

Letter from the Principal Investigator

July 2017

Greetings to everyone,

I have good news to report from NSF EPSCoR at the national level, and from us here in Alaska.

As you may have heard, the president's proposed budget included a sharp funding cut for NSF EPSCoR that would have imperiled many of the organization's programs. But both the House and Senate versions of the budget have restored NSF EPSCoR funding to at least last year's level. So presuming the program escapes the veto pen, NSF EPSCoR is in good shape to continue building science capacity across the country.

Meanwhile, here in Alaska we've received a glowing final report from our external evaluators, which focused on EPSCoR proposal and grant. They noted some strong numbers: since 2014, core EPSCoR researchers have been awarded 127 grants for \$25.6 million. Also impressive were statistics for the six faculty hires made during the Alaska ACE project: since 2014 they've received 19 awards for about \$8 million. "This demonstrates that the new hires are of high quality and produce nationally competitive research," notes the report.

Even as our researchers have been securing funding to advance ACE results, they've also been sharing their findings with the public. In early June, the Northern Test Case conducted a two-day workshop in Decision Theater North with officers from Kuukpik, the corporation for the village of Nuiqsut. The workshop was a unique opportunity for open-ended discussion between our researchers and Nuiqsut stakeholders, with researchers presenting on findings and Kuukpik officers sharing their needs, concerns, and suggestions for future research. Later in the month, the Southcentral Test Case wrapped up its year by hosting a public panel discussion entitled "Salmon and the Kenai: Past, Present and Future" at the Islands and Ocean Visitor Center in Homer. Researchers invited every stakeholder with whom the test case has interacted, including agency representatives, community council members, and educators from Homer and Soldotna, and a full house of about 50 people showed up for the event.

Finally, we're putting the finishing touches on "Fire and Ice: Navigating Variability in Boreal Wildfire Regimes and Subarctic Coastal Ecosystems," our proposal for 2018-2023. We've put together a strong writing team and the proposal looks better with every draft. We're submitting it for an August 21 deadline and, if funded, the project would kick off in fall 2018. But that's a long way off, so in the meantime we're working to maintain ACE collaborations and infrastructure, to build on our results, and generally to find ways to take full advantage of the year ahead.

Cheers,



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NSF ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH