

# **Diversifying Graduate Programs: Best Practices for Graduate Recruitment and Retention of Native American Students**

Carlos V. Grijalva

Associate Dean

UCLA Graduate Division

Anne Dela Cruz

Director of Outreach &  
Diversity Initiatives

UCLA Graduate Division

## Agenda

- Graduate admissions and application processes
- Outreach and recruitment statistics, literature and best practices
- Increasing the yield of Underrepresented Minority Students (URMs)
- Q&A

# The Native American Student Advocacy Institute

Educating Native Youth for Success: Many Nations, One Vision

## The Importance of Diversity in Higher Education

- Growing concern that our nation is falling behind as the world leader in science innovation and competitiveness which drive economic stability, growth and vitality.
- Heart of the problem is preparing the workforce that maximizes the talent pool from all segment of society.
- U.S. faces lingering problem of inequity of economic opportunity for minority and disadvantaged groups.
- Inequity, in turn, diminishes our national competitiveness and tarnishes our democratic ideals.
- Higher education is one of most effective ways to provide economic opportunity to everyone.
- Underrepresented groups are the natural pool of talent for expanding the research and educational workforce necessary to maintain of pre-eminence in the sciences and technology.

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## Best Practices and Pitfalls in Graduate Admissions Process

- Admissions based on evidence that an applicant has the necessary academic background, intellectual and/or creative attributes necessary for success in graduate studies.
- We as faculty may think that we already know how to review dossiers and assess whether or not the applicants have the “right stuff.”
- We often discover after the first couple of years of graduate study, that their performance was far from predicted.
  - Some individuals with stellar credentials falter early on.
  - Some individuals with mid-range credentials surprise us and excel.

**Selection of individuals for graduate study is by no means a science.**

**Evidence we use to assess applicants qualifications can be quite unreliable in predicting future performance.**

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## Best Practices and Pitfalls in Graduate Admissions Process

**Some admissions practices suggest the unfortunate use of “proxies” rather than an in depth assessment of applicants dossier.**

- Treating the applicant’s undergraduate school as an indicator of the “right stuff.” (Extra points for coming from an elite school, or giving demerits for attending a relatively non-selective school).
- Discount letters from people whose names or reputations we don’t know.
- Attending a school that is not considered in your league – the lack of *polish* often obscures other evidence of high potential for success in graduate studies.
- The reliance on measure that we regard as objective such as the GRE General Test, Subject Area Tests, and undergraduate grades – ***failure to recognize the limitations of the measures.***

# Elements of a Strong Graduate Program Application

## **Main Components:**

- Major and Course Work
- Performance on Standardized Tests
- Engagement and Leadership
- Personal Statement
- Letters of Recommendation

## Major and Course Work

- Develop a program of study in the major that covers required course work for the graduate work.
- Develop **Depth**: Take a progression of courses from introductory (foundational) to more advanced.
- Develop **Breadth**: Take courses in related fields and general education.

