

# LaSTEM Advisory Council Meeting

May 20, 2020

10:00 a.m.

The LaSTEM Advisory Council met on Wednesday, May 20, 2020, by Virtual Zoom.

## Committee Members/Representatives Present

Senator Sharon Hewitt  
Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed  
Mahyar Amouzegar (Proxy-Ryan Bell)  
Jill Cowart (Proxy-Nathan Corley)  
Bianca Dilberto  
Crystal Gordon  
Calvin Mackie (Proxy-Lawrence Jackson)  
Kenya Messer  
Frank Neubrandner  
Janet Pope (Proxy-Markey Pierre)  
Kristen Reeves  
Susana Schowen  
Scott Stevens  
Kellie Taylor-White  
Ken Tucker  
William Wainwright (Proxy-Jim Carlson)  
Tom Yura

## Staff Members Present

Susannah Craig  
David Lafargue

## Committee Members Not Present

Larry Carter, Jr.  
Representative Barbara Frieberg  
Patty Glaser  
Melissa Mann  
Meridith Trahant  
Jaimee Williams

Trisha Fos  
Michael Gaudet  
Jim Henderson  
Ronnie Morris  
Rachel Vincent-Finley  
Laura Younger

## Welcome, Roll Call, and Updates

Dr. David Lafargue, LaSTEM Program Administrator called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m., did roll call, and determined that we have a quorum. Dr. Lafargue then introduced Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed.

Dr. Reed welcomed Advisory Council members and proxies. Dr. Reed stated she appreciates everyone's commitment to this work and for attending the meeting. Also, she thanked all those who have worked hard to make sure we are responsive to the State needs with COVID 19. She appreciates Senator Hewitt's commitment and beliefs that we can build a STEM ecosystem like no other in Louisiana. Dr. Reed told members that Dr. Lafargue has been in communication with the White House to align our plans with the nation's STEM Strategic Plan.

Senator Hewitt expressed gratitude appreciated everyone's support in attendance. Senator Hewitt thanked Dr. Reed and Dr. Lafargue for the work they've been doing to move this initiative forward. Senator Hewitt believes Louisiana is in a great place and has received a lot of feedback from across the state. Many people are excited about the Regional STEM Centers and future opportunities. Senator Hewitt indicated she would advocate on behalf of Louisiana's Regional STEM Network. She looks forward to continuing to work with everyone.

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Dr. Lafargue thanked both Commissioner Reed and Senator Hewitt for their comments. He asked everyone please be patient as we are attempting to conduct this meeting with Zoom and wants to make sure we are using our technology correctly. Dr. Lafargue conducted a roll call and determined there was a quorum.

Dr. Lafargue told members that due to COVID-19 we would not have a showcasing for this meeting. Because of this, he anticipated the meeting would not last a full two hours.

The meeting minutes from February 13, 2020 for the LaSTEM Advisory Council were previously sent to council members by Dr. Lafargue. He received feedback from Dr. Neubrandner to amend the minutes on page three due to an error. The minutes were amended.

*There was a motion from Dr. Kim Hunter Reed to approve the amended minutes and a second from Mr. Nathan Corley. With there being no opposition, the amended minutes were approved.*

Members were informed of the members biographies on the LaSTEM website and are as up-to-date as can be. Dr. Lafargue previously sent an email advising members to review their information on the website and provide feedback. He did receive feedback from some members and has updated their information accordingly. Dr. Lafargue asked council members to please review their information on the website and provide any feedback for recommended changes.

Dr. Lafargue informed the council of valuable updates to the website, especially the regional STEM network section. All the videos, presentations, and supporting documents have been uploaded to the Regional STEM Network webpage. A formatting guide and template was available for those writing applications. Dr. Lafargue informed the council applications would be due on June 30, 2020.

## **Council Discussions**

Dr. Lafargue mentioned virtual options are being evaluated for the 2020 Louisiana STEM Annual Summit due to impacts from the current health crisis. At this time, we are only considering a virtual summit for this year's annual summit. An update would be provided at the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter advisory council meeting.

