



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES & MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT  
PROGRAM (GO-MAP)

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## **BEST PRACTICES FOR DEPARTMENTS TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN DIVERSITY IN THE GRADUATE STUDENT POPULATION**

The following list is compiled from the Diversity Plans that University of Washington departments have submitted to GO-MAP as part of their requests for funding for new students. Thanks to over 40 departments that yearly submit these plans. They provide thoughtful action items and reflective commentary that assist in clarifying departmental goals and procedures and help all of us identify ways to improve our recruitment and retention of minority and underrepresented students. In some instances, these Best Practices are drawn directly from departmental plans; in other instances, they include Best Practices that GO-MAP has instituted; still, others are combinations of several Best Practices.

Attention to diversity ensures the encouragement of a welcoming climate for all students. While targeting minority and underrepresented students in recruitment, publicity, encouragement of acceptance of admission, retention, and curricular change, we are simultaneously improving and enriching the environment for all students. Providing ways of thinking and interacting that are reflective of the richness of our nation enhances the quality of student life here at the UW and prepares students for the demands of a diverse society.

If, over time, you have suggestions for improving or adding to this list, please contact either Juan Guerra ([jguerra@u.washington.edu](mailto:jguerra@u.washington.edu)), Associate Dean; Cynthia Morales ([cmorales@u.washington.edu](mailto:cmorales@u.washington.edu)), Manager; or Sophia Agtarap ([sagtarap@u.washington.edu](mailto:sagtarap@u.washington.edu)), Administrative Counselor, GO-MAP, The Graduate School.

Please use GO-MAP as a resource to consult with and work with toward the implementation of ideas for programs and other support to enhance the recruitment and retention of minority and underrepresented students.

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## **PUBLICIZING YOUR PROGRAMS AND DEPARTMENTS**

- Use a variety of strategies, ranging from the design of brochures to the presentation of departmental information. Be sure all recruitment materials have a statement on the department's commitment to diversity.
- Advertise your program to targeted populations in colleges and universities that serve a large population of minority and underrepresented students to increase effectively your applicant pool. If you want assistance in this area, you may contact the GO-MAP office.
- Address diversity on the departmental web site. Highlight programs and departmental efforts that address diversity; provide links to select student organizations on campus, to GO-MAP, and to cultural centers in the community, etc. Making this information available gives students more information about Seattle and the UW, and relays the message that the department believes these qualities make the program more desirable and competitive and are important enough to be mentioned.
- Identify on your web page and in brochures programs of study that may be of particular interest to students who wish to explore in their discipline content on diversity. In these publications, identify faculty whose research and teaching studies the complexities, conflicts, and benefits of diversity in the field. Identify courses of study and recent dissertation work that addresses topics related to diversity as well as mainstream topics.
- Send national mailings to undergraduate departments in your discipline, particularly targeting schools with large minority populations. Utilize the Western (<http://www.grad.washington.edu/nameexch/national/> and National Name Exchange Programs (<http://www.grad.washington.edu/nameexch/western/>) (GO-MAP coordinates the national data base), and send direct mailings to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), Hispanic serving institutions (HSIs), and tribal colleges. Advertise in multicultural journals, etc.

## **ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT**

- Appoint a diverse admissions committee. This means that your admissions committee should be representative of the diversity, or of the faculty who are interested in achieving diversity, in your department and programs. Draw on majority and minority faculty who value qualitative as well as quantitative indicators of achievement.
- Design departmental applications to reflect the value that the University of Washington places on diversity. Your applications should encourage applicants to submit not only academic goal statements, but also essays that provide information on how their individual experiences and/or academic interests will bring diversity to the scholarly perspectives and academic experiences of your

graduate student community of scholars. The personal essay is valuable not only in the admissions process, but also in the selection of financial aid recipients.

- It is permissible for departments to ask for and use ethnic identifiers in pre and post admission recruitment. Although admissions decisions cannot be based on race, ethnicity, gender, etc., the availability of this data allows departments to take part in targeted recruitment strategies as well as monitor and report on the effectiveness of specific recruitment efforts.
- In admissions and in financial award decisions, departments are permitted to use in a positive manner, factors that help improve diversity in their graduate programs. These may include: economic and educational disadvantages, cultural awareness, overcoming personal adversity, and leadership awards and achievement. This information may be solicited in the form of a personal essay on the application.
- Departments and programs may consider tribal enrollment or affiliation as a positive factor in admission, financial aid, and outreach programs.
- Identify a staff member to recruit, go to graduate fairs and universities with high minority populations (HBCUs, HSIs, and tribal colleges)—use GO-MAP as a resource for information to identify these events and institutions. However, if identifying a staff member to recruit is not an option, follow through on most, if not all, of the other Best Practices.
- Appoint a Student/Faculty Diversity Committee. This committee would serve as a liaison to GO-MAP and would work with students and faculty in the department to identify and improve minority and underrepresented recruitment practices specific to the department and discipline or disciplines within the department. It also would connect personally with prospective graduate students to inform them about the application process, funding opportunities, and graduate student life.
- Build bridges with and make full use of institutional opportunities currently available at the UW. Programs—such as the Early Identification Program (EIP) (<http://depts.washington.edu/eip>), which offers departments the opportunity to mentor prospective graduate students, and Bridges4 in the Health Sciences (<http://depts.washington.edu/bridges4>) which encourages minority students in the biological sciences to pursue advanced degrees—are only two examples of programs across campus. Making yourself aware of the range of campus opportunities available not only serves to enhance your efforts, but it also reflects the fact that your department supports such efforts.
- Forge partnerships with other institutions. The potentiality for these varies from department to department, but examples include: Fisheries' and Forest Resources' partnership with Tuskegee University which allows undergraduates to spend their senior year at the UW and offers admissions into the Masters program, contingent upon performance; Fisheries' partnerships with Grays Harbor and Peninsula Colleges and Olympic Peninsula Region High Schools; Philosophy and Sociology's proposed W.E.B. DuBois Summer Institute with Howard University and Clark Atlanta University to bring undergraduate students here for a week in the summer with full funding to study with prominent

