

# Grant Scope

Sam Houston State University  
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs

A Member of The Texas State University System



## A Message from the Associate Vice President

Sept/Oct 2010



An academic institution's size and type sometimes has implications for external funding. Thus, sometimes there are different designations for institutions. One of those designations used by the National Science Foundation (NSF) is the Research at Undergraduate Institutions (RUI) designation.

The number of doctoral degrees earned within a two year period in disciplines eligible for NSF competitions defines an institution's RUI status. Sam Houston State University vacillates back and forth in its ability to claim RUI status. Last year we were not a RUI university; this year we are.

Being designated as a RUI institution simply implies that our professors generally teach more classes and have more contact with undergraduate students than do universities that are not RUI-designated. The NSF recognizes that institutions are different, and that there are advantages for them investing in both research-intensive and teaching-intensive institutions. While teaching responsibilities may take more time at a RUI institution, we also have more contact with undergraduate students and an opportunity to incorporate them into our research activities. Doing so is important to the development of future scholars, and this is recognized by the NSF.

What does the RUI designation mean for us? If you submit an application, you will include "RUI" at the beginning of your title to alert NSF to the status. You are also required to have this status certified by the university and to include an education impact statement. ORSP will provide you with the certification and help you with the statement; both will be included in the application as supplementary documents. When the proposal goes to the review panel, it is judged by the same technical standards as other proposals. However, when the proposals

are ranked, and the best proposals are awarded funding, NSF Program Directors will balance the portfolio by ensuring that RUI proposals are included in the awards. If you have the best RUI proposal in the panel, but no RUI is included in the natural funding category, it may be placed into the funding range as the NSF balances the funding. For this to happen, the proposal still must be ranked high. If it is a proposal that is on the cusp of funding, it may be pulled into funding because of the RUI status. By doing this, the NSF is ensuring that RUI institutions are recognized. Even more importantly, this will guarantee that some of the funding is going to institutions who will naturally include undergraduate training in their research. Since we do have contact with many undergraduates at SHSU, I encourage you to take advantage of our status this year. Next year we may no longer qualify.

## Grant Facilitates Student Support

National research has shown that "the graduation rate for 4-year colleges and universities is only 56%. For 2-year colleges, it is just 33%." The U.S. Department of Education awarded \$1,192,480 to Sam Houston State University (SHSU) to facilitate the improvement of the university's retention and graduation rates. This is part of the Texas Higher Education Plan that was initiated in 2000. The plan anticipates "Closing the Gaps" in higher education by 2015.

**Project CONNECT**, recipient of the 5-year grant, is an integral part of SHSU's strong history of providing students with academic support. The goal of the program is helping these students realize the possibilities and opportunities of higher education over a 4-year period. The program, which is in



its tenth year assists two specific populations of students. The federally-funded Student Support Services (SSS) TRiO program currently serves 165 highly-motivated first generation,

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low-income students, and students with disabilities. All participants must display an academic need for the program's services. Project CONNECT targets students entering SHSU ensuring that they have access to cultural events, faculty advisors, peer mentors, and other services as required or needed. On average, the program recruits approximately 25 new students. As the Project Director, Kelly Stuckey explains, "that is the number of students that leave us each year—either by graduation, by transfer, or by withdrawal."

Project CONNECT initiates recruiting activities each year from May 1st to August 31st. The second recruitment period is from October 1st to January 1st. Although the program accepts applications throughout the year, students are only accepted (into this program) prior to the start of fall and spring semesters.



**Dr. Beverly Irby, PI**



**Dr. Alice Fisher, Co-PI**

The faculty who have made Project CONNECT one of SHSU's success stories are: Dr. Beverly Irby, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs, College of Education & Principal Investigator (PI) and Dr. Alice Fisher, Department Chair, Health & Kinesiology and Co-PI. They have developed and implemented the Mentor Program and assist in recruiting faculty members to this program. They also coordinate collaborative partnerships within departments, organizations, and services on SHSU's campus. Drs. Irby & Fisher are in charge of all research and evaluation projects within the Project CONNECT program.

