



# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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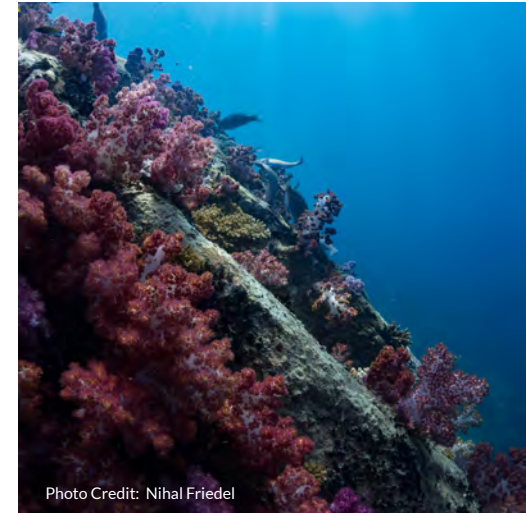
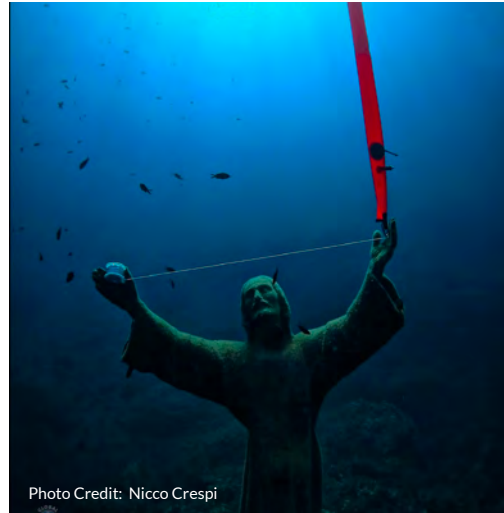
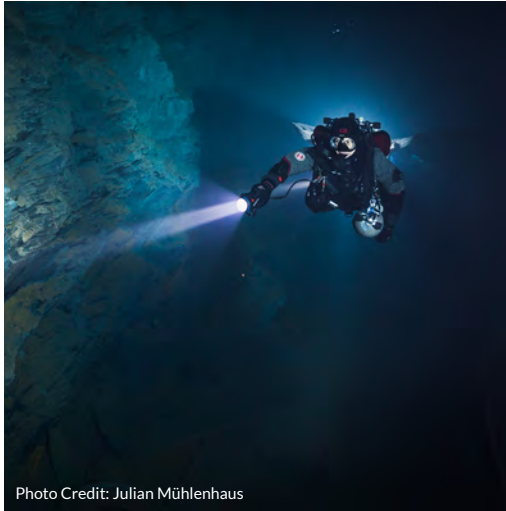
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# About GUE



## Who We Are

In 1998, we created a unique organization dedicated to high-quality diver education with the goals of supporting aquatic research to advance conservation and safely expand exploration of the underwater world.

## Our Vision

To establish an educated, proficient global community of scuba divers inspired and empowered to conserve and explore the world's aquatic environments.

## Our Mission

GUE is committed to:

- Developing safe, skilled, and knowledgeable divers
- Undertaking and promoting underwater research
- Pursuing global underwater exploration
- Safeguarding the integrity of the underwater world
- Providing the public with a comprehensive resource on all things aquatic.

# Letter from the President

As president and founder of Global Underwater Explorers, I am pleased to be writing this message in the year of our 20th anniversary. Such an auspicious milestone invariably evokes images of our early years and how far we have come; however, my goal-oriented nature requires me to take stock of the distance we have yet to travel.

First, the warm and fuzzy reminiscing of our 20-year success story: In 1998, GUE had just started with a small group of friends. We were enjoying great success with dive exploration in Florida and had been expanding these operations globally since our first big project in Turkey in 1995. We were setting our sights to Greece and the first of our Britannic expeditions, with a growing slate of community-led projects evolving in far-flung regions around the world. It would be another year before we had organized the formal non-profit details, and again another year before we

published the first issue of Quest in 2000, but our small, focused group had about 20 instructors and had launched our first website. Most importantly, we had a dream, and the moniker that emblazoned the landing page (back when websites did that sort of thing) was the Victor Hugo quote, “There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.” Retyping this now brings back fond memories of our youthful optimism and the absence of the obstacles we considered.

Over the next 20 years, there would be many challenges we did not foresee. Ironically, the things we were watching closely could ultimately be managed, while aspects we expected to be easy were more likely to develop into surprises. Today, given the wisdom of perspective, this seems quite obvious. Yet, I am most happy to report that I continue unabashed, with an arguably less naivety and a begrudgingly less

youthful view, but one in which obstacles remain surmountable and where the idea of GUE is all the more ready to be realized.

It is through this lens that I look into the next 20 years and we begin the planning and structural developments that will hopefully find me writing a 40-year message in 2038.



