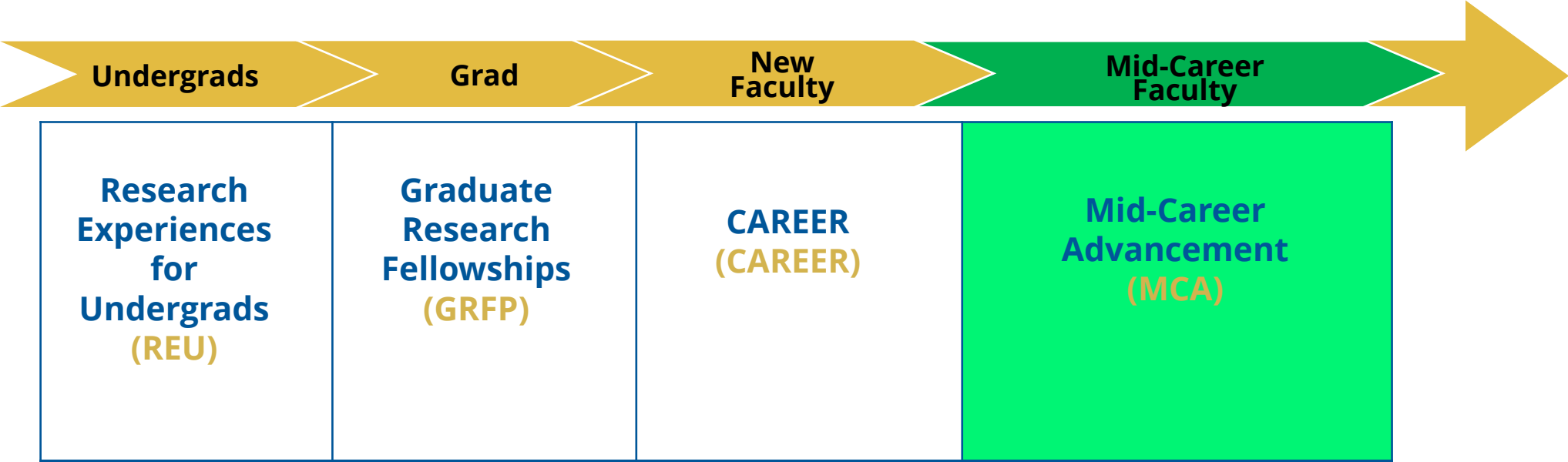# Mid-Career Advancement Program 22-603

Leslie Rissler - Directorate for Biological Sciences (lrissler@nsf.gov)
Eleanor Sayres – Directorate for STEM Education (esayres@nsf.gov)

MCA addresses a gap in NSF's portfolio –
mid-career with a focus on *retention* and *advancement*

Undergrads	Grad	New Faculty	Mid-Career Faculty
Research Experiences for Undergrads **(REU)**	**Graduate Research Fellowships** **(GRFP)**	**CAREER** **(CAREER)**	**Mid-Career Advancement** **(MCA)**

NSF Career Stage Solicitations

MCA addresses unique (and universal) challenges at mid-career stage

Recruitment - Beginning Investigators
CAREER

- Fresh out of PhD/postdoc training
- Startup $ for research
- More equal gender/racial distribution

Retention and Advancement - Mid-Career Investigators MCA

- Time to refresh/retool (> 6 yrs since postdoc training)
- Increased service (little time or $ for research)
- Skewed gender/racial distribution

nature podcast

NATURE CAREERS PODCAST | 21 September 2022

Muddle of the middle: why mid-career scientists feel neglected

How do you define 'mid-career' in academia? Funders, governing bodies and working scientists debate a vexed question.

NATURE CAREERS PODCAST | 26 October 2022

More support needed to survive the mid-career stage in science

Mid-career scientists need targeted training and development from funders and employers. Some are starting to provide it.

Motivation for the MCA

Broadening Participation

Convergent Research

Fostering Innovation

What is it exactly?

- **NSF participation:** BIO (all), GEO (all), SBE, EDU, and TIP

- **Who:** Associate Professor rank (*or equivalent*) with at least 3 years at that rank

  - **PUI Track** (began FY23) in BIO and GEO extends eligibility to Full Professors at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) only

- **What:** An opportunity to substantively enhance and advance the PI's research program and career trajectory through synergistic and mutually beneficial mentored partnerships [provides time (6.5 months) and $100K in direct costs for research and training]

Why is it unique? – sparks new achievement

- Provides protected time (salary) to learn new skills and think!

