

Mayo, M., Ithier-Guzman, W., Pyrtle, A., Betzer, P., Batson, B., Bhansali, S., Greene, B., and Turner, R. (2007) Enhancing Ocean Literacy and Expertise of Diverse Populations via Graduate School Fellowship Opportunities. Eos Trans. AGU, 88(23), Jt. Assem. Suppl., Abstract ED32A-05

In 2004, the University of South Florida (USF) was granted by the National Science Foundation a Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Bridge to the Doctorate (BD) site award (HRD# 0217675). As part of the Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (FGLSAMP), USF is one of thirteen institutions in an alliance that is dedicated to significantly increasing the number of underrepresented minority students who obtain undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees. The BD program at USF incorporates the goals of FGLSAMP and facilitates the recruitment of underrepresented minorities pursuing careers in the STEM fields at the graduate level. The thematic focus of the FGLSAMP USF BD program is focused on the development and application of biogeochemical sensors for marine, aquatic, environmental, remote sensing and biomedical applications. After recruitment, BD graduate fellowship recipients are provided with NSF-funded financial support for two years, and opportunities to participate in professional development workshops, seminars and short courses, as well as additional financial support to pursue and complete their doctoral studies (beyond the initial two years of NSF BD funding), in a variety of forms, including, but not limited to, Alfred P. Sloan Minority Scholarships, Florida Education Fund's McKnight Doctoral Fellowships, USF College of Graduate Studies Fellowships, USF CMS endowed fellowships, USF CMS research assistantships, and USF CMS teaching assistantships. Collectively, 3 LSAMP BD grants have been awarded at USF to support 56 underrepresented minority fellowship recipients, of which 14 are currently graduate students at the USF College of Marine Science (CMS). Since the arrival of the BD Fellowship program, the graduate community has diversified, showing an increase of over 40% in underrepresented minorities at CMS. The BD program has enhanced the research and learning environment for all CMS students, as well as fostered a nurturing community of underrepresented minority CMS graduate students committed to obtaining their doctoral degrees. As of spring 2007, a total of 4 BD fellowship recipients have obtained marine science master's degrees and are currently pursuing their doctoral degrees in the CMS. In addition, in less than two years, a BD endowment fund of more than \$900,000 was established. This fund will provide financial support for at least two minority CMS graduate students in perpetuity! Lastly, in response to an identified need for increased ocean literacy among underrepresented groups, several BD fellowship recipients have engaged in activities designed to "give back" via informal and formal education and outreach opportunities within their native communities.