

**Recruiting Students of Color and Socio-
Economically Disadvantaged Students**

A Strategic Plan for 2005-2010

Office of Academic Affairs

Princeton Graduate School

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I. Background.

The context for much of this report and its recommendation may be found, in part, in figures contained in Table 1. This table shows that while the number of degree candidates over the last ten years has grown, the number of underrepresented minority students (at present the Graduate School does not track the socio-economic background of its matriculants)—African American, Hispanic, and Native American—has declined, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the degree candidate population of the Graduate School. The population of African American graduate students has dwindled slowly from 50 total enrolled in the fall of 1999 to 42 at opening enrollment last year. The number of Hispanic graduate students has grown since 1999, but fallen off from the numbers of students enrolled in 2000-2002. Native American graduate students represent a trace percentage of the population. Only the number of Asian American graduate students has grown appreciably since fall 1999 (from 104 to 147), but even with this growth the percentage of minority students in the graduate school has hovered at about 12.5%, while the percentage of underrepresented minority students has slipped from 5.8% to 5.1%. The purpose of this report is to suggest some changes in approach to arrest this condition and, indeed, to reverse it.

Table 1. 1993 and 1998-2003 Graduate School Enrollment Data for Minority Students and Percent Change Over Ten Years

	1993	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Δ 1993 v. 2003
GS Enrollment	1861	1730	1734	1853	1902	1975	1978	6.2%
% Change (+/-)		-7.0%	0.2%	6.9%	2.6%	3.8%	0.1%	
African American	58	46	50	47	43	44	42	-28%
% of Enrollees	3.1%	2.6%	2.8%	2.5%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	
Hispanic	49	52	47	60	61	61	57	16.3%
% of Enrollees	2.6%	2.9%	2.7%	3.2%	3.2%	3.1%	2.8%	
Native Americans	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	(200%)
% of Enrollees	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	
Asian Americans	118	112	104	127	133	140	147	24.6%
% of Enrollees	6.3%	6.4%	5.9%	6.7%	6.9%	7.1%	7.3%	
Total Minority	226	213	203	236	239	247	249	10.2%
% of Enrollees	12.1%	12.3%	11.7%	12.7%	12.6%	12.5%	12.6%	
Total Underrepresented	108	101	99	109	104	107	102	-5.6%
% of Enrollees	5.8%	5.8%	5.7%	5.9%	5.5%	5.4%	5.1%	

Unfortunately, we are unable to construct a similar table for persons who are socio-economically disadvantaged. This is because the Graduate School has moved to an exclusive merit-based fellowship award process for doctoral students and gives guaranteed stipend support- regardless of financial need. Hence, beginning this fall, we will re-tool our current reporting structure to collect data about a prospective student's socio-economic status to permit the collection of socio-economic data for past and current graduate students, and identify programs nationwide that target this particular segment of the population in an effort to increase the number of disadvantaged student matriculants.

In the interim, we present the following report for racial and ethnic diversity with the understanding that the strategies detailed programs highlighted herein no longer exclusively target underrepresented minority students but now have broadened their target audience to include persons from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

II. Timetable and Goals.

In order to know whether or not any plan has been successful, one needs to have established clear goals and set a definite time within which those goals should be met. The Graduate School's recruitment efforts have, to date, had only very general goals (*e.g.*, "increase the applicant pool of minority students," but by how much? Of what group? Or of all groups?) and no very definite time frame for any given set of activities (*e.g.*, we have been traveling to recruitment "fairs" for a very long time. Are they still worth it? Which ones are worth it, and how do we know? Memberships in various consortia—is it ever time to bow out?). A place to start, then, is to define a period or periods of time within which the Graduate School will undertake specific recruitment and retention activities designed to increase the number of underrepresented students of color and socio-economically disadvantaged students in its program.

Recommendation. That the Graduate School identify the five-year period of academic year 2004-5 to 2009-10 to achieve a set of specific goals with respect to enrolling and retaining a critical mass of African-American and Hispanic graduate students, assess efforts and progress at the end of that period, and then embark on a second five-year period, academic years 2010-11 to 2015-16 to accomplish a revised and more ambitious set of goals.

