Annual Evaluation Report for the AN-MSI Project, 2001-02

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In July of 2000, six months after the Washington, D.C. All Hands Meeting that served as the kickoff for the Advanced Networking with Minority Serving Institutions project (AN-MSI), the EduCause administrators of the project hired the Learning through Evaluation, Adaptation and Dissemination (LEAD) Center of the UW-Madison to serve as the official project evaluator. LEAD’s researchers have extensive background in performing formative and summative evaluation for educational technology initiatives and efforts to increase educational opportunities for underrepresented groups. LEAD’s evaluation of the AN-MSI project runs on an annual cycle from July to June. In this, our second annual evaluation report, the LEAD evaluators summarize the observations and participant feedback we have collected over the last year regarding AN-MSI and its impacts. This report is intended to provide project administrators and participants with an understanding of the factors that contribute to and hinder the project’s progress in assisting the nation’s Minority Serving Institutions in developing the technical infrastructure and staff expertise necessary to remain competitive in the 21st century and beyond.

Over the last year, beginning in July of 2001, LEAD has also been providing evaluation for the portion of the AN-MSI project administered by the Education, Outreach, and Training branch of the Partnership for Advanced Computational Infrastructure (EOT-PACI). The two partners in AN-MSI have different but complementary missions and serve somewhat different though overlapping participant groups. The EduCause-administered portion of AN-MSI develops collaborative national and regional initiatives to improve the networking infrastructure, technical training, and technology-related political leverage of the nation’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). As seen in Appendix A, there are currently 35 HBCUs, 35 HSIs, and 32 TCUs who are considered “partners” in AN-MSI, although only 19 (54%) of these HBCUs, 13 (37%) of the HSIs, and 13 (41%) of the TCUs participated in EduCause-sponsored AN-MSI meetings over the last year. Put another way, there were 45 MSIs who participated in EduCause’s AN-MSI events in 2001-02, represented by 73 individuals. The other 16 participants in these events came from EduCause, EOT-PACI, and LEAD; from three organizations that are consulting with the project on technical issues (the Dandin Group, the Executive Leadership Council, and dot.edu of the Univ. of Wisconsin System); and from three organizations that represent the needs of an MSI community nationwide (the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, or AIHEC; the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, or HACU, and the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education or NAFEO).

The EOT-PACI administered portion of the AN-MSI grant (which receives about 1/7 of the project’s total funding through a subcontract with EduCause) assists MSIs interested in High Performance Computing in acquiring the advanced computational resources and staff training needed to become influential players in the development and use of PACI’s high-end modeling and visualization applications. Because these high-end applications are not currently relevant to the teaching missions or research interests of all MSIs, and because a fairly sophisticated computer network is needed to support them, EOT-PACI envisioned itself working with only a

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1 The NSF award for the project was made on Sept 15, 1999.
subset of the MSIs participating in the EduCause-sponsored initiatives. Over the past year, 59 individuals from 27 MSIs (14 HBCUs, 9 HSIs, 4 TCUs) participated in at least one of four EOT-PACI sponsored AN-MSI events: SC’01 conference activities geared toward MSIs in October 2001, a Cluster Computing Workshop in San Diego in March 2002, an HPC MSI Working Group convened in March, and a second Cluster Computing Workshop in Urbana in May 2002. Only eight of the individuals participating in these events also participated in an EduCause-sponsored AN-MSI event over the past year. Nineteen of the institutions participating in EOT-PACI-sponsored events also sent representatives to an EduCause sponsored event, but the individuals involved were often not aware of this. Five individuals interviewed about their participation in both types of events did not see an obvious connection between EduCause/AN-MSI and EOT-PACI/AN-MSI or think that there was a need for one, although several first heard about the EOT-PACI events at an EduCause-sponsored AN-MSI meeting. Because of this difference in EduCause’s and EOT-PACI’s missions and audience served, LEAD has been evaluating their efforts separately. LEAD’s annual evaluation report for EOT-PACI’s AN-MSI activities is available from EOT-PACI Coordinator Stephanie McLean upon request.

A. Data collection methods:

The data summarized in this report comes from five AN-MSI evaluation activities that the LEAD Center performs annually: (1) attending, observing, and taking notes at AN-MSI Project Action Committee meetings, Strategic Planning meetings, and Caucus conference calls; (2) reviewing all AN-MSI documents and notes distributed through the AN-MSI website and listservs;² (3) collecting and analyzing the content of all messages sent to the project’s general listserv and its three community listservs; (4) performing individual phone interviews with Committee Chairs, Community Leaders, and Project Consultants involved with the project; and (5) surveying all AN-MSI members who have participated in at least one AN-MSI meeting over the last year. The most illuminating information about the project’s benefits and obstacles generally comes from the latter two activities: the administrator interviews conducted in the early winter and the annual participant survey conducted in the late spring.

In winter of 2001-02, the LEAD Center evaluators interviewed 15 of the Committee Chairs, Community Leaders, and Project Consultants administering the AN-MSI project. The goal of these interviews was to solicit feedback from those working on AN-MSI about the administration of the project, its progress, its perceived impacts to date, obstacles the project has encountered, and recommendations for improvement. A summary of the main findings from these interviews was distributed in February all attendees of the AN-MSI PAC Meeting in San Juan. In early May of 2002, LEAD emailed a 17-question survey to 80 of the 84 MSI and national organization representatives who had attended at least one AN-MSI meeting or workshop over the past year.³ A copy of this participant survey, which was completed by 42 recipients (53% of the total), may be found in Appendix B.⁴ LEAD received feedback regarding the AN-MSI project from 13 of the 35 HBCUs, 9 of the 35 HSIs, 7 of the 32 TCUs, and 6 of the 8 national organizations that are currently partnered with AN-MSI.

² The AN-MSI website is at http://www.anmsi.org/. Individuals associated with the project or representing one of the three MSI communities are added to the AN-MSI listserv and community listservs upon their request.
³ There were four meeting participants whose current email addresses and contact information could not be found. Also, the LEAD evaluators, the Project Director, and the Project Administrative Assistant were exempt from completing the survey.
⁴ This response rate is only slightly better than the previous year, when 46% of 83 survey recipients completed the survey.
The remainder of this report highlights the main themes that emerged from LEAD’s analysis of the 15 interviews and 42 participant surveys, our listserv analysis, and the 4 of 5 AN-MSI meetings that LEAD evaluators attended over the past year. These meetings included the Sitting Bull PAC Meeting in May 2001, the Strategic Planning Meeting in D.C. in October 2001, the San Juan PAC Meeting in February 2002, and the Langston PAC Meeting in May 2002. The most recent PAC Meeting at Langston May 21st-22nd occurred after our annual administrator interviews and participant survey had been conducted, but because of the importance of that meeting, we have included feedback about the Langston meeting in this year’s report. This feedback was collected through an evaluation form that was handed out during the meeting and emailed to all participants afterwards (16 of 54 attendees responded), through verbal comments from another five participants, and through notes made by LEAD evaluators during the meeting.

B. Who participates in AN-MSI?

AN-MSI meetings and committees are currently open to faculty, administrators, and IT staff from any of the 102 MSIs that are officially partnered with AN-MSI. Because project funding is used to pay travel, room, and board expenses for all attendees at AN-MSI meetings, it is important to document who these attendees are and what role they play in the project’s various initiatives. According to the registration lists, 89 individuals attended AN-MSI meetings between early May of 2001 and early May 2002. Overall, 35% of these individuals represented HBCUs (either a single institution, a consortium of institutions, or a consultant group serving that community), 25% represented HSIs, 26% represented TCUs, and 14% represented organizations or consulting groups with no ties to a particular racial or ethnic community. Thirty-eight percent of meeting attendees were their MSI’s highest-ranking technology administrator (CIOs or the equivalent), 32% were other members of the campus technical support staff, 9% were MSI campus administrators, 8% were MSI faculty members, and 14% were liaisons or consultants. Of those individuals currently participating in AN-MSI events, about three-quarters are men and one-quarter are women. About 70% of participants belong to an underrepresented ethnic minority.

