

4. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PLAN TO ENHANCE DIVERSITY

4A. Recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities among predoctoral trainees. The leadership and mentors of this training program are committed to enhancing the ethnic and gender diversity of investigators engaged in biomedical research, and have been proactive in recruiting qualified applicants from under-represented populations through outreach in student and trainee oriented initiatives (e.g., SIBS, McNair, PREP). Dr. Benveniste, for example, has 1 URM (Hispanic American) undergraduate working in her lab at the present time, and 2 URMs (African American) will join this summer. UAB continues to take aggressive steps to recruit from under-represented groups. For the period of 2006-2011, recruiting activities in the participating departments and programs resulted in a total of 545 predoctoral minority applicants (**TABLE 7A**). Of these, 108 applicants were offered positions, 48 enrolled, and 43 remain in training. **Of the 6 predoctoral trainees supported by this training program in the last five years, 2 are URM, representing 33% of the predoctoral trainees in our program.**

4B. Recruitment and retention of underrepresented minorities among postdoctoral trainees. For the period 2006-2011, recruiting activities in the participating departments are shown in **TABLE 7B**. It should be noted that the data are likely an under-representation of the number of URM postdoctoral fellows at UAB, since this information is difficult to collect when applicants apply to the different departments. The OPE is working to improve this process. Nonetheless, of the 152 postdoctoral fellows from the participating departments, 9 are URM, and 8 remain in training. **Of the 8 postdoctoral trainees supported by this training program in the last five years, 1 was an URM, representing 13% of the postdoctoral trainees in our program.**

4C. Specific efforts by the Training Program in Brain Tumor Biology to recruit/retain trainees from under-represented groups. We are pleased that the current Training Program has **22% URMs**, but we need to work harder to increase the opportunities for URMs in this field of research. There are several mechanisms we will employ. **First**, we will send some of our most engaging Program Faculty to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) for visits to consist of 1) a research seminar in brain tumor biology geared to undergraduates, with an introduction to the UAB GBS Program and School of Medicine; 2) a description of summer research opportunities in the laboratories of the Program Faculty; and 3) lunch with pre-selected, interested undergraduates for small group discussion. We will target HBCU in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, as many of our graduate students at UAB come from the Southeast. We plan to visit up to **10 HBCU/year**, and will start in 2013 with visits to: Alabama A & M University, Normal, AL; Alabama State University, Montgomery, AL; Alcorn State University, Alcorn State, MS; Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA; Grambling State University, Grambling, LA; Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA; Spelman College, Atlanta, GA; and Tuskegee University, Tuskegee, AL. In addition, we will partner with the MERIT Program (see **4I** below) to visit Miles College, Fairfield, AL; and Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL. These HBCU have been chosen because the Program Faculty have colleagues and/or on-going collaborations at these institutions. Furthermore, the CCC has had long-standing collaborations with both Tuskegee University and Morehouse to promote faculty research projects in cancer biology. With the resources provided by the Office of Equity and Diversity (see **4E**) and the MHRC (see **4F**) as well as resources from the Brain SPORE Grant and contributing Departments (CDIB, Surgery, Radiation Oncology), we will offer **5 paid summer research internships** to undergraduates from HBCU to work with a Program Faculty from the Training Grant. **The “Summer Program in Diversity in Brain Tumor Biology” (SPBTB) will establish a pipeline of URM undergraduates with a specific interest in brain tumor biology to consider further training (hopefully at UAB) in this area as a Ph.D. or M.D./Ph.D..** Different HBCU will be visited each year of the award. **At those HBCU that have trainees in biomedical graduate programs, medical and/or veterinary school, a separate meeting with pre-selected potential trainees will be arranged to discuss postdoctoral opportunities with the Program Faculty from the Training Grant.**

