

**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 2007-08 COMPETITION FOR AWARDS TO BEGIN FY 2008-09**

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Professor
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Former Dean of the Graduate School
University of Texas at El Paso**

**Dr. Suzanne Ortega
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
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**Dr. Roger Chalkley
Senior Associate Dean for Biomedical Research Education and Training
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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 February 22 and 23, 2008, to discuss and make funding recommendations relative to proposals submitted in the FY 2007-08 competition for awards to begin in FY 2008-09. 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. Three proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools; one proposal was submitted by PIs in an academic department.

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 2007-08 BoR/SREB Fellowships Program Request for Proposals. Each consultant assigned a preliminary ranking 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 as determined by the Board of Regents.

The total amount of first-year funds requested in the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program was \$350,000. Consultants were advised that \$250,000 in first-year funds was allotted 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 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 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.

While it is recommended that all monies allocated to the BoR/SREB Fellowships Program in FY 2007-08 be expended, the panel is concerned about the overall quality of the applications and the likelihood that proposed activities will accomplish the goals of the program. Applicants are strongly urged to study national best practices related to recruitment and retention of under-represented minority students, and to determine ways to incorporate and/or adapt such practices at Louisiana institutions. It is critical to the success of this program and to the growth of under-represented minority participation in graduate education in Louisiana that institutions improve dramatically in this area.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING

**Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund
BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
FY 2007-08 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2008-09**

I. Proposals Recommended for Funding

RANK	PROP. NO.	SCHOOL	NUMBER OF FELLOWSHIPS RECOMMENDED	YEAR	TOTAL BoRSF MONEY RECOMMENDED
1	004SREB-08	UNO	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	<u>\$ 80,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$380,000
2	003SREB-08	UL LAFAYETTE	2	1	\$ 50,000
				2	\$ 50,000
				3	\$ 50,000
				4	<u>\$ 40,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$190,000
3	001SREB-08	LSU-BR	4	1	\$100,000
				2	\$100,000
				3	\$100,000
				4	<u>\$ 80,000</u>
				TOTAL	\$380,000

II. Ineligible Proposal

Proposal 002SREB-08 was deemed ineligible by the Review Panel.

APPENDIX B

NARRATIVE ASSESSMENTS

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

001SREB-08 LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BATON ROUGE
“Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 4 Fellowship Slot(s) for 4 years = \$380,000

Despite a number of years of fellowship support and active efforts to diversify the graduate student body at LSU-BR, it is somewhat distressing to note a two-year decline in the number of applications from under-represented minority students. Perhaps more distressing is an attrition rate for these same students that appears to exceed commonly reported national averages. Nevertheless, it is clear that the principal investigators of this proposal are committed and experienced professionals. Likewise, although it is not fully documented in the proposal, it appears that LSU-BR is signaling a substantial institutional commitment to continued diversification of its graduate student body through the use of its own funds to provide fellowships to 20+ students above and beyond those supported through the BoR/SREB program. Evidence now emerging from national studies indicates that discipline-/degree-based mentoring programs are absolutely critical to timely degree completion. The proposal gives no evidence that faculty members have been engaged in creating such programs or that disciplinary and peer mentoring efforts have been linked to or complement central graduate school-based efforts. Long-term, sustained progress in increasing the number of doctoral degrees earned by diverse degree recipients at LSU will require much more active engagement and partnership with faculty in creating robust and vital mentoring networks and initiatives. Funding is recommended for four (4) fellowships slots.

002SREB-08 SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AND A&M COLLEGE - BATON ROUGE
“Increasing Minority PhD Scholars in Special Education”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: - 0 -

The BoR/SREB Fellowships Program’s Request for Proposals explicitly states that the application “must be submitted by graduate schools or governing units for graduate education at eligible institutions.” The proposal submitted by SUBR does not meet this requirement, and is therefore deemed ineligible. The panel feels, however, that some assessment of the proposal itself is important and could assist in the development of future applications by the institution.

