

# DELTA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

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A Network of Post-Secondary Institutions  
in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama  
Black Belt Regions, with Public and Private  
Partnerships

May 2015

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- We propose the formation of a **Delta Research Consortium** that will work to maximize collaboration and funding for positive and solutions-driven research in the Delta region.
- The consortium will initially consist of **4-year institutions in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions** as defined by the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), leadership of the Delta Regional Authority, local economic development experts, industry partners and philanthropic organizations.
- The consortium is committed to being:
  - Collaborative and inclusive of many: Building our shared capacity for engaging research and innovation across all sectors;
  - Innovative and entrepreneurial: Elevating faculty and student research, demonstrating to stakeholders the value and relevance of research in higher education; and
  - Inspiring and impactful: Committed to bringing our shared assets to bear on the significant social and economic opportunities and challenges in the Delta for meaningful impact.
- Consortium annual meetings will provide a forum for university research teams from various disciplines to network with each other and with private/public stakeholders; attract nationally recognized speakers and facilitators to convey and implement best practices for collaboration and impact; and develop robust faculty and student mentoring networks, with emphasis on the mentoring researchers from underrepresented backgrounds.
- The **Delta 360 Assessment**, to involve each consortium member, will provide on-going data for evidence-based decision making and financial investment in Delta region higher education and research enterprises. In addition to identifying infrastructure needs, the assessment will produce a large student-faculty-institution data set that will provide information on who succeeds, how they succeed, and how to ensure success.
- Research data generated by the consortium and Delta 360 Assessment will be housed in an online data repository, the **Delta Commons**, hosted by the Delta Regional Authority.
- Member institutions will collaborate to produce innovation around shared priorities, including but not limited to issues of: economic and workforce development, energy efficiency and sustainability, biomedical/public health, Delta culture/natural heritage, water quality and sustainability, food/agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and entrepreneurship.
- The assessment knowledge-base and outcomes of research projects will drive the Delta Research Consortium activities and pursuits and tie together Delta institutions in a synergistic transformation of practical research, education, and technology development for lasting economic impact.
- This initiative is a transformative, broad-reaching, high-impact endeavor. By developing and maturing interdisciplinary, multi-institution collaboration networks, research funding and capacity in the Delta will be substantially increased, creating new jobs, producing new technologies and ultimately propelling economic development forward.

# Contents

White Paper.....1

Invitation to DRC Leadership Summit, April 9-10, 2015.....5

Map of invited universities in Delta Regional Authority service areas.....6

List of invited universities.....7

Outcomes report from DRC Leadership Summit.....10

**Interdisciplinarity and collaboration** are hallmark characteristics of modern science. One of the strongest indicators of a robust and sustainable university research program is the development of research collaboration networks. Such networks require not just “buy-in”, but also the committed participation and leadership of champions at each level of university administration. They require the adoption of responsive administrative structures that are able to act with foresight and thoughtfully engage the challenges of multi-institution, interdisciplinary collaboration. Success of collaborative networks also depends on the ability of administrators to nurture an institutional paradigm shift away from risk-averse, insular academic “silos” toward shared language, values and “out of the box” thinking across disciplines and institutions.

In the past decade, a decisive factor in the advancement of research at Arkansas State University (A-State) was the establishment of a five-member Arkansas Biosciences Institute (ABI) consortium, consisting of two medical training institutions, two state universities and one agricultural research entity. Despite these advances, a readily identifiable weakness in A-State’s research infrastructure is the lack of strong collaboration networks with other neighboring institutions, particularly those with greater student and/or faculty diversity.



**Figure 1.** Map of university invitees serving DRA service area

Thus, A-State invites regional colleges and universities to **form a Delta Research Consortium (DRC)** that will build regional infrastructure and economic development, expand pathways for student training and mentoring, and create collaborative, multi-institutional research teams. Consortium membership will initially consist of **four-year institutions in the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions** as defined by the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), and public/private stakeholders. A map of invited universities in DRA service areas is presented in **Figure 1**.

Critical to the success of the DRC is that member institutions articulate a clear mission to grow and increase the diversity of the Delta’s highly skilled workforce through investment in infrastructure, student and faculty development, and collaboration

networks. Commitment by institutional leaders and willingness to adopt nimble administrative structures is another key characteristic.

## DELTA 360 ASSESSMENT

A first step in the pursuit of institutional and regional change is to understand both ‘what is’ and ‘what needs to be.’ This will be fulfilled through a **combined asset mapping and needs assessment** (hereafter called *Delta 360 Assessment*). Member institutions will be encouraged to participate in this ongoing program to provide evidence for informed decision-making. The assessment organization and domains are given in **Figure 2**.