Dr. Lafargue provided an update on the Regional STEM Network Center process. There was a two-part series conducted through webinars. The first was on April 23, 2020 and is available on the website. The first session was the most thorough video of the two videos on the RFA process. The idea was to generate questions and anything not covered would be discussed during the second webinar on May 13, 2020. The follow-up meeting was to use those questions as talking points. A few questions were received at the end of the first webinar and a week was allowed for others to comment and/or provide feedback. No additional questions were received. The second webinar used talking points from initial questions and the first webinar as a virtual panel discussion. Both webinars were successful and can be found on the LaSTEM website.

Plans for the Regional STEM Network Centers will continue to move forward. Considering impacts from the health crisis, the goal is to plan for a pilot year STEM center implementation. We will continue with the application process and identify centers for the regions. Approved funding will determine how many STEM centers are implemented during the pilot year.

Dr. Reed commented on all the planning work and informed members that there has been a lot of energy and excitement. As Senator Hewitt said, we want to be in the right bucket, in terms of the legislative

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process. There are many uncertainties around the budget but, we have a commitment to at least have a pilot to see how this works and improving upon the process.

Dr. Susannah Craig commented LaSTEM desires the best and most innovative applications as we assess and identify the top applications to fund the top two STEM centers. Dr. Reed also mentioned if there are more funds available, obviously additional centers will be funded. Dr. Reed said she want people to know that we are committed to at least a pilot year and if we can do more, we certainly will. Our goal is to keep the energy and excitement around this work.

June 30, 2020 is when Regional STEM Center applications are due. The month of July is when applications will be assessed and top applications identified prior to the end of July pending no complications. Dr. Lafargue gave an estimate of the timelines stating Regional STEM Network Centers and their directors could be in place as early as October/November 2020.

Dr. Lafargue mentioned that in February he was tasked creating a crosswalk between LaSTEM's 2018 goals and objectives and the national strategic plans, goals, and pathways to achieve those goals. The crosswalk was created indicating goals and pathway alignment between LaSTEM and the goals identified in the National STEM Strategic Plan released in December of 2018. Dr. Lafargue elaborated on the crosswalk provided to the council and the benefits of aligning with the nation's five-year STEM Strategic Plan.

Dr. Susannah Craig requested clarification as she reiterated that the adoption of these goals and pathways does not change the work previously done. This simply aligns existing goals and objectives under the National STEM umbrella. Dr. Lafargue stated this doesn't remove the existing goals. This adoption enables the national goals and pathways to serve as LaSTEM's primary goals and pathways towards achieving statewide and regional goals. The crosswalk and previous work would be used for reference as needed whereas the primary goals will guide regional and statewide reporting and funding opportunities.

*Mrs. Kellie Taylor White made a motion to adopt the goals and pathways presented from the national crosswalk in addition to our current goals and alignment that we previously constructed. There was a second made by Dr. Kim Hunter Reed and the floor was opened for further discussion prior to the vote.*

Mr. Lawrence Jackson proxy for Dr. Calvin Mackie, wanted to share Dr. Mackie's perspective on the involvement of community and this direct statement of community in all goals and objectives to the extent that it is possible. Mr. Jackson stated these goals identified by the White House are broad and expansive in their presentation. He indicated a desire and hope that LaSTEM integrates community focus in all areas whenever possible. Dr. Lafargue stated that a community focus was identified throughout the nation's STEM Strategic Plan.

*With no further discussion, Dr. Lafargue began a roll call vote. With no opposition, the motion was adopted.*

Dr. Lafargue will inform the White House the goals and pathways passed unanimously. He will explore opportunities for LaSTEM to collaborate with others on a statewide and national level.

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### **Other Business**

The upcoming LaSTEM Quarterly meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Ideally plans will be made to meet face to face. However, in the event an in-person meeting isn't possible we will most likely have a virtual meeting similar to the May 20, 2020 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter meeting. We will be in the Thomas Jefferson room but, if there is a conflict, I will email everyone.

*With there being no other comments or business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Nathan Corley and a second by Mrs. Kellie Taylor-White. With all in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.*