

**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 2019-20 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2020-21**

INTRODUCTION

An external reviewer, Dr. JoAnn Canales, Founding Dean of the Graduate School, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi, evaluated proposals submitted in FY 2019-20 for funding consideration to the Board of Regents/Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Student and Faculty Diversity. Staff provided Dr. Canales with the FY 2019-20 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 2019-20 BoR/SREB Support Initiative Request for Proposals.

After thorough assessment of the merits of each proposal, Dr. Canales 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 \$300,000. Dr. Canales 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.

The five (5) proposals submitted under the BoR/SREB Support Initiative are recommended for funding in the amounts specified in Appendix A. Appendix B consists of brief narrative assessments of submitted proposals.

In addition, Dr. Canales asks that the Board of Regents consider the following recommendations for revisions in the proposal submission and evaluation process:

- Assign specific criteria to each category in the scoring rubric used to evaluate proposals, to assist reviewers in assessing consistently each proposal and proposal developers in understanding how projects will be scored; and
- Require applicants to report data in percentages and disaggregate by gender, race, and ethnicity, to allow a better analysis of yield and completion data.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative, FY 2019-20 Competition

Rank	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*
1	005SREB-20	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	42	30	22	94	3
2	001SREB-20	Louisiana State University and A & M College	Board of Regents Graduate Fellows Program 2020-23	\$30,000	2	40	30	22	92	2
3	002SREB-20	Louisiana Tech University	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2020-23	\$60,000	4	37	25	19	81	2
3	004SREB-20	Tulane University	Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University	\$105,000	7	38	24	19	81	2
5	003SREB-20	Southern University and A&M College	SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	\$60,000	4	38	23	19	80	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 2019-20 COMPETITION

**001SREB-20 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“Board of Regents Graduate Fellows Program 2020-23”
Requested: 2 Student Support Slots**

Recommended: 2 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$90,000

LSU is to be commended for the synergy among institutional units to support graduate students. Other notable initiatives at the various stages of the graduate student life cycle are:

1. The Graduate School Readiness component, grounded in a clear framework for the content to be addressed;
2. The professional development series complementing the degree requirements, i.e., life coaching; and
3. The focus on employment preparation, i.e., the pedagogical training and departmental commitment to award teaching assistantships to the SREB Scholars.

In order to better assess impact, following are some recommendations for consideration:

Recruitment: It would be helpful to see disaggregated data on participation and outcomes of impact, especially for the undergraduate experience.

Retention: The project might benefit from encouraging a focus not just on implementation of offerings, but also on ensuring participation by graduate students, especially URM populations, and documenting, by demographics, who attends and the impact of participation. The community may also be a good resource for support, especially for graduate students who may be hesitant to seek support on campus.

Enrollment and completion data: The project directors should consider disaggregating data by race/ethnicity and gender to ensure that intersectionality is valued and monitored.

Non-completers: The proposal should address why students have dropped; there are clear data on those retained and transferred out, but what about the six SREB Scholars who left as well as non-SREB drops (Section B: Five-Year Retention Data)?

Funding is recommended for two slots.

002SREB-20 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

“Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2020-23”

Requested: 4 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 2 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$90,000

This project is well presented, with particularly strong analysis of the data. The presentation of data in chart format including percentages provided the reviewer with a valuable snapshot of the URM population’s completion record over time, as did the level of detail on the SREB Scholars (though the same information was included multiple times in the same section). Also commendable is the extension of the 4+1 concept to programs at other institutions, affording students an opportunity to fast track their trajectory in advanced education. Below are specific observations and recommendations related to recruitment, retention, and funding, based on the information shared.

Recruitment: The traditional approaches to outreach should be monitored for impact, e.g., bringing large numbers of students to campus might yield more recruits if there was some intentionality beyond the 10-week research experience. Additionally, consideration might be given to expanding and broadening the number and type of pipeline campuses, given the title of the proposal vis-à-vis the definition of diversity. Disaggregating the participants by gender, race and ethnicity and examining patterns in participation might also be helpful in diversifying the pipeline.