The *Delta 360 Assessment* will allow researchers and policy-makers to evaluate the ecosystem of problems in the delta and utilize existing platforms to generate solutions, without duplicating efforts. Assessment findings will be disseminated in a **publicly accessible data repository**, the **Delta Commons**, hosted by the Delta Regional Authority. The DRA has created Today’s Delta, an online data repository, which could host DRC assessment findings and serve as a dissemination tool for DRC research and other outcomes. This novel assessment and database will **substantially improve the ability of public and private entities to plan infrastructure and other investments in the Delta** to yield maximum economic and educational impact. (Today’s Delta available at: <http://dra.gov/about-dra/research-and-data/>.)

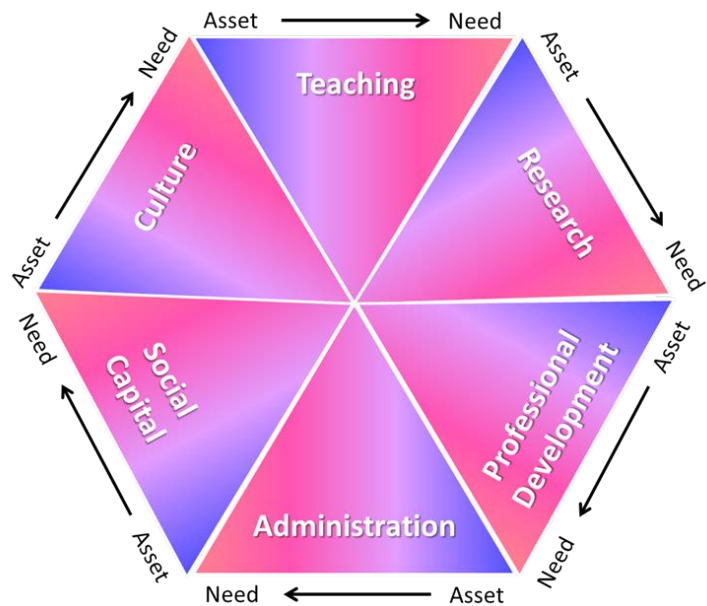


Figure 2. Delta 360 Assessment needs/assets domains.

## DELTA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM PHASED APPROACH

Establishment of the DRC will occur in three phases (see also **Figure 1**):

### *DRC Guiding Team Formation and Consensus Building*

In November 2014, the leaders of the Delta Regional Authority and A-State research development office met to discuss collaboration around this initiative. It was agreed that the A-State research development office would take the lead in reaching out to universities throughout the region and other public/private stakeholders. A Guiding Team was formed, including research leadership from: Delta State University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, Southeast Missouri State University, University of Memphis and University of Tennessee at Martin. Jonathan Bucki, of the Dendros Group, was retained as a consultant to facilitate a working summit of leaders from interested

universities and stakeholder groups. Financial commitments to support this meeting were obtained from DRA, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, Ritter Communications and Hope Credit Union.

University research officers from the 50 four-year universities presented in **Figure 1** were contacted by phone and personally invited to attend a two-day DRC Leadership Summit. The response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic and optimistic. The summit was held on April 9-10, 2015 at Arkansas State University. Participants gathered from 23 universities and 12 other stakeholder groups, including local economic development leadership and state legislators. Over the two days, plenary sessions and workshops were designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Launch the Delta Research Consortium;
- Develop practical strategy teams and plan next steps;
- Develop interest groups and plan next steps;
- Increase cooperation, shared vision and trust among consortium members; and
- Increase a sense of possibility and understanding of this opportunity.

Prior to the summit, participants were asked to report areas of strength for their institution, areas in which they would like to expand, and institutional assets or resources that may be scaled-up and regionalized to benefit the broader consortium membership. It is expected that collaborations may develop around some or all of the following interest areas: energy; information technology; agriculture and technology; health disparities; arts, culture and humanities; STEM education; biomedical research; community and economic development; entrepreneurship and tech transfer; workforce development; water conservation and sustainability; food production and safety; nanotechnology and advanced manufacturing. An outcomes report from the summit is included at the end of this white paper.

### *Capacity Building Phase*

In DRC Year 1, a sub-committee will continue **dialogue with university leaders, research officers, key faculty and other stakeholder groups** regarding partnership in the consortium. This will be referred to as the *Phase 1 region* and the *assessment stage* of forming institutional collaborations. During this stage, institutions that express interest in joining the DRC will be invited. Collaboration champions will be identified at each campus, as will potential areas for trans-institutional cooperation in research, teaching, infrastructure sharing and investment, student development, and mentoring of students and faculty.

An interim advisory committee will draft a Memorandum of Understanding to be circulated to all potential partners. The advisory committee will also publish and request comment on plans for formation of a **DRC Board of Directors**. This interim advisory committee will meet throughout the year to draft bylaws and other administrative documents. In conjunction with the first consortium annual meeting, the advisory

committee will host a business meeting to address issues of governance and plan for signing and announcement of formal MOU among member institutions.