What should these goals be? The focus groups that were held with graduate students as a part of the Graduate School's self-assessment exercise in 2002-3, and the more limited discussions the academic affairs office held with selected first-year students of color this past year, both have suggested that a problem, if not the problem, is one of numbers. That is, there are simply too few African American and Hispanic graduate students, especially doctoral students, currently enrolled to be called a "critical mass" of graduate students of color. Only the Woodrow Wilson School's M.P.A. program consistently recruits, admits, enrolls and graduates a sizeable fraction of Black and Latino students—between 15% and 18% of each entering class—and the percentage is higher if (as the School does) it counts Asian Americans as underrepresented in the field of public policy; then the percentage rises to 25% of each class.

Recommendation. The Graduate School would propose increasing the percentage of African American graduate students from its current 2% of enrollment to 4% and the percentage of Hispanic students from c. 2.5% to 5% of total enrollment by the Fall of 2010. Given the half-percent authorized/projected growth rate of the Graduate School over the next several years, we would expect to see 86 African Americans and 107 Hispanics enrolled in the Fall of 2010.

To achieve these goals means breaking the process of admission down into the components of building the pool of applicants, admission to programs from that pool, and then attracting the admitted students to Princeton. Table 2 shows these figures historically. They suggest that the Graduate School would have to more than double the size of the Black applicant pool in order to produce, at current admit rates of 15-16%, a number of admitted students (between 50 and 55) from which, at an average yield rate of 50%, an entering class of c. 25 new students would come. For Hispanic students, the pool would have to increase by 75% to produce, at a 17% selectivity rate, 55-60 new admits, from which an entering class of 27-30 new students might be realized.

Table 2. Applicant Pool Size, Selectivity, and Yield for Underrepresented Minority Students from 1995-96 to 2004-05										
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Total Applicant Pool	6086	6385	6109	5725	6536	7034	7263	8982	9071	7738
African American										
Applied	154	149	159	126	144	113	130	158	219	177
% Pool	2.5%	2.3%	2.6%	2.2%	2.2%	1.6%	1.8%	1.8%	2.4%	2.3%
Admittance	18	19	19	24	31	26	29	21	27	28
Select	11.7%	12.8%	11.9%	19.0%	21.5%	23.0%	22.3%	13.3%	12.3%	15.8%
Acc	7	10	13	12	16	16	15	7	16	17
Yield	39%	53%	68%	50%	52%	62%	52%	33%	59%	61%
Hispanic										
Applied	182	205	208	128	99	108	169	196	236	246
% Pool	3.0%	3.2%	3.4%	2.2%	1.5%	1.5%	2.3%	2.2%	2.6%	3.2%
Admittance	32	27	40	21	18	22	30	33	33	27
Select	18%	13%	19%	16%	18%	20%	18%	17%	14%	11%
Acc	13	16	13	9	14	13	16	17	14	11
Yield	41%	59%	33%	43%	78%	59%	53%	52%	42%	41%
Native American										
Applied	13	22	6	10	14	17	12	9	25	12
% Pool	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Admittance	4	3	0	0	2	4	1	0	3	0
Select	31%	14%	0%	0%	14%	24%	8%	0%	12%	0%
Acc	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
Yield	75%	33%	-	-	0%	25%	0%	-	67%	-

At least five separate variables—size and quality of applicant pool, admission rate from that pool by departments, yield from the admit pool of matriculating students, and satisfaction and success of those students once they are in our degree programs—are the factors that together must be addressed in order to achieve the goals stated above.

III. Refocused Recruitment Efforts

Travel and institutional outreach will continue to be mainstays of the recruitment program, but these efforts may take different forms in light of growth and success of many campus-based programs that promote graduate school for underrepresented undergraduates and for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Build more targeted institutional relationships. Princeton sits in the middle of the Boston-to-Washington corridor, an area especially rich in strong undergraduate programs at both colleges and universities, and places that have a variety of programs to assist underrepresented students and socio-economically disadvantaged students, e.g., McNair programs, NSF's AGEP and LS-AMP programs, and NIH's postbaccalaureate programs in the sciences, the schools in the Mellon/Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program, and institution-specific programs such as the Meyerhoff Scholars Program at the University of Maryland—Baltimore County, as well as the traditional MARC and MBRS programs in the sciences at HBCUs and minority serving institutions (MSIs). The Graduate School will select carefully and build productive relationships with a number of these programs in order to identify and cultivate students whose home institutions are already grooming them for graduate school. The Graduate School would travel more regionally and less nationally and create more opportunities for students to visit during the year in order to showcase our faculty, students, and programs (see Appendix I. Recruitment Schedule).