C. What does AN-MSI participation involve?

Current participants in the AN-MSI project play a number of different roles in the project, often simultaneously. Because this is a nationwide project that serves three different ethnic communities in higher education and because the 102 Minority-Serving Institutions currently involved have a wide range of technological interests and needs, the project requires a broader administrative structure and a more collaborative decision-making process than is the case with some other projects. The EduCause portion of AN-MSI is administered by Project Director Dave Staudt with the aid of Project Assistant Valerie Rice (both of EduCause) and a Community Leader from each of the three MSI Communities: Laura Lee Davidson of Wilberforce University (formerly of the Executive Leadership Council) representing the HBCUs, Alex Ramirez of HACU representing the HSIs, and Carrie Billie of AIHEC representing the TCUs (taking over from Steve Dupuis/Tom Davis in Spring of 2001). In the first couple years of the project, Dave Staudt made most of the budgeting and project hiring decisions, with recommendations from community representatives and project consultants. During those two years, the Community

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5 Representatives from MSIs not yet partnered with the project may attend AN-MSI meetings at the invitation of their Community Leader.
Leaders (all of whom received half of their salary from AN-MSI at that time) were responsible for providing members of their community with timely information about project developments, representing their community at AN-MSI meetings, encouraging participation in project initiatives, and helping their community to develop and submit project proposals for AN-MSI funding. Over the past year, the Community Leaders have become more involved in budgetary decisions and are currently working with the Project Director to develop explicit guidelines for project spending, accountability, and documentation.

Project initiatives are planned and carried out by members of AN-MSI’s six Committees: Executive Awareness, Resource Development, Network Technology, Internet Connectivity, Applications, and Evaluation. With the exception of Evaluation, which is performed externally by professional evaluators from the UW-Madison’s LEAD Center, each AN-MSI Committee is led by 1-3 committee chairs and is comprised of 6-12 experts in that area, with at least one representative from all three MSI communities. Detailed information about each Committee’s goals, initiatives, and membership may be found on the AN-MSI website at http://www.anmsi.org/committees.asp. Over the last year, about half of AN-MSI meeting attendees have been members of one of these committees.

In response to participant feedback, two important improvements in the administration of the AN-MSI project were made in 2001-02. First, beginning at the Sitting Bull PAC Meeting in May of 2001, a new planning and project development group called the AN-MSI Caucus has been having monthly meetings (usually by phone) to discuss the latest project developments, coordinate initiatives that involve more than one committee, plan upcoming meetings, and advise the project’s evaluation. The Caucus currently comprises 18 administrators and consultants from the AN-MSI project, including the Project Director and Project Assistant, the Community Leaders, the project evaluators, several project consultants, and the most active of the Committee Chairs. All of the subsequent AN-MSI PAC meetings have been planned by this group. The Caucus’s monthly conference call agendas are developed with input from Caucus members, and an average of 60% of Caucus members participate in each call.

The second improvement in AN-MSI administration over the past year had been the development and refinement of a detailed Strategic Plan, with facilitation provided by Ramon Harris of the Executive Leadership Council. In the first two years of AN-MSI, the project’s committees and administrators used the outlines of the original proposal and recommendations from committee members to administer the project and develop its initiatives. The majority of participants felt that more explicit development and documentation of the project’s goals, strategies, and administrative processes was needed so that: (1) it would be easier to explain the project and its goals to stakeholders and potential funders; (2) it would be easier to assess the progress of the project in meeting its goals; and (3) those responsible for project initiatives and administration could be held accountable for project progress. On October 2-3, 2001, a group of 14 Caucus members met at EduCause’s offices in Washington D.C. to write the first draft of AN-MSI’s Strategic Plan. Members of each Committee were asked to continue developing and refining the strategies and objectives for their Committee’s initiatives over the next month, and the draft was presented to the whole body of AN-MSI at the PAC Meeting in Indianapolis on October 31-November 1. Further changes were requested and more input at the strategy level was needed from AN-MSI partner EOT-PACI, so the Strategic Plan was gradually revised over the next six months. The final draft was presented by Mr. Harris at the Langston PAC Meeting on May 21-22, 2002, and is available on the AN-MSI website.
One other category of participation in the AN-MSI project that is important to document is serving as a consultant on AN-MSI’s Campus Visit Teams. Beginning with a site visit to the University of Texas-El Paso on May 31-June 1, 2001, the AN-MSI project has been providing expert technical consultation and strategic planning to Minority-Serving Institutions that seek to assess, document, and improve their IT infrastructure. Interested MSIs have their CIO or President contact their Community Leader or Campus Visit Coordinator Ron Langley\(^6\) to arrange a two-day visit to their campus by 2-5 consultants from the AN-MSI project. These costs of these visits are shared by AN-MSI and the host campus. The Campus Visit Team is led by a technical consultant from the host campus’s own MSI Community whenever possible. Once on site, the AN-MSI consultants meet with the President and all available administrators, IT staff, and faculty involved in planning and maintaining the campus’s networking infrastructure. Having reviewed the campus’s IT documentation prior to their visit, the consultants collect additional information from meeting participants, tour the campus IT facilities, and inspect the campus’s networks, switches, and wiring closets. Within two weeks of the visit, the President and CIO receive a draft report of the Team’s findings and recommendations; within one month, they receive a final report. After the President has had time to review the report, the Team Leader contacts him or her to answer any questions about the report and schedule follow-up visits if desired. In the first 12 months of AN-MSI Campus Visits, 13 TCUs, 5 HBCUs, and 2 HSIs were visited. One HSI campus scheduled a follow-up visit, and 4 more TCUs have scheduled visits for June of 2002. During that first year of visits, 12 AN-MSI Committee members served on one or more Campus Visit teams, and another 3 AN-MSI members (2 Community Leaders and a Project Evaluator) attended one visit as observers.

On the 2001-02 AN-MSI Participant Survey conducted in May, participants were asked to indicate all of the various ways that they had been involved in the AN-MSI project up to that point. Below are the responses, listed by the percentage of respondents that engaged in an activity (Total number of respondents = 42):

- 100% participated in one or more AN-MSI meetings
- 83% were on AN-MSI’s general email listserv
- 74% were on the AN-MSI listserv for a particular community
- 64% were on an AN-MSI committee
- 62% encouraged other staff/faculty members to attend technical training workshops sponsored by AN-MSI
- 45% said their campus was participating in one or more technology projects or grant proposals related to AN-MSI
- 43% attended technical training workshops sponsored by AN-MSI
- 36% approached or contacted government representatives, private foundations, or corporations about supporting an AN-MSI initiative
- 33% gave talks or wrote articles/newsletter items to inform non-participants about AN-MSI and its initiatives.
- 29% viewed or participated in online seminars sponsored by AN-MSI
- 26% said their campus received technical consultation through an AN-MSI Campus Visit
- 19% were the chair/co-chair of an AN-MSI committee

D. How are participants kept informed about the project?

Project participants are kept informed of the project’s progress and technology-related opportunities through three different means: (1) reports and discussions at AN-MSI meetings; (2)

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\(^6\) Community Leader’s contact information is available on the AN-MSI website. Ron Langley, the Networking Committee Chair, may be reached at rlangley@bak.rr.com or (661) 398-8794.
postings by project administrators and other AN-MSI participants on the AN-MSI listservs (one general listserv, one for each of the 3 communities, and 5 new committee listservs); and (3) information on the AN-MSI website at http://www.anmsi.org/. Survey respondents were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction with the amount of information and updates they received about AN-MSI in 2001-02. Although the total percentage of participants who expressed satisfaction with the amount of information they were receiving (83%) was somewhat higher than in the previous year (77%), the degree of that satisfaction has declined, as seen in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with AN-MSI information received</th>
<th>2000-01 survey (N=38)</th>
<th>2001-02 survey (N=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the section of the survey where participants were asked about obstacles to AN-MSI’s progress, one of the potential obstacles was: “Lack of communication: We don’t hear from others frequently enough about the project, its progress, and what we should be doing.” Twenty-two percent of participants rated this as “a major obstacle,” 33% said it was “a minor obstacle,” 19% said it was “an obstacle but is no longer,” and 25% said it was “never an obstacle in my opinion.” By this measure, the percentage of participants who see lack of communication as an obstacle to AN-MSI (55%) is similar to that from the previous year (53%), but the degree of concern has increased, with those who see it as “a major obstacle” rising from 14% to 22%. There were differences in this measure by Community, with representatives from HBCUs being the most likely to see communication as a problem, representatives from HSIs being the least likely to see it as a problem, and representatives from the TCUs falling in-between. A possible explanation for why the degree of concern over communication has increased while the percentage of those concerned has not is that individuals who perceive something as a problem become increasingly frustrated over time if that problem is not addressed. The amount of frustration that can build if individuals or their communities feel that their concerns are not being attended to was particularly evident at this year’s Langston PAC Meeting. At that meeting, accountability issues that the group had raised in February became the focus of tense discussions because representatives from the HBCUs felt that their prior requests for more information on project finances, accountability, and outcomes had not been sufficiently honored.