- Enables synergistic partnerships and mentorship

- Expands professional networks

- Provides research funds and time to conduct novel research and spark new achievement (publications and future grants)

Interested? If so, how should you begin...

Associate (or Full, only under Pilot PUI Track) Professor Equivalency - For a position to be considered an Associate or Full Professor equivalent position, it must meet all of the following requirements: (1) the employee has a continuing appointment that is expected to last for at least the duration of the grant; (2) the appointment has substantial research and educational and/or service responsibilities; and (3) the proposed project relates to the employee's career goals and job responsibilities as well as to the mission of the department or organization.

First – is your research area eligible?
search NSF.gov for MCA

Participation changes – so check often and contact a Program Officer in your research area
(goal to have entire NSF participating, analogous to the CAREER program)

Program contacts

A list of the participating programs is available at https://www.nsf.gov/bio/MCA_participants.pdf.

Program specific MCA contacts available at https://www.nsf.gov/bio/MCA_contacts.jsp.

MCA Cognizant Program Officers	MCA.info@nsf.gov	(703) 292-4628

Second – read the solicitation carefully
Submit to solicitation 22-603 and choose a participating program

1) Title must begin with "MCA: " or "MCA Pilot PUI: "

2) In addition to PAPPG requirements, proposals must include the following sections:
   - Section 1: Candidate's Past Research
   - Section 2: Candidate's Proposed Research Advancement and Training Plan
   - Section 3: Candidate's Long-Term Career Plans

3) References Cited

4) Biographical Sketches – for the PI <u>and</u> for Partner(s) (as Supplementary Docs)

5) Additional Supplementary Documentation
   - Impact Statement (2 pages) – *new!*
   - Letter(s) of Collaboration (written by the Partner)
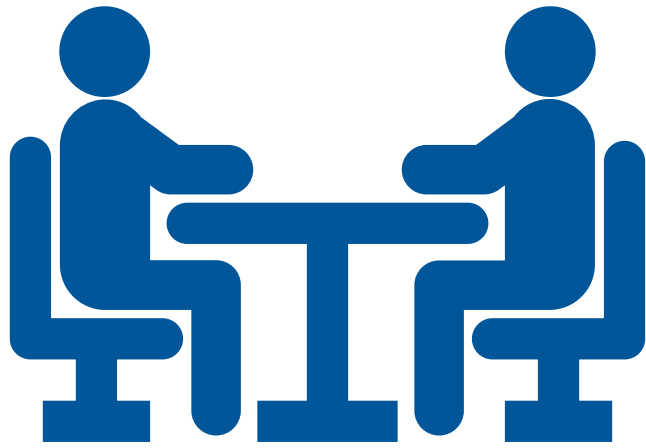   - Departmental Letter

Impact Statement – why is the MCA needed?

- Information on past or current constraints to the PI's time and resources available for research; and

- The impact of an MCA award on the PI's research and career trajectory, and if relevant, more far-reaching impacts including those on the PI's disciplines(s), department, and/or institution

Partner(s) choice is important – pick wisely

- Synergistic and Mutually-Beneficial

- No rank requirement

- Flexible in terms of field, institution type, and location

Departmental Letter – not a recommendation letter but rather...

- Acknowledges that PI's protected time will be honored

- Confirms eligibility

- Describes past successes

- Assesses value of proposed work for advancement

Main Focus of the Project Description – 12 pages

- Past Research

- Proposed Research Advancement and Training Plan

- Long-Term Career Plans

Tip: Get your Partner to help you with the research details.

Third - work with your SRO on budget details

Protected Time: up to 6.5 months of salary

Research and Training Funds: $100K direct costs

- **Partner** – one month of support (total) allowed
- **PI Meeting** – please include $ for 2-day awardee networking meeting in DC

Fourth – get others to read your MCA
(good advice for any submission to the NSF)

In summary:

The MCA is an award to enable advancements in scientific productivity that will likely lead to academic and leadership advancements, *not likely without such support.*

For questions, email:
mca.info@nsf.gov

MCA: PARTNERING LAND AND COMMUNITIES FOR EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE STEM LEARNING
NSF AWARD # 2121898

Dr. Karla Eitel

WHO AM I?

