

**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**

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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  
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**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. Five (5) proposals were submitted under the leadership of the institutions' graduate schools or their equivalent; one (1) proposal was submitted through the office of the dean at an academic college.

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 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 2008-09 Cycle for Awards to Begin in FY 2009-10**

**I. Proposals Recommended for Funding**

<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	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**

<b>PROPOSAL #</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
002SREB-09	SOUTHERN-BR
005SREB-09	UL LAFAYETTE

**III. Ineligible Proposal**

<b>PROPOSAL #</b>	<b>INSTITUTION</b>
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 under-represented 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 under-represented 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.

**004SREB-09 TULANE UNIVERSITY**  
**“Board of Regents Doctoral Fellowships at Tulane University”**  
**Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots**

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

Doctoral enrollments at Tulane have returned to pre-Katrina levels, but there has been a decline in the numbers of minority students. Nevertheless, the minority proportion of U.S. students enrolled at Tulane continues to be very good. Attrition rates seem reasonable and minority students comprise almost 20 percent of the total of U.S. doctoral graduates. Although minority enrollment in graduate and professional programs is impressive, the application correctly notes that this number is substantially below Louisiana’s minority population percentage and the proportion of minority students in the undergraduate student body. In the process of restructuring, the University has moved aggressively to coordinate programs related to minority recruitment and retention. Recruitment initiatives will also involve centralized coordination of department-led efforts. Making evidence of commitment to community service a criterion for selection is a novel approach to identifying potentially successful students, while reinforcing Tulane’s renewed commitment to public service. The panel notes that BoR stipends, currently providing \$20,000 in fellowship support, are not by themselves competitive in recruiting the most qualified students, especially in STEM areas. It is anticipated that departments will need to provide supplements. Retention efforts will focus on fostering mentoring programs in departments which will be enhanced with an electronic tracking system. The plan to make use of undergraduate research programs and conferences linking Tulane to HBCU students and faculty is promising. Tulane has successfully built sustained linkages with local HBCUs; one creative program involves opening Tulane courses to promising undergraduates from these partner universities. Funding is recommended for four slots.

**005SREB-09 UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE**  
**“Attracting Minority Doctoral Fellows to the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the STEM Disciplines”**  
**Requested: 2 Fellowship Slots**

**Recommended: - 0 -**

This proposal from UL Lafayette emphasizes the recruitment of minority students into STEM fields. The proposal is upbeat, indicating that numerous recruiting activities are planned and stating the University’s commitment to increasing the number of minority graduate students. Nevertheless, there is little tangible evidence that real change is occurring. Table 4 indicates a modest increase in URM applications and admissions, but the narrative indicates steady levels of minority graduate students since 2004 (148 in 2004 and 147 in 2008). A problem with the data presented is that Asian Americans are counted as under-represented minority students, though this is not in keeping with the guidelines. The second table in the appendix is particularly illuminating. Data from nine Ph.D.-granting programs is presented in a way that Asian Americans can be removed from the data. When this is done, all programs show a four-year growth of 23 to 31 URM students, but all of this growth is in the Educational Leadership program. When STEM programs are isolated, the data show a decline of from 12 to 10 over the five-year time span. Only one program, Environmental and Evolutionary Biology, has achieved an increase in representation. Since commitment to increasing the number of under-represented minorities has been promised for a number of years, it seems that the BoR-SREB fellowships are not providing necessary tools. No funding is recommended.

**006SREB-09 UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS**  
**“Ernest G. Chachere Doctoral Diversity Fellowship”**  
**Requested: 4 Fellowship Slots**

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

This proposal builds on more than a decade’s experience with the Chachere Fellowship Program and reflects the University’s strong commitment to diversity, as evidenced by the central “diversity cabinet.”

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, it will need to supplement more generously 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**

<b>Proposal #</b>	<b>PI Name(s)</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Proposal Title</b>	<b>Slots Requested</b>	<b>Funds Requested</b>
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**