

## MIDWEST AFFILIATES LEARN HOW ATE PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT INFILTRATES COLLEGE ECOSYSTEMS

“One of the benefits of this regional network is you are not alone,” Midwest Regional Network Chair Dr. Dan Phelan said during the first [CCPI-STEM](#) Midwest Regional Affiliates meeting on April 28. Seventeen people from 10 community colleges attended the virtual meeting.

Phelan began by sharing the challenges that [Jackson College](#), where he is president, has experienced with multiple proposals for NSF ATE grants that were declined for funding. “The problem was we were doing it on our own. What I’ve learned by virtue of this [CCPI-STEM] initiative—and why I am so passionate about it and why I’ve agreed to be a network chair—is that there are so many resources available to assist you and your teams to be successful in pursuing an ATE grant, and maybe doing it with other community colleges in your state or in your region.” (See [Resources](#) for a list of ATE-funded mentoring projects.)

Heather Ruttkofsky, Jackson’s dean of Health Sciences, Career & Technical Trades, then described the knowledge and momentum that she and two faculty members gained with [FORCCE-ATE](#) mentoring in the summer of 2022. “We started to transform the way we thought about our roles,” she said of the workshop discussions about the technician education improvements they wanted to accomplish.

“The idea of changing the community and being the catalyst to do that was so inspiring and so profound that the faculty’s idea went even further,” she said.

Ruttkofsky urged administrators to empower faculty be creative with ATE grant proposals. “If we want our faculty to grow and develop and become leaders, we have to involve them in the project and make it their project,” she said.

Although the Jackson College team did not know NSF’s decision on the proposal submitted in fall 2022 at the time of the Midwest Regional Affiliates meeting, the excitement of the group that attended the FORCCE-ATE workshop had spread on campus. In the spring, a group of faculty in a different discipline began work on another ATE proposal for submission in fall 2023.

“The idea of the [ATE] project really infiltrates out into every part of what I often refer to as the ecosystem of our college and our workforce,” Ruttkofsky said.

For more info or to become part of a regional affiliate, follow the links on the map on [CCPI-STEM website](#).

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