

**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 2010-11 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2011-12**

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Professor
Iowa State University**

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

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**Dr. Suzanne Ortega
Executive Vice President and Provost
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INTRODUCTION

The panel urges applicants to read the summary critiques, included in this report, relating to the submitted proposals. Most summaries 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 26 and 27, 2011 to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2010-11 competition for awards to begin in FY 2011-12. 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 at El Paso; and Dr. Suzanne Ortega, University of New Mexico.

Five (5) institutions submitted a total of five (5) proposals in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program. All proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools or their equivalent.

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 2010-11 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 \$500,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funding was available for the program.

The panel recommends that three (3) of the five (5) 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 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 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 2010-11 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2011-12**

PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING

Rank	Proposal No.	Institution	Number of Fellowships Recommended	Year	Total BoRSF Money Recommended
1	001SREB-11	LSU-BR	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	\$ 80,000
				TOTAL	\$380,000
2	003SREB-11	TULANE	3	1	\$ 75,000
				2	\$ 75,000
				3	\$ 75,000
				4	\$ 60,000
				TOTAL	\$285,000
3	004SREB-11	UL L	3	1	\$ 75,000
				2	\$ 75,000
				3	\$ 75,000
				4	\$ 60,000
				TOTAL	\$285,000

PROPOSALS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING

002SREB-11	LA TECH
005SREB-11	UNO

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

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

001SREB-11 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE
“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”
Requested: 5 Fellowship Slots

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

This is a strong proposal from LSU. There appears to have been a slight increase in the past year in the number of applicants and matriculants from under-represented groups in LSU graduate programs. It is perhaps too soon to tell whether the traditional recruitment strategies being used are only now bearing fruit or whether this is a one-year anomaly. While the selection criteria for recipients are eminently fair, the question remains whether focusing fellowships in a smaller number of departments would yield the critical mass that could be the catalyst for a more rapid increase in enrollment numbers. The expanded use of peer mentoring and professional development opportunities, especially for research, are highly promising and may help to mitigate the seemingly long time to degree and relatively high attrition rates. It is worth noting that data presented in the table on page six are extraordinarily difficult to understand or interpret. Reviewers were particularly impressed by LSU’s substantial institutional commitment to increasing the number of under-represented graduate students. The panel recommends four fellowship slots.

002SREB-11 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY
“Increasing Diversity in the Doctoral Student Populations at Louisiana Tech University”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: - 0 -

Louisiana Tech University proposes the introduction of a program of minority fellowships in the two colleges with the largest doctoral enrollments, the College of Engineering & Science and the College of Education, which houses PhDs in Counseling Psychology and Industrial/Organization Psychology. Although these apparently are strong programs, minority student enrollments have been static or have even declined slightly during the last five years, while the total number of U.S. students enrolled has increased substantially. There is some indication that minority applicant pools and matriculations have increased recently, returning to levels that had been achieved five years ago. The data presented indicate that of 25 students who completed the PhD, only one was a minority student. This situation certainly argues for action. But the lack of serious attention to minority recruitment and apparently high levels of attrition indicate a low level of institutional commitment. Joint appointments and collaborative programs with Grambling State University certainly make sense, but little evidence is provided that these are yielding concrete results. Plans for both recruitment and mentoring of students are vague. The review panel took note of the substantial institutional match, including a stipend supplement and travel funds; however, a more compelling proposal would outline a detailed plan with measurable goals for student recruitment and retention. It is not accepted practice to combine GRE scores in developing admissions standards. Future proposals must eliminate specific discussion of particular students identified by name to protect their right to privacy. No funding is recommended.

003SREB-11 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”
Requested: 3 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 3 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$285,000

This proposal is most convincing based on Tulane’s record indicating that under-represented minorities now comprise close to 20% of the graduate student body and on evidence of success in graduating these students with doctoral degrees. The panel is concerned, however, that the price of such success may be evident in the fact that more than 10% of the under-represented minority student population leave each year. This annual attrition rate is a real concern and one which the program desperately needs to address. It is likely occurring due to creative and

elastic admissions standards, possibly coupled with the decentralized mentoring process. Such an approach often allows admission of students with greater needs but only inconsistently addresses those needs post-enrollment. Tulane, in fact, has a highly centralized recruiting mechanism which seems divorced from the day-to-day activities of the recruited students. Centralized oversight of mentoring seems to depend upon annual or biannual reports from the programs to the administration. While this is not necessarily problematic, it does not offer the central funding structure much control over the realities of the mentoring activities. For NIH training grants the push is to totally decentralize recruiting and administration to the training grant faculty rather than relying on a central diversity recruiting group – an approach Tulane may wish to consider. Nevertheless, these comments are background to the impressive results that Tulane graduate programs have achieved over the last few years. The panel recommends full funding of three fellowship slots.

004SREB-11 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines: An Expanded Effort II”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 3 Fellowship Slots for 4 years = \$285,000

UL Lafayette’s proposal emphasizes the recruitment of minority doctoral students in STEM fields. Table A reveals a strong institutional commitment to recruiting minority students, with the number of under-represented minority applicants tripling (14 to 42) over a five-year period with corresponding increases in admissions and matriculations. The report presented is upbeat and documents administrative commitment to minority graduate student recruitment and success. A few weaknesses are noted, however. It appears the only program at UL Lafayette focused on offering minority students an attractive financial package is the BoR/SREB. This program would have greater impact if it were used to complement other financial packages supported with University funds. As the panel has noted in previous years, another problem with the proposal is that no data specific to STEM fields are provided. Two years ago the panel observed that the five-year growth in under-represented minority PhD students was entirely due to the Department of Educational Leadership and that STEM fields seemed to show a slight decline over the time period reported. Failure to provide department-specific data makes it impossible to determine if any improvement has been made in the targeted fields over the last two years. The panel would like to see an honest assessment of progress in recruitment to STEM doctoral programs. The \$5,000 supplement is applauded and should help to make stipends competitive. The panel recommends funding for three fellowship slots.

005SREB-11 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: - 0 -

This proposal requests support for BoR/SREB fellowships in effect to continue a previous under-represented minority fellowship program focused in the STEM disciplines, the Ernest Chachere Graduate Fellowships. UNO has a reasonable record of enrolling under-represented minority students at the graduate level although, as the proposal states, recent enrollments of minority students in STEM have been “dismally low.” More specific data outlining the record of minority applications, admissions, enrollments, and persistence in STEM disciplines would have enhanced the proposal. The data provided suggest that the attrition of doctoral students is very high, generally exceeding the number of graduates in any given year. UNO’s record with the Chachere fellowships reinforces concerns about dropouts and time to degree; one-third of those fellowship recipients seem to have left UNO without receiving the doctorate. Unfortunately, this proposal does not present a coherent and ambitious strategy to reverse this. No serious plan is outlined to expand recruitment of high-quality students and provide the mentoring and support required for retention. The proposal indicates that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs will fund two stipends in the event that this proposal is not funded. A stronger indication of institutional commitment would be to provide those fellowships regardless of Board action. No funding is recommended.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
2010-11 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-11	David Constant; Marie M. Hamilton; Katrice Albert	LSU-BR	Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity	5	Y1: \$125,000 Y2: \$125,000 Y3: \$125,000 <u>Y4: \$100,000</u> Total: \$475,000
002SREB-11	Terry McConathy; Bala Ramachandran; Tony Young	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in the Doctoral Student Populations at Louisiana Tech University	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
003SREB-11	Brian S. Mitchell	Tulane	Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University	3	Y1: \$ 75,000 Y2: \$ 75,000 Y3: \$ 75,000 <u>Y4: \$ 60,000</u> Total: \$285,000
004SREB-11	C. E. Palmer	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines: An Expanded Effort II	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
005SREB-11	Scott Whittenburg	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

BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 20

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$500,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,900,000

TOTAL FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10

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