



Third Quarter LaSTEM Advisory Council Meeting
August 18, 2022
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

The LaSTEM Advisory Council met on Thursday, August 18, 2022, at SOWELA Technical Community College in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Committee Members/Representatives Present

Bianca Deliberto (Proxy – Tom Brett)
Jawanda Givens
Paul Helton
Jim Henderson (Proxy – Chip LeMieux)
Commissioner Kim Hunter Reed
Lindsey Keith-Vincent (joined meeting late)
David Lafargue
Ronnie Morris
Frank Neubrander (Proxy – Vanessa Begat)
Janet Pope
Breigh Rhodes
Kellie Taylor-White
Christen Timmins (Proxy – Jean May-Brett)
Rachel Vincent-Finley
William Wainwright (Proxy – Neil Aspinwall)

Committee Members Not Present

Mahyar Amouzegar
Larry Carter, Jr.
Michael Gaudet
Patty Glasser
Crystal Gordon
Sen. Sharon Hewitt
Calvin Mackie
Melissa Mann

Kenya Messer
Scott Stevens
Rep. Polly Thomas
Tina Watts
Jaimee Williams
Tom Yura

Staff Members Present

Christina Cheek
Clint Coleman
Christine Norton
Carrie Robison
Jennifer Stevens

STEM Center Directors

Mark Arseneault
Daphine Barnes
Wendy Conarro
Cathi Cox-Boniol
Angela Boxie
Summer Dann
Jennifer DePriest
Heather Kleiner
Christie Landry

Welcome and Roll Call

Dr. Reed welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m. Dr. Coleman called roll, noting that a quorum was not obtained. Dr. Coleman thanked everyone at SOWELA for hosting the LaSTEM Council and invited SOWELA's Chancellor, Dr. Neil Aspinwall, to say a few words. Dr. Aspinwall provided a presentation on the damage to SOWELA's campus, the city of Lake Charles, and surrounding area as a result of natural disasters, beginning with Hurricane Laura in 2020, and the ongoing recovery efforts. Dr. Coleman introduced a new Council member for Louisiana Economic Development, Mr. Paul Helton, Executive Director of LED FastStart.

Approval of Second Quarter Meeting Minutes

Since quorum was not obtained, approval of the second quarter meeting minutes was deferred to the fourth quarter meeting.

#Summerof LaSTEM

Dr. Coleman provided a summary and images from Regents' STEM social media campaign, #SummerofLaSTEM. Dr. Reed thanked the STEM Center Directors for their good work as well as expressed gratitude for community support and business engagement, which is helping to expand the STEM ecosystem.

FY 2022-23 Appropriations to Regional STEM Centers

Dr. Coleman presented on the FY 2022-23 appropriations to the Regional STEM Centers and state-wide initiatives. He shared that this fiscal year, LaSTEM received an additional \$1M in state appropriations, for a total of \$3M. He thanked Senator Hewitt and the Regents' legislative team for facilitating those budget increases. In addition, LaSTEM's budget was incorporated into the Regents' overall budget, which will, compared with submitting annual funding requests, provide LaSTEM with stability. This fiscal year, each Regional STEM Center was provided with \$280,000 in State funds to support its region's efforts. Within this higher allocation, Regents requested that each STEM Center allocate up to 25% of its budget (\$70k) towards leadership of or participation in a statewide initiative. The goal of the statewide initiatives is to develop programs/solutions that can either be spearheaded at a particular center or made 'turn-key' for other STEM Centers to adopt. Dr. Coleman then introduced three STEM Center Directors to share their chosen statewide initiatives.

- Mr. Mark Arsenault, Region 5 STEM Center Director, and Mr. Darren Dotson, Coordinator, shared several initiatives and activities including a scaled model of the Solar System, which is believed to be the first in the state, as well as their continuous expansion of the region's robotics programs.
 - Dr. Reed asked for clarification on where Bell Robotics will be held. Mr. Dotson shared that a competition will be held weekly in November at the Lake Charles Boston Academy of Learning.
 - Mr. Morris noted that this region seemed to be the model for robotics, and asked how they established their network and how to be involved. Mr. Dotson responded that easiest way to get plugged into the network is to reach out to Mr. Arsenault and the Region 5 STEM Center. Mr. Arsenault added that it was the nature of their work, being the only STEM Center housed at a K-12 entity, that has helped them connect and have direct access to K-12 teachers in the region. He also gave an example of SeaPerch and how Region 5 is working to scale that initiative statewide.
 - Mrs. Breigh Rhodes added that LDOE has had more superintendents and principals reaching out to learn how to expand STEM programming. LDOE will be providing support calls (open presentations) and discussion to bring in individuals who are doing this work statewide to share how they made it work so teachers can make connections and build relationships. In addition, she mentioned LDOE recently applied for a grant to scale and build the network. Although it was not funded, the project team received great feedback that Louisiana is on the right track and a recommendation to continue forward.
 - Dr. Coleman added that the reason for emphasizing statewide initiatives of the STEM Centers this year was to help hone specializations of each of the Center Directors, who will become the main state point of contact in their specialty areas.
 - Dr. Wendy Conarro, Region 9 STEM Center Director, provided additional information on how this framework may look in each region and statewide.
 - Mrs. Jean May-Brett added that The Dow Red Stick Rumble (robotics competition) will be held on August 27th at Denham Springs High School. The following week, NASA will be sponsoring training at Stennis Space Center for all levels of First Robotics.

