient workflow and a supportive Editorial Board, the number of press releases and research highlighted increased by almost 50%.

A total of 52 press releases and research highlights were produced in English and Japanese during FY2019. 29 of these were press releases and 23 were research highlights. The English press releases that were published on EurekAlert have an average of 5,009 views, which is higher compared to Tokyo Tech's overall average of 3,190.



The top 10 press releases by Tokyo Tech on EurekAlert by views include four from ELSI. This is the first time four of ELSI's press releases feature in the top list. The press releases that appeared at the top are from astronomy, biology, chemistry, and machine learning, covering the major areas of ELSI's research scope.

Number	Title	Public Release Date	Total Page Views	Author
1	ELSI scientists discover new chemistry that may help explain the origins of cellular life	2019-07-23	11,333	Tony Jia
2	A metal-free, sustainable approach to CO2 reduction	2019-06-13	10,014	
3	A rapid, easy-to-use DNA amplification method at 37	2019-06-14	7,724	
4	Paving the way for spintronic RAMs: A deeper look into a powerful spin phenomenon	2019-12-26	7,531	
5	Thermo-chemical power generation integrated with forced convection cooling	2019-11-27	5,999	
6	ELSI researchers use biological evolution to inspire machine learning	2019-06-18	5,909	Nicholas Guttenberg
7	DNA is only one among millions of possible genetic molecules	2019-11-11	5,391	Jim Cleaves
8	Successful application of machine learning in the discovery of new polymers	2019-07-19	5,269	
9	Nanoscience breakthrough: Probing particles smaller than a billionth of a meter	2019-12-13	4,949	
10	Mars' water was mineral-rich and salty	2020-01-21	4,817	Yasuhito Sekine

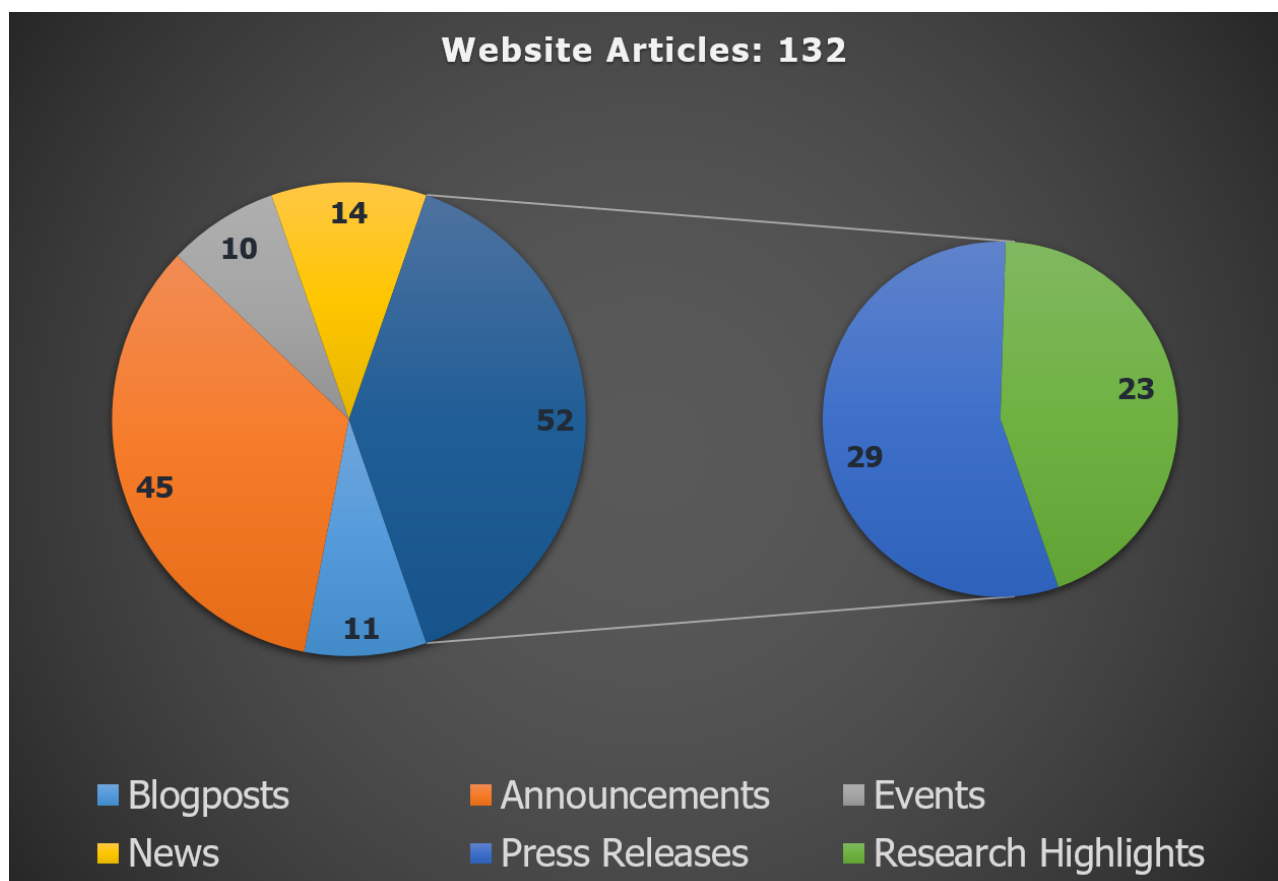
3. MEDIA COVERAGE: [3]

