Furthering Diversity within CISL’s SIParCS program: Final Report

Introduction
CISL’s Summer Internships in Parallel Computational Science (SIParCS) Program offers graduate students and undergraduate students who have completed their sophomore year significant hands-on R&D opportunities in high performance computing (HPC). Students are embedded as interns at NCAR working on projects in the computational sciences for 10 weeks during the summer. As described in the proposal, CISL Diversity funds have been used as cosponsorship of the NCAR Diversity proposal.

Activities and Outcomes
For 2008, we proposed to use NCAR Diversity Funds along with matching CISL diversity funds to dramatically enhance the diversity impacts of CISL’s SIParCS program. These activities are repeated here with outcomes noted:

1) Conduct outreach activities to targeted universities. We planned to conduct up to four university visits by CISL staff during the fall and winter of 2008. Outcome: The following trips/activities were supported: San Diego State University (SDSU) statistics and CS departments, January 25, 2008 (Nychka, Loft); Marquette University/ University Wisconsin, Milwaukee, computer science department, February 1, 2008 (Loft); Colorado State University (CSU) CS department seminar, February 4, 2008 – Based on contacts with a CSU computer science professor, himself from an underrepresented group (Loft ); Colorado Celebration of Women in Computer Science (CCWICS) – April 4, 2008 - NCAR/CISL was a “silver” sponsor for CCWICS, and staffed a recruiting table during the event’s job fair portion (Loft, Orendorff); Co-organized and spoke at a session at National Conference, Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science – October 10, 2008, Salt Lake City, Utah (Nychka). Supercomputing 2008 (SC08) Student Job Fair – November 19, 2008. CISL staffed a recruiting table during the job fair portion of SC08 conference in Austin, Texas (Loft, Cross, Unger). 

   Budget Expended: $5,089

2) SIParCS diversity candidate support for up to 4 candidates. Outcome: As a result of increased diversity support and more aggressive recruiting, the student interns in 2008 were a more diverse group: 4 students (36%) were from backgrounds traditionally under-represented in the CISL workforce – in 2007, none of the interns were. The backgrounds of these four “diversity” students were as follows: two were women, one was Hispanic and two were Asian. The funds received under our proposal, along with matching CISL Diversity funds, were used to support three diversity candidates – one recruited as a result of our visit to SDSU. One Asian-female student was supported by funds from the University of Wyoming. 

   Budget Expended: $43,878

3) Covering incidental follow-on costs related to SIParCS diversity intern participation. Outcome: One SIParCS diversity intern (Santos) received follow-on support funds (through December 31, 2008) to develop a parallel hydrology code for an NCAR scientist (Winter). 

   Budget Expended to date: $810

The remaining NCAR proposal funds and cosponsored CISL Diversity funds will be used in FY09 to support two diversity students.

Lessons Learned

1) Face-to-face recruiting efforts are effective ways to build university-based awareness of programs like SIParCS and strong referral networks for increasing applicant counts as well as getting a more diverse candidate pool.

2) Of these sorts of activities, by far the most effective strategy (in terms of greatest number of contacts per $) is staffing recruiting tables at conferences where large numbers of candidates from under-represented groups attend.

3) Universities’ winter break schedule is variable. A longer application window for internship programs is desirable.