(TO WHOM AM I ACCOUNTABLE?)

- **Mother, Wife, Daughter**
- **Director**, McCall Field Campus and McCall Outdoor Science School
- **Faculty** in Natural Resources and Society.
- Teacher, advisor, committee member, boss, mentor, volunteer, member of the community, friend....
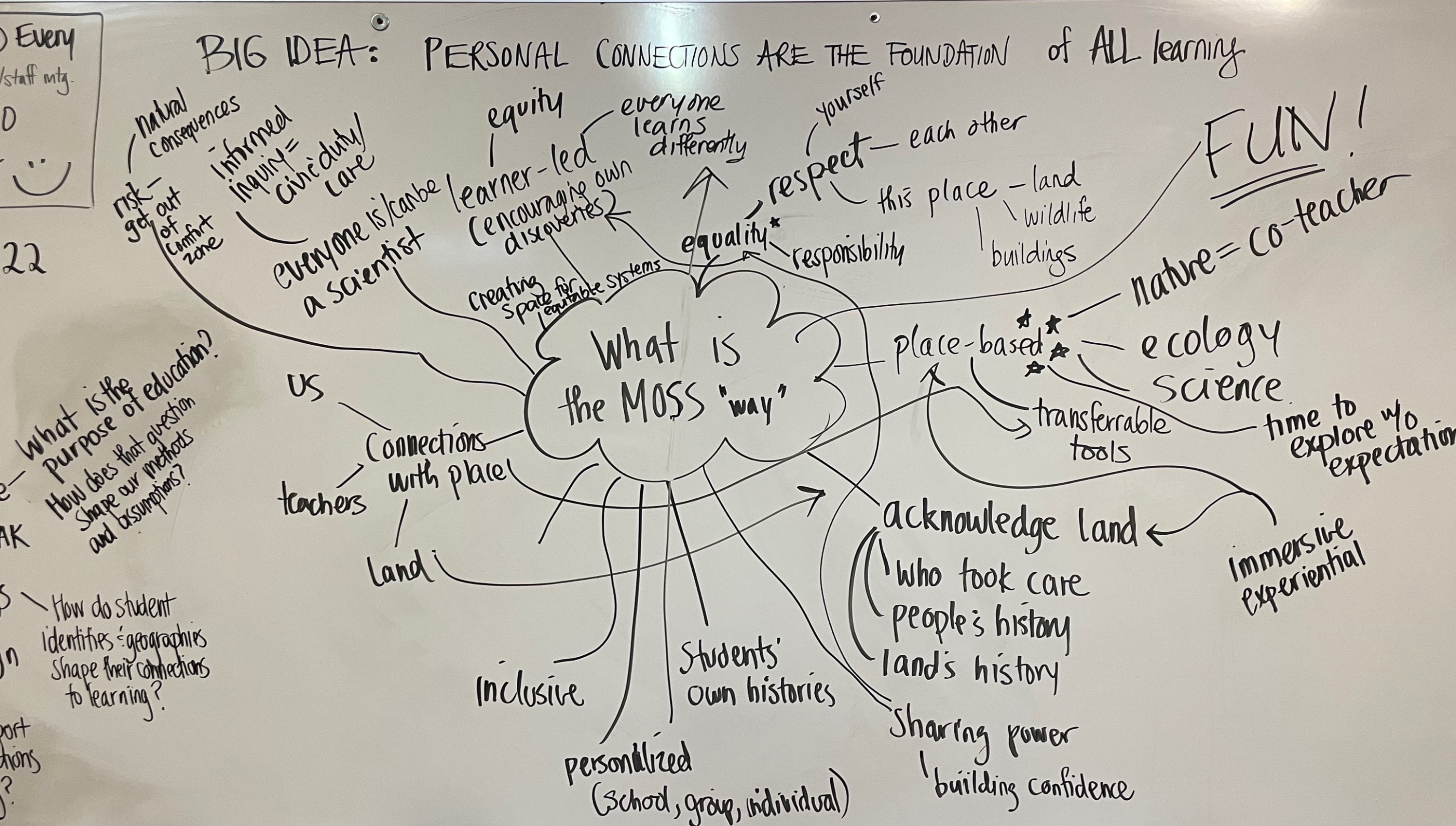
Hey, are you busy?

