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Response to INBRE Program Evaluation Recommendations

IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE)

Supports statewide biomedical research development networks in the 23 IDeA-eligible states and Puerto Rico; partners research-intensive institutions with primarily undergraduate institutions (PUIs).

Three interrelated objectives:

- **Infrastructure** development and enhancement
- **Faculty** research and research mentoring
- **Student** participation in research

Working Group Full Report: <https://nigms.nih.gov/about/dima/Pages/reports.aspx>

Recommendation #1

For future assessments of trend data, take care to consider the impact of COVID in the 2020-2022 period.

- **NIGMS recognizes that the pandemic impacted many aspects of science, particularly PI research productivity and faculty recruitment**
 - Some PIs were pulled away from regular research and duties
- **NIGMS will be mindful of this factor when assessing progress reports**
 - Potential lag in publications from INBRE-funded projects
 - Potential effects due to faculty leaving research/academia

Recommendation #2

Include the explicit goal of enhancing diversity in the biomedical workforce and collect appropriate data on metrics to help examine progress toward that goal.

- **Continue to encourage INBREs to work closely with HBCUs and TCUs**
- **Emphasize inclusion when conducting outreach to make undergraduates aware of research opportunities**
- **Current funding opportunity requires Plan for Enhancing Diverse Perspectives (PEDP)**
 - Strategies to advance the scientific and technical merit of the INBRE network through expanded inclusivity
- **Explore ways NIGMS can capture changes in student demographics over time**

Recommendation #3

Consider the possible benefits of shifting to virtual meetings for states with geographic limitations and collect more systematic information on participation in these meetings, particularly by faculty.

- **A positive aspect of the pandemic was the implementation of virtual meetings**
 - Potential benefits include efficient use of time, higher participation, and lower costs
 - Potential downsides are a loss of informal engagement and networking, and students not receiving sufficient feedback on presentations
- **New suggested progress report tables will capture data on virtual activities**
 - Encourage PIs to describe their experiences in the progress report narrative section
- **INBRE PIs regularly share best practices**
 - Encourage discussion of Virtual v. Hybrid v. In-Person over the next few years

Recommendation #4

Consider the possible network-wide impact of research-based courses to engage and prepare students in biomedical research, at PUIs and community colleges, on the INBRE research network, infrastructure, faculty and student development.

- **Current funding opportunity encourages innovation and integration of research into curricula**
 - Progress report guidance suggests new tables to better track # of students and the #/types of course-based research experiences and educational activities offered
- **NIGMS Sandbox – Year 2 funding opportunity published ([NOT-GM-24-006](#))**
 - Emphasizes suitability for integration into undergraduate or graduate curricula as well as self-learning by researchers

Broader Recommendations

Examine qualitative and anecdotal impact testimonials, including progress reports, to understand the impact of INBRE on the research culture at partner institutions.

- **NIGMS will encourage INBRE PIs to share examples of INBRE impact on research culture**
 - Communicate testimonials at INBRE meetings, email NIGMS POs, and include examples in the RPPR
- **NIGMS will collect these and disseminate success stories through its media outlets**

Thank You to:

The INBRE Evaluation Working Group

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Questions and Discussion