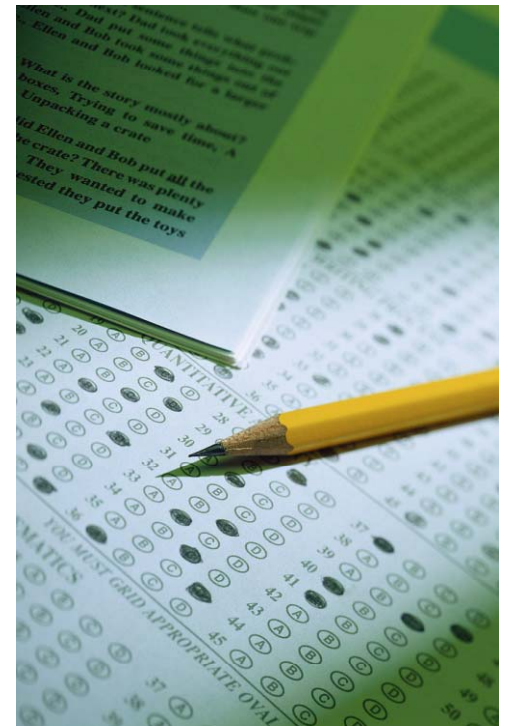


# Performance of Standardized Tests

## The Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

- Find out if the department/program requires the GRE
- The GRE General Test
- Familiarize yourself with the test
  - Verbal Reasoning
  - Quantitative Reasoning
- New GRE General Test (new score scale; test more aligned to skills required for graduate studies)
- GRE Subject Test
- Available resources (Practice tests, etc.)
- Test Prep materials and courses

[www.ets.org/gre/revised\\_general/prepare](http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/prepare)





## **2011-12 Guide to the Use of GRE Scores**

# **Important Guidelines to Remember**

- **Use multiple criteria** (*e.g. undergraduate grade point average, letters of recommendation, personal statement, samples of academic work, and professional experience related to proposed graduate study*). **GRE scores should not be used exclusively.**
- **Consider analytical writing, verbal and quantitative scores as three separate and independent measures.**
- **A cutoff score based only on GRE scores should never be used as a sole criterion for denial of admission.**
- **Avoid decisions based on small score differences.**
- **Do not compare scores from different subject tests.**

# Engagement and Leadership

Strong applicants demonstrate a number of characteristics including ability to work with others, leadership skills, and commitment.



# Engagement and Leadership

## Outside Activities (Extracurricular)

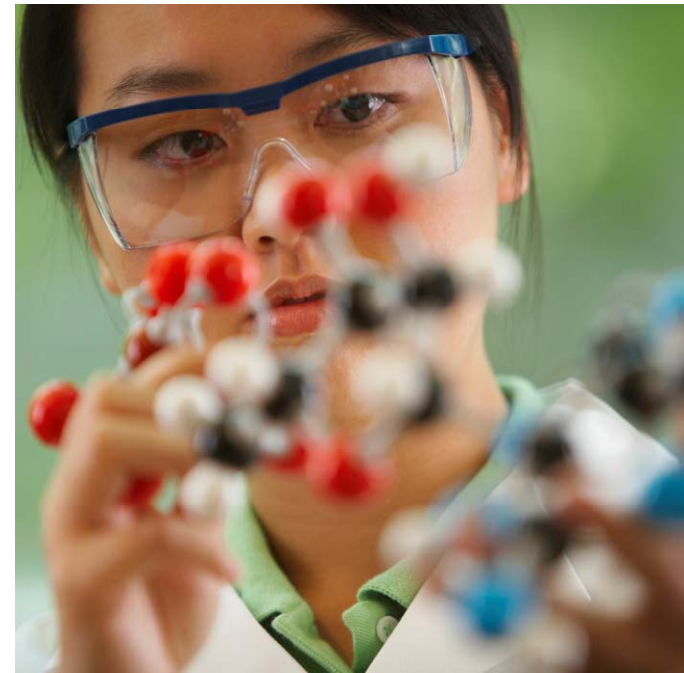
- Sports and athletics (individual/teamwork)
- Professional activities
  - Student organizations
  - Professional Societies
  - Community Activities
  - Tutoring
  - Community Service
  - Volunteer Work
  - Hospitals, Health Care Professions, Shelters, etc.
  - Faith-based Activities
  - Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion



# Engagement and Leadership

## **Research/Internships (Academic Institutions, Industry, Business Sector, etc.).**

- Develop your interests
- Identify your passion
- Develop your analytical, critical thinking and writing skills
- Develop the ability to organize and present your data/information
- Gain relevant experience related to your degree and career objectives



# Engagement and Leadership

## **Sustained Commitment and Focus demonstrates:**

- Maturity
- Persistence
- Ability to overcome obstacles
- Patience
- Time management skills
- Ability to prioritize

Best so do some things well, for sustained period rather than to dabble in many things.



