

SREB

Southern Regional Education Board

# IT'S ABOUT THE FUTURE



Celebrating 600 Graduates

2012



SREB-STATE DOCTORAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

## The SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is a pioneer in what works to help minority candidates persist in their journey toward the Ph.D.



On the long path to his doctoral degree, when Dennis Dean was tired and discouraged, he said it was thinking of his daughter that motivated him to finish.

“What brought me through that period of sacrifice,” he said, was “a little pink ribbon from my 2-year-old on my computer. Every time I wanted to stop, I looked and said, **‘It’s not about me anymore. It’s about the future.’**”

**The goal.** Diversify the faculty of colleges and universities in SREB states. The Doctoral Scholars Program increases the number of minority scholars who earn Ph.D.s and become faculty members.

This year the program celebrates its 600th scholar-graduate. That’s 600 new faces qualified to lead in campus classrooms, labs and administrative offices.

**What works.** Scholars who have been admitted to participating universities receive multiple layers of support from the SREB program. First of all, it provides financial support such as stipends and academic or research funds.

Just as important are many hands-on services while students pursue their Ph.D.s. Besides regular contact and follow-up, SREB helps Ph.D. students advocate for themselves. It provides mentoring and offers many opportunities for networking and community-building, such as the annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. Near the end of the academic experience, when the scholar is preparing for job searches, the Doctoral Scholars Program offers career counseling, workshops tailored to the academic job search, job postings, an online scholar directory and a recruiting fair.

This “more-than-a-check-and-a-handshake” approach improves retention and graduation rates and prepares scholars to become successful college and university faculty members.

### The results are changing the future.

- Almost 1,100 scholars have participated since the program was founded in 1993.
- More than 330 are currently enrolled.
- More than 600 graduates have completed Ph.D.s.
- 74 graduates have earned tenure.
- 80 percent of graduates are employed in education — 92 percent of them on campuses as faculty, administrators and postdoctoral researchers.
- Nearly 70 percent of graduates are employed in SREB states.
- 37 percent of scholars are in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; 28 percent in social and behavioral sciences; 16 percent in humanities; and 19 percent in other fields of study.

### Institute on Teaching and Mentoring

Each year SREB brings together doctoral scholars from more than 40 states when it hosts the Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring — the largest gathering of minority doctoral scholars in the country. Now in its 19th year, the partnership with federal and state organizations and foundations focuses national attention on the issue of faculty diversity.

Minority scholars learn strategies and skills to survive the rigors of graduate school, earn the doctoral degree, and succeed as faculty members on college and university campuses. Scholars and their faculty mentors, who are also invited, share knowledge about research on dozens of topics, meet other scholars and faculty in their disciplines from across the country, and connect to scholars and faculty in other academic fields.

Scholars often say that the Institute motivates them for the rigors of the coming year. In the words of one graduate, it is a place to “**recharge your spirit, refresh and renew your mind, and reconnect with your dreams.**”

## What is the value of a minority instructor at the front of a classroom, with the letters Ph.D. at the end of his or her name?

- More than one-third of U.S. college students are people of color — and the proportion is growing.
- About 5 percent of college and university faculty are African-American, 3 percent Hispanic and 1 percent Native American.
- Public schools in SREB states are increasingly diverse. The Class of 2019 is projected to be 54 percent non-white, up from 44 percent in 2009.
- Minority male graduation rates lag the national average in both high school and college. In 2009, the six-year college graduation rate was 38 percent for black and 45 percent for Hispanic students, compared with 57 percent for white students.
- By 2025, the majority of the work force will be made up of minorities or people of color, according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education projections.



The commitment of SREB states *today* to the SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program is making a real difference in what the future holds for *tomorrow*.

## What's needed is a focus on what works to increase minority graduation rates at all levels.

Envisioning oneself as a successful adult can be a powerful motivator to finish high school, enroll in college, and overcome economic and academic barriers along the way to a college degree. Having more minority faculty members in campus classrooms means more faces that students of color can identify with. Through mentoring, cultural connections and simply by being role models, minority faculty can encourage more African-American and Hispanic undergraduates to complete their degrees.

Successful minority faculty are well-versed in the kind of barriers to academic success that most often confront African-American and Hispanic students. And they are well-equipped to give advice and encouragement in overcoming them. They know that expecting the best of minority students is critical to their success.

## Benefits to states

**Save.** States save money: SREB minority Ph.D. candidates finish, on average, twice as fast as minority students nationally — and about two years faster than the average for *all* U.S. Ph.D. candidates.

**Recruit.** State colleges, universities and research labs can recruit from an online directory of minorities who hold doctoral degrees in a wide range of fields.

**Welcome.** More minority faculty members can help African-American, Hispanic and women students feel less isolated when they see their race, ethnicity and gender reflected in people in leadership positions — and improve the campus climate for all students.

## Exemplary Practices in Equal Opportunities

The American Society for Public Administration recognized the program with its Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Exemplary Practices award for education at its national meeting in March 2012. Program founder and Director Ansley Abraham (left) accepted the award from ASPA President Erik Bergurd.



# WHAT WILL THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?



## Our 600th Graduate: Lakeia Bailey

Minorities — and particularly minority women — are among the most underrepresented groups in the science, technology, engineering and mathematic disciplines. Future professors such as Lakeia Bailey are changing the look of STEM's future. A 2012 Ph.D. graduate of Georgia Health Sciences University in molecular genetics, Bailey plans a year of postdoctoral research at GHSU followed by public health advocacy and policy work. Her research focuses on molecular hematology and regenerative medicine.

Her love for science fueled her determination to make her dreams a reality. Another passion is volunteering and advocacy work for people with sickle cell disease. She has even represented Georgia on Capitol Hill to address this issue. GHSU recognized her with a leadership award and the Fisher Scientific Award for Excellence in Biomedical Research.