

OVERVIEW OF LTRC'S EXTERNAL PROGRAM

**FOR
LTRC PEER EXCHANGE
FOCUS AREA 1: UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIPS**

By

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Background

- **LTRC established the External (Funding) Programs initiative in 2006 to pursue certain specific objectives.**
- **An Associate Director for External Programs was selected in Fall 2006.**
- **Tasks in support of the objectives of the External Programs initiative started in January 2007. (Associate Director was in transition from the full-time university position during 2007 spring semester.)**

Purpose of External Programs Initiative

1. **Expand the funding opportunities for university faculty and LTRC researchers from external sources by:**
 - **Identifying funding opportunities at external agencies (NCHRP,TRCP, ACRP, NCFRP, SHRP 2, FHWA, FTA, NHTSA, RITA, NSF, etc.) in the broad area of transportation engineering, planning and management.**
 - **Organizing faculty teams/clusters that can be most responsive to the opportunity. Pursuit of these opportunities is channeled through LTRC.**

Purpose of External Programs Initiative (contd.)

- Broadening the faculty base involved in transportation related research by engaging faculty in sciences, humanities and social studies.
- Providing proposal review, coordination, guidance and critical collaborations to render proposals submitted through LTRC

competitive

LTRC

Purpose of External Programs Initiative (contd.)

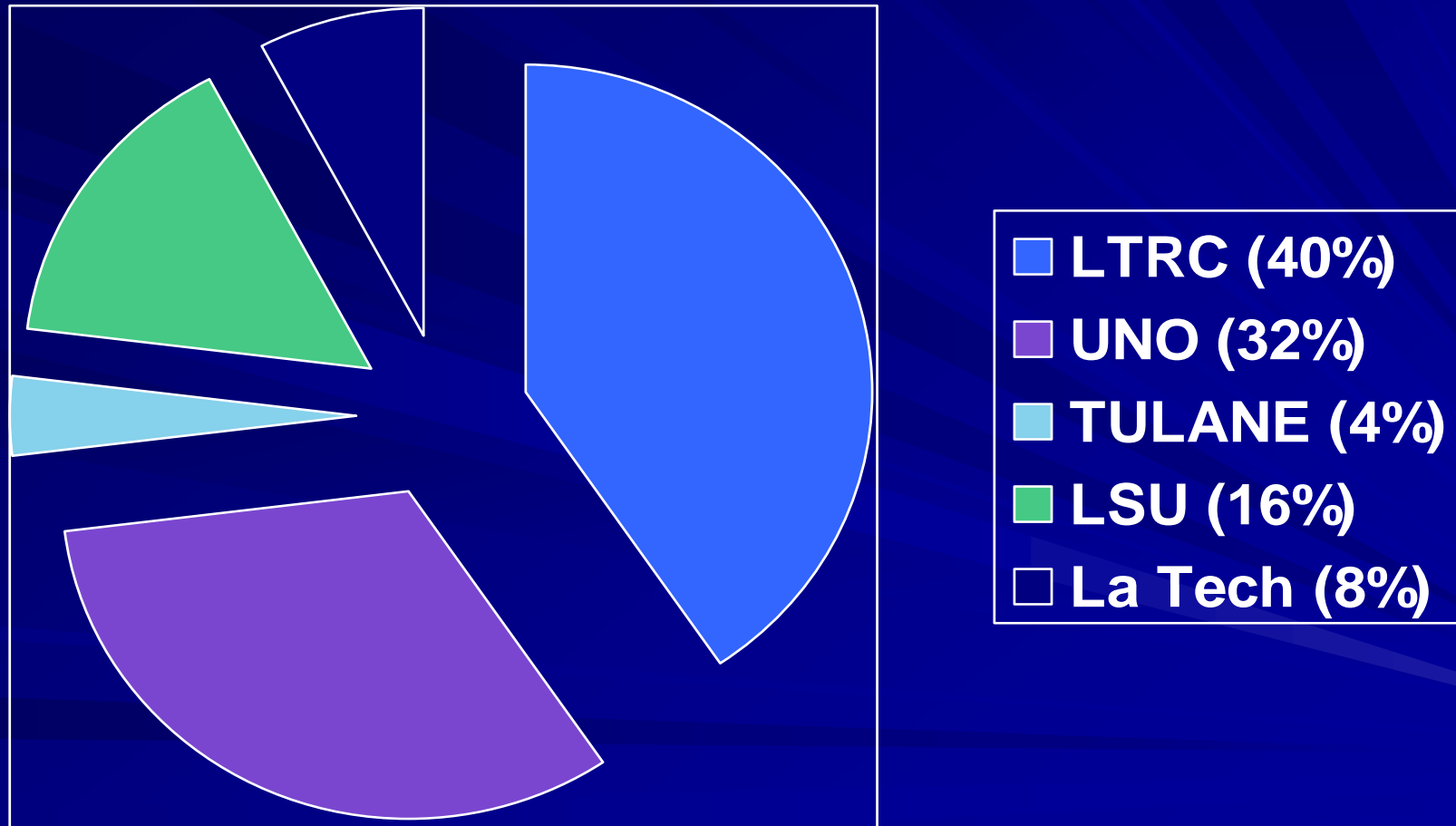
2. Support LTRC in developing strategies for securing a Regional Transportation Center (TIER 1).
3. Involve talented faculty at various universities in providing advanced education and training opportunities to the transportation/construction industry work force and DOTD engineers. (This is in support of the tech transfer and training activities of LTRC)

