

Response from State Office to External Advisory Board Report Recommendations
Meeting: January 2010
Report: March 2010

Increase communications both within the academic network and with the public. Internally, work with faculty to articulate the key science questions to be addressed by the EPSCoR sponsored scientific infrastructure. This will dramatically enhance faculty participation and buy-in, facilitate program integration and more clearly define future grant opportunities. Externally, clear articulation of the changing water dynamics on New Mexico and the impact on the entire population creates a compelling buy-in and support for the program (i.e., brand the program). Year one efforts lay the foundation for this effort.

Communication between project components is already occurring through quarterly Management Team meetings, the annual All Hands Meeting and participation in the annual Tri-State Consortium meeting. An electronic list-serv has also been established for all members of the NM EPSCoR community. Internal communication between scientists will be enhanced through regularly scheduled virtual “science meetings” during which scientists can discuss their work, the questions they are focusing on and data being collected. These science meetings will be explicitly for the purpose of fostering program integration and synergies.

The climate change exhibit planned for the NM Museum of Natural History and Science will provide an important mechanism for communicating with the public about climate change impacts on NM water. Once the exhibit is installed, programming for the public—lectures, seminars, science cafes, will address these issues as well. Already, the Museum’s climate educator, funded by NM EPSCoR, is providing numerous activities for the public related to climate change. NM EPSCoR has also participated in public events such as Math and Science Day at the NM Legislature and Earth Day festivities in Taos. At these events, NM EPSCoR researchers provide engaging experiences for members of the public to learn more about climate research and NM EPSCoR. We will continue to take advantage of public events to increase the public’s awareness of and appreciation for our efforts.

Consider addressing several of the EAB members’ input on the science base of the program. These include: more closely link the data collection to the modeling analyses; consider including groundwater in the modeling studies (e.g. consider age dating ground water to provide an integrated estimate of recharge); clarify the fit of the proposed study to the statewide water plan in terms of current and future water supply and demand and investigate expanding the study boundaries to include Northeast New Mexico and beyond state boundaries.

The EAB members’ suggestions related to the science base of the program will be raised with members of the Management Team and discussed through the science meetings mentioned in the previous response. Scientists will be encouraged to propose Innovation Working Groups to further develop these areas as appropriate.

The diversity driven undergraduate research program and the Native American place based outreach program has tremendous potential. The programs would benefit from better leveraging of science lab capabilities across institutions, from more involvement with tribal college leadership, and resource partnerships with other Native American/Minority based Federal Government programs.

An assessment of each institution's lab capabilities as well as existing minority based federal programs will be conducted and shared with all researchers. As the researchers discuss their work through Management Team meetings and science meetings, opportunities for leveraging different lab capabilities will be highlighted. The outcomes of the undergraduate research program will be shared with leaders at each of the tribal colleges in NM and their input will be sought on possible program improvements.

The RII3 is a very complex program that overlays a number of existing programs funded from a number of sources. As part of the evaluation of RII3, it will be important for the RII3 leadership to be able to articulate the contribution of EPSCoR versus the existing programs. EPSCoR has the opportunity to be a very significant integrating force on this collection of programs and by doing so can make a major contribution to understanding and adapting to Climate change in New Mexico.

The NM EPSCoR state office will develop a representation of the various programs related to climate change in the state that indicates funding sources and inter-relationships.