During this phase, the Guiding Team will continue to work on four emerging strategy areas to advance the DRC vision: governance, operations, communications and capabilities. Teams formed around focus areas (identified at the April 2015 Leadership Summit) will meet to plan and advance a strategy for collaboration around the following priorities: economic and workforce development, energy efficiency and sustainability, biomedical/public health, Delta culture/natural heritage, water quality and sustainability, food/agriculture, advanced manufacturing, and entrepreneurship. These teams will pursue concrete outcomes and “early wins” in terms of grants awarded and practical returns on investment.

### *Long-term Possibilities*

A formal mission/vision statement and strategic plan will be articulated during the April 2015 Leadership Summit and October 2015 Consortium Meeting. It is expected that the consortium will host annual meetings, with host sites rotating among institutions and with a different topical focus each year. The consortium must exist, from the beginning, with a goal of member investment in the financial sustainability of the group. As administrative structure and financial health mature the consortium could:

- Offer seed grants to collaborative, multi-stakeholder research teams for strategic topics of interest;
- Pursue extramural grant funding and co-author research publications with multi-stakeholder research teams;
- Sign articulation agreements that will allow students to spend one semester at a DRC partner institution with transfer of academic credits;
- Develop courses with multi-institution, collaborative instruction utilizing distance learning technologies;
- Invite student exchanges among stakeholder groups for internships, fellowships and other professional development experiences; and
- Fund faculty sabbatical opportunities at participating stakeholder institutions.

## SUMMARY

The Delta Research Consortium proposal is a transformative, broad-reaching, high-impact endeavor. We anticipate that by developing and maturing collaboration networks across diverse stakeholder groups the resulting substantial increase in research funding and capacity in the Delta will create new jobs, produce new technologies and propel economic development forward. This will ultimately improve health, education and quality of life of individuals throughout the Mississippi River Delta.



**DELTA RESEARCH CONSORTIUM LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**  
**SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 9 & 10, ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, JONESBORO, AR**

On behalf of a Guiding Team of university leaders from the Delta Regional Authority's footprint, we are pleased to invite you to participate in the creation and launch the Delta Research Consortium.

We imagine a consortium committed to being:

- **Collaborative and inclusive of many:** Building our shared capacity for engaging research and innovation across all sectors;
- **Innovative and entrepreneurial:** Elevating faculty and student research, demonstrating to stakeholders the value and relevance of research in higher education; and
- **Inspiring and impactful:** Committed to bringing our shared assets to bear on the significant social and economic opportunities and challenges in the Delta for meaningful impact.

In this initial phase of developing the consortium, we will engage potential partners from across the Delta region to build our shared leadership. Invited are research officers of four-year universities throughout the Mississippi River Delta and Alabama Black Belt regions, the Delta Regional Authority, and representatives of key industry sectors and philanthropic organizations.

At the summit, we will articulate a shared vision for a research consortium, develop unifying strategies to advance our vision, establish priorities and develop an initial working infrastructure. Jonathan Bucki of the Dendros Group has been retained as an experienced, neutral facilitator to help guide the process. After the launch, we will focus on capacity building and will plan a larger first annual consortium meeting in Fall 2015/Spring 2016.

On behalf of the guiding team, I wish to extend an invitation to join us on April 9 & 10. A formal invitation with program details will follow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Sustich".

Andrew Sustich, PhD  
Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Studies  
Arkansas State University

