Admission Topics – Options for Increasing Yield following SCOTUS

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Introduction and Overview of the SCOTUS Ruling

New Guidelines for Admissions Committees

- Admissions Committees are required for all programs.

- Size and composition may vary.

- Strongly recommend annual meeting with department leadership.

- Annual training should be provided.

- All applications should be reviewed by at least 2 committee members.

- Holistic Review Rubrics are strongly encouraged.

Strategies for Increasing Yield

Why Recruitment is Important

- Social science research documents that typical recruitment practices (and biases) limit opportunity for people from minoritized groups.

- But well-designed recruitment programs can ensure that "more students see the opportunities to undertake graduate studies."

    -NSF Director Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan

- *Interactions* are at the heart of recruitment: frequency, quality. How prospective applicants experience interactions with departments makes a difference to their choices.

- Pragmatically, recruitment is a way to distinguish yourself from programs in peer institutions.

Milkman, et al., 2015; Posselt, 2016; Rivera, 2015

Organizational Image & Climate

- **Recruitment activities can signal whether a department will be affirming of their social identities (race, gender, etc.)**

- **For people from backgrounds that have been marginalized in the academy, organizational climate is critical in decision-making:**
  - It impacts their decisions about where to apply AND enroll
  - Organizations were rated more favorably whose websites had strong statements about the importance of diversity
  - Small interactions feed into their perceptions of climate

Avery et al, 2013; Wofford & Blaney, 2021; Bar et al. 2007; Bersola et al, 2014; Posselt, 2020; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Starck et al., 2021

Factors Influencing Doctoral Students' Choices

- Bersola found many faculty assume *academic reputation* and *funding* reign.

- In reality, different students are drawn to different facets of a doctoral program.

- Additional, common factors include *curriculum* and *research experiences*.

- *Positive interactions* with faculty and other members of the doctoral program affect student decisions by building *trust*.

- For students with caregiving responsibilities, *campus resources, health care benefits,* and *geographic location* may be important – but it's important not to make assumptions.

Bar et al. 2007; Bersola et al, 2014; Bortz et al, 2019; Poock & Love, 2001; Bersola et al, 2014; Ramirez, 2013

Demystifying the Process

- List the faculty accepting new students and their research foci

- Mention how students are evaluated for admission on your website

- If your program is focused on one or two specific areas for the coming year, state that on your admissions page

- Diversity statement that ties to your mission
    - https://mcb.illinois.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion-mcb
    - https://education.illinois.edu/about/commitment-to-equity-and-justice

Things to Consider

- How many times has your main website/admissions webpage been viewed?

- Use multiple ways of engaging with students.

- Handwritten Notes- Sends a big signal to students that you value them, and it provides a glimpse of the type of treatment they will receive as students.

- Which links has the most clicks on your page? Highlight those in your messages to students.

- Send video messages- opportunity for students to connect your message with a person.

- Connect them in an online community after admitting. Use Slack or Discord to connect students with each other.

Welcoming & Affirming

A Student Example from the research

"**Diversity was a huge part of the application process** from what I remember. I think **they were starting the [curricular initiative] at the time.** I feel one of the things we had to address in our essays ...was diversity. **There was a website...devoted to diversity** ...so it seemed, like I said, on paper to be something that was really important to the school." (African American Doctoral Student)

(Slay, Reyes, & Posselt, 2019)

Summary of Recruitment Planning

PREDISPOSITION
- Faculty/department outreach to students
  - research opportunities
  - considering graduate studies

SEARCH
- Update department website
- Revise departmental recruitment webinar
- Host webinar in conjunction with MSI/HBCU

CHOICE
- Revise campus visit schedules
- Conduct a data dive in conjunction with institutional research

QUESTIONS

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