

**REPORT TO THE
LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD DOCTORAL
SUPPORT INITIATIVE
OF THE
BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND
FY 2023-24 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2024-25**



**BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM**

**BOR/SREB DOCTORAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE
FY 2023-24 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2024-25**

INTRODUCTION

An external reviewer, Dr. Charles Ambler, former Dean of the Graduate School, University of Texas El Paso, evaluated proposals submitted in FY 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 2023-24 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 Support Initiative was \$332,500. Dr. Ambler was advised that \$175,000 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, the reviewer noted that, despite last year's comments related to the inadequate data provided, multiple proposals continued to include inaccurate or incomplete data in the tables, making analysis difficult. Applicants are urged to verify that all information provided in the proposal narrative and tables is complete and correct in the final submission.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative, FY 2023-24 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	004SREB-24	Tulane University	BOR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program	\$87,500	5	44	28	24	96	3
2	005SREB-24	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	BoR/SREB Doctoral Scholar Fellowships at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$52,500	3	43	27	21	91	3
3	002SREB-24	Louisiana Tech University	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2024-27	\$70,000	4	35	24	20	79	2
4	003SREB-24	Southern University and A&M College	SU-SREB/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	\$52,500	3	29	25	19	73	1
5	001SREB-24	Louisiana State University and A & M College	Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2024-2027	\$70,000	4	25	27	20	72	1

* Slot = \$15,000 per year (\$10,000 stipend supplement; \$5,000 SREB DSP membership) for three years plus \$2,500 in year 1 for faculty member attendance at annual Institute

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD DOCTORAL SUPPORT INITIATIVE**

FY 2023-24 COMPETITION

001SREB-24 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2024-2027”
Requested: 4 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 1 Student Support Slot for 3 years = \$47,500

LSU A&M has a commendable reputation for graduating underrepresented students in its doctoral programs, but the proposal does not provide hard evidence of that success. As in previous proposals, data are notably inaccurate. The claims in the narrative regarding retention and graduation of underrepresented students may be correct, but are not supported by the data provided. The information in Form 4-SREB-B, Five-Year Retention Data, is clearly incorrect, making it impossible to understand LSU A&M’s success in retaining and graduating underrepresented students (or any students). To provide one example among several apparent inaccuracies, according to the data provided, not a single URM student and only one student total has completed a doctoral degree in the last five years. These problems also raise questions about the numbers provided related to admissions, including the apparent 250% increase in applicants to doctoral programs between 2021 and 2022. This lack of accurate information extends to the account of previous BoR/SREB recipients. No data whatsoever are provided regarding placements, and the number who have successfully completed appears to be small. These issues are particularly unfortunate since LSU A&M has undertaken several critical initiatives to build underrepresented student enrollment and has seen significant growth since 2010. Previous applications have described the introduction of new recruitment efforts focused especially on regional institutions, but the proposal provides no indication of whether those strategies have yielded results. The “Intrusive Mentorship Model” developed at LSU A&M would appear to hold promise as a retention tool. Given LSU’s numbers of underrepresented applicants, the institution is in a position to make strategic use of BoR/SREB funding, but given the data issues in the proposal funding is recommended for one slot.

002SREB-24 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY
“Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2024-27”
Requested: 4 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 2 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$95,000

Louisiana Tech has struggled for years to attract substantial numbers of U.S. applicants to the doctoral programs targeted in this proposal: Engineering and Science and Psychology. Despite notable efforts, there have been very few underrepresented applicants and even fewer students enrolled. The strategy to focus on programs where the university has particular strength and for which there is considerable need (especially in Louisiana) makes a great deal of sense. The data presented indicate that the institution has been successful in retaining and graduating underrepresented Ph.D. students, with the most recent numbers pointing to a very promising increase in enrollments. Likewise, the program has had relative success in recruiting and retaining BoR/SREB recipients and it appears that participants have gone on to excellent careers. The proposal directly responds to questions raised in earlier reviews, adding detail to

the recruitment plan (notably critical financial incentives) and outlining efforts to engage former BoR/SREB recipients as well as national and regional organizations in recruitment efforts. Ongoing efforts to collaborate with neighboring Grambling State University have been successful in encouraging underrepresented applicants to master's programs, and a number of Grambling's international students have gone on to complete doctoral programs at Louisiana Tech. In short, Louisiana Tech has significant recruitment and retention programs in place and these are showing success, but the applicant numbers still are not sufficient to sustain a larger number of BoR/SREB slots. Funding is recommended for two slots.

