Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE)

A Program for Women and Underrepresented Minorities[*] in STEM Disciplines

Request for Applications

DEADLINE DATES:
Round One: May 9, 2011
Round Two: December 1, 2011

LOUISIANA EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH (EPSCoR)

Sponsored By:
The National Science Foundation and the Louisiana Board of Regents

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[*] Blacks or African-Americans; those of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity; American Indian or Alaskan Natives; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders; or those with disabilities (hearing, visual, or mobility impairments)

A.   Program Overview

A goal of the Louisiana Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (LA-EPSCoR) project, funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), is to increase the participation of women and other underrepresented minorities and in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. The Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE) program seeks to further this goal by fostering opportunities for such students to conduct supervised research with a faculty mentor. Students will have the opportunity to become engaged in a professional researcher's work, to learn how he or she formulates a hypothesis, develops a plan to investigate it, obtains research funding and other resources, gathers and examines evidence, encounters obstacles, and evaluates and shares results with the scientific community. By participating in research, students have the chance to learn more about their chosen field of study, and can use the experience to help them decide whether or not to pursue further education by attending graduate school.

B.   General Information

B.1   Program Goals

- Provide opportunities for students to learn modern research and laboratory techniques
- Give students a clearer idea of their options for a future in research
- Motivate students toward careers in science and technology fields
- Provide mentors assistance for their research programs
- Improve student written and oral communication skills
- Enhance the research of participating faculty mentors

B.2   Eligibility

Students: the SURE program is available to full-time undergraduate students who are matriculated at a Louisiana public institution of higher education, or in a higher education institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Eligibility is further limited to female students or students (male or female) who are considered underrepresented minorities by NSF: i.e., Black or African-American; Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Alaskan Native; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; or those students with disabilities (e.g., hearing, visual, or mobility impairments). Students who will have completed their bachelor's degree before the research experience begins are not eligible.

Faculty Mentors must hold a faculty position at a Louisiana public institution of higher education, or in a higher education institution that is a member of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), in a STEM discipline supported by NSF.

Students and Faculty Mentors can be from the same institution or different institutions.

B.3   Award Amounts

Students accepted for the SURE program will receive a stipend of $4,000. This amount is based on a level of effort consistent with no less than 320 total hours of work. Faculty mentors receive a supplemental grant of $1,000 per student for the purchase of research supplies associated with mentoring students, and/or travel by students/mentors to meetings or conferences to present research findings. The funds for both the stipend and the Faculty Mentor supplemental grant will be made available to the Faculty Mentor's institution as a subcontract. Indirect costs (i.e., overhead) are not allowed under this program. The research experience must be completed within one year of the award date.

B.4   Duration of Research Experience

Students are expected to complete the research experience over no more than two consecutive terms, which may include summer. For example, a research experience may be completed in one summer; completed over summer and the preceding or following semester; or over two consecutive semesters.

B.5   Student Responsibilities

- Dedicate a level of effort consistent with no less than 320 hours of work over the course of the research experience
- Participate in seminars, workshops, discussion groups, and other activities as required by the Faculty Mentor
- Complete a program evaluation form
- Respond to queries from LA-EPSCoR regarding future academic endeavors for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF

B.6   Mentor Responsibilities

- Assist student in defining project goals, timeline, and structure
- Communicate expectations to the student regarding work hours, laboratory protocols, and evaluation of the student's performance
- Meet with student regularly to discuss progress and offer suggestions, feedback, and constructive criticism

B.7   Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed according to the quality of the proposed research described in the SURE Student Application Form, the student's interest in pursuing an advanced degree, the letter of recommendation from the Faculty Mentor, and other letters of recommendation, if provided.

C.   Application Procedure

C.1   For Students

Students may wish to consult the Faculty Mentor Profile List by visiting http://web.laregents.org/sure/ to identify a potential faculty mentor. After consultation with and assistance from the faculty mentor, the student must complete the SURE Student Application

Form attached to this RFA. At a minimum, a Letter of Recommendation from the Faculty Mentor must be appended to the SURE Student Application Form. Other letters of recommendation may also be included, but are not mandatory. The Faculty Mentor need not be listed on the Faculty Mentor Profile List to be eligible to participate in the SURE program.

Students may also complete a Student Profile, which is available on the SURE website. Student Profiles will be posted on the website, where interested faculty members will be able to peruse the profiles to identify potential students who are interested in participating in the SURE program. Students do not need to complete a Student Profile to be eligible to participate in the SURE program.

C.2   For Faculty Mentors

Individuals interested in serving as faculty mentors should complete the Faculty Mentor Profile that can be found at http://web.laregents.org/sure/. In your research project description, you may wish to include the following:

- Interesting questions your research raises and its importance in the field;
- The role you expect an undergraduate student to play in your research;
- How participation in your research project might benefit the student's education;
- The estimated number of hours per week you anticipate the student will work on the project; and,
- The minimum qualifications required (e.g. specify skills or prerequisite coursework).