Purpose of External Programs Initiative (contd.)

- 4. Facilitate the establishment of a ME Professional Degree program supported jointly by multiple universities to provide opportunities for practicing engineers to earn a practicum based graduate degree.**

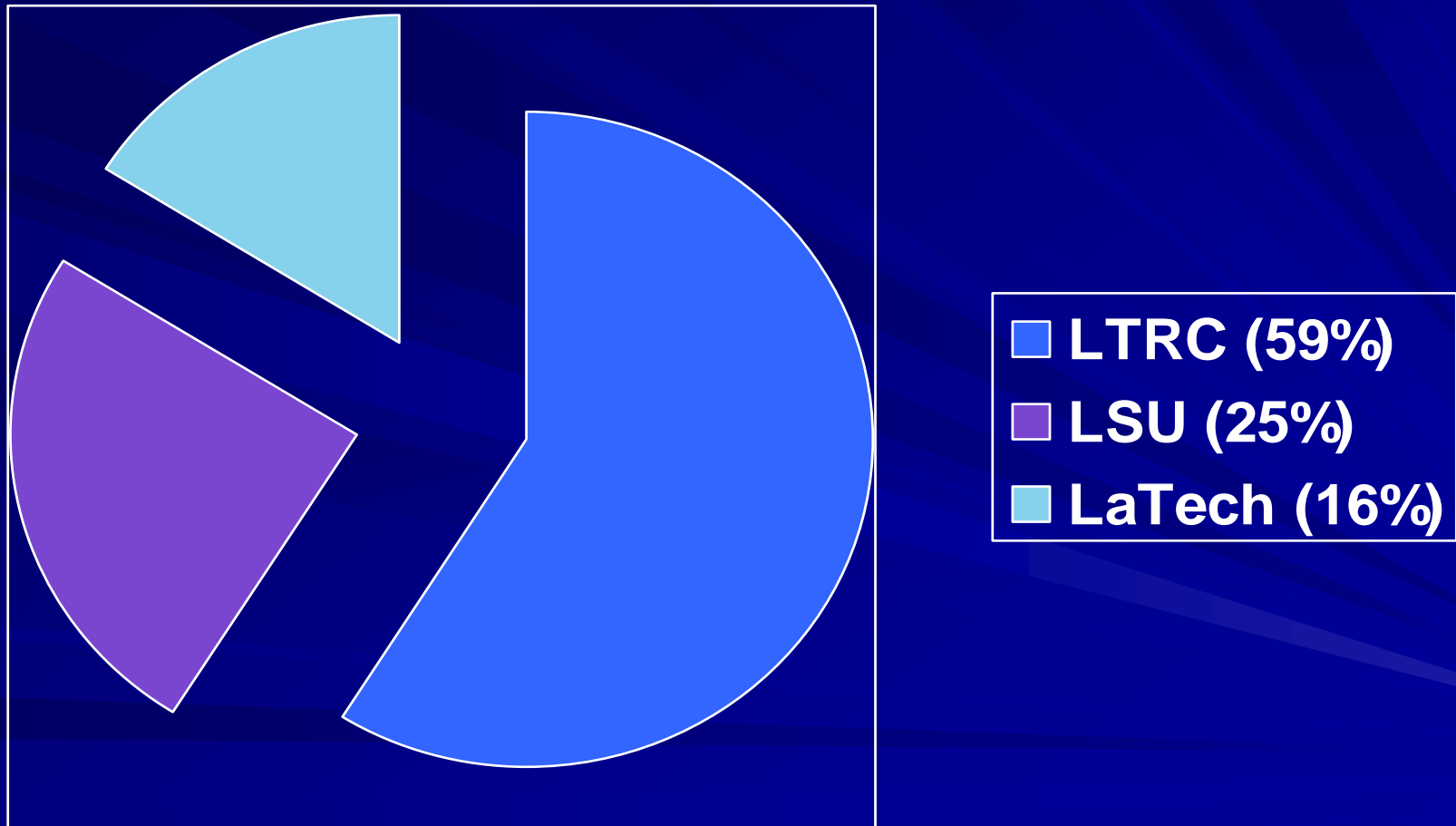
Proposals Submitted to External Agencies through LTRC or with LTRC Letters of Support (July 06 – Dec 07)

