

**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 2013-14 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2014-15**

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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 15 and 16, 2014 to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2013-14 competition for awards to begin in FY 2014-15. 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 North Carolina.

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 2013-14 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 assessment 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 \$475,000. Consultants were advised that \$175,000 in first-year funding was budgeted 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 narrative 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 program goal of increasing diversity and elevating academic success in the submitting institutions.

The panel recommends to the Board of Regents that future Requests for Proposals require applicants to include a table that provides comprehensive data on progress and outcomes (status in program, publications and conference presentations, and first placement following graduation) related to all previously awarded BoR/SREB fellowships. The panel also urges applicants to provide a full analysis of how BoR/SREB funding leverages and complements other university efforts to expand underrepresented minority retention and recruitment.

Once again, the panel members commend all involved in this ongoing endeavor to elevate the level of graduate study in Louisiana's institutions of higher education.

APPENDIX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

**Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund
BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
FY 2013-14 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2014-15**

**TABLE I
PROPOSALS RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING**

Rank	Proposal No.	Institution	Number of Fellowships Recommended	Year	Total BoRSF Money Recommended
1	003SREB-14	TULANE	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	\$ 40,000
				TOTAL	\$190,000
2	001SREB-14	LSU-BR	3	1	\$ 75,000
				2	\$ 75,000
				3	\$ 75,000
				4	\$ 60,000
				TOTAL	\$285,000
3	002SREB-14	LA TECH	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	\$ 40,000
				TOTAL	\$190,000

**TABLE II
PROPOSALS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FUNDING**

Proposal No.	Institution
004SREB-14	UL LAFAYETTE
005SREB-14	UNO

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

**COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER THE BOARD OF REGENTS/
SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS
TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY PROGRAM IN FY 2013-14**

001SREB-14 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE
“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”
Requested: 5 Fellowship Slots

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

This solid proposal from LSU indicates some success over the last several years in retaining and graduating underrepresented minority students and contains a number of new ideas to enhance recruitment and retention. Particularly appealing are high standards for fellow selection and plans to supplement fellowship levels. Of concern, the panel notes a recent decline in the overall number of U.S. applicants and a small decline in the number of underrepresented minority candidates admitted and matriculating. While the university uses a wide array of programs to recruit and mentor underrepresented students, these activities are not yielding desired results. It appears that almost half as many underrepresented students leave without the intended degree as graduate. Data further appear to indicate a high time to degree for remaining underrepresented students. As noted in previous reviews, universities with the greatest success in increasing the number of new minority students, both in Louisiana and nationally, have focused efforts on one or two departments, thereby building the critical mass of diverse students needed for further recruitment and to change departmental cultures. The panel strongly encourages LSU to rethink its approach of distributing BoR/SREB fellowships across a broad range of programs, focusing more fellowships in those programs that have demonstrated a commitment to and success in recruiting a diverse doctoral student body. Initiatives focused on career advising, help with interviewing skills, community connections, and statistics boot camps are all examples of student support services that should encourage timely completion of the degree and rapid progress into a career upon graduation. Based on the numbers of underrepresented students recruited to and enrolled in LSU doctoral programs, the panel recommends funding for three fellowships.

002SREB-14 LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY
**“Increasing Diversity in the Doctoral Student Populations at Louisiana Tech University
2014-18”**
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

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

Louisiana Tech University requests support for minority students in the university’s key doctoral programs: Counseling Psychology and Industrial/Organizational Psychology in the College of Education; and Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Computational Analysis and Modeling, and the new program in Molecular Sciences and Nanotechnology in the College of Engineering and Science. A strong case is made for the importance of these programs to Louisiana’s economy and the importance of recruiting minority students in them. Enrollment data presented for these programs indicate that there has been considerable success in graduating students, including minority students, though attrition numbers in a few years appear to be somewhat high. In general, numbers of U.S. students applying and enrolling, including minority students, are flat. The proposal suggests “modest growth,” but the data do not clearly support that assertion. For the five years of numbers provided, the total of minority PhD students in these programs seems in fact to have declined from a robust 25% to 19%—percentages that are nevertheless impressive. The fact that six of 26 PhD students in Engineering are African American is notable. The plans for mentoring of fellows are solid, but it would be desirable to see these within the framework of a broader mentoring program for minority students. There are some creative plans for recruitment, including leveraging the ADVANCE grant and a major NSF-funded program that will provide summer research opportunities for K-12 and

undergraduate students. Joint programs with Grambling State University are commendable, as is the commitment to internal programs to emphasize the importance of diversity—something that requires continual attention. The tables submitted are not entirely clear and the data are sometimes difficult to interpret. The panel recommends funding for two fellowships.

003SREB-14 TULANE UNIVERSITY
“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

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

Tulane has been reasonably successful in recent years in terms of recruiting underrepresented minority students into its programs. By and large, this proposal recognizes that such recruiting is best done by departments, or graduate programs, and their faculty, who interact most closely with putative graduate students. In addition, the proposal presents fairly extensive plans for mentoring, especially if a given student is having difficulty, which seem likely to have a significant impact on retention. The data and indicators of student performance are somewhat mixed. The number of underrepresented minority students enrolled fluctuates over the five years reported, but there is essentially no change in totals. Curiously, there has been a decline in PhD graduates from Tulane over five years, along with a parallel decline in attrition. Summarized over the five-year period, it appears that the institution has graduated 79 underrepresented minority PhDs, while during the same period 62 such students left without the degree. Thus this program should continue to develop new ideas about and pay close attention not only to recruitment, but also and particularly to mentoring issues. Mentoring of underrepresented minority students can be aided by having a role model and meeting with senior faculty, but mentoring must be done on an almost daily basis. This is not easy, and it is time consuming, but the best way for this institution to increase the number of underrepresented minority graduates is to work aggressively to minimize attrition. The panel recommends funding for two fellowships.

004SREB-14 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“Attracting Minority Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: - 0 -

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is committed to training minority PhD students and the graduate school seems to be working hard to attract and retain minority graduate students. Table A shows a significant increase in applications over the past five years, suggesting effort on the part of administrators. In addition, the number of minority students enrolled has doubled in the past five years despite little increase in the minority matriculation rate. Given the very low graduation rate for underrepresented minority students, the data indicate that minority students are taking longer to graduate than majority students. The numbers paint a picture of improved recruitment, but problems with degree completion; both an extended time to degree and a high dropout rate are indicated. Data provided in the proposal show that over the past five years 37 minority pre-doctoral students left the program. The solution to this problem must be better mentoring. Various efforts are described in the proposal for improving mentoring but it is not yet clear whether they are yielding results. The involvement of PhD students in the Black Faculty and Staff Caucus is innovative and could be an important element in student engagement. As noted in past reviews, no data are given that allow disaggregation of university-wide data (Tables A and B) from the STEM fields targeted for funding. Because of this, the panel cannot determine whether efforts to increase minority student participation in STEM fields are succeeding. The applicants should make certain that future proposals provide data that would allow this assessment to be made. The panel does not recommend funding.

005SREB-14 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”
Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: -0-

This proposal requests fellowship support to increase the number of underrepresented minority doctoral students at the University of New Orleans through any of its twelve PhD programs. Applicants in STEM disciplines would be given priority. UNO has a history of substantial enrollment of minority students in doctoral programs, consistent with the urban mission of an institution whose population is majority minority. Minority students make up a substantial proportion of applicants for doctoral programs and of students enrolled. From the data provided it appears that more than 30% of current doctoral students are minority, an increase in both numbers and percentage from five years ago. These data do not make clear, however, how those students are distributed among programs. The data tables also suggest quite low rates of graduation among minority doctoral students. Typically, the numbers who leave programs without the intended degree exceed the numbers who graduate. This suggests the need for greater focus on admissions processes and especially on intense mentoring and retention programs. The proposal details several programs organized by various units and departments on campus that encourage connection of potential minority graduate students to the university, but no systemic approach is evident. A new five-year marketing and recruitment plan promises to build on such efforts and link them to traditional and innovative recruitment strategies, which provides positive direction for the future. The panel does not recommend funding.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
2013-14 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal #	PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-14	Gary Byerly	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-14	Sheryl Shoemaker	Louisiana Tech	Increasing Diversity in the Doctoral Student Populations at Louisiana Tech University 2014-18	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
003SREB-14	Brian 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
004SREB-14	Mary Farmer-Kaiser	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
005SREB-14	Amanda Athey	UNO	Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship	2	Y1: \$50,000 Y2: \$50,000 Y3: \$50,000 <u>Y4: \$40,000</u> Total: \$190,000

BoR/SREB PROPOSAL SUBMISSION SUMMARY

NUMBER OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED: 5

FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 19

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$475,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,805,000

TOTAL FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 7

TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FUNDS AVAILABLE: \$175,000