

# The 25-Year March Toward Faculty Diversity

The Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

[SREB.org](http://SREB.org)

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## The Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

The nation's largest gathering of underrepresented faculty and scholars of color started with only a few dozen participants in 1994. Today, the annual Institute gathers about 1,000 current and future faculty members under one roof to address the continuing shortage of minority professors. More than 12,000 graduate students and faculty have attended the gathering.

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The Institute has succeeded in lifting up new generations of talented scholars whose work benefits our society. Scholars themselves describe the Institute as life-changing, a source of deep inspiration and a place to grow professionally and build important new connections with many different colleges and universities.

Looking ahead, the Institute and its key supporters are developing new priorities based on the needs of higher education and every state and community in the 21st Century. Today's college students come from more diverse backgrounds and need an abundance of talented faculty members and mentors to support their pursuits.



*"I never envisioned that the Institute would be the size and breadth that it is today. In attracting almost 18,000 attendees over the years, the Institute has become the largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars who seek a career as faculty in postsecondary institutions. The Institute has far exceeded my expectations."*

**Ansley Abraham**, Director,  
SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

*"Twenty-five years ago, there were too few, unacceptably too few, African-Americans, Hispanics/Latinos and Native Americans who were studying for and earning doctoral degrees. The Institute on Teaching and Mentoring WAS needed. Today, yes there are more of these students pursuing doctoral degrees, but still not enough by any measure. ... The Institute on Teaching and Mentoring IS needed ... and is relevant today by any measure."*

**Mark Musick**, Former President, Southern Regional Education Board, 1989 to 2005,  
key supporter of the Institute and SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program



## Growing as professionals and leaders

The Institute helps aspiring professors develop into outstanding faculty members. Participants attend dozens of workshops and learning sessions on becoming excellent teachers, landing research grants, mentoring young scholars, finishing their dissertations, scholarly publishing, writing and public speaking, giving back to the community, and other important topics.

*“Often times a Ph.D. is a very long and lonely journey. To complete this journey, you need support. The Institute on Teaching and Mentoring provided such support. I was supported by many other graduate students and faculty. It brought me together with people who understood this journey. These individuals helped me (re)discover reasons I needed to complete my degree. Moreover, the Institute helped me build long-term relationships with several members of the organization, including Dr. Abraham. These individuals continue to advise and support my development.”*



**Peter R. Corridon**, Ph.D., Department of Craniofacial Biology,  
School of Dental Medicine, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus



*“I’ve often said that the Institute is ‘more than the sum of its parts.’ ... It is the students and postdocs who bring the magic to the Institute, through testimonies on their lived experiences, through the inspiration and encouragement they bring to their peers and mentors, and through the heartfelt appreciation of knowing that they’re a part of something much larger than the individuals that make up the Institute. Each institute has been personally inspiring, heartwarming, and powerful. It’s a distinct honor and privilege for me to be part of this amazing event.”*

**Ken Pepion**, Ph.D., Senior Project Director,  
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE),  
and one of the Institute’s founders and organizers for 25 years

### 1994

Atlanta

First Institute on Teaching and Mentoring held in Atlanta with 107 in attendance

### 1995

Tucson

WICHE hosted the Institute. First Awards Ceremony recognizing Institute Ph.D. Graduates

### 1996

Boston

Institute hosted by the New England Board of Higher Education

### 1997

New Orleans

Debut showing of 90-minute documentary, *Shattering the Silences: Minority Professors Break into The Ivory Tower*

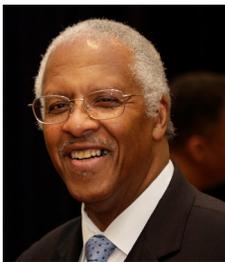
### 1998

San Diego

First time Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Scholars attended the Institute

## Investing in talent

The shortage of minority faculty members continues to challenge our nation. Only about 6 percent of U.S. faculty members are African American, and only 5 percent are Hispanic or Latino(a). The Institute brings unprecedented focus to addressing this challenge. With college enrollment booming and diversity increasing — along with the need to help more of today’s college students actually finish their degrees — the need for broader pools of talent is greater than ever.



