

Board of Regents Sponsored Programs Section Policies

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Board of Regents Sponsored Programs Policies

Introduction

Sponsored Programs policies span major initiatives within the division: Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF), Master Plan Research, Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON).

Board of Regents Support Fund

Preamble

Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Louisiana Constitution addresses the establishment of the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund (LEQTF) and annual allocation of monies generated therefrom through the Louisiana Education Quality Support Fund (LEQSF).

On an annual basis, Support Fund money is divided equally between the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Board of Regents for higher education. The portion of LEQSF intended for higher education and appropriated to the BoR shall be referred to as the Board of Regents Support Fund (BoRSF)

I. Constitutional, Statutory and Regulatory Parameters

A. Statutory Definition of Support Fund Mission and Purposes

Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Constitution provides that the funds available for higher education from the Support Fund are to be utilized “...as that money is appropriated by the Legislature and allocated by the BoR for any or all of the following higher educational purposes to enhance economic development:

- i. the carefully defined research efforts at public and private universities in Louisiana;
- ii. the endowment of chairs for eminent scholars;
- iii. the enhancement of the quality of academic, research, or agricultural departments or units within a university; and
- iv. the recruitment of superior graduate students.”

B. Annual Plan and Budget Submittal

According to Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Louisiana Constitution, at least sixty days prior to each regular session of the Legislature the BoR must submit to the Governor and the Legislature a proposed plan and budget for the expenditure, during the coming fiscal year, of money available to higher education from the BoRSF.

C. Expenditure Parameters

Article VII, Section 10.1 specifies that “the legislature shall appropriate the total amount intended for higher educational purposes to the Board of Regents and the total amount intended for elementary,

secondary, and vocational-technical educational purposes to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.” Entities eligible to receive LEQSF monies through BESE, including elementary and secondary schools and vocational-technical colleges, shall not be eligible to receive funds from the BoRSF.

Under Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Constitution, “monies appropriated by the Legislature and disbursed from the Support Fund shall not... displace, replace, or supplant other appropriated funding for higher education.”

D. Calculation of Maximum Administrative Expenses

Act 703 of the 2006 Regular Legislative Session indicates that the BoRSF administrative budget shall not exceed “three percent of the average annual amount of actual expenditures...for the most recent three previous fiscal years for which actual expenditures are available.”

E. Approval Authority from the Office of Contractual Review (OCR)

The State Office of Contractual Review (OCR) has issued a waiver for BoRSF programs that exempts all BoRSF contracts with public higher education institutions and most contracts with the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) higher education institutions, as well as all Graduate Fellows contracts, from the OCR approval process. Only Enhancement and Research & Development contracts with LAICU institutions for amounts over \$50,000 and in which the majority of proposed expenditures are outside the equipment category are subject to OCR approval.

II. BoR Policies Governing the BoRSF

A. Annual Plan and Budget Process

The Plan and Budget shall be prepared by the Commissioner of Higher Education, in collaboration with the BoRSF Planning and Advisory Committees, and presented by Sponsored Programs staff to the BoR for approval prior to submission to the Governor and Legislature.

All BoRSF funds recommended to match Federal Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) awards overseen by the BoR and the annual amount(s) required shall be delineated in the Plan and Budget and provided in the event that Federal funding is awarded.

B. Plan and Budget Scope

The Support Fund shall provide funding opportunities across all four “higher educational purposes” enumerated in Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Louisiana Constitution.

C. Administration

1. BoR Sponsored Programs Committee

The BoR Sponsored Programs Committee shall consider recommendations of the BoR Senior Staff relative to the Support Fund and forward its recommendations to the full BoR for action.

2. Advisory Committees

Two standing committees shall provide advice and guidance to the BoR relative to the BoRSF: the BoRSF Planning Committee and the BoRSF Advisory Committee.

a. Advisory Relationship to the BoR

The BoRSF Planning Committee and the BoRSF Advisory Committee may make recommendations to the BoR relative to the annual Support Fund Plan and Budget, participate in development of any Support Fund strategic plans, and serve in an advisory capacity to the BoR on other matters relative to the Support Fund. These committees shall serve the BoR in an advisory capacity only.

b. Membership

The BoRSF Planning Committee shall be comprised of the following members: two representatives from each of the public systems of higher education, two representatives from the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, the Associate Commissioner for Research, the Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Administration, and one representative each from the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium; the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities; the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; the Department of Natural Resources; the Department of Agriculture; the Department of Economic Development; the Louisiana Workforce Commission; and the informal statewide organization of higher education foundations. The Committee chair and vice chair shall be elected by the membership.

