

UC Berkeley Graduate Student Diversity Task Force

Preliminary Detailed Recommendations • June 2020

Recommendations: Outreach, Recruitment and Yield

A. Marketing and Communications

A1. Support departments in their messaging efforts based on a comprehensive branded marketing plan

- Provide customizable templates for brochures and web pages and incorporate principles of universal design

A2. Information about the value of graduate education should be enhanced through greater coordination among Graduate Division, Public Affairs, and Schools and Colleges

- Develop funding guides to make the process of funding doctoral education more transparent

B. Academic Preparation and Early Outreach

B1. Expand the number and reach of Signature Pipeline Programs

B2. Expand research opportunities in summer programs and undergraduate courses on campus.

B3. Continue to strengthen and institutionalize partnerships with the Center for Educational Partnerships, the UC Transfer Centers, and minority-serving institutions to fill gaps in academics and research experiences

C. Recruiting Prospective Applicants

C1. Invest in databases, research, and other tools to identify potential applicants and reach them more strategically

C2. Programs should systematically leverage and build upon relationships to develop more recruiting networks within the UC system, the CSU system, and at minority-serving institutions

C3. Explore the feasibility and cost of hosting “Preview Days” in the Fall or producing branded Berkeley promotional materials

C4. Support college, school and department outreach efforts

D. Yield Activities

D1. Use best practices from the field for communicating with students upon application

D2. Invest in more equitable funding for yield events at the college, school and department levels (where appropriate).

D3. Increase coordination, collaboration, and resources for campus units and other departments to align visit weekends and Diversity Day

D4. Elevate the roles and participation of current students and alumni in recruitment and yield events

Recommendations: Admissions

A. Guidance to the Graduate Division

A1. Consistent messaging from Graduate Division and Equity & Inclusion

- Review policy language to emphasize diversity and inclusion as a component of academic excellence
- Diversity also includes disability and other dimensions; including people of all diverse backgrounds requires more understanding and planning to ensure equitable access to education

A2. Provide critical guidance to admissions and fellowship committees

- Develop our own educational materials on stereotyping, confirmation bias, implicit bias, gender bias, context of achievement, disability accommodations etc.
- Disseminate best practices and diversity resources to committee chairs

A3. Evaluate and assess the outcomes of the multi-year fellowships competition

B. Guidance to Faculty and Department Admissions Committees

B1. Reconsider the composition of admissions committees

- Consider including graduate students, who are key stakeholders and represent the future of the field

B2. Advise departments to implement carefully designed rubrics incorporating holistic review

- Think boldly about evaluation criteria and examine assumptions about merit before starting the evaluation process

- Include “Broader Impacts” as a rating category
- Provide institutional templates in SLATE

B3. Recommend a study evaluating predictive metrics for success

- Letters of recommendation, personal statements and writing samples, previous lab and undergraduate research experience

C. Application Requirements

C1. Expand access to fee waivers, including low socioeconomic status international students

C2. Advise departments to be flexible on GRE requirements

C3. Ensure online applications and websites incorporate universal design

C4. Include proactive communications about accommodations for virtual interviews

C5. Provide clear prompts with explicit instructions for written statements and essay questions

Recommendations: Campus Experience

A. Mentorship and Advising

A1. Clear Expectations and Program Structures

- Graduate Student Handbooks should be held to a campus-level standard that includes communication of program milestones and timelines, as well as campus resources.
- Conduct Academic Progress Reviews on an annual basis, with ongoing reevaluation of plans for student support.

A2. Cultivating Holistic Mentoring Practices

- Develop an onboarding program for new faculty hires on graduate teaching, mentorship, and advising.
- Conduct annual reviews of faculty mentorship and advising and incorporate climate questions into the tenure and promotional review process.
- Create an incentives program for faculty to participate in ongoing trainings on teaching, mentorship, advising, and recognizing/correcting implicit bias.

A3. Advising Plans

- Schools and academic units with multiple degree programs should create different advising plans tailored to academic and professional masters students, which should be made specific components of the external review process.
- Academic mentoring plans should include goals for students to have advisors on record, and plans that the program has in case a student cannot find an advisor without intervention.

A4. Cross-institutional Mentoring, Advising, and Community Building

- Create opportunities for students to share work, develop professional contacts, and engage in a space that is not the campus or department
- The National Science Foundation's "Third Space" can serve as a model for other research fields

B. Basic Needs

B1. Establish a funding model for doctoral students that is equitable, reliable, and promotes doctoral student security and wellbeing.

