

MONTANA TECH

~ ~ ~ UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAM ~ ~ ~

WHY SHOULD YOU REPORT THE DEMOGRAPHICS REQUESTED BY NSF?

The Undergraduate Research Committee, as part of the requirements of the Undergraduate Research Program (URP), requires that all students of accepted proposals complete the form entitled: "MONTANA NSF EPSCoR DATA QUESTIONNAIRE." This form is required because NSF is a sponsor of URP through a State of Montana EPSCoR Grant. However, the demographics that they ask for do not need to be completed; rather, it is **strongly** encouraged. The reasons are discussed below:

"The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is a joint program of the National Science Foundation (NSF) with 24 US states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The program promotes the development of science and technology (S&T) resources for these entities through partnerships involving universities, industry, and government as well as the Federal research and development (R&D) enterprise. EPSCoR operates on the principle that aiding researchers and institutions in securing Federal R&D funding will develop a research infrastructure and advance economic growth. Therefore, EPSCoR's goal is to maximize the potential in S&T resources and use those resources as a foundation for economic growth.

The milestones for success of the NSF EPSCoR Program are straightforward. An important directive of the NSF EPSCoR Program is to improve and augment the recruitment of underrepresented groups as faculty, staff, and students. In this regard, the Montana NSF EPSCoR Program will take steps to attract applications from qualified women and/or minority candidates during its recruitment process and aggressively pursue the hiring of these candidates.

Therefore, when reporting each year to NSF, the progress and milestones attained through the various programs under the Montana EPSCoR grant, it is necessary that all demographics be reported (i.e. ethnicity, gender, race, handicap). This informs NSF as to whether the EPSCoR grant in Montana is being accurately carried out. The data is critical for assisting the university system in applying for future grant funding from NSF. NSF also uses the data to report to the U.S. Congress on the diversity and effectiveness of their student support programs. It is from the federal government that funding of this nature is ultimately received.

As you can see, the Undergraduate Research Committee really needs all students to complete all information on the form so that future students can have the same opportunity to do research under the URP via continued funding from NSF and other sources. To date, URP has funded 456 participants and 405 projects since its inception in 1996. Several projects have been directly funded through business support. Nearly half of all NSF sponsored projects have involved women, and other minorities clearly showing it is a success. The Undergraduate Research Committee thanks you beforehand for your cooperation.