Winter interviews with AN-MSI Community Leaders, Committee Chairs, and consultants suggested that even participants at the level of project administration saw room for improvement with regards to the amount and timing of project communication. While project administrators knew more about what was going on with the project than the typical AN-MSI participant, their knowledge was focused on the particular area or initiatives in which they were involved, and some reported critical communication gaps with other administrators about activities or decisions that affected their work. A number of interviewees reported not having enough contact with or guidance from their Community Leaders, and some interviewees said that Project Director Dave Staudt was in the habit of making important decisions without consulting them first. Although the number of project administrators who felt “cut out of the information loop” was relatively small, the lapses in communication they experienced sometimes caused embarrassment,
including a misunderstanding about a campus needing to share in the costs of a Campus Visit that was not discovered until the Campus Visit Team was onsite. About half of the administrators LEDA interviewed—particularly those from HBCUs—wanted more information about the project’s finances and administrative decisions than what they were receiving. These issues were raised publicly at the San Juan PAC Meeting in February 2002, where Project Evaluator Julie Foertsch facilitated a group discussion on communication gaps and other issues of concern (see Appendix C). Some outcomes of this discussion were:

- Dave Staudt and other project administrators were asked to be as open as possible about decisions being made on the project and were told that “nothing should be left off the table” in group discussions.
- Committee Chairs and others who lead initiatives were asked to report about strategies that failed as well as those that succeed so that others could learn from their mistakes.
- Ramon Harris and others working on the Strategic Plan were urged to complete a final draft as soon as possible.
- Project Assistant Valerie Rice was asked to post the minutes from all Caucus conference calls on the AN-MSI listserv so that all project participants could receive monthly updates about project developments and decisions.
- Community Leaders were asked to be more active in directing their constituents towards information about relevant AN-MSI initiatives and taking more of a leadership role in encouraging and submitting AN-MSI proposals from their Community.

As of June 2002, the actions on the items above have included the following:

- Dave Staudt and other project administrators have made attempts to be more open about project-related decisions and finances, but this openness has not been without its short-term costs, as evidenced by the divisiveness of the finance and accountability discussions at the Langston PAC Meeting;
- Ramon Harris completed the final draft of the Strategic Plan and presented it to the group at the Langston PAC Meeting in late May of 2002;
- The Caucus conference call minutes are now available on the AN-MSI listserv every month;
- TCU Community Leader Carrie Billie got all of the TCUs signed up for Campus Visits (to be completed this summer), and HBCU Community Leader Laura Lee Davidson convened an HBCU Community Meeting the day before the Langston PAC Meeting to discuss her community’s proposals and concerns.

Project participants in general and HBCU representatives in particular have been more vocal over the last year about their desires for more frequent and more complete information about project initiatives, particularly with regards to project finances. At the Langston PAC Meeting in late May, the TCU representatives for the Tribal Wireless Project (AN-MSI’s furthest-developed and most expensive project initiative to date) were asked many pointed questions about their project’s completion delays, expenses, and documentation—something which the HBCU representatives asking the questions felt had been lacking from previous discussions. However, because the tone of these inquiries made the TCU representatives feel that their most important project was being “attacked”\(^7\) and because no other AN-MSI projects had been subject to the

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\(^7\) HBCU representatives at the Langston Meeting emphatically requested that funding to the Wireless Project be cut off until certain problems within that project and with regards to AN-MSI administrative procedures were corrected.
same scrutiny, many of the non-HBCU participants at the meeting felt that this discussion did as much harm as good. Indeed, a number of the administrators who were interviewed in the winter expressed concern that having the entire group focus on financial issues could create defensiveness and competition between communities rather than a focus on collaboration and what the project’s overall needs are. This concern seemed to be borne out at the Langston PAC Meeting, where the divisions between communities with regards to their priorities and their cultural styles of conflict resolution had never been more clear. Responses to the brief survey that participants were asked to fill out at the end of the meeting and verbal comments from attendees reflected clear divisions forming between communities with regards to how or whether to “divide” the AN-MSI funding that remained for the last 18 months of the project. This split occurred in spite of the fact that all meeting participants agreed that greater accountability and documentation were needed for all AN-MSI projects and initiatives. On the post-meeting survey, HBCU representatives gave significantly higher ratings than representatives from other communities for almost all of the meeting’s agenda items, particularly those in which accountability and financial issues were discussed. The following comments from the Langston Meeting evaluation survey are representative of the contrasting perspectives between meeting participants on the usefulness of these types of discussions in moving the project forward:

**HBCU rep:** It was on target. Way overdue. Expenses, contracts, and deliverables need more discussion.

**HBCU rep:** I’d like more details about expenditures and more leadership and accountability from the Project Director.

**HBCU rep:** Would like to investigate depth of diligence in Project Management. Why does it seem there is a lack of accountability and rigorous management with respect to projects?

**HSI rep:** My main disappointments with the Langston meeting were the limited amount of inter-community interaction, much of which occurs in the committee meetings, which we had to cancel; and the amount of time we spent on project mechanics, rather than project technology.

**HSI rep:** Spent too much time on negatives, setting a bad tone, and not covering topics that were constructive…The 3 communities need to work together, and fostering mistrust is an outcome of the Langston meeting that will not easily be overcome.

**HSI rep:** We should have had more discussion on if we want the AN-MSI project to continue [beyond NSF funding], and how we can make this happen. The meeting should have been more positive.

To supplement the information received through presentations and discussions at meetings, all AN-MSI participants are sent a copy of the monthly AN-MSI newsletter (first issue: April 2002), and over 80% of participants receive almost daily postings on the AN-MSI general listserv and one or more of the Community listservs. These email listservs have been in operation since late February of 2001 and are the primary means by which the Project Director, project consultants, and Community Leaders communicate to other AN-MSI participants about project developments between PAC Meetings. “Being on a listserv that allows participants to both post and receive IT-related information and project updates” was rated as “a major project benefit” by 42% of this year’s survey respondents and as “a minor benefit” by 55%, ranking it third among all benefits received. Because of the importance of the AN-MSI listservs in alerting project participants to important opportunities and keeping AN-MSI’s broad national community connected to one another, LEAD analyzes the traffic on all four listservs every year. From June 1, 2001 through May 31, 2002, 344 messages were sent on the general AN-MSI listserv, 25 on the HBCU listserv, 22 on the TCU listserv, and 6 on the HSI listserv. Table 3 shows an analysis by topic of the general listserv, the most active of the AN-MSI listservs by far. (Most of the messages
posted on the community listservs are also posted on the general listserv.) To give the reader a sense of the degree of community participation in posting to the listserv, the third column shows the percentage of messages pertaining to each topic that were sent by either Project Director Dave Staudt or Project Assistant Valerie Rice. All other messages received were from individuals representing an MSI or from project consultants.

Table 3: Number and % of messages received by the AN-MSI listserv in one year (June 2001-May 2002), by topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of posted message (N=344)</th>
<th>n of messages (% of all posts)</th>
<th>% from EduCause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resources available: equipment, software</td>
<td>129 (38%)</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings or business proceedings</td>
<td>72 (21%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of individual achievements/job changes</td>
<td>38 (11%)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN-MSI workshops or training opportunities</td>
<td>34 (10%)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN-MSI in the news, media releases</td>
<td>31 (9%)</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates on existing projects and developing initiatives</td>
<td>18 (5%)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-AN-MSI conferences and meetings</td>
<td>9 (3%)</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activity relevant to AN-MSI; reports from DC</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical information and IT best practices</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal opportunities (external funding sources)</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the HBCU listserv, 7 of the 25 posts in 2001-02 were sent by Community Leader Laura Lee Davidson. On the TCU Community, none of the 22 posts were from TCU Community Leader Carrie Billie. On the HSI listserv, one of the 6 posts was from Community Leader Alex Ramirez. These figures show the extent to which the Community Leaders have utilized their community listserv as a means of communicating with their constituents.

