

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL NETWORK'S GRANT-WRITING CONFERENCE LEADS TO FORMATION OF GRANT ADMINISTRATORS GROUP IN LOUISIANA

The CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network's grant-writing conference on March 31 led to the formation of a Louisiana Community and Technical College System Grant Administrators Group to define early priorities and initiate mentoring partnerships.

Teams from 11 of Louisiana's 12 two-year, public colleges participated in the daylong meeting at Baton Rouge Community College to strengthen collaboration and planning capacity for Advanced Technological Education (ATE) grants.

The highest priorities identified by the 41 participants include implementation of statewide project management systems, development of grant budget templates and boilerplate materials, and faculty incentive structures.

In addition to helping the college teams learn more about the ATE grants available from the National Science Foundation, the conference served as a pilot for replicating the conference structure to support STEM-focused grant efforts in other states and regions. Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, chair of the CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network, led development of the conference agenda and facilitated senior leadership sessions. Ellen Wills, CCPI-STEM Southwest Region coordinator, provided program design support and documentation.

Shalini Gogawale, grants administrator at Baton Rouge Community College, led pre-conference planning and coordination on behalf of the college, and designed pre- and post-conference materials and adapted CCPI-STEM content for use in conference break-out sessions and handouts.

Baton Rouge Community College is led by Chancellor Dr. Willie E. Smith; he welcomed participants at the start of the meeting.

During the large group brainstorming activity participants responded to these three questions: What can we do differently? How can we collaborate across the state? What if NSF funding disappears? Ideas were thematically grouped and prioritized through a sticky-dot voting process.

Shane Kirby joined the meeting virtually to offer insights from his experience as director of Advancement Partnerships at Columbus State Community College and to summarize the CCPI-STEM Grant Modules. Kirby was part of CCPI-STEM team that developed the modules for graduate school programs and adapted them for community colleges to use with their personnel to promote strategic grant development and cultivate leadership skills.

During the conference Kirby shared practical strategies for building scalable partnerships, aligning grant work with academic priorities, and supporting faculty engagement.

He encouraged participants to apply to Mentor-Connect for guidance preparing ATE proposals. He also recommended using ATE Central's website to explore currently funded ATE initiatives and to find potential collaborators for faculty-led innovations to technical education programs.

Continued on page 2

This material is based upon work supported by The National Science Foundation under ATE grant #2132510. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



Key Points

The key points raised during the small-group discussions include the following:

- Cross-institution collaboration needs structure to enhance continuity and collective impact.
- Grant success depends on institutional support such as internal grants councils or proposal-routing systems.
- Faculty engagement in grants requires incentives such as release time.
- Operational bottlenecks can occur due to the challenges of budget development, reporting requirements, and staffing changes.
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) grant efforts must be intentional.

The participants identified the need for dedicated staff support for STEM grant writing, clearer budget templates, and modular project planning tools as high priorities.

The conference participants formed the Louisiana Community and Technical College System Grant Administrators Group to define early priorities and initiate mentoring partnerships. Initial leadership and coordination efforts are underway at Baton Rouge Community College.

Follow-up meetings are planned to develop shared resources such as a statewide project management system, grant budget templates, and faculty incentive structures.



Discussions by the 41 participants at CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network's NSF-ATE Grant Development Conference led to the formation of a Louisiana Community and Technical College System Grant Administrators Group to define early priorities and initiate mentoring partnerships. Follow-up meetings will consider implementation of statewide project management systems, development of grant budget templates, and faculty incentive structures.



Dr. Jennifer Wimbish, CCPI-STEM Southwest Regional Network Chair, led development of the conference agenda and facilitated the conference's senior leadership sessions.

This material is based upon work supported by The National Science Foundation under ATE grant #2132510. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