Jarrod Jablonski  
President



Photo Credit: Amanda White



Photo Credit: Claudio Provenzani

# Cave and Tech Diving

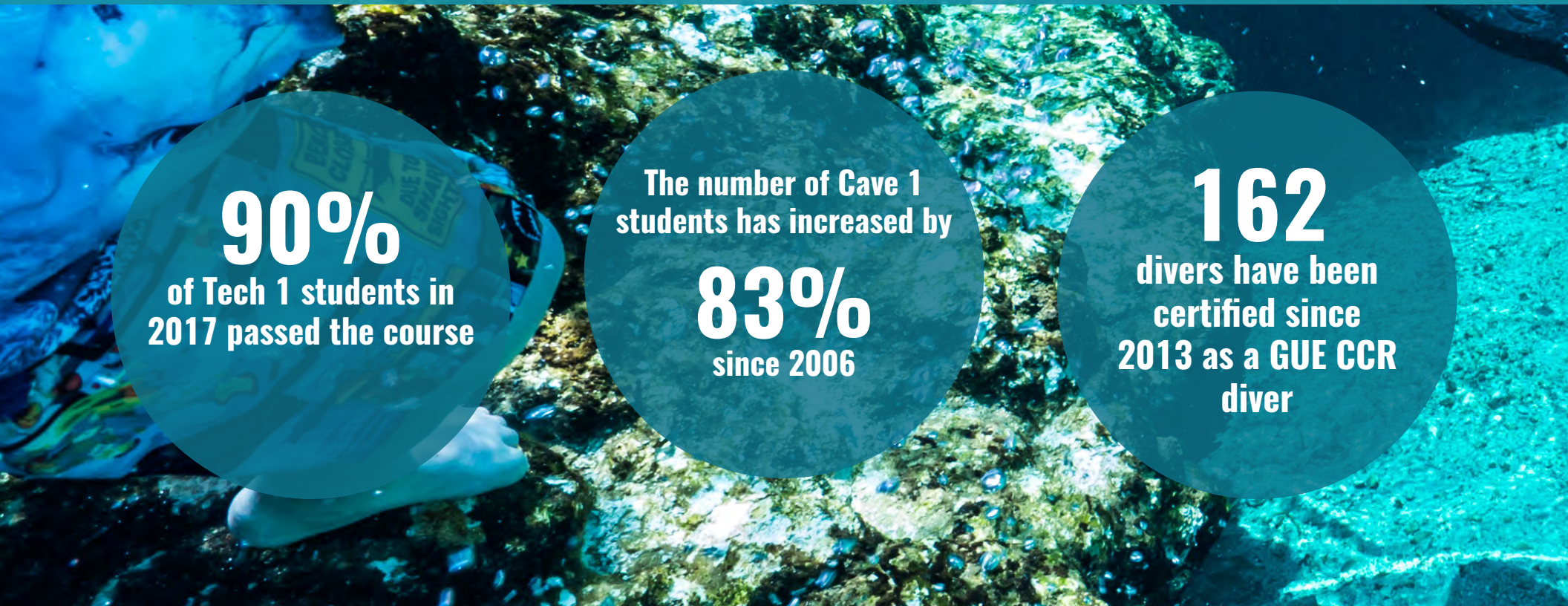
In 2017, we focused on improvements in the quality of our training materials. An updated GUE Cave 2 course presentation was released, along with the release of a new Standards Operating Procedures manual and a steady increase in the number of videos on DiveGUE.tv, which creates a solid platform to support our rigorous technical and cave training.

A number of changes were made to help

safeguard GUE training quality and ensure our students receive the best outcome from any GUE course they pursue. These changes include clarifying procedural aspects in training such as mandating at least three training locations and requiring that no more than one third of cave 1 training can be done in mines. Additional refinements are planned as we continue our ongoing quest for excellence.

Looking at the numbers, we can see that the quantity of our Cave Diver Level 1, Cave Diver Level 2, Technical Diver Level 2, and CCR programs have slightly increased, while the amount of Technical Diver Level 1 classes slightly decreased in comparison with 2016.

In general, we can see that there are more upper level classes being taught (i.e., Cave 2, Tech 2, and CCR) than Level 1 classes, meaning that there are more Level 1 divers than Fundamentals divers progressing forward. The current focused approach towards Recreational and Foundational curriculum devel-



**90%**  
of Tech 1 students in  
2017 passed the course

The number of Cave 1  
students has increased by

**83%**  
since 2006

**162**  
divers have been  
certified since  
2013 as a GUE CCR  
diver

opment should change this statistic, as an increase in skilled and passionate recreational divers will lead to an increase in our Level 1 training numbers. Yet another important topic is the amount of fail and provisional ratings in comparison with pass ratings. While numbers have stayed pretty similar to previous years, we have noticed that a lot of fail/provisional ratings in technical and cave classes were caused by a relatively low set of Fundamentals-level skills. This is a good time to remind everyone that solid basic skills not only help divers succeed during upper level training programs, but they also make

the experience much more exciting and enjoyable. It is important to keep practicing these skills on a regular basis, as well as constantly expanding your diving experience.