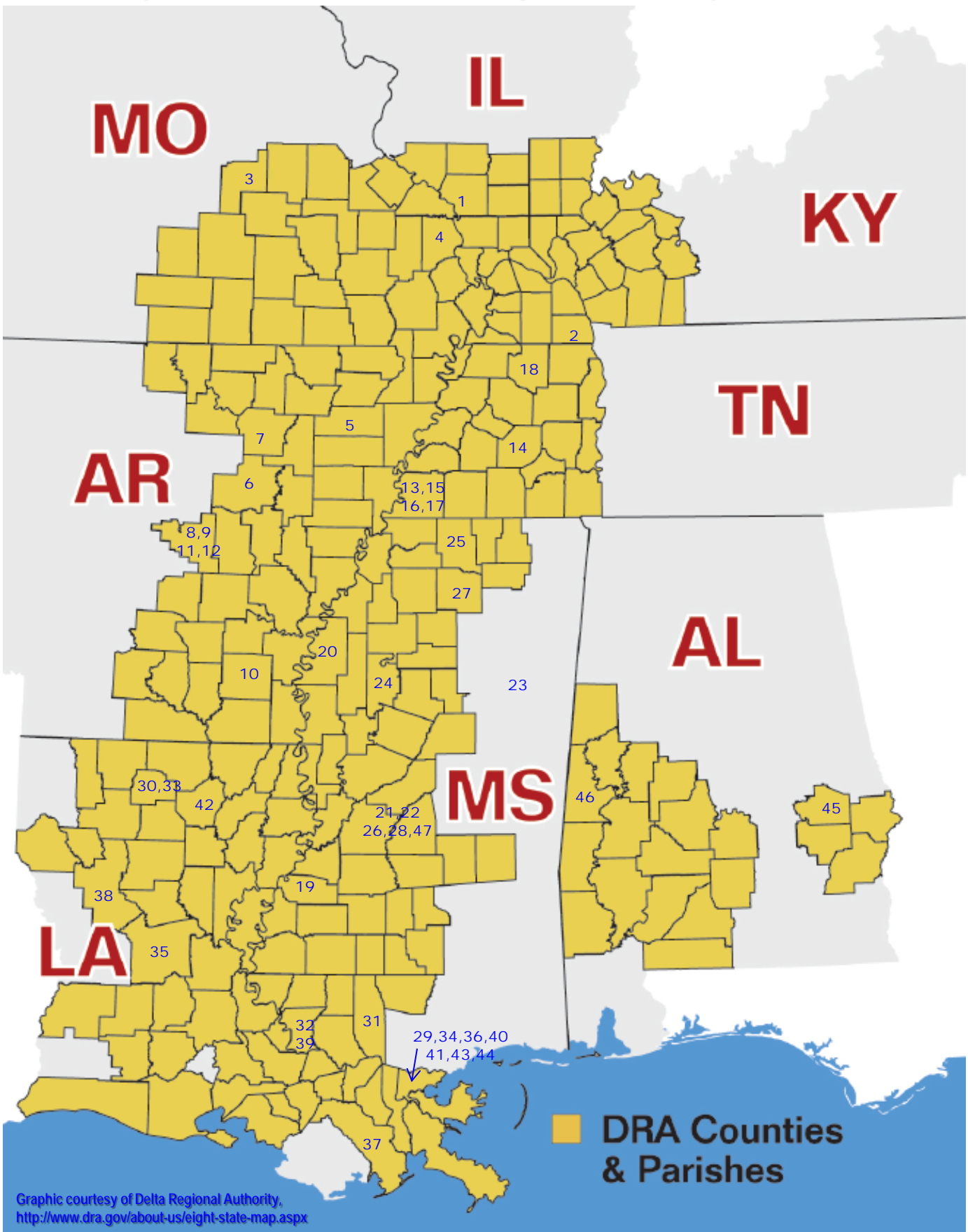
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Masingill".

Chris Masingill  
Federal Co-Chairman  
Delta Regional Authority

**Additional Guiding Team Institutions:** Delta State University | Louisiana State University | Mississippi State University | Southeast Missouri State University | University of Memphis | University of Tennessee at Martin



# Four-year Universities in Delta Regional Authority Service Area



Delta Research Consortium Summit  
April 9 - 10, 2015

	Institution	Institution Notes	City	State	County - DRA Service Area?	# UG Students	#Grad Students
1	Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	public; RU/H; rural	Carbondale	IL	Jackson	13306	4613
2	Murray State University	public	Murray	KY	Calloway	9172	1771
3	Missouri University of Science and Technology	public; RU/H; space-grant; rural	Rolla	MO	Phelps	6522	2120
4	Southeast Missouri State University	public; rural	Cape Girardeau	MO	Cape Girardeau	10605	1162
5	Arkansas State University	public; rural-urban	Jonesboro	AR	Craighead	9857	3287
6	Harding Univeristy	private; rural	Searcy	AR	White	4492	1583
7	Lyon College	private; rural	Batesville	AR	Independence	600	0
8	Philander Smith College	private; HBCU; urban	Little Rock	AR	Pulaski	556	0
9	University of Arkansas at Little Rock	public; urban; space-grant	Little Rock	AR	Pulaski	9384	1835
10	University of Arkansas at Monticello	public	Monticello	AR	Drew	2925	185
11	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	public; HBCU; rural-urban	Pine Bluff	AR	Jefferson	3232	100
12	University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences	public; urban; academic health science center	Little Rock	AR	Pulaski	0	2775
13	Christian Brothers University	private; urban	Memphis	TN	Shelby	1455	324
14	Lane College	private; HBCU; rural	Jackson	TN	Madison	1500	0
15	LeMoyne-Owen College	private; HBCU; urban	Memphis	TN	Shelby	1091	
16	Rhodes College	private; urban	Memphis	TN	Shelby	2031	23
17	University of Memphis	public; RU/H; urban	Memphis	TN	Shelby	17222	3897
18	University of Tennessee at Martin	public; rural	Martin	TN	Weakley	7025	396
19	Alcorn State University	public; HBCU; rural; land-grant	Lorman	MS	Jefferson	3208	742
47	Bellhaven University	private, urban	Jackson	MS	Hinds, Madison, F	3800	1200
20	Delta State University	public; rural	Cleveland	MS	Bolivar	2638	888
21	Jackson State University	public; HBCU; RU/H; urban	Jackson	MS	Hinds, Madison, Rankin	6902	2232
22	Millsaps College	private; urban	Jackson	MS	Hinds, Madison, Rankin	910	75

