

New Mexico EPSCoR State Committee Meeting
May 4th 2010
Valles Caldera Science and Education Center, Jemez Springs

Call to order: 8:30 am

In attendance: Jack Jekowski (chair), Julia Fulghum, Van Romero, Ronald Tafoya, Mike Dougher, Linda LaGrange, Anthony Sena, Nan Sauer (by phone), Vimal Desai Chaitanya (by phone), Stephan Helgesen (by phone), Bill Michener, Mary Jo Daniel, Laura Arguelles (note-taker)



The agenda was reviewed and approved with no changes.

Minutes from October 2009 were reviewed; it was noted that meeting attendees were not included. Minutes were approved with a request that the State Office attempt to identify the attendees.

Jack Jekowski addressed a concern that with the upcoming elections and change in Administration, that all of the good work accomplished to date for the states Technology21 Strategic Plan, the work done to implement the State's supercomputer, Encanto, and the passage of S.B. 205, the Research Applications Act may be in jeopardy. He asked for input to language he has proposed be included in the legislative platform for the Association of Commerce and Industry's Economic Development and R&D Committee that expresses support for NM's Science and Technology Plan as well as the Research Applications Act. The current language is¹:

"ACI supports continued investment in the Encanto Supercomputer and related efforts by the state to enhance the cyber infrastructure for New Mexico for the purpose of high-technology economic development, particularly as it relates to the engagement of our higher education institutions. ACI also supports the tenets set forth in the Research Applications Act of 2009 and encourages the state to pursue the recommendations identified in the Technology21 Strategic Plan."

¹ Note, separate language already exists in the ACI Legislative platform to support EPSCoR directly. That language reads:

"Technology Commercialization

ACI supports the development of effective partnerships between New Mexico universities and the national laboratories and their operating contractors to improve the movement of technology to New Mexico businesses. This includes support for university research programs that have clear economic development strategies such as the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR).

ACI supports early-stage and gap funding for commercialization of technology developed at the state's three research universities. The funds are necessary to make very early-stage university developed technology attractive to capital and industry through prototype development, market research and other pre-commercial technology enhancements."

Members of the ACI Committee favored support for the language, but asked for additional background information that would demonstrate the economic impact of the investments made so far by the state. Jack provided a handout from New Mexico Business Weekly that showed NSF grants in the state, and is collecting additional information that will help satisfy the Committee's request.

Mary Jo Daniel reviewed EPSCoR activities since the October 2009 State Committee Meeting (see PowerPoint presentation).

Bill Michener presented upcoming EPSCoR events (see PowerPoint handout), and discussed a variety of topics, including the External Advisory Committee visit, their recommendations and the responses by the EPSCoR office. He also introduced the Cyber Infrastructure (CI) for Industry Day workshop (to be scheduled for sometime this fall) as a way to bring together the needs of business and industry with CI resources and opportunities that exist at the Research Institutions and Labs. Jack suggested this would be a good opportunity to build connections between the private sector and research institutions, which will probably be required in future RFPs. The committee provided additional potential attendees for the planning meeting:

- Gil Gonzales (UNM)
- Venture Capitalists
- Jeff Lunsford (NMITSA)
- NM Internet Professionals Association
- Tech Transfer Association at labs, including the Institute for Advance Studies
- The New Mexico Technology Council

Bill then asked for feedback on his proposal to use the AAAS Review panel to provide input on identifying opportunities for the next RII proposal. The Committee expressed support for this approach and suggested some possible topics for the next round, including astronomy, nuclear science, and information security.

The Committee was then asked to provide input on two questions related to Workforce Development:

1. What are NM's near and long-term workforce needs related to STEM (and the state's Science and Technology Plan) that could inform our next RII proposal?
2. What resources do we currently have to meet those anticipated needs?

The discussion identified several key points:

- Several institutions have or are developing programs that connect business and STEM in a variety of ways, including development of problems-based capstone courses, and student internships.
- The Air Force Research Lab, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, and Kirtland Air Force Base (generally) provide resources that should be accessed.

- Possible areas of workforce development needs include maintenance of alternative/renewable energy systems, Electronic Medical Records, Media (3-D) and Healthcare broadly.
- It would be useful to review the economic forecasts provided by the Bureau of Business and Economic Research.
- It's important to work with teachers to improve the teaching of math and science so students stay engaged and develop critical thinking skills.

The Committee then reviewed the draft Diversity Plan that was distributed by State Office prior to the meeting. This plan was developed in response to direction from NSF from the Reverse Site Visit. The discussion addressed:

- The numbers provided in the plan are self-reported and may not always reflect reality on campuses.
- Comparatively low salaries are a major factor in recruiting.
- "Quality of life" factors and support mechanisms for junior faculty can help to offset some of the challenge created by low salaries.
- Working with industry to provide part-time faculty may contribute to faculty diversity and may help alleviate salary issues.
- Recruiting diverse students is difficult because of relatively low tuition—a full-time salary is worth less here than at more expensive institutions.
- Increasing start-up packages for new faculty could be added to Recommendation #5.
- We need to address creating a pipeline for diverse faculty.
- Consider the University of Minnesota plan as a model.

Bill also asked for input on how best to present this plan to the CUP, and it was agreed that representatives on the Committee should visit the draft with the appropriate personnel at their institutions, and that Bill and Van would set up a meeting with Dr. Dan Lopez prior to the CUP meeting to ensure that any sensitive issues had been addressed in advance.

The Committee is asked to provide any additional feedback to the draft plan by August 1, 2010. The State Office will incorporate suggestions into a final draft to be circulated to the State Committee for final comments by September 15. It will then be presented to the CUP at their meeting in the fall for their endorsement.

The next meeting will be held in Las Cruces later this year, with tours planned of NM State University.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am and was followed by a delicious lunch.

ADDENDUM
VALLES CALDERA TOUR
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2010

