

**REPORT TO THE  
LOUISIANA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**BOARD OF REGENTS/SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD  
GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY PROGRAM  
OF THE  
BOARD OF REGENTS SUPPORT FUND  
FY 2006-07 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2007-08**

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**Dr. Charles Ambler  
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University of Texas at El Paso**

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School  
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Senior Associate Dean for Biomedical Research Education and Training  
Vanderbilt University Medical School**

## INTRODUCTION

**The panel urges each applicant to read the summary relating to the submitted proposal that is included in this report, which contains indications as to how the proposal was judged. Most summaries, more importantly, also offer suggestions to help applicants design proposals for future competitions of the BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program.**

The Review Panel for the BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program met in Baton Rouge on March 5 and 6, 2007, to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2006-07 competition for awards to begin in FY 2007-08. Members of the panel were Dr. John Mayfield (Chair), Iowa State University; Dr. Roger Chalkley, Vanderbilt University Medical School; Dr. Charles Ambler, University of Texas, El Paso; and Dr. Suzanne Ortega, University of Washington.

Four (4) institutions submitted a total of four (4) proposals in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program. All proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools.

Prior to arriving in Baton Rouge, consultants individually read and evaluated each proposal according to the guidelines provided by the Louisiana Board of Regents in the FY 2006-07 BoR/SREB Fellowships Program Request for Proposals. Each consultant assigned a preliminary ranking to each proposal before the March meeting. Preliminary composite scores were then computed. These composite scores facilitated discussions at the March meeting.

After thorough discussion of the merits of each proposal, the consultants established a rank order for all of the proposals and recommended a number of fellowship slots for each. Recommendations were made consistent with the limits of available funding as determined by the Board of Regents. A total of \$250,000 available in first-year funding was recommended for expenditure.

The total amount of first-year funds requested in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program was \$500,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funds was allotted for the program.

The panel recommends that all four (4) of the proposals submitted under the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program be funded in the amounts specified in Appendix A. Appendix B consists of brief narrative summaries of the panel's assessment of each proposal submitted and Appendix C contains a listing of all proposals submitted under the program.

The cumulative requests substantially exceed the total amount of funding available. Panel members made every effort to keep recommendations within established funding limitations as well as in accordance with the collective assessment of each proposal's individual merits. Reviewers sought to ascertain the degree to which each award could bring about the successful recruitment of under-represented minority students in keeping with the goal of elevating diversity and academic success in the submitting institutions.

Once again, the four panel members commend all involved in this ongoing endeavor to elevate the level of graduate study in Louisiana's institutions of higher education. The members of the panel, collectively and individually, also wish to express our sincere appreciation to the staff of the Louisiana Board of Regents for their aid and support in the completion of this task.

## APPENDIX A

**TABLE I**

**Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund  
BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program  
Proposals Recommended for Funding  
FY 2006-2007 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2007-2008**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>PROP. NO.</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIPS RECOMMENDED</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TOTAL BoRSF MONEY RECOMMENDED</b>
1	004SREB-07	UNO	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	<u>\$ 80,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$380,000
2	002SREB-07	LA TECH	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000
3	003SREB-07	UL L	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000
4	001SREB-07	LSU-BR	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000

## APPENDIX B

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/SOUTHERN  
REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY  
PROGRAM**

**001SREB-07    LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE**  
**“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”**  
**Requested:    10 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended:    2 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$190,000**

Based entirely on the now expired Perkins fellowship program, this proposal for LSU’s minority fellowships program reads less like an application for a new fellowship initiative than like a continuation of an old one. This is problematic because evidence suggests that although enrollment of under-represented minority students in LSU graduate programs now approaches 10%, the Perkins program has been far less than an unqualified success. For example, proposal data suggest that the number of under-represented minority applicants, admitted students, enrollees, and graduate degree recipients have remained essentially flat over the last five years. Furthermore, with an enrollment of approximately 160 under-represented minority students, one would expect to see substantially more than 14-26 degrees produced each year. This pattern indicates that there is either a very poor completion rate or a very protracted time to degree among these students. While these problems are not necessarily unique to LSU, the national attention currently being given to them is already providing information about the best mentoring practices that are likely to help remedy both. Despite this, however, the proposal includes virtually no plan to monitor student progress, mentor fellowship recipients, or encourage degree completion by any means other than involving fellowship recipients in the program provided by SREB. The SREB program is a gem and it is highly prized by student participants. But Perkins fellows also participated in SREB and data presented here suggest that in the absence of a strong campus mentoring program, participation in SREB is in itself not enough to encourage timely degree completion. The suggestion that special seminars may be provided for fellows and that they will be encouraged to remain part of the community is not nearly enough to address the serious problems evident in the Perkins program. In addition, there are internal inconsistencies in the proposal which make it difficult to determine how the requested fellowships will be distributed. At one point it appears that it will be a straight competition among individual student applicants; at others, it seems to be suggested that fellowships will be distributed across departments or programs and that priority will be given to those programs with records of excellence. In either case, the panel wonders whether the planned strategy of dispersing fellowships as widely as possible is a good one, given evidence that suggests a critical mass in a program may be the most effective way of recruiting larger numbers of under-represented minority students in future years and promoting the kind of peer mentoring and informal community that research shows facilitates degree completion. The plan to enhance the proposed stipends with a supplemental fellowship of \$3,000 provided by the university signals a strong institutional commitment to the initiative. However, even at \$23,000, it is unclear whether the stipend level is sufficient to attract the very best students from across the State and the nation. Funding is recommended for two fellowship slots.