Delta Research Consortium Summit  
April 9 - 10, 2015

23	Mississippi State University	public; RU/VH; rural; land-grant; sea-grant	Starkville	MS	Oktibbeha - No, 2 counties west	16128	3507
24	Mississippi Valley State University	public; HBCU; rural	Itta Bena	MS	Leflore	1889	333
25	Rust College	private; HBCU; rural	Holly Springs	MS	Marshall	1200	0
26	Tougaloo College	private; HBCU; rural	Tougaloo	MS	Hinds	900	
27	University of Mississippi (Ole Miss)	public; RU/H; sea-grant; space-grant; rural	Oxford	MS	Layfayette	15628	1984
28	University of Mississippi Medical Center	public; urban; academic health science center	Jackson	MS	Hinds, Madison, Rankin	0	2900
29	Dillard University	private; HBCU; urban	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	1183	0
30	Grambling State University	public; HBCU; rural	Grambling	LA	Lincoln	3524	980
31	Southeastern Louisiana University	public; rural	Hammond	LA	Tangipahoa	13376	1122
32	Louisiana State University	public; RU/VH; urban; land-grant; sea-grant; space-grant	Baton Rouge	LA	East Baton Rouge	25577	4874
33	Louisiana Tech University	public; RU/H; rural; space-grant	Ruston	LA	Lincoln	9545	1726
34	Loyola University	private; urban	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	3165	1843
35	LSU at Alexandria	public; urban	Alexandria	LA	Rapides	2690	17
36	LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans	public; urban; academic health science center	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	0	2699
37	Nicholls State University	public; rural	Thibodaux	LA	Lafourche	5695	603
38	Northwestern State University of Louisiana	public; rural	Natchitoches	LA	Natchitoches	7898	1104
39	Southern University & A&M College	public; HBCU; land-grant; urban	Baton Rouge	LA	East Baton Rouge	5302	1002
40	Southern University at New Orleans	private; HBCU; urban	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	2289	445
41	Tulane University	private; urban; RU/VH	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	8352	5110
42	University of Louisiana at Monroe	public; urban	Monroe	LA	Ouachita	7222	1304
43	University of New Orleans	public; urban; RU/H	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	7137	2079
44	Xavier University of Louisiana	private; HBCU; urban	New Orleans	LA	Orleans	2976	145
45	Tuskegee University	private; HBCU; rural	Tuskegee	AL	Macon	2605	512
46	University of West Alabama	public; rural	Livingston	AL	Sumpter	1922	2067

# **Delta Research Consortium**

**Launch Meeting at Arkansas State**

*April 9 & 10, 2015*



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GROUP**

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people who want to  
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# Practical Vision - What do we want to see in place in 2-3 years?

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Regional Research Repository: Centralized Credible Data	Collaborative Resource Directory: A Clearinghouse for Regional Resources & Information	Inter-Institutional Partnerships & Problem Solving: Delt-Driven Diverse Collaboration	Clear Strategic Mission: Inclusive, Innovative Collaboration	Evidence-based, Applied Solutions: Delta Models and Assessment	Synergistic Informed Economic Development: Community Partnerships	Greater Collective Influence: Monetary & Political Leveraging for Community Trust
<i>ideas</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Shared big data</li> <li>•Regionally shared resources centers</li> <li>•Shared interest groups</li> <li>•Research repository</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identify and share Delta resources</li> <li>•Delta information portal</li> <li>•Clearinghouse for partner opportunities</li> <li>•Develop consortium pages for searching, making connections</li> <li>•Develop a database of shared resources</li> <li>•Shared boiler-plates, team building</li> <li>•Expertise database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Delta student exchange program</li> <li>•Create a delta undergraduate curriculum</li> <li>•Develop an actual collaborative project</li> <li>•Support student internships</li> <li>•Issue-based conference that rotate sites across the region</li> <li>•Intercollegiate business, innovation contest</li> <li>•Undergrad and graduate research consortium</li> <li>•Increase communication about projects opportunities, “boots on the ground.”</li> <li>•Faculty research collaborative</li> <li>•Promoting student engagement with social challenges in Delta</li> <li>•Possibly with intercollegiate teams</li> <li>•Promoting student engagement with businesses, manufacturing challenges</li> <li>•Identify, catalog sites for research, learning opportunities</li> <li>•Identify Delta summer research opportunities for students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Defined focus</li> <li>•Clarity of goals, focus</li> <li>•Options for organizational structure</li> <li>•Marketing, branding consortium</li> <li>•Remove barriers, organizational, geographic</li> <li>•Identify expected outcomes, values</li> <li>•Evaluation &amp; feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•focus on aquaculture as a Delta challenge</li> <li>•Models for rural health</li> <li>•Resource assessment: natural, cultural, agricultural</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Industry connections for workforce development</li> <li>•Enhance community economic development - mayors?</li> <li>•Outreach to regional stakeholder universities</li> <li>•Identify regional focus groups</li> <li>•Facilitate partnerships with federal, state agencies, NGOs</li> <li>•Models for community economic development</li> <li>•Shared templates and language for university merit and reward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•(obscene sustained funding levels.)</li> <li>•Public, private funding</li> <li>•Funds</li> <li>•Partnerships that lead to relevant funding</li> <li>•Political clout</li> <li>•Collaborative funding</li> <li>•Identify and secure money</li> <li>•Influence federal policy</li> <li>•Amplify voice from community to national level (louder!)</li> </ul>