Some faculty of color have strongly suggested a complementary strategy. After consultation with departmental faculty, the Graduate School should identify three or four excellent schools in a discipline or set of related disciplines, which have a significant number of African American and/or Hispanic undergraduate majors, and target them consistently for visits, inviting their students and faculty to visit Princeton, encouraging their students to apply for and enroll in our summer programs, etc., thereby building significant and ultimately self-sustaining pipelines to those programs. (Faculty in Sociology, for example have suggested Xavier U. of Louisiana, UT-Austin, UCLA, and Berkeley for Hispanic students in the social sciences; or UIUC, Michigan, Howard, and North Carolina A&T for African American students in engineering and science.)

Rethink the Princeton Summer Research Experience (PSURE). At present, PSURE is a nine-week summer program in which participants, pursue intensive research projects in humanities, social sciences, life sciences, and engineering. Some faculty have suggested a dual, or a two-part, model for the summer research program, one part with a more course-based, text-and-writing character for humanities and social science students, the other part the more traditional research model for science and engineering (S/E) students. (The Graduate School Office would still provide a substantial supplementary program focused on applying and getting into Ph.D. programs.) The use of faculty would be different, e.g., hiring a junior faculty member or graduate student to “teach” basic critical

and theoretical texts to c. 10 humanities and social science students, and advise them on a research paper. The Woodrow Wilson School Junior Summer Institute and the College's Freshman Summer Scholars Institute have been suggested as models.

Re-conceive President's Fellowships as "Target of Opportunity" Awards. The current program of fellowships is administered in an inconsistent fashion. Sometimes the fellowships are awarded to very top minority candidates, other times to those at the margins, to stretch the number of offers. Additionally, the award of these fellowships to U.S. women in S/E varies widely (and wildly) by department.

Recommendation: The program should move to a competitive merit-based, centrally selected fellowship opportunity for the top minority candidates in doctoral programs, top women candidates in science and engineering Ph.D. programs and top students who demonstrate socio-economic disadvantage. A faculty committee, working with the associate and assistant deans of academic affairs, should review departmental nominations and recommend fellows. (More on this committee below.) The number of awards should be increased.

We predict that these collective recruitment efforts will yield the results shown in Table 3.

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Total Degree and Enrollment Pool	2040	2060	2081	2102	2123	2144
African American Enrollees	41	52	62	74	74	86
% of Enrollees	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%	3.5%	3.5%	4.0%
Hispanic American	61	72	73	84	96	107
% of Enrollees	3.0%	3.5%	3.5%	4.0%	4.5%	5.0%
Total number of underrepresented	102	124	135	158	170	193
% of Enrollees	5.0%	6.0%	6.5%	7.5%	8.0%	9.0%

III. New Initiatives.

To prosecute a more effective effort, we recommend three new initiatives that will have both short-term and long-term benefits.

- A. Create an *ad hoc* committee on diversity made up of at least five faculty members, representing each division, some of whom to be current or former directors of graduate studies, who would have at least three tasks. The first would be to provide general advice and guidance to the Graduate School's diversity efforts, suggesting, for example, particular institutions to target for recruiting students to certain disciplines and helping to establish faculty contacts. The second would be to act as a review and selection committee for the President's Fellowships, as suggested above. The third would be to serve as a recommendation and placement committee for the PSURE summer

research program. This committee should be named and put to work in the Fall Term.