2018 is promising to be an even more exciting and busy year than 2017, with both project and training programs development.

We are actively working on the development of new Technical Diver Level 2 training materials that will be up-to-date in content and appearance and will truly support our Tech 2 program.

In the very near future, the GUE Cave Sidemount program will be released and will be supported by a set of comprehensive training materials.

The newest set of GUE CCR training materials are currently undergoing final edits and will be ready to release in the second quarter of 2018.

And finally, based on current requirements posed by a number of dive site owners in Europe and the Americas, we are planning to release a GUE Cave CCR endorsement in the second quarter of 2018.



Photo Credit: Jongmoon Lee

# Recreational and Foundational Diving

The recreational domain remains a critical focus for GUE in 2018, with a variety of developments on the way and several achievements last year. 2017 was marked with the long-awaited launch of a revised Recreational Diver Level 1 program, and there are already multiple success stories of the Discover Diving program and other recreational classes.

The Discover Diving program is designed to allow non-divers to experience the underwater environment for the first time, as well as familiarize them with GUE's meticulous training methodology and the value of using standardized GUE equipment and procedures in their pursuit of safe and enjoyable scuba diving training that will benefit them for life.

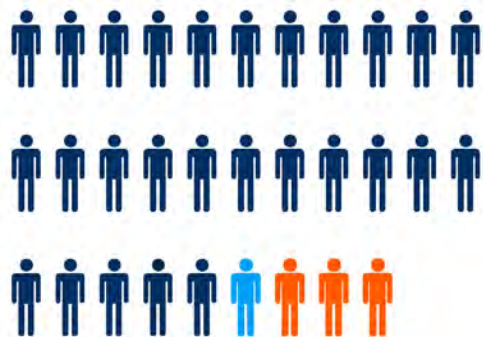
Photo credit: Julian Mühlenhaus



The new Diver Propulsion Vehicle Level 1 training materials were released in fall 2017 and have been used successfully since then.

Recreational Diver Level 2 is in progress and its launch is planned for the beginning of the second quarter of 2018. It is comprised of three primers: Rescue, Navigation, and Triox Primer, with the last having launched in fall 2017. The Triox Primer includes student materials, additional reading, and a set of instructor guidelines. Each of the newly released recreational materials will follow a similar pattern of material creation. We believe that opening up the Recreational Diver Level 2 program to the option of a split-schedule format will encourage our existing GUE-trained divers, at all levels, to pursue these necessary and fundamental skills.

Work continues on revised Doubles and Drysuit Primers, along with an updated Recreational Diver Level 3 course, with a planned release in second quarter 2018.

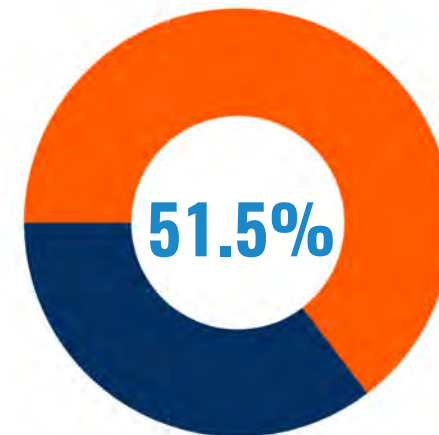


87% of Rec 1 students in 2017  
passed their course

Thanks to the commitment of our international community, we received translations of the new Recreational Diver Level 1 course, and the process of creating multilingual materials has started. Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Hungarian, German, Norwegian, Korean, and French are all in progress. Additionally, a German translation of DPV 1 and Triox Primer is underway and to be released in early 2018.

The end of 2017 was significant with long-term plans for the development of a GUE recreational dive center program and restructuring of the GUE recreational instructor training program, which will see its conclusion in the first half of 2018.

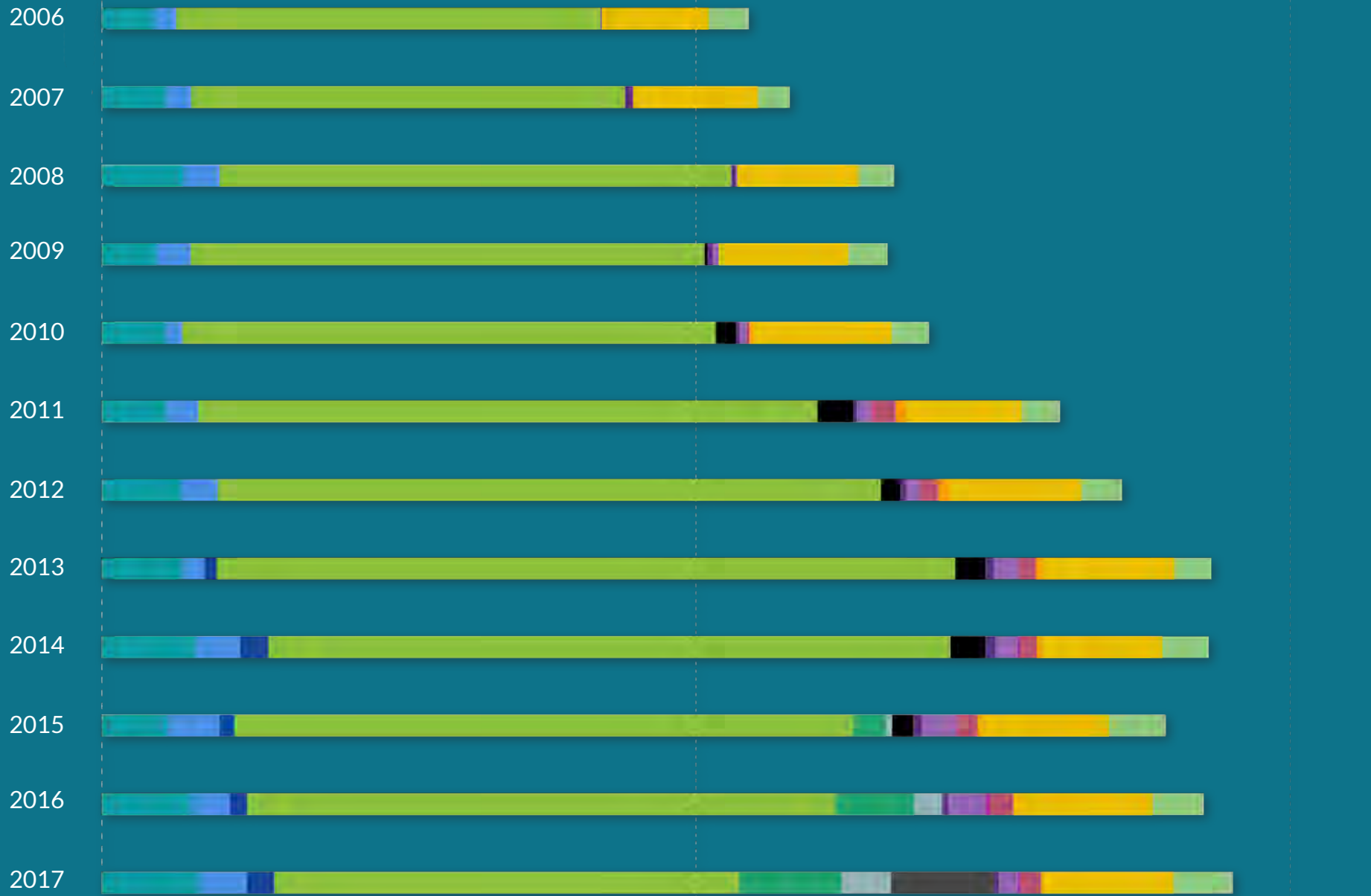
This, along with continued development of a refreshed, modern GUE website and marketing materials, will support our long-term vision of bringing GUE training to the forefront of recreational scuba diving training.