During FY2019, ELSI research activities were covered in 430 media articles and channels. The activities ranged from coverage of press releases, interviews, outreach activities and research in general. 27% of this coverage is by Japanese media outlets such as NHK, Japan Today, Yahoo News, Japan Times, and Tokyo FM. 73% is coverage from popular foreign media, ranging from CNN, Daily Mail, Discover Magazine, Fox News, Forbes, Gizmodo, Newsweek, Science Daily, RT News, Sciworth, Space.com, and The Indian Express. The increased coverage in international media highlights the effort the PR Office has put into communicating research in English in order to support the globalisation aspect of WPI. The research activities were covered in multiple languages: Japanese, Russian, German, Hindi, Dutch, French, Italian, Chinese and English. The types of media used were radio, TV, printed news and online news.

4. WEBSITE: [4]

ELSI's website plays a crucial role as the 'front door' of the institution and is therefore vital to making a good first impression on visitors. In order to maintain a dynamic website and keep visitors up-to-date on activities at the institute, the website's main goal is to publish content weekly, including at least one new article. The dynamic content covers news, events, announcements, blog posts, research highlights and press releases. A key change during FY2019 is working closely with the seminar sub-committee to publish weekly seminars, showcasing the activities within ELSI.

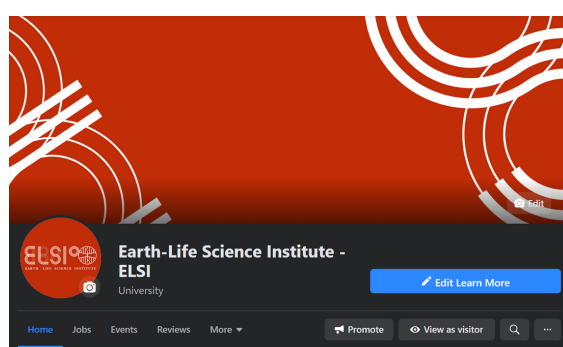
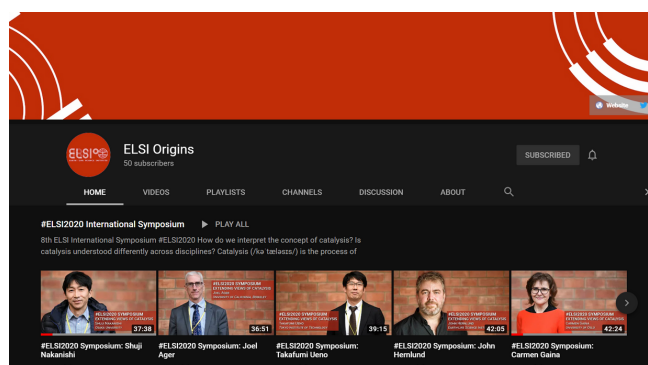
An average of 2.5 articles per week were published, bringing the total to 132 for FY2019.



5. SOCIAL MEDIA:

Apart from the website, social media is another way for ELSI to engage different stakeholders. A major change for FY2019 is the scheduling of daily content, or a minimum of 3 days of content per week. It is shared in English and Japanese (due to availability) to reach both local and foreign audiences. Due to the limited resources of the PR Office, the priority is to keep a weekly content flow going.

