

Diversity Best Practices

Graduate Students

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Theme	Types of programs and initiatives	Princeton examples
<p><i>Recruitment initiatives</i></p>	<p>Develop summer research programs to bring promising non-Princeton undergraduates to campus to build their research experience through close interaction with faculty members, postdocs, and advanced graduate students. These students conduct original research on which they receive detailed feedback. Students in these programs often receive additional graduate admissions counseling and support about how to navigate the graduate application process. The vast majority will go on to graduate school; some will be competitive for our graduate programs.</p>	<p>The Graduate School’s Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (PSURE) provides opportunities for up to 20 summer students each year.</p> <p>Successful departmental summer programs exist in Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Princeton Institute for the Science and Technology of Materials (PRISM) / Princeton Center for Complex Materials (PCCM), and Mid-InfraRed Technologies for Health and the Environment (MIRTHE).</p>
	<p>Host undergraduate research conferences to allow promising students to share their research with faculty members and peers. These conferences can be poster sessions or panel presentations. They can be run as stand-alone conferences for prospective graduate students who have conducted research or be the culmination of a summer research experience at Princeton.</p>	<p>Molecular Biology and the Lewis-Sigler Institute have hosted a conference as part of its summer research program.</p> <p>The School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS) will be hosting a Princeton Engineering Graduate Symposium in Fall 2013.</p>
	<p>Create faculty exchanges to bring faculty members from minority-serving institutions (such as historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges, and women’s colleges) to Princeton for a summer research opportunity in which they collaborate with our faculty members. This provides faculty visitors with first-hand experience of Princeton, which makes them better able to recommend it to their top undergraduate students for graduate study.</p>	<p>Molecular Biology has hosted faculty visitors from Morehouse and Spelman Colleges.</p>

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<p><i>Recruitment initiatives (cont.)</i></p>	<p>Encourage Princeton undergraduates and master’s students to pursue academic careers. Initiatives to encourage Princeton students or recent alumni to pursue doctorates could expand the very small pool of underrepresented minority (URM) individuals on the pathway to the professoriate. For example, high potential sophomores could be hired as summer research assistants to explore academia as a career.</p> <p>We should also consider encouraging our alumni to pursue doctorates at Princeton. Historically, departments here and among our peers have had informal policies against accepting their own undergraduates as doctoral students. The rationale was that exposure to a different context provided new insight, experiences, and contacts enriching to young scholars. These policies require some of our most talented students to choose other institutions, even though staying at Princeton might be their first choice. Some of our peers have started to relax such policies to hold onto their alumni with the highest potential for academic success.</p>	<p>Through the Office of the Dean of the College, Princeton has long been a participant in the Mellon-Mays Fellowship program which provides programmatic and financial support to URM undergraduates interested in pursuing doctorates in select academic fields.</p>
	<p>Develop a visiting student program for non-Princeton undergraduates to spend their junior year taking courses at Princeton. The goal is to provide first-hand exposure to individuals who may be potential graduate students. These selective programs often involve partnerships between research universities and undergraduate colleges that do not have the breadth of faculty members or infrastructure to support advanced coursework and independent research. These programs are most successful when several students from a college come together as a cohort. Attention should be paid to ensure that these students are academically and socially well-integrated. Such programs could be developed at a departmental or central administrative level.</p>	<p>SEAS has a modest, two-way exchange program with Smith College.</p>