E. The project’s benefits: What do AN-MSI participants value most about the project?

Both interviewees and survey respondents were asked what they valued about participating in the AN-MSI project, with interviewees asked to discuss whatever came to mind and survey respondents asked to consult a list of 17 potential benefits and rate each on whether it was “not a benefit I have experienced,” “a minor benefit I have experienced,” or “a major benefit I have experienced.” On the next page, Table 2 shows how survey respondents rated the project’s potential benefits in May of 2002:

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8 For the TCU listserv, the majority of the posts (12 of 22) were from Dewayne Hendricks of the Dandin Group, who coordinates the Tribal Wireless Project and posts any news releases related to the Tribes and technology. The various individuals involved in the TCU leadership and initiatives use regular conference calls for most of their communication.
Table 2: Benefits of participating in AN-MSI in 2001-02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating scale: 0 = not a benefit; 1 = a minor benefit; 2 = a major benefit</th>
<th>% who rated as benefit</th>
<th>Mean rating (0-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Networking with IT people at MSIs within my community</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking with IT people from other MSI communities</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting funding to attend IT-related meetings</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming to understand the similarities and differences between ethnic communities</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming to understand the similarities and differences between MSIs</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a diverse community of IT professionals pursuing common goals</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding my own knowledge of IT-related issues</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being on a listserv that allows me to post and receive IT-related info and project updates</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to expand others’ knowledge of IT-related issues</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having greater MSI visibility and leverage within government and majority organizations</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with AN-MSI participants from other institutions on IT grants or initiatives</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating people on my campus about IT-related needs and how to address them</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting info about technology initiatives and funding opportunities</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating government and corporations about the IT needs of MSIs</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting training in IT through workshops sponsored by AN-MSI</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting funding to spend my time working on community-wide technology initiatives</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting AN-MSI funding for technology initiatives that directly affect my campus</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most significant change since the previous year in how these 17 benefits were rated is that “being on the AN-MSI listserv” (which had only been in operation for 2.5 months at the time of last year’s survey) has soared in importance as a benefit. Last year it was rated 16th, with 70% of respondents considering it a benefit (mean rating = .97); this year it is rated 8th, with 97% of respondents considering it a benefit (mean rating = 1.39).

The major benefits of the AN-MSI project, as determined through this survey and through interviews with 15 project participants, are discussed in more detail below:

E.1. **Getting to know IT people at other institutions inside and outside one’s own minority community:**

Having opportunities to network with IT professionals and administrators at other MSIs is still considered the project’s biggest benefit. Inter-community networking and intra-community networking were essentially tied as the top-ranked benefit in both years that LEAD has surveyed, with about ¾ of survey respondents perceiving it as a major benefit and most others perceiving it as a minor benefit. All interviewees said they valued the fact that these three communities who had never worked together before have been brought together, are coming to understand and trust one another, and are finding ways of cooperating. In the most concrete sense, the intra- and inter-community relationships developed through AN-MSI have resulted in inter-institutional collaborations on grants and IT projects that a number of interviewees said “wouldn’t have happened otherwise.”

E.2. **Receiving project funding to attend IT-related meetings and conferences:**

Survey respondents and interviewees both considered funding to attend AN-MSI’s meetings a major benefit of the project. A number of the MSIs participating in this project (particularly TCUs) cannot afford to send IT personnel to these national meetings out of their own budgets. Nevertheless, some of the interviewees thought the large, face-to-face meetings should be reduced in their frequency now that an initial period of networking has occurred and now that
there are monthly Caucus calls to allow communication between the project’s most active members. Survey respondents in 2001-02 rated this benefit 3rd, with 74% saying it was a major benefit and 18% a minor benefit.

E.3. Professional development: Expanding participants’ knowledge of IT-related issues: Numerous project participants have said in interviews and other discussions how much they are learning about the latest technology and the IT solutions at other schools by attending AN-MSI meetings. Indeed, one of the greatest interests of many of this year’s meeting attendees was to hear reports and receive documentation from participants who have implemented new technologies at their schools so that they may learn from those schools’ successes and failures. Overall, survey respondents ranked professional development for themselves 7th out of the 17 potential benefits listed, with 62% saying it was a major benefit and 23% a minor benefit. (This benefit had dropped somewhat in importance from the previous year, when it was ranked 3rd and rated as a major benefit by 70% and a minor benefit by 19%.) In addition to attending AN-MSI meetings, a small number of participants from all three communities have been invited to attend AN-MSI sponsored technical training workshops over the past two years of the project. Because of the comparatively small number of people participating in technical workshops through the EduCause portion of AN-MSI,9 attending workshops to gain IT training was ranked only 15th out of the 17 potential benefits, but it was a benefit that 2/3 of survey respondents said they had experienced (a rating which may also reflect attendance at EOT-sponsored AN-MSI workshops).

E.4. Being part of a diverse community of IT professionals that appreciate each other’s cultural similarities and differences and work together to achieve common goals: In this year’s survey, “being part of a diverse community of IT professionals who have developed enough trust and understanding to pursue common goals” was rated as a major benefit by 59% of respondents and a minor benefit by 33%, ranking it 6th overall. Many interviewees and participants at AN-MSI meetings have described the personal rewards of learning about other cultures and getting to know people outside their usual social circle. Interviewees placed a high value on the sense of community that had formed between AN-MSI participants of diverse cultural backgrounds and emphasized the importance of being able to talk openly about similarities and differences in order to come to a consensus on their shared goals. This process has been an “eye-opening” experience for many involved, although it has not always been an easy one, as the discussions at the last PAC Meeting in Langston illustrate. In that meeting, cultural differences in expression and conflict resolution added to the tension of a difficult discussion about project finances and accountability. Even in the many cases where discussants from different communities agreed with what other discussants were saying, that agreement was not always apparent because of the contrasting ways in which members from different cultural backgrounds expressed their views. Nevertheless, in the comments that concluded the meeting and in interviews this year and last, AN-MSI participants have repeatedly said how “rewarding” it has been to be a part of the AN-MSI community and how important it is that the HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs continue to find ways to collaborate and learn from one another. In this year’s survey (completed in the weeks right before the Langston Meeting) 2/3 of survey respondents said that “coming to understand the similarities and differences between different ethnic communities” and “coming to understand the similarities and differences between MSIs” were major benefits for them, while just over ¼ said they were minor benefits. These benefits ranked 4th and 5th respectively and were similar to their rankings from last year.

9 The EOT-PACI portion of AN-MSI focuses much more intensively on IT training, with most of its annual funding dedicated to training workshops for MSI representatives in Cluster Computing and HPC applications. See the EOT-PACI evaluation report for more details.
E.5. **Unifying three minority communities through their common IT goals allows each community greater political visibility and leverage:**

Most interviewees both this year and last said they valued the sense of unity and common purpose that the AN-MSI project has fostered, because unity equals political leverage. Many participants feel that the communities have far more to gain by working together and presenting a united front than they do by working as separate institutions or communities, as they have in the past. This is felt to be especially important in meetings with the federal government. As a nationwide cross-cultural minority group, AN-MSI is unique in higher education and has a better chance of gaining visibility. Among this year’s survey respondents, “being part of a large group of MSIs whose size gives us visibility and leverage within the government and majority organizations” was seen as a major benefit by 53% of respondents (ranking it 10th overall) and a minor benefit by 29%, similar to the ratings from last year.

E.6. **The salary support that AN-MSI provides for project administrators and IT consultants within each community:**

AN-MSI’s salary support was seen as very important to the success of the project by a number of interviewees. In its first 18 months, AN-MSI provided five individuals within the minority communities with half-time funding to work on technology initiatives that extend across their entire community. Although which individuals and which roles in the project receive AN-MSI funding has changed over the past year, paying individuals to work on project initiatives and administration continues to play a critical role in the project’s development. Several interviewees said key roles within the project could not be filled without salary support, because few people who serve as the primary IT support for their institution have time to do cross-community IT projects on the side. Among survey respondents, the vast majority of whom had not received any salary support through AN-MSI, receiving such support was seen as a major benefit by 22% and a minor benefit by 30%, similar to the ratings from the previous year.

F. **What impacts of the AN-MSI project have participants already perceived?**

A complete list of the accomplishments and impacts of the AN-MSI project as of June 2002 can be found in AN-MSI’s annual report to the National Science Foundation. Below are what interviewees considered some of AN-MSIs major accomplishments in 2001-02 (note that the ordering below does not reflect perceived importance):

- **Campus Visits by AN-MSI consultant teams:** From June 1, 2001-May 31, 2002, 13 TCUs, 5 HBCUs, and 2 HSIs were visited by technical consultants from the AN-MSI project to receive assessments of their IT plans and networking infrastructure and guidance in how to improve them.
- **Strategic Plan:** From October 2001-May 2002, AN-MSI administrators, facilitated by Ramon Harris of the Executive Leadership Council, developed, revised, and completed a Strategic Plan for the entire AN-MSI project and all its various initiatives.
- **The Tribal Wireless Project:** Over the past year, the project led by Dewayne Hendricks of the Dandin Group has assisted four TCUs in obtaining wireless backbones and campus wireless networks to provide their institutions and surrounding Tribal communities with reliable Internet and telecommunication access that they would not otherwise have.

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10 Two Community Leaders who are now fully-funded through other organizations or institutions no longer receive half-time funding through the project, and several consultants—one from an HSI, one from a TCU, and one with no ties to a particular AN-MSI community—are now working exclusively for the project. Some of the consultants who participate in AN-MSI site visits have also been compensated for their work.
• **Videoconference series on online learning at MSIs**: From November 2001 to April 2002, AN-MSI administrators at the University of Texas-El Paso hosted a series of six online videoconferences about issues involved in developing and maintaining successful distance education courses at MSIs. A CD-ROM of the entire series is being made.

