

GRADUATE SCHOOL, Colorado State University

Overview of Initial Report from Diversity Consultant: Dr. Nadya Fouad

4/24/14

Goal: To assist the Graduate School in ensuring a welcoming and inclusive environment for all graduate students, with an additional focus on marginalized populations.

Identified Concerns:

- Students of color feel isolated, unwelcome “There are no allies in the department”
- Lack of agency in department
- Departments function very independently—sometimes good ideas don’t get communicated across units, and funding can’t be combined; high variability across departments and colleges—sometimes even within a single department
- Students of color are very busy—they have limited time to be involved on campus—thus increased isolation
- Graduate students, in comparison to undergraduates, may experience higher repercussions or negative consequences—“This place isn’t safe”
- The Graduate School may not always clearly and consistently communicate the value for and attention given to issues of diversity; that is, the activities the Graduate School engages in that focus on areas of diversity are not always noticeably visible or readily identifiable
- Application process that do not include a holistic review process may create a barrier
- Campus is visibly white “No one here looks like me—I must not belong”
- Lack of recognition for faculty who are active and successful with diverse students
- Lack of coordination among a number of units charged with Diversity Strategic Plan
- Fort Collins has been perceived as unfriendly, unwelcoming, or hostile to students and faculty of color

Dr. Fouad’s Recommendations:

- A. Recruitment of diverse students and faculty

- B. Retention of diverse students and faculty
 - Repository of information on diversity across graduate programs, including resources but also “what’s happening” for students and faculty
 - Have a network for students of color
 - Re-examine policies (e.g., B or better needed to stay in program) to ensure they are equitable
 - Help students learn about resources and grants for funding, provide training for them to access those resources
 - Assign student mentors
- C. The Graduate School consistently highlight evidence of its activities and commitment to diversity
- D. Ensure there is a fair admission process
- E. Advising and mentoring
 - Provide time/mechanism to bring Graduate Coordinators together to ensure they all know the processes and procedures
 - Provide professional development for advisors on working with diverse students
 - Provide implicit bias training for all advisors
 - Information on preventing plagiarism of students’ work by faculty
- F. Evaluation
 - Ask for coverage of diversity in annual or periodic reviews of faculty and programs
 - Hold faculty/departments/colleges accountable for recruitment and retention
 - Ask departments what they are doing to address diversity
- G. Climate of fairness and equity
 - Work with colleges to have a neutral advocate in each college
 - Be a leader in promoting a culture of zero tolerance for discriminatory or sexist language and behavior
 - Provide training for chairs on whistle blowing and threats of retaliation
 - Provide someone in the Graduate School for students to talk with who can serve as both a sounding board and an advocate
 - Work with other units to develop multiple points of entry to discuss concerns
 - Work within the university structure to prohibit retribution for voicing concerns
 - Develop more organized relationships between Cultural Centers and Graduate School—The Diversity Offices have been charged to reach out to Graduate Students in Work Plans
 - Conduct a survey of all graduate students around diversity to understand the barriers and supports for all graduate students.