Best Practices for Recruiting Underrepresented Students

Resources from CGS Recruiting for Success: Inclusiveness Series, UGA Graduate School Strategic Plan, UGA Diversity Strategic Plan, University of Minnesota Recruitment Toolkit

• Set Goals/Establish Criteria for Success
  o Measure current numbers of underrepresented students in graduate programs by departments
  o Familiarize demographics about these students: institutions, geographic region, how are they doing in the program, progress towards completion
  o Review numbers of degrees within the past five years and know the facts to relay to key stakeholders
  o Review what works and what does not. Create and implement assessment plans with learning outcomes

• Locate Funding
  o Collaborate with other departments and industries to secure funding
    ▪ Federal funding (i.e. grants, fellowships)
    ▪ Private funding
  o Allocation of resources from central administration – targeted programs with underrepresented students (i.e. Feeder Program, McNair, GRO)

• Build a case about why your institution and/or academic department is desirable for an inclusive graduate education
  o Key question: What does an underrepresented student see? What is appealing about your institution?
  o Create a list of “selling points” (What’s your brand?)
  o Create a team with an agenda for increasing enrollment of underrepresented graduate students
  o Offer research opportunities and campus visits (i.e. summer research programs, summer campus visits, weekend visits)
  o Offer faculty and/or student mentorship
  o Inclusive curriculum
  o Career placement opportunities
  o Continue to diversify the faculty and staff in departmental units

• Know where to find prospective students
  o Coaching model (start early, identify prospective students, track their progress and establish a relationship with them)
  o Contact faculty at the institutions where prospective students study
  o Develop networks at HBCU’s and HSI’s
- Collaborate with Graduate School to identify prospective graduate students
  - National databases (i.e. McNair Scholars, CURO, National Name Exchange (NNE))
- Expand outreach programs
- Communicate in person rather than the traditional phone call or letter. Personal contact demonstrates intentionality about building a community of inclusivity in graduate programs

**Programs Supporting Diversity and Inclusiveness (Recruitment Pipelines)**

- Alliances for Graduate Education
- Ford Fellowship Predoctoral Fellowships for Minorities
- Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowships for Minorities
- The Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation
- Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program
- Southern Regional Educational Board Doctoral Scholars Program (SREB)

**Retention Initiatives**

- Design a curriculum that aids the transition from undergraduate to graduate school
- Utilize bridge programs (i.e. Graduate School Summer Bridge Program)
- Establish graduate student support groups to assist in retention within academic departments
- Assign incoming graduate students a faculty mentor who is supportive of and sensitive to issues surrounding underrepresented students.
- Provide networking opportunities for graduate students at the university (i.e. directory)