

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES REPORT 2002-2003 Academic Year

Report Prepared July 15, 2003

Each year, an academic year plan for recruitment activities is designed. The purpose of this plan is to provide a guide for the Graduate School's recruitment activities and to provide assurance that staff and fiscal resources are being used in an effective and efficient manner. This recruitment activities report contains an assessment and overview of the Graduate School's 2002-2003 recruitment activities.

OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS AND RECRUITMENT TRAVEL

While attempts are made to actively recruit graduate students from both national and international sources, funds restricted travel for recruitment to Southeast U.S. locations in recent years. During the 2002-2003 academic year, graduate recruitment travel was increased. The Graduate School attended over 30 Graduate and Professional School Day Programs (recruitment fairs) and other events across the Southeast. Each program throughout the state of Alabama is made up of prospective graduate students from colleges and universities in the surrounding area. The result of this is that one Graduate and Professional Day program allowed the UA Graduate School to recruit students from several colleges and universities who come together at one central location. Thus, 30 Graduate and Professional School Day Programs in this case resulted in our recruitment staff making contact with prospective graduate students for over 50 colleges and universities. Consistent with university-wide efforts to increase minority student enrollment, UA Graduate School attended a number of events for minority recruitment.

During and following these recruitment visits, the Graduate School representative developed a list of prospects, entered the prospects into the recruitment data base, sent each prospective graduate student a post card (within two-weeks), and sent a memorandum to each graduate chairperson with a list of the names and phone numbers of those prospective students that expressed interest in their particular program. When these prospective graduate students apply, they are contacted by email or letter concerning any additional information they may need to complete their application.

Graduate and Professional Day Programs Attended by UA Graduate School

PROGRAM	LOCATION	DATE
• Mississippi State University	Colvert Student Union	September 16, 2002
• University of Mississippi	Career Center	September 16, 2002
• Tennessee State University	Floyd-Payne Center	September 24, 2002
• Fisk University	Henderson Johnson Ctr.	September 24, 2002
• Vanderbilt University	Stadium Club	September 24, 2002
• University Memphis	Student Center	September 26, 2002
• Rhodes College	Bryan Center	September 26, 2002
• Alabama Minority Graduate Education Program Attended by undergraduates at 10-12 Alabama colleges	UAB / Hill Center	October 7, 2002
• Huntsville Area Alabama A & M University Athens State University Oakwood College UAB University of North Alabama	UAH Campus	October 7, 2002
• Birmingham Area Birmingham-Southern Miles College Samford University UAB University of Montevallo	UAB Hill Center	October 7, 2002
• Stillman College	Birthright Auditorium	October 8, 2002
• University of Alabama	Ferguson Center	October 8, 2002
• Auburn University	AU Haley Center	October 9, 2002
• Montgomery Area Alabama State University Auburn University- Montgomery Faulkner University Huntington College Troy State Univ.- Troy Troy State Univ.-Dothan Troy State Univ.- Montgomery	ASU / Acadome	October 10, 2002

• Mobile Area Spring Hill College University of Mobile University of South Alabama	Univ. South Alabama Student Center	October 11, 2002
• Millsaps College	South Hall Atrium	October 14, 2002
• Atlanta University Center Clark Atlanta University Spelman University Morris Brown College Morehouse College	Clark-Atlanta Center	October 15, 2002
Florida State University	University Union	October 15, 2002
University of Florida	Reitz Student Union	October 16, 2002
Tuskegee University	Conference Center	November 23, 2002
Mississippi State Univ.	James Trotter Ctr.	January 20, 2003
Louisiana State University	Pete Maravich Assem. Ctr./ "L" Club	February 6, 2003
National Black Graduate Student Association	Atlanta	March 19-23, 2003
Mississippi University For Women	Hogarth Student Center	March 28, 2003

McNair Programs

McNair Scholars are highly motivated junior and senior undergraduate students engaged in scholarly activities with faculty mentors from areas in which they hope to pursue graduate study. The program is intended for scholars from first generation or disadvantaged backgrounds. The UA Graduate School conducts seminars for individual McNair programs on their campuses, hosts visits to our campus, exhibits at showcases at McNair Research Conferences in the southeast, and recruits at the national Compact for Faculty Diversity Conference attended by McNair Scholars. Recruitment seminars and showcases were conducted at the following programs during 2002-2003.

