

Diversifying Graduate Programs: Best Practices for Graduate Recruitment and Admissions

Carlos V. Grijalva
Associate Dean
UCLA Graduate Division

The Importance of Diversity in Higher Education

- Growing concern that our nation is falling behind as the world leader in science innovation and competitiveness which drive economic stability, growth and vitality.
- Heart of the problem is preparing the workforce that maximizes the talent pool from all segment of society.
- U.S. faces lingering problem of inequity of economic opportunity for minority and disadvantaged groups.
- Inequity, in turn, diminishes our national competitiveness and tarnishes our democratic ideals.
- Higher education is one of most effective ways to provide economic opportunity to everyone.
- Underrepresented groups are the natural pool of talent for expanding the research and educational workforce necessary to maintain of pre-eminence in the sciences and technology.

Best Practices and Pitfalls in Graduate Admissions Process

- Admissions based on evidence that an applicant has the necessary academic background, intellectual and/or creative attributes necessary for success in graduate studies.

- We as faculty may think that we already know how to review dossiers and assess whether or not the applicants have the “right stuff.”

- We often discover after the first couple of years of graduate study, that their performance was far from predicted.

 - Some individuals with stellar credentials falter early on.

 - Some individuals with mid-range credentials surprise us and excel.

Selection of individuals for graduate study is by no means a science.

Evidence we use to assess applicants qualifications can be quite unreliable in predicting future performance.

Best Practices and Pitfalls in Graduate Admissions Process

Some admissions practices suggest the unfortunate use of “proxies” rather than an in depth assessment of applicants dossier.

 - Treating the applicant's undergraduate school as an indicator of the “right stuff.” (Extra points for coming from an elite school, or giving demerits for attending a relatively non-selective school).

 - Discount letters from people whose names or reputations we don't know.

 - Attending a school that is not considered in your league – the lack of *polish* often obscures other evidence of high potential for success in graduate studies.

 - The reliance on measure that we regard as objective such as the GRE General Test, Subject Area Tests, and undergraduate grades – **failure to recognize the limitations of the measures.**

The GRE General Test: Old and New

What Has Changed?

***Redesigned General Test**

***New Score Scale**

Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning scores will be reported on new score scales:

Old Scale:

200→800 (in 10-point increments)

New Scale:

130→170 (in 1-point increments)

Analytical writing scale does not change from 0-6 score scale, in half-point increments

The New Revised GRE General Test

- On August 1, 2011 the revised GRE General Test replaced the current test
- The first test takers personally will receive their scores on the old scale, though in mid-November institutions will receive their scores on the same test on the new scale, with **concordance tables** (www.ets.org/gre/institutions/scores)
- In December, 2011 normal score reporting for the GRE resumes
- The new revised GRE General Test designed to be more closely aligned with skills need to succeed in graduate school.

New Score Scales

- Compressing reporting metric produces scores that won't exaggerate small performance differences between examinees
- Will help institutions make more meaningful and appropriate comparisons between examinees
- In accordance with professional standards, score scale changes were required because of substantial changes to the test
- New score range chosen so as not to overlap with old score range (200-800 → 130-170)

New Score Report

Graduate Institution Score Report
Let's make the world a better place.

SMITH, MARY A. Department Copy

List of manufacturers' marks. First names have white ink.

Mary A. Smith
23 Allen Street
Jackson, MS 39203
USA

Email: msmith@jdn.edu

Phone: 1-601-974-3212

Date of Birth: 02/02/1983 Gender: Female

Social Security Number: 8700
Last Digit

Intended Graduate Major:

Code: 0203
Name: Biology

Most Recent:

Test Date: 12/03/2011 Registration Number: 1111111 Print Date: 12/15/2011

RECIPIENT

Institution Name	Date	Department Name
1234 ETS UNIVERSITY	02/03	BIOLOGY

GENERAL TEST SCORES

Test Date	Verbal Reasoning*			Quantitative Reasoning*			Analytical Writing		
	Prior Format	Current Format	% Rank	Prior Format	Current Format	% Rank	Score	% Score	
MMDDYYYY 12/03/2011 00010000	890	161	84	770	181	83	88 80	4.5 4.5	72 72

*% Rank indicates that no examinees were assessed in this category.
**The GRE® Verbal Reasoning and Quantitative Reasoning score scales changed in August 2011. For more information regarding 2011 scores, see the "Score Conversion" section. For more information regarding 2011 scores on the prior scale and the corresponding estimated scores on the current scale, see the "Your Former Scores" section. See the back of this page for more information.