- Development and reassessment of the model should include consideration of factors such as:
 - Cost of living
 - Impacts of enrollment on diversity of cohorts
 - Increased flexibility in "stacked" funding
- Reconsider policies governing normative time and teaching limits for disabled students

B2. Establish a model for intentional Masters'-to-PhD bridge programs that would also provide UR students equitable, reliable, and adequate funding.

B3. University Owned-and-Operated Housing

- Include more graduate student input when considering increases to university-owned-and-operated housing stock.
- Review and redesign housing policies, waitlists, and assignment practices to allow for alternative contract lengths and increased transparency.
- Explore possibilities to provide prioritized housing for disabled students

B4. Housing Financial Support and Access

- Create a housing liaison to assist students in finding suitable housing, especially for students coming from out of the area or students who would require physical accommodations.
- Bolster financial assistance for housing stipends or offsetting transportation costs.

B5. Basic Needs and Emergency Support Resources

- Collaborate to create a singular, central application for emergency and basic needs support
- Develop a screening process to identify students who are more likely to be basic needs insecure and mobilize resources and communication strategically and proactively.
- Identify and address program and structural barriers that limit graduate student access to existing basic needs resources

C. Wellness

C1. Increase availability of and access to culturally competent mental health services.

- Expand on satellite office model and increase presence in spaces trafficked by UR graduate students.
- Provide targeted financial support to UR students for mental health and wellbeing services.

C2. Destigmatize conversations about mental health and reject the valorization of adversity as part of the graduate student experience.

- Host regular fireside chats on graduate student mental health to continue to encourage open, candid dialogue.
- Develop department-level programming and messaging sharing faculty experiences with mental health and disability, explicitly naming issues, and advocating for a compassion-driven framework.

D. Campus Climate

D1. Task existing diversity initiatives to review goals and progress on graduate student needs (e.g., African American Initiative, HSI Doctoral Diversity Initiative, Disability and Accessibility Planning) to ensure alignment and consistency

D2. Improve local-level infrastructure, support, and assessment of climate for graduate students.

- Support and hold departments accountable to building out internal equity and inclusion committees to identify climate issues in their departments and develop and implement department-specific plans.
- Develop 10 pilot field-specific cluster groups to foster peer-to-peer support

D3. Conduct a review of building facilities for accessible and gender-inclusive facilities

D4. Increase trained staff resources to address climate and retention issues with mediations and restorative justice practices

E. Policing

- E1. Evaluate potential alternatives for relocation of UCPD from Sproul Hall
 - Sproul Plaza is a high-traffic, high-density area for students that also serves as a gateway for the larger public

- E2. Conduct independent assessments on the effectiveness and impact of current training programs in working with communities of color

- E3. Implement trainings and protocols for alternative safety practices
 - Invest in research and development of restorative justice, de-escalation and anti-bias trainings

- E4. Invest in expansion of alternative community programs for safety services
 - This includes expansion of Night Safety Services, BearWalk Escort, night shuttle buses, and door-to-door services.

F. Employment

- F1. Develop a central posting system for Graduate Student Instructor appointments
 - While priority may go to internal candidates, a central posting system provides equitable access to employment opportunities.

- F2. Investigate Graduate Student Instructor and Graduate Student Researcher step inequities across departments and academic units.

G. Communications

- G1. Review and assess campus procedures for communications in response to timely issues.
 - Timeliness and transparency build trust during times of crisis

- G2. Inventory and align communications for critical information about basic needs, mental health and wellness resources.

Top Priorities

Outreach and Recruitment
Prioritize resources to expand pipeline programs, summer research opportunities for prospective and admitted students, and undergraduate courses that strengthen graduate school readiness and opportunities for apprenticeships with faculty
Expand recruitment networks within the California State University and University of California

systems, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and other minority-serving institutions

Support departments with their outreach and communications by developing templates and inclusive website language that incorporate universal design

Admissions

Develop a shared list of admissions principles and practices that center academic excellence, value underrepresented perspectives, affirm a commitment to providing equitable access and funding, and that establish an inclusive foundation for the future of each discipline

Disseminate educational materials for admissions chairs, committees, and equity advisors on stereotyping, confirmation bias, implicit bias, gender bias, and context of achievement

Coordinate with Graduate Division, Equity Advisors and department admissions committees to take contributions to diversity into consideration from the earliest stages of recruitment and admissions

Campus Experience

Establish a funding model for graduate students that is equitable, reliable, and promotes student security, well-being and mental health

Promote practices that create clear expectations and program structures, including holistic mentoring practices that support academic success and foster a culture of well-being

Institute accountability mechanisms to improve local-level infrastructure, support, and assessment of climate for graduate students

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