Recommendations for Future EPSCoR Faculty Development at Nebraska Tribal Colleges

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The following recommendations are based on an analysis of the data from this research, the conclusions above, and information from the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). However, all these recommendations should be implemented only through active endorsement, dialogue, and partnership between all the entities.

**Recommendation 1**: It is critical that Nebraska EPSCoR continues to be actively engaged with the two tribal colleges in Nebraska; there should be no time lapse in this relationship. The progress that has been made between the agency and these two institutions has been exceptional and this work positions the participants to broaden partnership activities in the future. However, if there is not a key point of contact within the NE EPSCoR organization, these past efforts will be for naught. A key contact person should be secured and that individual should be recognized by the tribal colleges as their main conduit to NE EPSCoR as well as someone that functions as a catalyst in any future endeavors.

**Recommendation 2**: The issue of continued general faculty development as well as mathematics and science specific activities is a high priority for continued NE EPSCoR and tribal college involvement. General faculty development should include activities and opportunities that focus on curriculum development, use of technology, implementation of distance learning and outreach, as well as the initiation and development of mentoring between tribal college professors and their counterparts at Nebraska universities and colleges, particularly UNMC, UNO, and UNL. Mathematics and science faculty need to become actively engaged in summer developmental activities and institutes.

**Recommendation 3**: The need to develop the feeder system between the tribal colleges and the reservation schools that provide future students was made overwhelmingly clear from this study. Most students do not possess the rudimentary skills in mathematics and science that are required at the tribal college level. NE EPSCoR can play a broker role in this activity particularly since such a program will begin to cross many political, cultural, and tribal lines. The key contact person can play a very pivotal role in these activities. It will be important to get the concerned educational officials to meet to address these issues; so far, such meetings have not occurred and probably will not happen without some outside force intervening.

**Recommendation 4**: The two tribal colleges are willing but not able participants/partners in future research activities. When the preparation of pure competitive research proposals is contemplated by faculty and administration at these
schools, the chance of success is viewed as fleeting or even non-existent. There must be a conscience and co-operative effort undertaken to show faculty how to respond to RFPs as well as attempting to break a very large task into smaller, more manageable pieces. This assistance can be using grant writing workshops, preceptorships, summer institute attendance, as well as many other engagement activities.

**Recommendation 5**: Faculty at tribal colleges must be encouraged to pursue advanced degrees in science and mathematics. The typical faculty member in these areas possesses a master's degree, has limited collegiate full-time teaching service, and has little or no theoretical inquiry experience. Changing these qualifications will take many years to accomplish and there is no short cut available. However, a fast track approach could be used but an impacting factor is that many times, faculty members do not stay in the tribal colleges but for short periods of time and then move on. While this constant churning may be related to salary as well as facilities issues, the opportunity to gain the necessary academic and research qualifications might have a strong influence on this retention issue and could over time provide the tribal colleges with well qualified and long-term faculty members.