SUBJECT TEST SCORES

Test Date	Test Name / Subscore Name	Scaled Score	% Rank	Test Date	Test Name / Subscore Name	Scaled Score	% Rank
MMDDYYYY				MMDDYYYY			

***Verbal Reasoning**

Scaled Score 590 (prior format)

Scaled Score 161 (new format)

Percent below 89 (new); 84 (prior)

Verbal Reasoning Concordance Table

Table 1C: Verbal Reasoning Concordance Table

Scores on the Prior Scale	Estimated Scores on the Current Scale	% Rank*
800	170	99
790	170	99
780	170	99
770	170	99
760	170	99
750	169	99
740	169	99
730	168	98
720	168	98
710	167	98
700	166	97
690	165	96
680	165	96
670	164	94
660	164	94
650	163	93
640	162	90
630	162	90
620	161	89
610	160	86
600	160	86
590	159	84
580	158	79
570	158	79
560	157	77
550	156	72
540	156	72
530	155	69
520	154	64
510	154	64
500	153	62

Scores on the Prior Scale	Estimated Scores on the Current Scale	% Rank*
490	152	56
480	152	56
470	151	51
460	151	51
450	150	48
440	149	42
430	149	42
420	148	40
410	147	36
400	146	31
390	146	31
380	145	28
370	144	26
360	143	21
350	143	21
340	142	18
330	141	16
320	140	13
310	139	10
300	138	8
290	137	6
280	135	4
270	134	3
260	133	2
250	132	1
240	131	1
230	130	1
220	130	1
210	130	1
200	130	1

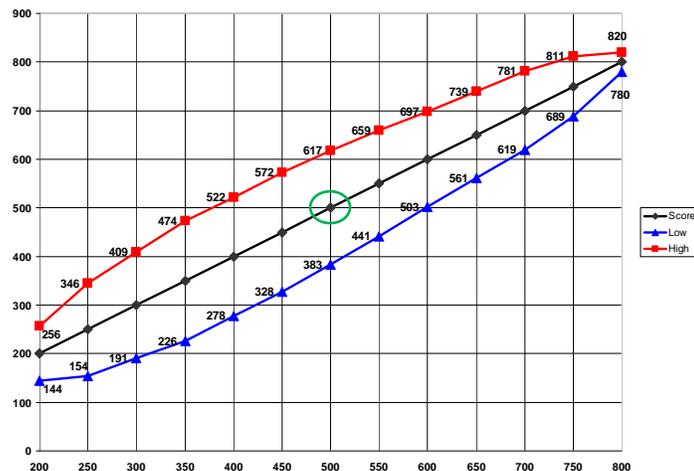
*Based on the performance of all examinees who tested between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2010. Percentile ranks will be updated in July 2012.

Guidelines for the USE of GRE Scores

(<http://www.ets.gre/guidelines/>)

- The GRE General Test and Subject Tests are designed to assess academic knowledge relevant to graduate study.
- **Any GRE test, however, has two limitations:**
 1. It does not and cannot measure all the qualities that are important in predicting graduate or in confirming undergraduate achievement.
 2. It is an inexact measure; consequently, the standard error of measurement of the difference between test scores can serve as a reliable indication of real differences in applicants' academic knowledge and developed abilities.

GRE Quantitative 90% Confidence Interval for Comparing Scores (Example from scores on older test)



Guidelines for the USE of GRE Scores

Use the Appropriate Percentile Ranks when Comparing Candidates:

Percentile ranks are provided on score reports and can be used to compare examinees' relative performance among the measures.

Percentile ranks indicate the percent of examinees in a group who obtained scores below a specified score.

The percentile ranks are generally based on previous GRE examinees from a recent three-year period. Percentile ranks should be compared only if they are based on the same reference population. Percentile ranks are updated annually.

2011-12 Guide to the Use of GRE Scores Important Guidelines to Remember

- **Use multiple criteria** (*e.g. undergraduate grade point average, letters of recommendation, personal statement, samples of academic work, and professional experience related to proposed graduate study*). **GRE scores should not be used exclusively.**
- **Consider analytical writing, verbal and quantitative scores as three separate and independent measures.**
- **A cutoff score based only on GRE scores should never be used as a sole criterion for denial of admission.**
- **Avoid decisions based on small score differences.**
- **Do not compare scores from different subject tests.**

Outreach and Recruitment

Best Practices

Outreach and recruitment events

- **Recruitment fair and conferences** throughout the year
- **Campus tours** for prospective graduate students
- **Graduate School presentations** on Applying, Funding Options, and Summer Programs





Creating partnerships and pipelines

- **Early preparation** for graduate school admission (including departmental visits, summer programs, etc.)
- **Strategy discussions** with current students, faculty, and staff to discuss outreach and diversity initiatives
- **Building relationships** with CSUs, HBCUs, and Minority Serving Institutions