WHY APPLY?

THE MID CAREER PROGRAM

PROTECTING TIME FOR THINKING AND LEARNING!

How do graduate students take up and make meaning of equitable STEM learning?

How and in what ways can we partner with land and communities for more equitable STEM learning?

THINKING PARTNERS

Josiah Pinkham

Cultural Resources Specialist, Nez Perce Tribe

Shanny Spang-Gion

Visiting Tribal Scholar, University of Idaho

Karly Foster

Graduate Research Assistant

Hannah Pasek

Graduate Research Assistant

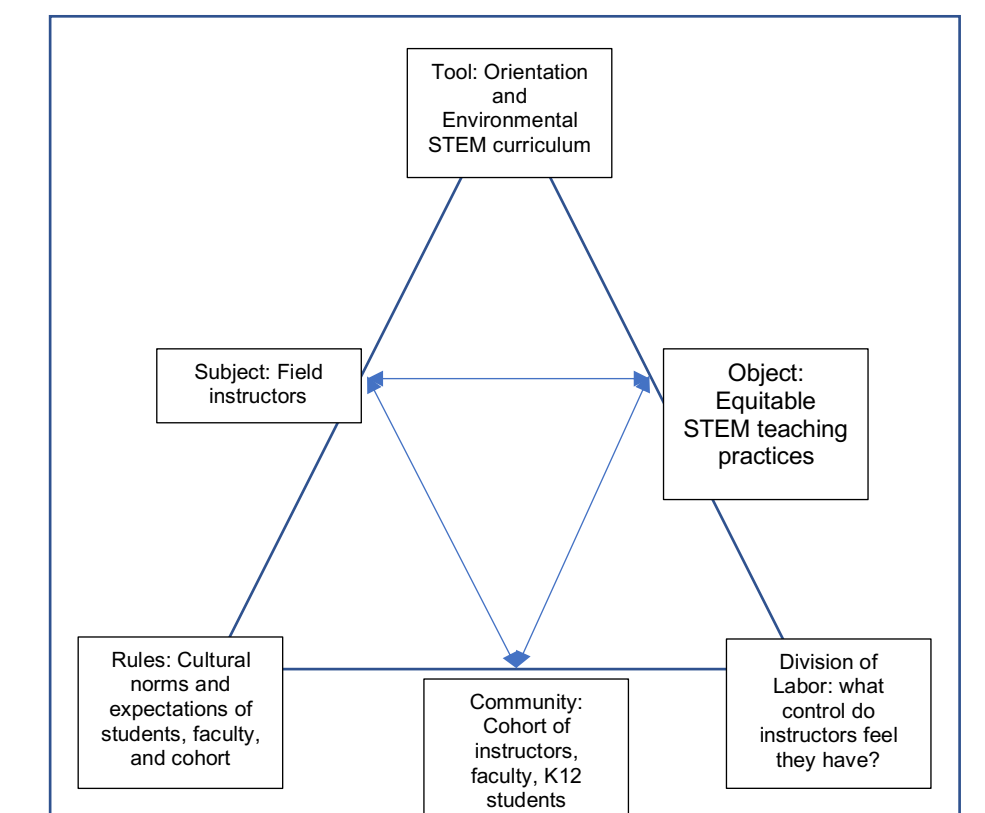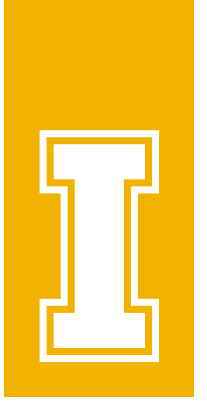## Resources I'm drawing from to define equitable STEM teaching:

Learning in Places

STEM teaching tools

YOUTH EQUITY + STEM

NSF Award #1720578

NSF Award #1920249

NSF Award #1647033

Analytical Tool: Cultural-Historical Activity Theory

Tool: Orientation and Environmental STEM curriculum

Subject: Field instructors

Object: Equitable STEM teaching practices

Rules: Cultural norms and expectations of students, faculty, and cohort

Community: Cohort of instructors, faculty, K12 students

Division of Labor: what control do instructors feel they have?

DO AS I SAY AND NOT AS I DID...

