

# Funding Efforts That Support Southeast Louisiana Universities Ability to Retain Teacher Education Populations Post Hurricane Katrina

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**Abstract:** Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had a pervasive destructive impact on the educational community in Southeast Louisiana Universities. Decades of research, encompassing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal research grants to some of America's top scientists, were wiped out virtually overnight, along with much of the infrastructure that made them possible. The storms also severely affected the Southeastern Louisiana universities capacity to retain teacher education candidates. Prior to the hurricanes, Louisiana had a strong research and educational capacity and was investing in new projects intended to expand collaborative research among state universities with these natural disasters that changed.

**Background:** Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated many of Louisiana's educational infrastructure as well as teacher training institutions. It scattered faculty, staff, and students around the country. Funds are currently being identified and used to redevelop and grow the scientific pipeline to support the different levels of the university workforce needed by the research institutions to maintain and reacquire teacher candidates.

**Retention of Key Faculty:** The success of efforts to promote education and training at severely impacted Louisiana colleges and universities depend on the dedicated participation of high-quality faculty. Competitive awards are being used to provide salary enhancements, summer funding, and release time to enable key faculty members to dedicate substantial time and effort to education and training efforts related to the recovery and growth of the technical pipeline. Institutions are recommending faculty for participation based on their involvement in training, student research, and recruitment activities in key areas targeted for economic development. Ensuring the involvement of these faculty members is a critical activity in retaining and attracting teacher candidates.

**Expand student education and training:** Undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs are being vigorously marketed. Funds are also being used to enhance methods of course delivery on the part of the affected universities that support students' abilities to receive instruction via the internet, compressed video and other technological means. These methods of instructional delivery support curricular objectives and student retention. Enhanced funding is also being offered to students including scholarships and fellowships. Funds are also being provided for students to pursue work experiences that support their curricular endeavors and complement and reinforce their educational and career goals. An investment in diverse student populations of principally undergraduate students at community and technical colleges provides vital support for expanded education and training and retention efforts.

**Restore resources:** Funds are also being allocated for resources, including replacement and restoration of lost Equipment, supplies, information technology upgrades, and library materials, needed to restore and advance student education and training efforts at the undergraduate level in teacher preparation programs.