A team of students from Washoe County School District’s Academy of Arts, Careers and Technology (AACT) returned home victorious after competing in the second annual NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge, held in April, at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The Reno students’ team and their sophisticated rover vehicle finished third in the High School Division – Obstacle Course, presented for posting the fastest vehicle assembly and race times in their division, with the fewest on-course penalties. The Reno team also won the System Safety Award for the high school team exemplifying the best safety practices. Reno’s third-place finish clocked them in as the fastest high school team from the continental U.S. Supported in part by Nevada NASA Space Grant Consortium (NVSGC), the Reno rover team is a partnership between the school district’s AACT, and Fleischmann Planetarium at the University of Nevada, Reno.

**NASA EPScoR HOSTS 2015 ANNUAL MEETING**

The Nevada NASA EPScoR and the Nevada NASA Space Grant Consortium hosted its annual meeting in Las Vegas April 30-May 1, 2015. Nearly 100 people were in attendance including faculty, students and administrators from across Nevada who are involved or interested in Nevada’s NASA programs.

Invited guest speaker, Dr. Denise Thorsen, Director of the Alaska NASA EPScoR and Space Grant Consortium spoke about interpreting NASA’s mission to meet a jurisdiction’s needs. Faculty attended a proposal writing workshop given by Dr. Hans Moosmüller and Roger Kreidberg. Students presented research posters and participated in special sessions to help them gain a competitive edge in scholarship writing, resume building and interview basics.
A delegate of Nevada faculty and executive administrators traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend the Annual EPSCoR/IDeA States Coalition Meeting, March 3-4 2015. The EPSCoR/IDeA Coalition is a national, non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote expansion of the capacity of the United States and Commonwealths and territories to carry out scientific and engineering research and education.

EPSCoR/IDeA state members learned about the congressional outlook with regards to the 2015 federal budget for EPSCoR and IDeA program budgets, as well as new initiatives of importance. The meeting on March 3 culminated with a talk by Dr. France Cordóva, the Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF), in which she provided information on new and exciting initiatives being offered by the NSF.

On March 4, the Nevada delegation walked the halls of Congress on Capitol Hill and met with staff of Nevada’s congressional members to inform them of the importance of the EPSCoR and IDeA programs to Nevada’s research, education and workforce as well as providing highlights of current EPSCoR and IDeA programs. The delegation met with the staff of Senators Reid and Heller, and staff of Representatives Heck, Titus, and Amodei. The annual “Hill” visits are always very exciting, being right in the midst of where federal laws are made, and seeing up close the neoclassical architecture of Capitol Hill.

**ROBIN GONZALES MEETS WITH SENATOR REID’S OFFICE**

Robin Gonzales, the NSF program coordinator from the System Sponsored Programs & EPSCoR office, attended the White House Summit on Asian American and Pacific Islanders at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. because of his previous involvements as an alumnus of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) Leadership Academy and his non-profit volunteer work in the Philippines for the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU).

While in D.C., Gonzales was invited to Senator Reid’s office. Reid’s representatives were excited to hear about the programs that are specific to broadening participation of underrepresented minorities. They showed interest in getting involved in raising awareness and the marketing of the NV STEM Pipeline and the NV STEM Mentor Database. Gonzales was also able to share about additional programs happening with the EPSCoR office including the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), application writing workshops, and the Bright Stars programs. Gonzales will continue to provide updates on these and other programs to Reid’s office. Most importantly, Gonzales was able to communicate the importance and need of EPSCoR funding within Nevada.