

# Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE)

A Program for Women and Underrepresented Minorities\* in STEM Disciplines

*Request for Applications*

DEADLINE DATE: **17 April 2012**

Last Day to ask questions about this RFA: **2 April 2012**



# LA EPSCoR

## LOUISIANA EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM TO STIMULATE COMPETITIVE RESEARCH (EPSCoR)

Sponsored By:

**The National Science Foundation and the Louisiana Board of Regents**

1201 North Third Street, Suite 6-200

Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

(225) 342-4253

[www.laregents.org](http://www.laregents.org)

Issuance Date: 15 February 2012

---

\* 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 (e.g., 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 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 to enhance their research programs
- Improve student written and oral communication skills

### **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 will

receive a supplemental grant of \$500 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. Each Faculty Mentor may host a maximum of two students under this RFA. 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 three consecutive terms/semesters, which may include summer. For example, a research experience may be completed in one summer; over summer and the following (fall) semester/term; over summer and the following fall and spring semesters/terms; or over the fall and spring semesters/terms.

#### **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 after completion of the research experience 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
- Respond to queries from LA-EPSCoR after completion of the research experience for program evaluation purposes and reporting to NSF

#### **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 information provided in the Application Form.

## **C. Application Procedure**

### **C.1 For Students**

After consultation with and assistance from a faculty mentor, the student must complete the 2012 SURE Student Application Form attached to this RFA. A single Letter of Recommendation from the Faculty Mentor must be appended to the SURE Student Application Form.

### **C.2 For Faculty Mentors**

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 “Abstract of Proposed Research Project” section of the Student Application Form.

### **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., 17 April 2012.**

### **C.4 Electronic Submission**

**Completed 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 is to be completed online using the Board’s LOGAN system, and the required letter of recommendation must be uploaded as a PDF document through LOGAN.

Instructions for Faculty Mentors:

1. Go to URL: <https://laregents.org/cgi-bin/logan/home>.
2. Login using your LOGAN credentials.
  - a. If you are new user and do not have a LOGAN login, please click on “New user registration” to register.
  - b. If you have logged into LOGAN before and have forgotten your credentials please send an email to [support@laregents.org](mailto:support@laregents.org).
3. After logging in, click on “SURE Proposals” and, with the assistance of the student, complete the online application form and upload the “Letter of Recommendation” as a PDF document.
4. Send the completed proposal to your sponsored programs office by clicking the “Send Proposal to OSP/OSR”. A proposal number will be assigned after the proposal is successfully sent to the PI’s Office of Sponsored Programs/Research.
5. An email confirmation will be sent to the PI with the proposal number.

6. The OSP/OSR will review the proposal, and, if approved, send the proposal to the Board of Regents

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](mailto:support@laregents.org).

#### **D. Reporting and Evaluation**

Annually the LA-EPSCoR office must submit a report to NSF summarizing progress toward its project goals. Much of the information needed for this reporting is provided by the recipient of these funds via the Online Advancing Science Information System (OASIS), a web-based comprehensive data collection system (<https://oasis.laepscor.org>). At the conclusion of your SURE experience, LA-EPSCoR will provide both the student and faculty mentor with log in credentials. Each should respond to the questions in OASIS within 30 days. It is also requested that the faculty mentor and/or student respond to requests for information (e.g., current educational/career situation) each year for five years after completion of the research experience to assist LA-EPSCoR in assessing the long-term effectiveness of the program.

#### **E. Questions about this RFA**

Specific questions concerning this RFA and the requirements set forth herein should be directed **in writing** to Mr. Jim Gershey, Executive Director of Special Programs, Board of Regents Office of Sponsored Programs, at [jim.gershey@la.gov](mailto:jim.gershey@la.gov). Questions will be accepted and answered through **2 April 2012**. A running compilation of all questions asked about this RFA and all answers provided in response to those questions will be periodically posted on the BoR website at <http://laregents.org>.

#### **F. Attachment**

##### **SURE Student Application Form**

The SURE Application Form is provided for informational purposes only. Proposers will complete the form online using the Board's LOGAN system, following the instructions outlined in Section C.4 of this RFA.

**LA EPSCoR SURE 2012 Student Application Form**  
**(To be completed online)**

**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.](#)

Do you have prior research experience? [Choose an item.](#)

Are you currently receiving any stipends or involved in another research experience for undergraduates (REU)? If yes, please mention title, funding source, and duration: [Click here to enter text.](#)

**LA EPSCoR SURE 2012 Student Application Form**  
**(To be completed online)**

**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
- 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.](#)

Email Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone number (with area code): [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: (max 250 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

For Student to complete: What are your expectations for your SURE experience?: (max 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. No other letters of recommendation are allowable.