

**REPORT TO THE  
LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**BOARD OF REGENTS/SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD  
GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY PROGRAM  
OF THE  
BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND  
FY 2009-10 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2010-11**

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Professor  
Iowa State University**

**Dr. Charles Ambler  
Former Dean of the Graduate School  
University of Texas at El Paso**

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**Dr. Roger Chalkley  
Senior Associate Dean for Biomedical Research Education and Training  
Vanderbilt University Medical School**

## INTRODUCTION

**The panel urges applicants to read the summary critique, included in this report, relating to each submitted proposal. Most summaries, more importantly, also offer suggestions to help applicants design proposals for future competitions of the BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program.**

The Review Panel for the BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program met in Baton Rouge on February 27 and 28, 2010, to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2009-10 competition for awards to begin in FY 2010-11. Members of the panel were Dr. John Mayfield (Chair), Iowa State University; Dr. Roger Chalkley, Vanderbilt University Medical School; Dr. Charles Ambler, University of Texas, El Paso; and Dr. Suzanne Ortega, University of New Mexico.

Four (4) institutions submitted a total of four (4) proposals in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program. All proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools or their equivalent.

Prior to arriving in Baton Rouge, consultants individually read and evaluated each proposal according to the guidelines provided by the Louisiana Board of Regents in the FY 2009-10 BoR/SREB Fellowships Program Request for Proposals. Each consultant assigned a preliminary rating to each proposal before the February meeting. Preliminary composite scores were then computed. These composite scores facilitated discussions at the meeting.

After thorough discussion of the merits of each proposal, the consultants established a rank order for all of the proposals and recommended a number of fellowship slots for each. Recommendations were made consistent with the limits of available funding allocated by the Board of Regents.

The total amount of first-year funds requested in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program was \$425,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funding was available for the program.

The panel recommends that all of the four (4) of the proposals submitted under the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program be funded in the amounts specified in Appendix A. Appendix B consists of brief panel assessments of submitted proposals and Appendix C contains a listing of all proposals submitted to the program.

The cumulative requests exceed the total amount of funding available. Panel members made every effort to make recommendations within established funding limitations as well as in accordance with the collective assessment of each proposal's individual merits. Reviewers sought to ascertain the degree to which each award could bring about the successful recruitment of under-represented minority students in keeping with the goal of elevating diversity and academic success in the submitting institutions.

Once again, the four panel members commend all involved in this ongoing endeavor to elevate the level of graduate study in Louisiana's institutions of higher education. The members of the panel, collectively and individually, also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the staff of the Board of Regents for their aid and support in the completion of this task.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING**

**Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund  
BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program  
FY 2009-10 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2010-11**

**Proposals Recommended for Funding**

| <b>RANK</b> | <b>PROP. NO.</b> | <b>INSTITUTION</b> | <b>NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIPS RECOMMENDED</b> | <b>YEAR</b> | <b>TOTAL BoRSF MONEY RECOMMENDED</b> |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1           | 001SREB-10       | LSU-BR             | 3  | 1           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 2           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 3           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 4           | <u>\$ 60,000</u>                     |
|             |                  |                    |  | TOTAL       | \$285,000                            |
| 2           | 002SREB-10       | TULANE             | 3  | 1           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 2           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 3           | \$ 75,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 4           | <u>\$ 60,000</u>                     |
|             |                  |                    |  | TOTAL       | \$285,000                            |
| 3           | 003SREB-10       | UL<br>LAFAYETTE    | 2  | 1           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 2           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 3           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 4           | <u>\$ 40,000</u>                     |
|             |                  |                    |  | TOTAL       | \$190,000                            |
| 4           | 004SREB-10       | UNO                | 2  | 1           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 2           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 3           | \$ 50,000                            |
|             |                  |                    |  | 4           | <u>\$ 40,000</u>                     |
|             |                  |                    |  | TOTAL       | \$190,000                            |

## **APPENDIX B**

### **NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/  
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS  
TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY PROGRAM**

**001SREB-10    LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE**  
**“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”**  
**Requested:    5 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 3 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$285,000**

Although there has been no change in the number of under-represented minority applicants since 2004-05 at LSU-BR, yield and matriculation rates for applicants appear to have substantially increased. Two inferences follow: first, it appears that the addition of institutionally supported stipend supplements to SREB funding has substantially increased yield; and second, it appears that current recruitment strategies are not sufficient to break out of the application plateau. The focus on recruiting students to Foundation of Excellence programs may help. The attrition gap between majority and under-represented students appears to be relatively small and programs such as the statistics boot camp and math tune-up workshop should help all categories of students to reach their degree goals. This is a strong program moving in good directions. Funding for three fellowship slots is recommended.