Alabama	UAB University of Alabama	June 6, 2002 June 2, 2002
Mississippi	University of Southern Mississippi Jackson State University University of Mississippi	June 20, 2002 June 20, 2002 June 21, 2002 June 21, 2002
Tennessee	University of Tennessee	July 13, 2002
National Compact for Faculty Diversity Conference in Washington DC	McNair Scholars from across the United States	October 24-26, 2002

ON-CAMPUS EVENTS

The University of Alabama Graduate and Professional School Day

Graduate School recruiters participated in the seventh Annual Graduate and Professional School Day (October 9, 2002). Over 300 UA undergraduate students participated in this event and visited exhibits from graduate schools across the country.

Graduate School Preview Day

The Graduate School conducted the 5th annual UA Graduate School Preview Day on Thursday September 26, 2002. There were over 400 prospective graduate students who attended this event. Students were provided with the opportunity to attend a general session on "Applying to Graduate School" as well as breakout sessions with representatives from the various UA colleges and divisions. Breakout sessions included the three divisions of Arts and Sciences, Commerce and Business Administration, Communication and Information Sciences, Education, Engineering, Human and Environmental Sciences, and Social Work. The purpose of this event was to provide information to undergraduate students and to other prospective graduate students, including non-traditional graduate students, who are interested in pursuing a graduate degree at The University of Alabama. Also, the Kaplan Education Center, Inc. (now offering graduate admissions test preparation classes through The University of Alabama Center for Teaching and Learning) was on hand to provide students with the opportunity to take a free practice test for the GRE, GMAT or LSAT.

Minority Student Seminar and Reception

Each year The Graduate School holds a reception to honor outstanding minority students. This year over 300 junior and senior minority students from UA and Stillman College were invited to attend. During this event The Graduate School Admissions Staff, along with other prominent UA and Stillman College faculty and administrators, were available to meet and discuss the benefits of getting a graduate degree. The event took place in the Parlor Room of Alston Hall (CB&A) on Tuesday, March 13, 2003. There were over 100 students who attended a seminar on applying to graduate school and the reception.

Other On-Campus Events

The Graduate School Admissions staff continues to participate in every possible opportunity for on-campus recruitment as well as speaking to various undergraduate organizations concerning admissions procedures and the benefits of investing in graduate education. Speaking engagements for this past recruitment year included prospective graduate students from The English Language Institute, The National Science Foundation, REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) summer program, McNair Scholars Program, Adult Student Program, housing groups, various classes, honor societies and other UA groups and organizations.

Monthly Seminars

The Graduate School conducts a seminar on the 1st Wednesday of each month on the process associated with applying to graduate school. The seminars take place on the first Wednesday in each month at 2:00 p.m. in room 122 Graves Hall. The seminars provide information on when and how to apply, transcripts, test scores, recommendation letters and other components involved in the application process.

Graduate Department Recruitment Seminar

This year the Graduate School conducted a Recruitment Seminar in March 2003 for faculty members, Department Chairs and Graduate Program Directors. The purpose of this event is to generate new and innovative ideas relating to the recruitment of graduate students. The major focus is an open discussion of what recruitment techniques work best for each individual department, what the Graduate School can do to help departments in the recruitment process, and recommendations for new graduate school recruitment activities. In addition, in September 2002, the Graduate School held a seminar for *new* department chairs and staff about Graduate School activities.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OFFICE AND DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

Updating and Use of Print Materials

The Graduate School updates and uses a variety of print materials in off-campus and on-campus recruitment activities. In addition, the print materials are provided to graduate departments for their targeted recruitment activities at professional conferences, etc. Recruitment publications produced by the Graduate School include the following: Catalog (updated in 2002-2003), Graduate School brochure (updated in 2002-2003), Graduate Student Financial Assistance Handbook (updated every semester), and Graduate School bookmark (updated 2002-2003). Print materials also are duplicated on the Graduate School's website.

