

# Letter from the Principal Investigator

## December 2017

Greetings to everyone,

The UAF campus has grown quiet as the fall semester wraps up and we head into the holidays. So it's a perfect opportunity to send out a quick summary of our fall activities and spring opportunities before we all recharge our batteries and gear up for next year.

There was a strong Alaska NSF EPSCoR presence at the [NSF EPSCoR National Conference](#), which was held Nov. 6-7 in Missoula, Montana. Eleven people from Alaska made the trip (though not without some travel challenges). UAA student Cory Sheaffer and former UAS student John Krapek presented posters; UAF faculty Charlene Stern participated in a panel discussion on "STEM Engagement in Indigenous Communities;" Alaska EPSCoR Associate Project Director Pips Veazey participated in a pair of panel discussions; and I co-led a session on "Best Practices for Promoting Research Competitiveness."

A highlight of the conference for all of us was meeting Chinonye Nnakwe, our new Program Officer at the NSF. A molecular biologist, Nnakwe spent four years as the Director of Graduate Diversity Initiatives at the University of Chicago and also worked with the NSF I-Corps program, which helps scientists to commercialize research. She replaces Alaska's longtime Program Officer Uma Venkateswaran, now acting section head of NSF EPSCoR. We had a great time making Nnakwe's acquaintance and we look forward to working with her.


One program Nnakwe is in charge of at EPSCoR is "Track-4" awards, which fund non-tenured faculty to make extended collaborative visits to private, governmental, or university research centers across the country. The awards are for up to \$300,000 over up to two years, and the NSF has released [their solicitation for 2018](#). The deadline is March 31; for more information contact [Larry Hinzman](#) (UAF); [George Kamberov](#) (UAA); or [Paula Martin](#) (UAS). UAF researcher Georgina Gibson received one of the awards this year and we'd love to see more Alaskans follow in her footsteps.

There's one more award deadline coming up too, and EPSCoR researchers are on top of it. UAF Fisheries faculty Peter Westley is leading a proposal for one of EPSCoR's "Track-2" awards, which fund joint research between two or more EPSCoR jurisdictions. Westley and his colleagues propose to collaborate with University of Montana researchers to conduct a genetic study of invasive freshwater fish species in both states.

If you haven't seen it already, our [fall newsletter](#) also gives a good idea of what we've been up to over the last few months.

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday break and a great start to 2018!

Cheers,



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NSF ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH