

**REPORT TO THE LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS
REVIEW OF PROPOSED ENDOWED CHAIRS
FOR EMINENT SCHOLARS**

**BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2025–26**

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Report of the Review Panel for the Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars Program

FY 2025–26 Competition for Board of Regents Support Fund Matching Funds

February 24, 2026

The four-member Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars Program external review panel received and reviewed the following documents:

- a. The current Board of Regents Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars Program Policy (revised June 2020);
- b. Guidelines for the Submission of Proposals to the Competitive and Restricted Bequests Endowed Chairs Subprograms for fiscal year (FY) 2025–26; and
- c. Fifteen (15) proposals for Chairs submitted in the Competitive Subprogram under the FY 2025–26 Guidelines.

On February 23, 2026, the panel met by videoconference to discuss, rate, and rank the fifteen (15) proposals submitted in the Competitive Subprogram and develop funding recommendations. Based on the submitted proposals, prospective chairs were rated according to evaluation criteria defined in the RFP, including: (1) alignment with role, scope, mission, and strategic priorities (30 points); contribution to academic training in priority areas (25 points); potential to contribute to economic development in Louisiana (20 points); long-term campus investment & appropriateness of the chair (15 points); and appropriateness of available resources (10 points).

The burden of proof was on each submitting institution to demonstrate the manner and extent to which the proposal satisfactorily addressed these criteria.

Attachment A contains the rank-order prioritization of the fifteen (15) proposed Endowed Chairs submitted in the Competitive Subprogram resulting from the rating of each proposal according to evaluation criteria set forth in the RFP. **Attachment B** contains a summary evaluation of each chair proposed in FY 2025–26.

Following are comments about the proposal submission and review process and suggestions for maximizing the impact of the Board of Regents Support Fund Endowed Chairs Program:

1. The external review panel members strongly affirm that the Endowed Chairs Program continues to effectively coordinate public and non-State resources for the purpose of improving the quality of higher education and its role in advancing Louisiana's economy, society, and culture. The overall merit of proposals continues to dictate funding decisions for the Endowed Chairs Program, which is increasingly important as monies available for matching decline. The review panel urges that every effort be made to provide additional resources to fund, in rank order according to merit, as many of this year's excellent proposals as possible, to help attract high-caliber scholars who are the hallmark of a superior higher education system.
2. The panel reminds applicants that for Endowed Chairs to be truly transformational in priority academic areas the campus must provide sufficient resources separate from the endowment to support not just recruitment, but retention of superior scholars. This must include a salary line sufficient to draw a senior, tenured faculty member with an outstanding record of scholarly/educational/professional accomplishments, as well as access to appropriate facilities, colleagues, and resources to pursue professional work at the level of quality and impact that led to the chairholder's selection.

The careful coordination of the review process provided by the Board's Research and Sponsored Initiatives staff is acknowledged and appreciated. Further, the review panel commends the Regents for their insistence on the independence of the external review process.

ATTACHMENT A

BoRSF Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars Program, Proposal Scoring and Funding Recommendations, FY 2025–26

Rank	Proposal #	Chair Title	Institution Name	BoRSF Match Requested	Alignment with Role, Scope, Mission, & Strategic Priorities (30 points)	Contribution to Academics/ Training in Priority Areas (25 points)	Potential to Contribute to Economic Development in LA (20 points)	Long-term Campus Investment & Appropriateness of Chair (15 points)	Appropriateness of Available Resources (10 points)	Total Score (100 points)	BoRSF Match Recommended
1	007EC-26	Michael A. Fitts Presidential Chair in Environmental Informatics and Artificial Intelligence	Tulane University	\$800,000	29	24	19	14	10	96	\$400,000
2	005EC-26	LHC Group/Myers Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Nursing and Home Health	South Louisiana Community College	\$400,000	28	23	18	14	9	92	\$400,000
3	008EC-26	Drs. Philip and Cheryl Leone Presidential Chair in Medicine	Tulane University Health Sciences Center	\$1,200,000	28	23	17	14	9	91	\$400,000
4	015EC-26	Sharon Griffith Turrentine Super Endowed Chair in VAPA	University of Louisiana at Monroe	\$400,000	28	22	18	13	9	90	\$400,000
4	012EC-26	Valery, Ruby and Georgie Coco/BORSF Endowed Chair in Education for Educational Innovation, Research, and Policy	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$400,000	28	22	18	13	9	90	\$400,000
6	011EC-26	Rosemary Saucier Laborde/BORSF Endowed Chair in the College of Nursing	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$400,000	27	22	16	13	8	86	

7	001EC-26	Janice Harvey Pellar Endowed Chair in Voice, Piano, or Collaborative Piano	Louisiana State University and A&M College	\$800,000	26	23	15	12	8	84	
8	006EC-26	Dr. Brian R. O'Callaghan Endowed Chair in Mathematics	Southeastern Louisiana University	\$400,000	25	22	15	12	8	82	
9	003EC-26	The Dr. Otto Wasmer Eminent Scholar Chair in Microbiology	Louisiana Tech University	\$400,000	24	22	15	11	9	81	
9	014EC-26	Kim Sledge Endowed Chair in Risk Management & Insurance	University of Louisiana at Monroe	\$400,000	24	22	15	12	8	81	
11	002EC-26	The Jack Kent Oral and Maxillofacial Chair in Maxillofacial Trauma and Reconstruction	Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans	\$400,000	23	21	15	12	8	79	
12	004EC-26	Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Artificial Intelligence	Northwestern State University	\$400,000	24	22	14	12	6	78	
13	010EC-26	McElligott/BORSF Endowed Eminent Scholar Chair for the Center of Innovation & Entrepreneurship	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$400,000	23	21	12	12	8	76	
14	009EC-26	Duhon Family/BORSF Endowed Chair in Librarianship	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	\$400,000	22	21	12	12	8	75	
15	013EC-26	Ella Johnson Endowed Chair in Agribusiness	University of Louisiana at Monroe	\$400,000	23	22	13	9	6	73	

