

# EPSCoR/IDEA FOUNDATION

## EPSCoR/IDEA COMMUNITY GATHERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Coalition of EPSCoR/IDEA States met for its annual meeting March 6-7, 2007, in Washington, D.C. More than 100 university researchers and administrators from 23 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico were in attendance.



*Dr. Sidney McNairy of NIH gave the keynote address, pointing out the nationwide benefits of the agency's IDEa program.*

future direction of the National Science Foundation (NSF) EPSCoR program, had contributed to a belief that the federal investment in EPSCoR and IDEa is an important part of the nation's efforts to improve its science and technology competitiveness in the world market.

NSF Director Dr. Arden Bement and EPSCoR and IDEa managers from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), NSF and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) attended a number of the events. On Tuesday, March 6, Dr. Bement welcomed the group to Washington and stated once again his support for the research and development efforts of the states. NIH's Dr. Sidney McNairy delivered the keynote address at the Coalition dinner. Dr. McNairy spoke about the importance of bringing the

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*NSF Director Dr. Arden Bement welcomed the group and expressed his support for research and development activities in the EPSCoR states.*



The annual Coalition meeting was one of the group's best-attended gatherings in recent years. The attendees spent two exciting days meeting with congressional representatives and their staff, sharing information about the achievements of the EPSCoR and IDEa programs, and describing the impact of these programs on the citizens of half the U.S. states. In almost all cases, these visits revealed strong congressional support for EPSCoR-like programs located in the seven federal agencies that support the majority of federally funded academic research. There was also a sense that last year's EPSCoR 2020 Workshop, which addressed the

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THE EPSCoR/IDEa FOUNDATION IS AIMED AT PROMOTING THE NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF STRONG SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE IN ALL STATES AND IMPROVING THE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMPETITIVENESS OF STATES THAT HAVE HISTORICALLY RECEIVED LESS FEDERAL RESEARCH FUNDING.

## EPSCoR/IDeA FOUNDATION SENDS POTENTIAL PANELISTS' NAMES TO NSF



The EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation has sent more than 180 names of university researchers and administrators to Dr. Kathie Olsen, National Science Foundation Deputy Director. Each state nominated up to 12 faculty and research administrators to serve on the agency's standing and ad hoc committees. Dr. Olsen solicited these names following receipt of last June's EPSCoR 2020 Workshop Report. The EPSCoR 2020 Workshop Report encouraged the more vigorous involvement of NSF's regular research programs in achieving the goal of increasing the competitiveness of

researchers in all states. Most EPSCoR/IDeA jurisdictions provided names of nationally-recognized scientists and engineers whose research expertise cuts across science and engineering areas that are supported by all NSF directorates. Dr. Jerome Odom, former chair of the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation Board, said that "our long-term goal of having better representation on NSF committees should be enhanced by this effort."

## DOE EPSCoR MANAGER MEETS WITH JOINT COALITION AND FOUNDATION BOARDS



Dr. Kristin Bennett

On May 2, 2007, Dr. Kristin Bennett, Manager of the Department of Energy (DOE) EPSCoR effort, met with the members of the EPSCoR/IDeA Coalition and Foundation boards at a joint meeting in Washington, D.C. Dr. Bennett, who assumed her EPSCoR position in 2006, presented her vision for DOE EPSCoR.

DOE EPSCoR is located within the agency's Office of Science, which is slated for significant funding increases

in President Bush's FY 2008 budget request. The board members were eager to learn about Dr. Bennett's efforts to help EPSCoR/IDeA researchers take advantage of this funding increase. Dr. Bennett provided an analysis of the DOE structure that supports university research and indicated she is engaged in organizing the EPSCoR program to position it at the crucial connection point between DOE-funded "basic" and "applied" research programs. She agreed to continue to work with the EPSCoR community on overall DOE research funding. Furthermore, Dr. Bennett unveiled the new DOE EPSCoR website, which will be a source of information about the program and broaden information available to the EPSCoR/IDeA states.

