

NIH Recruitment and Retention Plan to Enhance Diversity

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist faculty in writing their Recruitment Plans for T32 Training grant proposals. NIH guidelines on preparing materials for Training Grant applications include instructions for preparation of a section devoted to the ongoing efforts to enhance diversity of trainees at the institution. There is no page limit stated for this section, although recent applications have recruitment plans around 3 pages in length. Recent guidelines encourage applicants to focus on Recruitment rather than Retention (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-16-004.html>). Taken from the NIH T32 application instructions:

“The NIH recognizes a unique and compelling need to promote diversity in the biomedical, behavioral, clinical and social sciences workforce. Accordingly the NIH continues to encourage institutions to diversify their student and faculty populations and thus to enhance the participation of individuals currently underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral, and social sciences such as: individuals from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups [and] individuals with disabilities. Institutions are encouraged to identify candidates who will enhance diversity on a national or institutional basis.”

Information from each graduate field/department that is relevant to the proposed training grant is requested in the submission instructions: the distribution of Students or postdoctoral researchers who; 1) applied for admission or positions within the department(s)/programs(s) relative to the training grant, 2) were offered admission to or a position within the department(s)/program(s), 3) enrolled in the academic program relevant to the training grant, 4) were appointed to the research training grant, and 5) outcomes of trainees who were enrolled in the training program. In addition to this information, there should be information on the efforts undertaken by both the institution and the individual field/department to recruit diverse candidates. **It is not sufficient to document only institutional commitment to identifying and attracting diverse recruits**, although this is what this guideline will focus on, due to the variation in recruitment activities employed by individual fields/departments. It is also not sufficient to only document activities targeted to one or other of the underrepresented communities, your plan should focus on both underrepresented minorities and individuals with disability for NIH to consider it compliant. Recruitment plans are reviewed separately after the scientific review, and are scored as acceptable or unacceptable for 1) Individuals and ethnic groups 2) Disabled individuals 3) Overall, and if your plan is deemed unacceptable for either of 1) or 2), the overall plan will be unacceptable.

Cornell Resources:

Cornell Graduate School Recruitment Office:

The Cornell Graduate School Office (<http://gradschool.cornell.edu/>) is committed to promoting graduate study at Cornell. Our staff serves as the liaison to all prospective students, especially those from diverse backgrounds and populations traditionally underrepresented in graduate education. The graduate school has many tools to ensure that Cornell recruits a diverse pool of student applicants, a selection of which are listed below.

Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement (OISE):

The Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement (OISE, <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/OISE>) is part of the Graduate School's framework for providing an inclusive and holistic approach to graduate and postdoctoral scholar success. OISE supports scholar success through recruitment, diversity fellowships, professional and community development programming and ongoing support. OISE supports an inclusive and welcoming environment for all graduate and postdoctoral scholars, and fosters the development of their core competencies and transferable skills in the areas of career development, communication, leadership and management, teaching and mentoring, responsible conduct of research, and personal development.

Graduate School Fellowships in Support of Diversity:

Recruitment fellowships are designed to enhance the diversity of Cornell's student population, and are available to US citizens or permanent residents on a competitive basis, by submission of a diversity essay with their graduate school application materials. Students awarded a fellowship will be recognized as Graduate School Dean's Scholars, and will be invited to participate in events hosted by the **Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement**. Anecdotal and measured evidence of diversity students who study in your field attaining a diversity fellowship would be useful to include.

- SUNY Graduate Diversity Fellowship
- Deans Excellence Fellowship
- Deans McNair Graduate fellowship
- Provost Diversity Fellowship
- Cornell Colman Fellowship
- Cornell Sloan Fellowship
- Cornell GEM Ph.D. Fellowship

Recruitment Events:

Cornell students act as representatives at many Conferences geared towards recruitment of diversity students, which are a wonderful opportunity for students and faculty to network with prospective diversity students. Anecdotal and measured successes at recruiting from attending these conferences would be a useful item to add to the recruitment section of the T32. Examples of some of these conferences include:

- Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS, <http://www.abrcms.org/>)
- Society for Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in the Sciences (SACNAS, <http://sacnas.org/events/national-conf>)
- National Society of Black Engineers (NBSE, <http://www.nsbe.org/Convention/2016/Home.aspx>)
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS, <http://manrrs.org/conference-information/>)
- National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCChE, <http://www.nobcche.org/conference>)
- Society for Women Engineers (SWE, <http://we14.swe.org/>)
- TAPIA celebration of Diversity in Computing (<http://tapiaconference.org/>)
- National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP, <http://nsbp.org/nsbp-annual-conference/>)

