

SDIGERT Annual Assessment Report May 2011
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We conducted telephone interviews with half of the 12 students involved in the IGERT program. The students had a mix of multi-institutional courses, some through the access grid room, and some through older technologies through the governor's classroom. IGERT students were generally positive of the IGERT program and recognize the value of contributions for different researchers both within different disciplines and within different institutions. While a few indicated limited understanding of the goals and objectives of the IGERT program most appreciated the multi-institutional aspect of the program and the opportunities afforded through the access grid room. Several key elements emerged from the discussion that warrant further evaluation and assessment.

- Most have taken courses through multi-institutional delivery and felt that the courses worked reasonably well. It is not uncommon for students to feel somewhat disconnected when taking a course where the instructor is at a remote location. Surprisingly, none of the IGERT students expressed a concern in this area and almost all indicated a moderate to moderately high level of satisfaction with courses and program delivery. Having access to additional courses through multi-institutional delivery seems to be a definite positive for the program. A few indicated that while the lecture format was a bit more awkward in the older governor's classroom, they also indicated that it was not significantly distracting from overall content delivery. It is not clear if all faculty plan to convert to the access grid for course delivery and this may be an area for discussion and further evaluation.
- Of the students interviewed, only one had completed a rotation and strongly felt that it was a huge benefit for building collaborative research. The rotation offered an opportunity to work more closely with a researcher in a related field and that much was gained by being temporarily located at a new location. In addition, two students were planning rotations in the near future and were looking forward to the opportunity. One student indicated no awareness of the rotation program and indicated little desire to participate in a rotation.
- The last area involved the monthly research meetings conducted through the access grid room. In this case reviews were mixed and this is an area that requires additional exploration and evaluation for the future. Most of the students indicated that while the research meetings were informative they had only marginal impact on their own research and, for the most part, did not feel that they were universally productive for identifying possible areas of collaboration or for providing key insights to problems or methodologies within their own research context. This is not universally true and one student felt strongly that the monthly research meetings were valuable and always felt that at the very least they were both interesting and informative.