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<p><i>Admissions, yield, and post-baccalaureate initiatives</i></p>	<p>Engage in intensive off-campus recruiting to build a pool of highly qualified applicants. High-potential underrepresented applicants are sometimes hesitant to apply without active invitations and encouragement from people they trust. Therefore, recruitment efforts are most effective when they are targeted.</p> <p>Strong candidates can be found through pre-admission initiatives run by Princeton, peer institutions, or government agencies/foundations. There are also minority student conferences in many disciplines that can be great opportunities for recruitment. In addition, targeted recruitment at minority-serving institutions can be effective, especially if the recruiter or department has developed relationships to key faculty members at the target institution. Princeton faculty members are the most effective ambassadors for their departments; they may require incentives and support for participation. Advanced graduate students and staff members can also be effective recruiters.</p> <p>Beyond undergraduates and recent alumni, departments should aim to identify successful students in terminal master’s degree programs who are interested in doctoral study. Research shows that minority students often pursue master’s degrees as a ‘stepping stone’ to doctoral work.</p> <p>Once students are identified, they must be tracked and actively engaged throughout the application process. This work can be staff-led and supported through new database technology.</p>	<p>The Graduate School appoints Diversity Fellows, current graduate students at the dissertation writing stage of their programs, to follow up with prospective students to encourage them to apply to Princeton. These Fellows also support on-campus programming for both recruitment and retention and occasionally travel with office staff to recruitment events and conferences. Diversity Fellows are paid a modest salary.</p> <p>Molecular Biology has been engaged in active outreach efforts including regular attendance at two key conferences that draw minority students interested in the life sciences. Attendees include faculty members, advanced minority graduate students, and staff members.</p> <p>The Graduate School is working with the CollegeNet admissions system to expand the current technology in order to allow departments to better manage contact with prospective graduate students.</p> <p>SEAS recruits at national conferences, symposiums, and colleges/universities.</p>
	<p>Host on-campus events such as open houses and preview days to engage potential graduate students or those who have been accepted and are deciding where to attend. These events are most effective when the invitations are targeted (for example, to invitees that have been selected or nominated by a mentor) and when prospective applicants have an opportunity for intellectual engagement with faculty members. Participants should gain exposure to the wide range of academic and non-academic resources that Princeton offers. Such events should include contact with current graduate students and an opportunity to learn about social and family life in Princeton, which can be an important factor to student decision making.</p>	<p>The Graduate School coordinates Open Houses and a Preview Day program which brings Mellon-Mays Fellows and McNair Scholars to campus. (Both programs that target high-potential underrepresented undergraduates interested in doctoral programs).</p> <p>Some departments also host open house activities for prospective applicants.</p>

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<i>Admissions, yield, and post-baccalaureate initiatives (cont.)</i>	<p>Grant fee waivers to reduce barriers for highly qualified graduate applicants. Many minority students apply to graduate programs where they perceive their chances of admission are high. As such, they may fail to apply to the strongest programs in their field believing that — given the low rate of admission — they are “wasting” the application fee. Experience shows that waiving the application fee can significantly increase the number of minority applicants. This is due both to the removal of the financial barrier and sending a positive signal about the worthiness of the candidate.</p>	<p>The Graduate School and SEAS offer fee waivers to applicants when they are requested. Molecular Biology actively offers them to potential applicants they meet at specific conferences or who have participated in certain pipeline programs.</p>
	<p>Offer early admission to high potential applicants to signal Princeton’s interest in their candidacy. Receiving such an offer can increase an applicant’s interest in Princeton and our ability to convince them to enroll. It may also reduce their interest in applying to other institutions.</p>	<p>Some of our academic departments already make early, non-binding offers to their strongest and most coveted graduate applicants before regular acceptance letters are mailed.</p> <p>‘Likely Letters’ are also used by all Ivy League schools at the undergraduate level to indicate to applicants that they are likely to be admitted.</p>
	<p>Engage in holistic applicant review by conducting a thorough evaluation of all available information to determine the likelihood of a doctoral applicant’s success at Princeton. The best predictors of doctoral completion and success include research experience and aptitude, creativity, perseverance, flexibility, grit, and passion. While GPAs and GRE scores are important and must be considered, they are more useful as markers of preparation than predictors of future success.</p>	<p>Since Molecular Biology took this approach, it has been able to admit an equally talented but much more diverse cohort of doctoral students. Several other departments also use this approach.</p> <p>At the beginning of each admissions season, the Graduate School sends each department a best practice guide to graduate admissions which encourages a holistic review.</p>

