Recruiting and Working With Graduate Students

Anantha Aiyyer and Andrew M. Goodliffe

Why Choose a Particular University?
• What made you choose your PhD university?

Recruitment Methodology....
• What have you been doing to recruit students?

Resources at your University....
• What resources do you have to help you at your university?

University Resources you Might not Know About....
• Your university may buy names (e.g. GRE & TOEFL; make sure that you contact potential applicants who have submitted GRE scores, but not applied)
• Resources to find students
  – McNair
  – SACNAS
  – Council on Undergraduate Research
  – National Name Exchange
  – Regional groups focused on underrepresented minorities
• Gather university recruitment materials
• Become familiar with benefits/support programs for students at your university
  – Use these as selling points – i.e. do you have lactation rooms, health insurance, mentoring programs, etc.

University Resources you Might not Know About....
• Find out which universities your university recruits at!
  – Identify key universities and offer to help
  – Offer to use your contacts (domestic or international) and travel to recruit at these places – very often your university will financially support this – ASK!
  – Do you have open houses (dept./college/university level)
  – Will your dean meet with your top recruits?
  – Other university resources
Some Key Points (in case these did not come up already...)

• Be proactive!!
• Commit Time to Recruitment
  — You are picking a team that will have a HUGE impact on your research success
  — Will your students be tenure makers or tenure breakers?

The Little Things

• Up to date personal web page with research/teaching interests and publications
• Respond to student enquiries in a timely fashion – create a form letter...
• Make sure that your research is featured on your university web page and in university publications (i.e. research magazine, alumni magazine)
• Call/Skype/FaceTime with prospects – your “competition” is almost certainly not doing this
• Have your chair/dean call the applicant
• Have other faculty call the applicant

Closing The Deal

• So, you have managed to get the best student ever to apply – this is where the hard part of recruitment starts!
• This is where a campus visit may be VITAL
• Be familiar with what your university offers that others do not..... examples....
• Be responsive
• Have students contact the applicant
• Have chair/dean contact student
• Does the applicant have housing/town resources?

Money

• Sometimes it all comes down to money.....
  — Are there institutional fellowships that you can nominate your applicant for (even at the last moment)?
  — Are there departmental scholarships?
  — If you are offering a GTA position, can you supplement it with any of the above?
  — If you have support from a 3 year grant for the student, will the university “match” this with a 4th year? Ask!

What are your challenges (and what are the solutions)?

Keeping that Excellent Student

• Keep an eye out for opportunities for that student – professional (e.g. writing workshops) and financial (e.g. scholarships)
• Make sure that they have research/conference travel money
  — Do you know about all the resources your university offers?
• Weekly meetings (individual/group)
• Make sure your chair/dean knows all the good things that you/they do – sell yourself and your students
• Go to commencement!
Questions and Comments?