

RCN CE₃SAR Conferences

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Overview

In partnership with NSF-funded **Research Coordination Network on Climate, Energy, Environment and Engagement in Semiarid Regions (RCN CE₃SAR)**, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi invites you to a charette entitled:

Understanding the Corpus Christi Educational Ecosystem: Promoting a Culture of STEM + A/D

RCN CE₃SAR brings together the combined power of regional research organizations in South Texas with specific expertise related to sustainability in semiarid climates contiguous to the Gulf of Mexico.

Today's global societal challenges are of such a magnitude of complexity that multiple areas of expertise are needed to conceive, plan, design, and implement effective solutions at multiple spatial and temporal scales. This is particularly evident in the pursuit of sustainable economic growth, which requires that citizens be educated and informed, and display active and high levels of social, cultural, and political engagement, in the development, promotion, and application of policies, which encompass the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability. In particular, grasping the complexities of sustainability in order to effectively address and solve societal challenges such as climate change, energy, water, and other environmental, social, and economic issues, requires mindsets, skills, abilities, and competencies solidly anchored in **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** innovations.

However, **STEM** innovations have not been, and will never be, enough to provide comprehensive solutions to societal challenges, particularly within the global context of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that surrounds sustainability. In this context, several issues converge: (1) the nature, dynamics, and speed of change; (2) a low level of awareness and understanding, lack of predictability, and prospects for surprise of some issues and events; (3) a plethora of forces, confounding issues, chaos, and confusion that surround organizations, both public and private; and (4) cause-and-effect confusion caused by haziness of reality, potential for misreads, and mixed meanings and understanding of conditions. As a result, more than ever, there is a need to transcend **STEM**, and add imagination, creativity, and design to the set of mindsets, skills, abilities, and competencies required to effectively address and solve societal challenges. For some constituents, **Art and Design (A/D)** is poised to transform societies, economies, and the environment in the 21st century, just as science, technology, engineering and mathematics did in the last century.

The goal of this charette is to initiate the planning process for creating **STEM + A/D** culture in Corpus Christi that leads to a measurable increase in the number of its graduates in these disciplines over the next decade. Lessons learned from the Corpus Christi region will be generalized for use in other areas.

The charette will be grounded on the thesis that an "educational ecosystem," defined as *a hierarchical community of institutions, organizations, agencies, societies, businesses and people that interactively learn and educate in the same area or environment*, exists in Corpus Christi and its outlying regions.

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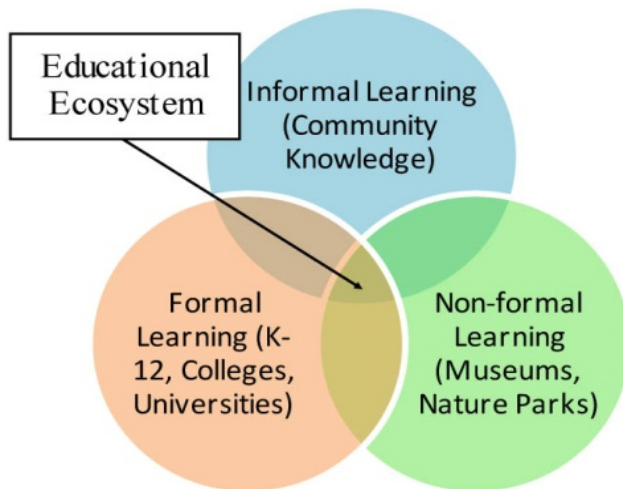
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It will be organized around a primary question:

- What are the key elements of Corpus Christi educational ecosystem?

And the following:

- How are the key elements of Corpus Christi educational ecosystem networked?
- How do resources flow through the present network?
- Does the present network and resource flow minimize or optimize **STEM + A/D** education?
- How can the Corpus Christi educational ecosystem promote a regional **STEM + A/D** culture?

A charette has several characteristics that are important to the success of this regional planning process. First, it will be a collaborative and inclusive process. In our case, the collaboration will embrace outside experts and community stakeholders who are interested in and will benefit from **STEM + A/D** development in the region. Second, it will take a rigorous interdisciplinary approach to examining the Corpus Christi educational ecosystem. Third, it will take into consideration the unique values and vision of the region.

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