philosophers and sociologists; and Drama's partnership with the Ethnic Cultural Theatre which allows students in the Professional Actor Training Program to perform at least one Ethnic Cultural Theatre production per year.

- Have former students who are now at other colleges and universities recommend the UW for graduate study. This requires someone in the department to maintain contact with former students. This could be a duty of the Student/Faculty Diversity Committee.
- When faculty members give talks at other colleges and universities, ask them to seek out underrepresented graduate students and maintain contact with them; have them ask faculty or administrators at the host institution to identify students who may be interested in the UW.
- Hire minority faculty. Their very presence helps attract minority graduate students to your department. If minority faculty participate in recruiting, that *really* helps.
- Send faculty representatives to targeted meetings of organizations such as the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), the Society of Black Engineers, and the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS).
- Never underestimate the value of *personal contact*.

## **ENCOURAGING ACCEPTANCE OF ADMISSION**

- Following admission, departments may take part in activities intended to increase directly the yield of specific targeted groups. Such efforts may include personal phone calls from graduate students, faculty, and administrators.
- Utilize fellowships for the purpose of enhancing diversity in your program. Marketability is also a factor that may be considered. Once the department has decided that it wants a student and is willing to pay to land that student, it may, in its judgment, offer the student his or her "market rate" in financial aid, etc., to attract that student to enroll. "Market rate" decisions should be made on a case by case basis. Contact GO-MAP if you have questions about criteria for establishing marketability or about determining a "market rate" decision.
- Host prospective students. This includes: encouraging early visits; assigning a student host for each prospective student while he/she is on campus; having a faculty member follow up with personal contact.
- Seek funding for underrepresented and minority students to visit.
- Participate in the Prospective Graduate Student Days events sponsored by GO-MAP. Coordinate your department's prospective student visits with other departments through GO-MAP. Arrange to have prospective students meet with Graduate Diversity Recruiters (GDRs) from GO-MAP for lunch or coffee during their visit or invite a GDR to speak to prospective students in your department

(<http://www.grad.washington.edu/gomap/gdrp.htm>). These kinds of activities help to provide prospective students with a sense of the community of graduate students that exists at the UW across departments and disciplines.

## RETENTION

- Ensure that underrepresented students are apprised of all funding available.
- Be certain that minority and underrepresented students are assigned advisors who will serve as mentors and who will ascertain that the students are getting appropriate direction. While this is a Best Practice for all students, it is especially important for underrepresented and minority students who may be hesitant to seek assistance when they are not getting it, or who may not easily network with majority peers in discussions about resources.
- Identify a faculty member who can help connect minority or underrepresented students with graduate reading/study groups, or who can help students initiate reading/study groups across the department or program graduate population.
- Have graduate student “pizza” lunches, which several faculty attend as well, at which a small component of the time is informational for graduate students around a shared topic of interest or inquiry. The topic can be academic, interdisciplinary, informative about events in Seattle related to the discipline or simply about events that might be enjoyable for students to attend. The point is to encourage conversation among students and among students and faculty, conversation that may extend beyond the lunch, encouraging collegiality and the sharing of information.
- Encourage students and faculty to participate in the events and activities sponsored by GO-MAP, among them the quarterly receptions (Getting Connected, Winter Quarter, and End of the Year) as well as Voices in Academia lunches and other activities listed regularly on the GO-MAP website. These activities have as their major purpose a) the providing of opportunities for students to bring together and discuss with one another their ideas, academic and collegial interests; and b) the fostering of a strong feeling of community among graduate students across departments and disciplines.

## CURRICULAR CHANGE

- Explore ways to address, in curricula, pedagogy, and student/student and student/faculty interactions, scholarly research, writing, and cooperative projects that are inclusive of diversity. This helps to contribute not only to a welcoming climate but also to innovative learning for all.

Examples:

- Drama makes certain there is multicultural content in many of their productions through their partnership with the Ethnic Cultural Theatre;

- Communications established a Diversity News Lab, aimed at training undergraduate journalism students in how to report news stories about diversity issues. The school hosted a summer journalism workshop for the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in the school's new Media Lab. The school requires all TAs to take curriculum units on teaching and interacting in classes that have diverse content. Diversity is encouraged as a research topic.
- Geography emphasizes “human geography (that) directly addresses issues such as international and interregional disparities of wealth, social implications of environmental degradation, and urban and social and economic change.”

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