ATTACHMENT B

Ranked #1: Michael A. Fitts Presidential Chair in Environmental Informatics and Artificial Intelligence – Tulane University (007EC-26)

Tulane University requests \$800,000 from the Board of Regents Support Fund to match \$1,800,000 in secured support from the Carol Lavin Bernick Family Foundation to establish the Michael A. Fitts Presidential Chair in Environmental Informatics and Artificial Intelligence. Last year, the Board of Regents awarded \$400,000 towards this endeavor. The chairholder's primary role and responsibilities include both research and education. The Fitts Presidential Chair leads programs and scholarships within the ByWater Institute, a center of excellence around disaster resilience and risk management that aligns with Tulane's commitment to data literacy and enhance curricula and research support for data science. In 2016, Tulane created the ByWater Institute, one of five university-wide research institutes, to catalyze thriving climate and water futures through transdisciplinary and collaborative scholarship. From 2017 to 2025, the ByWater Institute facilitated the submission of more than \$82 million in proposals, which generated \$11.2 million in support.

For generations, the state and region have been defined by their proximity to the Mississippi River and to the Gulf of Mexico, where fertile wetlands, vibrant ecosystems, and a rich cultural heritage intersect. However, this proximity also makes the state and region highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate instability. As coastal erosion continues to claim vast stretches of land in Louisiana each year, the state's coastline is being reshaped, communities are continuously displaced, and vitally important industries are disrupted. By harnessing Tulane's existing strengths and resources in the field of climate adaptation scholarship and research, and by leveraging cutting-edge data science and technology, the Fitts Presidential Chair is positioned to shape the way Louisiana addresses pressing ecological concerns and sustainable development goals at the local, regional, and national levels. It is anticipated that the chairholder's interdisciplinary focus will foster collaboration and meaningful synergies amongst multiple Tulane entities including the Connolly Alexander Institute for Data Science, Department of Computer Science, Tulane University School of Law, Celia Scott Weatherhead School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Tulane School of Liberal Arts, and Tulane School of Architecture.

Tulane University has conducted a national search and selected a superb candidate, Dr. Ibrahim Demir, for this position. Dr. Demir is an accomplished researcher, holding an exceptional record of scholarly achievement, with the ability to further solidify Tulane's status as a leader in the interdisciplinary study of environmental data, bringing new perspectives on the broad role of AI in scientific research.

It is also laudable that Tulane University is providing substantial resources for this position and ensuring that 60% of the expendable earnings from the Chair shall be used at the discretion of the holder to support their work in research, professional development, or service. Additionally, Tulane ensures that earnings will not be used for general or departmental support.

The Fitts Presidential Chair will focus on several long-term goals related to economic impact in Louisiana, including: 1) Advancing research that aims to reduce the impacts of natural hazards and augment disaster resilience in the state, thereby improving Louisiana's overall economic condition; 2) Fostering collaborations and partnerships that will drive innovation and generate positive economic opportunities and returns for Louisiana; 3) Attracting grants, contracts, and federal research funding to Louisiana, which enhances the state's overall economic climate; and 4) Magnetizing high-caliber investigators and scholars to the interdisciplinary study of climate adaptation at Tulane and in Louisiana.

The panel recommends funding the second \$400,000 match installment for the Fitts Chair.

Ranked #2: LHC Group/Myers Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Nursing and Home Health – South Louisiana Community College (005EC-26)

South Louisiana Community College's (SoLAcc) proposal, requesting a \$400,000 match for the LHC Group/Myers Family Foundation Endowed Chair in Nursing and Home Health, is focused primarily on workforce and economic development through curriculum development, innovation, and cultivation of industry partnerships as essential elements. Matching funds for this project were set aside in The Legacy Project, a \$2.5 million public-private partnership launched in 2020 among SoLAcc, LHC Group, and the Myers Family Foundation, to develop a national best-practice model for home health education and training. The work of the chairholder will position SoLAcc as a national hub for excellence in nursing and home health education, enhancing student outcomes and elevating the quality of care in Louisiana while supporting the state's broader economic development goals and creating a model for how higher education, industry, and government can collaborate to advance workforce readiness, innovation, and long-term regional prosperity.

The Chair is aligned with College and Department strategic priorities. SoLAcc and the Legacy Project's strategic partners have invested in facilities (home health labs at multiple locations), staffing, and scholarships, and this position is a strategic step to advancing work in home healthcare in the region, state, and nation to grow a ready workforce, increase economic mobility, and improve home healthcare practices. The work to improve and expand home healthcare education began in 2019 and has expanded in focus and vision, following shifts in the healthcare industry stemming from the 2020 COVID crisis.

Workforce data indicate that demand for healthcare workers is growing as the population ages and with economic shifts that require a focus on "value-based care that supports improved patient outcomes while controlling costs." The Chair will influence a large population of healthcare professionals who begin at community colleges and enter the workforce locally, regionally, and nationally. By 2032, the Department of Labor projects the demand for home health aides will increase by 22%. In Louisiana, demand projections for nurses are at 5.5% (RN – 5 stars) and 5.3% (LPN – 4 stars). The leadership and guidance from the chairholder will shape and enhance curriculum within the Division of Nursing and Allied Health, cultivate additional state and national partnerships, and propel grant endeavors and sponsored programs that will redefine the education and training for home healthcare.

SoLAcc is a community college recognized for excellence by the Aspen Institute and various state agencies and has a sharp focus on workforce development within the local community. In response to questions from the evaluation of a previous submission, SoLAcc has addressed the strengths and alignment of its partnership with the nursing program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Annually, SoLAcc serves over 11,000 credit and noncredit students. The chairholder joins an accomplished group of faculty in a growing department to expand outreach and cultivate industry partnerships. In 2024, the department educated 850 credit and over 700 noncredit credential-seeking students in healthcare training programs.