## ALVING NAMED DIRECTOR OF NIH'S NATIONAL CENTER FOR RESEARCH RESOURCES

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director, Elias A. Zerhouni, M.D., has named Barbara Alving, M.D., to be the director of the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR). Dr. Alving has served as the acting NCRR director since 2005. NCRR provides funding for training and research opportunities at minority institutions and colleges as well as in academic centers located in states that are challenged by distance and have low or often rural populations. As director, Dr. Alving has oversight of a number of programs including NIH's Institutional Development Awards (IDeA) program. Under her leadership, NCRR initiated the Clinical and Translational Science Awards (CTSA) program, which is intended to transform the conduct of clinical and translational research to ensure that biomedical discoveries are rapidly translated into prevention strategies and clinical treatments for both rare and common diseases.

"Dr. Alving has demonstrated exceptional leadership in the recent efforts of the NIH to energize the discipline of clinical and translational research across the nation," said Dr. Zerhouni.

An Indiana native, Dr. Alving is a graduate of Purdue University and earned her medical degree—*cum laude*—from Georgetown University School of Medicine, where she also completed an internship in internal medicine. Dr. Alving completed her residency training, followed by a research fellowship in hematology, at the Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore. She began her research career as a public health officer in the Division of Blood and Blood Products at the Food and Drug Administration. In 1980, Dr. Alving joined the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, where she served at the rank of Colonel as the Chief of the Department of Hematology and Vascular Biology. In 1997, Dr. Alving became the Chief of the Section of Hematology and Oncology at the Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C. In 1999, she joined the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) as the Director of the Extramural Division of Blood Diseases and Resources. She then became the NHLBI Deputy Director and Acting Director while also serving as the Director of the Women's Health Initiative (2002-06). She currently serves the NIH Director as the agency's official liaison for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and is a member of the Advisory Board for Clinical Research at the NIH Clinical Center.



## EPSCoR/IDeA FOUNDATION FORGES NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Staff from the Council of State Governments (CSG) met with a delegation of EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation administrators at CSG's offices in Lexington, KY, in November 2006. The purpose of the meeting was to explore areas of mutual interest. Dr. Jerome Odem, who led the EPSCoR/IDeA delegation, was joined by Jay Cole and Dr. Paul Hill of the West Virginia EPSCoR program and Foundation staff.

As a result of the meeting, CSG has invited individual states belonging to the Foundation to submit articles to CSG's monthly magazine *State News*. This magazine has a circulation that includes 14,000 state legislators and senior state government officials from across the country, and affords a wonderful opportunity for state programs to showcase their EPSCoR/IDeA efforts to state politicians. To date, three states—West Virginia, Idaho and South Carolina—have submitted articles. All were accepted by CSG and have been published. Nebraska is currently preparing an article. The Foundation is coordinating the submission of articles to CSG on a quarterly basis. Contact Jim Hoehn at [jhoehn@tigdc.com](mailto:jhoehn@tigdc.com) for more information.



## McDOWELL NAMED UT VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER



*Dr. Keith McDowell*

Alabama's Dr. Keith McDowell has been named Vice Chancellor for Research and Technology Transfer for The University of Texas (UT) System. Dr. McDowell, a member of the EPSCoR/IDeA Coalition Board of Directors, returns to Texas and the UT System after four successful years as the first Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer at the University of Alabama.

Previously, he served as Vice President for Research and Information Technology at UT Arlington, where he joined the faculty in 1991 as Chairman of the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department and later became Associate Dean of Science and then Dean of the Graduate School.

Dr. McDowell has been an active member of the EPSCoR/IDeA community. He has testified before Congress on behalf of the EPSCoR/IDeA states and has met with several of the directors of agencies with EPSCoR-like programs.

