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# *AGEP: Perceptions of the Participants*

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presented at

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# *Background*

- AGEP undergoing 10-year examination
    - AAAS/Campbell-Kibler
    - American Institutes of Research (AIR)
    - Quantitative, formal evaluations
  - Participant perspectives
    - Needed
    - Useful
  - A different set of questions
    - Qualitative
    - ◆ A series of semi-structured conversations
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# *Reminder*

- A snapshot in time and space
  - Not an evaluation
  - No outcomes impacting existing programs
  - No threat to existing funding or to probability of future funding
  - No intent to eliminate AGEP
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# *Alliances visited*

<b>Alliance</b>	<b>Lead Institution</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Dates (2009)</b>
Rice-Houston	Rice University	Houston, TX	29-31 July
Iowa	Iowa State Univ.	Ames, IA	27-29 August
SUNY AGEP	Stony Brook Univ.	Stony Brook, NY	31 August- 2 September
CUNY MAGNET- STEM	CUNY Graduate Center	New York, NY	8-10 September
Mississippi AGEP (AGEM)	Univ. of Mississippi	Oxford, MS	14-16 September
Northeast Alliance	Univ. of Mass., Amherst	Amherst, MA	29 September- 1 October

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# Visitors

## Name

## Institution

Arturo Bronson	Univ. of Texas, El Paso
Henry Frierson	Univ. of Florida
Carlos Gutiérrez	Cal. State Univ., LA
Frank Hamilton	Univ. of Florida
Wesley L. Harris	MIT
Philip Kutzko	Univ. of Iowa
Cheryl Leggon	Ga. Tech

## Name

## Institution

Theresa Maldonado	Texas A&M University
Charles McGruder, III	Western Ky. Univ.
Stephen McGuire	Southern University at Baton Rouge
Germán Núñez	Texas Tech Univ. HSC
Terrence Russell	Assn. for Institutional Research (ret.)
Janet Rutledge	University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Virginia Van Horne	Lexington, KY

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# *Procedure*

- Two days
  - Constituencies:
    - Faculty members
    - Program administrators
    - Campus project administrators
    - University leadership
    - Collaborative-program directors
    - Evaluators
    - Students
      - ◆ (undergraduates. graduate students)
  - Candid conversations
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# *Outputs*

- Planned:
  - Written summaries of individual visits to NSF
  - Overview report on collective impressions
- Unplanned:
  - Feedback to project directors and program managers based on observations
  - Not part of reports to NSF





# *Topics*

- Program administration, structure, operation
  - Student recruiting
  - Faculty perceptions and engagement
  - Student perceptions and engagement
  - Evaluation
  - Summary
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## *Program administration, structure, operation*

- Passionate commitment, dedication
  - Minimal staffing, often multiple reporting
  - Coordinate all AGEP student services
    - Minimal faculty roles
  - Mostly loose collaborations
    - MGE → AGEP
    - Apparently not strategically created (one exception)
    - Different operating structures
    - Joint activities
    - Collaborations productive
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# *Use of Funds*

- Stipends
  - Mostly supplemental
- Books, travel
- Available to all departments
  - “Lone” student





# *Student Recruiting*

- Mostly same conferences, fairs
  - Personal contacts
    - Research collaborations, sabbaticals
  - Less from local populations
    - Tendency to assume “best” go elsewhere
    - Recruit local undergraduates back?
  - Undergraduate research programs
  - Other ABP programs less fruitful
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# *Faculty Perceptions and Engagement*

- Favorable
  - Most see as fellowship program
    - “2 for the price of 1”
    - “makes recruiting easier”
    - “allows departments to take risks”
  - Rely on AGEF staff for mentoring, advising
    - Staff “overworked”
  - Notable exceptions
    - Scattered individuals
    - Graduate coordinators
    - Prior departmental histories and successes
    - Strongest engagement where program faculty driven
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# *Faculty Perceptions and Engagement*

- Almost no AGEP alumni appointed as faculty members
- Implications for ending of funding
  - “Spirit of AGEP” would remain
  - Biggest impact: reduced recruiting
    - ◆ Suggestion of removing residency requirements (a single individual)
  - Some support programs
  - Could continue if funding identified
    - ◆ Reallocations?



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## *Student Perceptions and Engagement*

- **Strong, mutually supportive sense of community**
    - On/across campuses, disciplines
    - Important for “lone student”
  - **Uniformly credit AGEP with their success**
    - Financial support
      - ◆ Less well aware of other fellowship sources
    - Advising, mentoring
    - “Safe haven” — first point of contact
      - ◆ Some climate issues
      - ◆ Illegitimacy
  - **Many not initially aware of AGEP**
    - Fellowship program?
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# *Student Perceptions and Engagement*

- Large number of non-US-born students in some programs
  - Satisfy eligibility criteria—permanent residents
  - Secondary education mostly outside US
  - A few baccalaureates outside US
  - US/Puerto Rican-born conscious of distinction





# *Student Career Plans*

- Few intend academic careers
    - Reasons to do so not presented
      - ◆ Transitions not clear
      - ◆ Details left to departments
    - Variable, uneven teaching requirements, opportunities
      - ◆ Little pedagogy, guidance
      - ◆ Some PFF-type programs, also IGERT, GK-12
  - Work elsewhere, then teach
  - “Teach on the side”
  - Need for postdoctorate
    - AGEP program?
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# *Evaluation*

- External evaluators for two Alliances
  - Mostly input, output data collection
    - Data quality, consistency, completeness are issues
    - Variable definitions of AGEP students
  - Occasional surveys, focus groups
    - Welcoming environment important
    - Younger faculty members more attuned than older
  - Little or no input from stakeholders
  - No consistent formative evaluations
  - No extended longitudinal outcomes
  - No examination of institutional change
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# *Suggestions*

- Review of program goals
    - Student development?
    - Institutionalization?
    - Institutional change?
  - Strategic Alliances
  - AGEP as an honor
  - External Advisory Committees
  - Faculty ownership – explicit faculty roles
  - AGEP marketing to constituencies
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# *Suggestions*

- Strengthen the “P”
    - AGEP postdoctorate
    - Requirement of guided teaching
  - Development of evaluation plan
    - Formative
    - Longitudinal
      - ◆ Social networking
      - ◆ Résumé collection
    - Budgeted
    - Stakeholder input
    - Consistent and systematic data definition and collection
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# *Suggestions*

- Broadened recruiting
    - Undergraduate research
    - Bridging programs
      - ◆ Re-examine pathways from LSAMP, Bridge to Doctorate
    - Inter-Alliance recruiting
    - Exchange programs
  - Strategic review of stipends
    - Funding level/student expense ratio
    - Avoid financial disadvantages of working with unfunded faculty
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# *Acknowledgments*

- National Science Foundation personnel
  - AIR personnel
  - Visiting team members
  - AGEP Program personnel
  - Participating faculty members
- Especially
- AGEP graduate students
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