Kelly Stuckey has been the Director of Project CONNECT SSS since January 2008. She has worked in higher education and in the field of student support services for the past 10 years. Ms. Stuckey earned her Bachelor of Arts in English and her Master of Education in Counseling degrees from SHSU. As Director, she manages the operational, budget, and personnel functions of the program. Ms. Stuckey directs research and implementation of effective retention strategies for participants. She also is committed to promoting the continued pursuit of



**Kelly Stuckey, Director, Project CONNECT**

excellence for the program and her staff. Ms. Stuckey enjoys helping low-income, first generation college students realize and accomplish their academic aspirations.

She relates to the SSS students because she was a struggling first generation, low-income student; and without the support of great mentors, she would never have achieved a higher education.

Other staff and support personnel include Katherine Fletcher, Service Coordinator; Maegan McKerrow, Retention Specialist, and Angel McAdoo, Student Assistant. Project CONNECT also provides tutors for assisting students in various subjects. Among them are Katie Watkins [mathematics]; and Treveon Murdock [science, statistics, Criminal Justice, and writing].

The services Project CONNECT offers include:

- Specialized study skills seminars
- Transfer assistance
- Registration assistance
- Cultural events
- Individual tutoring
- Individual and group counseling
- Computer lab for Project CONNECT students only
- Textbook lending library (students may borrow textbooks for the entire semester)
- Staff members familiar with the campus who can help you find the services you need
- A spirit of community offering support and encouragement
- Financial literacy counseling—collaborates with Student Money Management office on campus to help test a new financial literacy game called *Kat Cents*; it teaches students the fundamental of personal finance.



**Angel McAdoo assists with tracking Project CONNECT students**

Project CONNECT has made several improvements since the program's inception in 2000, including additional full-time staff members. The grant serviced 3 entities—Tomball & Montgomery Community Colleges and SHSU. In the first year of the program, 150 students were full-time participants—50 at each of the junior colleges and 50 at SHSU. The program

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## Grant Awarded to Help Reduce Gun & Gang-Related Crimes in High-Risk Neighborhoods



The generic phrase, "Gangs Growing!" seems to resonate throughout many news headlines across the nation's cities and counties.

For fiscal year 2010, \$275,233

was awarded to Sam Houston State University (SHSU). The award will facilitate Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) with their current focus. SHSU's College of Criminal Justice (COCJ) serves as Administrator of the PSN initiative for the Southern District of Texas (SDTX) of the U.S. Attorney's Office. The COCJ has played an integral role in the fight to reduce gun-related crimes.

The PSN was established in 2001 through support from President George W. Bush. In a letter, he said, "we need a focused national strategy to ensure that every community vigorously combats the problem of gun violence. Project Safe Neighborhoods is an integral part of that strategy." There has been continued legislative support for the PSN initiative since its inception.

Kristi Kreier and Tammy Winkler are the administrators of SHSU's PSN initiative. They work in various budgetary capacities with the COCJ. Dr. Victoria Titterington, professor in the COCJ, has served as evaluator of the PSN program since 2007. She works closely with all participating agencies in evaluating and reporting statistical data. This allows for in-depth analysis of how the project is working in the most violent crime areas within the SDTX.

The PSN is a nationwide commitment that focuses on gun reduction and anti-gang activities in the U.S. by supporting local law enforcement projects and initiatives. As evidentiary of the success the local initiative at SHSU, the COCJ has overseen a PSN budget of almost \$6 million since October 2003.

Joe Porto, Assistant U.S. Attorney, serves as the SDTX PSN coordinator for the U.S. Department of Justice. According to Mr. Porto, the SDTX encompasses a large portion of Texas, and the district leads the nation in criminal filings because of the border. This includes cities and towns in 43 counties, stretching from Huntsville to Houston; along the coast to Corpus Christi, Brownsville, along the Rio Grande to Laredo, and back up the US 59 corridor to Bryan/College Station. Mr. Porto explained that the "PSN effectively applies law enforcement assets to our highest violent crime areas in the SDTX, causing a measureable and meaningful reduction in gun and gang violence."