Engagement in Diversity:

- Graduate School Dean's Scholars- these are recipients of the above-mentioned diversity fellowships, with a mission to develop a core community of diverse scholars, through which connections are established and maintained across graduate fields
- Summer Success Symposium (S3)- a one day event for graduate students from all fields who have received diversity fellowships or identify as first generation college students and/or students of color, during which participants have the opportunity to form connections and participate in sessions in support of their transition to and progression through graduate school, with both fellow students and Cornell faculty/alumni
- Bouchet Honor Society- seeks to develop a network of preeminent scholars who exemplify academic and personal excellence, foster environments of support and serve as examples of scholarship, leadership, character, service and advocacy for students and postdocs who have been traditionally underrepresented in the academy
- Graduate Students Mentoring Undergraduates- Goals of this program include fostering connections between graduate and undergraduate students and providing graduate students with professional development and service opportunities
- Diversity in Scholarship and Engagement Program- includes the Diversity in Scholarship and Engagement Symposium, a unique opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to present their research to the broader community via oral or poster presentations
- Colman Leadership Program- Every January and June, the Colman Leadership Program seeks to enroll up to 30 STEM-focused PhD students in an intensive three-day program focused on providing participants with skills and knowledge that will support their development as leaders in graduate school and beyond. Dean's Scholars receive priority consideration for selection for the Colman Leadership Program
- OISE Engage Lunches- a monthly program series that features diverse Graduate School alumni speakers. The Engage Lunch Series provides Dean's Scholars and other invited students with the opportunity to engage with each other and an alumni speaker in a relaxed environment conducive to informal mentoring

Office of Student Engagement Affiliated Student Organizations:

- Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA)
- Cornell Latin American Student Society (CLASS)
- Indigenous Graduate Student Association (IGSA)
- Latino/a Graduate Student Coalition (LGSC)
- Society for Asian American Graduate Affairs (SAAGA)
- GPSA Diversity & International Committee
- Out in STEM (oSTEM)

Graduate School Diversity Advisory Council

The Graduate School Diversity Advisory Council (GS-DAC, <http://gradschool.cornell.edu/inclusion/GS-DAC>) is responsible for providing the leadership of the Graduate School with feedback and guidance on diversity and inclusion plans and initiatives focused on graduate and professional students, postdoctoral scholars, and other key constituency groups. Members of the GS-DAC provide insights on established best diversity

and inclusion practices within the academy, industry, NGOs, and government, which helps inform the efforts within the Graduate School. The council also provides advice and input regarding the Graduate School's Towards New Destinations diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Leadership Alliance Participation:

Cornell University participates in the Leadership Alliance (<http://www.theleadershipalliance.org/>), which is a national consortium of 36 leading teaching and research colleges, universities, and private industry. The mission of the Leadership Alliance is to develop underrepresented students into outstanding leaders and role models in academia, business and the public sector.

Summer Research Programs:

Both internal and external summer research internships are an excellent way of engaging undergraduate students from Cornell to participate in scientific research, and is another way of retaining the excellent undergraduates from Cornell for their postgraduate studies. Many of these programs welcome applications from underrepresented minority students.

- NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program (http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5517&from=fund)
- NYSTEM Summer Undergrad Program (<http://stemcell.ny.gov/rfa-summer-undergraduate-experience-stem-cell-research>)
- Cornell Centers often offer summer research internships
- Douglas Award at Cornell- solicited entries, and one URM student chosen to do summer research at Cornell

Office of Postdoctoral Studies:

This office offers advice, training and resources to both prospective Cornell postdocs and those already employed at Cornell. Recruitment tools provided by the Office for Postdoctoral Studies include links to the Diversity Fellowships provided to the College of Arts and Sciences by the Mellon Foundation, and instructions for applying. The **Cornell diversity fellowships** (<http://as.cornell.edu/diversity-fellowships>) are two year fully funded fellowships designed to support the early development of scholars who show promise of distinguished research careers, and who are from sectors of the population historically underrepresented on the professorial faculties of U.S. colleges and universities. Eligible applicants might be from underrepresented minority groups, have faced economic hardship, be first-generation college graduates. Diversity and inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, protected veterans and individuals with disabilities.