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<p><i>Admissions, yield, and post-baccalaureate initiatives (cont.)</i></p>	<p>Develop ‘bridge’ research positions to provide promising students with a bachelor’s degree with the opportunity to gain additional research experience. Some students, especially those who attended institutions without a strong research orientation, may not have gained sufficient research experience as undergraduates. Providing them with a two-year fully funded research position allows them to get the necessary experience to be competitive doctoral applicants. Departments could create and advertise such positions; they might also consider offering such positions to doctoral applicants with high potential but insufficient experience.</p>	<p>Physics will be piloting a bridge program this fall and the Graduate School is working in collaboration with several national professional societies in order to expand bridge program offerings.</p>
<p><i>Retention, completion, and success</i></p>	<p>Offer late summer ‘boot camp’ courses for entering doctoral students to ensure they have the content and skills they need to be successful in the program. In addition to academic expertise, students learn how to navigate graduate student life. They also form close bonds with their peers and with the faculty members that teach them. These points of contact can be enormously valuable in ensuring that students have the resources and support they need to be successful.</p>	<p>Several departments host such courses including Molecular Biology, the Woodrow Wilson School, and Economics.</p> <p>Graduate students are already eligible for Early Arrival and may arrive to campus as early as July 1.</p> <p>We have long held a similar program for undergraduates called the Freshman Scholars Institute.</p>
	<p>Strengthen and formalize mentoring relationships which are critical to graduate student success. The right advice, support, and sponsorship from mentors can significantly advance a career. Mentoring is particularly important for minority and female graduate students who sometimes require additional encouragement and support to overcome their own hesitations or unconscious bias from others. An ideal mentorship relationship involves a mentor who actively and assertively engages with the mentee and advances his or her opportunities for research, teaching, publication, postdocs or faculty positions, and other leadership opportunities. Good mentorship can be learned and must be rewarded; it should involve incentives and training for both mentor and mentee. Given the number of demands placed on our faculty; we should also experiment with peer, alumni, staff, or emeritus faculty mentorship models.</p>	<p>The Graduate School convened a Professional Development Working Group with students, faculty and staff to address many of these issues and will launch expanded programming this fall to address issues related to mentoring and professional development for all graduate students.</p>

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<p><i>Retention, completion, and success (cont.)</i></p>	<p>Offer departmental academic and social programming designed to support student success and encourage students to take full advantage of Graduate School offerings. Many diversity efforts are focused on recruitment, but students often require additional support to complete their doctorates successfully. They may also need additional discipline-specific training to remain competitive for postdoc and faculty positions.</p> <p>Some of this programming should focus on non-academic skills that will contribute to future success including budgeting, communications, grant-writing, people management, negotiation, and fundraising. These skills will be especially valuable to those in the sciences and engineering who may be managing the staff and budgets of their laboratory. Other programming should focus on ensuring that students are happy and fulfilled socially and in their family life.</p>	<p>The Graduate School has several initiatives including the Academic Success Series Seminars, Dissertation Writing Groups, and Heritage Month programming.</p>
	<p>Encourage more underrepresented doctoral students to pursue academic careers. The transition from doctoral student to postdoc is a critical stage in the faculty pipeline (especially in the sciences and engineering) when many women and racial minorities opt out of pursuing academic careers. Efforts should be made to support academic aspirations by coaching students looking for postdocs or faculty positions, encouraging individuals to think broadly about the types of academic institutions where they might work (looking beyond research-intensive universities), and helping them to find support during the years they may be on the job market.</p>	<p>The Graduate School has offered workshops and seminars on Preparing Future Faculty which feature current Princeton faculty members and provide a forum for students to address issues related to careers in the academy and beyond.</p> <p>SEAS sponsors the Wesley L. Harris Scientific Society, an organization devoted to encouraging students from communities that are underrepresented in engineering and the sciences to pursue research careers.</p>
	<p>Promote family-friendly initiatives to prospective and enrolled graduate students to ensure that they have the tools they need for appropriate work/life balance and their family members also have resources to thrive in Princeton. Departments can support work/life balance in numerous ways. For example, they can schedule important department meetings or seminars with sensitivity to daycare and school schedules.</p>	<p>Princeton has made significant progress in this area over the last ten years including the development of a new on-campus child care center scheduled to open in 2017; a need-based child care subsidy program; and a robust emergency backup care program for family members whose regular child, adult, or elder care services are disrupted.</p>