• **Grant collaborations**: AN-MSI Members from all three communities have been collaborating with one another on several NSF grant proposals, although none of this year’s proposals were funded. Last year, a $620,000 Department of Education Title V Cooperative Development Grant was awarded to California State-Bernardino and four other California HSIs who were collaborators through the AN-MSI project.

• **AN-MSI promotional materials**: Over the past year, consultant Eric Jensen was hired to assist in disseminating information about AN-MSI’s mission and accomplishments. He produces a monthly AN-MSI newsletter and has assisted in creating the project’s brochure, logo, and other promotional materials. The project’s Networking Model for MSIs has been printed and is being disseminated through various channels.

G. How satisfied are participants with the project’s progress?

A considerable amount of progress has been made in the past year of the AN-MSI project with regards to the number of activities and products initiated and completed, including those mentioned in Section F. But much remains to be accomplished, and a number of proposed initiatives are in the planning stages or awaiting project funding. When asked about their satisfaction with AN-MSI’s progress, survey respondents’ gave very similar responses in each of the last two years of the project. As seen in Table 4, about 2/3 of all respondents in each year reported satisfaction with the project’s progress, but in 2001-02, the majority (50%) said they were only “somewhat satisfied.” The degree of satisfaction in 2001-02 differed by community, with the satisfaction among HBCU representatives being the lowest (mean = 2.71 on a 4-point scale), HSI satisfaction being somewhat higher (mean = 2.87), and the satisfaction among TCU representatives being the highest (mean = 3.00).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction with AN-MSI’s progress</th>
<th>2000-01 survey (N=38)</th>
<th>2001-02 survey (N=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat satisfied</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat dissatisfied</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know enough to comment</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

H. What are some perceived obstacles to the project’s progress?

Interviewees and survey respondents were asked what they thought were the major obstacles to AN-MSI making faster progress. Two obstacles mentioned by this year’s interviewees—communication gaps between participants and a lack of agreement about how project finances should be spent—were discussed in section D. Survey respondents were given a list of 13 potential obstacles and were asked to rate each on a 4-point scale as “was never an obstacle” (1 point) “was an obstacle but is no longer” (2 pts), “a minor obstacle” (3 pts), “a major obstacle” (4 pts), or “I don’t know enough to have an opinion on this.” For each item, 6-13 of the 42 respondents said they didn’t know enough to have an opinion. Using this 4-point scale, the obstacles that AN-MSI faced in 2001-02 were ranked as seen below in Table 5, with the
percentage of this year’s respondents (and last year’s respondents) who perceived something as an obstacle seen in the second column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Perceived obstacles to the progress of AN-MSI in 2001-02</th>
<th>% rating as current obstacle (last yr’s %)</th>
<th>Mean rating (1-4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time and competing responsibilities for project workers</td>
<td>86% (64%)</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing agendas between participants make it hard to come to consensus</td>
<td>79% (38%)</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sufficient project funding from NSF</td>
<td>78% (59%)</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of training among technical support staff at the campuses</td>
<td>80% (52%)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding among college presidents about their IT needs</td>
<td>72% (48%)</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support and matching funds from campuses</td>
<td>67% (63%)</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding &amp; trust between coordinators and minority participants</td>
<td>64% (30%)</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The concrete benefits for individual campuses are unclear</td>
<td>61% (52%)</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of communication between participants</td>
<td>55% (42%)</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leadership: The project management is not clear and forceful enough</td>
<td>47% (27%)</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns about collaborating with campuses who are normally competitors</td>
<td>50% (27%)</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding and trust between the three minority communities involved</td>
<td>42% (19%)</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities for input to project management</td>
<td>42% (9%)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first thing to note is that for all but one factor, the percentage of respondents perceiving these factors as obstacles has increased substantially since last year. This sharp increase in the degree to which various factors are perceived as obstacles could have as much to do with an increase in participants’ knowledge about the project as it does with factors actually becoming “more problematic.” Also, as the project’s NSF funding is spent and the end of the funding period nears, participants have understandably gotten more anxious about anything which prevents the project from reaching its goals. The second thing that is important to note is that all but one of the average ratings (see column 3) are between 2 (“was an obstacle but is no longer”) and 3 (“a minor obstacle”), meaning that the majority of respondents do not see any factor except “lack of time” as being a major obstacle. In other words, those factors that were still considered obstacles at the time of the survey were, on the average, perceived as minor obstacles.

The main changes from last year in how these factors were ranked relative to one another are:

- “Competing agendas between participants make it hard to come to consensus” moved up substantially from the 8th biggest obstacle last year to a tie for 2nd this year. In 2000-01, only 11% of participants saw this as a major obstacle and 27% as a minor obstacle. In 2001-02, 41% saw this as a major obstacle and 38% as a minor obstacle.

- “Lack of support and matching funds from campuses” moved down from 2nd last year to 6th this year, but the percentage of participants who saw this as an obstacle was about the same (63% last year; 67% this year). This was the only factor that did not show a substantial increase in the percentage of participants who were concerned about it.

Other than these changes, the biggest perceived obstacles to AN-MSI’s progress remained the same between this year and last year. The four biggest obstacles in 2001-02 and what interviewees had to say about them are described in more detail below:

H.1. *Lack of time and competing responsibilities for project workers:* As was the case last year, the main perceived obstacle to AN-MSI’s progress according to survey respondents was a lack of time and competing responsibilities for those who work on the AN-MSI project. The percent of respondents who considered this a major obstacle went up to 53% (from 28% the previous year)
and the percent who considered it a minor obstacle stayed about the same (36%). All of those interviewed similarly felt that the day-to-day institutional responsibilities of almost everyone involved in the project were a significant factor in project delays. For most committee members, their AN-MSI related assignments must be done on top of the existing demands of being an administrator or IT support staff at their own institution. Many interviewees admitted that they and others on their committee were having difficulty juggling these competing demands and giving sufficient time to the project.

H.2. Competing agendas between participants make it hard to come to consensus:
Last year, competing agendas between AN-MSI participants was seen as an obstacle by only 37% of survey respondents (11% as a major obstacle; 27% as a minor obstacle). In 2001-02, 79% saw this as an obstacle (41% as a major obstacle; 38% as a minor obstacle). The degree to which this was considered an obstacle might have been even higher if the annual AN-MSI survey had occurred after the Langston PAC Meeting in late May, where there was direct competition between the interests of the TCU representatives (who were trying to protect the funding for a community-wide project that is of prime importance to them) and the HBCU representatives (who wanted greater financial accountability to ensure that sufficient AN-MSI funding would remain for the proposals under development within their own community). Interviewees also mentioned competing agendas between individuals within a single community, each of whom have their own campus’s interests and their own pet projects or reputations to protect. Although many participants in AN-MSI have been able to look beyond their own schools and communities to collaborate on regional and national projects with other AN-MSI participants, the fact remains that almost every individual working on the project is under pressure from his or her institution or their constituents to “get their fair share” from AN-MSI’s budget and development activities. The more schools that are involved in a collaborative project and the greater the diversity between participants in terms of school size and culture, the more difficult it is to reach consensus on group priorities, and AN-MSI is arguably one of the largest and most diverse NSF collaborations ever attempted. Given that—and the low amount of funding provided—many interviewees have said they are surprised the project has accomplished as much as it has. Some said that in order for the project to succeed in the long term, compromises will need to be made with regards to the particulars of individual initiatives and a greater focus will have to be placed on the good of the project as a whole rather than on the needs or interests of individual campuses or communities. These interviewees felt that priority might have to be placed on those projects that can garner the most favorable attention for AN-MSI, that have the best chance to produce products that can be disseminated, or that will be relevant to the largest number of MSIs in the long-run. And, as one interviewee and several meeting attendees pointed out, AN-MSI participants should remember that most of the funding for projects should not and cannot come from AN-MSI’s original grant. That grant is being used to produce a collaborative network of MSIs that can work together to obtain additional funds from government and corporate sources for whatever IT development they might need.

H.3. Lack of sufficient project funding:
Lack of sufficient project funding was considered a major obstacle by 45% of survey respondents and a minor obstacle by 33%. Many interviewees and meeting attendees have said that the $6 million in funding that AN-MSI received from NSF falls far short of what is needed to make significant IT improvements at the 102 MSIs currently involved in the project, much less all 300+ MSIs nationwide. Hence, rather than being used to buy networking equipment for individual campuses, most of the NSF money is being used as “seed money” to build human networks of IT professionals across the three MSI communities and to fund collaborative work
on grant proposals and project initiatives. The difficulties surrounding AN-MSI’s comparatively small budget are compounded by the fact that many of the TCUs and HBCUs involved in the project have very small IT budgets of their own to work with. According to survey respondents, the low IT budgets of most MSIs is yet another barrier that project participants will have to overcome. In 2001-02, this was rated as a major obstacle by 41% and a minor obstacle by 26%.