The BoRSF Advisory Committee shall be comprised of the following members: one representative from each of the public systems of higher education, one representative from the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, one representative from the Governor's Office, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs for the BoR. The Committee shall be chaired by the Commissioner of Higher Education.

3. Annual Budget Estimating and Contingency Plans

The Commissioner of Higher Education shall recommend an annual budget estimate for the BoRSF, to be used in the development of the Plan and Budget. This estimate shall be based upon guidance from the Louisiana State Treasurer and the State Revenue Estimating Conference, but shall also reflect current economic trends and recent performance of the Fund. After review, the BoR shall approve a budget estimate as part of its consideration of the annual Plan and Budget. The BoR shall also approve

contingency plans in the event that revenue estimates during the year of expenditure and/or actual revenues are either lower or higher than projections used to formulate the Plan and Budget.

4. Maintenance and Uses of BoRSF Reserve Funds

A minimum of \$2 million shall be retained in the BoRSF reserve account at all times. Should the amount in the reserve fund exceed this minimum, the BoR may consider strategic expenditures it deems to be consistent with the constitutional mission and purposes of the BoRSF which advance postsecondary education and the State's economic development. All expenditures from the BoRSF reserve fund shall be approved by the BoR prior to allocation.

5. Sponsored Programs Staff Responsibilities

Sponsored Programs staff shall have primary responsibility for daily management of the BoRSF and the programs and subprograms which it includes. Staff actions related to management of BoRSF programs and awards shall be subject to Board of Regents review and approval of the Commissioner of Higher Education as defined in agency policy, program guidelines, and executed contracts.

a. Program Administration

Under leadership of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Sponsored Programs initiatives shall be administered by the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, the Associate Commissioner for Research, and the Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Administration.

b. Approvals/signature authorities/document processing

The Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs or his/her representative, as appointed in writing, shall approve all contracts and payments processed relative to the BoRSF. Contracts and payments shall be processed in accordance with agency policies and rules.

c. Invoice Processing and Payment: State Office of Finance and Support Services (OFSS)

The State Office of Finance and Support Services (OFSS) provides invoice processing and payment services for BoRSF contracts. Sponsored Programs staff shall furnish all required documents, including contract copies, invoices, payment pages and Form 125s. Sponsored Programs staff shall prepare, receive, and review all contracts, and campuses shall prepare and submit invoices for payment in accordance with contract terms.

d. Approval Authority: Office of Contractual Review

Sponsored Programs staff shall adhere to all OCR requirements for contract review and approval for those contracts not exempted through the OCR waiver.

D. Programs

1. Establishment of four umbrella programs per constitutional categories

The BoRSF shall be comprised of four programs consistent with the four purposes outlined in Article VII, Section 10.1 of the Constitution: Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars, Research and Development, Enhancement, and Recruitment of Superior Graduate Students. Subprograms shall be established, as approved by the BoR, to address specific needs within these broad categories.

2. Campus eligibility for BoRSF programs

All public higher education institutions in Louisiana and all accredited private higher education institutions that are members of LAICU shall be eligible to apply to and receive funds from all components of the BoRSF. The BoR may, at its discretion and with justification, limit participation in certain subprograms to subsets of this group of eligible institutions and the amount of program/subprogram monies that may be awarded to systems and/or campuses within a funding cycle.

3. Competitive model and exceptions

With exceptions as specified by the BoR, BoRSF programs shall operate on a competitive basis, through publicly issued requests for proposals that utilize an out-of-state peer review process.

a. Competitive Programs – General Guidelines

The following policies shall govern competitive programs operated through the BoRSF. Specific requirements of each program and/or subprogram shall be set forth in requests for proposals released for each cycle of funding. These documents shall be available on the Sponsored Programs website.

i. Request for Proposals (RFP) Process

On an annual basis Sponsored Programs staff shall prepare and release requests for proposals for all programs and subprograms for which funds have been allocated in the annual Plan and Budget, as approved by the Governor and the Legislature. These RFPs shall provide all necessary information for campuses to prepare proposals for competitive review, and shall specify deadlines and formats for submission, budgetary requirements, and other program requirements.

