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MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 16, 2025

TO: Board of Regents

FROM: Patricia Charlton 
Interim Chancellor

SUBJECT: Annual Evaluation Summary President Dr. Kumud Acharya Desert Research Institute

Pursuant to Procedures & Guidelines Manual (PGM) Chapter 2, Section 2, Sub-section 1.A.4, please accept this summary of annual evaluation for President Dr. Kumud Acharya, Desert Research Institute (DRI). As prescribed this summary includes “the status of institutional metrics and corresponding targets established to measure progress towards the achievement of goals outlined in the institutional strategic plan.” (PGM Chapter 2, Section 2, Sub-section 1.A.4).

Overall Status of Institutional Performance:

Under President Acharya’s leadership and since the last evaluation DRI has been extremely successful in increased grant awards. Key success areas have been growth of partnerships and collaborations with the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Energy (DOE), these two granting areas represented a thirty-one percent (31%) of overall DRI grants and contracts in FY 24. DRI continued to meet and exceed Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) targets, a critical component of operational support over the past five years. This is a result of sound fiscal management; however, this is an area that in the coming years is expected to be challenging for all grant recipients nationally.

Of note, is the success of philanthropic efforts at DRI. Since the prior evaluation in FY 24, fundraising increased by one-hundred and eighty nine percent (189%) and included the establishment of two new endowments: the Innovation Research Program Endowment and the Betty and John Gallifent Endowment.

Institutional Metrics & Corresponding Targets:

Annually, DRI completes a comprehensive review of the fifteen (15) metrics established in the DRI Strategic Plan. These metrics align not only with the DRI Strategic Plan, through 2027 but also have elements aligned with the NSHE Strategic Goals. At the close of calendar year 2024, seven (7) of the goals met or exceeded 100% of targets. An additional five (5) goals have met or surpassed eighty percent of the target. Finally, DRI continues to prioritize two focused initiative areas which include Proposal Success and Streamlining Business and Governance Functions.

Under President Acharya's leadership, DRI strongly collaborates across NSHE institutions through the DRI Research Immersion Internship program. This program provides opportunities for undergraduates from NSHE community colleges and Nevada State University (NSU) to participate in internships. DRI has reached ninety-eight percent (98%) of the established goal through 2027. The DRI Strategic Plan metrics include:

DRI Strategic Plan Metrics Scorecard	
Proposal dollars generated	Proposal success
Number of scientific trainings and forums	Earned media outreach
Funding generated by advancement	Event engagement
Cross-functional teams	Number of DRI internships
Align investments with IDEA goals	Inclusion & belonging indicators
Number of graduate students	Cross-divisional proposals
Participation in citizen science	Social media engagement
Mentoring relationships	

Evaluation Goals:

President Acharya is committed to professional development and the establishment of goals personally, professionally and for DRI.

Personal Goals 2025-26:

1. Attend conferences, seminars, and symposiums for research topics relevant to DRI.
2. Continue engagement with organizations and business leaders in support of the visibility of the DRI. This is accomplished through opportunities for speaking events and participation in local, regional, and national organizations.
3. Engage with the Board of Regents in a systematic manner. Explore opportunities to showcase the Desert Research Institute and highlights of programmatic activity.

Professional Goals 2025-26:

1. Provide leadership to DRI and adjust to new realities and challenges of federal funding changes.
2. Facilitate the planning of a five-year external review to encompass a five-to-ten-year research vision for DRI. The visioning exercise will include three to five national experts.
3. Evaluate the identification of opportunities for private sector and private foundations in support of DRI.
4. Evaluate expansion into new areas such as AI, Cybersecurity and Wildfires to broaden DRI's research portfolios.