# Letters of Recommendation

- Request letter from professors, supervisors that know you and your work well
- Is a letter from a professor whose class in which you received an “A” necessarily the best choice?
- Is a letter from a distinguished professor necessarily the best choice?



## Personal Statement/Statement of Purpose

**One of the most challenging elements of a strong application**

▪ Know the difference between a *personal statement* and *statement of purpose*

▪ Your voice to the Admissions Committee

➤ **Personal Statement:** Relevant personal background, as well as academic, volunteer, and employment experiences

➤ **Statement of Purpose:** Why you have chosen this particular field and the relevant academic, research, and professional experiences that make you a strong candidate



## The Whole Package

**The whole package needs to be consistent:**

- Your application should showcase your educational trajectory, talents and special characteristics
  - Your accomplishments
  - Your maturity
  - Interpersonal skills
  - Your passion for the field
- What sets you apart from the “pack”
- Why the admissions committee should choose you
- Confirmation and validation from your letter writers





# Outreach and Recruitment

Statistics and Literature

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## REPORT OF APPLICATIONS/ADMITS/ENROLLED FOR PAST ACADEMIC YEAR (AY 2010 – 2011)

AY 2010 - 2011	All	Female	Male	African American	Asian American	Hispanic American	Native American	Other &/or Unknown	White	Inter - national	URM NNE Disciplines*
<b>UNDERGRADUATE</b>											
Applications	61,564	33265	28299	3,325	21,252	13,388	361	1,423	16,064	5,751	17,074
Admits	15,689	8386	7303	464	5,991	2,053	83	482	4,307	2,309	2,600
Enrolled	5,825	3235	2590	224	2,159	979	33	154	1,678	598	1,236
Admissions Rate	0.254840491	0.252096798	0.258065656	0.139548872	0.28190288	0.15334628	0.229916898	0.338721012	0.26811504	0.401495392	0.152278318
Yield	0.37127924	0.385761984	0.354648774	0.482758621	0.360373894	0.476863127	0.397590361	0.319502075	0.389598328	0.258986574	0.475384615
<b>GRADUATE</b>											
Applications	13,113	5,522	7,591	384	1,771	756	50	205	3,873	6,074	1,190
Admits	3,250	1,291	1,959	98	688	227	18	76	1,218	925	343
Enrolled	1,367	566	801	50	298	122	7	26	460	404	179
Admissions Rate	0.247845649	0.233792104	0.258068766	0.255208333	0.388481084	0.30026455	0.36	0.370731707	0.314484895	0.152288443	0.288235294
Yield	0.420615385	0.43841983	0.408882083	0.510204082	0.433139535	0.537444934	0.388888889	0.342105263	0.377668309	0.436756757	0.521865889
<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>											
Applications	27,705	13,263	14,426	1,743	6,525	2,482	197	2,459	9,645	4,654	4,422
Admits	5,515	2,813	2,702	252	1,243	481	33	443	2,152	911	766
Enrolled	2,508	1,203	1,305	131	651	262	19	136	972	337	412
Admissions Rate	0.199061541	0.212093795	0.187300707	0.144578313	0.190498084	0.193795326	0.16751269	0.180154534	0.223120788	0.195745595	0.173224785
Yield	0.454759746	0.427657305	0.482975574	0.51984127	0.523732904	0.544698545	0.575757576	0.306997743	0.451672862	0.369923161	0.537859008
<b>TOTAL GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL</b>											
Applications	40,818	18,785	22,017	2,127	8,296	3,238	247	2,664	13,518	10,728	5,612
Admits	8,765	4,104	4,661	350	1,931	708	51	519	3,370	1,836	1,109
Enrolled	3,875	1,769	2,106	181	949	384	26	162	1,432	741	591
Admissions Rate	0.214733696	0.218472185	0.21170005	0.164551011	0.232762777	0.21865349	0.206477733	0.19481982	0.249297233	0.17114094	0.197612259
Yield	0.442099258	0.431042885	0.45183437	0.517142857	0.491455205	0.542372881	0.509803922	0.312138728	0.424925816	0.403594771	0.532912534