of courses since 2006 have been Fundamentals

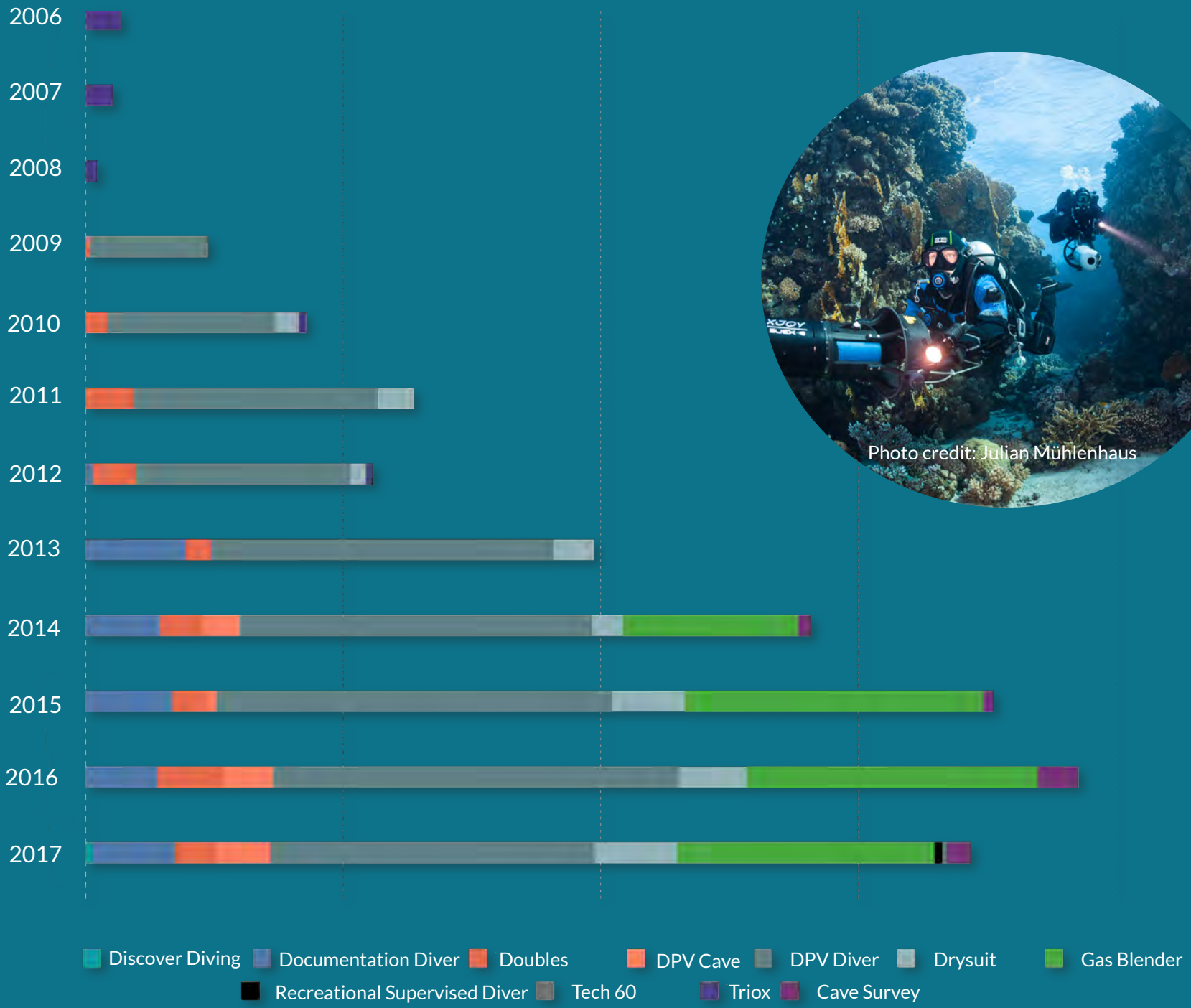
# Student Numbers

\*GUE's core courses are shown on the graph on the left. Additional courses are shown on the right. The values of the two graphs are not on the same scale.



- Cave Diver 1
- Cave Diver 2
- CCR
- GUE Fundamentals
- Fundamentals Part 1
- Fundamentals Part 2
- Fundamentals Upgrade
- GUE Primer
- Rebreather
- Recreational Diver 1
- Recreational Diver 2
- Recreational Diver 3
- Tech 1 + Upgrade
- Technical Diver 1
- Technical Diver 2

al courses are shown on the graph on





# DiveGUE.TV

DiveGUE.tv launched in December 2016, and in our first year we've averaged 150 monthly subscribers. Through our growing team of volunteers and instructors, we were able to create and publish numerous new videos and launch the first Project Baseline Film Festival in 2017. As we continue to grow in 2018, our goal is to increase the amount of content released, with an emphasis on bringing in new documentaries from internal and external sources. We have several collaborations in progress and we are working on new fitness and swimming video categories to help divers in their commitment to diving excellence. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports DiveGUE.tv. You are the reason for our success, and you continue to help us grow into a service that is unmatched in the diving community.

## Most popular videos:

1. How to Make a Bottle Leash
2. How to Replace a 2nd Stage O-ring
3. Fundamentals Skills: Deploy an SMB [English]
4. Fundamentals Skills: S-Drill [English]
5. Switching to Deco Gas
6. Frog Kick
7. Testing New Waters
8. Valve Failures
9. Deco: Bottle Position
10. Back Kick



68% of our viewers watch on their laptop or desktop



6.1 million seconds played... that's nearly 1,700 hours!



37k total video plays and 100 new videos released this year



Bandwidth used: 6.2 terabytes

Photo Credit: Nihal Friedel



## Most views by country:

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. United States  | 6. Netherlands |
| 2. Germany        | 7. Canada      |
| 3. Australia      | 8. Norway      |
| 4. Italy          | 9. Spain       |
| 5. United Kingdom | 10. Finland    |

# Exploration Report

One of the pillars of Global Underwater Explorers is exploration. Over 70% of the Earth's surface is covered in water, and we know less about our oceans than we do about outer space. That is why GUE is leading the way in the exploration of our water systems. From springs, caves, and lakes to rivers and oceans, our members are diving below the surface to explore and share with the world what is right in our own backyard.