To improve branding, customised graphics were created for ELSI social media channels: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Due to the combination of a better branding image and consistent content production, the number of users increased by 60%.

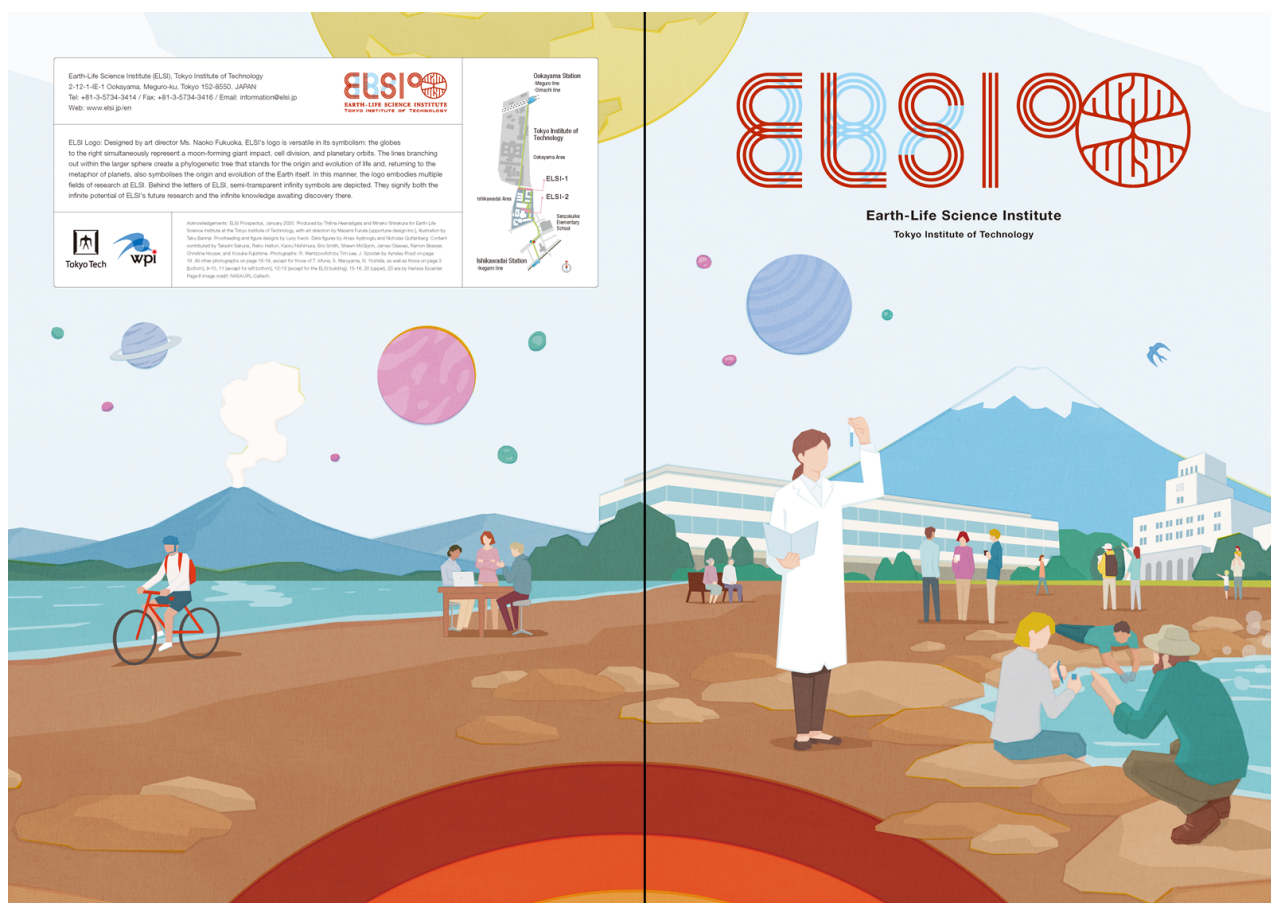


6. PRINTED MATERIALS:

During the FY2019, the PR Office published a completely revamped Prospectus, an information pamphlet for the WPI Site Visit, issue 7 of the Origins outreach newsletter and also supported the Japanese edition of ELSI Rising (which was managed by ELSI coordinators).