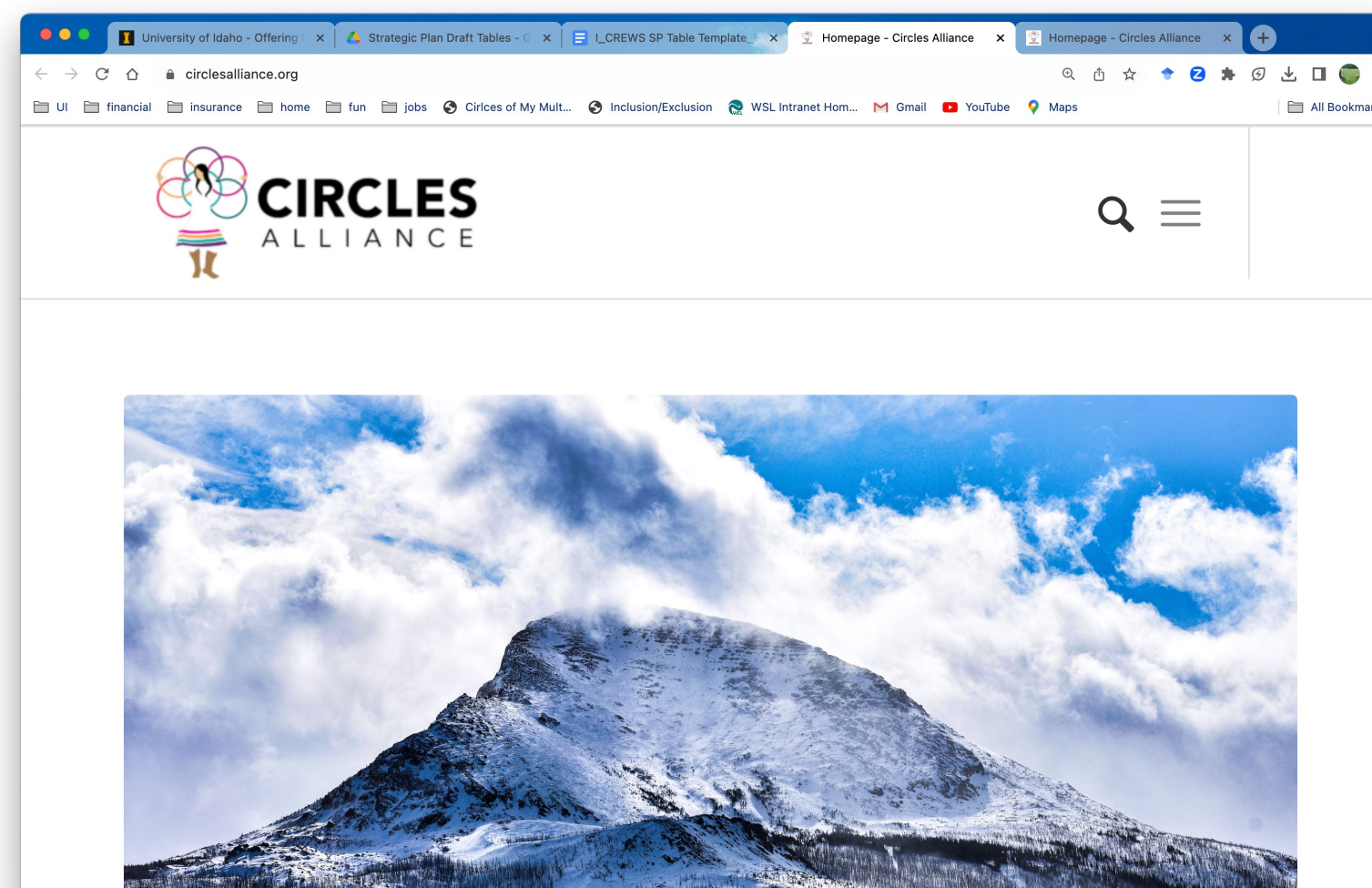Discuss with your supervisors how you will continue to support your scholarly work after the protected time is over.
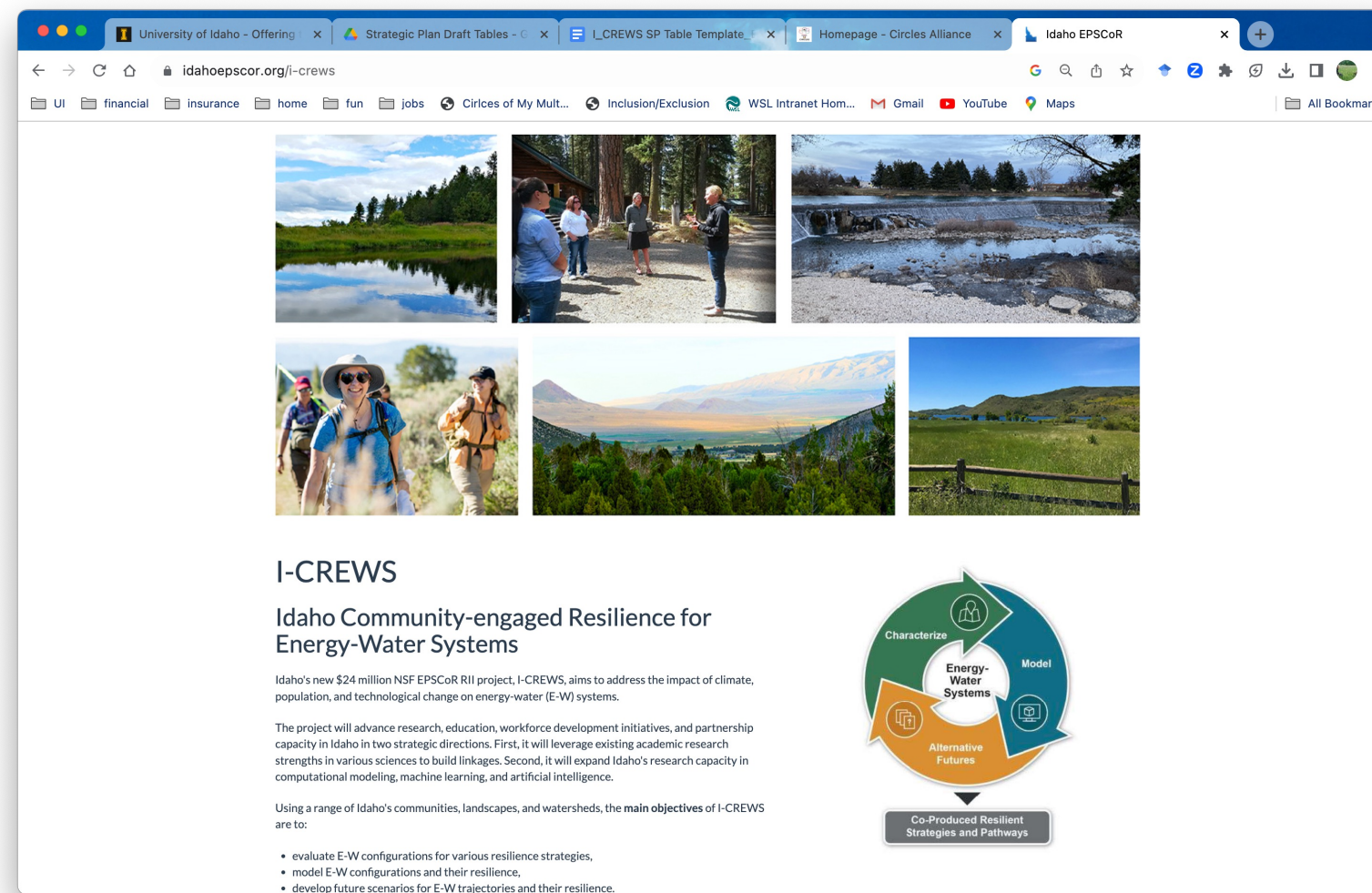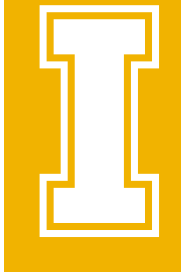
HOW IS THIS INFORMING CURRENT WORK?

Partnering with Teachers and Tribes to Integrate Indigenous and STEM School Knowledge

NSF Award #2201148

Wrap-up

- Next MCA submission window is February 1 – March 1, 2024
- Schedule a 1:1 with one of our presenters
  - Eleanor or Leslie: Microsoft Bookings
  - Karla: Reach out to her directly
  - Window is open through October 10
- Next seminar: Broader Impacts 101
- Contact the RFD Team with any questions
- THANK YOU ALL!!!