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## UCLA American Indian Graduate Students

As of March 2012

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Count</b>
MS	Aerospace Engineering	1
MA	African Studies	1
MA	American Indian Studies	6
MA	Applied Linguistics	1
PhD	Art History	1
PhD	Biomedical Engineering	1
PhD	Biomedical Physics	1
PhD	Biostatistics	1
PhD	Chemistry	1
MFA	Design   Media Arts	1
EdD	Educational Leadership Program	1
EdM	Education	8
PhD	Education	2

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UCLA American Indian Graduate Students

As of March 2012

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Count</b>
MS	Electrical Engineering	1
MS	Engineering	1
PhD	Epidemiology	1
MBA	Executive MBA	3
MA	Film & TV	1
MFA	Film & TV	2
PhD	Film & TV	1
MBA	Fully Employed MBA	3
PhD	Geochemistry	1
PhD	Hispanic Language and Literature	1
PhD	History	3
MLI	Library & Information Sciences	4
MBA	Full-Time MBA	3

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## UCLA American Indian Graduate Students

As of March 2012

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Count</b>
PhD	Material Science & Engineering	1
PhD	Mechanical Engineering	1
PhD	Molecular Toxicology	1
MA	Moving Image Arc Studies	1
PhD	Near Eastern Languages	1
MSN	Nursing	4
PhD	Nursing	1
PhD	Physics	1
PhD	Psychology	1
MPH	Public Health	2
PhD	Public Health	2
MSW	Social Welfare	5
MFA	Theater	1

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## UCLA American Indian Graduate Students

As of March 2012

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Count</b>
MURP	Urban & Regional Planning	2
PhD	Women's Studies	1

Total UCLA Native American Graduate Students: 76

# **The Native American Student Advocacy Institute**

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## **Literature on Native American Students' Barriers To Higher Education**

- Demographic and geographic barriers exist for Native American psychology undergraduates including geographic concentration, rural locations, lack of financial resources, and admissions criteria (Thomason, 1999)
- Obstacles include lack of support from immediate family and significant others, discrimination, feeling of not fitting in when returning home (Juntunen et. al., 2001)
- Graduate nursing students experience faculty-student relationship barriers, rigid academic environment, strategies to survive, value conflicts, and feeling isolation from main student body (Dickerson, Neary and Hyche-Johnson, 2000)

## **Literature on Academic Persistence**

- Undergraduate Native American seniors note the following in assisting retention: family, social structured support (clubs), faculty/staff interactions, exposure to college experiences and vocations, development of independence and assertiveness, reliance on spiritual resources, dealing with racism, nonlinear academic paths, and paradoxical cultural pressure (Jackson, Smith, and Hill, 2003)
- Universities that provide Native and Non-Native university resources must bridge an understanding between value systems (Belgarde and Lore, 2004)



# Outreach and Recruitment

## Best Practices

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## Outreach and recruitment events

- Recruitment fair and conferences throughout the year, including presence at American Indian reservations
- Campus tours for prospective graduate students
- Graduate School presentations on Applying, Funding Options, and Summer Programs



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## Creating partnerships and pipelines

- **Early preparation** for graduate school admission (including departmental visits, summer programs, etc.)
- **Strategy discussions** with current students, faculty, and staff to discuss outreach and diversity initiatives
- **Building relationships** with CSUs, Tribal Colleges, HBCUs, and Minority Serving Institutions

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## What Graduate Divisions Should Provide to Departments

