Contact: Dr. Charles C. Baker, Director, VLT
University of California, San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0420
(858) 534-4971
Visit our website at: http://vlt.ucsd.edu

Teaching science by doing science

"We need to create a better understanding between the people of America and the physics community. Because many Americans believe that physics is, on the whole, inaccessible. The equations, the experiments, the strange words -- these are things many people gladly left behind in high school."

Bill Richardson, Secretary of Energy

More and more, leaders in education and public policy look to the scientific establishment to improve the state of math and science education at the elementary and high school levels.

Students often consider math and science studies irrelevant to their current interests and future goals. Moreover, traditional lecture and memorization formats are often ineffective.

Fusion scientists and engineers are active in a variety of educational outreach programs to stimulate student interest vis-à-vis "hands-on" experimental activities. The outreach programs provide an opportunity to engage in one-on-one discussions with plasma physicists and fusion technologists from national and academic laboratories. Students learn first hand about --

- **What plasmas are and why students need to know about them.**
- **The current status of fusion energy research around the world.**
- **How plasmas are used to improve every day life.**
- **The job opportunities available for students who want to pursue physics.**

The outreach activities are an enriching experience for the students and teachers, as well as the scientists and engineers.

During the American Physical Society Division of Plasma Physics annual meeting, a Plasma Expo is held for students and teachers who learn from scientists and engineers in the field of plasma science and technology.

As public policy is increasingly formulated upon scientific and technological issues, broader public appreciation for the benefit of scientific discovery is important to funding research programs. A technologically proficient citizenry is vital to ongoing economic prosperity.