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**For Immediate Release:**

**Chicago State, IUPUI and Argonne get \$2.5 million for regional STEM center with goal of increasing minorities in science careers**

CHICAGO – With funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), two urban universities and the U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory are joining forces in a unique effort to help meet the country's future needs for scientists, engineers and mathematicians.

Chicago State University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and Argonne National Laboratory are the recipients of a \$2.5 million, five-year NSF grant to establish a pilot regional Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) Center of Excellence that will work to recruit and graduate minorities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics academic majors at 28 universities in the Midwest.

Chicago State and IUPUI are longtime state-level lead institutions in the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program established by the National Science Foundation. Both universities have outstanding track records for attracting and advancing underrepresented minorities in STEM education and careers through their participation in the LSAMP program. The pilot center will reach out to non-LSAMP campuses to increase the quantity and quality of minority students receiving bachelor's degrees in STEM areas and subsequently increase the number of minorities earning STEM doctorate degrees.

With offices at Chicago State University and IUPUI, the Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence in Broadening Participation will take a national leadership role in advocating for more minority participation and success in STEM undergraduate programs and will develop a regional information hub providing online resources to showcase best practices in STEM research mentoring, teaching and learning.

LeRoy Jones II, Ph.D., executive director of STEM Initiatives for the College of Arts and Sciences at Chicago State, will serve as the director, overseeing the day-to-day operation of the center, monitoring budgetary expenditures, and organizing the project activities and annual regional conferences.

The Chicago State University-IUPUI-Argonne partnership is the only recipient of the first-time NSF grant to create pilot centers. Under the grant, Chicago State University, as one of the nation's predominantly black institutions, is the lead partner.

"Chicago State University is very excited about leading the effort with IUPUI and Argonne to serve as a resource and support entity to broaden the participation of students of color in STEM," Jones said. "The LSAMP community has developed numerous best practices over the past 20 years for recruiting, retaining and graduating STEM underrepresented minority students. "This is our University mission, to develop and graduate minority students through a rigorous and transformative educational experience, said Jones."

The center will also establish a cyber portal to disseminate information and create networks to support STEM students on the targeted campuses in the region that includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin.

"This grant is an exciting opportunity for IUPUI," Chancellor Charles R. Bantz said. "It will enable us to work with our partners to establish successful strategies for recruiting, retaining and graduating students in the STEM disciplines that can be shared broadly with others. Future innovation and economic development depend upon more STEM graduates and more minorities interested in STEM-related careers."

In addition to providing academic resources to participating campuses, the Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence will link students and faculty to world-class facilities and researchers at Argonne, which is just outside Chicago.

"We are thrilled to share our support, resources and research opportunities to underrepresented minorities through the Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence," said Andrew Skipor, Ph.D., manager of educational programs at Argonne. "Argonne is committed to increasing the visibility of underrepresented voices, viewpoints and narratives in STEM fields. Diversity is invaluable in scientific research – including different perspectives increases the number of approaches that people take towards finding creative and innovative solutions to problems. Supporting underrepresented minorities means bolstering our country's future in science and technology."

In addition to Jones and Skipor, key personnel for the Louis Stokes Midwest Center of Excellence are principal investigator Sandra Westbrooks, Ph.D., Chicago State University provost, and co-principal investigators Kim S. Nguyen, Ed.D., IU School of Education, IUPUI; and Pamella P. Shaw, Ph.D., associate dean for diversity, equity and inclusion, IU School of Dentistry, IUPUI.

Nguyen will lead the development of cyber operations for the center which will be housed in the School of Education on the IUPUI campus which has numerous instructional technology resources available for faculty and instructors.

With the first year's funding scheduled for distribution this fall, the center leadership will begin hiring additional personnel, building technology infrastructure and developing webinars within the next three months.

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