The new ELSI Prospectus was designed with a human-centric approach to showcase the diversity, activity and environment at ELSI by using large, bold images, and quotes from PIs/A-PIs. The front-inner cover also features an infographic to give an overview of the institute and the cover design captures 'life at ELSI/Titech' through the impression of a local artist.

Issue 7 of the Origins outreach newsletter focused on students who are interested in pursuing a career in research. It featured three ELSI researchers. And, for the first time, the newsletter featured an article by an ELSI student. Overall, 50% of the researchers featured in the newsletter are female to maintain a good gender balance.



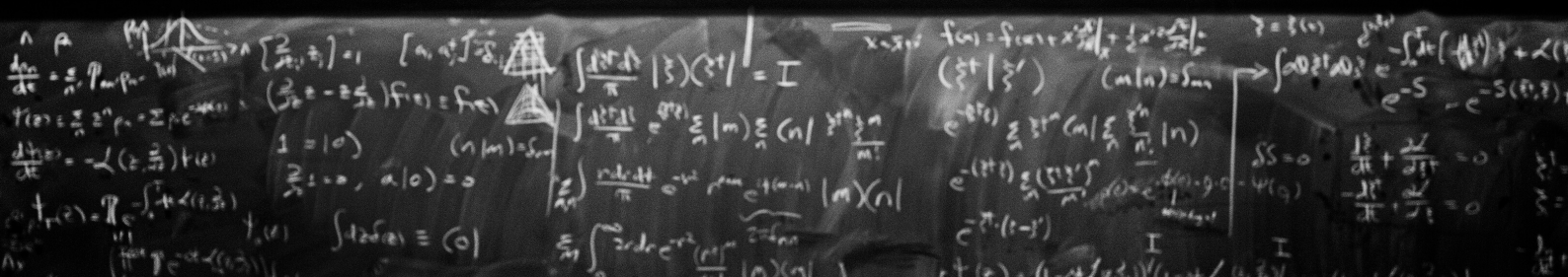
7. OUTREACH IMPLEMENTATION: [5]

The PR Office organised a total of 16 outreach activities in FY2019. About 90% of the public lectures and activities for school students were in Japanese, while the Science Cafe was in English, and the exhibition engagement is in both languages. The ELSI annual public lecture received the highest number of participants recorded: 250.

Public lectures	9
Activities for school students	2
Science cafes	1
Exhibitions	4

8. OUTREACH EVALUATION:

An idea of an outreach evaluation framework was presented and discussed at the PIO Summit conference organised by Hokkaido University. The framework aims to understand ELSI's impact on public engagement. It was first used at the ELSI Annual Public Lecture to run an exit survey and a case study is currently underway (FY2020).



9. SCIENCE COMMUNICATION: [5]

ELSI has organised, hosted and engaged in 10 science communication events during FY2019. The core of the science communication efforts is to provide training for researchers and PIOs; as a result, many ELSI researchers have shown a keen interest in contributing to outreach activities, creating graphical abstracts for papers and proposals, submitting papers for press release, and adding outreach as a component of their research proposals.

ELSI also plays a role in science communication across Japan by providing seminars and workshops at other institutes and local conferences. ELSI arranged two workshops for the WPI/JSPS community about press releases and public engagement at exhibitions, which were received positively.

10. SUPPORTING ELSI ACTIVITIES

Starting from FY2019, the PR Office will play an active role supporting research events at ELSI. The weekly seminars are coordinated closely with the seminar sub-committee, which helps to keep track of records. A total of 58 seminars were held with an average of 20 participants. Almost 25% of the speakers were female.