**002SREB-10    TULANE UNIVERSITY**  
**“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”**  
**Requested:    4 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 3 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$285,000**

Tulane University requests support for SREB fellowships in conjunction with the existing, NSF-funded Graduate Alliance for Education in Louisiana (GAELA), a program aimed at recruiting, tracking and mentoring minority PhD applicants and students in STEM fields. A critical element of the approach is to build linkages between Tulane and HBCUs. Tulane has an impressive record of recruiting and graduating minority doctoral students, though the lack of retrospective data provided makes it difficult to judge progress. However, the data indicate that approximately 20% of U.S. doctoral students enrolled at Tulane are minorities and that the percentage is increasing. Minority students make up a larger proportion of PhD graduates, strong evidence that minority students are effectively mentored. Given the thrust of the GAELA program, it would have been helpful to have some specific information on the STEM disciplines (although students in a variety of disciplines would be eligible for the SREB fellowships). SREB fellowships and the GAELA programs are administered through the University Center for Research-Education Activities at Tulane (CREATE) and benefit from links to the Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) program. Funding for three fellowship slots is recommended.

**003SREB-10    UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE**  
**“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines: An Expanded Effort”**  
**Requested:    4 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 2 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$190,000**

UL Lafayette’s proposal emphasizes the recruitment of minority students in STEM fields. Documented in the proposal are several pending campus changes which should improve the climate for minority students on campus. Table A reveals a successful recent recruiting strategy, with the number of under-represented minority applicants increasing from 12.6% to 22.7% over a five-year period. The numbers of acceptances show a corresponding increase with a sharp increase in enrollments in 2008-09. The plan presented is clearly credible but has one major weakness: it appears the only university program to offer minority students an attractive financial package is the SREB. This Board of Regents program would have greater impact if it was used to leverage other financial packages funded from university resources. The proposal is difficult to assess because it did not provide department-specific data related to STEM fields. The panel

noted last year that the five-year growth in under-represented minority doctoral students was entirely due to the Department of Educational Leadership and that STEM fields actually showed a slight decline over the time period reported. Elimination of department-specific data makes it impossible to see if any improvement was made in the targeted fields last year. Given the success of the overall recruiting strategy, the panel recommends funding for two fellowship slots and will continue to monitor the extent to which the stated commitment to minority recruitment is realized. The \$5,000 supplement is laudable and should make the stipends competitive.

**004SREB-10 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**  
**“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”**  
**Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 2 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$190,000**

This proposal is unusual in that the person in charge is not an academician. This raises concerns as this type of program must be so acutely attuned to mentoring within the academic environment and helping under-represented minority students perform to the best of their abilities. Program success usually requires very close interaction with students as well as direct discipline-specific coaching. Certainly an administrator can be supportive and encouraging, but it is not certain that such an individual can provide the kind of constant, personal support necessary. An example of the limitations of administrative leadership of this program is in the reported rate of attrition, which seems badly miscalculated. The proposal claims that the attrition rate is below the national average and less than 15-20%. The data in Appendix B are used to support this claim. However, year by year, the drop numbers exceed the graduation numbers by more than two-fold, which clearly disproves the claimed attrition rate. Attrition has to be calculated relative to the number of students admitted in a given cohort year, not to the total number of students present in a program at any point in time. In addition, the approaches to tracking student progress and development, as well as to mentoring to increase retention, are unimaginative and suggest that the proposal developer is not closely involved with these activities. An administrator is fine to coordinate the practical elements of this type of program, but in terms of interacting with and understanding new students as well as creating new and effective approaches to recruitment and retention, an administrator is not the best fit. Funding for two fellowship slots is recommended.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **LISTS OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED**



**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program  
2009-10 Competition  
Proposals Submitted**

| <b>Proposal #</b> | <b>PI Name(s)</b>  | <b>Institution</b> | <b>Proposal Title</b>  | <b>Slots Requested</b> | <b>Funds Requested</b>  |
|-------------------|--|--------------------|--|------------------------|---|
| 001SREB-10        | W. David Constant;<br>Marie M. Hamilton;<br>Katrice Albert | LSU-BR             | Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity  | 5                      | Y1: \$125,000<br>Y2: \$125,000<br>Y3: \$125,000<br><u>Y4: \$100,000</u><br>Total: \$475,000 |
| 002SREB-10        | Brian S. Mitchell  | Tulane             | Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University   | 4                      | Y1: \$100,000<br>Y2: \$100,000<br>Y3: \$100,000<br><u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u><br>Total: \$380,000 |
| 003SREB-10        | C. E. Palmer   | UL Lafayette       | Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines: An Expanded Effort | 4                      | Y1: \$100,000<br>Y2: \$100,000<br>Y3: \$100,000<br><u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u><br>Total: \$380,000 |
| 004SREB-10        | Elizabeth Sigler   | UNO                | Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship   | 4                      | Y1: \$100,000<br>Y2: \$100,000<br>Y3: \$100,000<br><u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u><br>Total: \$380,000 |

**BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY**

**NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 4**

**FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 17**

**FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$425,000**

**TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,615,000**

**TOTAL FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10**

**TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$250,000**