# Obstacles

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

## Obstacles to Our Vision

- Institutional policies
- Too much ego
- Buy-in from institutions
- Buy-in from community to maintain movement
- Methods for assembling resources
- Geography
- Information dispersed (not concentrated, available)
- Communication silos
- Unclear benefits and obligations, need to negotiate long term, short term
- Multi-jurisdictional nature, region
- Self-interested fiefdoms
- Leadership
- Complacency
- Administrative ownership questions
- Competition between states
- Government
- Ignorance
- Culture of the Delta



*photos: Andrew Ferguson, A-State Creative Services*

# Emerging Strategies Workshop: What substantial actions will advance our vision?

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

## Define & Establish Organization

*ideas*

- Navigate legal complexities, structure
- Establish a board to set agenda
- Develop org structure that is accountable and inclusive to DRC
- Develop procedural rules & guidelines
- Executive structure, leadership team
- Secure funding & staff
- Form 501c(3). Gov appt'd board

## Develop Mission, Vision, & Framework

*ideas*

- “Consortium for dummies”
- Develop compelling argument
- Set clear objectives
- Define programmatic dimensions
- Mission statement clear & concise
- Decisive goals & objectives

## Secure Buy-In & Agreements

*ideas*

- Imagine and plan for immediate wins
- Develop MOUs
- Think global, act local
- Commitment & benefit
- Define membership roles & responsibilities
- Designate responsible person at each institution
- Manage conflicts of interests

## Build Awareness & Network

*ideas*

- Annual Conference Fall 2015
- Periodic meetings, face to face
- Host summer exchange institutes

## Create & Nurture Sustainable Mechanisms

*ideas*

- Train student leaders to take over
- Develop sub-regions to stimulate collaboration
- Develop milestones to assess progress
- Piggy-back on existing efforts
- Assessment tools
- “Team” Science
- Build resiliency into process
- Create nodes to focus on each program dimension

## Develop Marketing

*ideas*

- Define who we are
- Community & institutional incentives for buy-in
- Involve all sectors on front end
- Begin lobbying government & industry for support

## Communicate & Stay Connected

*ideas*

- Communication infrastructure
- Develop a communication tool
- Twitter Acct #DRC
- Communicating initiatives
- IT tools
- Establish support groups of similar institutions

## Develop Needs, Capabilities & Assets Inventory

*ideas*

- Capabilities inventory assessment
- Evaluating the ecosystem of problems
- Identify needed resources & information
- Develop hub to house data resources, clearinghouse
- Explore existing platforms to support work, don't reinvent
- What can be made today by DRA that will endure beyond next 20 months?