The proposal was difficult to evaluate. The special education program at SUBR admits some 25-30 students each year, and essentially all are paid from department/university funds. The graduation rate is disturbingly low (an average of nine students per year). Either the information provided is misleading, or time to degree and/or attrition rates are extremely high. In addition, the BoR/SREB proposal does not request fellowship slots to recruit new, highly qualified students, but rather to provide a source of funding for those who have already completed content coursework. In other words, the proposal appears to request Board of Regents funding to replace Southern University monies, which is both undesirable and in conflict with the intent of BoRSF funding. Moreover, the use of funding to support multiple cohorts of students for one to three years does not fit the focus or the intent of the BoR/SREB program, which seeks to provide four-year fellowship slots for new students. On the positive side, the program has had and will continue to have success in attracting under-represented minority individuals to graduate school. There is a need for the product, though the panel is concerned about the extremely narrow focus of the area of study. In addition, the effectiveness of the program could not be reliably assessed because of contradictory data concerning entrance and completion. In future applications, the panel strongly recommends that the institution make every effort to comply with the requirements of the RFP, provide accurate and complete data, and, if necessary, present compelling arguments for the limitation of the program to a single, very narrow, field of study.

003SREB-08 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette”
Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 2 Fellowship Slot(s) for 4 years = \$190,000

This proposal seeks support for two highly qualified under-represented minority doctoral students in STEM programs at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. The data provided in Form 4-SREB to support this request are difficult to interpret and do not appear to provide an accurate picture of minority recruitment in STEM disciplines. Data are given for all Ph.D. students enrolled at UL Lafayette, and no attempt is made to indicate how the STEM disciplines either reflect or differ from institutional norms. Ph.D. enrollment and U.S. student enrollment appear to be increasing; the panel would be interested to see the degree to which this increase is affecting STEM fields. There is little evidence in the data that minority enrollment in particular is increasing either across the institution or in STEM disciplines. It appears that Asian Americans are counted among the under-represented minorities, which is inappropriate. Funding is recommended for two (2) fellowship slots.

004SREB-08 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS
“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”
Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots

Recommended: 4 Fellowship Slot(s) for 4 years = \$380,000

The University of New Orleans requests fellowships to enhance recruitment and retention efforts related to diversity. The program will be closely managed by the Graduate School, which currently convenes a Diversity Council, which addresses issues related to building minority student enrollment. UNO demonstrates a commitment to increasing and redistributing minority doctoral enrollment through a systematic effort to gather, analyze and distribute detailed data. UNO has a strong record of recruiting and graduating African American Ph.Ds in education fields. The BoR/SREB fellowships would in particular assist in the University’s goal of shifting doctoral enrollments toward STEM fields. The existing Ernest Chachere Fellowship initiative shows that organized fellowship programs can substantially impact recruitment and retention of highly qualified minority doctoral students. UNO’s significant efforts made to facilitate minority student integration are also commendable. The University will provide a supplementary \$2,000 for each fellowship recipient, and additional funds will be committed to support recruitment efforts at institutional and departmental levels. The proposal presents clear goals for minority enrollment and provides a workable plan for recruitment and retention, linking department efforts with core institutional activities. The panel was particularly impressed with the comprehensive plan for mentoring. The provided tables seem, incorrectly, to include Asian Americans among legally designated under-represented minorities. Funding is recommended for four (4) fellowship slots.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

**BoR/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity Program
2007-08 Competition
Proposals Submitted**

Proposal#/ PI Name(s)	Institution	Proposal Title	Slots Requested	Funds Requested
001SREB-08 Stacia Haynie; Marie Hamilton; Katrice Albert	LSU-BR	Board of Regents/SREB Graduate Fellowships to Promote Diversity	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
002SREB-08 Sheri L. Anderson; Vera I. Daniels	SUBR	Increasing Minority PhD Scholars in Special Education	4	Y1: \$100,000 Y2: \$100,000 Y3: \$100,000 <u>Y4: \$ 80,000</u> Total: \$380,000
003SREB-08 C. E. Palmer	UL Lafayette	Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette	2	Y1: \$ 50,000 Y2: \$ 50,000 Y3: \$ 50,000 <u>Y4: \$ 40,000</u> Total: \$190,000
004SREB-08 Polly M. Burns; Elizabeth Sigler	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: 4

FELLOWSHIPS REQUESTED: 14

FIRST-YEAR FUNDS REQUESTED: \$350,000

TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1,330,000

TOTAL FIRST-YEAR FELLOWSHIP SLOTS AVAILABLE: 10

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