Graduate Student Recruitment Guidebook:
Suggestions for Department Chairs, Program Coordinators and Faculty

Oakland University
Office of Graduate Study
and Lifelong Learning

2019
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1:</th>
<th>Capacity and Growth Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP 2:</td>
<td>Recruitment Goals and Current Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP 3:</td>
<td>Best Practice Strategies and Tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STEP 1 Capacity and Growth Potential

Discuss with department faculty:

- Identify the capacity to increase the number of graduate students in your programs and additional resources it would take to expand
  - Number of faculty
  - Space
  - Equipment
  - Other

- Identify how/or if your current programs will grow over the next five years

- Identify new programs on the horizon in the next five years. What do you see as the future of your discipline? What are the trends?

- Identify any programs that are declining and whether they will be phased out or how they might be changed to attract students
• Identify programs that could be delivered online and what resources would be needed

• Identify programs that could be developed jointly with other departments on campus

• Identify programs that could shift or add a new format such as an accelerated master’s degree

• Consider articulation agreements with international institutions/track the yield on any current articulations

STEP 2: Recruitment Goals and Current Data

Ask your faculty these questions about the program(s) in your department to determine faculty awareness about your programs

• What is your communication plan with potential students
• What is the number of inquiries your department receives for its program(s) and their sources?
• What is your admit number?
• What is your rate of denial and what are the reasons
  o Are you reaching the right population
• How many accepted students enroll
• How many students (what percentage) get funding?
  What type of funding?
• What is the program’s completion rate and the average time to a degree?
• What is your student profile (gender, race, etc?)

Continue the discussion by sharing information with them

• Examine and share the information found on OIRA’s interactive degree website for trends related to your program(s) number of degrees by year, gender, race, major, level, etc.  
  https://www.oakland.edu/oira/degrees-awarded/
• Share with your faculty the latest Graduate Study reports on inquiries, application, acceptance, and enrollment for your department’s programs (at all graduate levels)
• Look at how many inquiries it is taking to get the current number of enrolled students
• **Set a goal for what the enrollment in each of your program(s) should look like in five years**
• Based on the number of inquiries per enrolled student now, determine how many inquiries you would need to meet the goal you’ve set if you do not change anything about how you are recruiting
• Determine what populations you are tapping into to recruit your students (% domestic, %international [what countries], %undergraduate OU students, % funded research students, % working professionals [include key feeder companies, universities] etc.)
• Discuss new markets where you could begin to recruit

Step 3: Best Practice Strategies and Tactics

• Review these best practices and discuss with faculty how your recruitment practices can be improved

A. Communication process

• Create a communications plan that identifies who will be making contact and updating information.
• Effective communication strategies can significantly increase the number of students who enroll in your program.
• Research has shown contact between prospects/admitted students and faculty/deans increases likelihood of matriculation
  o Ensure timely follow-up (goal should be to follow-up with prospects within 8 business hours)
  o The quicker prospects and applicants are responded to, the more likely they are to enroll
  o Create & use standardized communications
• Communication involves both live and online forms of interaction.

Live, active interaction
  ➢ Attend university open houses for potential students
  ➢ Involve faculty, students and alumni in recruiting
- Identify faculty who will call students with incomplete applications
- Identify faculty who will call admitted students and maintain contact
- Host campus visits to department for admitted students
- Hold a departmental new student orientation or some form of support
- Reach out to professional networks to identify potential students
- Attend disciplinary recruiting fairs
- Reach out at key professional organizations and conferences or other sources
- Visit undergraduate feeder institutions
- Present to OU undergraduate students and honors college students [2-minute presentation to OU undergrads before/after classes]
- Integrate graduate education into UG advising discussions
- Reach out to employers that support employees who are in a degree program
- Reach out to HBCUs, NSF & NIH pipeline programs, women’s institutions, McNair Scholars Program, etc.
- Recruit student and alumni ambassadors
- Ask colleagues at other institutions to recommend their students
➢ Ask advisory board members to get engaged in recruitment

**Online interaction**

➢ Work with Communications and Marketing to optimize use of internet search engines
➢ Create webpages designed to attract target audiences
  ▪ Up to date information
  ▪ Coordinator’s contact information
  ▪ Showcase student and faculty achievements
  ▪ Identify faculty research interests
  ▪ Encourage stories about students and alumni
  ▪ Highlight welcoming campus life and opportunities for growth
➢ Create web pages that attract international students
  ▪ Make webpages available in languages of student populations you recruit
➢ Survey admitted students who did not enroll
➢ Provide prospective student and advising support online
➢ Offer online recruitment webinars, information sessions
➢ Put grad info in newsletters, flyers, other communications
B. Financial support
- Identify students who will receive assistantships early (February/March)
- Provide assistantships with work obligations
- Encourage faculty research that supports graduate students
- Provide institutional aid based on need
- Make scholarship opportunities visible to potential students (link webpage to Graduate Education website)
- Provide clear financial aid information (link webpage to Graduate Education website)

C. Graduate Education Recruiters
- Contact the Office of Graduate Study and ask for support from their recruiters to help support your recruitment efforts [Services are listed in the attached appendices]

D. Tracking the data
- Maintain records of recruiting activities and yield from them
- Survey current students about why they came to OU; why they came to your program(s)
- Identify the sources of your most successful students
Appendices – Additional Resources

A. Oakland University Quick Facts
   https://www.oakland.edu/oira/

B. OIRA Data Guide for Chairs
   https://www.oakland.edu/oira/departmental-support-data/

C. Graduate Study Recruiters

D. Information available on the Graduate Education website
   https://www.oakland.edu/grad/
References

Adapted from:
