



NSF EPSCoR

HDRFS 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

This past April, over 80 faculty, students, and collaborators from the Nevada NSF EPSCoR RII-Track 1 [Harnessing the Data Revolution for Fire Science \(HDRFS\)](#) project gathered at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) for the [2026 Annual Meeting](#). The two-day event featured collaborative working groups and panel discussions focused on practical application workflows like 2D mapping, 3D sensor fusion, and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). The event also featured a dynamic afternoon poster session, providing students an opportunity to network and discuss their research. Following the main meeting, a dedicated professional development workshop equipped students with critical career skills, featuring tracks on science communication, resume building, and interviewing strategies. Ultimately, the 2026 event successfully fostered the cross-component collaborations and strategic planning needed to maximize the impact of the project's final year while securing the long-term future of Nevada's fire science initiative.



HDRFS faculty and students gathered at the 2026 Annual Meeting. (Credit: Mayara Cueto-Diaz)

2026 NSF EPSCoR ANNUAL SUMMIT

Last month, the Nevada NSF EPSCoR team attended the [2026 EPSCoR Annual Summit](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana, joining project researchers, students, and staff from 28 jurisdictions across the country, alongside national scientific leadership. Co-hosted by the National Science Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) from May 19–22, the summit served as a leading collaborative forum, featuring engaging speakers, strategic breakout sessions, and dynamic networking opportunities. The Nevada team actively engaged in workshops, attended student poster presentations and flash talks, and immersed themselves in discussions on leading regional practices. The invaluable insights gained and connections forged during these collaborative sessions will directly inform Nevada's strategic approach to building a sustainable research ecosystem.



The Nevada team actively engaged in strategic workshops, flash talks, and student presentations at this year's NSF EPSCoR National Summit. (Credit: Mayara Cueto-Diaz)

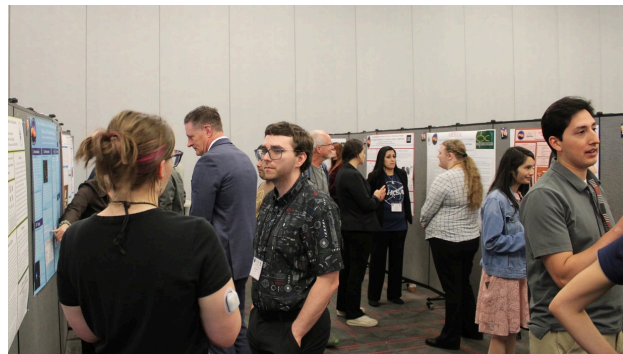
NASA EPSCoR

2026 STATEWIDE MEETING

The Nevada NASA Programs held their annual [Statewide Meeting](#) on April 3, 2026, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Hosted in the Student Union Ballroom, the event gathered about 80 faculty, students, affiliates, and advocates from across the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to celebrate and advance NASA-supported research and STEM initiatives.

The meeting served as a platform for participants to showcase groundbreaking advancements through a series of oral research presentations and a vibrant student poster session. With dedicated networking blocks and a keynote presentation on cutting-edge aerospace innovations, the event successfully sparked new statewide collaborations—laying strong groundwork for Nevada's future in the aerospace sector.

We were honored to have NSHE Chancellor Matt McNair, UNLV Vice President of Research Dr. David Hatchett, and Desert Research Institute Vice President of Research Dr. Vic Etyemezian join us to see the incredible work our students are doing. Their support underscores the impact of NASA-funded research across Nevada.



Top: Students presenting research at the poster session. Bottom: Chancellor Matt McNair and VPs of Research Dr. David Hatchett and Dr. Vic Etyemezian join Nevada NASA Project Director, Eric Wilcox to celebrate student innovation. (Credit: Arlene Herrera)

NASA EPSCOR PROJECT BRINGS VR VISION TECH TO THE ISS



Professor Alireza Tavakkoli
(Credit: UNR)

In an effort to protect astronauts on long-duration space missions, a virtual reality vision test designed by Professor Alireza Tavakkoli from the University of Nevada, Reno, is officially being tested aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Backed by a \$100,000 NASA EPSCOR research award, the study aims to combat Spaceflight Associated Neuroocular Syndrome (SANS)—a condition first noticed by NASA in 2009 that physically alters the retina and optic nerve due to the prolonged absence of gravity.

Following a successful April resupply delivery, a series of 30-minute testing sessions involving four astronauts are scheduled to run through late 2026. The data gathered will support NASA's Artemis project for future moon and Mars exploration, while also offering a blueprint for portable eye care in remote, underserved regions on Earth. "This phase of the study is primarily for feasibility," Tavakkoli said. "You want to see if this thing actually works in space, if it's measuring things that it's supposed to be measuring, and if those measurements are consistent." Tavakkoli said the next phase of the study would be to get approval from NASA to link his data with NASA's medical database and compare datasets for eye changes before and after flight.

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epscorspo.nevada.edu | 702.522.7070
Nevada System of Higher Education
4300 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89119