

NM EPSCoR Response to Reverse Site Visit (held August 11, 2011)

The NM EPSCoR Management Team very much appreciates the valuable feedback and recommendations provided in the Reverse Site Visit report. Below is our plan for addressing the RSV recommendations.

Specific Recommendations

1. *Hold pre-town hall project coordination meetings to ensure an agenda that serves the audience and demonstrates the to-date products of the project.*

NM EPSCoR leadership recognize the need for careful planning of the Town Hall to ensure that it is an effective vehicle for connecting NM EPSCoR-supported research with policy leaders, water managers, business leaders, and other members of the community. As stated in the original proposal:

“NM EPSCoR in collaboration with New Mexico First, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that engages New Mexicans in public policy, will organize a two-day Town Hall meeting to provide a forum for scientists, economists, and business people to develop consensus on how to support businesses affected by a changing climate and decreased water supply. The meeting organizers will collaborate with NM EPSCoR researchers to develop a Background Research Paper for participants who will use it as a reference guide and learning tool. Participants will be recruited from NM citizen stakeholders, the corps of NM EPSCoR scientists and economists, and from business leaders identified by the NM SEC. During the Town Hall Meeting, participants will engage in highly structured small group discussions as well as plenary sessions and will seek consensus by the end of the two days. After the meeting, New Mexico First will produce a final report to use in presentations to community leaders, to advise policy-makers, and to inform the broader public of the Town Hall results.”

NM First has many years of experience in developing and facilitating Town Halls that have led to significant policy changes and legislative actions. We will be drawing upon their expertise to develop the agenda, using their successful structure and skilled facilitators.

NM EPSCoR has initiated planning meetings with NM First, formation of a steering committee for the required science background paper, and established connections with other groups with related interests that can collaborate on the project. The PD and AD are working with the New Mexico Water Assembly, for example, and are having a day-long scenario planning workshop on Saturday, November 5th; this is only one of a series of pre-Town Hall planning meetings that will be held in preparation for this important event. Work is currently proceeding on determining a suitable location and date.

2. *The panel advises that the universities need to do more with their faculties to enhance the climate for diversity. Once faculty are recruited, activity for retention involves development of mentoring programs (including training for*

mentors) and attention to faculty development of faculty members from traditional groups.

NM EPSCoR developed a *Best Practices Guide for Increasing Faculty Diversity at New Mexico Higher Education Institutions*, (http://nmepscor.org/sites/all/documents/Diversity_Plan_2010.pdf) which includes strategies to retain diverse faculty under the headings:

- New Faculty Support
- Maintaining an Inclusive Community of Practice
- Institutional Commitment to Diversity

This plan has been endorsed by the Council of University Presidents and shared with department chairs and others involved in faculty hiring and retention. NM EPSCoR Management Team members also distribute the guide at their institutions when hiring processes are initiated. The NM EPSCoR State Committee has directed project leadership to update the faculty demographics information provided in the report in order to determine data on retention of diverse faculty. This will be done as the institutions publish updated data. Furthermore, each of the research universities involved in NM EPSCoR has programs designed to recruit and retain diverse faculty. NM EPSCoR leadership shares information about these programs to encourage EPSCoR faculty to participate in these opportunities at their home campuses. The Junior Faculty Workshop, offered each year by NM EPSCoR, will continue to provide sessions that focus on mentoring and working with diverse student populations as one mechanism for contributing to a climate that values diversity at all levels.

- 3. In their annual reports they should state a clear statement of the degree of completion on the benchmarks Strategic plan reporting.*

All annual reports have been structured to align reported project activities with the 14 specific strategic objectives detailed in the Strategic Plan. Future annual reports will include an appendix that clearly reports the degree of completion of the yearly planned activities delineated in the Implementation Plan.

- 4. Establish and utilize during the last two years of the project a parallel interactive working relationship with partners and stakeholders.*

There are several planned activities that will enhance and further develop productive working relationships between researchers, partners, and stakeholders. The Town Hall that is scheduled to occur in Year 4 (described in #1 above) has an explicit goal of connecting all of these groups. In addition, plans for the final two years of the project include increased interactions across activity areas (e.g., CI and research

instrumentation) as well as continued collaborations with acequia associations and other water users. Project personnel are also establishing and extending working relationships with agencies in the use and sharing of data as well as maintenance of climate-related instrumentation. All efforts to enhance and deepen interactive working relationships with partners and stakeholders will be included in future annual reports.

5. *The program should create a refined assessment plan that focuses on outcomes to ascertain if activities/initiatives are contributing to meeting Impact Area goals. This plan should cover all Impact Areas, including Research.*

The external evaluator will work with program staff to update the evaluation plan to include more detailed outcome metrics that measure all project activities/initiatives, including research. We have already begun this effort by subscribing to Student Tracker for Outreach programs from the National Student Clearinghouse to track the major, institution and graduation status of EPSCoR-supported UROP students and undergraduates/graduate students in our research programs. We are also tracking the NSF funding received by EPSCoR-affiliated faculty and post-docs to measure research competitiveness; and are looking at research.gov and other sites to capture the impact from other federal grants. We have begun a bibliographic analysis using Web of Science to measure the impact of EPSCoR funding on new investigators, knowledge generation, dissemination, collaboration and the change in national visibility of New Mexico researchers as a group in climate change, hydrology and water quality. These data sources allow us to filter by time period, so that we can measure from the beginning of the award. The outcome metrics and their implementation will be designed to provide NM EPSCoR with a series of metrics from secondary data sources that can be tracked by the project after the award is over. We have also planned a one-year follow-up survey of NSF Day attendees to measure any change in the number and success of NSF proposals submitted since attending the event in April 2011. We have a meeting scheduled with Elsa Bailey (Elsa Bailey Consulting) to help assess the impact of the climate change museum exhibit. We have struggled with defining the outcome metrics for the educational professional development, but will continue working with our professional development providers to identify metrics that are meaningful and measureable. The above information will be included in future Annual Reports.

6. *The project should document the benefits of data exchange. Additional data sources would clearly be a desirable direction. The move to integration with jurisdictional libraries and their institutional repositories is strongly encouraged.*

The project will continue to pursue opportunities to share relevant data with other agencies and organizations involved in related work. NM EPSCoR has recently developed a process for granting researchers access to LiDAR data collected by the Critical Zone Observatory in Jemez Springs before they are made publically available. Researchers are actively sharing data with acequia associations in northern New Mexico and an advisory group has been formed to make NM EPSCoR data accessible and useful to K-12 educators.

Data are being integrated with jurisdictional, institutional libraries as well as national repositories such as DataONE and CUAHSI. Because the EPSCoR data portal uses open standards, project data can be integrated with a broad range of repositories that can be accessed by a wide range of users.

- 7. The Strategic Plan should be updated to address the above recommendations; including modifications to the linear operation approach to facilitate better interdisciplinary synthesis.*

The NM EPSCoR Management Team will meet in February 2012 to review the Strategic Plan and update it to reflect changes as appropriate using the recommendations from the Reverse Site Visit. The team will focus on identifying mechanisms to continue and extend the interdisciplinary synthesis that is already under way.

All of these activities will be fully reported in future Annual Reports, as will information about agreements with agencies and organizations to maintain installed monitoring equipment and maintain data collected with instrumentation purchased with EPSCoR funds. If you require any additional information, please contact me at William.michener@gmail.com or 505-220-3123.