**GOVERNANCE:  
KICKING OFF,  
LAUNCHING THE  
CONSORTIUM**

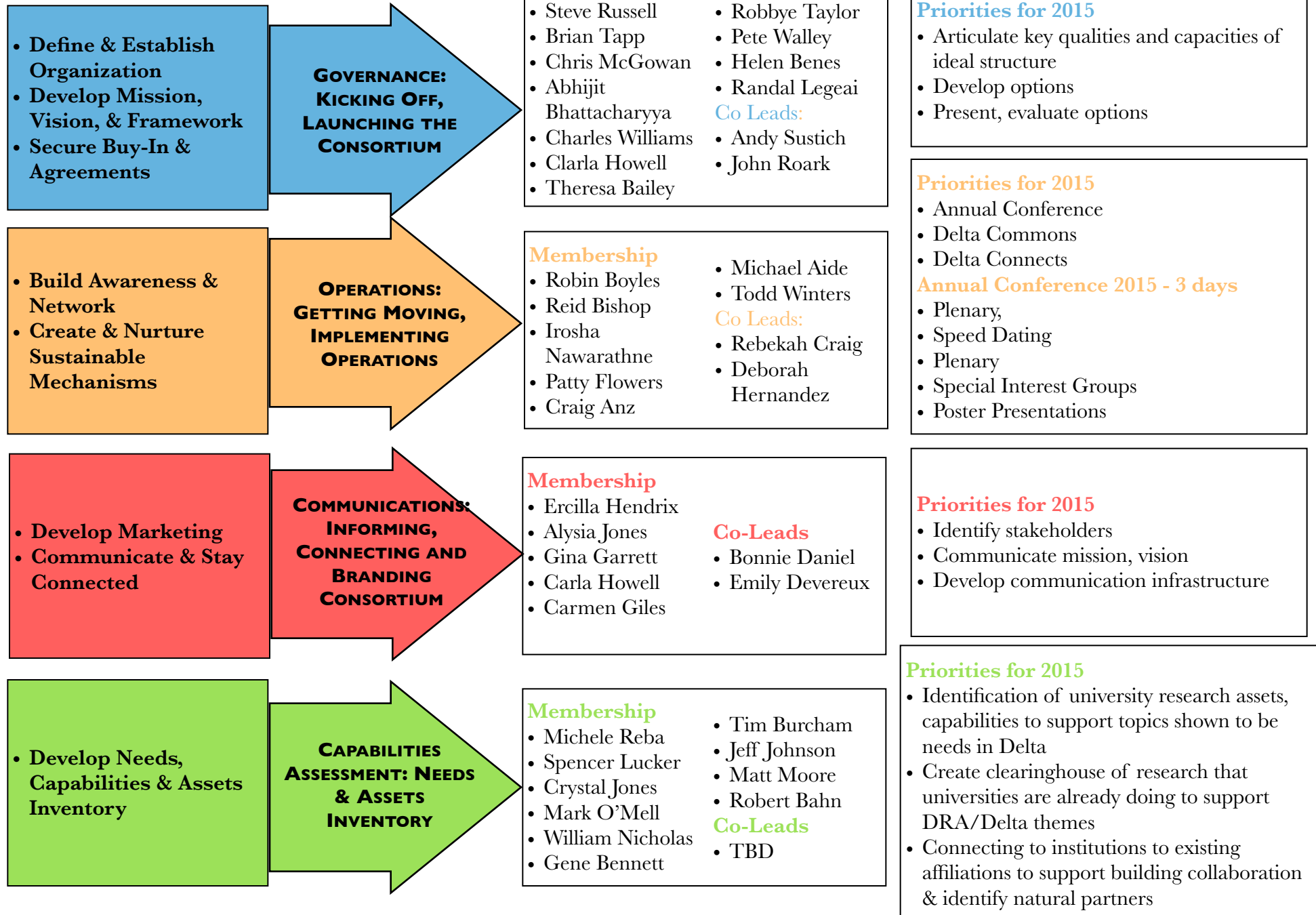
**OPERATIONS:  
GETTING MOVING,  
IMPLEMENTING  
OPERATIONS**

**COMMUNICATIONS:  
INFORMING,  
CONNECTING AND  
BRANDING  
CONSORTIUM**

**CAPABILITIES  
ASSESSMENT: NEEDS  
& ASSETS  
INVENTORY**

# Emerging Strategies Work Groups:

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015





# Key Qualities and Capacities of Ideal Organization

Governance Committee: Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

Responsive, Effective, Diverse Servant Leadership	Clarity of Mission & Goals	Values Diversity of Ideas & People	Ownership, Purpose & Partnership with Community	Relevance & Influence in Delta region	Shared Resources, Measurable Useful Outcomes
<i>ideas</i>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Flexible leaders, ambassadors</li> <li>•Multi-faceted leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Deliberate, (not slow) leadership</li> <li>•8 Board members</li> <li>•Clear leadership structure</li> <li>•Identify effective, responsive leadership, governance</li> <li>•DRA/DRC connection</li> <li>•Leadership capacity, levels</li> <li>•Stronge leadership, human capital; revolving leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive- all organizational types</li> <li>•Specific mission that encompasses all stakeholders</li> <li>•Compelling mission</li> <li>•State the values, vision, goals, mission clearly</li> <li>•Clarity of goals</li> <li>•Identify several projects to be gin the DRC</li> <li>•Define inclusive organizational representation</li> <li>•Guidance for diverse teamwork</li> <li>•Fluid ability to pivot</li> <li>•Develop internal general MOU between institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Engage community, et al.</li> <li>•Garner support from Delta community</li> <li>•Formalize pubic communication, web based</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Broad institutional support</li> <li>• Political awareness of environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reliable resource for expertise and data</li> <li>•Dynamic projects</li> </ul>