Dr. Benveniste, PI for this Training Program and Drs. David Sweatt and Anne Theibert, PI/Co-PI on another NINDS funded T32 award “Cognition and Cognitive Disorders Training Grant” (**TABLE 3**), attended the “NINDS T32 Regional Meeting” held in March, 2012, in Philadelphia, at which diversity was the main focus, demonstrating the strong commitment of UAB Program Directors to URM recruitment and training. In discussions between Drs. Benveniste, Sweatt and Theibert, and Dr. Lori McMahon, in her role as CNC Director, funds have been committed from the CNC to develop the “**UAB Summer Program for Diversity in Neuroscience (SPDN)**”, which is committed to summer research experiences for **5 URM students** per summer. The new SPDN program will partner and operate with the well-established, and highly successful **UAB Summer Program in Neurobiology (SPIN)**. For the past 7 years, SPIN has coordinated summer research opportunities for 6-10 undergraduates per summer, partially supported by the CNC, and has itself

been successful in minority recruitment, with an average of **34% URM** participation. The Program Faculty from the Brain Tumor Training Grant will participate in the new SPDN initiative to engage URM students that may have an interest in brain tumor biology. The SPDN will include workshops in graduate application, interviews and GRE preparation, and the **5 URM undergraduates from SPBTB** will also participate in these activities. Our experiences have shown that URM students who have the opportunity to perform summer research are likely to apply to and matriculate in graduate school. SPDN was specifically developed as a separate diversity program (and not just part of SPIN) to ensure its targeted advertising and recruitment of URM students from HBCUs and minority serving institutions across the country, and will work closely with the SPBTB. We anticipate that this new initiative will be a promising investment that will result in an increase in diversity of the students in the GBS Neuroscience Theme and the Brain Tumor T32 Training Program. **While the SPDN program is much broader in scope than what we are proposing for the SPBTB, we feel this mechanism will complement our efforts to recruit URM specifically interested in brain tumor biology.**

Dr. Theibert, Director of the Undergraduate Neuroscience Honors Major and Co-PI of the NINDS Cognition and Cognitive Disorders T32 Training Program will visit ten HBCUs in the Southeast (to present a scientific seminar and provide information on the new summer diversity SPDN program and the GBS Neuroscience Theme) and will attend the *Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRACAMS)* and *Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)*. Dr. Theibert has been dedicated to training and mentoring URM students throughout her career, having mentored 5 URM graduate students, and 1 URM medical student. As Director of the Undergraduate Neuroscience Program, Dr. Theibert is an excellent representative for interactions with undergraduate faculty and student recruitment. Drs. Benveniste and Theibert have had a strong working relationship for over 15 years, and will work together to coordinate visits to HBCUs, and maximize the resources devoted to these efforts. **These 2 new summer programs in diversity, one specifically for research in brain tumor biology (SPBTB), and the other for general neurosciences (SPDN), will provide outstanding research opportunities and mentoring for promising URM undergraduates.**

4D. Recruitment and retention of women and underrepresented minorities among the mentors. The training program also seeks to enhance gender equity and to recruit and retain faculty from under-represented groups. **In the Neuro-Oncology Program in the CCC, the representation of women among the faculty has increased from 16% in 2006 to 28% in 2011.** Regarding our Training Program in Brain Tumor Biology, we have plans to add **3 additional female faculty** to the Program Faculty in the next 1-2 years.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The current percentage of females on the Program Faculty is **12% (2/17)**. The addition of the 3 faculty described above will increase this to **25% (5/20)**. Furthermore, this will increase the percentage of URM faculty mentors from **0% to 5%**.

4E. Office for Equity and Diversity. (Louis Dale, PhD, Vice President for Equity and Diversity). Dr. Dale is responsible for providing effective leadership in the development, coordination, implementation and assessment of a comprehensive array of programs to promote diversity and understanding of differences at UAB. The mission of the OED is to increase, retain and enhance faculty, student and staff diversity at all levels of the University and to ensure equity. Dr. Louis Dale reports directly to the President on matters related to policy and vision and to the Provost on matters related to the management of programs. **We are fortunate to have support in the amount of [REDACTED] from the Office of Equity and Diversity to enhance our URM recruitment efforts for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (see letter from Dr. Dale).**

4F. UAB [Minority Health & Health Disparities Research Center \(MHRC\)](#). (Mona Fouad, MD, MPH, Director). The MHRC mission is to eliminate health inequalities experienced by racial and ethnic minorities

locally, regionally and nationally. The Center is developing research to include Latino and Asian populations in addition to African Americans. The MHRC achieves its mission through innovative education, research and community outreach. **We are fortunate to have support in the amount of [REDACTED] from the MHRC to enhance our URM recruitment efforts for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows (see letter from Dr. Fouad).**

4G. Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. The McNair Scholars Program is an academic enrichment program that provides effective preparation for doctoral study to TRIO eligible college students, and students from groups underrepresented in graduate education. The McNair scholars benefit from a strong committed faculty who are experienced in mentoring undergraduates, outstanding research programs and facilities, a full range of support programs and educational enhancement opportunities, and a population of graduate students to serve as role models and mentors.