## EPSCoR/IDeA COMMUNITY TO HOLD RETREAT



*Dr. Duncan Moore*

Representatives of the EPSCoR /IDeA states will meet for a retreat in Baltimore, MD, on June 14-15, 2007. The purpose of the retreat is to: 1) examine the accomplishments and strengths of EPSCoR/IDeA states; 2) determine the role of the states in the American innovation/competitiveness effort, and 3) address agency issues. Special guest Dr. Duncan Moore, Professor of optical engineering at the University of Rochester and the former Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Deputy in the Clinton Administration, will address the EPSCoR/IDeA state representatives and participate in the retreat.

At the retreat, the Coalition and Foundation will chart future directions of the federal-wide program, develop a list of "action items" for the community to pursue during the next two to three years, and lay the groundwork for collecting and cataloguing information that will lead to a document articulating the strengths of the EPSCoR/IDeA states and how we contribute to national priorities. At a time when the Federal science and technology budget is not likely to grow significantly, the boards are anxious to ensure the EPSCoR and IDeA programs continue to advance the competitiveness of the participating states. Building strong support for all states and regions in new Federal scientific research initiatives has been a hallmark of the Coalition and Foundation activities.



## PAUL AND SHREEVE TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF COALITION AND FOUNDATION



*Dr. Prem Paul*

The Coalition of EPSCoR/IDeA States and the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation have new chairs.

Dr. Prem Paul, Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UNL) was elected chairman of the Coalition's Board of Directors by the group's voting members and installed on Feb. 16, 2007. Dr. Paul joined UNL after a 16-year career at Iowa State University where he began as a faculty member in 1985 and culminated in his service as Associate Vice Provost for

Research. He earned his DVM at the College of Veterinary Sciences at Panjab Agricultural University in India in 1969 and a Ph.D. in veterinary microbiology/virology at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities in 1975. As incoming chairman, Dr. Paul expressed his desire to engage the entire membership in proactively demonstrating the achievements of the EPSCoR and IDeA programs to Congress and the research agencies. Toward that end, he and the boards are meeting in Baltimore in June (see "EPSCoR/IDeA Community Retreat" article) to map out Foundation strategies for each of the research funding agencies with EPSCoR-like programs. Dr. Paul was a participant at the EPSCoR 2020 Workshop in June 2006. He succeeds South Dakota's Dr. Royce Engstrom as chairman of the Coalition.

Other directors of the Coalition Board are Dr. Keith Hudson (Arkansas); Dr. David Weir (Delaware); Dr. Harold Silverman (Louisiana); Dr. Patricia Hand (Maine); Dr. Penny Amy (Nevada); Dr. Phil Boudjouk, *Vice Chairman* (North Dakota); Dr. Frank Waxman (Oklahoma); Dr. Royce Engstrom (South Dakota); Jack Carpenter, *Treasurer and Secretary* (West Virginia); and Dr. Bill Gern (Wyoming).

Dr. Jean'ne Shreeve from the University of Idaho (UI) was elected chairwoman of the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation Board of Directors. Dr. Shreeve is a nationally competitive chemist and currently serves as the NSF EPSCoR Program Director in Idaho. She has had a distinguished research and administrative career, including serving for 12 years as the UI Vice President for Research. Dr. Shreeve expects the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation to help the EPSCoR and IDeA programs evolve to meet the new challenges and opportunities that the America COMPETES legislation will engender for academic science and engineering professionals. Dr. Shreeve and the Foundation are taking a leadership role in preparing for the Baltimore retreat. She succeeds Dr. Jerome Odem of South Carolina as chair.