# Emerging Interest Groups

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

## Economic & Workforce Development

### Co Leads

- Gene Bennet
- Mark O'Mell

### Priorities

- Identify skills gap
- Identify assets we have
- Student mentor program

### Next Action

- Identify right institution, person to identify, lead assets

### Membership

- University of Arkansas - Little Rock)
- University of West Alabama
- University of Tennessee at Martin
- NCPDD
- Murray State University
- Univeristy Arkasas- Pine Bluff
- Northwestern State University
- Southeast Missouri State University
- Carbondale
- Northeastern College
- Grambling State University
- Southern Arkansas University
- **ASU (Alcorn State University?)**
- Lyon College

## Energy

### Co Leads

- John Pratte
- TBD

### Priorities

- Develop affordable sustainable energy for the Delta
- Develop more efficient energy use in the Delta
- Decrease energy's impact on environment in Delta

### Next Action

- Assessment of energy research & firms
- Assess energy's impact in Delta
- Look for quick wins

### Membership

- University of West Alabama
- University of Tennessee at Martin
- Little Rock
- Murray State University
- VAPB
- Southeast Missouri State University
- Southern Arkansas University
- Southern Arkansas University Tech
- **ASU (Alcorn State University?)**
- Tulane

## Emerging Interest Groups

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

### Biomedical/Public Health

#### Co Leads

- Rebekah Craig
- Helen Benes
- Mary Benjamin

#### Priorities

- Standardization of health literacy and access
- Diverse, skilled biomedical workforce
- Translational research & innovation (bench to bedside)

#### Next Action

- Assess resources & needs

#### Membership

- University of Tennessee at Martin
- University of Memphis
- Murray State University
- Lyon College
- Tulane
- Northwestern State University
- South Illinois University at Carbondale
- Arkansas State University
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

### Delta Culture

#### Co Leads

- Alysia Jones
- Reid Bishop

#### Priorities

- Create catalog/database of Delta cultural works
- Identify collaboration for NEH grant proposals
- Perceptions of diversity and cultural sensitivity
- Natural heritage

#### Next Action

- Assessment of current Delta cultural environment and events
- Develop common calendar of events
- Develop Delta culture maps and nature trails

#### Membership

- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Murray State University
- Lyon College
- University of Tennessee at Martin
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- Arkansas State University

## Emerging Interest Groups

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

### Water

#### Co Leads

- Michael Aide
- Matt Moore

#### Priorities

- Quantity, sustainability
- Quality
- Emerging technology

#### Next Action

- Identify all interested parties in Delta
- Identify research, demonstration priorities
- Propose creation of planning committees

#### Membership

- University of Arkansas-Little Rock
- University of West Alabama
- University of Tennessee at Martin
- University of Memphis
- Murray State University
- Arkansas State University
- Southeast Missouri State University
- Tulane
- University of Mississippi
- Southern Arkansas University
- Lyon College

### Food & Agriculture

#### Co Leads

- Todd Winters
- Ercilla Hendriks
- Reid Bishop

#### Priorities

- Food deserts (rural)
- Train the agricultural workforce
- Conduct applied agricultural research
- Natural resources-habitat preservation, restoration
- Develop food safety research & education programs

#### Next Action

- Identify and recruit partners
- Define leadership roles within the working group

#### Membership

- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning
- Murray State University
- South Illinois University at Carbondale
- University of Tennessee at Martin
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- Arkansas State University
- Belhaven University
- Southeast Missouri State University

## Emerging Interest Groups

Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015

### Advanced Manufacturing

#### Co Leads

- Bonnie Daniel
- Carmen Giles

#### Priorities

- SWOT Analysis by area
- Identify industry needs
- Secure equipment

#### Next Action

- Rural business, industry, university meeting (interest)

#### Membership

- East Arkansas Crossroads Coalition
- University of Mississippi
- Murray State University
- Arkansas State University
- South Illinois University at Carbondale,
- Northwestern State University

### Entrepreneurship

#### Co Leads

- Brian Tapp
- William Nicholas

#### Priorities

- Organizational assessment
- Best practices

#### Next Action

- Engagement of appropriate staff
- Summary of services
- Identification of key programs, education

#### Membership

- University of Tennessee at Martin
- University of Tennessee at Memphis
- Murray State University
- Lyon College
- Northwestern State University
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- Arkansas State University

# Next Steps

## Next Steps

- Each Team meets, develops work plans
- Documentation from launch sent out
- Letter explaining consortium to members

## Additional ideas for future conversations:

- The Delta Mobile
- DRA Kiosk
- Certificate program on the Delta
- Delta Leadership Institute
- STEM education
- [DRA.org](http://DRA.org) website accessible to “anyone”
- Personal stories of researchers connecting - case studies
- Students: Delta leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Delta Intellectual Property sharing
- Recreation as a topic/interest area



*photos: Andrew Ferguson, A-State Creative Services*

**Delta Research Consortium - April 9 & 10, 2015**



*photos: Andrew Ferguson, A-State Creative Services*

# Delta Research Consortium Launch Meeting

## April 2015 - Participant List

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