The chairholder will occupy a pivotal position within the organizational structure of the College, integrating academic leadership with workforce development and industry collaboration. Alongside the dean, the chairholder will serve as a liaison between SoLAcc's academic leadership and external stakeholders, including healthcare providers, policymakers, and community organizations. The chairholder will work closely with the Office of Institutional Advancement to secure funding, grants, and partnerships that support the College's healthcare initiatives. Additionally, the chairholder will collaborate with the Division of Economic and Workforce Development to ensure that healthcare short-term training programs align with regional workforce demands and provide students with practical skills

to enter the job market. The chairholder will be positioned as a key academic partner, facilitating dialogue between healthcare practitioners, researchers, and educators to drive innovation and best practices in home healthcare education and workforce development. Nationally, the chairholder will participate in thought leadership and advocacy efforts aimed at elevating home healthcare education.

Qualifications for the chairholder include a doctoral degree and experience in teaching and developing relationships with partners in the home health industry. The hiring committee has wide departmental representation and includes industry partners. The salary cited in the proposal is appropriate to the market in community colleges and in the region. The chairholder will lead curriculum development in home healthcare, strengthen relationships, and advance curriculum and standards for a statewide credential that may ultimately be adopted nationally.

SLAcc has invested significantly in home health labs in multiple locations, has developed and incorporated home health curriculum across programs, and raised significant funds to support the work. The workforce and economic development case is strong from an outstanding two-year institution. This is a niche in healthcare that is expanding. The College has a head start and can position Louisiana a national leader in this effort. Training will benefit residents of the state by providing qualified, well-trained caregivers and by creating entry-level positions for economically disadvantaged people who want to build careers in healthcare.

The panel recommends awarding the \$400,000 match for this outstanding proposal.

Ranked #3: Drs. Philip and Cheryl Leone Presidential Chair in Medicine – Tulane University Health Sciences Center (008EC-26)

This proposal from Tulane University Health Sciences Center requests \$1,200,000 to match \$1,800,000 for the Drs. Philip and Cheryl Leone Presidential Chair in Medicine. TUHSC will award the Leone Presidential Chair to a renowned scholar, investigator, and mentor who has made exceptional achievements in the health sciences, with an emphasis on the fields of immunology, parasitology, and/or public health, and whose career clearly demonstrates adherence to the highest professional standards, which include attainment of national and/or international distinction for having made unique and significant impacts in the health sciences field through outstanding research, creative scholarly achievement, teaching, and/or service. Given TUHSC's strength in these areas, the existing environment and faculty will provide ample fertile ground for an appointment with the function of stimulating integrative/collaborative research.

While the grant briefly summarizes existing research strengths in these areas, it would have been helpful to have a more detailed discussion of existing integrative opportunities and some suggestion of potential expanded collaborations. Given the choice of the areas of immunology, parasitology and public health for a Presidential Chair, there must have been discussions about the integrative potential of these areas. Despite this absence, as Louisiana contends with population losses, it is clear that the Leone Presidential Chair will position Tulane as a statewide asset that can help stem the flow of talent from the state, while also generating "braingain" on a parallel track, attracting new academics, investigators, and clinicians to the region. While it is indicated that the chairholder will have access to the Tulane Innovation Institute, focused on bringing research from Tulane and from other institutions to market, it would have been helpful to have some sense of the past/current success of this institute.

Importantly, the Leone Presidential Chair will contribute to TUHSC, to Louisiana, and to the broader Gulf South region by advancing groundbreaking scholarly objectives; propelling promising research forward; attracting federal research funding to New Orleans; drawing preeminent scholars and investigators to the state and region; and spurring bioinnovation. A national search for the Leone Presidential Chair will be conducted and completed by a diverse search committee that includes current Board of Regents eminent scholar chairholders, as well as an expert external to Tulane. Tulane has dedicated a salaried line at the level of full professor for the Leone Presidential Chair.

The panel recommends awarding the \$400,000 match for this excellent proposal.

Ranked #4: Sharon Griffith Turrentine Super Endowed Chair in VAPA – University of Louisiana at Monroe (015EC-26)

The Sharon Griffith Turrentine Super Endowed Chair in the School of Visual and Performing Arts promotes intellectual, artistic, and cultural diversity and collaboration in all facets of the School; oversees and manages faculty affairs, including recruitment, retention, and development, faculty workloads, annual performance reviews, and promotion and tenure processes; works collaboratively with key academic and community partners to represent ULM School of Visual and Performing Arts on and off campus and to develop shared programming that advances the mission of the School of Visual and Performing Arts within ULM and the city of Monroe; and works with faculty and staff to effectively meet school-specific and university-wide initiatives for enrollment and student success through (re)innovating school curricula to meet the demands of the 21st-century arts student and ensure continued relevance. The Turrentine Super Endowed Chair in the School of Visual and Performing Arts will be equipped, with additional increments of matching, to provide further comprehensive education and programming for students who want to work as creative professionals in the arts in Louisiana, the nation, and across the world. In addition to its focus on education and development, this chair will continue to promote the arts through positive and innovative outreach and is well-positioned to expand creative partnerships across the northeast Louisiana region and the state, setting the stage for a continued economic boost.

The Endowed Chair position is currently held by Dr. Nicholas Bratcher. In Dr. Bratcher's vision for VAPA, he outlines the (re)examination of curriculum and innovation to teach to what he refers to as "the 21st century arts student". This includes exploring the full range and potential of VAPA course offerings to elevate underrepresented voices, enrich students as artists, teachers, and scholars, build an accessible curriculum that equips students to flexibly and effectively navigate the 21st-century job market, and allow VAPA curricula to serve as a model for curricular and societal change. In his first year, the performance metrics (which averaged 92.3%) improved by 1.1% over the previous year. In addition, the retention rate for rate for students in their first two years improved from 65% to 75%.

At ULM, Dr. Bratcher has demonstrated visionary leadership by securing nearly \$3 million in visual and performing arts-specific endowments during the first year of his tenure. His ability to engage external donors and cultivate meaningful partnerships reflects his proactive approach to institutional development. Beyond fundraising, his leadership is visible in key academic areas, such as program accreditation and compliance efforts. Dr. Bratcher has been pivotal in coordinating the accreditation processes for the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) at ULM, ensuring that the institution maintains its high standards in music and visual arts education.