*“The Institute has proven to be one of the most successful incubators of extraordinary diverse intellectual talent in the world. The ‘products’ of the Institute are scholars who understand the development of knowledge behind new technology and the creative uses of that new technology. The curiosity to ask questions that have never been asked before and the intellect to generate answers to those questions are defining characteristics of Institute Fellows. The Institute’s exceptional success in producing diverse academic talent makes it relevant yesterday, today, and tomorrow!”*

**Roosevelt Johnson, Ph.D.**, Senior Advisor, NASA, longtime Institute supporter

*“The Institute is a true exemplar of what needs to be done to retain our students and fully tap this nation’s talent. Scholars return from the Institute as new members of a community with a renewed sense of commitment to their educational and career goals. It has been a tremendous benefit to scholars. ... Not only do scholars have the assurance of being funded for the duration of their graduate programs, but most importantly they have access to a broad network of students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to support them through the challenges that they will inevitably face in their graduate careers.”*



**David M. Shafer, Ph.D.**, Assistant Dean, The Graduate School, North Carolina State University

**1999**

New Orleans

First time Alfred P. Sloan Minority Ph.D. Program Scholars attended the Institute

**2000**

Orlando

Attendance reached 528, first time scholars from the National Institutes of Health Predoctoral Fellowship Program/ Bridges to the Professoriate Program attended

**2001**

Atlanta

First time institution recruiters attended the Institute

**2002**

Arlington

First time directors of the National Science Foundation Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate Program (AGEP) attended the Institute

**2003**

Miami

First time AGEP scholars attended the Institute

## Celebrating mentors

Scholars nominate their own faculty mentors for national awards that are presented at the Institute. The winners tell their own stories of achievement, inspiring others and recognizing faculty members who go the extra mile. Scholars also learn about becoming effective mentors to others who will follow them.

*“The gathering allowed me to visualize the next steps of my academic future. Seeing the multitude of scholars from around the country in one place expanded on my experience at McNair conferences. The presence of SREB helped me understand that I was not alone in my pursuit of the Ph.D. and there were countless opportunities to learn from my peers and from a network of professionals dedicated to my growth. Whether they’re planning a career inside or outside of the academy, the Institute offers detailed recommendations for junior scholars. Graduate students have a dire need for financial resources, intellectual community, comraderie, and professional direction. The moments spent at the Institute help meet these needs and move us forward to fulfill our dreams and purpose.”*



**Stephanie Y. Evans**, Ph.D., Professor and Department Chair, Clark Atlanta University, former McNair Scholar



*“I benefited most from the counsel of accomplished underrepresented higher education professionals with a wealth of experience as faculty, managers, and administrators. The Institute embodied a moral bedrock that supported and solidified my decision to become a faculty member. The knowledge I gained at the Institute was instrumental in my earning a tenure-track position without a postdoctoral experience.”*

**Ramón Emilio Fernández**, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Mathematics Department, Pace University, former AGEP Scholar

2004

Atlanta

First time scholars from the NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship Program attended the Institute

2005

Arlington

Richard A. Tapia, Ph.D., Engineering Professor, Rice University, former National Science Board member and champion for minorities in STEM, spoke

2006

Miami

First time Institute attendance topped 1,000, Institute honors Dr. Frank Abbott as first Director of the Compact for Faculty Diversity

2007

Arlington

First time offering a session at the Institute on financial investing

2008

Tampa

First time scholars from the New Jersey Minority Academic Careers Program attended the Institute

## Recruiting faculty

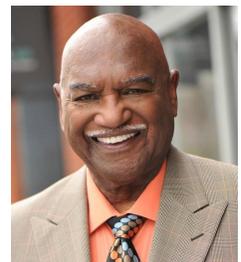
Every year, the Institute attracts leaders from more than 100 colleges and universities across the country to identify and interview candidates who become new faculty members. The Institute is an important nexus for colleges to identify the next generation of professors and researchers.



