LOUISIANA
NSF EPSCoR
ADVANCING GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY IN STEM

ESTABLISHED PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH VOL.15 NO. 8

IMPACT: LAMDA in the Outcome Figures

Five years ago just last month, amidst unprecedented global upheaval due to COVID-19 the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR) via Louisiana EPSCoR (LA EPSCoR) established a new initiative, the Louisiana Materials Design Alliance (LAMDA). The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact forced the word "pivot" into the forefront of the professional lexicon as innovative technologies and strategies were deployed to ensure the project's needs and requirements were exceeded. Common business practices like in-person meetings fell by the wayside, replaced by globally accessible video conferencing, safely connecting the team and collaborators conveniently across the State and world. Still, much consternation surrounded the fresh challenges presented, especially the issue of cohesion amongst the team. After all, building a world-class research ecosystem with serious capacity is no small feat, and the foundation for that research capacity is the team. So, how far have we come? Today, we will explore critical outcomes of the LAMDA effort.

As noted in the figure shown, LAMDA convened 181 total participants across Louisiana higher education, including a host of faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduates, and post docs. From senior researchers in materials science, chemistry, and physics working to move the needle on thermoset shape polymers and complex concentrated alloys to undergraduates undertaking their first formal research project, LAMDA has made a path for serious inquiry in Louisiana.

Attracting talented research personnel with the resources they need to excel is a critical objective of the LAMDA model. As part of this effort to grow the research landscape in Louisiana, LAMDA has attracted nineteen new faculty members to Louisiana's universities. Additionally, the project has shored up the workforce pipeline, graduating thirty-five graduate students and twelve undergraduates. Also supported were twenty-three post docs, another valuable community of quality researchers.

This cadre of professionals has secured eighty-seven subawards through LA EPSCoR plus $77 million in external funding, more than tripling NSF's initial $20 million investment in LAMDA. Add $4 million in matching from the State, and the whole funding picture becomes clear.

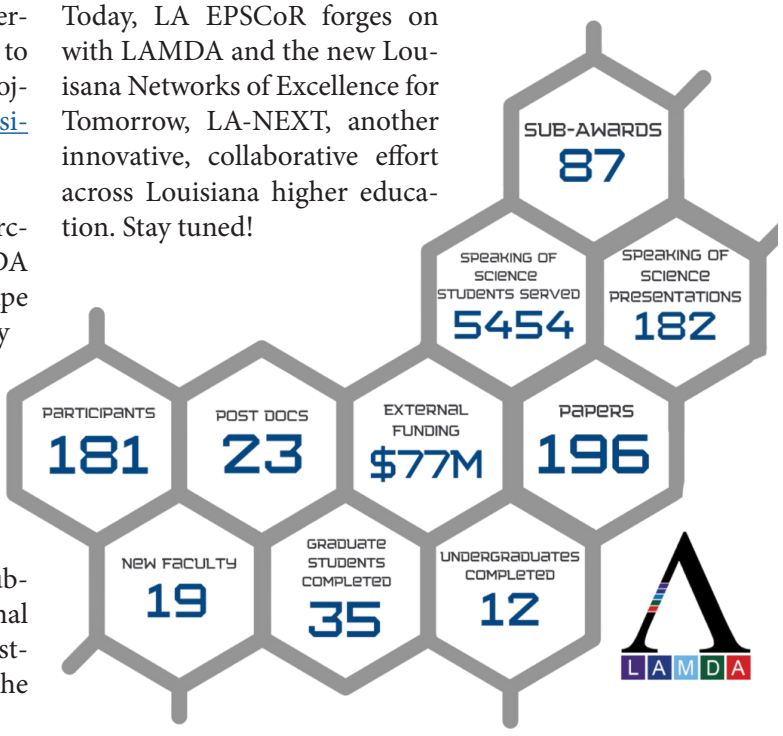
All of these accomplishments have taken place while maintaining a strong commitment to outreach via 182 Speaking of Science presentations to 5454 students across Louisiana in addition to individualized university based efforts like the work occuring at the Louisiana School for the Deaf.

Five years later, and the aforementioned consternation culminates into a vibrant sense of accomplishment along with a profound understanding that the challenges facing the research community today are different but just as significant.

Nearly four decades of research capacity development has Louisiana poised to lead, and FIRST Louisiana 2030, the State's science and technology plan, provides a roadmap forward as it:

> *focuses broadly on the foundational science discplines that form the core of the State's industrial and translational research targets: physical sciences, mathematics, engineering, computational science, earth sciences, agricultural sciences, biological sciences, biomedical science, and the social, behavioral and economic sciences.*

Today, LA EPSCoR forges on with LAMDA and the new Louisana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow, LA-NEXT, another innovative, collaborative effort across Louisiana higher education. Stay tuned!



The Speaking of Science (SoS) Speakers Bureau seeks titles regarding space science. Please take a moment to consider joining the bureau to provide high-interest content for k-12 students about space especially work happening in Louisiana.

Click below or Google: *Louisiana Speaking of Science* for more information.

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