

**American Association for the
Advancement of Science**

Research Competitiveness Program

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INBRE PI meeting

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AAAS

- Founded in 1848
- Mission: “To Advance Science and Innovation throughout the World for the Benefit of all People”
- Largest general scientific society in the world, with over 125,000 individual members
- Publisher of *Science*
- Programs in Science and Policy; International Programs; Education and Human Resources; K-12 Education; Science, Technology, and Security

Research Competitiveness Program

- A programmatic peer review service
- Provides guidance, assessment and review to the research and innovation community
- Initiated as a NSF grant in 1996 to work with recipients of state infrastructure improvement awards
- Established in 2000 as fee-for-service program
- Conduct 30-40 peer-review projects per year (research sponsorship, S&T policy, research performance)

<http://www.aaas.org/spp/rcp/>

Review and Guidance of Statewide Programs

PROCESS

- Understand the program and its goals
- Develop a charge for the AAAS panel
- Assemble a panel tailored to program needs
- Help develop an agenda for site visit
- Review background materials
 - ❖ *INBRE proposal, NIH critique, progress reports, EAC reports, institutional research strategy, internal evaluation data/summary*
- On site semi-structured interviews with stakeholders
- Deliberate on findings and recommendations
- Report to the program leadership

Balancing the Evaluation Trilogy

*Internal evaluators, Advisory Committee(s), External review panels
(also NIH, State S&T/ EPSCoR committees)*

- AAAS is an independent group: tailored, adaptable, ad hoc teams or long-standing panels as institutional memory
- Informed by the other actors, e.g. EAC, stakeholders, internal evaluators, institutional leadership
- Comment on the robustness, validity and utility of the internal evaluation process and methodology, where needed

Why Evaluate?

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Program management and course correction
- Benchmarking and contextualization
- Evidence of impact
- Advocacy and support for the program → ***Sustainability***

(Macro) Challenges of Evaluating INBREs

- Programs are a composite of various (hard to measure) components- administration, bioinformatics, mentoring, research, core facilities
- Long timeframe for outcomes of program goals
- Differences in research culture, infrastructure, faculty and student diversity, career paths and mission of INBRE institutions
- Goals for XX-INBRE program *and* individual partners
- Insufficient resources/personnel dedicated to evaluation

(Micro) Challenges for Individual INBREs

- Balancing quantitative and qualitative measures
- Lack of consultation with participants for needs assessment, e.g., for core facilities, professional development, mentoring
- Lack of response to evaluation requests by participants; ineffective program-wide communication
- PUIs often track students but not in a way to feed info back into INBRE grant renewal
- Capturing the interactions *among* institutions and faculty, in addition to tracking individual entities

An Evaluation Framework

- Evaluation has be part of the strategic plan, integrated as a management tool
- Must respond to, and measure progress toward, program goals
 - ❖ *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely*
- Set baselines, collect longitudinal and follow up data
- Leverage individual success to capture impacts on the network→ beyond hub and spokes model
- Utilize existing efforts, e.g., institutional diversity offices, national assessment tools
- Streamline and automate data collection, e.g., videoconferencing capabilities, annual retreats for focus groups

Food for Thought

- Standardization: evaluation skeleton, core-specific, frequency
- Comparison groups
 - ❖ *other INBRE programs, corresponding faculty/student*
 - ❖ *separating INBRE outcomes from non-INBRE*
- Evaluator: internal, external, institutional capabilities
- Program goals and institutional partner goals
- INBRE evaluation community → sharing (best) practices, lessons learnt