**002SREB-07    LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY**  
**“Doctoral Diversity in Engineering and the Sciences at Louisiana Tech University”**  
**Requested:    4 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended:    2 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$190,000**

This proposal from Louisiana Tech University aims to increase minority enrollment and retention in graduate programs through carefully considered recruitment programs and a thorough mentoring/student tracking mechanism. In general the review panel felt that there were some good ideas in this proposal. The group was impressed with the strong plans for recruiting, as well as with the ideas for increased mentoring of the students. The proposal seems to identify some proactive ways to address the serious problem of attrition among minority student populations in graduate programs. The panel’s enthusiasm was reduced somewhat by the lack of detail in describing exactly how these ideas would be implemented. The details of the implementation of these ideas are critical to gauging their chances for success and likelihood of making a long-term impact on Louisiana Tech’s minority enrollment in graduate programs. In fact, the institution’s past record in this area, which shows little sustained success, gives the panel considerable concern. Table 5 indicates, for example, that the graduate programs enroll some 20-22

minority students each year, but only graduate 1-2 such students each year. Clearly there is a serious problem here which was not acknowledged or explained in the proposal. Still, the new ideas and new funding might yield some positive results, and Louisiana Tech should be encouraged to develop new strategies and ideas for addressing historic problems in minority student recruitment and retention. Funding is recommended for two fellowship slots.

**003SREB-07 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE**  
**“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”**  
**Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 2 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$190,000**

This proposal seeks support for two highly qualified doctoral students in STEM programs at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The awards will be made by a committee of three deans and will be paired to the activities of a Task Force on Minority Graduate Recruitment. The inclusion of the deans on the selection committee is a positive element, and suggests that the institution understands the importance of encouraging faculty/administrative support of the program. The same is true for the invitation to students to serve on the Task Force. Including students in the administration of their graduate careers could be a positive aspect of the program. The student recruitment plans are sound, if somewhat standard in design. If implemented as described, they should have a positive impact on graduate minority enrollment. The proposal is weakened by the lack of analysis of UL-Lafayette’s previous experience with under-represented minority graduate students. Clearly applications have declined slightly over the last few years and under-represented minority student enrollment appears to be less than 5%. These are statistics that demand aggressive analysis and action, though the proposal does not make an effort to understand or address them directly. Funding is recommended for two fellowship slots.

**004SREB-07 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**  
**“Graduate School Diversity Fellowship Program for Doctoral Studies at UNO”**  
**Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: 4 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$380,000**

The Graduate School at the University of New Orleans requests four fellowships to enhance recruitment and retention of minority Ph.D. students. The University will provide an additional \$2,000 for each student as well as funds to departments to support recruitment activities. Through the creation of a Diversity Cabinet and a careful analysis of current minority enrollment data, the University has demonstrated its commitment to understanding existing problems and correcting them to promote minority recruitment and retention in all Ph.D. programs. UNO has a commendable record in enrolling and graduating African American Ph.Ds in education fields, although there is cause for concern regarding retention rates. The proposal indicates that the institution plans to use the SREB Fellowships to leverage significant increases in the STEM disciplines. The existing Chachere Fellowship program has demonstrated the impact that such programs can have in attracting and retaining highly qualified minority students. The proposal presents clear goals for minority enrollments and provides workable plans for recruitment and retention, linking University and department efforts. These strong plans, combined with a real understanding of what obstacles exist on the campus, make this a strong proposal. Funding is recommended for four fellowship slots.

## APPENDIX C

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program  
2006-07 Competition  
Proposals Submitted**

<b>Proposal#</b>	<b>PI Name(s)</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Proposal Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Slots Requested</b>	<b>Funds Requested</b>
001SREB-07	Stacia Haynie; Marie Hamilton	LSU-BR	Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity	4 years	10	Y1: \$250,000 Y2: \$250,000 Y3: \$250,000 <u>Y4: \$200,000</u> Total: \$950,000
002SREB-07	Terry McConathy; Bala Ramachandran; Tony Young	LA Tech	Doctoral Diversity in Engineering and the Sciences at Louisiana Tech University	4 years	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
003SREB-07	C. E. Palmer	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	4 years	2	Y1: \$50,000 Y2: \$50,000 Y3: \$50,000 <u>Y4: \$40,000</u> Total: \$190,000
004SREB-07	Polly M. Burns; Elizabeth Sigler	UNO	Graduate School Diversity Fellowship Program for Doctoral Studies at UNO	4 years	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$80,000</u> Total: \$380,000

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

**NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 4**

**FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 20**

**FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$500,000**

**TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,900,000**

**TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10**

**TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$250,000**