

Partnerships

Panel

Jakki Mohr, moderator

Gregory Chun, University of Hawaii

Stephen Anthony, USGS

Geoffrey Bothun, University of Rhode Island

Bongsup Cho, University of Rhode Island

Keith Goyne, University of Missouri

Kristen Veum, USDA

Building Interagency Partnerships

Mon, 11/06/2017 – 3:00 pm

This panel explores the basis and development of agency partnerships and identify best practices for building the relationships that generate these partnerships. The discussion includes perspectives from both sides of these existing partnerships: Missouri EPSCoR and USDA, Hawaii EPSCoR and USGS, and Rhode Island EPSCoR and NIH. Content includes a discussion on NSF EPSCoR's current and future role in these partnerships and address how to best work with agency partners on NSF EPSCoR RII projects.

Summary of Panel:

This panel assembled three strong collaborations between University and non-University partners to discuss what made their partnership successful. These partnerships were chosen, the moderator said, because of their thoughtfulness around how a team functioned, not because of the research they performed. The following suggestions for quality partnerships were discussed:

- **Build relationships:** The quality of relationships between partners has an outsized effect on the success of the collaboration. Get to know your potential collaborators professionally before you decide to collaborate. Once in a collaboration, invest time and energy in building and maintaining relationships in order to prevent problems and allow for more effective resolution when problems arise.
- **Seek mutually beneficial outcomes:** Find common ground and research objectives with your partners. Consider co-producing research questions. At the very least, try to create projects that have outputs that specifically help the agency further its goals, mission, and research needs. Think about ways to use funds to for materials, facilities, activities that have a joint benefit.
- **Know your agency partners:** Each agency partner is different. Each brings different skills, institutional constraints, and institutional requirements. Know and respect the parameters and processes of your partners when it comes to conducting research, publication, and budgets. Find the right person(s) at the agency to work with. Understand the agency requirements on the staff member(s) with whom you're working.
- **Establish expectations:** Be clear about general expectations for behavior amongst the partners (e.g. trust, communication, rigorous scholarship etc.), the outcomes of the collaboration, data sharing, dissemination, and authorship. Similarly, establish each individual/partners contribution expectations and timeline. Consider a compact or other type of pre-negotiated agreement on how conflict or transgression will be handled.

- **Practice clear, consistent communication:** The team leaders need to meet regularly and communicate frequently about the state of the project, progress toward goals, complications and other concerns related to the project. Good communication means listening to each other. This may require a “translator” given the interdisciplinary nature of these collaborations. This individual can translate the language of different disciplines (e.g. how they define or measure success) to the other partners. Similarly, communication with other project stakeholders should be regularly maintained. Keep them apprised of successes and challenges. Consider assigning/hiring a team member who is responsible for community engagement and/or communication within the team.