



Drs. Philip W. Archer (left) and Harry S. Bass are co-directors of the NSF project.

Virginia Union University Receives \$3.3 Million National Science Foundation Grant

Virginia Union University is the recipient of a \$3.3 million grant from the National Science Foundation to increase the number of African American, Hispanics and Native Americans in technological education and enterprise.

VUU, under the National Science Foundation's Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (NSFLSAMP), will lead a consortium of six other institutions that are charged with doubling the number of minority graduates in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering and technology (SMET) over the next five years. Partner institutions include Elizabeth City State, Fisk, James Madison, Virginia Tech and Johnson C. Smith Universities and St. Augustine's College. All the institutions combined had 374 students to graduate with SMET degrees in 2000. The consortium seeks to double that number in the next five years.

The grant became effective Nov. 1, 2001.

"We are proud and elated to receive this award," said Dr. Bernard W. Franklin, president of Virginia Union and principal investigator for the project. "Virginia Union has a strong history of producing outstanding scientists, engineers, mathematicians and business professionals. The NSF's grant will provide VUU, as well as our partner institutions, an opportunity to effectively increase the pool of minority graduates in those areas."

Dr. Judith Ramaley, assistant director, Directorate for Education and Human Resources of the NSF, said the seven institutions comprising the Mid-Eastern Alliance for Minority Participation have demonstrated the leadership abilities necessary to broaden participation in the fields

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National Science Foundation Alliance Institutions (from left to right): Dr. Benjamin Dixon, Virginia Tech; Dr. Willie A. Bragg, VUU; Dr. Philip Archer, VUU; Dr. Lebarron Chambers, VUU; Dr. Ali Khan, Elizabeth City State; Dr. James Hicks, National Science Foundation; Dr. Arnold Burger, Fisk University; Dr. Kim Luckes, St. Augustine's College; Dr. Bernard W. Franklin, President, VUU; Dr. Mickey L. Burnin, President, Elizabeth City University; Dr. Harry Bass, VUU; Dr. David Brakke, James Madison University.

\$3.3 Million Grant Comes to VUU

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of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"We have every reason to believe that the innovative activities of the MEAMP will be highly successful in increasing opportunities for personal and professional growth of large numbers of talented undergraduate students," she said.

In 1995 African Americans were approximately 14.4 percent of the college freshman age population, about 11 percent of the United States college enrollment, represented 5.6 percent of

all graduate SMET students, and were awarded just 2.1 percent of all SMET doctoral degrees. In that same year, African Americans constituted just 3 percent of the nation's employed scientists and engineers. Reasons for such inequities include discrimination, academic disengagement, lack of role models and inadequate pre-college education. Historically black institutions such as Virginia Union and other consortium participants have a tradition of educating students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The inclusion of larger, well-resourced non-HBCUs will result in new ideas, resources and fresh visions for success.

VUU was selected as the lead institution for several reasons, most notably its

success in and knowledge of similar projects. As a private, historically black university whose mission includes the development of emerging technologies in the teaching and learning processes, VUU tripled its SMET graduation rates in its third year with the Xavier AMP and its activities were consistently associated with statistically significant gains in student achievement. VUU has been ranked 50th in the nation (tied with The University of Michigan and The University of Arkansas, Pine Bluff) in the production of minority life science degrees. In addition to increasing its student enrollment in the Natural Science Department by 20 percent during the past five years, VUU also doubled its Ph.D. faculty and reached record

heights in fund-raising support from various government and nonprofit institutions. VUU will be allocated \$3.3 million over the next five years to support a restructured Phase 1 Mid Eastern Alliance for Minority Participation Program. Each institution will receive its own budget from the NSF funds.

Assisting Dr. Franklin with the project will be VUU professors Dr. Harry S. Bass and Dr. Phillip W. Archer, and Dr. Willie A. Bragg, executive director for sponsored research for VUU.

"VUU will do all the administrative work, but each institution will have its own budget and operating manual," said Dr. Bass. "But VUU is the lead institution by virtue of coordinating data and compiling and transferring it to NSF."

Specifically, the Alliance for Minority Participation (AMP) will:

- Incorporate regional freshman orientation programs, oversight, management and technical assistance, and internal and external evaluation.
- Recruit sufficient numbers of students to double the Science, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology (SMET) degree production over five years
- Provide pre-college enrichment activities to improve students' analytical skills
- Emphasize the skills and knowledge needed for success in SMET study
- Provide a faculty mentor for each AMP participation
- Provide ongoing undergraduate research experiences
- Foster networking and interaction among students with similar interests
- Widen the network of SMET faculty and increase the exchange of information among AMP faculty members and administrators