- B. In order to extend the reach of our efforts, aid in follow-up, and establish student-to-student contact at various points during the academic year, appoint a number of “student diversity assistants” who are current matriculants and whose job would be: to travel for the Graduate School to recruit; to follow up via e-mail or phone calls with prospective applicants to ensure they apply, with applicants to make sure their folders are complete, and with admitted students to see that their questions about Princeton are addressed. The diversity assistants would complement and extend the work of the assistant and associate deans and keep up a more consistent stream of communication with potential students. This initiative could be funded immediately from the Hanna Fund, at a cost of *c.* \$2500 per assistant per year (see Appendix II. Job Announcement).
- C. Following successful programs in the Woodrow Wilson School here, and more recently at Stanford University, the Graduate School would hold a reunion of graduate alumni of color in the Fall of 2005. The event would be shaped to serve several purposes at once: reconnect a particularly important group of graduate alumni/ae to the Graduate School and, if possible, to their departments; through presentations and discussion groups, get their feedback and ideas on how to improve the graduate school experience, start to finish, for the students of color; to engage alumni/ae in the active business of recruiting for Princeton’s graduate programs (invite alumni, and in addition ask them to identify two prospective applicants? Bring those prospectives with them?); celebrate and showcase successes. (The Graduate School will go to the Priorities Committee in November with a request to fund such an effort.)

IV. Other Ideas

Competing institutions are employing a number of other interesting strategies to generate interest in graduate study among students of color. All operate on the principles of early identification, competitive application, and short (long weekend to one-week) programs that introduce students in targeted populations to the excitement of graduate study at the institution.

- A. Pre-application introductions to graduate study. Duke University has for several years invited Mellon Mays Fellows to apply to a long weekend at Duke in the fall to hear about graduate programs at Duke. Duke targets HBCUs and minority serving institutions, generates applications, selects several dozen participants, and delivers a two-day program than culminates in students being urged to apply to Duke on the spot.
- B. A second example of this is a “graduate preview weekend” at MIT called CONVERGE. It is a series of information sessions delivered by faculty, administrators and graduate students to undergraduates who have applied for a place in the program. The program is akin to the information imparted over many weeks in our own summer research program—the application process, financial aid for graduate study—but incorporates visits to labs, interviews with professors

- and graduates students, and tours of campus and the community. The program is open to anyone but the thrust and appeal are clearly to underrepresented students.
- C. Finally there are weeklong programs at Harvard, in the Business School and in the Kennedy School of Government, to which rising sophomores and juniors apply competitively. The program is a mix of substantive academic presentations from faculty at the KSG and in the social science departments that are part of the big IGERT grant on Social Inequality (Government, Sociology, and KSG), interspersed with recruiting talks by GSAS, the Kennedy School, and any other professional school that wants to attract applications from the students. Like MIT's CONVERGE, the program is open to everyone, but the purpose is to reach out to underrepresented students.

V. Retention

Notwithstanding an aggressive recruitment campaign, the achievement of a graduate student body with a ten percent underrepresented minority population by 2010 hinges on retention. At present, it is difficult to determine the degree to which attrition may account for the dwindling number of our underrepresented minority population, as the Graduate School neither tracks attrition rate for underrepresented groups nor does it record factors that may contribute to a student's withdrawal from the University in any systematic way. The extant re-enrollment process will, however, allow the Graduate School to easily track the academic progress of minority students and to note indicators that may demonstrate that a student is likely to withdraw.

- A. Beginning in the 2004 Fall Term, the Office of Academic Affairs will maintain attrition and time to completion rates for both majority and underrepresented minority students. If these numbers should be significantly different between groups, a strategy will be devised in consultation with the faculty and student representatives to eliminate the disparity.
- B. Graduate students who terminate prior to the receipt of a doctorate—as well as those who successfully complete—will be strongly encouraged to complete an exit interview. The results of these interviews will be used to construct a profile of students who are most likely to succeed at Princeton. Also, these results will be used to inform the selection process and to craft intervention strategies for students who are “at-risk” of withdrawing.
- C. The office of the assistant dean of academic affairs and diversity will be used to facilitate each student's acculturation to the rigors of Princeton's graduate environment. In order to achieve this goal, the assistant dean will inaugurate a monthly SWORD (Survival While on the Road to the Doctorate) meeting that will be open to all students, but will especially target underrepresented minority students. Also, the SWORD series will be used to connect the graduate student body to Princeton's alumni, as a significant number of featured speakers will be members of the APGA.

VI. Evaluation

The Office of Academic Affairs will develop a comprehensive evaluation plan to determine the collective impact of recruitment and retention efforts on the applicant pool

size and quality, successful matriculation, clarity of expectations *vis à vis* Princeton's intensive research culture, and overall satisfaction and success of each student.

These and other ideas should be considered seriously in creating the Graduate School's subsequent recruitment plans.