



Southern University at Shreveport, LA  
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Shreveport, LA 71107

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT SHREVEPORT, LA. (SUSLA) IS AWARDED \$250,000 FROM AEP FOUNDATION.

The award is part of an HBCU Collaborative for Academic Achievement and STEM Education initiative, in cooperation with five universities throughout the southwest region served by American Electric Power. The purpose of the award is to strengthen STEM Education in the service territories served by AEP.

While the grants were written around a central theme of enhancing STEM education achievement, each institution submitted individual grant applications based on the goals of their STEM programs and meeting the needs of their respective communities. The SUSLA grant was championed by representatives of the regional AEP-SWEPCO office Mr. Brian Bond, Vice-President of External Affairs and supported by Mr. Michael Corbin, Manager of External Affairs. The grant represents the largest single award to SUSLA from AEP.

“The gift is part of the foundation’s Delivering on the Dream: Social and Racial Justice grant program, which is a five-year, \$5 million commitment to fund organizations with programs dedicated to advancing social and racial justice in communities American Electric Power (Nasdaq: AEP) serves. “SWEPCO also is dedicated to building brighter futures for the communities where we live and work and remains committed to advancing justice and equity for our neighbors of color,” said Malcolm Smoak, president and chief operating officer of SWEPCO, a subsidiary of AEP that provides funding to the AEP Foundation.

The award will allow Southern University at Shreveport to establish the STEM Academy which will have two tracks:

- 1) Track 1: **Dual Enrollment for High School Students.** This track will accelerate opportunities for STEM education by allowing students enrolled in the dual enrollment programs through academic programs, exploration lab projects, field trips and STEM competition camps with scholarship awards. The program allows students who complete the program to achieve degrees and/or certificates in STEM career fields upon graduation from high school and;
- 2) Track 2: **Unemployed and Under-Employed Adults.** This track will provide access to fast track training and internship opportunities for unemployed and underemployed adults who face financial insecurities due to the pandemic. Scholarships will be provided to help individuals train for industry-based certifications (IBC’s) in high-demand career fields, allowing them to become gainfully employed.

A key component of the Academy will be the STEM Mobile Lab. The mobile lab will be fully equipped with advanced technology. The Mobil Lab will travel to schools in rural and underserved communities providing students with hands on STEM explorations in robotics, AI and 3-D printing technologies.

SUSLA's Chancellor Dr. Rodney Ellis states, "We could not be more excited and appreciative of this award from AEP Foundation. We also want to thank our friends at SWEPCO for their support and vision. With this investment, students, especially those in lower income urban and rural communities, will have a chance to explore careers that many of them never considered. This program will also help adults who have been wondering how to restart their careers and get their lives back on track..."

Led by their respective Advancement and STEM leadership, institutional members of the collaborative consist of: Jarvis Christian College (Collaborative Team Lead), Wiley College, Southern University at Shreveport, Langston University and Bluefield State College.

*Members of the Southern University at Shreveport Grant Award Team include:* Dr. Rodney A. Ellis, Chancellor; Stephanie Rogers, Chief Advancement Officer and Principle Investigator/Grant Writer; Ms. Brenda Henderson, Resource Grants Development Officer; Dr. Terry Kidd, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Workforce; Dr. Barry Hester, Dean of Business & STEM (B-STEM); Ms. Janice Sneed, Assoc. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Workforce; Dr. Tuesday Mahoney, Asst. Vice Chancellor for College Success and Dual Enrollment; Ms. Shanace Robinson, Adult Ed. Program Mgr.

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