*Dr. Jean'ne Shreeve*

Directors of the Foundation Board include Dr. George Happ (Alaska); Dr. Edgar Garcia-Rill (Arkansas); Dr. Karl Steiner (Delaware); Dr. Rose Tseng (Hawaii); Dr. Tom Taylor (Kansas); Dr. Chuck Staben (Kentucky); Dr. Tom McCoy (Montana); Dr. Fred Choobineh (Nebraska); Dr. Brad Weiner (Puerto Rico); Dr. Peter Alfonso, *Treasurer and Secretary* (Rhode Island); Dr. Jerome Odom (South Carolina); Dr. Anthony Guiseppi-Elie (South Carolina); Dr. Judith Van Houten (Vermont); and Dr. Paul Hill, *Vice Chairman* (West Virginia).

## ASCEND TO HOST EPSCoR RESEARCH THEME FORUM IN JUNE 2007

### SSTI CITES NORTH DAKOTA SUCCESS

The April 30, 2007, issue of the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) *Weekly Digest* reported that in the 2000–04 period, North Dakota had the greatest percentage increase in industrial research and development expenditures—more than tripling its total, which has now reached \$379 million. North Dakota's increase (99 percent) outpaced the U.S. total rate (3 percent) from 2000-04. SSTI drew its data from the National Science Foundation's *Survey of Industrial Research and Development*.

### ASCEND HOSTS IGERT ASSISTANCE WORKSHOP IN FEBRUARY 2007

On Wednesday, February 21, 2007, the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation's Assistance Strategies for Centers Development (ASCEND) project hosted a national EPSCoR workshop in Washington, D.C., focused on developing competitive Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) programs. The one-day workshop focused on the National Science Foundation (NSF) IGERT program and included presentations on the related Howard Hughes Medical Institute-National Institutes of Health (HHMI-NIH) Interfaces Initiative. The workshop presented information about the programs to the EPSCoR community and provided EPSCoR investigators with first-hand information from, and an opportunity to interact with, successful principal investigators (PIs) and NSF program officers regarding developing and sustaining competitive IGERT endeavors.

A total of 84 EPSCoR representatives participated in the workshop. The EPSCoR attendees joined five presenters (four PIs of successful, ongoing IGERTs and the PI of an ongoing HHMI-NIH Interfaces Initiative project), three NSF Program Directors (two NSF IGERT and one NSF EPSCoR program director) and ASCEND's five-person core team. The 84 EPSCoR participants came from 20 EPSCoR jurisdictions and 28 EPSCoR institutions. Seven EPSCoR universities sent teams of five or more members to the workshop, which provided information ahead of the current NSF IGERT competition—with an April 2007 pre-proposal deadline and an October 2007 invited full proposal deadline.

NSF Program Directors participating in the workshop included Drs. Judy Giordan and Carol Van Hartesveldt from the NSF IGERT program. IGERT PIs giving presentations were Drs. Amy Ward of the University of Alabama, Paul Russo of Louisiana State University, Yury Gogotsi of Drexel University, and Bernard Wood of George Washington University. Dr. Felisa Smith of the University of New Mexico presented her Interfaces Initiative grant. The workshop concluded with a panel discussion and an opportunity for participants to meet one-one-one with presenters and the ASCEND team. Additional information about the workshop, including presentations, can be found on the ASCEND website at <http://www.epscorideafoundation.org/ascend>.

ASCEND is an NSF-funded project of the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation. It works with researchers, universities and jurisdictions in the EPSCoR community to develop and implement effective research and education development strategies aimed at increasing competitiveness for federal research centers and other large-scale projects.

On Tuesday, June 12, 2007, ASCEND will host a national EPSCoR forum focused on identifying, selecting, focusing and developing research themes that draw on institutions' and states' strengths and positioning to represent future research center targets. The one-day workshop in Washington, D.C., is targeted to senior-level administrators and key faculty from the EPSCoR community.

Panel sessions at the workshop will include: (1) Targeting Center Opportunities; (2) Identifying Internal Strengths and Building Center-Level Teams; (3) Developing Proposals, Forming Centers and Implementing Strategies; and (4) Investing for Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation. Panelists and presenters include representatives from the National Science Foundation and successful EPSCoR and non-EPSCoR center principal investigators and members of university and state research leadership. Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier of the University of Oklahoma, a member of the National Science Board, will give the keynote presentation. Additional information about the workshop can be found on the ASCEND website at <http://www.epscorideafoundation.org/ascend>.





