

Pacific Northwest Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Impact 2009-2011

As one of the National Science Foundation's newest alliances, the Pacific Northwest Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (PNW LSAMP) is proud of its impact on institutional capacity for broadening participation, student success in STEM, and collaborative relationships among and within member campuses. PNW LSAMP launched in fall of 2009 and spent much of the first year building staff, establishing LSAMP campus centers, identifying student participants and team-building for all the partners. As it enters the second year, alliance priorities include increasing communication, strengthening community college engagement, leveraging funding and partner relationships, and connecting with other diversity programs in the region.

Institutional Capacity

As the PNW LSAMP partners began their work, they encountered a number of institutional barriers to broadening participation in STEM. Barriers included lack of knowledge about best practices, lack of consistency in data collection about underrepresented (UR) student access and success in STEM, inadequate staffing or resources dedicated to broadening participation, lack of coordination among STEM diversity programs, tenuous relationships with pre-college and admissions programs, and inconsistent engagement with faculty. The infrastructure demanded by the LSAMP model has enabled each participating campus to address these barriers and build institutional capacity to broaden participation in STEM.

Student Success

The LSAMP model has also enabled participating campuses to enhance student success. Identification of UR students with an interest in STEM at the point of entry to college has provided staff with a way of tracking student progress toward a degree in STEM. Students are now consistently provided with information about undergraduate research, academic support resources and opportunities to explore STEM careers. Students from all campuses participated in a community-building in STEM retreat and developed their own list of strategies and priorities for PNW LSAMP campuses to initiate. Five students from PNW LSAMP campuses have been selected to participate in the Emerging Researchers National (ERN) Conference in STEM to be held in Washington, DC in February. LSAMP students have won prestigious awards on their respective campuses and are consistently invited to present their work at national conferences.

Collaborative Relationships

The collaborative relationships that have been established within and among participating campuses have been one of the most exciting outcomes of the alliance. Students from Boise State University and participating community colleges spent a summer conducting research at the University of Washington. A STEM diversity advocate from Oregon State University will lead a best practices workshop on the Boise State University campus. The faculty advisory boards on each of the participating campuses have been instrumental in writing REU supplements to support LSAMP students. These relationships have enabled LSAMP partners to leverage the funding provided by NSF to serve greater numbers of students.