

PRESIDENT WIMBISH USES A TEAM APPROACH IN THE SOUTHWEST REGION



Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, chair of the [CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network](#), is intentional in her work of inviting community college presidents in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma—and those they lead—to apply to the [National Science Foundation](#) for [Advanced Technological Education \(ATE\)](#) grants.

Her strategy involves partnering and networking with other organizations, which have a common interest and are willing to share info about CCPI-STEM on their websites and in their newsletters, communicating through email with presidents and others in their institutions, and direct telephone calls.

Wimbish noted Ellen Wills, coordinator for the CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network, plays a critical role in this strategy because she usually communicates with the presidents first through e-mails. Wimbish then follows up with telephone conversations with as many presidents as possible.

Her phone calls begin with presidents of small colleges that have not participated in ATE and not responded to Wills's emails. During her phone conversations with the presidents Wimbish explains the opportunities that open up to colleges that have been awarded ATE grants. She also tells them about how [Cedar Valley Campus of Dallas College](#), where she was president from 2003-2016, used an ATE grant to develop a logistics program.

Wimbish notes that the combination of outreach through partner organizations, Wills's emails, and her phone calls have been key to engaging presidents and others to learn more about CCPI-STEM and mentoring opportunities that help community college faculty apply for ATE grants.

As a result of these partnerships, the Southwest Region's e-mail list has grown from 60 contacts to 180 individuals in the first nine months of 2023.

Wimbish said she is "so pleased that the work of a team has led to five institutions being selected to participate in [FORCCE-ATE](#), and another being selected to participate in another ATE mentoring program."

While some faculty members have already engaged with the Southwest Region Network, Wimbish plans in the immediate future to do a great deal more with contacting faculty. However, she explained that her initial strategy focused on presidents: "It is important for the presidents to take the lead in this type of effort as they set the tone for the direction the college will take."

Once presidents are interested in learning more about the ATE program, Wimbish encourages them to have their grant professionals and research office personnel attend CCPI-STEM webinars and affiliate meetings.

During the spring semester, Wimbish shared information at the Texas Student Success Conference in Dallas. Also, with a goal to serve minority-serving institutions, she presented information to the board of Jarvis Christian University, a historically Black university.

At the 2023 AACC conference, Wimbish's talked to individuals at various meals and receptions about CCPI-STEM. She said these in-person, one-on-one conversations were particularly helpful. After the CCPI-STEM presentation by Dr. George Boggs, Wimbish and a member of the CCPI-STEM advisory board distributed CCPI-STEM information packets in the exhibition hall.

Others who have assisted with Southwest Region's team effort include the leaders of community colleges in Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma; the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges; the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; the North Texas Community College Consortium.

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