What Graduate Divisions Should Provide to Departments

- **Sharing relevant diversity and outreach information** to departmental staff
- **Collaborating on student recruitment and retention initiatives**, including summer programs and departmental visits
- **Providing strategies and best practices support** for departmental outreach and diversity efforts



2010 Psychology Department Website and Diversity Initiatives link

The image shows a screenshot of the UCLA Department of Psychology website. A red arrow points from the 'Diversity Science Initiative' link in the left sidebar to a larger, detailed view of the initiative page on the right. The detailed view includes a header with the UCLA logo and 'DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY', a photo of a group of people, and the text 'Diversity Science Initiative'. Below this, there are sections for 'Applying to Graduate School?', 'See Yourself Here.', and 'The cutting edge'. The 'Applying to Graduate School?' section includes a sub-section 'See Yourself Here.' and a paragraph about the department's focus on diversity. The 'The cutting edge' section features a photo of a woman and text about the chair faculty. The 'See yourself here' section includes a photo of two women and text about personal experiences. The 'Taking the next step?' section includes a photo of a person writing and text about support for research.

RECRUIT: Best Practices

- Screen shot of Poli Sci Diversity website to illustrate new communication strategies?

The image shows a screenshot of the UCLA Department of Political Science Diversity website. The header includes the 'DIVERSITY Initiative' logo and 'UCLA Department of POLITICAL SCIENCE'. Below the header is a photo of three people sitting at a table. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Students', 'Faculty', 'Alumni', 'Support', and 'Resources'. The main content area is titled 'Student Profiles' and features a profile for Jesse Acevedo, an Undergraduate Institution/PhD student in Political Science major, Psychology minor. The profile includes a photo, a bio, and research interests.

Outreach & Diversity Best Practices Toolkit

- [Online resource](#) geared to support departmental outreach and recruitment
- [Will include templates, scripts, and fliers](#) to help departments interface with prospective students
- [Webinars and recordings](#) to share outreach and diversity best practices to engage prospective students



Recruiting Best Practice

- [Follow up with admits](#) while they continue to shop
- [Make personal calls](#) after they are admitted
- [Plan a campus visit and tours](#) (to collaborate with SAOs)
- [Connect admits with current grad students](#) to build relationships
- [Highlight Graduate Student Groups:](#) Graduate Student Association (GSA), Graduate Students of Color (GSOC), Black Graduate Students Association (BGCA) American Indian Graduate Student Association, STEM-Pledge



Welcoming Best Practices: The Personal Touch Counts a Lot

Active Role of Faculty is Critical

- **Make personal calls to students after they are admitted**
- **Be available and responsive to questions by email and/or the during campus visit (e.g., office hours/ lab tours)**
- **Follow-up after the campus visit**

Welcoming Best Practices: The Personal Touch Counts a Lot

Campus Visit

- Fund a campus visit – utilize Recruitment Travel Funds
- Consider a virtual campus visit, e.g., videoconference or teleconference call
- “Open House” – meet with other recruits, current graduate students, faculty, staff
- Have a program to inform students of department and faculty research interests and activities & of other academic supports
- **Admittees are comparison shopping**



Packaging UCLA To Prospective Graduate Students

- Provide competitive fellowships - multi-year are attractive
- Note: Supplement to recruitment travel funds. At UCLA \$250 for in-state and \$500 for out-of-state for each Cota-Robles and GOFP student provided by Graduate Division
- Rich, graduate student experience at UCLA including student support and resources
- Address housing options

Increasing the Yield of Underrepresented Minority (URM) Admits

REVIEWING APPLICATIONS: Guidelines for Evaluating Contributions to Diversity for Graduate Admissions (500.13)*

“University policy states that an applicant’s race or gender may not be considered in selection for student or faculty appointments. However, to attract excellent graduate students who will contribute to the University’s diversity imperative, departments may give special consideration to the following factors in selecting graduate students for admission (and financial support):”

**Guidelines for the Graduate Admissions Process and Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions – UCLA Graduate Council rev. 2009*
<http://www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/gccodific.pdf>

Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions

Applicants who have engaged in service efforts or programs to increase participation in:

- science
- education
- humanities
- fine arts
- or social sciences

by groups historically underrepresented in higher education (e.g., participation as an undergraduate in programs designed to remove barriers to students from underrepresented groups, record of mentoring other students from groups underrepresented in their field).

Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions

Applicants who have the potential to contribute to their graduate program through their understanding of the barriers facing

- women
- domestic minorities
- students with disabilities
- and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education careers

as evidenced by life experiences and educational background
(*e.g., attendance at a minority-serving institution*).

Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions

Applicants who display drive and motivation to persist and succeed in their careers in spite of barriers in higher education that disproportionately disadvantage them.

Applicants with the potential to bring to their research the creative critical discourse that comes from their non-traditional educational background or experience as a member of a group underrepresented in higher education.