Retention: The traditional approaches noted for retention could also benefit from documenting impact by sharing participation in the activities. For example, having a multi-layered mentoring approach that includes peers, staff, and faculty is commendable. Documenting the extent to which this occurs, and any specific outcomes, could provide insightful data to encourage others to implement a similar approach. Other retention strategies could include those focused on professional development, socio-emotional support, etc., which complement the degree requirements.

Other recommendations to inform attention to diversity are:

1. Disaggregating the recruitment and admissions data to examine the racial/ethnic/gender mix;
2. Examining the reasons for the attrition of candidates from acceptance to enrollment;
3. Examining the reasons for attrition among all students, similar to the analysis performed for the SREB (which was exceptionally detailed); and
4. Disaggregating the TA and RA awards to examine the racial/ethnic/gender awardee mix.

Funding: There is no mention of support for fees or for funding beyond the three years of the project. Given the attrition increase among URM students and the graduation record, the institution may wish to target the additional institutional funds to supporting existing Scholars beyond the three-year SREB funding rather than to recruiting additional students.

Funding is recommended for two slots.

003SREB-20 SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program”
Requested: 4 Student Support Slots

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

SUBR is to be commended for the collaboration among academic colleges and the Graduate School and for consistently implementing practices across funded programs, e.g., mentor-mentee assessment. Following are general observations relative to the proposal text and data, as well as some specific observations related to recruitment, retention and funding.

Embedded in the preparation of all students should be an emphasis on appreciation for diversity, in all its forms, rather than just tolerance as mentioned in the project summary. Additionally, the definition of ‘Underrepresented minority’ is broad in principle, but seems to be narrowly targeted in practice as evidenced by the recruitment strategies and the enrollment narrative. Additionally, there appears to be a disconnect between the narrative and the data presented in Table 2. The narrative shows more than 30 individuals graduated in the Public Policy and Science/Math Ed programs, yet the tables reflect 30 and 29, respectively. The Environmental Toxicology narrative states that more than 26 have graduated and are ‘well-placed’, yet only five are reflected in the table and there is no mention of placement.

Recruitment: The narrative suggests traditional outreach efforts and names targeted organizations. SUBR might want to consider more intentional outreach efforts involving peers, faculty, follow-up calls, and campus site visits led by peers/faculty alumni. Also, it would be helpful to know for the Public Policy and Environmental Toxicology faculties what minorities are represented and their faculty status (e.g., assistant, associate, full, adjunct). The status of the URM faculty is a strong messaging component that is frequently overlooked and important to consider if faculty are included in recruitment strategies.

Retention: The formative and summative check-in approach is commendable. The PI may wish to monitor ‘survey overload’, to ensure the responses are substantive and not just a pro forma ‘complete the survey’ answer. Also commendable is the implementation of IDPs. While no specifics were provided regarding the boot camp and professional development, monitoring the effectiveness of utilizing the IDP approach to ensure completion and sharing its efficacy would contribute to validating this strategy as a retention tool.

Funding: Funding support is mentioned on pp. 3 and 5 as well as on the Budget Page and in the Budget Justification section. Nevertheless, it was unclear whether:

1. Only out-of-state tuition would be waived for out-of-state students;
2. In-state tuition and fees would be waived;
3. If in-state tuition and fees are not waived, how much of the \$20,000 stipend would remain for other costs to the student; and
4. The amount of support contributed by the academic colleges during and beyond the three years of support provided through the project, including campus match.

The institution may wish to reconsider whether available funding would better be used to support fewer than the requested four doctoral students, especially given low graduation rates and lack of evidence to

show that doctoral students are able to finish in three years. In addition, given the size of the faculty and the large number of master's programs, their ability to effectively support a larger number of incoming doctoral students should be considered.

Funding is recommended for one slot.

004SREB-20 TULANE UNIVERSITY

“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”

Requested: 7 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 2 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$90,000

Several aspects of Tulane's proposal are to be commended. First, the synergy among units to provide support for doctoral students suggests that there has been intentionality in creating a graduate education ecosystem leveraging the resources of various units on campus. Tulane might wish to explore similar opportunities within the community, as some graduate students may feel more comfortable seeking resources outside of the university.

