

LA-SiGMA Diversity Advisory Council
Summary of Findings and Recommendations
August 2011

Members of the LA-SiGMA Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) participated in the 2011 Symposium on August 5, 2011. Observations and recommendations from the visit are provided below.

Observations:

- The LA-SiGMA team has a strong team of researchers who are committed to integrating diversity throughout the three science drivers.
- The comprehensive statewide approach provides numerous opportunities to leverage resources and coordinate diversity initiatives at participating universities through Louisiana EPSCoR.
- The five key strategic directions (diversity, workforce development, external engagement, research infrastructure, and faculty development) have overlapping activities and thrusts that will, if well aligned, contribute greatly to increasing diversity in the alliance.
- The participation of historically black institutions offers a tremendous opportunity to improve diversity, when they are treated as equally valuable partners as the predominantly white institutions.
- Louisiana is far ahead of other states in developing articulation agreements and a statewide recruitment database with community colleges.

Recommendations:

- Integrate the programs and resources offered by EPSCoR with diversity activities and outcomes.
- Work strategically with existing national efforts (i.e. GEM, Institute for Broadening Participation) to increase the recruitment of domestic underrepresented graduate students.
- Seek opportunities to write collaborative grants that will enhance researchers' ability to communicate and share their research with broader audiences (e.g., the NSF-funded Communicating Research to Public Audiences (CRPA) grant).
- Leverage Louis Stokes Alliance programs on participating campuses to address mentoring and summer bridge opportunities for undergraduates.
- Seek clarification about issues related to residential programs for minors on participating campuses, and perhaps develop commuter day programs as an alternative.
- Utilize the statewide database to improve the recruitment of students from community colleges.
- Pay attention to balancing the resources and attention given to the science drivers and the strategic directions.
- Include a representative from each of the participating HBCUs on the ILT.

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