Total Amount of External Funds Requested: \$ 9.4M



Proposals Funded by External Agencies through LTRC or with LTRC Letters of Support (July 06 – Dec 07)

Total Amount of External Funds Awarded: \$ 4.7M



Significance of LTRC's External Program Initiative to Louisiana Universities

- 1. LTRC's establishment of an external program initiative with a key goal of increasing the external research support in the transportation area for faculty at all universities in the state is unique in the nation.**
- 2. The initiative fosters development of multi-campus and multi-disciplinary research proposals in the transportation area by eliminating the need for budget management by a lead university – often a sore point in multi-campus efforts.**

Significance of LTRC's External Program Initiative to Louisiana Universities

- 3. The research dollars stretch farther since, unlike a lead university in a multi-campus effort, LTRC doesn't levy indirect costs on sub-contracts that it awards.**
- 4. The initiative utilizes the full research capacity of the state, an approach necessary to complete at a national level.**

Strategy for Success

- 1. Given the challenges facing the state's engineering programs to become regionally competitive and recognized, it's important that faculty in engineering and transportation related areas at the state's universities avail of the support provided by the External Program Initiative at LTRC to garner a higher level of research funding.**
- 2. Faculty needs to be encouraged to collaborate across disciplines and campuses if the universities' research expenditures are to grow.**

Strategy for Success (contd.)

- 3. Barriers for submitting proposals through LTRC for transportation related studies should be removed and faculty should be properly recognized for contracts awarded to them with funds obtained by LTRC from external sources.**

Related External Program Activities

1. On LTRC invitation, two NSF Program Directors – Drs. Richard Fragazy and Balaguru – visited Louisiana to meet with faculty with civil engineering faculty in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Several LSU, Tulane and UNO faculty members attended these meetings.

It's pertinent to point out that a faculty member submitted a NSF proposal in line with the suggestions offered by the visiting program officers. He proposal was funded recently because he was responsive to certain critical NSF goals and interests.

Related External Program Activities (contd.)

2. Two workshops on “How to Develop a Competitive Proposal” were offered at LSU for in 2007 by Drs. VJ Gopu and Roger Seals. This workshop was also presented at two regional ASEE Conferences held at South Padre Island, TX, and Wichita, KS.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- I. Increase the number of faculty and graduate students involved in transportation related research coordinated by LTRC.**
- II. Increase the number of projects and the amount of research funding available to university faculty by enhancing the level of external funding at LTRC.**
- III. Increase the number of short-courses, seminars, workshops offered by university faculty for training of transportation professionals in the state.**

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- IV. Develop multi-campus and multi-disciplinary clusters/teams to address complex research problems that address the future needs in the transportation area**
- V. Make collaboration and interaction with LTRC rewarding and challenging**
- VI. Enhance the status of LTRC in the eyes of the university administration**

FOCUS AREA QUESTIONS

- 1. What methods/mechanisms do you use to encourage university faculty to seek funding from external (non-DOTD) sources such as NCHRP, FHWA, NSF, etc., to conduct transportation related research? How successful were these approaches?**

FOCUS AREA QUESTIONS (contd.)

- 2. Do university faculty and university administrators in your state take the approach that the flow of external research funds through the Transportation Research Center is not in their best interest since the universities are not the primary awardees? If they do, what can be done to correct it?**

FOCUS AREA QUESTIONS (contd.)

- 3. What incentives do you provide to university faculty to engage in transportation related continuing education activities? Are they adequate?**
- 4. Do have any initiatives targeted to establishing multi-disciplinary/multi-campus teams to respond to external solicitations?**

FOCUS AREA QUESTIONS (contd.)

5. What recommendations do you have for enhancing the stature of LTRC in the eyes of the university campuses, particularly LSU where it's located?