Helen Meier, Ph.D. Dir.
Alison Rockwell, National Center for Atmospheric Research, Earth Observing Laboratory, Boulder, Colorado | July 2016

Program Background & Motivation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) Lower Atmosphere Observing Facilities (LAOF) Educational Development Program is a short-term facilities deployment program designed to strengthen STEM-related education by providing access to nine separate research facilities to educators for providing instruction in the field of observational meteorology and engineering.

The program but yet to submit a proposal (N=10)

PI perception and understanding of the program

Current facilities available on campuses

PI factors

University factors

User-perspective program enhancements.

Professional development gains:

In-person and phone interviews

Online surveys

Archived report analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data was categorized into four main themes:

1. Data show the high request rate of the anomalous facility is likely representative of the community.

2. Data show the request rate for PIs is not reflective of the user community, and gaps do exist.

3. When combined with the implementation of the suggested recommendations, these efforts should increase the diversity of participants and the facilities that are used leading to the broadening of participation in the program and increasing the use of a subset of LAOF.

4. A data-driven needs assessment is valid and method to improve program performance and broaden participation.

5. Professional development gains:

1. A greater understanding of the differences between and when to apply an assessment and evaluation.

2. Building of professional network through communications and interest in PI perceptions of program.