As the chief executive officer of the School of Visual and Performing Arts, Dr. Bratcher has demonstrated the impact this chair can have by (a) fostering academic excellence in all of the School's programs, including supporting and stewarding the implementation of new programs; (b) leading the execution of initiatives to support the strategic plans for the School of Visual and Performing Arts and the University of Louisiana at Monroe; (c) leading processes to keep the School's strategic plans and priorities relevant and up to date; and (d) leading nationally as an active conductor, clinician, adjudicator, and researcher in music education and wind band pedagogy. Dr. Bratcher was named the Sharon Griffith Turrentine Super Endowed Chair for Visual and Performing Arts in the fall of 2023.

The achievements of ULM's music and arts programs align directly with the university's mission to prepare graduates for global competitiveness through transformative education. Since the Chair's establishment, VAPA's recruitment and retention have climbed significantly, driven by robust

collaborations across programs and the region. Enrollment in the Bachelor of Arts in Music concentrations continue to rise with projected 20+ majors just in Commercial Music and Music Therapy, respectively, for the coming academic year. It should also be noted that ULM hosts the only music therapy program in the University of Louisiana System. Meanwhile, the art program has maintained steady enrollment, bolstered by the revamping of the arts curriculum and the introduction of a new concentration in illustration, which, in its inaugural year, has already become the second highest populated concentration in the program. This growth has been supported directly through the resources and visibility afforded by the Turrentine Chair. At ULM, placement for music majors boasts 96% and 100% placement for art majors. Since Dr. Bratcher's tenure, the Art program has achieved a 100% placement rate for its graduates in their professional fields, reflecting both the program's academic rigor and its strong connections to the regional creative economy. Music Education graduates continue to maintain a 100% placement rate (with two alumni recognized by the state of Louisiana for their teaching), and alumni are now represented in top graduate programs and professional ensembles worldwide, including military and international performance appointments. These outcomes illustrate the Chair's central role in fostering student achievement, professional readiness, and regional cultural leadership.

The Turrentine Super Endowed Chair will have, through its holder's endeavors, a profound impact on the local, regional, and national arts landscapes. In the city of Monroe, ULM VAPA serves as a vital cultural pillar, significantly enhancing the artistic vibrancy of the community. At the heart of VAPA's local engagement is comprehensive educational programming. VAPA offers a diverse array of programs in visual arts, music, theatre, and dance, providing students with rigorous training and fostering their creative potential. Beyond Monroe, the School of Visual and Performing Arts plays a crucial role in the cultural development of Northeast Louisiana. VAPA's regional impact is characterized by the School's outreach efforts, regional partnerships, and contributions to cultural tourism. On the national stage, the School of Visual and Performing Arts at ULM is recognized for its contributions to the American arts landscape. The School's national impact is evident through alumni achievements, faculty research and creative works, and participation in national arts initiatives.

This proposal is strong, especially given the accomplishments of the current Chair and the achievements of the School of Visual and Performing Arts. During his tenure as Chair, Dr. Bratcher's has been actively engaged in research, scholarly, and creative works that garner national attention. His scholarly publications, artistic performances as a conductor, and research contribute to the broader discourse in the arts. Moreover, under his leadership, VAPA has many internal and external achievements. The only weakness that appears in the proposal is the limited salary and backing given to Dr. Bratcher to support his various achievements.

Funding of an additional \$400,000 match increment is recommended to complete this strong proposal.

Ranked #4: Valery, Ruby and Georgie Coco/BORSF Endowed Chair in Education for Educational Innovation, Research, and Policy – University of Louisiana at Lafayette (012EC-26)

The type of chair requested in this proposal would serve a combination of needs related to both research and workforce development. Louisiana, like other states in the U.S., is experiencing a severe teacher shortage. The College of Education & Human Development (COEHD) at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is one of the largest providers of teachers for the state of Louisiana. As such, the COEHD is seeking innovative solutions to address this workforce need. The teacher shortage is vast and complex, but the COEHD at UL Lafayette is determined to grow its research initiatives around educator recruitment and changes needed to retain more current educators.

A unique setting for the proposed Chair to engage in this important work is the innovative laboratory school currently under construction at UL Lafayette. The laboratory school's mission is to prepare new K-12 educators by offering a world-class curriculum that is empirically based. Research on effective teaching and learning will drive the curriculum, to ensure every new teacher has the advantage of the most innovative and sound pedagogical practices available. In addition, the laboratory school will provide a unique opportunity for the chairholder to conduct and coordinate collaborative research that can lead to improvements in teacher recruitment and retention, while at the same time enhancing teaching effectiveness. The chairholder will work with laboratory school administrators and COEHD faculty to implement innovative practice in preservice teacher education at the laboratory school, thereby improving teacher engagement and motivation to remain in the profession. Education majors will have opportunities to gain professional experience in an immersive laboratory school setting designed to showcase global best practices and serve as a site for cutting-edge educational research. The ultimate goal of the work will be to provide an empirical foundation for change in state and national K-12 education policy and practice that will positively impact Louisiana education and the K-12 teacher workforce.

With solid foundations built around research and initiatives related to teacher recruitment and improved teacher retention, and with the work ongoing to bring about a rebranding of what teaching and learning can look and feel like, this Endowed Chair position would be a catalyst for innovation, integrating with a dynamic, versatile team of faculty already engaged in this arena. The Endowed Chair will build on this foundation by expanding the research base on factors that contribute to the teacher shortage and actively collaborating with school districts, the Louisiana Department of Education, and the Louisiana Legislature to develop evidence-based policies that address these fundamental issues.

The Educational Innovation, Research, and Policy BORSF Endowed Chair will report to the Dean of the COEHD and work to expand opportunities for collaboration between academic units and research centers, developing grants and contracts for applied research, sponsored research, and external funding, conducting innovative research into factors affecting teacher recruitment and retention, and establishing and supporting a strong educational policy advocacy presence for the COEHD. The chairholder will seek new ways for the COEHD to achieve significant impact in public education policy and position the COEHD as a leading voice in public education policy. The holder will also communicate with partners, the public, and the media and engage in creative dissemination of education research to drive change.

This reworking of the proposal focuses the Chair more clearly on student retention and recruitment, university collaboration, grant development, policy advocacy, and education research. The linkage of the Chair with the Learning Lab is clearer. The \$400,000 match request is strongly recommended for funding.

Ranked #6: Rosemary Saucier Laborde/BORSF Endowed Chair in the College of Nursing – University of Louisiana at Lafayette (011EC-26)

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette's proposal for the Rosemary Saucier Laborde/BORSF Endowed Chair in the College of Nursing requests \$400,000 to support a position dedicated to research, innovation, and workforce development. The Chair will be assigned to the Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences to enhance the impact of the Regional Simulation Center and student research at graduate and undergraduate levels. The state faces challenges related to education, poverty, chronic disease, mental health, and poor maternal-child health outcomes. Interdisciplinary research that advances health outcomes along with state policy on healthcare is the goal. The proposed outcome for interdisciplinary research of students and healthcare practitioners in the Center is improved quality of life and economic impact.

UL Lafayette was designated as an R1 institution in 2022 and re-accredited in 2025. Research is a priority, as evidenced by the Quality Enhancement Plan titled Advance: Student Research Experience, and the activities at the Regional Simulation Center is an excellent opportunity for hands-on student research. Additionally, plans are in place to investigate the various socioeconomic factors that affect healthcare, especially in rural communities. This proposal makes the case that improving healthcare in Louisiana will have an economic impact and enable the state to attract more talent while making life better for native residents.

Funds from the endowment will support research and its dissemination, travel and participation in conferences, and hardware, software, and data acquisition. In years that the College does not have grants that fund student participation and learning experiences, proceeds will be used to provide those activities for students. The chairholder will have an academic appointment and will be required to teach one graduate or undergraduate course each semester as well as mentor faculty and students as they develop their research agendas and strengthen workforce relationships and partnerships.

The Department is large, with approximately 2,000 students in healthcare and related disciplines pursuing bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. The programs are staffed by 51 full-time faculty, including eight full professors, five associate professors, and six assistant professors approaching tenure. The University will begin construction of the Regional Simulation Center, the first to be housed at a public university in Louisiana, within the next 12 months.

The economic development data in the proposal should be more specific to job market for healthcare in the region and across the state. Additionally, the regional facility is still in the planning stages and will not be a reality for more than a year.

Given the limited resources in this program, matching funds are not recommended at this time.

Ranked #7: Janice Harvey Pellar Endowed Chair in Voice, Piano, or Collaborative Piano – Louisiana State University and A&M College (001EC-26)

Janice Harvey Pellar seeded this proposed Chair at the College of Music and Dramatic Arts (CMDA) with a gift of \$1.2M, for which LSU A&M is requesting \$800,000 in match to complete the endowment. Through this position, the School of Music (SOM) will lean into its strength and further elevate its profile as a leader in classical singing education and a force in opera. The chairholder will provide leadership to the voice program and guide the program in training the complete singer in the second half of the 21st century. LSU Opera, one of the first university opera programs in the nation, has consistently produced high-quality opera performers for over 80 years.

The Pellar Endowed Chair is perfectly aligned with the mission of LSU A&M and will foster artistic excellence, preserve cultural heritage, and generate new knowledge through research and innovation. The chairholder will elevate the reputation of the voice program and CMDA through high-profile performances, recordings, and scholarly publications, and by attracting talented students, drawn by the opportunity to be mentored by a renowned artist and scholar. Finally, the chairholder will build relationships that foster collaborations and expand CMDA's network.

A key aspect of this endowed position is the cultivation of national and international performance opportunities. The holder will be instrumental in forging partnerships with prestigious institutions and presenters across the globe, opening doors for performances, residencies, and collaborative projects that extend far beyond the university's walls, and establishing a prominent presence for vocal performance on a global scale.

The University has made several recent institutional investments in CMDA including development of the new Bachelor of Music Therapy program. LSU A&M has also hired new distinguished vocal faculty and is currently searching for a new Collaborative Piano faculty member. In addition, CMDA and the SOM have made significant investments in graduate student education, spending over \$1.4 million of their allocation from the Office of Academic Affairs to support approximately 80 graduate assistantships each year. Moreover, 16 graduate assistantships are funded externally to the SOM budget each year, for a total additional investment of approximately \$300,000. Beyond these graduate assistantships, the SOM awards approximately \$90,000 in graduate scholarships annually. By investing in the next generation of musicians, educators, and researchers, the SOM is not only fulfilling its educational mission but also strengthening Louisiana's cultural heritage and economy.

Expected qualifications of the holder, including a terminal degree or commensurate experience, a strong record of teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom and studio, a significant body of creative work, artistic excellence, achievement in professional settings, and the ability to contribute to the Department, College, and University through service activities such as committee work, advising students, and participating in professional organizations, are appropriate. The institutional commitments to the Chair include a base salary along with a significant annual stipend for research equipment, professional development, and travel.

Given the limited resources in this program, matching funds are not recommended at this time.

Ranked #8: Dr. Brian R. O’Callaghan Endowed Chair in Mathematics – Southeastern Louisiana University (006EC-26)

Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), recently designated a research institution, is requesting \$400,000 to support the Dr. Brian R. O’Callaghan Endowed Chair in Mathematics, which will be used to lead the master’s program in Integrated Science and Technology (ISAT). The chairholder will advance the College’s research agenda across disciplines, secure research funding through grants and industry partnerships, and mentor graduate and undergraduate students to become “problem solvers and system integrators.” Specifically, the Chair will serve as the Graduate Coordinator of ISAT, growing the program while expanding cross-departmental research collaborations.

The College of Science and Technology brings together five departments: Chemistry and Physics, Mathematics, Biological Sciences, Computer Science, and Industrial and Engineering Technology. The ISAT program is positioned to prepare STEM students and future employees for the expanding role of artificial intelligence and digital security in growth industries important to the Louisiana economy, such as healthcare, petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing, and telecommunications. The chairholder will bring mathematical expertise and research experience to support collaboration and cohesion across these departments. The holder will also work with the College’s existing advisory board of industry leaders, which provides strategic guidance related to academic programming and workforce development initiatives.

The University has invested in the College of Science and Technology, which currently holds three endowed professorships and nine endowed undergraduate scholarships. The ISAT program has four graduate research assistantships. SLU commits to funding the O’Callahan chairholder as a tenured professor at an appropriate level of salary. The chairholder would teach six hours per semester (reduced from the standard 12-hour load), allowing time for the administrative duties of Graduate Coordinator.

SLU’s recent designation as a research institution makes this position especially important to the mission and strategic priorities of the University as well as the Department. The ISAT program’s collaborative approach to research is positioned to advance emerging fields. The master’s program prepares students for the workforce needed by the industries that sustain the Louisiana economy or that are being pursued to locate in Louisiana. Graduates of the ISAT master’s program bring needed research and collaboration skills to employers hiring for emerging markets.

Given the limited resources in this program, the matching funds are not recommended at this time.

Ranked #9: The Dr. Otto Wasmer Eminent Scholar Chair in Microbiology – Louisiana Tech University (003EC-26)

This revised proposal from Louisiana Tech University requests \$400,000 in matching funds for the School of Biological Sciences (SBS) to establish the Dr. Otto Wasmer Eminent Scholar Chair in Microbiology. The Chair will enable Louisiana Tech to engage an internationally recognized leader in microbiology who has demonstrated the ability to mentor students and maintain a strong externally funded research program, including leadership of interdisciplinary research. The chairholder will teach courses, supervise graduate students and conduct research, contributing to the overall quality and success of Louisiana Tech's School of Biological Sciences (SBS) programs and to the University by increasing its research reputation, improving the infrastructure for research, mentoring early-career faculty members, and growing the capabilities of SBS graduates, along with existing and future faculty.

The College of Applied and Natural Sciences (ANS) has the second-largest enrollment of the five academic colleges at the University, with the SBS degree program typically ranking in the top three undergraduate programs, with approximately 500 students. The establishment of the Chair will be a transformative step forward, elevating the commitment to excellence in education and research. By advancing cutting-edge research in microbiology and creating a culture of excellence, the holder will enhance students' academic experiences and career opportunities while increasing the capacity to address critical global challenges in health, environmental sustainability, and biotechnology. Microbiology encompasses a wide range of topics – antimicrobial resistance, infectious disease prevention and response, biotechnology and synthetic biology, environmental health and sustainability, microbiomes and health, food and agriculture, biosecurity and bioremediation, and more – which aligns it well with university, regional and national priorities.

SBS, ANS and Louisiana Tech have agreed to support the development of appropriate laboratory facilities for the chairholder, providing space for equipment, undergraduate students, and graduate students. A competitive start-up package is also pledged to purchase equipment, reagents, and supplies, and to recruit and support highly qualified students at both the MS and Ph.D. levels. To facilitate recruitment the University has committed a salary line at the level of full professor, providing at least one month of summer salary for the first three years if the holder is not able to generate their own salary from grants. In addition, at least \$40,000 will be provided from the endowment each year for faculty development and research. Over four years, these funds will total ~\$500,000. It is hoped that in the short term the chairholder's contributions will immediately enhance the educational experiences in SBS. In the longer term, the chairholder will attract graduate students, faculty, collaborators, and partners to raise the research status of Louisiana Tech.

In response to the previous review the applicants have provided additional information on facilities and resources, publication rates of existing faculty, research expenditures, and research programs of the existing microbiologists, as well as an initiative supported by NSF to teach an inquiry-based course: Environmental Microbiology.

The expected qualifications and expectations are appropriate. While \$500,000 over four years is a lot of money, however, it is uncertain, given that young microbiologists just out of postdoctoral fellowships often receive seven-figure start-up packages, whether it is sufficient to recruit an outstanding senior microbiologist.

Due to the limited resources available to this program, matching funds are not recommended at this time.

Ranked #9: Kim Sledge Endowed Chair in Risk Management & Insurance – University of Louisiana at Monroe (014EC-26)

The University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) requests \$400,000 to complete the \$1 million Kim Sledge Endowed Chair in Risk Management and Insurance in the College of Business and Social Sciences. Funding from the Louisiana Department of Insurance was provided to the ULM Foundation to create the Endowed Chair in memory of Kim Sledge, an employee of the Department of Insurance who was killed while on the job, and to support the efforts of the nationally recognized ULM Risk Management and Insurance (RMI) program. The position will help the College recruit a prominent RMI faculty member with national and/or international recognition, who will continue to maintain the reputation, visibility, and prestige of the RMI program at ULM. Because of the nature of the RMI program and industry, the purpose of the Sledge Endowed Chair in RMI will be to attract and retain a faculty member who will combine teaching/educational, research/scholarly, and service/outreach foci, in which the teaching/educational component will be primarily emphasized while research and service to the institution, region, state, and RMI community will be important components.

The services provided by organizations operating in the risk management and insurance industry are critical to society. Very few of us could afford to pay the full price of healthcare, lost wages due to illness or death, accidents involving personal property, or theft or loss of property. The RMI industry provides ways in which individuals and organizations can manage their risks.

ULM's RMI program is one of only a few in the world with specialized coursework in surplus lines and reinsurance, partially due to the nature of the businesses that work in the state of Louisiana (i.e., oil and gas industries, chemical production, agricultural production, sporting events, and festivals). A severe workforce shortage will exist in the near future as more than 50% of employees in the industry are expected to retire by 2028, which could create more than 8,000 job openings. Seniors in the RMI program are already being placed 100% of the time, with juniors also receiving job offers. The addition of the Chair to the ULM RMI program will provide excellence in teaching and curriculum offerings for students along with opportunities to foster and maintain relationships with industry partners and program alumni.

This is a very good proposal for a Chair that would improve students' educational experience at ULM. However, there already seems to be a high-quality program at ULM that is quite successful in placing all graduates, so the proposal should discuss the added value that an additional eminent faculty member will bring.

With limited resources available to this program, matching funds are not recommended at this time.

Ranked #11: The Jack Kent Oral and Maxillofacial Chair in Maxillofacial Trauma and Reconstruction – Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center – New Orleans (002EC-26)

This revised application from LSUHSC-NO's Schools of Dentistry and Medicine requests \$400,000 to complete the Jack Kent Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Foundation Chair. In response to previous review comments, the application has been revised and the focus changed to support a nationally eminent faculty member with clinical education expertise who will provide supervised experimental learning experiences to oral and maxillofacial surgery residents and students. LSUHSC-NO's Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMS) program immerses prospective dentists/physicians in an integrated OMS and Doctor of Medicine (MD) program or an OMS-MD scientific study and clinical experience through the Schools of Dentistry and Medicine. The purpose of this Endowed Chair is to build upon the contributions of Dr. Jack Kent by recruiting and retaining an eminent faculty member with outstanding clinical education expertise who will provide educational leadership to continue to enhance the field of oral and maxillofacial surgery, the OMS program, and the Schools of Dentistry and Medicine, and increase access to quality care for patients within Louisiana. The goals of the faculty appointment are to preserve and expand the scope of established clinical education programs in OMS, raise OMS awareness through education, and enhance the medical community's fundamental understanding of OMS. The goals appear consistent with the existing education, research, and service environments.

A summary description is provided of the 15 faculty members associated with the program and their roles in the overall program are delineated. Discussion of ongoing research areas is detailed, and numerous research areas are identified along with the participants. Over the last 40 years, 138 successful OMS grants have led to nearly \$20 million in grant funding from federal, state, industry, and private sources to support over 200 significant projects. For the 2023–24 academic year, OMS Department faculty had 41 ongoing and active research projects, three refereed publications, and nine non-refereed publications, a surprisingly low level of research productivity. In this resubmission the focus of the Chair has been limited to recruitment of a nationally eminent surgeon in the field of oral and maxillofacial traumatology and reconstruction with clinical expertise currently lacking in Louisiana, who will focus on clinical education and clinical practice.

LSUHSC-NO's Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Program is, without question, a stellar clinical program with a very good record despite current limited productivity. While there is little doubt that the Department would benefit from the proposed faculty member, this extensive proposal containing a significant amount of historical information, in general, still falls short of relating that information to a strong justification for matching support for the Jack Kent Oral and Maxillofacial Chair. No funding is recommended.

Ranked #12: Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Artificial Intelligence – Northwestern State University (004EC-26)

Northwestern State University (NSU) requests \$400,000 from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund to match \$600,000 in secured support from the Dunahoe family to establish the Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Artificial Intelligence in memory of Mrs. Lola Walker Dunahoe and in honor of her service, passions, contributions, and dedication to the success of NSU. The Dunahoe Chair is proposed as a combination position, balancing research, teaching, and service responsibilities in accordance with BoRSF guidelines. The Chair will be based within the School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), focused on artificial intelligence, data analytics, and ethical technology integration. The chairholder is expected to lead initiatives in AI curriculum development, applied research and workforce innovation.

The establishment of the Dunahoe Chair will advance groundbreaking partnerships like the collaboration between NSU and IBM that has made NSU one of the first regional universities in the nation to deliver IBM-developed coursework within a university curriculum. This successful partnership with IBM has expanded into the addition of new AI-infused courses in programming, data structures, analytics, and 3D design. The Dunahoe Chair aligns with Louisiana Economic Development's Digital Skills Initiative and Louisiana Works' projected 20% growth in computer and data occupations by 2030.

It is laudable that NSU has allocated \$250,000 in institutional matching funds and research infrastructure support to enhance the early success of the chairholder. However, there is concern with the very low base salary guarantee of \$50,000, which is far below what is expected of such a position. This salary also does not appear to be in compliance with Board of Regents policy section XIII.B, which requires the institutionally provided base salary be at a level at least equivalent to the average full professor salary in the department in which the Chair is housed. Additionally, suggesting that the entire amount of endowment earnings be used to supplement the salary is not a good use of these kinds of funds, at least some of which are typically provided for use at the discretion of the chairholder to support their academic and research work. Moreover, a 5% return on the endowment is not guaranteed, so how will the salary requirement be met if the Chair does not produce \$50,000 in expendable earnings? It may be difficult to recruit an eminent senior faculty member, especially in such a high-profile and in-demand field, with the package of support described in the proposal.

The proposal has been greatly improved from the previous submission, narrowing the emphasis to one academic area rather than the previously attempted interdisciplinary approach. This has resulted in a much more focused proposal that could be successful in future years if the concerns above are addressed. Removal of the rotating aspect of the Chair position is a positive development and is more aligned with the purposes of the Endowed Chairs Program. The proposal does, however, show lack of supporting detail, with virtually no information given about the School of STEM, including faculty, students, courses taught, research currently underway, etc. Such information is crucial to understanding the scope and impact of the Chair on the institution.

Funding is not recommended at this time.

Ranked #13: McElligott/BORSF Endowed Eminent Scholar Chair for the Center of Innovation & Entrepreneurship – University of Louisiana at Lafayette (010EC-26)

The McElligott/BORSF Endowed Eminent Scholar Chair for the Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship aims to inspire and cultivate a new generation of leaders at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette by advancing research, teaching, and real-world application in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship. The chairholder will drive cutting-edge initiatives that foster creativity, empower students to launch impactful ventures, and position the Moody College of Business Administration as a major contributor within the university's overall innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. This position will serve as a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating entrepreneurial thinking across campus while strengthening ties between academia and the business community, ultimately contributing to economic growth and societal advancement. The McElligott Chair is essential to actualizing UL Lafayette's strategic plan, crucial for inclusive student programming, and critical for the Acadiana Region, which hosts a large number of small businesses.