003SREB-24 SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE
“SU-SREB Board of Regents Fellowship Program”
Requested: 3 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 1 Student Support Slot for 3 years = \$47,500

Southern University and A&M College's proposal focuses on three doctoral programs: Environmental Toxicology, Urban Forestry, and Science/Mathematics Education. All three are in strategic areas for Louisiana. The data presented in Table 1 indicate modest success in student recruitment and a relatively strong record of completions. Student enrollments in Environmental Toxicology had dropped but appear to have rebounded, although the size and health of that program continues to be a concern. The University has an array of programs aimed at underrepresented student recruitment and retention, as well as a substantial number of underrepresented faculty. SU A&M has committed significant resources to support recruitment of BoR/SREB recipients. A straightforward plan for monitoring these students has been developed, drawing on project leadership's experience with LS-AMP. Only one of the five BoR/SREB recipients to date has left the program. Unfortunately, data presented in the two required tables are inaccurate, making it difficult to assess SU A&M's overall success in building doctoral program recruitment, retention and graduation. In both tables the dates are incorrect, but if accurate associated data appear to suggest that while numbers of applications seem healthy, admissions are not selective. Whereas the first table indicates that all U.S. students admitted are underrepresented, the second table indicates numbers of non-underrepresented U.S. students completing. In addition, graduation numbers for the three targeted programs do not align with those provided in the narrative. Funding is recommended for one slot.

004SREB-24 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“BOR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program”
Requested: 5 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 3 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$142,500

Tulane has continued to attract very large numbers of talented underrepresented applicants to its highly competitive Ph.D. programs and enrolls a substantial proportion of those admitted. The University has a long history of involvement in the BoR/SREB program and a strong record of graduating and placing BoR/SREB recipients. In a highly decentralized graduate education environment, Tulane's and its Graduate School's commitment to diversity has shown remarkable results. Departments have been encouraged in developing diversity programs and institutional funding has supported diversity initiatives. Tulane has had a successful national profile in recruiting, making use of a variety of strategies and networks including, notably, Project 1000. An impressive support infrastructure is in place to address retention and degree attainment, although the numbers of minority students who leave doctoral programs continue to cause concern. Nevertheless, Tulane's numbers speak for themselves: approximately one-

third of U.S. students admitted to and graduating from its Ph.D. programs are from underrepresented groups. Funding is recommended for three slots.

005SREB-24 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“BoR/SREB Doctoral Scholar Fellowships at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”
Requested: 3 Student Support Slots

Recommended: 3 Student Support Slots for 3 years = \$142,500

As noted in previous reviews, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette has made remarkable progress in recruiting, retaining and graduating underrepresented doctoral students. With strong university leadership, particularly within the Graduate School, a comprehensive program and a culture of support have been put in place to enhance recruitment and create the conditions for student success. The data are clear: in the last five years ULL has sharply increased the numbers of underrepresented applicants, the numbers enrolled and, most important, the numbers of graduates. The application narrative does not, however, address possible causes for a recent significant decline in application and enrollment numbers. Despite this concern, continued strength in overall underrepresented Ph.D. enrollments is noted, as well as apparent success in reducing attrition. These developments presumably point to the need for continual vigilance and action, but the comprehensive approach taken at ULL could serve as a model for similar institutions. Particularly notable are the strategies for identifying linkages among the numerous relevant support programs and the efforts to build environments in which peer mentoring reinforces other, more traditional mentoring programs. Funding is recommended for three slots.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Doctoral Support Initiative to Promote Student and Faculty Diversity
2023-24 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-24	James Spencer	LSU A&M	Board of Regents Graduate Fellow Program 2024-2027	4	Y1: \$70,000 Y2: \$60,000 <u>Y3: \$60,000</u> Total: \$190,000
002SREB-24	Bala Ramachandran	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in Doctoral Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2024-27	4	Y1: \$70,000 Y2: \$60,000 <u>Y3: \$60,000</u> Total: \$190,000
003SREB-24	Patrick Mensah	Southern A&M	SU-SREB/Board of Regents Fellowship Program	3	Y1: \$52,500 Y2: \$45,000 <u>Y3: \$45,000</u> Total: \$142,500
004SREB-24	Michael Cunningham	Tulane	BOR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program	5	Y1: \$87,500 Y2: \$75,000 <u>Y3: \$75,000</u> Total: \$237,500
005SREB-24	Mary Farmer-Kaiser	UL Lafayette	BoR/SREB Doctoral Scholar Fellowships at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	3	Y1: \$52,500 Y2: \$45,000 <u>Y3: \$45,000</u> Total: \$142,500

BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY, FY 2023-24

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

SUPPORT SLOTS REQUESTED: 19

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$332,500

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$902,500