The PSN has over 40 sub-contracts, and over the past nine years, have partnered with approximately 25 agencies in Texas. These agencies are:

**Since 2003, the College of Criminal Justice has overseen a budget of almost \$6 million and monitored the efforts of 25 criminal justice agencies and social service providers for the Southern District of Texas of the United States Attorney's Office.**

The Gulf Coast Task Force  
The Harris County Juvenile Probation  
The Texas Attorney General Office  
The Houston Police Department-New Crime Lab  
The Houston Police Department-Southeast  
The Houston Police Department-Northeast  
The Houston Police Department-Westside  
The Texas Department of Public Safety  
The Laredo Housing Authority  
The Texas Department of Criminal Justice  
The Montgomery County Sheriff's Office  
The City of Houston Mayor's Office-Gangs  
The Houston Police Department-Fondren  
The Palmview Police Department  
The Harris County Sheriff's Office  
The Victoria County Sheriff's Office  
The Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas  
The Houston Police Department-Gangs Division  
Fox Valley Technical College  
Texas Engineering Extension Service

Corpus Christi Police Department (PD)  
Pasadena PD  
Texas City PD  
Victoria PD

Participants in the PSN program attend quarterly meetings to discuss funding and effectiveness of current and future projects for their proposals. Caren Thomas

is the Law Enforcement Community Coordinator (LECC), and she works in the U.S. Attorney's office. She is responsible for contacting the participating agencies and for arranging the meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for **October 28, 2010** at SHSU. Additional information about PSN is available at <http://www.psn.gov/about/index.html>.



**Deputy U.S. Marshal Robert Garmon participated in the "Real Talk with CJ" series. The U.S. Marshals Service is one of the agencies the PSN funds.**

**Visit us online for funding opportunities at**  
**[http://www.shsu.edu/~rgs\\_www/FundingOpportunities.html](http://www.shsu.edu/~rgs_www/FundingOpportunities.html)**



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was successful in its first year. The Project experienced a 14% graduation rate, and 98% of participants were in the process of completing a degree. The current cycle of funding does not include the two satellite campuses. The project also increased the number of participants to 165. These are now serviced only at SHSU. This significantly improved the tracking of those in need of Project CONNECT's services. There are some additional activities included in the program this year. Project CONNECT, in conjunction with the Department of Student Activities is adding a new leadership development workshop called *On the Ropes Challenge Course*. It will take place

on October 30, 2010 from 9:00 – 5:00 at the SHSU University Camp. Project CONNECT will conduct field trips this summer for current participants who will be seniors. They will visit several graduate schools such as the University of Houston and Texas A&M University. Project CONNECT also plans to implement a Faculty Mentor program Spring 2011. Students will have the option of joining this mentor program, which will match each student to their specific career and degree interests. Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education under George W. Bush once said, "there are far too many Americans who want to go to college but cannot, because they are either not prepared or cannot afford it." Programs like Project CONNECT are necessary to successfully "Close the Gaps" in higher education by the anticipated year of 2015.

## Fall 2010 Grant Workshops

**Workshop: Department of Education Grants**

**Date: 10/26/2010**

**Time: 3:00 - 5:00**

**Location: PACE Center Conference Room C002**

**Workshop: COS Funding Opportunities**

**Date: 11/2/2010**

**Time: 3:00 - 5:00**

**Location: Lee Drain Building (LDB), Room 407**

**Workshop: Foundations**

**Date: 11/10/2010**

**Time: 3:00 - 5:00**


**Location: PACE Center Conference Room C002**

**Workshop: COS Funding Opportunities**

**Date: 11/30/2010**

**Time: 3:00 - 5:00**

**Location: LDB, Room 407**



**REMINDER:** Beginning January 2011, the **National Science Foundation** will require all grant submissions to include a **Data Management Plan**. There are FAQs within the NSF website to answer any questions about the new requirement. A link is also available on the ORSP website under the NSF News & Announcements tab. If you have any further questions about the new requirement, please contact us at 294-3621. Thank you.

### Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this newsletter: Dr. Jerry Cook, Dr. Beverly Irby, Dr. Alice Fisher, Kelly Stuckey, Kristi Kreier, Tammy Winkler, Dr. Victoria Titterington, Joe Porto, Delia Gallinaro, Eva Strickler, and Brian Blalock.