*“The Institute is phenomenal because of the strength in numbers, excellent speakers and mentors who provide both information and motivation, and opportunities for students to network among — and be hired by — institutions that are committed to diversifying their faculty. My students within the University System of Maryland and the PROMISE: AGEP have been motivated to continue in their programs when they were fatigued, had opportunities to practice defense and proposal talks on-site with mentors, found jobs, and even spouses! Some of our scholars who have come to the Institute have had extraordinary career accomplishments, including working in the White House, becoming a vice president for diversity, assuming the role of department chair and more.”*

**Renetta Tull**, Ph.D., Associate Vice Provost for Strategic Initiatives, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, Professor of Practice in Engineering & IT, and Director of the University System of Maryland Pipeline Programs

*“Colleges and universities see the Institute as a rich venue to recruit potential minority faculty. The Institute provides an opportunity for scholars to meet a large number of recruiters. As scholars interact with recruiters and other professionals, they have the opportunity to sharpen their communication skills and secure feedback from professionals on how to improve their professional curriculum vita. A recruiter at the Institute was overheard saying, ‘For those of us who recruit, the Institute is like a one-stop shop.’”*



**Robert (Bob) Belle**, Ph.D., Ed.D.  
Associate Director, SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

**2009**

Arlington

First time Apple Inc. sponsored the Cyber Café at the Institute

**2010**

Tampa

First Junior Faculty Professional Development Conference was held at the Institute

**2011**

Atlanta

Institute honors Dr. Thelma Thompson, former President, University of Maryland Eastern Shore

**2012**

Tampa

Dr. Sylvester Gates, John S. Toll Professor of Physics, University of Maryland, College Park and member of President Obama’s Council on Science and Technology was a featured speaker

**2013**

Arlington

Participants at the Institute visited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial

## Developing teaching skills

Most Institute participants eventually become (or already are) college faculty members. The Institute provides professional development for future and current professors, so that they can inspire and help their own students succeed. Scholars and young faculty also become presenters at the Institute, developing as speakers and leaders.

*“The value of the Institute is that it focuses on what students need to know about what life is like as an assistant professor and how to avoid common pitfalls that cause them not to get tenure. The Institute helps participants develop the tools for success in teaching in the academy.”*

**Thomas R. Rochon**, Former President, Ithaca College



*“Faculty who participate in the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring have a lot to gain. If you are looking for future faculty, they are at the Institute. If you want to learn how to mentor underrepresented minority Ph.D. students, the Institute will teach you various strategies to make you a more effective mentor. There’s so much to gain from the Institute as a faculty member. I have been several times, and each time I come away with something new. It’s a unique gathering with many lessons to learn for everyone.”*

**Juan E. Gilbert**, Ph.D., Andrew Banks Family Preeminence Endowed Professor, University of Florida

**2014**

Atlanta

Participants at the Institute visited the Center for Civil and Human Rights

**2015**

Arlington

Astronaut Charles Bolden, NASA Administrator, was a featured speaker

**2016**

Tampa

First NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Boot Camp was offered at the Institute

**2017**

Atlanta

*Hidden Figures* author Margot Shetterly was the closing speaker

**2018**

Arlington

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring, more than 1,000 expected

## Looking to the future

*“The best way to predict the future is to create it.” — Abraham Lincoln*

The need to increase the representation of minority faculty in the academy is a need that should still be addressed. Future Institutes will continue to address this issue, and the following important questions must be considered:

- How should the Institute change to better address the issue of increasing faculty diversity?
- Should the format and size of the Institute be changed?
- Should the Institute broaden its scope to include minority Ph.D. scholars who are not seeking a full-time career in the academy?
- How can sufficient funding be secured to support future Institutes?

*“The Institute’s reassuring power is documented by a generation of doctoral students embarking on their personal and professional journey within the academy. This remains a driving force for the Institute’s continuation, its preservation and dedicated commitment.”*

**Emorcia V. Hill**, Ph.D., Director, Research and Evaluation,  
Office for Diversity Inclusion and Community Partnership,  
Harvard Medical School, longtime co-planner of the Institute



*“SREB will maintain its relationship with the Institute since we recognize the link between levels of educational attainment and economic vitality. The goal of the Institute in the future will continue to be providing professional development experiences for scholars preparing for faculty careers. Placement of more minority faculty will mirror the diversity of projected student enrollment, and will remain essential to advance educational attainment in the future.”*