ii. Sponsored Programs Staff Clarifications of RFP Requirements

The Sponsored Programs staff shall respond in a timely manner to all questions relative to requests for proposals and the proposal submission process. RFPs shall specify a deadline by which interested parties may ask questions, and the staff shall post a compendium of questions and answers on the Sponsored Programs website as soon as possible after this date, to ensure all parties receive the same information. Upon request, staff may hold workshops and question-and-answer sessions with potential applicants.

iii. Proposal Submission Policies

Campuses shall be required to submit proposals in accordance with requirements detailed in each program's/subprogram's annual request for proposals.

iv. Competition Timelines

Competitions in Support Fund programs will take place within the fiscal year in which funds are allocated through the Plan and Budget process, with all funding recommendations approved and contracts executed before the close of the fiscal year.

v. Competitive Review

For all competitive programs and subprograms, Sponsored Programs staff shall engage out-of-state consultants with appropriate expertise to review proposals and funding recommendations within the assigned grouping of proposals. Each review panel shall produce a written report that ranks proposals by funding priority and recommends funding levels and stipulations for all highly ranked projects. The specific structure of reviews for each program and subprogram shall be outlined in the annual request for proposals.

vi. BoR Approval of Funding Recommendations and Consultant Stipulations

Sponsored Programs staff shall provide the BoR with funding recommendations as submitted by the final panels for each program and subprogram. These funding recommendations shall be consistent with the level of funds outlined in the annual Plan and Budget. Program funding levels may be revised by staff, in accordance with the BoR's approved contingency plans, to reflect changes in income estimates since adoption of the Plan and Budget. The BoR shall consider and approve all funding through the BoRSF. For all projects approved by the BoR, funding stipulations included in review panels' final reports shall be incorporated into the BoRSF contract for each individual project.

vii. Contracting

Immediately following BoR approval of funding recommendation and in consultation with BoR Finance and Administration staff, Sponsored Programs staff shall develop contracts reflecting funding as approved by the BoR and consistent with Constitutional requirements for BoRSF expenditure of funds. These contracts shall be negotiated with recipient campuses and signed by the campus and system designees, the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, and Commissioner of Higher Education, or his/her designee, on behalf of the BoR.

viii. Contract Amendments and Extensions

No-cost extensions may be requested to complete BoRSF project activities per La. R.S. 39:1514. This statute specifies that "contracts or amendments to existing contracts issued to institutions of higher education under the authority of the BoR to award grants for educational purposes with funds available from the Louisiana Education Quality Support Fund, the Louisiana Fund, and the Health Excellence Fund

may be entered into for periods of not more than six years. However, such contracts may be extended beyond the six year limit up to an additional two year period provided no additional costs are incurred.”
La. R.S. 39:1514(A)(1)(d)

a) Requests for Amendment or Extension

Requests for contract amendment and extension shall be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs in writing, and requests shall include the approval of the submitting institution’s authorized representative. When budget adjustments are requested, the submitting institution shall submit appropriate detail and justification related to the rationale for the request and the consequences for the approved budget.

b) Changes to Principal Investigator/Co-Principal Investigator

Requests to change principal investigator shall be submitted to the BoR in writing and with the approval of the submitting institution’s authorized representative. This written request must indicate the qualifications of the proposed new principal investigator(s) and its applicability to the BoRSF award. Requests shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Except under unusual circumstances as determined by Sponsored Programs staff, the BoR shall not consider changes in principal investigator to single-investigator projects in Research and Development subprograms.

ix. Reporting

All BoRSF competitive programs shall require, at a minimum, annual project and expenditures reports during the life of the grant and final project and expenditures reports at contract termination. The content and due dates for these reports shall be developed by Sponsored Programs staff and outlined in each grant contract.

b. Non-Competitive Programs – General Guidelines

On a limited basis, the BoR may establish non-competitive programs within the BoRSF, provided such programs are consistent with the Fund’s constitutional mission and purposes. The BoR shall issue policies to administer such non-competitive programs that delineate the requirements of participation, the conditions of funding and reporting, and the mechanism by which awards will be made when submissions exceed funds available.

