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State Universities Receive Funding to Create LONI Institute Advanced research environment could spur economic development for Louisiana

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BATON ROUGE – Six state universities, led by LSU's Center for Computation & Technology, or CCT, received funding to create a state-of-the-art research collaboration that will enhance Louisiana's scientific and economic development capacity.

Funding for this project, totaling more than \$15 million, will create a bold new multi-institutional, multidisciplinary endeavor called the LONI Institute. The primary funding will come from the Louisiana Board of Regents' Post-Katrina Support Fund Initiative, or PKSFI, and from significant matching funding from all institutions involved. The PKSFI program provides funding for state projects designed to boost scientific research and economic development for Louisiana following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Under this grant, the six research institutions collaborating on the project – LSU, Louisiana Tech University, Southern University, Tulane University, University of Louisiana-Lafayette and University of New Orleans – will receive \$7 million throughout a five-year period, with a match of more than \$8 million coming from the six universities.

The LONI Institute will capitalize on the resources of the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative, or LONI, a high-speed, fiber optic network that connects supercomputers at the state's major research institutions. LONI allows greater

collaboration to tackle complex scientific research problems, and also gives Louisiana one of the most advanced computational and networking environments in the world.

The six universities that will develop the LONI Institute are all LONI schools included as sites on the LONI network, along with the LSU Health Sciences Centers in New Orleans and Shreveport, and the Louisiana community and technical colleges.

“With this advanced network in place at the major research institutions in Louisiana, we are ready to take the next step and create a collaborative that allows people at those universities to fully use LONI to advance academics and business,” said Charlie McMahon, LONI executive director. “With the LONI Institute, we will create such an environment, maximizing the state’s research base potential.”

The LONI Institute would not be located in a single building; rather, it would be a collaboration of researchers among the six LONI sites that creates a multi-disciplinary environment.

The CCT will serve as the central hub of the distributed Institute, coordinating activities from LSU.

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