- Mrs. Janet Pope shared they have long been advocating for a holistic accountability system within the Department of Education and school systems. She thanked everyone and the LaSTEM Council for introducing interests and opportunities as well as infusing great STEM work across the state.
- Dr. Heather Kleiner, Region 7 STEM Center Director, shared several statewide initiatives, including using videography to create a video capture experience, telling a story through data, and the First Inspires robotics program.
- Ms. Barnes, Region 1 STEM Center Director, provided information about their statewide initiatives that focus on education, community, and business/industry partnerships. These included the HBCU Startup Internship, HBCU STEM Connect Internship, Son of a Saint, and Wise Women NOLA Mentorship program.
 - Dr. Reed commented that the work of the Centers and their presentations reflects the differences in their locations and regional needs. She noted that Regents was very intentional in reaching out to have the Centers partnered with business, in schools, in higher education, and at Sci-Port.
 - Mr. Ronnie Morris asked if the internships were being messaged to the high schools. Ms. Barnes noted the internships are focused on juniors and seniors in college, but the mentorship programs are used as springboards towards internships. The Wise Women program serves 9th-12th grade students and Son of a Saint 5th-12th grade.

Regional STEM Center Renewal Process

Dr. Coleman stated the 2022-23 fiscal year marks the last year of the three-year designations with of Regional STEM Centers provided through the initial RFA. Regents will be updating the RFA this fall, incorporating internal BoR feedback and external responses from the Regional STEM Centers and the LaSTEM Advisory Council. All recommended changes will be presented to the Council for final approval at the November (fourth quarter) meeting. After approval, the RFA will be published in December and any interested parties may apply. Applications will be due by March 1, 2023. Centers selected for funding will be presented to the Council for final approval at the second quarter meeting in 2023.

Directors' Retreat

Dr. Coleman said the Second Annual Director's Retreat would be held the following day, on August 19th, and would focus on building a sustainable, cohesive LaSTEM team. The goal of the retreat was to develop a comprehensive metrics collection plan, as well as a strong collective understanding of where the statewide LaSTEM network is heading and opportunities for the Centers to collaborate on shared goals.

Quality Science and Mathematics/Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

Mrs. May-Brett stated QSM has been in the state since 1992 and had recently been updated. Middle and high school teachers can request up to \$2,000, but there is a need to bring more awareness of this opportunity to teachers. Instituted in 1986, the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching was also changed, expanding to include all STEM teachers, and not just science and mathematics. It is a \$10,000 award and a trip for two to Washington, D.C. Mrs. May-Brett asked for assistance in bringing awareness to teachers of this award opportunity.

Dr. David LaFargue asked if the money from the previous year had been fully expended or funds remained. Mrs. May-Brett answered that there was a small amount remaining, which they are using for outreach purposes to get the message out to teachers. They have a total of \$165,000 to award. Dr. Reed mentioned this is also a great tie-in to the statewide initiatives to also have these opportunities for grants.

Lake Area Industrial Alliance

Dr. Coleman welcomed the Secretary/Treasurer of the Lake Area Industry Alliance (LAIA), Mr. Greg Gray, to present on LAIA's impact in southwest Louisiana. Mr. Gray noted that the LAIA, formed in 2000, is the primary channel of communication between local area industry and the community, civic leaders, elected officials, educators, and non-profit organizations. Its community endeavors include community advisor panels, partners in education, paint recycling, Chem Expo, and environmental and sustainability initiatives. He stated that LAIA wants to partner with organizations like LaSTEM to prepare young people to transition into varied industry roles, to integrate business and education.

Mr. Morris asked if they were able to fill all their vacancies. Mr. Gray stated that 12 salaried vacancies are open at his site right now. Mr. Morris commented that he is hearing positive things about the carbon capture industry coming to the state and to the Houston area, noting that this group would love to be engaged on the education aspect and workforce preparation. Mr. Gray stated he would love to come back to the group to provide another presentation on carbon capture. Dr. Reed asked, given the shortages in the workforce and competition for talent, whether Mr. Gray sees the industries changing business models, doing more apprenticeships/internships, then recruiting people in and paying for college or training. Mr. Gray mentioned that industries already doing some of that now and he foresees a need to do more to engage young people at an earlier age. Ms. Kellie Taylor-White asked whether recruitment has been expanded statewide. Mr. Gray said yes, but noted the difficulty of getting individuals in the Lake Charles area. The Council thanked Mr. Gray and his team for starting with 6th grade, because research shows these efforts should start around 5th grade.

Dr. Coleman thanked the group for an excellent discussion and announced that the final 2022 quarterly meeting date is Thursday, November 17, 2022.

Adjournment

There being no other comments or business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Jean May-Brett, with a second by Mrs. Janet Pope. With all in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.