

Save the Date! Conference on April 23rd, 2015

Partners will convene in Sacramento at CalEPA headquarters to discuss the formation of the CSU Disadvantaged Communities Center (DACC).

This conference will bring together our partnering experts to address the critical needs of DACs in California and to also discuss funding and governance opportunities for the DACC. Those in attendance will include NGOs, government officials, industry, representatives from the CSUs, CCCs, and UCs, and other potential funding partners.

Fresno State President Joseph Castro will commence the event with a welcome and overview. The conference will feature panels with our partnering experts from academia, industry, grassroots organizations, and government officials, including California state directors Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood), Fran Spivy-Weber, and Glenda Humiston.

Panel topics will include:

- Challenges facing rural DACs
- Challenges facing urban DACs
- California state directors' perspectives in addressing DAC water issues
- Case studies from the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) grant project assisting DACs
- Funding and governance of the DAC Center (DACC)

For more info -or- to RSVP, please email Maria Elena Kennedy:

mariaelenakennedy@icloud.com

Overview of Proposed California State University Disadvantaged Communities Center

The Water Resources and Policy Initiatives and its partners are forming the Disadvantaged Communities Center (DACC), a new California State University (CSU) institute dedicated to supporting water-related technical assistance and capacity building in disadvantaged communities (DACs) throughout California. The CSU Chancellor's Office has approved of the establishment of this system-wide institute that will focus on providing technical, financial, managerial and organizational assistance to DACs.

Developing an institute that provides water and other types of assistance to DACs is necessary for expanding the availability and frequency of such services. The centralized, administrative nature of such an institute can provide long-term consistency, improved communications, and resource maximization and expansion through the consolidation of funding and a unique pool of expertise. Furthermore, the CSU has a long-standing history in providing assistance to DACs and experience in cost-effective administration.

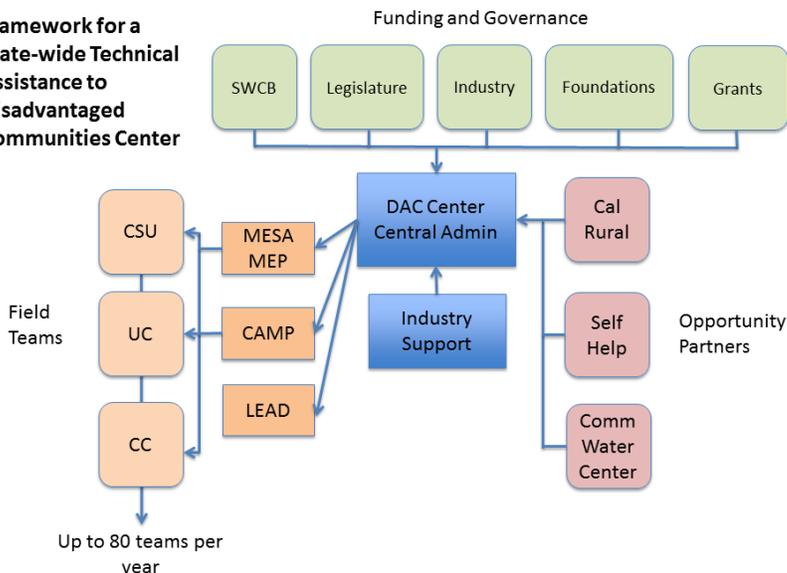
We will be engaging with partners from industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and higher education. In collaboration with the expertise of our industry and NGO partners, faculty and student research teams will be recruited across the California Public Higher Education system—CSU, University of California (UC), and California Community Colleges (CCC)—to engage in identifying and implementing solutions to the various water issues each DAC faces.

These academic research teams will represent expertise from various fields—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEMS), political science, business, and design to name a few. Student recruitment will be accomplished by the academic support programs Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) programs, College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and Latino Education and Advocacy Days (LEAD).

One of our goals is to involve underrepresented students in STEMS and in other participating disciplines. This will be an important opportunity for our students to gain valuable experiential learning.

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Framework for a State-wide Technical Assistance to Disadvantaged Communities Center





Overview of Proposed CSU DACC

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Many of our students come from DACs or underrepresented groups, and having these students bring their skillsets back into the community is a crucial component in assisting these DACs and solving our state's poverty.

Alongside our academic research teams, partnerships with engineering and consulting industries will provide the professional consultation required on many technical

assistance projects within DACs. Furthermore, NGOs already operating and providing technical assistance to DACs will have their capacities augmented and their existing knowledge utilized.

The main DACC will be housed at Fresno State. Project managers will be located at selected CSU campuses. The goal will be to set out approximately 50 to 80 field teams each year, each team embedded within a DAC; teams may remain within a DAC for multiple years as needed. Beyond improved conditions of quality water supply, indicators of long-term success will also be based on increased standards of living.

USDA Rural Utilities Service Funded Case Studies

Drinking Water Technical Assistance and Training for Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) in the California Central Valley project directly placed CSU water experts and student interns in five identified DACs in the California Central Valley for the purpose of identifying and evaluating problems and solutions to the respective area's drinking water issues.

The primary objective of the project was to gather and evaluate technical data that each respective DAC could use to support decision making regarding drinking water quality problems and to provide support to applications submitted for assistance grants.

Water supply in relation to drought conditions has been a major issue for three of the DACs located in Tulare County—London, Sultana, and East Orosi. Water meters are either non-operational or non-existent for residents; as a result, residents are unaware of how much water they are using, and a flat rate charge does not accurately reflect usage cost. Through an analysis, it was proposed that through grant funding, the installation of water consumption meters per household and low-flush toilets in these communities would result in water savings of up to 19%. Two letters of commitment were submitted to the Prop 84 grant, but the communities were not able to secure funding.

Also located in Tulare County, Monson faces issues of drinking water contamination; potable water contains nitrates five times the maximum contaminant level due to neighboring agricultural operations. Point-of-use reverse osmosis filters are currently addressing this problem, but limited storage capacity and inaccurate indicators for filter replacement have posed shortcomings. Analyzed solutions included the installation of a second tank to increase storage capacity and the installation of Total Dissolved Solids monitors for accurate filter replacement.

Drinking water contamination is also an issue in Fresno County's Perry Colony; water is contaminated with uranium and nitrates. Since Perry Colony is not part of a community water system, such high contaminant levels do not technically violate any laws for water contamination, despite being a health hazard to residents. Preliminary engineering reports were created for a new water distribution system to replace the current individualized well system.

While this pilot project was successful in identifying problems and solutions, the lack of time and administrative capacity demonstrates the difficulty of implementing long-lasting solutions in DACs. This is why we strive to establish a state-wide institute that can model after these pilot projects at a larger scale and capacity.

Funding: Prop 1 Water Bond

We have been reaching out to legislators and regulators in order to identify various sources of funding, which include Prop 1, Water Bond. On April 20th, we will be attending the CSU Agriculture-Water Impact Day, and we will be meeting with:

- Martha Guzman-Aceves, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary
- Senator Ben Hueso (D-San Diego)
- Assembly Committee on Water, Parks & Wildlife: Assemblymember Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood) and Principal Consultant Tina Cannon Leahy
- William Craven, Chief Consultant, Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water
- Senator Jeff Stone (R-Riverside County)
- Assemblymember Jose Medina (D-Riverside)
- Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D-Bell Gardens)