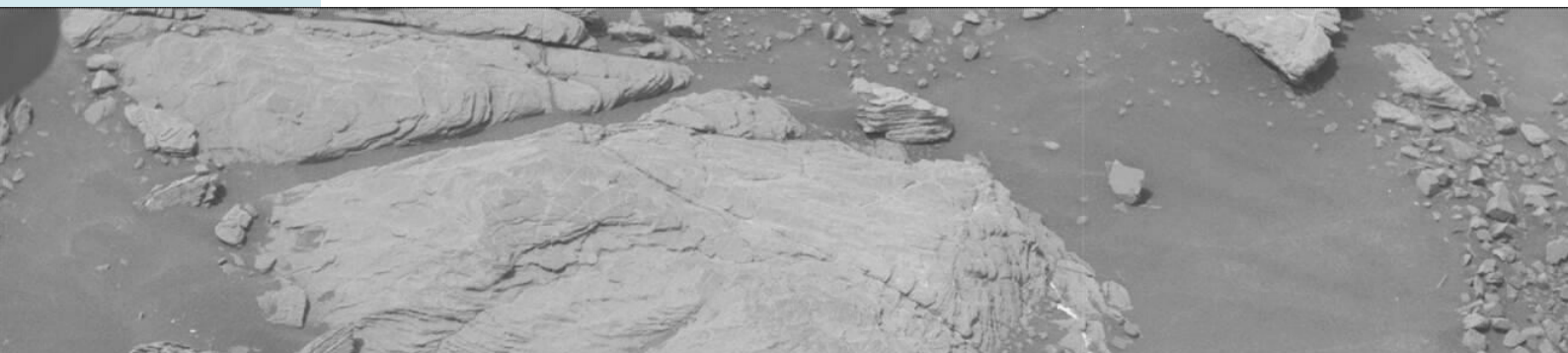


11. ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT:

The PR Office budget is managed by closely working with the Admin Office. Starting FY2019, the budget is reviewed twice a year to coordinate expenses. The management is handled peer-to-peer within the two offices.

12. NOVELTIES MANAGEMENT:

Using the graphics created by the local artist for the new ELSI Prospectus, the PR Office created tote bags, notebooks, aluminum pin badges and new pens. Styling the products in a way that matches the Prospectus also helps build the ELSI branding.



13. COORDINATION WITH WPI OUTREACH:

During the FY2019, ELSI worked in close collaboration with the WPI outreach team to improve outreach practices across the WPI PIOs of all 13 institutions. As a result, a number of things were initiated. There was increased usage of English at the WPI outreach meeting due to documentation in both Japanese and English being provided, and allowing some of the discussion to be in English. Some E-mail communications are in English, specifically the subject line.

Hands-on and skill development workshops were organised during the WPI outreach meeting for WPI PIOs and JSPS staff. These workshops were designed with topics that are relevant to the community and provided the training and skills that they need to implement them in their outreach practices. To engage the WPI PIOs more, the idea of a Task Force was discussed and the first Task Force to organise the 'Super Science High School Fair' was set up.

The WPI community participates in the annual AAAS conference and a discussion was initiated about effective engagement at AAAS, with a possible future proposal to organise a seminar.



14. CHANGES FOR FY2020 (ELSI):

- The submission form for the press release or research highlight should be improved by removing/adding questions to help make the initial decision.
- The questionnaire form to produce an English press release should be improved by removing/adding questions to help with writing the first draft. E.g. images and additional links.
- Discuss with Tokyo Tech about improving the Japanese Press Release coordination.
- Produce a working document to keep track of media coverage and use it to create a media database. The database also has the potential to evaluate ELSI research in media (E.g. Rui Brito Fonseca, et al 2010, Astronomy in Newspapers: Evaluation, Communicating Astronomy with Public Journal.)
- Create 'Web of Science' alerts for research papers by ELSI members and share them on social media, helping to increase the paper's metrics (on Altmetrics) and which potentially could help to increase the H-Index of researchers.
- Maintain a master list of contacts of schools, teachers, PIOs, businesses, etc.
- Implement a new novelties handling system to streamline the process.

15. CHANGES FOR FY2020 (WPI):

- Support to implement new Task Forces and encourage ELSI PR Office members to join.
- Discuss with WPI disseminating the Outreach Evaluation Framework among the institutions.
- Organise a seminar to present the Outreach Evaluation Framework.
- Support to initiate monthly meetings for WPI PIOs.



16. CHALLENGES OF THE PR OFFICE:

- Improve knowledge on the public engagement of PR Office staff by supervising a course on Public Engagement and Outreach.
- Improve the attitude towards outreach and the PR Office from ELSI members and management.

APPENDIX:

- [1] List of FY2019 press releases
- [2] List of FY2019 research highlights
- [3] List of media coverage of research activities
- [4] List of articles published on ELSI website
- [5] List of outreach activities from ELSI
- [6] List of ELSI seminars