The Office for postdoctoral studies also hosts seminars related to increasing Diversity in Academia, for example the "Future Professors Institute: Advancing Diversity in the Academy", which features faculty and academic leaders from Cornell, as well as from other institutions representing liberal arts colleges, public and private research universities, and masters granting institutions discussing ways of increasing diversity in major degree-granting institutions. This office also promotes programs run by the Inclusive Teaching Network, such as "The Future of Diversity: Rethinking Pedagogy in Diverse College Classrooms", which focuses on the best teaching practices for creating inclusive and supportive classroom environments, including strategies for how to effectively engage students in difficult conversations on topics of identity and power.

Ideas for Department/Field-specific Recruitment Initiatives:

Given the variety of graduate fields at Cornell, and their vast array of recruitment activities, it would be hard to summarize them all in this document. However, examples of recruitment activities upon which individual graduate fields have embarked are listed below for inspiration:

- Encourage search committee chairs, faculty and departmental administrators within the university to participate in workshops to review “best search practices”, which review strategies to attract a diverse applicant pool, best practices for application review without bias, and interview and recruitment practices that lead to a highly qualified and diverse pool
- Establish formal “pipelines” with institutions traditionally high numbers of underrepresented minority undergraduate and Master’s level students, and include letters of support from these institutions in your application
- Survey applicants from diverse backgrounds that were offered a place at Cornell, but chose to study elsewhere. This will inform the graduate field about potential biases or climate that might play a part in the student accepting a position elsewhere
- Improve awareness of students, faculty and staff about the need for a diverse climate at Cornell. One example of this would be to send participants to conferences to increase investment in diversity planning and recruitment, such as National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE®, <https://www.ncore.ou.edu/en/>). *“At NCORE individuals and campus teams can work collaboratively under the guidance, tutelage and expertise of recognized and effective scholars, practitioners and change makers. It is a place where individuals and institutions share their on-the-ground knowledge about: program development, student development, academic assessment tools, effective theoretical frameworks, latest practice-based research findings and radical and innovative experiential curriculum to transform higher education in its mission for diversity and inclusion for students, staff, faculty and leadership.”*
- Directly mail or email prospective underrepresented minority students, whose information can be gleaned from recruitment efforts by the graduate school, with information about the graduate program in your field. Can also contact prospective students in advance of meetings such as ABRCMS, to increase traffic to the Cornell booth. Direct targeting of institutions with historically high numbers of underrepresented minority students can also be a good tool for increasing awareness of Cornell’s graduate program
- Recruiting trips to institutions with historically high numbers of underrepresented minorities, these could include undergraduate and high school level
- List mentoring activities of every faculty member that has a role mentoring underrepresented minority students
- Mention any faculty that have appointments to Advisory Committees at NIH with a focus on minorities
- List any outreach activities faculty have engaged in to increase diversity in the graduate pool
- Cornell recruiters and hiring managers are encouraged to use the Cornell Recruitment Partnership online directory (https://www.hr.cornell.edu/diversity/recruitment/recruitment_partnership.html) in connecting with partnering organizations for diverse talent. Recruiters and hiring

managers may make direct contact with listed representatives of partnering organizations to establish informational dialogues, to forward select job announcements and to participate in recruitment and outreach activities sponsored by the organizations

Cornell policies to attract applicants with disabilities and to assist those already at Cornell:

In 1998, an ad hoc group of faculty, staff, and students formed the Campus Climate Committee to institutionalize a respectful, inclusive, diverse community. The group met over the course of a year and a half to develop a vision for the university, "Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds," which has since provided the foundation for subsequent efforts to address diversity and inclusion at Cornell. To this end, from the time of their initial application, Cornell has strong procedures in place to encourage and allow students with disabilities to self-report on their application submission, so that they might be assisted to the fullest from the outset of their studies.