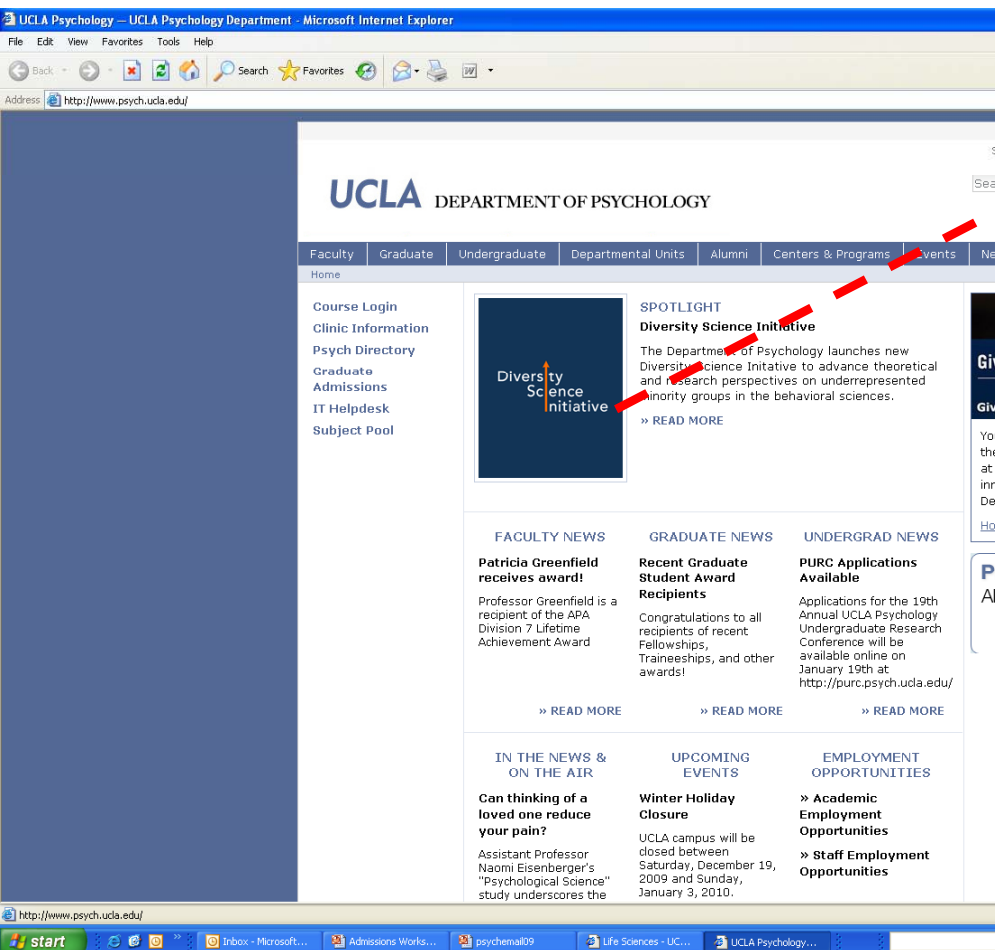
- Sharing relevant diversity and outreach information to departmental staff
- Collaborating on student recruitment and retention initiatives, including summer programs and departmental visits
- Providing strategies and best practices support for departmental outreach and diversity efforts





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## Educating Native Youth for Success: Many Nations, One Vision

### 2010 Psychology Department Website and Diversity Initiatives





DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



## Diversity Science Initiative


### Applying to Graduate School? See Yourself Here.

The [UCLA Department of Psychology](#) is on the cutting edge of the study of diversity. The [Diversity Science Initiative](#) at UCLA aims to advance theoretical and research perspectives on underrepresented minority groups in the behavioral sciences.

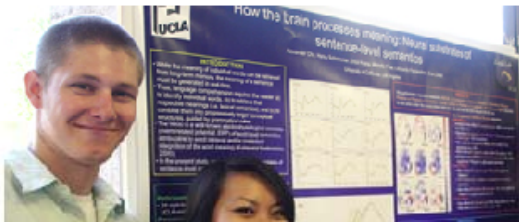


**The cutting edge**  
Our faculty includes premier scholars leading the study of diversity in psychology

Scholars study topics spanning disparities in health and mental health, bio-behavioral mechanisms explaining disparities, intergroup relations and conflict, social identity and social cognition, and diversity in development across the lifespan and across social contexts. Diversity Science extends behavioral science to understudied populations including racial/ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, individuals with minority sexual orientations, and diverse socio-economic classes.



**See yourself here**  
Personal experiences and cultural heritage inform your studies at UCLA



**Taking the next step?**  
UCLA offers excellent support for diversity science research

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## RECRUIT: Best Practices

- Screen shot of Poli Sci Diversity website to illustrate new communication strategies?



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## Outreach & Diversity Best Practices Toolkit

- **Online resource** geared to support departmental outreach and recruitment
- **Will include templates, scripts, and fliers** to help departments interface with prospective students
- **Workshops, webinars and recordings** to share outreach and diversity best practices to engage prospective students

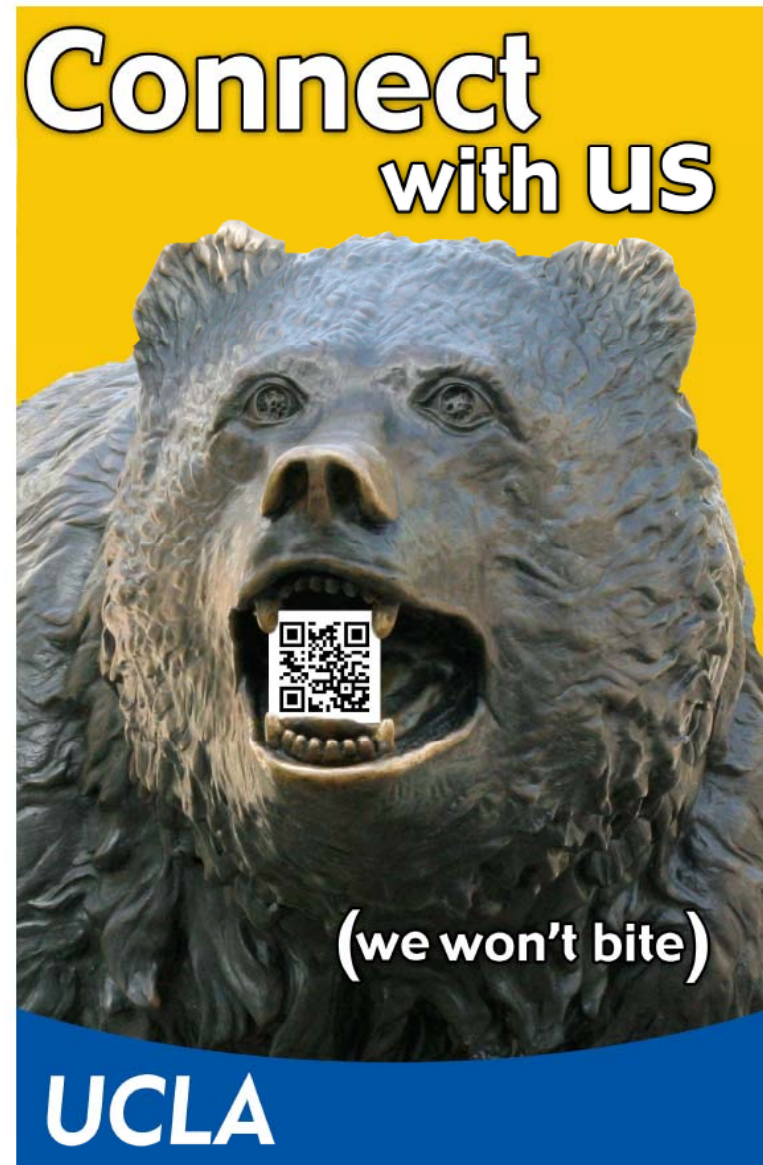


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## Recruiting Best Practices

- Follow up with admits while they continue to shop
- Make personal calls after they are admitted
- Plan a campus visit and tours (to collaborate with SAOs)
- Connect admits with current grad students to build relationships
- Highlight Graduate Student Groups: Graduate Student Association (GSA), American Indian Graduate Student Association, Graduate Students of Color (GSOC), UCLA SACNAS Chapter, STEM-Pledge





## **Welcoming Best Practices: The Personal Touch Counts a Lot Active Role of Faculty is Critical**

- **Make personal calls to students after they are admitted**
- **Be available and responsive to questions by email and/or the during campus visit (e.g., office hours/ lab tours)**
- **Follow-up after the campus visit**

## **Welcoming Best Practices: The Personal Touch Counts a Lot**

### Campus Visit

- Fund a campus visit – utilize Recruitment Travel Funds
- Consider a virtual campus visit, e.g., videoconference or teleconference call
- “Open House” – meet with other recruits, current graduate students, faculty, staff
- Have a program to inform students of department and faculty research interests and activities & of other academic supports
- **Admittees are comparison shopping**

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## Packaging UCLA To Prospective Graduate Students

- Provide competitive fellowships - multi-year are attractive
- Note: Supplement to recruitment travel funds. At UCLA \$250 for in-state and \$500 for out-of-state for each Cota-Robles and GOFP student provided by Graduate Division
- Rich, graduate student experience at UCLA including student support and resources
- Address housing options

# **Increasing the Yield of Underrepresented Minority (URM) Admits**

## **REVIEWING APPLICATIONS:**

### **Guidelines for Evaluating Contributions to Diversity for Graduate Admissions (500.13)\***

**“University policy states that an applicant’s race or gender may not be considered in selection for student or faculty appointments. However, to attract excellent graduate students who will contribute to the University’s diversity imperative, departments may give special consideration to the following factors in selecting graduate students for admission (and financial support):”**

***\*Guidelines for the Graduate Admissions Process and  
Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate  
Admissions – UCLA Graduate Council rev. 2009***

***<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/gccodific.pdf>***

## **Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions**

**Applicants who have engaged in service efforts or programs to increase participation in:**

- **science**
- **education**
- **humanities**
- **fine arts**
- **or social sciences**

**by groups historically underrepresented in higher education (e.g., participation as an undergraduate in programs designed to remove barriers to students from underrepresented groups, record of mentoring other students from groups underrepresented in their field).**

## **Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions**

**Applicants who have the potential to contribute to their graduate program through their understanding of the barriers facing**

- women**
- domestic minorities**
- students with disabilities**
- and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education careers**

**as evidenced by life experiences and educational background**  
*(e.g., attendance at a minority-serving institution).*

## **Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions**

Applicants who display drive and motivation to persist and succeed in their careers in spite of barriers in higher education that disproportionately disadvantage them.

Applicants with the potential to bring to their research the creative critical discourse that comes from their non-traditional educational background or experience as a member of a group underrepresented in higher education.



## **Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions**

Applicants who, in addition to their primary field of interest, have the potential to make research contributions to understanding the barriers facing women and domestic minorities in science and other academic disciplines.

Applicants who have research interests in subjects that will contribute to diversity and equal opportunity in higher education.

## **URM Doctoral Survey**

- **Online survey**
- **To all URMs doctoral students who were admitted for Fall 2007 and Fall 2008**
- **Sent parallel surveys to**
  - **Those who came to UCLA (n=199)**
  - **Those who declined our admission offer (n=162)**
- **Excellent response rates so far**
  - **Those who came = 59%**
  - **Those who declined = 59%**

# **URM Doctoral Survey**

## **Survey Questions:**

- **What contact with UCLA?**
- **Components of their financial support package**
- **Importance of specific factors in decision to attend UCLA**
  - **Quality of life**
  - **Program issues**
  - **Recruitment**
- **Compare UCLA funding with other institutions**
- **Was there anything that UCLA/your program did specifically to convince you to enroll?**

# **URM Survey Preliminary Results – Recruitment**

**Percent that marked “very important”**

<b>Recruitment Item</b>	<b>Attending</b>	<b>Declined</b>
Contact with faculty	69.8%	69.0%
Contact with current graduate students	60.3%	52.3%
Contact with staff	28.4%	23.3%
Campus visit(s) / information day / open house	41.7%	52.3%
Off-campus information session / graduate student fair	7.1%	8.4%

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## During the admissions process, what contact did you have with UCLA?