H.4. Lack of training among technical support staff at participating campuses:
A major problem facing colleges and universities nationwide is difficulty in finding and keeping well-trained IT staff to support their campus networks. There is a national shortage of qualified IT workers, and smaller and less well-funded schools like many of the MSIs participating in this project have a particularly hard time paying the salaries that would attract and retain highly-skilled IT professionals. One goal of AN-MSI is to assist these campuses in bringing their IT staff up-to-speed on the latest technology, since many MSIs cannot afford to send their IT staff to training workshops on their own. Still, AN-MSI currently does not have the funding to meet the demand, so insufficiently-trained campus IT staff will continue to be an obstacle for years to come. Survey respondents in 2001-02 ranked this obstacle 4th, with 37% saying it was a major obstacle and 43% a minor obstacle. Several participants who have been involved with Campus Visits and the Tribal Wireless Project acknowledged that under-trained staff at some MSIs make it challenging for campuses to upgrade and maintain their existing networks, even if the funding for hardware and software can be found. As is the case with every IT program, advanced technology cannot be effectively utilized unless college presidents invest in developing their IT staff as well, but the funding to train—and to keep—well-trained staff is not readily found at many MSIs.

I. What can the Project Director do to be more effective in administering the project?

Opinions remain divided over the approach that Project Director Dave Staudt of EduCause should take in administering the AN-MSI project. As was the case last year, these differences seemed to reflect cultural differences between respondents in: (1) the importance of consensus-building, (2) the importance of community autonomy and self-guidance, (3) how much their community values production over process, and (4) the degree of perceived pressure for the representatives to justify time spent on the project through material benefits for their particular campus. When survey respondents were asked about their degree of satisfaction with Dave Staudt’s role as the director of AN-MSI, 40% said they were “very satisfied,” 38% said they were “fairly satisfied,” 18% said they were “somewhat dissatisfied,” and 5% said they were “very dissatisfied.” Of the eight people who wrote comments to explain their rating, six comments were very positive, one was negative, and one was very negative.

As with the survey respondents, the majority of interviewees both this year and last were generally pleased with Dave Staudt’s leadership. Most agreed with Dave’s stated approach of setting up some general guidelines and then stepping aside to communicate to the communities that they are full partners in making project decisions and carrying them forward. However, several interviewees felt that, in reality, Dave had often made decisions without consulting the appropriate community or committee representatives. Interviewees and survey respondents alike acknowledged that the Project Director has a difficult role in which he must try to coordinate many competing agendas and that it is impossible to please everyone involved. As one survey respondent said, “I think Dave is making a sincere effort to achieve the goals of the AN-MSI project...There are structural obstacles involved with getting 100+ MSIs to participate in a meaningful way that prevent the project from moving forward as quickly as we would like.”
While some participants complained that Dave made decisions without them, other participants said they had gone to Dave with requests only after they had received no response from their Community Leader or other administrators. And while some participants felt Dave should push harder to set deadlines and clarify what he expects from all the people working on AN-MSI, others felt that these decisions should be made by the Community Leaders. As was the case in the previous year, how representatives from the three communities responded to Dave Staudt’s leadership tended to follow these patterns:

- **TCU representatives** were generally very pleased with Dave’s leadership and facilitation of AN-MSI meetings. Dave had worked extensively with the Tribals in the past, and his “laid-back” leadership style fits well with most TCU representatives’ preference for consensus-building and Tribal self-determination.

- **HSI representatives** tended to be very “product-focused” in general, but most felt that the complexity of this project and the difficulties of meeting the needs of three very different communities would require more patience and a longer time frame than with most projects. Although many of these representatives were still anxious to move forward and produce results, most were generally pleased with how Dave had handled his facilitation duties and were looking toward the long term with respect to project impacts.

- **HBCU representatives** have been the most vocal about the need for the project to “move forward” and “produce results” in previous years. Although this concern was frequently mentioned in interviews and at PAC Meetings, over the last six months many HBCU representatives have shifted their focus to issues of process and intra-project accountability: Who is making decisions about project initiatives?; how much do the various initiatives cost?; what are the initiatives’ timelines and who is responsible when those timelines are not followed? Last year, most HBCU interviewees felt that Dave needed to be more forceful and explicit in his guidance of AN-MSI. This year, although the concern over having explicit rules of process continues, HBCU leaders have been pressing for greater control by the HBCU community on where AN-MSI project money is spent. Partway through the year, Dave Staudt was told to route all inquiries from HBCUs about funding requests or other AN-MSI activities through the HBCU Community Leader.

Interviewees and survey respondents were also asked about EduCause’s role in the AN-MSI project. Most participants feel that EduCause is the right organization to handle this project because of its nationwide network of resources and its IT expertise, but many expressed disappointment that EduCause has not given the project the support or visibility they feel it deserves. According to the survey, participants’ satisfaction with EduCause’s role as coordinator of the project has dropped from last year: 25% percent of this year’s survey respondents said they were “very satisfied” with EduCause’s role (down from 39% the previous year), and 58% said they were “fairly satisfied.” Thirteen percent said they were “somewhat dissatisfied” and 5% said they were “very dissatisfied,” a slight increase in dissatisfaction from 2000-01, when 16% said they were “somewhat dissatisfied.”

J. What can the Community Leaders do to be more effective in their roles?

Interviewees and survey respondents were also asked about the roles of their Community Leader. Overall, 20% of survey respondents said they were “very satisfied” with the effectiveness of
their Community Leader, 30% were “fairly satisfied,” 20% were “somewhat dissatisfied,” and 3% were “very dissatisfied.” The other 27% of respondents said they did not know enough about their Community Leader’s role in AN-MSI to offer an opinion on this. The following are the recommendations that interviewees gave on how their Community Leaders could be more effective:

- Many interviewees (and the few survey respondents who commented) emphasized the importance of keeping the lines of communication open and providing constituents with more regular updates on developments within the project. Several interviewees were frustrated about not knowing what had happened with projects or understanding how or why certain decisions were being made. Others complained that they had little or no luck in getting their Community Leaders to respond to emails and phone messages, some of which required action within a brief timeframe.

- The majority of interviewees were worried that their Community Leaders were overextended. Some speculated that their Leaders’ responsibilities at other organizations and institutions had hampered their ability to attend to developments within AN-MSI, and several thought it would be helpful to have people funded to work on the project for a large percentage of their time. As with almost all individuals working on AN-MSI (many of whom are volunteers), finding the time to complete project activities in “one’s spare time” remains a challenge and requires a willingness to delegate activities that one cannot complete oneself.