Prospect Data Base, Follow-Up, Direct Mail Activities

The Graduate School maintains a number of prospect databases and also uses a number of national databases for targeted recruitment. The databases were used for direct mail activities from the Graduate School and were shared with departments for targeted recruitment. The Graduate School's primary prospect database consists of prospects that were identified at recruitment fairs, contacted the Graduate School by phone or email, sent GRE scores to UA, or contacted departments. Since April 2002, the Graduate School has added 10,365 names to its prospect database, including the database of prospects identified by departments and Graduate School staff and the database of prospects submitting the "request for information form" from our internet site, resulting in over 35,000 students entered into our databases since they were created in April 1998. The following steps were used to maintain the primary database and follow up with prospects.

1. Names, phone numbers and addresses are entered into the Graduate School Prospect Database immediately after the contact.

2. The graduate admissions officer mails a personal letter/email and other materials to each prospect.
3. An electronic memo/file listing the students interested in each particular area/discipline is sent to each department chairperson requesting more specific information is sent to each student.
4. The prospects are contacted by email, letter, or phone several weeks later to inquire about any additional needs.

We also conducted a number of direct mail and email activities with selected groups of UA undergraduate students and prospects on national databases including UA presidential scholars, outstanding UA juniors and seniors, and national McNair scholars. UA Presidential Scholars and outstanding juniors/seniors were encouraged to consider attending graduate school at The University of Alabama. In addition to the general recruitment letter, each student was asked to complete a special form called the Outstanding Junior and Senior Data Form. When these forms were returned to The Graduate School, they were forwarded on to the respective departments along with a memorandum encouraging the various departments to respond in some fashion to help recruit the prospective students. The Graduate School encouraged each department to follow up by sending each student a letter, brochure(s), and possibly invite the student to sit in on a graduate class. Emails and print mail activities with the national McNair Scholars included invitations for campus visits and notification about UA's waiver of the \$25 graduate application fee for McNair Scholars.

In Office Admissions and Recruitment Activities

The daily admissions and recruitment activities for domestic and international admissions by the Graduate School staff include phone calls, voice mail messages, sessions with individual students in office, processing applications, mailing applications, mailing catalogs, phone calls from faculty and other units, and responding to e-mail inquiries from faculty and students. During this past year (May 2002 to June 2003) the Graduate School received and processed approximately 33,000 pieces of mail related to applications. The Graduate School admissions staff had in excess of 4,400 office visits from students with application questions. The admissions staff handled over 9,000 phone calls and responded to over 13,500 questions from applicants.

International Recruitment

The Graduate School's International Admissions Office engaged in a number of activities during 2002-2003 to increase the number of international applications, assist departments with international recruitment, and increase the ease for international applicants to apply for graduate study and complete financial and visa documents. Activities during 2002-2003 included:

- The Graduate School conducted a major mailing of catalogs and brochures to embassies, consulates, U.S. service offices, and some foreign university libraries.
- In addition to providing all application materials on our website, we provided all application forms as email attachments to applicants who request this service.

- The Graduate School changed its deadlines for international applicants to encourage earlier applications, earlier admissions decisions, and, thus, earlier opportunities for international applicants to seek visa interviews at the consulates in their countries.
- The Graduate School coordinated with other international programs on campus regarding SEVIS, immigration requirements, international recruitment visits, and other special issues related to international students.

WEB AND OTHER ELECTRONIC ACTIVITIES

Enhancements continue for the Graduate School virtual site (<http://graduate.ua.edu>). Important improvements on our virtual site for 2002-2003 include the following:

- The overall design of the virtual site has been enhanced, and new features have been added, including a site map, search capabilities, and a “Graduate Community News” page.
- Most Graduate School publications and announcements are included on the site, including the *Graduate Catalog*, *Graduate Program Procedures and Policy Guide*, *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, *Graduate Assistant Guide*, *Semester Deadlines for Graduate School*, *Financial Aid Handbook*, and the *Graduate School Annual Report*.
- University-wide policy changes for graduate students (e.g., admissions policies, residency requirements) were placed on the site immediately following approval.
- The on-line application on our internet site accounted for well over 50% of our graduate applications. Continuous improvements have resulted in an increase in the number of applications and quicker, more efficient processing. For example, on-line application data are automatically uploaded into our Student Information System (SIS). On-line applicants may pay their application fees with credit cards. We recently added online, expedited graduate application forms to enhance the application process for our own seniors and our master’s students applying to our doctoral programs.
- We use numerous online methods to assist applicants with the admissions and registration process and to provide information to departments that will assist in recruiting high quality students. Departments receive automatic e-mails when applicants apply on-line, and applicants receive periodic acknowledgement and reminder e-mails following their on-line application submission. All applicants may check the status of their applications at tideguide.ua.edu. We also send periodic emails to new students, after their acceptance to a degree program, which provide information about the university, encourage admitted students to attend UA, and instruct students in online class registration procedures.
- Several new activities have been implemented in recent months and will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our application and admissions process. The Graduate School purchased equipment and software to provide imaging of transcripts that accompany graduate applications. We recently approved a proposal to develop a workflow process for online review of graduate applications by department faculty. We are beginning work with Banner and other university staff for the switch to this new platform.

