

May 2006

Volume 4, Issue 2



In this issue

- Annual Report for 2005-2006
- EPSCoR Updates
- New M.S. Degree Proposed
- Approved M.A. Degree in Mathematics

Highlights

- VI-EPSCoR gets 3rd year funding approved
- VI-EPSCoR welcomes new staff members
- New incubator grant work underway

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VI-EPSCoR Annual Report: Two Down and Two to Go

After many long hours and a truly collaborative effort by researchers and staff of the Virgin Islands Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (VI-EPSCoR), the second VI-EPSCoR annual report was submitted to the National Science Foundation (NSF) on May 5, 2006. The annual report highlights VI-EPSCoR achievements during the 2005-2006 grant fiscal year. On May 8, VI-EPSCoR staff received notification from NSF that year three funding was approved. The timely response serves as a strong statement of confidence in VI-EPSCoR, as a result of outstanding progress made throughout the past two years.

Proposed M.S. Degree in Marine & Environmental Science

An important goal of VI-EPSCoR is the development and implementation of a Master's degree program in Marine and Environmental Science at the University of the Virgin Islands (UVI). The proposed Master of Science degree will be offered through the Division of Science and Mathematics and the Center for Marine and Environmental Studies. The establishment of this program is included as an objective in VISION 2012, the University's strategic plan.

The proposed graduate program would provide students with skills for planning, conducting, and evaluating scientific research. It will produce a growing cadre of professionals capable of addressing topical environmental issues of the Virgin Islands and Caribbean. An M.S. program will enhance the research climate and serve to improve UVI competitiveness in gaining federal research dollars. Graduates of the program will be qualified for academic, government, and private sector positions in science and resource management locally, regionally and nationally.

Dr. Sylvia Vitazkova, the new VI-EPSCoR funded graduate

program coordinator, is leading the academic approval process and implementation of the program.

Please contact Dr. Vitazkova with questions and comments: svitazk@uvi.edu. Also, please visit our website for more information: http://epscor.uvi.edu/graduate_program.

Curriculum Development Workshop

VI-EPSCoR sponsored a Curriculum Development Workshop for the proposed Master of Marine & Environmental Science program on May 25-26 on the UVI St. Thomas campus. The goals of the workshop were to define the proposed M.S. program's curriculum and to begin developing the syllabi for core and elective courses, based on Elizabeth Gladfelter's feasibility study.

The Workshop was well attended by UVI faculty and VI-EPSCoR staff and resulted in lively debates on several key topics, such as the core curriculum, the philosophy and the mission of the proposed program, admission requirements, comprehensive examina-

tions, and the logistics of course offerings. The time-frame for the UVI approvals process was also discussed.

As a result of this workshop and faculty efforts to write up course curriculum this summer, the proposed M.S. program is expected to be ready for presentation to UVI faculty, administrative divisions and committees, as well as the Board of Trustees, by Fall 2006.

BCCR Research Team off St. John



Year 3 Funding from Local Donor

Trust Asset Management LLP (TAM) renewed its commitment to VI-EPSCoR with a third year of funding for VI-EPSCoR educational outreach activities. TAM is a global investment management services company based in St. Thomas. The company is a strong supporter of efforts to enhance K-12 science and math education for the young people of the Virgin Islands.

Staff Changes, New Research, and New Facilities: VI-EPSCoR Moves Forward in 2006

Dr. Elizabeth Gladfelter of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute completed the VI-EPSCoR funded feasibility study of a new graduate program in marine and environmental science. She submitted a report with her recommendations in February 2006.

Dr. Paul Butler-Nalin (Ph.D., Higher Education Administration and Policy Analysis, Stanford University) has joined VI-EPSCoR as consultant for planning, monitoring and evaluation. Working with the Project Co-Director, he has responsibility for creating a monitoring and evaluation plan, identifying formative, summative and extended evaluation data to be collected for project management use and for reporting to NSF.

Dr. Sylvia Vitazkova (Ph.D., Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology, Columbia University) joined VI-EPSCoR in May 2006 as Graduate Coordinator for the new degree program in marine and environmental science. She will be leading in the development and implementation of the M.S. program. Sylvia comes to us most recently from Cornell University, where she served as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Science at the College of Veterinary Medicine, as well as Ithaca College, where she was a lecturer.

Mr. Eoghan Joyce (M.A., Sociology, East Carolina University) joined VI-EPSCoR as Research Project Manager in April 2006. He will have responsibility for managing daily research operations

including grant administration, logistics, capital projects, and procurement. He will also act as internal and external liaison on issues including partnerships, permitting, compliance, and outreach. Eoghan comes to us from East Carolina University's Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources.

New Incubator Grants Approved

VI-EPSCoR incubator grants for 2006-2007 were awarded in April 2006. Preference was given to proposals that included evidence of:

- Relevance to the BCCR research thrust;
- Interdisciplinary collaboration;
- Collaboration between university researchers and local organizations;
- Undergraduate research opportunities;
- Potential for economic impact and spillovers; and
- Potential to attract competitive funding.

After external review by members of the BCCR Advisory Board, nine incubator grants were selected (including three that are awaiting final approval), totaling approximately \$200,000. More than a dozen new researchers as well as a number of new undergraduate researchers are expected to participate in the 2006-2007 incubator projects, as well as collaborators from other universities and federal agencies.

Please stay tuned for more about the progress of the exciting work being done by BCCR researchers.

Renovations and Infrastructure Update

As of May 2006, VI-EPSCoR funded renovations are nearly complete, including four research labs, a teaching lab, a compressor shed, office space, and a video conferencing room in the MacLean Marine Science Center, and facilities at the Virgin Islands Environmental Resource Station. Additional office space for post-doctoral researchers and technicians will be complete in Summer 2006.

Approved M.A. Degree in Mathematics

A new UVI degree of Master of Arts in Mathematics for Secondary Teachers was approved by the University's Board of Trustees in March 2006. This program is designed to advance and deepen the knowledge of teachers, as well as to train these educators to be highly qualified mathematics teachers at the secondary level. The program is cohort based, which means that students will be admitted and progress through the program as a group. The majority of the coursework will take place during the summers, as to best serve the teachers who wish to advance their training with this degree program. The first cohort of 18 students will begin in June 2006. Classes for the first cohort will be held on UVI's St. Croix campus.

VI-EPSCoR is supporting the costs of the graduate program coordinator, Dr. Vanere Goodwin, as well as costs incurred in the transitional phase of the program's development. In addition, the Virgin Islands Department of

Education is a major supporter of this degree program, providing scholarships for 18 Virgin Islands public school teachers participating in the first cohort. These scholarships will cover the expenses of tuition, fees, and textbooks for the students.

The positive impact of this new degree program will be quickly felt in the secondary schools of the Virgin Islands. Ultimately, Dr. Goodwin says that there is "every intention to begin recruitment of students in the larger Caribbean region, as well as in the U.S."

An official program launch is expected to take place on the St. Croix campus in July. Please see the UVI website for further details as they become available.

Please contact Dr. Goodwin for more information: vgoodwi@uvi.edu.



BCCR Research Team deploys water monitoring equipment off the shelf on the south side of St. John

