Furman University recently received two major grants — one designed to help minority science students pay for their education and the other set to help education professionals develop after-school programs and initiatives.

The school received a five-year, $600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, and a $200,000 grant from the Mott Foundation to establish the White-Riley-Peterson Policy Fellowship.

This fall, biology and chemistry majors entering Furman will be eligible to receive financial aid awards of up to $40,000 as part of the new scholarship program funded by the Foundation’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics program. Known as the Science Opportunities, Activities and Resources Scholars, the initiative will provide support for students for whom the cost of attending college would be a hardship, Furman officials said.

The program aims to improve opportunities from racial and ethnic groups traditionally under-represented in scientific fields. That includes blacks, Hispanic/Latino, Native American and Pacific Islander.

Between 15 and 21 students are expected to participate in the program over the next five years.

Furman will contribute funding for the program’s sixth year.

“The university has historically proved itself to be an exceptional leader among liberal arts colleges in preparing students from under-represented backgrounds for highly successful professional careers,” said John Wheeler, director of Furman’s Office of Integrative Research in the Sciences.
SOAR Scholars program. He will be assisted by Wheeler, the principal investigator; Eli Hestermann, co-investigator and associate professor of biology; and Marion Martin, co-investigator and assistant professor of chemistry.

SOAR Scholars will participate in a one-week, precollege bridge experience immediately prior to the freshman year; weekly interdisciplinary seminars; opportunities for science-based community outreach through established programs directed at disadvantaged populations; and guaranteed placement into paid summer research experiences on campus.