

**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 2012-13 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2013-14**

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**Dr. Suzanne Ortega
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INTRODUCTION

The panel urges applicants to read the summary critiques, included in this report, relating to the submitted proposals. Most summaries 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 23 and 24, 2013 to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2012-13 competition for awards to begin in FY 2013-14. 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 at El Paso; and Dr. Suzanne Ortega, University of North Carolina.

Five (5) institutions submitted a total of five (5) 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 2012-13 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 assessment 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 \$475,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funding was budgeted for the program.

The panel recommends that all of the five (5) 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.

The panel recommends to the Board of Regents that future Requests for Proposals require applicants to include comprehensive data on the progress and outcomes of all previously awarded SREB fellows. The panel also urges applicants to provide a full analysis of how SREB funding leverages and complements other university efforts to expand under-represented minority retention and recruitment.

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 2012-13 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2013-14**

PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING

Rank	Proposal No.	Institution	Number of Fellowships Recommended	Year	Total BoRSF Money Recommended
1	001SREB-13	LSU-BR	3	1	\$ 75,000
				2	\$ 75,000
				3	\$ 75,000
				4	<u>\$ 60,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$285,000
2	003SREB-13	TULANE	3	1	\$ 75,000
				2	\$ 75,000
				3	\$ 75,000
				4	<u>\$ 60,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$285,000
3	004SREB-13	UL LAFAYETTE	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000
4	005SREB-13	UNO	1	1	\$ 25,000
				2	\$ 25,000
				3	\$ 25,000
				4	<u>\$ 20,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$ 95,000
5	002SREB-13	LA TECH	1	1	\$ 25,000
				2	\$ 25,000
				3	\$ 25,000
				4	<u>\$ 20,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$ 95,000

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS
TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY PROGRAM IN FY 2012-13**

001SREB-13 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

This solid proposal from LSU and A&M College indicates a continuing decline in the number of applicants and new enrollments by under-represented minority students over the last three years and offers some ways to curb the decline. While the university uses a wide array of programs to recruit and mentor under-represented students, these efforts are not producing the desired results. As noted in previous reviews, in Louisiana and across the nation, universities with the greatest success in increasing the number of new minority students have focused efforts on one or two programs, thereby building the critical mass of diverse students necessary to increase recruitment and change the departmental culture. Activities proposed by LSU – career advising, coaching of interview skills, community connections, and statistics boot camps – are all exciting examples of student support services that should help students toward timely completion of the degree and rapid progress into a career upon graduation. Funding is recommended for three \$25,000 fellowship slots.

002SREB-13 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY
“Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2013-17”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 1 Fellowship Slot for 4 years = \$95,000

Louisiana Tech University has requested four fellowships to support students in the university’s leading doctoral programs in the Colleges of Education and Engineering & Science: Counseling Psychology, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Biomedical Engineering, Computational Analysis and Modeling, and Engineering. The panel noted a promising increase in the numbers of under-represented minority applicants last year, which translated into higher numbers of under-represented minority students enrolling; however, neither the data nor the narrative make clear the distribution of under-represented minority students among the programs and between the colleges. Very high levels of attrition indicated in Form 4 are worrisome, and the proposal neither explains nor analyzes these data. Louisiana Tech has positioned its programs effectively relative to State workforce goals and economic development, and has outlined ambitious recruiting strategies, including reliance on networks built through major multi-university grants and substantial programmatic links to historically black colleges and universities. There is little examination, however, of what actually works and it might be useful for the programs to assess recruiting strategies in relation to actual student enrollment. There is an impressive mentoring plan outlined for SREB fellows, but no indication of broader mentoring programs that would impact all minority students. The program continues to combine GRE scores for admissions assessment, in contradiction of ETS guidelines regarding the use of scores. Funding is recommended for one \$25,000 fellowship slot.