- The Graduate School has developed a number of electronic resources for use in its own recruitment activities and departmental recruitment. Several PowerPoint presentations were developed in 2002-2003, used at our own seminars, and shared with departments. An electronic slide show on CD-Rom was developed and contains photos regarding research and other activities relevant to graduate education.

MINORITY RECRUITMENT

During 2002-2003, the Graduate School engaged in extensive recruitment and support activities that contribute to high levels of enrollment and graduation of African-American graduate students. Principal recruitment efforts for minority students were directed at current UA and off-campus undergraduate students. We recruited on-campus students with an annual reception, on-campus mailings and publications, and continuous contact through graduate coordinators in each department of the University. For off-campus students, the Graduate School actively recruited through campus visits to HBCUs in the state and region, attendance at important events such as National Science Foundation Diversity Continuum Programs and the national Compact for Faculty Diversity Conference, and through use of national lists of minority scholars, such as the McNair Scholars and the National Physical Science Consortium.

The Graduate School actively participated in numerous undergraduate activities at UA and other campuses that are designed to prepare minority and first-generation students for their application to and study in graduate school. For example, we assisted the UA TRIO office with obtaining a grant for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program and with applying for grant renewal in 2003. Pat Harrison, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, currently serves on the UA McNair Advisory Board. Graduate School staff members provide seminars and individual assistance for McNair scholars at UA. We visited McNair programs on other campuses to provide recruitment seminars, and we also attend the McNair research conferences of several universities to recruit prospective students. We hosted visits from McNair programs to the UA campus. The Graduate School provided a \$25 application fee waiver for any McNair scholar in the U.S. who applied to a UA graduate degree program

The Graduate School provided extensive and individualized help in identifying graduate assistantships and other financial support for minority students. Our Financial Assistance Handbook and web site identified external fellowship and scholarship programs available to minority students. The UA fellowship programs, listed in the next section, provided funding for a number of minority students.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

The fellowship programs administered by the Graduate School are targeted for recruitment of highly qualified new graduate students, as described below

Graduate Council Fellowships

For 2002-2003, a total of 60 students received fellowship awards from the available pool of \$895,000. Students who were beginning graduate study at The University of Alabama in 2002-2003 received 42 of the 46 Regular Fellowships. The fellowships carry full tuition and fee scholarships, as well as stipends. All Graduate Council Fellowship stipends were raised to \$14,000 for the 2002-2003 academic year. In addition to the stipend, some fellows were selected to receive \$5000 supplements. The supplements, totaling \$55,000, were awarded to 11 students, including 8 new fellows for 2002-2003 and 3 fellows for 2001-2002 who will continue with a second year of the supplement.

National Alumni Fellowships and Scholarships

The National Alumni Association Collegiate License Tag Program was established in 1987. Proceeds from the sale of University logo license tags are endowed for the provision of fellowships to Alabama natives. Income generated from the endowed funds is used to award money to cover a stipend for the academic year together with full tuition costs for two semesters. For the 2002-2003 year a total of 28 fellowships awards were made of a stipend of \$12,000 plus tuition of \$3556. For the academic year 2003-2004 stipend rates have been increased to \$14,000 and the tuition award now totals \$4,134.

The National Alumni Graduate Scholarship Program awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to one graduate student in each college or school offering a post-baccalaureate degree.

Graduate Assistantships

Each department within each college receives funding each year to provide assistantships plus tuition awards. An assistantship requires a number of hours' service per week either as a teaching assistant or for research projects and the number of hours determines the amount of stipend and tuition received. The minimum level of stipend for assistantships of 20 hours per week for the 2002-2003 academic year was \$8,678. The average level of award made by the university as a whole was \$9,388. These assistantships are a crucial element within the recruitment process and, along with the fellowships described above, provide a valuable enticement for students looking at applying to this university.

Funding for Minority Students

We continue to have outstanding financial assistance programs for recruitment and retention of minority students. Since 1988, when the earliest of these programs commenced, the University has funded students for well over \$2 million in stipends and tuition awards. In 2002-2003 (summer, fall, and spring terms), a total of 38 students were supported. Our fellowship programs are aimed specifically at increasing the enrollment and retention of minority graduate students and to provide them with preparation for careers in academic settings

SREB/ACHE Minority Faculty Fellows: The Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) and Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) Minority Doctoral Scholars Program encourages ethnic minority students to pursue doctoral degrees and

become college-level professors. The annual stipend for an SREB fellow has been \$12,000, but will be increased to \$15,000 beginning in fall 2003. Since 1993, the Graduate School has enrolled 35 SREB Minority Doctoral Scholars, which is the highest number of SREB scholars in the country. A total of 11 SREB fellows have completed their doctoral degrees at UA. One new UA doctoral student in fall 2002 and eight new UA doctoral students in fall 2001 were awarded SREB fellowships. During 2002-2003 (summer, fall, and spring terms), 18 SREB fellows were supported with stipends, tuition scholarships, and/or department assistantships.

Future Faculty Fellows: Students from minority groups who plan to become college or university professors may apply for support from the Future Faculty Fellows Program. Future Faculty Fellows receive annual stipends, departmental assistantships, and full-tuition scholarships for up to 4 years of full-time graduate study. In 2002-2003, the Graduate School funded five students for a total stipend of \$60,000 (\$12,000 each). Since this program started in 1991, 26 graduate students have been supported, and 13 have received their doctoral degrees.

Joint Faculty Development: The Joint Faculty Development Program supports practicing college teachers who do not have terminal degrees in their particular field of instruction. Institutions partnering with UA in this program include Alabama State University, Alabama A&M University, and Oakwood College. Under this program, for 2002-2003, the Graduate School supported four faculty members from the partner institutions with a total annual stipend of \$49,000 (\$14,000 each for three full-time students and \$7,000 for a part-time student). Since this program started in 1988, 23 students have been supported, and 10 have received their doctoral degrees.

UA-Stillman Faculty/Staff Development: This program is for faculty and staff of Stillman College. In 2002-2003 (summer, fall, spring terms), seven students received tuition scholarships totaling \$11,958.

APPLICATIONS AND ENROLLMENT OUTCOMES

The University of Alabama Graduate School continues to benefit from its extensive recruitment activities.

- The Graduate School received 5,014 applications to degree programs in 2002, which is comparable to 4,852 degree applications in 2001. A large number of degree applications were completed and reviewed by departments --- 3,837 in 2002 compared with 3,808 in 2001. The quality of degree applications was similar to last year, and an acceptance rate of 59.2% was maintained in 2002, compared to 59.4% in 2001. The degree applications completed in 2002 resulted in 2,273 acceptances, 1,245 rejections, and 319 awaiting departmental decisions. A total of 1,050 non-degree applications and 706 off-campus degree applications were received in 2002.
- Although all graduate applications for fall 2003 have not been completed and data are very preliminary, reports indicate that total graduate applications are remaining high (4,255 submitted applications by July 12, 2003, versus 3,458 by July 11, 2003). In addition, preliminary reports suggest that the number of

accepted graduate students is also high (1,331 by July 12, 2003, versus 1,162 by July 11, 2002). However, a large number of applications are still incomplete or pending, and final department decisions about student admissions are ongoing.

- Total graduate enrollment at the University of Alabama for fall 2002 reached an eight-year high of 3,542, which continues the trend of high enrollment levels over the last few years. The highest levels of enrollment in 1994 of 3,600 students and 1995 of 3,530 students were followed by a drop to 3,322 in 1996 and 3,253 in 1997. Since 1997, enrollment has steadily increased. This year's enrollment is about 6% higher than the total enrollment of 3,340 for fall 2001.

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