Codification of the Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Admissions

Applicants who, in addition to their primary field of interest, have the potential to make research contributions to understanding the barriers facing women and domestic minorities in science and other academic disciplines.

Applicants who have research interests in subjects that will contribute to diversity and equal opportunity in higher education.

URM Doctoral Survey

- **Online survey**
- **To all URMs doctoral students who were admitted for Fall 2007 and Fall 2008**
- **Sent parallel surveys to**
 - Those who came to UCLA (n=199)
 - Those who declined our admission offer (n=162)
- **Excellent response rates so far**
 - Those who came = 59%
 - Those who declined = 59%

URM Doctoral Survey

Survey Questions:

- What contact with UCLA?
- Components of their financial support package
- Importance of specific factors in decision to attend UCLA
 - Quality of life
 - Program issues
 - Recruitment
- Compare UCLA funding with other institutions
- Was there anything that UCLA/your program did specifically to convince you to enroll?

URM Survey Preliminary Results – Recruitment

Percent that marked “very important”

Recruitment Item	Attending	Declined
Contact with faculty	69.8%	69.0%
Contact with current graduate students	60.3%	52.3%
Contact with staff	28.4%	23.3%
Campus visit(s) / information day / open house	41.7%	52.3%
Off-campus information session / graduate student fair	7.1%	8.4%

During the admissions process, what contact did you have with UCLA?

Percent that marked "yes"

Admissions Contact	Attending	Declined
Contact with UCLA <u>faculty</u>	91.2% >	84.1%
Contact with current UCLA <u>graduate students</u>	74.8% >	59.1%
Contact with UCLA <u>staff</u>	79.1%	72.4%
Campus <u>visit</u> (such as information day or open house)	80.4% >	59.8%
Off-campus information session (such as graduate student fairs)	15.0%	11.0%
Other—please describe below.	23.1%	16.2%

More Preliminary URM Survey Results

Accepted our Offer of Admission

- “My faculty advisor personally called me...”
- “The chair of the department called me...”

Declined our Offer of Admission

- “Funding concerns definitely influenced my decision. However, the critical factor in my decision was the way that the faculty at my current institution treated me throughout the application process....”
- “I was struck by the formulaic and somewhat faceless character of my acceptance from UCLA....”

Give Attention to the Cohort

- A critical mass of URM faculty & students is a measure of a welcoming environment
- Strengthen your welcome by having new recruits meet with advanced URM graduate students and by connecting students to the Graduate Division's Office of Outreach, Diversity & Fellowships

Give Attention to the Cohort

Provide information on graduate student organizations such as:

- Graduate Students of Color (GSOC)
- Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA)
- Raza Graduate Students Association (RGSA)
- STEM-PLEDGE

Funding: How to Tip the Decision

A strong student financial support package is critical; know your competition and their offers

Please select the items that were included in your UCLA financial support package.

Percent that marked “yes”

Financial Support	Attending	Declined
Single-year package	33.0% >	21.3%
Multi-year package	58.7%	59.0%
Stipend	68.5%	67.1%
Fellowship	76.8% >	60.2%
Employment as research assistant	26.5%	30.3%
Employment as teaching assistant	47.1%	46.8%
Loan	39.6% >	18.7%
Financial aid (e.g. federal work study)	16.3%	10.8%
Housing guarantee	48.1% >	29.9%
Other – Please describe below.	11.7%	12.3%

Quality of life issues

Percent that marked "very important"

Quality of Life Item	Attending	Declined
Geographic location	65.5% >	37.9%
Urban environment	33.9% >	25.3%
Cost of living in general	17.2%	< 35.6%
Availability & affordability of child care	4.3%	3.4%
Availability & affordability of housing	28.7%	29.9%
Diversity of student body	51.7% >	27.6%
Diversity of surrounding community	41.4% >	24.1%
Size of institution	21.6%	19.5%
Size of doctoral program	33.0% >	20.7%

Increasing the Yield Depts: Making Information Accessible

- **Provide contacts of faculty, staff, and graduate students willing to answer questions**
- **Keep the department website up-to-date with information on/links to:**
 - Faculty
 - Program requirements
 - Distinctions
 - Time-to-degree
 - Housing
 - Career services/placement
 - Transportation

Graduate Outreach & Diversity Initiatives Contacts

- Carlos Grijalva (62281)
Associate Dean
cgrijalva@grad.ucla.edu
- Anne Dela Cruz (53829)
Director, Outreach & Diversity
adelacruz@grad.ucla.edu
- Anna Guzman (53953)
Program Coordinator
aguzman@grad.ucla.edu
- Jozen Gibson (68743)
Student Affairs Officer
jgibson@grad.ucla.edu

