

## THOUGHT LEADERS DIALOGUE REPORT CONTAINS RECOMMENDATIONS TO NSF

The first CCPI-STEM Thought Leaders Dialogue contains recommendations to the National Science Foundation as well as the key points made during the discussions (which were listed in the [July 2023 issue of Presidents Press](#)).

Dialogue participants' suggestions include simplifying the ATE grant proposal process; allowing stipends from grant funds rather than teaching load reductions for principal investigators; clarifying whether previously funded colleges are penalized by efforts to bring new colleges into the program; modifying the merit review process to give points to the institutions and leaders of previous well-executed grants; selecting more reviewers who understand the culture of community colleges; addressing the misperception that community colleges and faculty without NSF grant experience will not be able to make competitive proposals; and improving connections between NSF program officers and community college leaders and faculty.

The report also contains quotes from participants about the impact of ATE grants at their colleges.

Caron L. Daugherty, president of Flint Hills Technical College in Kansas, pointed out the private-public partnerships that are woven into ATE initiatives “are critical to the support of the workforce, the community engagement, the student learning, and the economic stability and development in a community.”

Natalia Chekhovskaya, principal investigator of the Center for Laser and Fiber Optics Education (LASER-TEC) at Indian River State College in Florida, explained that ATE grants made it possible “to establish critical institutional infrastructure to grow and expand photonics technician programs.”

Chris McNally, a professor and chair of Applied Technologies at [Hudson Valley Community College](#) in New York, said ATE grants have opened “avenues for collaboration and networking with other institutions.”

Other dialogue participants shared information about how their colleges reward grant leadership.

### Central Community College Nominates Grant-funded Project Leaders for League for Innovation Awards

Matt Gotschall, president of [Central Community College](#) in Nebraska, mentioned during the first Thought Leaders' Dialogue that he nominates faculty who successfully execute grants for awards from the [League for Innovation in the Community College](#).

The League's Innovation of the Year awards recognize innovative programs, practices, partnerships, and activities. League Excellence Awards recognize outstanding faculty, staff, and college leaders who have made a significant difference in the lives of students and in the communities their colleges serve through excellence in teaching and leadership.

“Between National Science Foundation, US Department of Education, and US Department of Labor grants, I, or my predecessor president, have nominated approximately seven Innovation of Year awards to groups implementing the grants,” Gotschall explained in an email.

“The Excellence Awards are newer awards, but in total since multiple individuals can be recognized, I have nominated and—the League awarded—over a dozen individual awards in just five years,” he wrote.

Gotschall reports that award recipients have appreciated the opportunity to travel to the League's annual conference to receive their awards and have submitted proposals to present information about their projects at the conference. The college also spotlights national awards and the projects that led to them with press releases, as well as posts on its website and social media.

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## Wake Tech Gives Credit for Involvement in Grants in Faculty Rank Process

[Wake Technical Community College](#) in North Carolina has considered involvement in grants when determining faculty rank during the past decade. The college does not have a tenure process.

Amy MacDonald, dean of Sponsored Programs at Wake Tech, mentioned this incentive during the Thought Leaders' Dialogue. In an email afterward she explained that the rubric used in the rank process awards points for "exemplary service to the college." Activities that qualify as exemplary service include work on grants and development of professional relationships.

"The faculty member documents their involvement in writing grants, service on grant-writing committees, or service in some capacity on a grant-funded initiative; or the faculty member documents the relationships they have built with industry or university colleagues that enhance opportunities for students," she wrote. The rank process is a formal policy administered by a committee with oversight by the college's chief academic officer.

"We have found that by being a factor in faculty rank, grants are recognized as an important service to college that demonstrates leadership. We have found faculty who are on a path to receive rank and pursue grants are innovative and like to conduct research," MacDonald explained.

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