Small groups of highly skilled GUE divers are working on these exploration projects worldwide. In 2017, projects were occurring in more than 15 countries. These projects range from the continued exploration of caves in France and Mexico to shipwreck projects like the wrecks of the Battle of the Egadi in Sicily.

For more on the projects from this year, please see the 2017 Project Reports publication.



Photo Credit: Derk Remmers

## Project Highlights

A team of GUE divers ran a three-week diving operation at the site of the Battle of the Egadi Islands in collaboration with the archaeologists of SopMare, the archaeological authority for Sicily. Divers accomplished a number of tasks and found, surveyed, documented, and recovered two bronze rams (one Roman and one Carthaginian), 10 bronze helmets, several transportation amphorae, and other pottery.

Since 2009, a team of experienced divers and GUE instructors have been exploring and surveying the Reseau de L'Ouyse, known as the cave diving sites Résurgence de Cabouy/Gouffre de Pou Meysen in the Lot region in France. This year, the team focused on photo and video documentation of the cave, as well as further exploration and survey of the cave beyond sump 2. A survey dive in sump 3 was also conducted.

The Peak is a seamount located 14 nautical miles from Sydney, Australia, and is reputed to have formed part of the continent's shoreline during the last ice age when sea levels were lower. Rising from a sea floor more than 100 meters deep to a plateau top at around 65 meters, the side of the seamount facing the open ocean is scored with dramatic cliffs and canyons. Divers from the GUE SydneyTec Group have been undertaking a Project Baseline initiative at this site to record the condition of this little-explored and rarely seen environment.



Photo Credit: Derk Remmers



Photo Credit: Uli Kunz



Photo Credit: Vanessa Torres Macho

# Conservation Report



As it is one of the pillars of GUE, we encourage all of our divers to participate in aquatic conservation. Many of our regional dive groups take part in projects like Ghost Fishing (the removal of abandoned fishing gear), and our own conservation initiative, Project Baseline.



The overarching mission for Project Baseline is for participants worldwide to survey and record their local aquatic environments with photos, video, and data logs as a baseline against which future changes can be measured. The results of such efforts are used to build public awareness and support political action.



This year, we strived to encourage the creation and growth of Project Baseline team projects around the globe, foster more collaborative missions with scientists around the globe, and promote the efforts of our teams to the public.

## This Year:

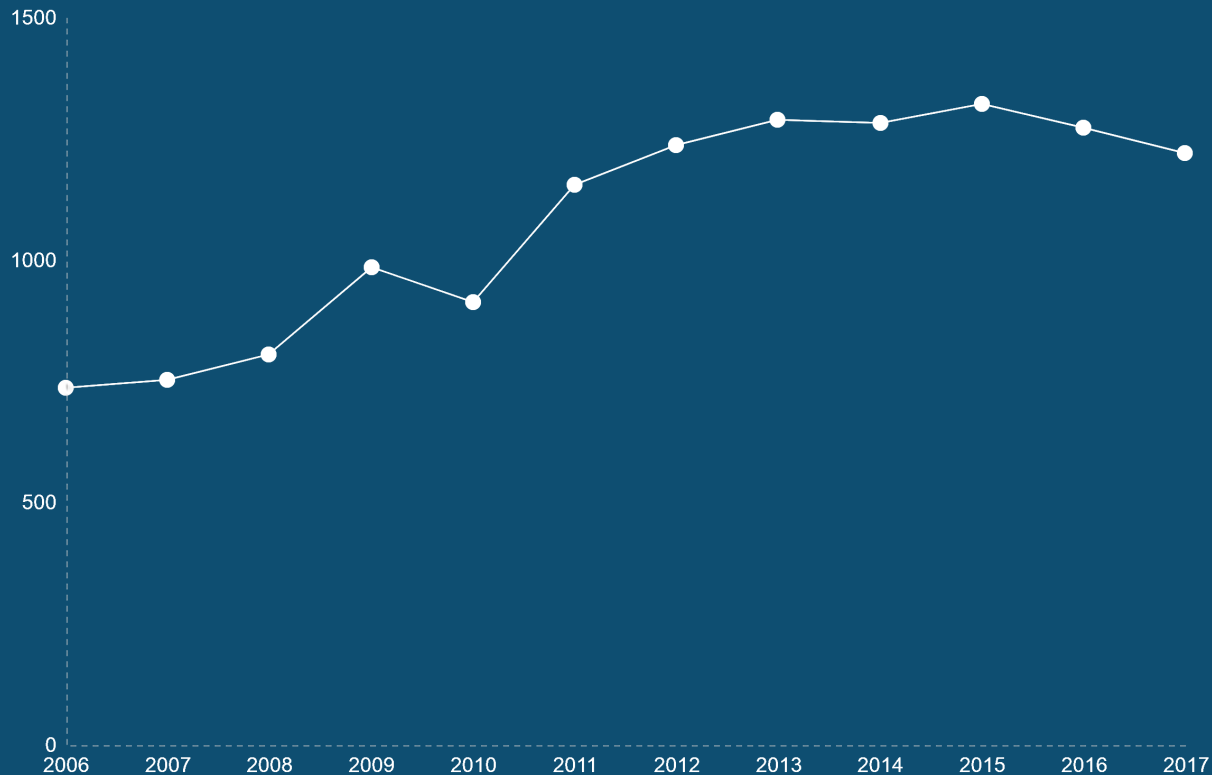
- We hosted our first online film festival on DiveGUE.tv to promote our global Project teams' efforts.
- Director Dr. Todd Kincaid spoke at the 2017 GUE Conference and presented a short course on how to start a baseline.
- Our teams submitted more than 690 photos to the online database.





