

**REPORT TO THE
LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD DOCTORAL SUPPORT
INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE STUDENT AND FACULTY DIVERSITY
OF THE
BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND
FY 2018-19 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2019-20**

INTRODUCTION

An external reviewer, Dr. Charles Ambler, Dean of the Graduate School, University of Texas at El Paso, evaluated proposals submitted in FY 2018-19 for funding consideration to the Board of Regents/Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Student and Faculty Diversity. Staff provided Dr. Ambler with the FY 2018-19 Request for Proposals (RFP) and subprogram policy.

Five (5) institutions submitted a total of five (5) proposals in the BoR/SREB Support Initiative. All proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools or their equivalent. Proposals were assessed based on the criteria for evaluation and scoring rubric set forth in the FY 2018-19 BoR/SREB Support Initiative Request for Proposals.

After thorough assessment of the merits of each proposal, Dr. Ambler established a rank order for all of the proposals and recommended a number of student support 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 subprogram was \$330,000. Dr. Ambler was advised that \$150,000 in first-year funding was set aside for the subprogram as part of the Enhancement component of the Board of Regents Support Fund.

Dr. Ambler recommends that the five (5) proposals submitted under the BoR/SREB Support Initiative be funded in the amounts specified in Appendix A. Appendix B consists of brief narrative assessments of submitted proposals.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative, FY 2018-19 Competition									
Proposal #	Campus	Proposal Title	First-Year Funds Requested	Slots Requested*	History & Plans for URM Student Retention and Success (45 points)	Appropriateness of Financial & Academic Support (30 points)	History of & Plans for URM Student Recruitment (25 points)	Total Points (100 Points)	Slots Recommended*
004SREB-19	Tulane University	Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University	\$105,000	7	42	28	19	89	4
001SREB-19	Louisiana State University and A & M College	Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2019-22	\$75,000	5	40	24	20	84	3
005SREB-19	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Board of Regents/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$45,000	3	39	27	15	81	1
002SREB-19	Louisiana Tech University	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2019-22	\$60,000	4	36	22	21	79	1
003SREB-19	Southern University and A&M College	The SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	\$45,000	3	36	22	19	77	1

* Slot = \$15,000 per year (\$10,000 stipend supplement; \$5,000 SREB DSP membership) for three years

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD DOCTORAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE TO
PROMOTE STUDENT AND FACULTY DIVERSITY**

FY 2018-19 COMPETITION

001SREB-19 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2019-22”
Requested: 5 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 3 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$135,000

LSU A&M has achieved remarkable success in attracting minority students and has long been a highly productive participant in this program. Although the narrative indicates an increase in underrepresented minority applicants this year, the most recent data presented in the tables suggest declines in both applicants and enrolled students. Data on graduation rates also seem to indicate a slight decline. It would be useful for the proposal to present some information regarding distribution of these student populations across discipline areas. That said, however, the social science focus makes sense and there is evidence presented that the tactic is working. The fact that LSU A&M did not have a sufficient pool of qualified students to award all four BoR-provided supplemental support slots last year suggests the need to provide additional institutional funds for student recruitment. Funding is recommended for three support slots.

002SREB-19 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY
“Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2019-22”
Requested: 4 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 1 Student Support Slot for 3 years = \$45,000

Louisiana Tech demonstrates a sincere commitment to increasing the number of underrepresented minority doctoral students and the University is experimenting with a number of promising strategies to expand recruitment and improve retention. There might be greater integration of the Fellows initiative in broader University efforts to diversify the PhD student population and graduates. The data provided do indicate some cause for concern. In the most recent year only one of the currently enrolled 19 underrepresented minority students graduated. This is not an anomaly, but appears to be fairly typical, and the numbers for all U.S. students are not markedly different. This suggests that both attrition and time to degree represent challenges to the doctoral programs. There is no evidence that numbers of applicants and those admitted and enrolled have changed. The proposal includes a thoughtful plan for student support and, given the challenges noted, the campus might explore expanding it to incorporate a larger number of students. Minority faculty members have been critical in the SREB efforts, but there are limits to the contributions they can make. Funding is recommended for one support slot.

003SREB-19 SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“The SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program”
Requested: 3 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 1 Student Support Slot for 3 years = \$45,000

Southern University and A&M College has had considerable success in recruiting minority students into its small number of PhD programs. The proposal does not make the case, though, that the institution should be focusing, as stated, on expanding that number. Rather, a more critical focus might be on building student retention and graduation, areas in which the data suggest problems. Unfortunately, the proposal narrative does not provide clear information on issues driving these problems and what is being done to address them. There is evidence of some promising retention practices, including the introduction of Individual Development Plans (IDPs), but a more thorough analysis of possible solutions is needed. The lack of selectivity in admissions might be a factor in what seems to be high attrition, but it may also reflect a focus in admissions on students who are likely to attend. Information on student financial support is confusing. If the very low numbers presented are accurate, it seems doubtful that a small amount of BoR/SREB support can have a major impact. Nevertheless, the apparent lack of resources available for these doctoral students warrants some support, to see if one student's participation in the Doctoral Scholars Program can have a more general positive effect. Funding is recommended for one support slot.

004SREB-19 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”
Requested: 7 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 4 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$180,000

Tulane has made a substantial effort to expand minority participation in its PhD programs and has had substantial success. There is a strong strategy for recruitment and an impressive plan for fellow support and mentoring. Nevertheless, the data indicate an actual drop in the number of applications and the number of underrepresented applicants admitted, which should be explained. The proportion of students graduating each year suggests issues with time to degree that extend beyond underrepresented minority students. Funding is recommended for four support slots.

005SREB-19 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“Board of Regents/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”
Requested: 3 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 1 Student Support Slot for 3 years = \$45,000

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has had considerable success during the last several years in retaining its BoR/SREB-funded students, which is likely attributable to a focus on providing support. The emphasis on Individual Development Plans may be a critical factor. It is of considerable concern, however, that the University was unable during the first year to award the most recent support slot. It

appears from the data that the pool of underrepresented minority PhD students admitted is small. Unfortunately, the data mix professional doctorate and PhD populations, making this impossible to determine with certainty. The data provided also make it difficult to assess time to degree and retention. It does seem that there has been some success in these areas, however, and better, more clearly presented evidence might bolster the case for funding. Given the recent inability to appoint a recipient for a single slot, it would be difficult to justify raising the number of support slots for this year. Funding is recommended for one support slot.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Student and Faculty Diversity
2018-19 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-19	Malcolm Richardson	LSU A&M	Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2019-22	5	Y1: \$75,000 Y2: \$75,000 <u>Y3: \$75,000</u> Total: \$225,000
002SREB-19	Bala Ramachandran	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2019-22	4	Y1: \$60,000 Y2: \$60,000 <u>Y3: \$60,000</u> Total: \$180,000
003SREB-19	Habib Mohamadian	Southern A&M	The SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	3	Y1: \$45,000 Y2: \$45,000 <u>Y3: \$45,000</u> Total: \$135,000
004SREB-19	Michael Cunningham	Tulane	Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University	7	Y1: \$105,000 Y2: \$105,000 <u>Y3: \$105,000</u> Total: \$315,000
005SREB-19	Mary Farmer-Kaiser	UL Lafayette	Board of Regents/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	3	Y1: \$45,000 Y2: \$45,000 <u>Y3: \$45,000</u> Total: \$135,000

BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY, FY 2018-19

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

SUPPORT SLOTS REQUESTED: 22

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$330,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$990,000