

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Academic and Student Affairs

AGENDA ITEM: 7 – B
DATE: August 7-9, 2018

SUBJECT

NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 Update

CONTROLLING STATUTE, RULE, OR POLICY

None

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

The National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) aims to enhance research competitiveness in targeted jurisdictions (states, territories and commonwealth) by strengthening STEM capacity and capability. The specific goals of the program are to: (1) catalyze research capability across and among jurisdictions; (2) establish STEM professional development pathways; (3) broaden participation of diverse groups/institutions in STEM; (4) effect engagement in STEM at national and global levels; and (5) impact jurisdictional economic development. South Dakota was first recognized as an EPSCoR jurisdiction in 1987, and is currently one of twenty-eight recognized EPSCoR jurisdictions. The cornerstone of the NSF EPSCoR program is the Research Infrastructure Improvement Program Track-1 ([RII Track-1](#)) award, which is typically a 5 year \$20M award issued to jurisdictions on a competitive basis, with each jurisdiction allowed one proposal when they are eligible to submit. South Dakota is concluding year 4 of its current 5 year \$20M award. The award notification for the pending proposal, which was due on July 31st, is anticipated in late spring of 2019.

In March of this year, the SD Research Excellence: A Critical Hallmark ([REACH](#)) Committee, which serves as the EPSCoR Steering Committee for the state, selected a biofilms proposal, led by a team out of SDSMT with collaboration from USD and SDSU, to serve as the scientific core of the state’s RII Track-1 submission. Given the structural transition of the EPSCoR Office to under the BOR Office, after numerous discussions with RAC and consultation with Kelvin Chu from The Implementation Group (EPSCoR Consultant), it was determined that the best way to proceed with the RII Track-1 submission was to have the BOR Office submit the proposal, with the BOR Office then issuing sub-awards to the participating institutions. The foregoing provides a clean and clear organizational structure, both for the stakeholders within the state, as well as for NSF, while also maximizing F&A recovery at the campus level. Additionally, this approach paves the way for a more efficient and effective coordination of the various EPSCoR

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programs operating within the state (e.g., NIH, NASA, etc.), which will ultimately reduce administrative costs, leaving more funding available to carry out programmatic activities at the campus level. The primary fiscal management will be handled via existing campus personnel, with grant funding covering the requisite staff time to fulfill this function. This approach will ultimately reduce the overall administrative FTE/cost required for the program(s) through better utilization of our existing resources within the system.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATION

If successful, the NSF EPSCoR RII Track-1 award will provide \$20M in funding over a five year period to enhance R&D capacity/competitiveness and bolster STEM education/outreach efforts statewide, which will ultimately serve to bolster the STEM pipeline and advance the state's technology/knowledge based economy.

ATTACHMENTS

None