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Higher Education Initiative to Help Rebuild Gulf Coast Launched By Housing Secretary and National Service Chief

(Baton Rouge, LA) –U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Alphonso Jackson and Corporation for National and Community Service CEO David Eisner today announced the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership (URAP), an initiative offering funding and other resources to empower college and university students, faculty, and staff to lend their skills in rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

The initiative will be partly financed through a \$5.6 million in grant funding from HUD, which will support a \$2 million collaborative design grant program to partner schools of architecture and planning with affected communities, and a \$3.6 million grant program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to provide sustained services to affected communities.

Jackson and Eisner made the announcement at Louisiana State University with Chancellor and former NASA Administrator Sean O’Keefe. They were joined by a number of higher education leaders from the region.

“Today, I have come to Louisiana State University to launch the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership to inspire and to empower students and faculty across the country to become involved in the rebuilding process in the Gulf,” said HUD Secretary Jackson. “These universities will use their great talents and energy to partner with communities that have been affected by the Hurricanes as we seek to rebuild the Gulf.”

“Volunteers are the backbone of support for people and communities in need - especially in times of crisis,” said national service CEO David Eisner. “Across the Gulf Region AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America volunteers are both providing direct relief and engaging others to serve. College students, with their idealism and energy, are among the most effective and enthusiastic of all volunteers.”

"After Katrina, our nation came together to help our neighbors in need, and some of the greatest givers were our colleges and universities," said U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. "As the rebuilding effort hits high gear, this unique Partnership will allow students and faculty to share their time and talents, whether it's designing blueprints or swinging hammers."

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Working with local, state, and national organizations, the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership will provide an opportunity for groups of college and university students, faculty, and staff to find meaningful ways to respond to the disaster. The funding will be awarded through competitive grants using the Notification of Funding Availability (NOFA) process. Colleges and universities can go online and apply. Schools with collaborative design programs may apply to FR-5023-N-01 at

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-21790.htm>

Historically Black Colleges and Universities may apply to FR-5024-N-01 at

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-21789.htm>

The NOFAs appeared in the Federal Register (URL) on October 31, 2005 and applications will be accepted until November 30, 2005.

In addition to the grant funding, the Corporation and HUD are also making available the Universities Rebuilding America Partnership Toolkit, a step-by-step guide on how to select and arrange service projects in the Gulf Region, and what to expect. And, in conjunction with the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, URAP has established the Universities Rebuilding America Honor Roll and Awards Program to recognize higher education institutions for their contributions to the recovery and rebuilding efforts. To download the toolkit or for more information on the honor roll, go to www.nationalservice.gov/urap.

At the launch event, Eisner also announced a \$100,000 grant to Tulane University to support expansion of service-learning programs to support students from Tulane, Dillard, and Xavier in carrying out research and service projects to help their campuses and communities rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The funding is a supplement to an existing grant and comes from the Corporation's Learn and Serve America program.

Since Hurricane Katrina struck, more than 13,000 national service participants have contributed to the hurricane relief and recovery effort in the Gulf Coast and others states across the country. They have established and operated shelters, provided meals and social services to evacuees, assisted with communications, coordinated the warehousing and distribution of donated goods, answered phones, cleared debris, provided information on housing and other resources, raised funds, and managed community volunteers, among other activities.

HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership, particularly among minorities; creating affordable housing opportunities for low-income Americans; and supporting the homeless, elderly, people with disabilities and people living with AIDS. The Department also promotes economic and community development as well as enforces the nation's fair housing laws. More information about HUD and its programs is available on the Internet at www.hud.gov and espanol.hud.gov.

The Corporation for National and Community Service provides opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through three programs: Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America. Together with USA Freedom Corps, the



UNIVERSITIES REBUILDING AMERICA PARTNERSHIP



Corporation is working to foster a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility in America.
For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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