Using percentages to report the data is also useful. It is recommended to extend this to a disaggregation of the data by race/ethnic/gender demographics to ensure the definition of diversity is being attended to in its broadest sense: not only to who is admitted and enrolled, but also to who is receiving the fellowships, assistantships, scholarships, etc.

Recruitment: Incentivizing and monitoring departmental diversity recruitment plans and implementation are notable activities, as is overseeing the track record for mentoring. Absent is evidence of intentional proactive recruitment initiatives involving outreach to pipeline institutions, and utilization of faculty and peers in conducting the outreach, increasing the yield of enrolled students from the applicant pool, or engaging in graduate school readiness strategies with URM undergraduate students.

Retention: As previously mentioned, the synergy is admirable in terms of multiple opportunities for engagement, e.g., Dissertation Support Groups, a robust series of workshops, and multicultural program offerings. In question, though, is the level of participation in these opportunities. Beyond encouragement to participate, how is URM student inclusion ensured and is there documentation of participation and impact? The proposal mentions policies stipulating that students receive written feedback annually on academic performance, research progress, and advancement to the degree, but does not indicate attention to IDPs or formative feedback to ensure a useful annual summative report.

Funding: Using BoR/SREB funds to augment departmental support is a noteworthy mechanism to create substantial competitive offerings for students. Missing are details related to how fees are covered, travel support provided, and Scholars supported beyond the three-year BoR/SREB funding period, given that students, especially those in underrepresented groups and the sciences, rarely complete doctoral degree requirements in three years. Perhaps utilizing institutional funding to support fewer SREB Scholars at a higher level would address some of these questions.

Funding is recommended for two slots.

005SREB-20 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: 3 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$135,000

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Graduate School is to be commended for its intentionality in building synergy with the Office of Diversity, as well as for addressing attrition issues both in the yield from application to enrollment and among the enrollees. It would be helpful to have the data reported in percentages as well as disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender, to understand how students benefit from fellowships, scholarships, assistantships, etc. Following are general observations relative to the proposal text and data and some specific observations related to recruitment, retention and funding.

Recruitment: UL Lafayette engages in several promising recruitment strategies, e.g., examining the data for yield, engaging undergraduate students in graduate school readiness activities, conducting holistic reviews and engaging the leadership and departmental faculty in their implementation. A caveat for consideration is to ensure that cognitive skills are objectively assessed in the holistic review process, as overreliance on non-cognitive skills, GPA, and letters of recommendation can contribute to implicit bias. The institution may also wish to consider expanding the types of organizations and institutions tapped for recruitment, in order to address the broader definition of diversity provided in the proposal.

Retention: The campus has in place promising practices at this stage of the graduate student life cycle. Requiring IDPs at the outset of the program of study, monitoring their implementation, providing mentoring workshops and programs involving faculty and peers, establishing formal and informal structures for connecting with the SREB Scholars, and offering writing support and opportunities for participation in university governance are all evidence of intentionality in building inclusiveness. One suggestion is to document participation in the various initiatives by gender/race/ethnicity and conduct a disaggregated analysis to assess impact and ensure that all students are benefitting from these experiences and opportunities. A final notable practice is the attention to the post-graduation stage of the doctoral student experience by preparing them pedagogically to be competitive for academic employment.

Funding: The additional two-year funding pledge after BoR/SREB funding has ended, as well as the support for research and travel, including attending the Compact for Faculty Diversity, demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to increasing the diversity pipeline.

Funding is recommended for three slots.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Student and Faculty Diversity
2019-20 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-20	Malcolm Richardson	LSU A&M	Board of Regents Graduate Fellows Program 2020-23	2	Y1: \$30,000 Y2: \$30,000 <u>Y3: \$30,000</u> Total: \$90,000
002SREB-20	Bala Ramachandran	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2020-23	4	Y1: \$60,000 Y2: \$60,000 <u>Y3: \$60,000</u> Total: \$180,000
003SREB-20	Habib Mohamadian	Southern A&M	SUBR/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	4	Y1: \$60,000 Y2: \$60,000 <u>Y3: \$60,000</u> Total: \$180,000
004SREB-20	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-20	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 2019-20

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

SUPPORT SLOTS REQUESTED: 20

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$300,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$900,000