4H. Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP). A unique, 1-2 year training opportunity for students seeking graduate degrees in biomedical or behavioral science, this program is for students who received their baccalaureate (4-year) degree in the past three years and who are not currently enrolled in graduate school. This program gives instruction, practice and mentoring in research, academic writing, math and test-taking, and provides the extra experience students need to gain acceptance into science programs in leading graduate schools. During the PREP training period, students receive a \$21,000 stipend, plus health insurance and tuition for up to 10 credit hours of academic instruction. Based on an individual development plan, students are paired with faculty for hands-on research projects.

4I. UAB Mentored Experiences in Research, Instruction and Teaching Program (MERIT). UAB has received funding for an NIH sponsored program to support postdocs interested in combining research and teaching experiences. The award enables institutions to combine a traditional mentored, postdoctoral research experience with an opportunity to develop teaching skills through assignments at a minority-serving institution. UAB partners with Miles and Stillman Colleges to provide postdocs a unique opportunity to get practical mentored teaching experience while expanding their research skills. The long-term objectives of this training mechanism seek to enhance research-oriented teaching at minority-serving institutions, to promote interactions between research-intensive universities such as UAB and minority-serving institutions that lead to collaborations in research and teaching, and to increase the number of well qualified, under-represented minority students entering competitive careers in biomedical research. Towards that goal, the MERIT program holds small workshops at Stillman and Miles Colleges to discuss future careers in graduate/medical school, provides hands-on help with applications, and provides placement for summer research opportunities at UAB. All of these activities are geared towards increasing the number of URM undergraduates interested in biomedical science, and helping them become competitive for graduate/medical school.

4J. The Alabama Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (ALSAMP) Program. The ALSAMP strives through its twelve member institutions to increase the quality and quantity of under-represented minority students completing baccalaureate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The undergraduate institutions benefit from having their students participate in research experiences with research faculty, while the research institutions have the opportunity to work with, identify and recruit highly qualified minority students seeking to attend graduate school. The Alliance members, -- Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU), majority institutions, public and private institutions, and research and teaching institutions, -- cooperate to maximize learning opportunities and increase the achievement bar for all ALSAMP students. ALSAMP students receive financial support to attend high standing state, private and HBCU institutions and earn academic degrees in the areas of STEM while receiving tutoring, mentoring, career counseling, travel to attend local and national professional conferences, sponsored occasions to interact with peers and professionals in their field of study, summer internship opportunities, social progression experiences and facilitated access to graduate/professional schools.

4K. UASOM Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. As part of its fundamental commitment to diversity, including the identification, recruitment, retention, and career advisement of minorities and students from underrepresented populations, this office works to implement multifaceted approaches to recruitment and retention efforts including:

- Fostering relationships with the local, regional, and national educational institutions to stimulate minority student interest in science, thus increasing the pool of qualified minority applicants;

- Increasing the number of colleges/universities visited and establishing relationships with science and pre-medical advisors;
- Having a presence at conferences on regional and national levels where a large number of minorities (undergraduate, graduate and medical students) are in attendance;
- Coordinating seminars for minority students with emphasis on interviewing skills;
- Coordinating enrichment activities that complement the recruitment and retention process.

4L. Recruitment and retention of individuals with disabilities. UAB [Disability Support Services](#) (DSS) is committed to making UAB programs and services accessible to students with disabilities. To prevent discrimination based on disability in all UAB student programs and services, the primary goal of DSS is to ensure an accessible university environment by working with students, faculty, staff, and community agencies to provide appropriate accommodations. Students that self-identify with a disability are referred to the UAB DSS office. The office will work with the student to formulate a plan for accommodating their disabilities, thus allowing the student to fully participate in our training program.