Dr. Chuck Staben

## SENATE COMMITTEE OVERSEEING DEPSCoR HEARS FROM KENTUCKY'S STABEN

On May 16, 2007, Dr. Chuck Staben, Associate Vice President for Research and Acting Head of the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Kentucky (UK), testified before the Senate Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Defense. He testified on behalf of Kentucky and the other states participating in the Department of Defense (DOD) DEPSCoR program. Dr. Staben expressed support of the Coalition's efforts to return funding for the very successful DEPSCoR research program to the \$20 million level. He also asked the subcommittee to reject the administration's proposed plan to sunset the DEPSCoR research program and transfer funds to education activities.

Dr. Staben cited specific research areas at UK and in other DEPSCoR states where faculty are engaged in scholarly efforts that directly impact DOD's mission. Examples included: (1) UK researchers who work closely with the U.S. Navy on aluminum alloys and fabrication techniques critical to shipbuilding; (2) University of Alaska researchers who are working on sea-ice upper ocean interactions, which will allow the Navy to improve real-time prediction systems for ship navigation and submarine surfacing in seasonally ice-covered regions; and (3) University of Vermont faculty who are working on research on heterogeneous catalysis of chemical warfare agent stimulants using porous inorganic supports, which is aimed at decomposing chemical warfare agents into non-toxic compounds.

"The EPSCoR states have a vast reservoir of talent and capacity. They represent 20 percent of the U.S. population, 25 percent of the research and doctoral universities and 18 percent of the nation's scientists and engineers. The EPSCoR program is critical to ensuring that we maintain a national infrastructure of research and engineering by providing much-needed funding to these leading universities and scientists."

Chuck Staben, Ph.D.

"Research is the source of the innovation and competitiveness activities that will protect our nation in the future and provide opportunities for young scientists. We know from many sources that fewer U.S. students are pursuing advanced degrees in science and engineering. We also know that the trend in foreign students studying in the U.S. is decreasing. We need to develop the country's research infrastructure and provide opportunities for students in all our states to become first-rate scientists and engineers. This is particularly true in our EPSCoR states, where we educate thousands of engineers each year and where we have a wealth of talented secondary school talent who have often scored quite well on standardized math tests."

Paul Hill, Ph.D.

## HILL TESTIFIES ON BEHALF OF NSF AND NASA EPSCoR



Dr. Paul Hill

On April 24, 2007, Dr. Paul Hill, Executive Director of West Virginia's EPSCoR program, testified before the House Committee on Appropriations' Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, which has oversight of the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). His testimony focused on the FY 2008 EPSCoR funding levels at the two agencies. Dr. Hill mentioned that the Coalition of EPSCoR/IDeA States was requesting \$125 million for the NSF EPSCoR and \$15 million for the NASA

EPSCoR programs in FY 2008. He said that at these levels, EPSCoR "will help the 27 EPSCoR jurisdictions that contribute to innovation and competitiveness initiatives. This will help to ensure our nation's research base continues to be the world's leader in scientific and technological development."

Dr. Hill's testimony elaborated on (1) the importance of the nation's investment in research and technology development; (2) the benefits of utilizing all our nation's resources (in all states); and (3) the need to use the expertise that resides within EPSCoR states' research universities to help solve national competitiveness issues.

Dr. Hill cited in his testimony examples in EPSCoR states where specific issues (health, homeland security, etc.) could be addressed by local research faculty expertise. He also thanked NSF senior management for beginning the process of adopting the recommendations of the June 2006 EPSCoR 2020 Workshop.