Cornell University is committed to diversity and inclusiveness, with the goal of providing an accessible, usable, and welcoming environment for faculty, staff, students, and visitors with disabilities. Since 2004, a team of individuals from departments across the university has worked to address disability access, which has resulted in a comprehensive web page and a strategic plan (<http://disability.cornell.edu/strategic-plan.cfm>). Cornell University has a dedicated Disability Services Office (<http://disability.cornell.edu/>) which offers resources and assistance to prospective and existing faculty/staff and students to help them with accessibility on campus, planning accessible events on campus, a full list of resources to aid individuals with disabilities (http://sds.cornell.edu/Resources/Campus_Resources.html#dis_reps). The office will also arrange for course materials to be converted to alternate formats for students. In terms of teaching, faculty are encouraged to adopt Universal Design for Learning (UDL) techniques (<http://www.washington.edu/doit/universal-design-instruction-udi-definition-principles-guidelines-and-examples>). UDL is a key component of the Faculty Institute for Diversity which is hosted by the Center for Teaching Excellence four times a year, and enables faculty to develop course material that is flexible and appeals to a variety of students, including students with disabilities or those who have varied learning styles. Presentations advising faculty on how to adapt their teaching style/materials are held regularly on the Cornell campus, and are open to all faculty.

Since 2000, Cornell University has had a program to track bias that is occurring on all campuses in an effort to be proactive in creating an inclusive climate for all. Information about bias activity, including incident summaries and responses, is updated monthly in Reports and Responses to Bias Activity at Cornell University. In January and July of each year, aggregate data on the Reporting Bias System is collected and presented in Mid-Year and Annual Reports.

Cornell works hard to maintain an inclusive atmosphere on its campuses. To this end, each college has a disability liaison who works within the college to promote understanding about disability issues and inclusiveness (http://sds.cornell.edu/Resources/Disability_Reps.html). Both students and staff have dedicated support groups that support individuals with disabilities, student organizations can be found listed here (<http://sds.cornell.edu/organizations.html>). The Disability Colleague Network Group, run by Cassandre Joseph in the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity, is a university sponsored employee resource group that serves a dual purpose of providing 1) a safe space to address issues faced by the faculty and staff with a

disability and 2) a platform to raise awareness of the issues faced by the community on our campus.

The Office of Student Disability Services (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>) will also work with faculty to discuss strategies to improve recruitment of individuals with disabilities. It would also be advantageous for faculty to work with organizations that promote inclusive recruitment in higher education, some of which are listed here. The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD, <https://www.ahead.org/>), which is a professional membership organization for individuals involved in the development of policy and in the provision of quality services to meet the needs of persons with disabilities involved in all areas of higher education. Faculty can use online resources to identify feeder schools that have a high number of disabled students currently enrolled (<http://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/best-accredited-colleges-schools-for-students-with-disabilities/>). The Higher Education Compliance Alliance (<http://www.higheredcompliance.org/resources/disabilities-accommodations.html>) and the Disability Compliance for Higher Education (<http://www.disabilitycomplianceforhighereducation.com/>) can provide faculty with insightful analysis of disability and privacy laws and proven techniques for accommodating your students and staff with disabilities.

Partnering with charities that assist those with disabilities is another way faculty can increase awareness and make the campus atmosphere more inclusive for disabled students. For example, the National Association for the Deaf (NAD, <https://nad.org/>), which is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States of America. Their mission covers areas of early intervention, education, employment, health care, technology, telecommunications, youth leadership, and more. Associations such as Guide Dogs for the Blind (<http://welcome.guidedogs.com/>) and Guiding Eyes for the Blind (<https://www.guidingeyes.org/volunteer/puppy-raising/locations2/new-york/>) can educate the Cornell community surrounding working with guide dogs, and there is a Guiding Eyes for the Blind club on campus that host events related to education and awareness. The National Association of American Veterans (NAAVets, <http://www.naavets.org/>), is an organization to assist service members and disabled veterans and their dependents by helping them access educational institutions.

General Strategies and Resources for Recruitment of Trainees from Underrepresented Racial and Ethnic Groups:

Initial Strategies:

- **Design recruitment strategies appropriate for the program.** Consider scientific area of training, size and location of the campus, mentoring style of the faculty, and the student recruitment system adopted by the parent institution
- **Consider recruiting at undergraduate institutions with a substantial enrollment of underrepresented minority students.** Visit these schools to publicize the training opportunities. Visits by a mix of training grant directors, faculty and students are key. Set up discussions with underrepresented minority students
- **Evaluate the admissions process.** Consider whether current practices are screening out qualified minority candidates. Increase the weight of non-traditional metrics, such as

interview, letters of recommendation and research experience, rather than numerical credits, in selecting candidates.

