School of Public Health (SPH) Diversity Committee
Best Practices for Department & Programs
From Application to Enrollment

_Diversity is a core element of educational quality that must be addressed systematically and proactively. Our training, teaching, and research must reflect our society’s increasing cultural and racial diversity for our students to be prepared and productive. Greater diversity is not simply an end in itself, but a means to improving the health of the public and the richness and breadth of our educational experience and work environment._ --Guerra, J.

Departmental Best Practices, (10/08)

To assist departments/programs, the Diversity Committee offers the following practices for improving acceptance and yield rates. These are but two narrow areas of the admissions and enrollment process, but the two that bring the most challenge for us School-wide. By making the SPH a good **Academic, Social, and Financial Fit**, we can improve our diversity and reach our strategic vision for the future of the School.

With the following practices, we can assume that the prospective student 1. Is interested in our academic programs, 2. Has applied to one or more programs, and 3. Has provided us their academic and personal information, indicating membership in one or more underrepresented minority groups.

Definitions

- The SPH defines **underrepresented minority (URM)** as “Hispanic/Latinos, African-Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders” because individuals in these groups are underrepresented in the SPH in comparison with their numbers in the general population, and their membership in the public health field is essential to eradicating inequities in health status. Ethnicity and race, however, are not the only characteristics that affect inclusiveness and climate in the SPH. Differences in privilege, socioeconomic status, family history of participation in higher education, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, religion, and military status also demand that leadership, faculty, students, and staff conduct themselves with cultural awareness, respect, and appreciation for the value of diversity in our school and our profession.” (*SPH Self Study Report*)

- The UW defines **diversity** as “as groups or individuals with differences culture or background, including, but not limited to, race, sex, gender identity, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, religion, and military status.” (*UW Diversity Blueprint*)

**Goal Area: Acceptance Rate (Increase the likelihood that someone will be admitted)**

- Design department and program applications to reflect the value of diversity. Encourage applicants to submit academic goal statements as well as essays that provide information on how their individual experiences and/or academic interests will bring diversity to the scholarly perspectives and academic experiences of the School.

- Critically evaluate admission policy and practice, on a regular cycle, to include qualitative as well as quantitative indicators of achievement. Consider that the “best” students are defined as those who will complete the degree program and be successful both in and outside of academia. This is especially important considering that most SPH alumni are not in academia.

- Use factors in admissions that may help improve diversity in programs such as: overcoming economic and educational disadvantages and/or personal adversity, proven leadership, achievement awards, cultural awareness, and past enrollment in Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HCBUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

- School of Public Health programs should consider **tribal enrollment or affiliation** as a positive factor in admission. Yes, this is legal.
• Appoint a **diverse admissions committee** which is representative of the diversity in your department and program (or the faculty, staff, and students who are interested in achieving diversity). Draw on majority and minority members who value qualitative as well as quantitative indicators of achievement. If you don’t have minority faculty, staff or students, appoint a diversity advocate.

### Goal Area: Yield Rate (Increase the likelihood that someone who has been admitted will accept an offer)

#### Policy & Practice

• **Ask for and use identifiers** in pre and post admission recruitment. These optional demographic questions can include such information as race, ethnicity, gender, economic and educational disadvantage, participation in organizations/events that promote cultural awareness and diversity, overcoming personal adversity, and leadership awards and achievement. Although admissions decisions cannot be based on some of these factors, the availability of this data allows you to take part in targeted recruitment strategies as well as monitor and report on the effectiveness of specific recruitment efforts.

• **Profile or highlight** current students, faculty, and department/program activities which speak to the diversity of your department, program, the School, University, or discipline.

#### Personal Contact

• Prioritize **personal contact and relationships** in enrollment management work. Using faculty, administrators, current students, or alumni, reach out to newly admitted students at least once via phone, email or meeting by organizing a calling party or distributing contact lists to committee members.

• Following admission, departments and programs should take part in **activities** intended to increase directly the yield of specific targeted groups. Such efforts should include program, School, and University visit days and programs like the Prospective Graduate Student Days sponsored by GOMAP.

• Seek **funding** for underrepresented and minority students to visit.

• When hosting prospective students, assign a **host** for each visitor and follow up visits with personal contact.

• Outside of visit days, arrange to have prospective students meet with **Graduate Diversity Recruiters (GDRs)** from GO-MAP for lunch or coffee during their visit or invite a GDR to speak to prospective students in your department (http://grad.washington.edu/gomap/gdr.shtml). These kinds of activities help to provide prospective students with a sense of the community of graduate students that exists at the UW across departments and disciplines.

#### Financial Support

• **Use factors** that help improve diversity in programs such as: overcoming economic and educational disadvantages and/or personal adversity, proven leadership, achievement awards, cultural awareness, and past enrollment in Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HCBUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

• Utilize **fellowships** for the purpose of enhancing diversity in your program. Marketability is also a factor that may be considered. Once you’ve decided you want a student and are willing to pay to land that student, you may offer the student his or her “market rate” in aid to attract them to enroll. “Market rate” decisions should be made on a case by case basis. Contact GO-MAP if you have questions about criteria for establishing marketability or about determining a “market rate” decision.

• **Identify** one or more possible fellowships, awards, and tuition waivers for each admitted student from eligible backgrounds. See: http://grad.washington.edu/gomap/funding.shtml, http://commons.lib.washington.edu/services/gfis

• School of Public Health departments and programs should consider **tribal enrollment or affiliation** as a positive factor in financial awards. Yes, this is legal.