c. Operation of Endowment Programs

The BoRSF shall include opportunities for donors to contribute non-State monies for State match on a 60% non-State to 40% State ratio. Program policies for these programs are included in Appendix A (Endowed Chairs for Eminent Scholars), Appendix B (Endowed Professorships), Appendix C (First-Generation Endowed Undergraduate Scholarships). The BoR Finance and Administration section shall maintain an investment policy with guidelines and restrictions on investment of endowed funds, expenditure of income, and financial reporting. This policy is included in Appendix D.

d. Periodic Program Reviews of BoRSF Programs

To ensure that BoRSF funds are expended wisely and producing desired outcomes on a statewide basis, the BoR shall periodically authorize and conduct comprehensive reviews of programs and subprograms.

i. Process for Program Review

The Sponsored Programs staff shall develop, based on the goals and requirements of the program(s)/subprograms(s) to be reviewed, general approaches to program assessment for presentation to the BoR. Program assessment approaches and formats shall be approved by the BoR prior to data collection.

ii. Data Collection Requirements

In collaboration with affected systems and campuses, Sponsored Programs staff shall develop formats for data collection. Participating campuses shall be required to provide data as requested by the BoR and within the approved timeframes. Failure to comply with BoRSF data requests approved by the BoR may result in limitations on participation in the BoRSF. Any such penalties shall be approved by the BoR and transmitted in writing to the affected campus(es) prior to implementation.

iii. Out-of-State Reviewers

External program reviews shall be conducted using the expertise of objective out-of-state reviewers with relevant expertise. Sponsored Programs staff shall select these individuals based upon the requirements of the particular review. The specific duties of program review teams shall be established and communicated to reviewers by Sponsored Programs staff.

iv. Transmission of reports/recommendations to the BoR

Sponsored Programs staff shall forward reports of out-of-state panels conducting program evaluations to the BoR for review and approval.

Master Plan Research

Preamble

The BoR's Master Plan includes as one of its three key goals "foster[ing] innovation through research in science and technology." The Master Plan requires that campuses and the BoR identify key research priorities to guide state investment; these priorities will be aligned with the BoR's State Science and Technology Plan, FIRST Louisiana, LED's Blue Ocean initiative, and the work of the Louisiana Innovation Council.

Master Plan Research Policies

I. Campus STEM Research Priorities Reports

In accordance with the BoR Master Plan and using the format approved by BoR in February 2012, each public campus with more than two science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) doctoral programs shall establish and periodically update evolving research plans in relation to FIRST Louisiana, linking strategic investments in the FIRST Louisiana framework with performance and assessment. All other campuses may submit reports on a voluntary basis. Public and independent campuses with two or more doctoral programs must submit research plans to be eligible for BoRSF Research and Development and research-related Endowed Chairs funding.

II. Review of Campus STEM Research Priorities Reports

After reviewing initial campus reports in 2013, the Master Plan Research Advisory Committee (see below) may recommend revisions in reporting requirements and Committee membership to the BoR.

III. Master Plan Research Advisory Committee

The Master Plan Research Advisory Committee shall be comprised of one member from each public and private four-year higher education system and each campus with two or more STEM doctoral programs, one member from each special focus research institution, the BoR's Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, and the BoR's Associate Commissioner for Research. Representatives of the systems and campuses shall be appointed by the appropriate president or chancellor. The Committee chair and vice chair shall be elected by the membership for two-year terms.

IV. Identification of Statewide Priorities

The Master Plan Research Advisory Committee (MPRAC) shall identify statewide priorities and opportunities, and make investment recommendations to the BoR.

V. Reporting to the BoR

The Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs, along with the Chair and Vice Chair, shall provide to the BoR an annual report on campus progress toward Master Plan Research goals.

Louisiana Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR)

Preamble

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, or EPSCoR, was established by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1978 in response to Congressional concerns over uneven distribution of Federal science and technology research funds. EPSCoR participation is limited to states that historically have not received significant Federal research and development funding. By increasing the quality of research within these jurisdictions, EPSCoR ensures that all parts of the country participate in and benefit from the building of scientific and technological research capacity, with its attendant economic development. Seven Federal agencies now participate in EPSCoR-like programs. The BoRSF provides substantial State matching contributions to these major federal awards.