- **Consider institutional assets.** Review the available information about resources such as student advising and diversity offices on campus, interest and affinity groups, professional organizations, faculty role models champions and peers, mentoring resources and other institutional strengths

Targeted Recruitment Activities:

- **Sponsor summer undergraduate research programs.** These will highlight research opportunities and build advisory networks
- **Invite prospective applicants to campus to meet with current students and faculty**
- **Communicate directly with prospective applicants.** This could be by phone, mail or email. These potential students can be identified by:
 - Underrepresented Student Locator Service of the Educational Testing Service
 - Students supported by particular NIH programs targeted towards increasing diversity (examples are R25 or T34 awards)
 - Certain NIH institutes have interactive program maps to help T32 program directors recruit students and guide them to their T32 programs (Kim- find link)
 - Professional societies and subgroups for underrepresented minorities
 - Topic-specific programs, such as industrial internships for chemistry or biotech programs
- **Communicate with Deans and department chairs at schools having a substantial enrollment of students from underrepresented minorities.**

Publicize the Program:

- **Present recruitment sessions,** posters, flyers and videos at meetings of the appropriate scientific societies
- **Advertise** in journals that the program is currently seeking underrepresented minorities
 - In educational and professional journals such as *The Black Collegian*, *National Society for Black Engineers*
 - In science journals appropriate to the specific area
 - In campus publications of colleges and universities with substantial enrollment of underrepresented minorities
- **Design the training program's website and brochures to welcome diverse candidates.** You can include links to campus resources, groups, to statements from current and previous underrepresented minority students or from current underrepresented faculty. Include these groups in any graphics on printed or web based materials for the program

Create Long-term Commitments:

- **Provide Summer courses** for students and faculty from colleges with high numbers of underrepresented minority students
- **Teach or participate in courses** at institutions with high numbers of underrepresented minority students
- **Establish scientific collaborations** with faculty at institutions with high numbers of underrepresented minority students

- **Exchange** graduate or undergraduate students
- **Participate in pipeline activities**, for example:
 - Send underrepresented graduate students to local high schools to talk about their research
 - Increase retention of current undergraduate underrepresented minority students through activities built into the course curriculum
 - Bring in high school students and teachers for courses at Cornell University
 - Work with local and national industries that could provide support, employment of internships to underrepresented students

General Strategies and Resources for Recruitment of Trainees with Disabilities:

- **Environment.** Provide an open and friendly environment, with accommodations for disabled students, that focuses on productivity and accomplishment. Create an environment where various kinds of disability are recognized and addressed, leading students to feel comfortable declaring their disability and included once they have
- **Resources.** Work with the available resources on campus to generate plans for recruitment of disabled students
- **Education.** Work with associations or on campus offices that are knowledgeable about disability issues. Invite them to educate faculty and staff about working with disabled students
- **Outreach.** Conduct outreach efforts linked to programs designed to increase the population of people with disabilities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Examples of these include, but are not limited to, the Washington University-led AccessSTEM Project (<http://www.washington.edu/doiit/programs/accessstem/overview/about-accessstem-project>), which is one of the regional alliances for increasing disabled people in STEM disciplines funded by the NSF, and the Institute for Accessible Science (<https://stemedhub.org/groups/iashub>) an online site funded by NIH for developing and sharing tools for accessible science
- **Pipeline.** Partner with institutions that have high numbers of students with a disability. Resources to identify these can be found here: <http://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/best-accredited-colleges-schools-for-students-with-disabilities/>
- **Publicize.** Develop a statement on your website that states your dedication to creating a diverse environment, including increasing the number of disabled students. Add links to institutional resources available for disabled students
- **Identify** local school that you could partner with that have a high representation of disabled students
- **Explore external resources.** These include the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD, <https://www.ahead.org/>), NIH presentations such as “Promoting Diversity in Research” (<https://www.nigms.nih.gov/News/reports/archivedreports2009-2007/Pages/PromoteDiversity06072009.aspx>) and the joint NSF/NIH report on disabilities in STEM “Chemists, Chemical Engineers and Materials Scientists with Disabilities” (https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/diversity/Documents/ChemistwithDisabilitesRpt_web_sm.pdf)

Useful links:

Cornell Diversity Dashboards: <http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/university-factbook/diversity>

Cornell demographics: <http://irp.dpb.cornell.edu/university-factbook/diversity>

FAQs

<https://researchtraining.nih.gov/resources/fag?CFID=52560740&CFTOKEN=c4ad7547145bd89-388DBDDDB-5056-9439-7E7B049F1194F5DA>