Dr. Hill talked at length about West Virginia EPSCoR working in tandem with Governor Joe Manchin III and the state legislature. In the last year, he said West Virginia has "set aside \$10 million in *additional* funds to help build the research programs at West Virginia University and Marshall University." This represents an unprecedented state investment in research infrastructure, due in large part to the successes of the EPSCoR program. Grants from this new fund will be linked to economic development outcomes to ensure steady progress in efforts to reinvent West Virginia's future. Because of EPSCoR's track record of stimulating competitive research, the fund will be administered by the West Virginia EPSCoR office.

## ALFONSO TESTIFIES ON BEHALF OF NIH'S IDeA PROGRAM



Dr. Peter Alfonso

On March 27, 2007, Dr. Peter Alfonso, Vice Provost for Research, Graduate Studies and Outreach and Dean of the Graduate School at the University of Rhode Island, testified before the House Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies. His testimony focused on the importance and impact of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program. He supported the Coalition's call for increasing the IDeA FY 2008 budget to \$250 million. Dr.

Alfonso's testimony highlighted his perspective of having been, until recently, the Research Vice President of the University of North Dakota.

Dr. Alfonso testified that IDeA states' efforts in helping NIH meet its mission "are far from complete. Funding disparities between the states remain and may have a detrimental impact on our national self-interest. This is why the IDeA program is so important. It is helping to ensure that all regions of the country participate in biomedical research. Citizens from all states should have the opportunity to benefit from the latest innovations in health care, which are most readily available in centers of biomedical research excellence."

Dr. Alfonso called for an FY 2008 budget request for the IDeA program to be funded at the Coalition of EPSCoR/IDeA States' goal of \$250 million. This level of funding "would restore and continue funding for COBRE and INBRE, provide funding for information technology infrastructure upgrades through IDeANet, and also, some funding for a co-funding program, which would allow researchers and institutions to merge with the overall national biomedical research community."

Photo of Dr. Alfonso by URI Communications/Michael Salerno.

"Although IDeA is relatively new, there is already objective evidence of its success. In FY 1999, the year before COBRE grants were initiated, IDeA states received a total of \$595 million from NIH. In FY 2005, NIH funding for the IDeA states had increased to \$1.556 billion, representing an increase of 162 percent in six years. It is important to note, however, that in the following year, as the IDeA budget started to decrease, NIH funding for the IDeA states fell to \$1.458 billion, the same level as in FY 2003."

Peter Alfonso, Ph.D.



## EPSCoR/IDeA COMMUNITY GATHERS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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benefits of NIH research activities to all states and regions of the nation through the agency's Institutional Development Awards (IDeA) program. Dr. McNairy related his own experience in building a successful university research career to his NIH experience in building programs for universities that had at one time been left out of the mainstream of NIH funding. Dr. Fred Taylor, senior NIH IDeA manager, also attended the dinner. Drs. McNairy and Taylor have been strong proponents for the IDeA researchers.

Dr. Nathaniel Pitts, who oversees NSF EPSCoR in his role as director of the Office of Integrative Activities, delivered an address at a lunch held by the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation. Dr. Pitts, who is a longtime NSF executive, stressed the importance of the EPSCoR 2020 Workshop recommendations within the current NSF planning process. He underscored his commitment to the states and said that EPSCoR-funded projects must meet the highest standards of scientific quality. Other distinguished guests included Dr. Darrell Winner, who manages the EPA EPSCoR effort.

On Monday, May 5, the EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation inaugurated a new "leadership" workshop to develop the next generation of research faculty and administrators who will be assuming leadership of the EPSCoR and IDeA programs at the state levels. This workshop was well attended—nearly all states sent representatives—and led to the decision that this type of event should be repeated at future meetings.



Dr. Nathaniel Pitts, director of the NSF Office of Integrative Activities, emphasized the importance of the outcomes of the EPSCoR 2020 Workshop in the overall NSF planning process.

Photos by Max Taylor Photography.



Dr. Joseph G. Danek  
Executive Director  
EPSCoR/IDeA Foundation

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