003SREB-13 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

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

This detailed proposal from Tulane University outlines a number of useful steps planned to increase the proportional number of under-represented minority students, though the university is already performing well in this respect, with proportions close to 20%. Clearly Tulane has activities in place that work to recruit and retain under-represented minority students, and the campus seems likely to continue to make positive strides. The panel does, however, note a few concerns. First, the fraction of under-represented minority students has not increased significantly over the last five years; indeed, the absolute number of such students has decreased in the most recent reporting year. In addition, the overall attrition from the graduate programs at Tulane, which appears from submitted data to be near 50%, is a

serious problem that must be addressed. Is it related to mentoring, student selection, or other factors? While the proposal correctly notes that attrition of under-represented minority students is comparable to the larger population, it does not identify the reasons general attrition is so high. Finally, the panel is concerned that making these fellowships available broadly across all university doctoral programs might dilute their impact. Given Tulane's significant graduate student population, a targeted approach might be preferable. Despite these reservations, however, the panel notes that Tulane has shown success with the target populations supported through these fellowships and is worthy of support. Funding is recommended for three \$25,000 fellowship slots.

004SREB-13 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

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

University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Graduate School seems to be working hard and introducing new ideas to attract under-represented minority graduate students, and these efforts are showing some results. The proposal reveals a dramatic increase in applications from these student populations over the past five years, as well as an increase in the number of under-represented minority doctoral students. At the same time, the number of newly admitted minority students is flat and the number of graduations is low. The ratio of minority doctoral degrees granted to student drops from doctoral programs is seven of 30. The numbers paint a picture of improved recruitment, but problems in student completion, with both an extended time to degree and a high dropout rate indicated. The various efforts described in the proposal to improve mentoring have promise to yield positive results over time. As noted in past reviews, no data are given that allow disaggregation of university-wide data (tables A and B) to isolate the STEM fields the proposal targets for funding. The panel therefore has no idea if efforts to increase under-represented minority student participation in STEM fields are succeeding. If UL Lafayette continues to submit proposals for targeted STEM funding, future applications must provide data that allow this assessment to be made. The narrative does suggest there was some difficulty awarding the fellowships in the past two years. Given UL Lafayette's recent aggressive work in student recruitment and retention, funding is recommended for two \$25,000 fellowship slots.

005SREB-13 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”
Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 1 Fellowship Slot for 4 years = \$95,000

The University of New Orleans requests fellowship support to expand under-represented minority student enrollment in the university's STEM PhD programs. UNO has a diverse student population at both undergraduate and graduate levels, but minority enrollments in STEM fields have historically been low. Unfortunately, the data presented make it difficult to discern existing trends in STEM enrollments, though it is clear from graduation information that there have been few STEM students. Overall, graduate enrollments at the university are healthy, and minority students comprise a substantial proportion of the U.S. students enrolled. Data related to the attrition of under-represented minority students, however, are troubling. Each year approximately the same number of minority students leave the university without the intended degree as graduate; this is not the case for U.S. students overall. The proposal outlines a number of strategies that will be employed to attract minority applicants, but it is difficult to see how these will result in increased enrollments in the specific STEM programs at UNO. The university commitment to supplement awards should be helpful, however, and the panel commends UNO for adding resources to the SREB fellowship. Funding is recommended for one \$25,000 fellowship slot.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
2012-13 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-13	Gary Byerly	LSU-BR	Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity	5	Y1: \$125,000 Y2: \$125,000 Y3: \$125,000 <u>Y4: \$100,000</u> Total: \$475,000
002SREB-13	Terry McConathy	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2013-17	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
003SREB-13	Brian S. Mitchell	Tulane	“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
004SREB-13	David Breaux	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
005SREB-13	Elizabeth Sigler	UNO	Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship	2	Y1: \$50,000 Y2: \$50,000 Y3: \$50,000 <u>Y4: \$40,000</u> Total: \$190,000

BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 19

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$475,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,805,000

TOTAL FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10

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