While research is positioned as an essential component of the McElligott Chair, its primary focus is on service and teaching. The chairholder will actively engage with students, faculty, and the broader community to provide hands-on learning experiences and mentorship, helping to shape future innovators and entrepreneurs. By fostering a dynamic learning environment and building meaningful partnerships, the McElligott chairholder will ensure that the University serves as a hub for entrepreneurial activity. Research will support these efforts by informing best practices, staying at the forefront of industry trends, and contributing to the continuous improvement of pedagogy and program development.

The proposal establishes primary priorities for the chairholder, including curriculum development, student mentorship and advising, management of spaces and places for student innovation and entrepreneurship, interdisciplinary collaboration, program evaluation and improvement, and grants. Secondary priorities include networking and community engagement, business competitions and funding opportunities, professional development and skills training, public engagement and outreach, fundraising and resource development, and venture incubation and support. The position will largely focus on local initiatives but also has incentives to engage in the development of regional and national engagement and networks.

Integrating innovation and entrepreneurship across teaching, research, and service can create a holistic, entrepreneurial culture that extends beyond business schools to permeate all academic disciplines. The chairholder will achieve this in teaching by infusing innovation and entrepreneurship into the curriculum; in service building entrepreneurial communities and ecosystems for UL Lafayette students; and in research by advancing knowledge in innovation and entrepreneurship. The McElligott Chair will also be involved in establishing dedicated centers and programs for innovation and entrepreneurship, developing curricula and entrepreneurship education, seeking funding and financial support, building industry partnerships and networks, engaging the community, developing ecosystems, promoting research and intellectual property commercialization, developing thought leadership and events, and creating a culture of innovation.

Overall, the proposal is solid. The goals of the Chair are extensive, however, and will require considerable skill and expertise. The salary range offered is of concern, as it does not appear high enough to attract the quality of applications that the University and the Chair, as described, need to be successful. Funding is not recommended.

Ranked #14: Duhon Family/BORSF Endowed Chair in Librarianship – University of Louisiana at Lafayette (009EC-26)

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette University Libraries requests a chair focused on research in librarianship, planning and visioning, and continuous improvement in library collections, services, and facilities. The Duhon Family/BORSF Endowed Chair in Librarianship will be assigned to the Dean of University Libraries for the purpose of developing a library network that meets the information, teaching and research needs of students and faculty across the disciplinary spectrum.

In the university's recently implemented strategic plan, "Vision. Louisiana.", University Libraries is a priority for increased support and renewal. Among the proposed initiatives is to reconceive the physical library, remodeling facilities, adding new features such as technology areas, meeting space, and places where students can engage with each other in the socio-intellectual processes of research and learning. In addition, University Libraries intends to develop collections that reflect the University's recently attained R1 Carnegie Foundation classification and support the ever-increasing research being conducted at the institution. Finally, University Libraries has identified several new services that are much needed in a library at an R1 institution. These include research data management services that will enable faculty researchers to collect and maintain data as required by many granting agencies, scholarly publishing and intellectual property rights services for the increasing amount of publishing done by faculty, and enhanced instructional services for students who are becoming more engaged with research and need to develop information and technological skills to do so successfully.

The chairholder will serve as the leader of an organization transforming itself to meet the information needs of students, faculty, staff, and the region. In an era of unprecedented information abundance, the world looks to colleges and universities that develop graduates who not only have disciplinary knowledge and skills but can understand the ever-evolving complexities of the availability, relevance, and voracity of information. A college education must instill in students not only the skills needed to embark on a career, but also the meta skills that enable them to find information, evaluate and understand it, discover new meanings within it through information technologies, and use it to continually develop their own knowledge and skills.

The proposal primarily describes the role that a university library network has at a Carnegie R1 research university. The roles described for the Endowed Chair are largely the functions required of a Dean of Libraries at an R1 research university. The proposal does not make clear what is unique about the position that would require the supplementary support of an Endowed Chair. In addition, given the Endowed Chairs Program's and BoRSF's focus on supporting academics and research, it is of concern that this investment would be in a general support position at the university, which does not appear to be aligned with program goals.

Funding is not recommended for this proposal.

Ranked #15: Ella Johnson Endowed Chair in Agribusiness – University of Louisiana at Monroe (013EC-26)

The University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM) requests \$400,000 in matching funds to create the Ella Johnson Endowed Chair in Agribusiness within the College of Business and Social Sciences, Davis and Sharon Turrentine School of Management. The Chair is designed to help the College recruit and retain a prominent agricultural business faculty member with a national and/or international reputation to lead the program and enhance the visibility and prestige of the Agribusiness program. Consistent with the mission of the University and College, the chairholder will primarily focus attention on transformative education, community engagement and service, with a secondary focus on research that will have a significant impact on the students, community and region.

Crop production and animal production are strong industries in Louisiana, helping to make agriculture, along with oil and gas production, one of the state's top economic drivers. Louisiana Economic Development cites a \$30 billion annual economic impact from agricultural production. It is thought that ULM Agribusiness graduates will have the opportunity to play an important part in not only the regional but also the national economy by helping to fill regional shortages.

Student numbers have been consistently growing over time, though the last couple of years show a slight decline, attributable to general declines in national enrollment and some negative press surrounding financial challenges faced by ULM. This is particularly concerning as the program had previously been supported by three faculty members, but only one remains. There is no mention of recruiting replacement faculty, so it appears that these two vacant positions may be lost.

Some of the changes in the proposal are appreciated, particularly the section that discusses additional regional cooperation that could be built. However, other changes from previous proposals are of concern, including an unexplained decrease in support for the chairholder's salary from \$120,000 to \$100,000 and an increased teaching load. Previous proposals also stated that the average teaching load for full-time faculty was nine hours (three classes) per year. In this year's proposal, this same load is described as a 'reduced load' for the chairholder. It appears that the resources available and the institutional support for the position and the program have declined, which injects considerable uncertainty. In light of these issues, no funding is recommended.