# GUE Membership

Membership is an important source of support for GUE and allows for the development of training materials, advancing and growing Project Baseline, and the longevity of the organization.



**44.5% of GUE membership is at the Conservation level**

Visit [gue.com/membership](http://gue.com/membership) to join and support the organization you love!



Photo Credit: Mikkel Stokke

# Top 10 Home Countries of GUE Students in 2017

1. United States
2. Germany
3. Netherlands
4. Italy
5. Singapore
6. South Korea
7. China
8. Canada
9. United Kingdom
10. Norway



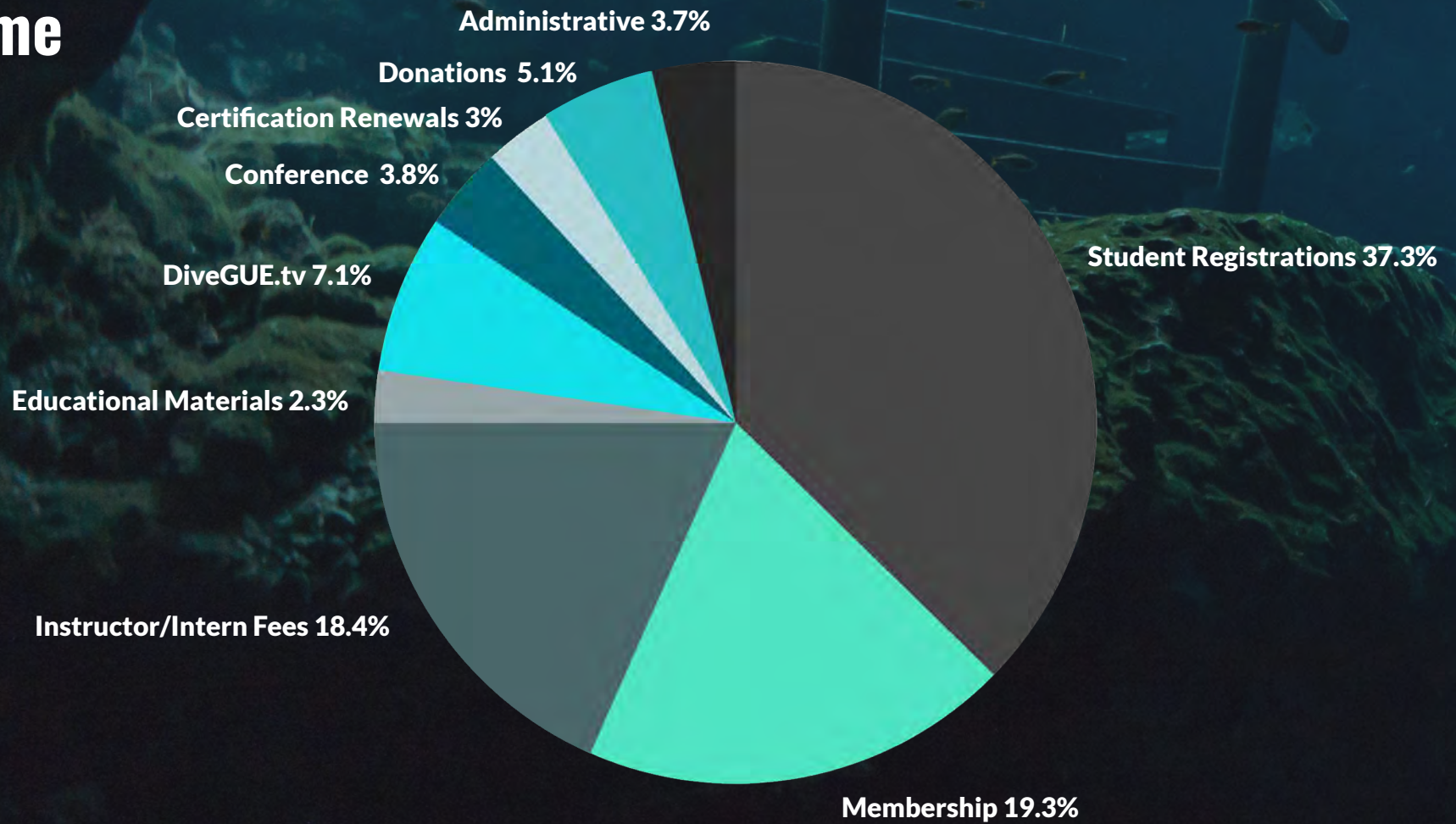
# Top 5 Course Locations in 2017

1. United States
2. Mexico
3. Italy
4. Germany
5. Netherlands

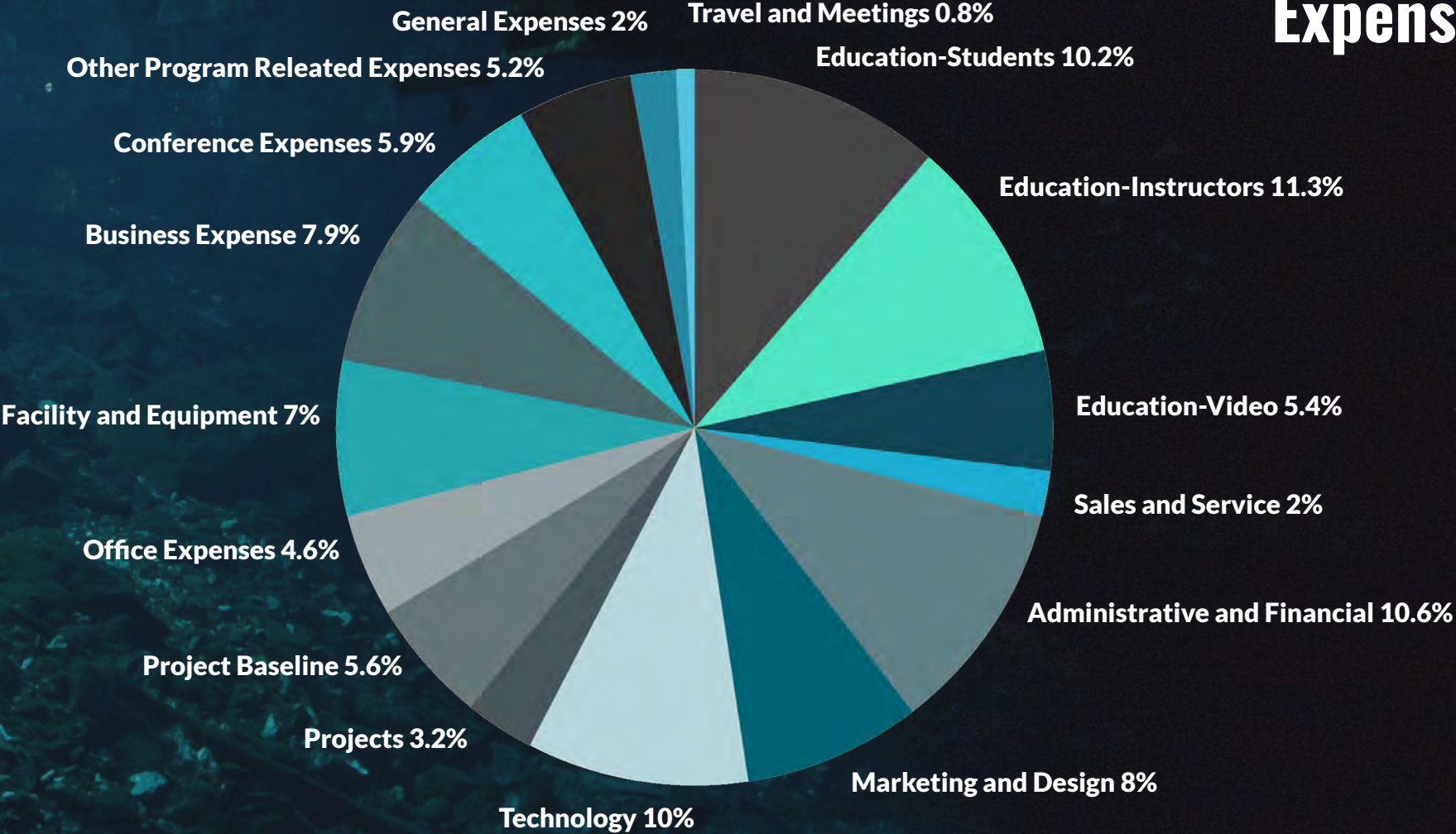


# Financials

## Income



# Expenses





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Photo Credit: Peter Gaertner