**Joan Lord**, Vice President,  
Southern Regional Education Board

*“Graduate life is hard anyway. Some programs that target minority students at majority institutions teach them how to thrive as the ‘only.’ Here at the Institute, they don’t have to thrive as the ‘only.’ They are the majority. It is a very powerful bonding networking experience, with first-class professional development programs. The future of the Institute is very important to the future of the professoriate, and the immense talent that gathers each year strengthens higher education tremendously.”*

**Elizabeth S. Boylan**, Ph.D., Program Director,  
Alfred P. Sloan Foundation



## Reflecting on 25 years of the Institute

As one of only three people who have attended every Institute, Dr. Robert (Bob) Belle, the longtime associate director of the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program, reflects on the Institute's growth and importance, marking the 25th year of the conference.

“I’ve been involved with the Institute since the beginning. In 1992, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE), and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) began an initiative to increase the number of African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic faculty.

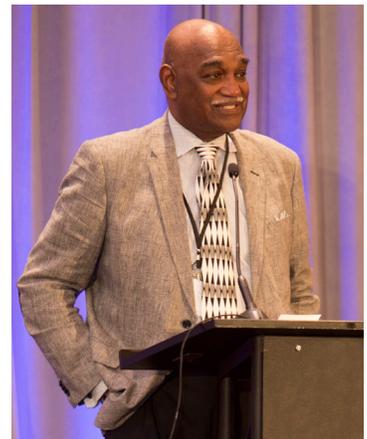
Around that time, SREB in Atlanta was preparing to start a regional fellowship program based on the successful Florida McKnight Doctoral Program, a graduate fellowship for African-American Ph.D. scholars aspiring to become college faculty.

This program was started by Dr. “Ike” Tribble. That same year, I was an assistant dean at the University of Central Florida in Orlando and left to join the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The Council had recognized my work with Dr. Tribble and wanted me to help implement SREB’s program in Virginia.

Dr. Ansley Abraham of SREB and I then began to work together to develop a program for the SREB region. In 1993, Dr. Dwayne Matthews (another Institute founder, originally with WICHE and later the Lumina Foundation), Ansley and I escorted the first 12 SREB scholars to Tampa for the McKnight scholars’ annual meeting. At that meeting, we observed scores of minority Ph.D. scholars in all academic disciplines. Their excitement and confidence were contagious. We envisioned that SREB could have such an event on a national level.

Some 25 years later, the Institute has become the nation’s largest gathering of minority Ph.D. scholars seeking faculty careers. Institute attendance has increased from 107 in the first year to more than 1,000. It’s remarkable to see hundreds of scholars of color in one place. I feel so privileged to be one of only three people who have attended all Institutes.

Even with the success of the Institute, our nation’s share of underrepresented full-time faculty of color has grown from 6.8 percent to only 10.5 percent in the past 27 years. We have many miles to go on this ‘march to faculty diversity.’ ”



**Dr. Robert (Bob) Belle**, Associate Director,  
SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program

## Acknowledging our supporters

The Southern Regional Education Board supports the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program that has the responsibility for administering the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. Over the past 25 years, the Institute has received support from colleagues and many leaders at colleges and universities, federal agencies, and organizations from across the country. By providing support for the Institute they embraced the idea of “increasing the pool of minority and underserved Ph.D. students that seek a career in the academy.” It was a direct result of their commitment that the Institute is where it is today. SREB expresses its appreciation for those who have helped the Institute on its 25-year March Toward Faculty Diversity:

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program  
American Society for Cell Biology  
Apple, Inc.  
ChronicleVitae  
Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology  
Four Star Marketing  
Gates Millennium Scholars Program  
Herff Jones  
Higher Education Recruitment Consortium  
National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity  
National Institutes of Health  
National Science Foundation  
New England Board of Higher Education  
New Jersey Minority Academic Careers  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program  
Scantron Corporation  
Specialty Engraving  
The Atlantic Philanthropies  
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The Ford Foundation  
The Pew Charitable Trusts  
U.S. Department of Education  
Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education  
Williamsburg Travel Leaders  
Wright-Hayre Fund

# SREB

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