Percent that marked “yes”

Admissions Contact	Attending	Declined
Contact with UCLA <u>faculty</u>	91.2% >	84.1%
Contact with current UCLA <u>graduate students</u>	74.8% >	59.1%
Contact with UCLA <u>staff</u>	79.1%	72.4%
Campus <u>visit</u> (such as information day or open house)	80.4% >	59.8%
Off-campus information session (such as graduate student fairs)	15.0%	11.0%
Other—please describe below.	23.1%	16.2%

## **More Preliminary URM Survey Results**

### **Accepted our Offer of Admission**

- **“My faculty advisor personally called me...”**
- **“The chair of the department called me...”**

### **Declined our Offer of Admission**

- **“Funding concerns definitely influenced my decision. However, the critical factor in my decision was the way that the faculty at my current institution treated me throughout the application process....”**
- **“I was struck by the formulaic and somewhat faceless character of my acceptance from UCLA....”**

# **Give Attention to the Cohort**

- A critical mass of URM faculty & students is a measure of a welcoming environment
- Strengthen your welcome by having new recruits meet with advanced URM graduate students and by connecting students to the Graduate Division's Office of Outreach, Diversity & Fellowships

# **Give Attention to the Cohort**

**Provide information on graduate student organizations such as:**

- American Indian Graduate Students Association
- Graduate Students of Color (GSOC)
- Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA)
- Raza Graduate Students Association (RGSA)
- STEM-PLEDGE



# **Funding: How to Tip the Decision**

**A strong student financial support package is critical; know your competition and their offers**

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Please select the items that were included in your UCLA financial support package.

Percent that marked “yes”

Financial Support	Percent that marked “yes”	
	Attending	Declined
Single-year package	33.0% >	21.3%
Multi-year package	58.7%	59.0%
Stipend	68.5%	67.1%
Fellowship	76.8% >	60.2%
Employment as research assistant	26.5%	30.3%
Employment as teaching assistant	47.1%	46.8%
Loan	39.6% >	18.7%
Financial aid (e.g. federal work study)	16.3%	10.8%
Housing guarantee	48.1% >	29.9%
Other – Please describe below.	11.7%	12.3%

**Quality of life issues** Percent that marked “very important”

Quality of Life Item	Attending	Declined
Geographic location	65.5% >	37.9%
Urban environment	33.9% >	25.3%
Cost of living in general	17.2%	< 35.6%
Availability & affordability of child care	4.3%	3.4%
Availability & affordability of housing	28.7%	29.9%
Diversity of student body	51.7% >	27.6%
Diversity of surrounding community	41.4% >	24.1%
Size of institution	21.6%	19.5%
Size of doctoral program	33.0% >	20.7%

## **Increasing the Yield**

### **Depts: Making Information Accessible**

- **Provide contacts of faculty, staff, and graduate students willing to answer questions**
- **Keep the department website up-to-date with information on/links to:**
  - Faculty
  - Program requirements
  - Distinctions
  - Time-to-degree
  - Housing
  - Career services/placement
  - Transportation

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## UCLA Graduate Outreach & Diversity Initiatives Contacts

- Carlos Grijalva (62281)  
Associate Dean  
[cgrijalva@grad.ucla.edu](mailto:cgrijalva@grad.ucla.edu)
- Anne Dela Cruz (53829)  
Director, Outreach & Diversity  
[adelacruz@grad.ucla.edu](mailto:adelacruz@grad.ucla.edu)
- Anna Guzman (53953)  
Program Coordinator  
[aguzman@grad.ucla.edu](mailto:aguzman@grad.ucla.edu)
- Jozen Gibson (68743)  
Student Affairs Officer  
[jgibson@grad.ucla.edu](mailto:jgibson@grad.ucla.edu)