After completion, the Faculty Member Profile will be posted to the SURE website, where interested students will be able to peruse the profiles to identify potential Faculty Mentors. (Note: completion of the Faculty Mentor Profile is not required to be eligible to participate in the SURE program.) Faculty Mentors will interact with interested students to determine if a mutually beneficial research project can be developed, and will assist students in completing the section of the Student Application Form in which the proposed research project is described.

C.3.   Deadline for Submission of SURE Student Applications

The deadline for receipt of SURE Student Application Forms on the BoR server is **4:30 p.m. Monday, May 9, 2011** for Round One and **4:30 p.m. Thursday, December 1, 2011** for Round Two.

C.4   Electronic Submission

SURE Student Application Forms must be submitted to the Board of Regents electronically by the authorized institutional representative (i.e., office of sponsored programs or office of sponsored research) of the mentoring faculty member's institution. Electronic submission by the authorized representative will denote institutional approval of the proposal and acceptance of the requirements of this RFA. The SURE Student Application Form, including the required letters of recommendation, must be uploaded as a single PDF document through the Board's LOGAN system.

Instructions for the OSP/OSR:

1. Go to URL: https://laregents.org/cgi-bin/logan/home.
2. Login using your Institutional credentials.
3. Select "SURE Student Application".
4. Follow simple onscreen instructions to submit the application to the Board of Regents, EPSCoR office.
5. An email will be sent to the student, faculty mentor, and the OSP/OSR to confirm successful submission of the application.

If the student, faculty mentor, and the OSP/OSR do not receive confirmation emails within 12 hours, the application was not received. Please contact the LA EPSCoR office by phone at (225) 342-4253 or by email at support@laregents.org.

D.   Reporting and Evaluation

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the SURE program, a final report, in letter format, documenting the outcome of the student research experience from the standpoint of both the student and the faculty mentor is required. It is also requested that the faculty mentor and/or student respond to requests for information (e.g., current educational/career situation) after completion of the research experience to assist LA-ESPCoR in assessing the effectiveness of the program.

E.   Additional Information

Please direct questions in writing to Mr. Jim Gershey, Executive Director of Special Programs, Board of Regents Office of Sponsored Programs, at jim.gershey@la.gov. Questions asked about this RFA and all answers provided in response to those questions will be compiled and posted on the BoR website at http://laregents.org.

F.   Attachment
SURE Student Application Form

LA EPSCoR SURE Student Application Form

Last Name: **Click here to enter text.**
First Name: **Click here to enter text.**

Personal Information:
Gender: Choose an item.
Ethnic Background: Choose an item.
Racial Background: (mark one or more boxes)
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ White
Do you have a disability that limits your activities? Choose an item.
If yes, please explain: Click here to enter text.

Contact Information:
Email Address: Click here to enter text.
Phone number (with area code): Click here to enter text.

Mailing Address:
Line 1: Click here to enter text.
Line 2: Click here to enter text.
City: Click here to enter text.
State: Click here to enter text.
Zip: Click here to enter text.

Permanent Address (if different from above):
Line 1: Click here to enter text.
Line 2: Click here to enter text.
City: Click here to enter text.
State: Click here to enter text.
Zip: Click here to enter text.

Academic Information:
Current Undergraduate Institution: Click here to enter text.
Current Major/Minor: Click here to enter text.
Current Standing (Year) Choose an item.
When do you expect to receive your bachelor's degree? Click here to enter text.
GPA (out of 4.00): Click here to enter text.

Future Educational Plans:
I plan to enter this school: Click here to enter text.
I am currently considering: (check all that apply)
☐ Graduate School
☐ Medical School
☐ Dental School
☐ Veterinary School
☐ Other Professional School
☐ Have not decided yet

LA EPSCoR SURE Student Application Form

☐ I don't plan to pursue further education

Proposed Research Project: Student must first contact a Faculty Mentor and discuss the proposed research project. The proposed project may be your idea, one suggested by your Faculty Mentor, or a combination of both.

Name of Faculty Mentor: Click here to enter text.

Faculty Mentor Institution/Department: Click here to enter text.

Title of Proposed Research Project:
Click here to enter text.

Proposed Duration of Project (weeks):
Click here to enter text.

Abstract of Proposed Research Project: (250 words)
Click here to enter text.

Letter of Recommendation from Faculty Mentor
A letter of recommendation from the Faculty Mentor who has agreed to sponsor your research experience is required. This letter should address your potential as a researcher, and the potential benefits of the research experience to your education and career, as well as any other pertinent information.