The Big R’s: A Guide to Graduate Student Recruitment and Retention

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WHAT CAN WE DO TO DISTINGUISH OUR UNIVERSITY AND OUR COLLEGES FROM OTHERS?
Fund Competitively

Teamwork 

CAMPUS VISITS research conferences

spread the word colleagues

assessment website

graduate fairs STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Electronic media
RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- Advertise
  - Brochures, posters and conventional mailings
  - Department web page and/or department newsletter(s)
    - Highlight student/faculty accomplishments and collaborations
    - Faculty research interests and successful grants
    - Showcase diversity and development of graduate students as colleagues and professionals
    - Stories and testimonials from current students and alumni
    - Update regularly
  - Professional conference proceedings
RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- Annual multi-level (faculty, staff and student) presence at national recruitment meetings
  - Review conference proceedings for professional associations to identify student presenters

- Spread your net
  - Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)
  - Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)
  - Women’s Colleges
  - Institutions with NSF and NIH pipeline programs (e.g. Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP), Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP), etc.)
RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- Utilize advanced students and alumni as ambassadors
  - Develop a group of reliable (and trained) students and alumni
    - Answer questions, being available for email, personal or phone contact
    - Regional alumni-sponsored informational

- Invite colleagues from other universities and your graduate alumni to give seminars on their current research
  - Encourages visiting faculty to develop connections; feel more comfortable recommending their students to consider your program
  - Request names and emails of their top students
Assist programs with increasing their numbers of high quality and diverse graduate students.

- Advertisement
- Attendance and presentations at recruiting fairs, forums and national conferences
- Student and faculty - supported recruiting
- Funding opportunities for new incoming graduate students
- Professional development workshops
Regional and National Databases to identify top students who are under-represented in identified disciplines (i.e. engineering and science)

- McNair Scholars Program
- National Name Exchange
- National GEM Consortium
- California Diversity Forum
Know your numbers

- Can you answer these questions?
  - How many students get admitted?
  - How many students receive funding (how much and for how many years)?
  - How many students complete their degree programs?
  - What is the average time to degree completion (master/doctorate)?
  - What is the gender and racial/ethnic composition of your department (students and faculty)?
RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- If you invite them, they will come
  - Develop a departmental visit day
    - Area/regional schools to attend
    - Those you have been communicating with or identified through contact cards or colleagues
  - *February/March* are ideal months for recruitment visits
RECRUITING STRATEGIES

- Identify top students early and cultivate talent
  - Electronic Prospective Request Forms
    - Match potential students with faculty and current graduate students
  - Seal the deal
    - Targeted mailings and/or phone calls
    - Quick responses to questions and receipt of information
    - Campus visits
      - Appropriate community resources

- Know your students
  - Tracking database system
    - Where are successful applicants from?
    - How did they find out about your program?
    - Who are their mentors and/or major professors?
RETENTION

- Workshops and seminars
  - Writing and Academic Integrity, Grant proposal writing, Dissertation writing, Stress management, Time management, Managing your finances

- Social events
  - ASK OGS, Evening dialogues, Ice Cream Social

- Partner with graduate student organizations (e.g. GSC, BGSA, HLGSA)

- Develop a tracking, monitoring, and feedback system
  - Obtain regular feedback from students about perceptions of barriers to degree advancement (as well as helpful practices) and perceptions of the faculty’s commitment to diversity.
QUESTIONS?

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