I. EPSCoR Committee

The Louisiana EPSCoR Committee was established in 1985 by the BoR, working in conjunction with NSF, to help Louisiana become more competitive in securing federal research and development (R&D) funds in the science and engineering (S&E) disciplines. It is a subcommittee of the BoR's Support Fund Planning Committee. The goals of the Louisiana EPSCoR Subcommittee are to:

- Act as the State's contact point and coordinator for the variety of EPSCoR programs operated by federal agencies;
- Assist Louisiana institutions of higher education in enhancing their S&E research capability in order to compete more effectively for federal R&D funds;
- Provide leadership for effective research collaboration across different institutions in Louisiana;
- Enhance research infrastructure and decrease barriers to research competitiveness on a statewide basis;
- Seek S&E infrastructure and enhancement support from federal agencies for institutions of higher education across the state; and
- Advise the BoRSF Planning Committee on issues relating to Louisiana's scientific competitiveness and evaluation of the BoRSF programs.

A separate policy that establishes EPSCoR Committee eligibility and membership has been adopted. This policy is included in this document as Appendix A.

II. Program Management

EPSCoR as a whole shall be administered by the Associate Commissioner for Sponsored Programs Research and Development, who serves as the State EPSCoR Project Director, in conjunction with the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs. The Project Director shall be assisted by a Program Administrator and additional EPSCoR staff as necessary to accomplish program goals. Evaluation and assessment reviews, as required by funding agencies, are conducted by engaging internal and external (i.e., out-of-state) evaluators.

III. EPSCoR Programs

1. Establishment of EPSCoR programs

The EPSCoR Committee shall determine specific courses of action in response to Federal opportunities for establishment or continuance of EPSCoR initiatives.

2. Campus eligibility for EPSCoR programs

All public higher education institutions in Louisiana and all accredited private higher education institutions that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) shall be eligible to apply to and receive EPSCoR funds. The EPSCoR Committee may, at its discretion and with appropriate justification, limit participation in certain programs to subsets of this group of eligible institutions and the amount of program/ subprogram monies that may be awarded to systems and/or campuses within a funding cycle.

3. Competitive model using External Review

EPSCoR programs shall, where appropriate, operate on a competitive basis, through publicly issued requests for proposals that utilize an out-of-state peer review process. Specific requirements of each program and/or subprogram shall be set forth in requests for proposals released for each EPSCoR funding opportunity. External program reviews shall be conducted using the expertise of objective out-of-state reviewers with relevant expertise. EPSCoR staff shall select these individuals based upon the requirements of the particular review. The specific duties of program review teams shall be established and communicated to reviewers by EPSCoR staff.

4. Request for Proposals (RFP)

EPSCoR staff shall prepare and release requests for proposals that provide all necessary information for campuses to prepare proposals for competitive review, and shall specify deadlines and formats for submission, budgetary requirements, and other program requirements. Campuses shall be required to submit proposals in accordance with requirements detailed in each request for proposals.

5. Contracting

EPSCoR staff shall develop contracts for approved projects. These contracts shall be signed by campus and system designees, and by the Commissioner of Higher Education or his/her designee.

a. Contract Amendments and Extensions

No-cost extensions to contracts may be requested to complete EPSCoR project activities as permitted under La. R.S. 39:1514. Requests for contract amendment and extension

shall be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner for Sponsored Programs in writing, and requests shall include the approval of the submitting institution's authorized representative. When budget adjustments are requested, the submitting institution shall submit appropriate detail and justification related to the rationale for the request and the consequences for the approved budget.

b. Changes to Principal Investigator/Co-Principal Investigator

Requests to change principal investigator shall be submitted to the BoR in writing and with the approval of the submitting institution's authorized representative. This written request must indicate the qualifications of the proposed new principal investigator(s) and its applicability to the EPSCoR award. Requests shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

c. Reporting

All EPSCoR contracts shall require, at a minimum, a final project and expenditures report at contract termination. Additional reports may be required depending upon specific program requirements.

d. Data Collection Requirements

ESPCoR staff shall develop formats for data collection. Participating campuses shall be required to provide data as requested by the BoR and within the approved timeframes. Failure to comply with EPSCoR data requests may result in limitations on participation in the ESPCoR. Any such penalties shall be approved by the BoR and transmitted in writing to the affected campus(es) prior to implementation.