K. Conclusion:

The participant feedback and observations summarized above illustrate the progress the AN-MSI project has made over the last year, the benefits that participants are already receiving, and the obstacles that project administrators are working to overcome. AN-MSI is increasing its national visibility and is providing valuable IT services, resources, and networking opportunities (both in the technical and the human sense) for participating Minority Serving Institutions nationwide. The majority of participants are satisfied with the progress and the impact of the project thus far, but there is much that remains to be done in the year or two of funding that remain. It has been a very active year for AN-MSI with regards to its Campus Visits, online videoconference series, Tribal Wireless Project, proposal writing, and the development of a Strategic Plan and promotional materials. Participating campuses are looking forward to getting project funding for their AN-MSI proposals, collaborating on grants and IT projects, and continuing to meet and network with IT professionals at other MSIs. The AN-MSI evaluators at the LEAD Center hope that the information contained in this report is useful in understanding what the project has already accomplished, what more remains to be done, and how to build a project infrastructure that will long outlive the period of the initial NSF grant.
**Appendix A: Institutions and Organizations Participating in AN-MSI’s “First Cohort”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>HBCU Institutions - 35 total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Oakwood College</td>
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<td>Stillman College</td>
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<td>Talladega College</td>
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<td>Tuskegee University</td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td>University of the District of Columbia</td>
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<td>FL</td>
<td>Bethune-Cookman College</td>
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<td>GA</td>
<td>Albany State University</td>
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<td>Clark Atlanta University</td>
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<td>Morehouse College</td>
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<td>LA</td>
<td>Dillard University</td>
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<td>Southern University, Baton Rouge</td>
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<td>MD</td>
<td>Bowie State University</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Maryland, Eastern Shore</td>
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<td>MS</td>
<td>Alcorn State University</td>
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<td>Jackson State University</td>
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<td>Rust College</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>North Carolina A &amp; T State University</td>
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<td>North Carolina Central University</td>
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<td>Saint Augustine's College</td>
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<td>Saint Paul's College</td>
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<td>Virginia State University</td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td>University of the Virgin Islands</td>
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<td>WV</td>
<td>West Virginia State University</td>
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<tr>
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<th>HSI Institutions - 35 total</th>
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<td>Riverside Community College District</td>
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<td>City Colleges of Chicago Richard J. Daley College</td>
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<td>NM</td>
<td>College of Santa Fe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Mexico State University at Carlsbad</td>
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<td>Santa Fe Community College</td>
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<td>NY</td>
<td>Bronx Community College</td>
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<td></td>
<td>College of Aeronautics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eugenia Maria Hostos Community College/CUNY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Herbert Lehman College/CUNY</td>
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<td>Mercy College</td>
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<td>State</td>
<td>Participating National Organizations</td>
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| PR    | AIHEC  
|       | Dandin Group  
|       | EduCause  
|       | Executive Leadership Council  
|       | EOT-PACI  
|       | HACU  
|       | NAFEO  
|       | NASULGC  
| TX    | Our Lady of the Lake University  
|       | The University of Texas at El Paso  
|       | University of Houston - Downtown  
|       | University of Texas, Pan American  
|       | University of the Incarnate Word  
| State | Tribal Colleges and Universities - 32 total |
| AZ    | Dine College  
| CA    | D-Q University  
| KS    | Haskell Indian Nations University  
| MI    | Bay Mills Community College  
|       | Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College  
| MN    | Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College  
|       | Leech Lake Tribal College  
|       | White Earth Tribal and Community College  
| MT    | Blackfeet Community College  
|       | Dull Knife Memorial College  
|       | Fort Belknap College  
|       | Fort Peck Community College  
|       | Little Big Horn College  
|       | Salish Kootenai College  
|       | Stone Child College  
| NB    | Little Priest Tribal College  
|       | Nebraska Indian Community College  
| ND    | Cankdeska Cikana Community College  
|       | Fort Berthold Community College  
|       | Sitting Bull College  
|       | Turtle Mountain Community College  
|       | United Tribes Technical College  
| NM    | Crownpoint Institute of Technology  
|       | Institute of American Indian Arts  
|       | Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute  
| SD    | Ogilala Lakota College  
|       | Si Tanka College  
|       | Sinte Gleska University  
|       | Sisseton Wahpeton Community College  
| WA    | Northwest Indian College  
| WI    | College of the Menominee Nation  
|       | Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College  
|
Appendix B: 2001-02 Survey of AN-MSI Participants: We need your feedback!

This brief survey is being sent to all people who participated in AN-MSI meetings over the last year. Please take a few minutes to tell us about the impacts of the project so far, how well you think the project is progressing in addressing MSIs’ needs, and any areas of frustration or concern that you would like the project leadership to address. These surveys are confidential and results will only be reported to the AN-MSI leadership as generalizations that do not identify individual respondents.

Please fill out this survey and reply by email by Tuesday May 14. If you have any questions or additional comments, you may call Julie Foertsch of the LEAD Center at 608-265-6368. A Word version is attached at the bottom of this email in case you have trouble with the email version. If you must use postal mail to return a printed survey, please send it to the LEAD Center, 1900 University Ave, Madison WI 53705.

1. What is your institution or organization?:

2. With which higher education community are you most closely affiliated?
   a) ___ No particular community affiliation
   b) ___ Historically Black Colleges and Universities
   h) ___ Hispanic-Serving Institutions
   t) ___ Tribal Colleges and Universities

3. Which one of the following comes closest to describing your current role at your campus or organization?:
   a) ___ Chief Information Officer/highest-ranking campus technology expert
   b) ___ Other member of the campus technical support staff
   c) ___ Other member of the campus administration
   d) ___ Faculty member
   e) ___ A technology/education consultant or liaison who works with colleges or universities
   f) ___ Other—please explain:

4. Overall, how would you rate your campus’s current IT infrastructure compared to other MSIs (hardware, software, and human technical support staff included)?
   a) ___ Not applicable
   b) ___ Near the top: We have most of the latest technology and have readily-available and well-trained technical support.
   c) ___ Above average: Our current IT infrastructure/staff is generally sufficient for our needs and is as good or better than most MSIs.
   d) ___ Average: Our current IT infrastructure is just barely meeting our needs and we face shortages in qualified IT staff
   e) ___ Below average: Our current IT infrastructure/staff falls short of our needs and is behind the curve for most MSIs.
   f) ___ Near the bottom: Our current IT infrastructure is woefully inadequate compared to that of most MSIs.

5. In what ways have you been involved in the AN-MSI project so far? (Check ALL that apply.)
   a) ___ I have participated in one or more AN-MSI meetings
   b) ___ I am on AN-MSI’s general email listserv
   c) ___ I am on the AN-MSI listserv for a particular community (e.g., HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs).
   d) ___ I am currently on one or more AN-MSI committees
   e) ___ I am or have been the chair/co-chair of an AN-MSI committee
   f) ___ My campus is participating in one or more technology projects or grant proposals related to AN-MSI or that include other AN-MSI members
   g) ___ We have had or have scheduled AN-MSI representatives to come to our campus for a technical consultation visit
   h) ___ We have already begun working with AN-MSI representatives and technical experts on a technology project or plan for our campus
   i) ___ I have attended technical workshops/training seminars sponsored by AN-MSI or encouraged another staff/faculty member to do so
   j) ___ I have encouraged other staff/faculty members to attend technical workshops/training seminars sponsored by AN-MSI
   k) ___ I have viewed or participated in online seminars or webcasts sponsored by or affiliated with AN-MSI
   l) ___ I have approached or contacted government representatives, private foundations, or corporations about supporting an AN-MSI initiative
   m) ___ I have given talks or written articles or newsletter items to inform non-AN-MSI participants about AN-MSI and its initiatives.
   n) ___ Other—please explain:
6. Which of the following benefits of the AN-MSI project have you experienced so far? Please rate each potential benefit in the following way:

0 = not something I have experienced as a benefit
1 = a minor benefit I have experienced
2 = a major benefit I have experienced

a) Getting to know IT people at other institutions within my community
b) Getting to know IT people within other minority communities
c) Expanding my own knowledge of IT-related issues
d) Helping to expand others’ knowledge of IT-related issues
e) Getting training in IT through workshops related to or paid for by AN-MSI
f) Being part of a diverse community of IT professionals who have developed enough trust and understanding to pursue common goals
g) Coming to understand the similarities and differences between MSIs
h) Coming to understand the similarities and differences between different ethnic communities
i) Educating those in the majority (whether in government or in IT-related organizations) about the IT needs of MSIs
j) Educating people on my own campus about our IT-related needs and how to address them
k) Being part of a large group of MSIs whose size gives us more visibility and leverage within the government and majority organizations
l) Getting funding to attend IT-related meetings (AN-MSI meetings and workshops, EduCause conferences, other IT events)
m) Getting funding to spend my time working on campus and community-wide technology initiatives associated with AN-MSI
n) Getting AN-MSI funding for technology initiatives that will directly affect my campus
o) Getting information about technology initiatives and IT funding opportunities that I wouldn’t have known about otherwise
p) Collaborating with AN-MSI participants from other institutions on IT grants or initiatives
q) Being on an AN-MSI listserv that allows me to both post and receive IT-related information and project updates

7. Please describe any grants, proposals, or funding arrangements that your campus or organization was aided in securing in the last year because of its links with AN-MSI, EduCause, or EOT-PACI:

8. Please describe any technical improvements, IT staff training, free or reduced-cost hardware or software, and free or reduced-cost technical consultation that your campus or organization has received in the last year because of its links with AN-MSI, EduCause, or EOT-PACI:

9. What do you think the impact of the AN-MSI project has been on your campus administration’s knowledge about the campus’s IT needs and the IT equipment and training opportunities that are available?

x) Not applicable
a) Significant improvements in their knowledge or understanding
b) Small improvements in their knowledge or understanding
c) No impact

10. What do you think the impact of the AN-MSI project has been on your campus administration’s commitment to improving its IT infrastructure and/or staff training?

x) Not applicable
a) There has been a significant increase in commitment due to AN-MSI
b) There has been a small increase in commitment due to AN-MSI
c) There has been no change in commitment due to AN-MSI
d) There has been a decrease in commitment due to AN-MSI

11. How satisfied do you feel about the amount of information and updates you have been receiving about the AN-MSI project and its initiatives?

a) Very satisfied
b) Fairly satisfied
c) Somewhat dissatisfied
d) Very dissatisfied

