

**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 2008-09 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2009-10**

**Dr. John Mayfield, Chair
Professor
Iowa State University**

**Dr. Charles Ambler
Former Dean of the Graduate School
University of Texas at El Paso**

**Dr. Suzanne Ortega
Executive Vice President and Provost
University of New Mexico**

**Dr. Roger Chalkley
Senior Associate Dean for Biomedical Research Education and Training
Vanderbilt University Medical School**

INTRODUCTION

The panel urges applicants to read the summary critique, included in this report, relating to each submitted proposal. 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 February 21 and 22, 2009, to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2008-09 competition for awards to begin in FY 2009-10. 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 New Mexico.

Five (5) institutions submitted a total of six (6) proposals in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program. All proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools; one proposal was submitted as a multi-institutional, collaborative project.

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 2008-09 BoR/SREB Fellowships Program Request for Proposals. Each consultant assigned a preliminary rating to each proposal before the February meeting. Preliminary composite scores were then computed. These composite scores facilitated discussions at the 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 allocated by the Board of Regents.

The total amount of first-year funds requested in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program was \$800,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funding was available for the program.

The panel recommends that three (3) of the proposals submitted under the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program be funded in the amounts specified in Appendix A. Appendix B consists of brief panel assessments of submitted proposals and Appendix C contains a listing of all proposals submitted to the program.

The cumulative requests exceed the total amount of funding available. Panel members made every effort to make 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 underrepresented 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 Board of Regents for their aid and support in the completion of this task.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

**Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund
BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
FY 2008-09 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2009-10**

I. Proposals Recommended for Funding

RANK	PROP. NO.	SCHOOL	NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIPS RECOMMENDED	YEAR	TOTAL BoRSF MONEY RECOMMENDED
1	001SREB-09	LSU-BR	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	<u>\$ 80,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$380,000
2	004SREB-09	TULANE	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	<u>\$ 80,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$380,000
3	006SREB-09	UNO	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000

II. Proposals Not Recommended for Funding

PROPOSAL #	INSTITUTION
002SREB-09	SOUTHERN-BR
005SREB-09	UL LAFAYETTE

III. Ineligible Proposal

PROPOSAL #	INSTITUTION
003SREB-09	TULANE

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

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

001SREB-09 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE
“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”
Requested: 10 Fellowship Slots

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

It is gratifying to note that the decline in enrollment of underrepresented minority students evident in the two preceding applications appears to have been reversed at LSU in 2007-08. While degree production still remains below earlier years, the commitment of the principal investigators to reducing attrition and expanding recruitment pools is clear. Also commendable is the use of institutional funds to enhance BoR-SREB fellowship stipends. Funding is recommended for four slots.

002SREB-09 SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE – BATON ROUGE
“Southern University SREB Graduate Fellows Program”
Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: -0-

Southern University-Baton Rouge has a strong history of attracting African-American students to its undergraduate programs, and is attempting to increase the success of the graduate programs. The Environmental Toxicology and Nursing programs stand out as somewhat successful in doctoral degree production, though attrition is clearly a significant issue. The BoR-SREB fellowship request is directed at increasing the stature of and enrollment in these programs. The recruiting and advertising is somewhat conventional and unimaginative, and seems to be of questionable use in increasing the quantity and quality of doctoral students at Southern. In contrast, the degree of mentoring that the institution plans to provide these students is innovative, encouraging and absolutely essential given the high drop rates evident in the doctoral programs. The proposed process includes student nomination of a mentor, a review of the nomination by the central administration and, once a mentor is selected, regular weekly meetings between student and mentor to ensure close and careful mentoring. This approach might provide a strong tool to address attrition issues, but to ensure effective retention and student success, the academic degree programs must be concurrently strengthened. No funding is recommended.

003SREB-09 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“A Collaborative Program Between Tulane and Xavier Universities”
Requested: 10 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: Not eligible

This proposal is ineligible for funding since it is submitted from a program/department and not from the graduate school or central governing body for graduate education at Tulane. Notwithstanding its ineligibility, the proposal has a number of weaknesses. The recruitment plan relies on existing pipeline projects despite the fact that, to date, they have not had a significant effect on diversifying the student body. Clearly additional efforts and creative new approaches to working with these projects are needed, but are not described in the proposal. It appears that broad-based faculty engagement in the recruitment effort, not simply the appointment of a recruitment committee, will be critical. Given the current low numbers of underrepresented students in the program, special professional development and mentoring efforts should be devised to ensure student success. Such new approaches were not evident in the proposal.

Appropriately, the University intends to leverage the fellowships to shift minority doctoral enrollment toward the STEM fields. Enrollments of all categories of students dropped sharply as a consequence of Hurricane Katrina, but there are signs that graduate programs are recovering. Analysis of figures on graduates for 2007-08 included in the appendix suggests that minority enrollment is dropping. That said, the detailed information provided is an indication of the serious attention being given to tracking trends. Given recent events, it is difficult to evaluate retention data, but it is clear that graduation rates for all students, and particularly minority students, are cause for concern. At the same time, several students who received the Chachere Fellowships completed their programs at levels well above national averages. The University has also made small supplements to State fellowships and with resources very limited has continued to commit significant funds to minority recruitment, including the introduction and expansion of the Marcus Christian Scholarships for U.S. ethnic minority students. Focusing attention on recruitment among local master's students is a good approach and using student profiles as a recruitment device represents an inventive strategy. In fact, a variety of activities on campus indicate a serious commitment to effective retention strategies. Nevertheless, if the University wishes to attract qualified minority applicants in STEM fields, additional will be required supplement the \$20,000 BoR/SREB stipends. Funding is recommended for two slots.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
2008-09 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-09	William H. Worger; Marie M. Hamilton; Katrice Albert	LSU-BR	Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity	10	Y1: \$250,000 Y2: \$250,000 Y3: \$250,000 <u>Y4: \$200,000</u> Total: \$950,000
002SREB-09	James L. Llorens; Moustapha Diack	SUBR	Southern University SREB Graduate Fellows Program	2	Y1: \$ 50,000 Y2: \$ 50,000 Y3: \$ 50,000 <u>Y4: \$ 40,000</u> Total: \$190,000
003SREB-09	Carol A. Burdsal	Tulane	A Collaborative Program Between Tulane and Xavier Universities	10	Y1: \$250,000 Y2: \$250,000 Y3: \$250,000 <u>Y4: \$200,000</u> Total: \$950,000
004SREB-09	Brian S. Mitchell	Tulane	Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
005SREB-09	C. E. Palmer	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines	2	Y1: \$ 50,000 Y2: \$ 50,000 Y3: \$ 50,000 <u>Y4: \$ 40,000</u> Total: \$190,000
006SREB-09	Meagan Bourgeois	UNO	Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000

PROGRAM SUMMARY

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 6

FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 32

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$800,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$3,040,000

TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10

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