

# Supervised Undergraduate Research Experiences (SURE)

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

## *Request for Applications*

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE ON: **December 1, 2014**

Last Day to ask questions about this RFA: **November 20, 2014**



# LA EPSCoR

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

Sponsored By:

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

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

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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 (e.g., hearing, visual, or mobility impairments)

## **A. Program Overview**

One of the goals 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**

- Increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields
- Motivate students toward advanced education and careers in STEM fields
- Give students a clearer idea of their options for a future in research
- Provide opportunities for students to learn modern research and laboratory techniques
- 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<sup>†</sup> 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 are not yet enrolled full time may apply as long as they will be enrolled full-time at the time the SURE research experience begins. Students who will have completed their bachelor's degree before the research experience begins are not eligible.

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<sup>†</sup> Students with disabilities that prevent them from enrolling full-time are exempted from this requirement.

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.

Eligible Disciplines are those STEM fields that are supported by NSF. For more information about the science and engineering disciplines that are supported by NSF, please visit: <http://www.nsf.gov/funding/index.jsp#areas>.

### **B.3 Award Amounts**

Students accepted for the SURE program will receive a stipend/scholarship 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, travel by students/mentors to meetings or conferences to present research findings, or other expenses directly related to the SURE project. Each Faculty Mentor may submit only one application, sponsoring one student under this RFA. The funds for both the stipend/scholarship 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. The anticipated start date of the subcontract is 1 January 2015.

### **B.4 Duration of Research Experience**

Students must 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 spring and summer; over spring, summer, and fall; or over the summer and fall semester/term.

### **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.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Letter of recommendation from faculty member(s)	50 points
Quality of proposed research	30 points
Interest in pursuing an advanced degree in graduate or medical school	10 points
GPA	10 points

### **C. Application Procedure**

#### **C.1. Deadline for Submission of SURE Student Applications**

The deadline for receipt of the SURE Student Application on the BoR server is **4:30 p.m., 1 December 2014**. The application submission system is programmed to close at the deadline cited. Note that submission deadlines are absolute and that all campus work on the application, including final approval and submission to the Board of Regents by the designated campus office, must be completed on or before the deadline date and time.

#### **C.2 Electronic Submission**

All applications submitted to the Board must be complete upon submission and must be received electronically through LOGAN. Paper originals or copies will not be accepted. Modules for submitting SURE applications will be available on LOGAN, which may be accessed at <http://web.laregents.org> by clicking "LOGAN" on the menu at the top of the page. SURE modules will be available on 1 October 2014. After the applicant (i.e., faculty mentor) submits the completed application to his/her campus' office of sponsored programs or office of sponsored research, Institutional Advancement, or Grants Office via LOGAN, confirmation of receipt of the electronic application will be e-mailed to the applicant and to the campus. If the confirmation email is not received within 12 hours, the application was not accepted into

LOGAN. Please contact the LA EPSCoR office by phone at (225) 342-4253 or by email at [support@laregents.org](mailto:support@laregents.org).

NOTE: The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the application is complete and correct upon submission to the Board, and no changes may be made to any application after the submission deadline. Disqualification of an application and/or any reviewer misunderstandings that occur because application contents (including all required forms) are incomplete, out of order, or contain incorrect information are solely the responsibility of the applicant.

The SURE application 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 application and acceptance of the requirements of this RFA

#### **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 **20 November 2014**. 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.2 of this RFA.

## LA EPSCoR SURE 2015 Application

**(Provided for information only - DO NOT complete this form in the format shown below –use the LOGAN SURE module.)**

**Last Name:**

**First Name:**

### **Personal Information:**

Gender:

Ethnic Background:

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?

If yes, please explain:

### **Contact Information:**

Email Address:

Phone number (with area code):

### **Mailing Address:**

Line 1:

Line 2:

City:

State:

Zip:

### **Permanent Address (if different from above):**

Line 1:

Line 2:

City:

State:

Zip:

### **Academic Information:**

Current Undergraduate Institution:

Current Major/Minor:

Current Standing (Year)

When do you expect to receive your bachelor's degree?

GPA (out of 4.00):

Do you have prior research experience?

Are you currently receiving any stipends or involved in another research experience for undergraduates (REU)? If yes, please mention title, funding source, and duration:

## LA EPSCoR SURE 2015 Application

**(Provided for information only - DO NOT complete this form in the format shown below –use the LOGAN SURE module.)**

### Future Educational Plans:

I plan to enter this school:

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:

Email Address:

Phone number (with area code):

Faculty Mentor Institution/Department:

Title of Proposed Research Project:

Proposed Duration of Project (weeks):

Abstract of Proposed Research Project: (max 250 words)

For Student to complete: What are your expectations for your SURE experience?: (max 250 words)

### 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.