Comments:

12. How satisfied do you feel about the progress of the AN-MSI project so far?

x) Too little information to tell
13. How satisfied do you feel with Dave Staudt’s role as the director for this project?
   a) ___ Very satisfied
   b) ___ Fairly satisfied
   c) ___ Somewhat dissatisfied
   d) ___ Very dissatisfied
   Comments?:

14. How satisfied do you feel with EduCause’s role as the coordinator for this project?
   a) ___ Very satisfied
   b) ___ Fairly satisfied
   c) ___ Somewhat dissatisfied
   d) ___ Very dissatisfied
   Comments?:

15. How satisfied do you feel with the effectiveness of your Community’s AN-MSI Coordinator
   x) ___ Not applicable
      w) ___ I’m not sure who my Community Coordinator is
   a) ___ Very satisfied
   b) ___ Fairly satisfied
   c) ___ Somewhat dissatisfied
   d) ___ Very dissatisfied
   Comments?:

16. Which of the following do you think have been (or still are) obstacles to AN-MSI making more progress? Please rate each potential obstacle in the following way:
   0 = I don’t know enough to have an opinion on this;
   1 = was never an obstacle in my opinion;
   2 = was an obstacle but is no longer;
   3 = still a minor obstacle;
   4 = still a major obstacle:

   a) ___ Lack of time and competing responsibilities for those who need to work on the project
   b) ___ Lack of appropriate project funding (i.e., money from NSF and other project-wide sources)
   c) ___ Lack of support and funding from individual campuses
   d) ___ Lack of understanding and clarity among college presidents about their campus’s technological needs and how best to address them
   e) ___ Lack of training among technical support staff at the participating campuses
   f) ___ Competing interests or agendas among all the various participants that make it hard for the group to come to a consensus.
   g) ___ Concerns between campuses about how to collaborate with campuses who are normally competitors
   h) ___ Lack of understanding and trust between the three minority communities involved in the project
   i) ___ Lack of understanding and trust between the majority funders and coordinators of this project and its minority beneficiaries.
   j) ___ The concrete benefits of participation for individual campuses are unclear
   k) ___ Lack of leadership: The project management has not been clear enough and forceful enough about its goals and its requirements for participation.
   l) ___ Lack of communication: We don’t hear from others frequently enough about the project, its progress, and what we should be doing.
   m) ___ Lack of opportunities for input: The project management doesn’t attempt to get sufficient participant input before making important decisions.

17. If you have any additional comments about your experiences with or expectations for the AN-MSI project, please share them here:

THANK YOU for taking the time to give us your feedback!
Appendix C: Moving Forward: Group Discussion at AN-MSI’s San Juan PAC Meeting
2/25/02

Communication: The larger and more distributed an organization is, the more essential communication is to keeping everyone working towards the same goals. In order to succeed, projects like AN-MSI need open and frequent communication between all people who are working on or invested in a particular project initiative.

1) Are there areas where communication is a problem or where project members aren’t getting the information they want about project activities? ...about decisions being made?

2) Who should this information be coming from (Project Director; Community Leaders; Committee Chairs, those spearheading an effort?) and in what form (listserv; private emails; conference calls; group meetings)?

People said they wanted more information about a variety of topics that haven’t been openly discussed up to this point, including how project decisions are being made, how much certain initiatives cost, and how much money is left in the project budget to pay for launching & supporting those initiatives. Alex and several others suggested that information about decisions being made or new opportunities being considered could be shared in group meetings or the listservs, but Laura Lee added that the Community Leaders should also be more active in directing particular schools and participants towards information that is of relevance to them. See “Items for further discussion” for a more detailed list of topics and discussion questions.

3) What type of project information shouldn’t be shared with the entire community/project membership?
   • What level of detail is desired regarding the initiatives that are going on?
   • What sort of topics might be too divisive or delicate to discuss publicly?
   • Do people want to hear about initiatives/activities that were discontinued or didn’t pan out? Why or why not?

The group consensus was that there is nothing about the project that should be left “off the table”—that anything that could affect the project and the schools working on it should be open knowledge for all participants. People felt that, although such conversations can be uncomfortable at times, it is actually less “divisive” to talk openly than to keep some people out of the communication loop. When people haven’t been told what is going on with the project or why, they speculate, and the speculation is generally more divisive than the truth. The group felt that all levels of administration and all participants in the project needed to make more of an effort to communicate about what they and their schools/committees are doing and why they are doing it (including how those decisions are being made).

Included in those discussions/emails should be information about initiatives, proposals and partnerships that were discontinued or didn’t pan out. Often, it doesn’t occur to people to share information about activities that have been dropped; in other cases, people may be embarrassed that something didn’t work out as hoped. But the group emphasized that such embarrassment is unnecessary and that we can all learn valuable lessons from the initiatives that didn’t work or didn’t happen.

4) Are community/committee breakouts at project meetings appropriately focused?
• Should those group discussions be used primarily for sharing news among group members?
• Should there be more group discussion of issues? (How do we want to handle X?)
• Should there be more group discussion of responsibilities? (Who is going to do X and by when?)

We didn’t get around to discussing this in any detail, but it’s an important topic in terms of group productivity. Reflect on the community and committee meetings you just had in San Juan. Were the right kinds of topics discussed? If not, you need to let your Community Leader or Committee Chair know that. Send an email with your feedback now so that they can make the necessary changes in future meetings/phone calls.

5) What protocols or structures could be put in place to encourage more frequent and more timely communication?

People’s suggestions for improving the group’s communication are below. Is there something in this list that applies to you and your own communication responsibilities?

• Send monthly Caucus meeting notes to everyone on listserv (Valerie)
• Have Community Leaders take more active responsibility in directing their schools toward particular information. (Alex, Carrie/Tom, Laura Lee)
• Have Dave & other administrators communicate their expectations of people more clearly/more frequently (Dave, Community Leaders, Committee Chairs)
• Put Strategic Plan online now in a form that allows people to add their input/edits (Ramon, Mark)
• People involved with initiatives, proposals, or partnerships that don’t pan out need to let Community Leaders know about the discontinuation and why it occurred so they can share that info with the rest of AN-MSI. (Everyone, Community Leaders)
• Have the project budget/expenses included in regular progress reports and in the Strategic Plan. (Dave)
• Have a listing of all schools involved in an initiative included in the Strategic Plan and in any email or document that goes out describing that initiatives. (Committee Chairs, Community Leaders, Ramon, Valerie)

Some items for further discussion

Increasing AN-MSI’s visibility: Now that we have a number of initiatives underway, project members have said we need to make AN-MSI’s goals and activities more visible to government agencies, educational organizations, corporations, and the outside world.
• How can we best do this?
• How much time/effort should we spend on establishing the “AN-MSI brand” and making our efforts known?
• Who could realistically focus their time on this?

Project-related meetings:
• How often should the project membership come together for large meetings like this one? (Drawbacks: Time & project expense. What are the benefits?)
• Are there other ways/better ways of achieving the same benefits?
• Should individual communities meet/have conference calls to establish their priorities? How often?

**Project responsibilities & the challenge of getting things done in one’s “spare time”:**

• Should Committees (with representatives from each community donating their time) have primary responsibility for carrying out project initiatives, or should the project hire more consultants to head efforts or produce specific deliverables?
• If we continue to rely on Committees to develop and implement project initiatives, should Committee Chairs be given some compensation for their time?
• We now have a Strategic Plan that is quite specific about the project’s goals and initiatives, what we hope to achieve with each, and by when. To what degree should project members be held accountable for activities or deliverables? Who should be held accountable? (only people being paid?)

**CAT costs:** Campus Action Team visits cost about $2000-5000 each depending on the size of the school and the size of the team.
• Should individual MSIs share in the costs of their Campus Action Team visits? What are the benefits and drawbacks of cost-sharing?

**Relationship between EOT-PACI and AN-MSI:** In the past, project members have expressed confusion about the relationship between EOT-PACI and AN-MSI. In the last several months, several e-mails have tried to clarify that relationship: EOT-PACI is partnered with AN-MSI and works with schools participating in AN-MSI who are interested in high-performance computing.
• Does the relationship between the two groups need further clarification?
• People have expressed interest in having more input into what EOT-PACI does for MSIs. Currently this input is being collected through surveys/interviews with those who participate in EOT-PACI events. Are there other ways to enter dialogues with EOT-PACI?

**Adding cohorts/schools to AN-MSI:**
• What are the drawbacks, benefits to adding some schools to AN-MSI? Is there any reason to consider adding more schools at the present time?
• Under what circumstances should new schools be added?
• There are concerns about having a negative impact on the project and its culture if too many new schools were admitted at once. How many is too many?