

Galo, Kathleen

From: Lynn Cooley, Dean of the Graduate School <grad.dean@message.yale.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 1:12 PM
To:
Subject: An update on diversity in Yale Graduate School

Yale

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

A Message from Dean Cooley

Copied to: DGSs, Department Chairs, Registrars

In this message: A summary of GSAS diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts including updates on initiatives, statistics, and links to further information.

October 14, 2020

Dear graduate students,

I write to update you about the efforts my team and I have been making to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in the graduate school. When the pandemic hit last spring, we necessarily diverted all energies to COVID-related issues. It was already a difficult time, with the pandemic further compounding the suffering caused by a seemingly endless onslaught of racially-motivated violence resulting in the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks as well as so many others whose names may never be widely known.

Encountering individual and systemic racism over and over again takes a toll. Discrimination in all its forms has a profoundly corrosive effect on the peace of mind and well-being of all those who experience it. This is why ensuring the health, safety, access and opportunity of our students – especially in a time fraught with uncertainty – is fundamental to our mission.

[Commitment to diversity](#)

While the definition of diversity is sometimes viewed as tantamount to race and gender issues, in our understanding it also includes socio-economic distinctions, religious beliefs, political perspectives, sexual preferences, and many other ways of thinking and existing in the world.

Educating a diverse student body is the means to our intellectual goals as well as our pursuit of social justice. Providing an environment where every student can reach their potential must be woven into our institutional culture with the understanding that diversity implies an evolving process. As such, it requires continued effort to ensure everyone feels respected by our community and supported in their work.

Yale joins 500 member universities in the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) in its commitment to diversity. [In its Statement of Principles](#), CGS recognizes “that diversity, equity, access, and inclusion are critical to the excellence of graduate education.”

Our recent efforts to diversify our student body and provide them a supportive home at Yale are summarized below.

Diversity updates at GSAS

1. **Since the inception of the Dean’s Emerging Scholars Initiative in 2016:**

- 61 incoming graduate students have received the [Dean’s Emerging Scholars Fellowship](#)
- 40 matriculating graduate students have received the Dean’s Emerging Scholars Research Award. 10 will be awarded in November 2020
- 21 participants have completed the year-long Emerging Scholars Initiative Post-Baccalaureate Research Education Program (ESI PREP). 19 (90%) of the 21 are in graduate school programs (PhD, MA) and 2 (10%) are in professional school programs (JD, MPH) at Yale and across the nation. Six were extended offers to Yale and three accepted. Five participants are currently in the 2020-2021 ESI PREP cohort.

- 22 National Institutes of Health PREP participants completed the program during the 2014-2019 grant funding cycle. All 22 (100%) are still connected to the biomedical sciences in some capacity. 19 (86%) of the 22 entered graduate programs in the biomedical sciences within two years of completing the program. Two (9%) remained in Yale laboratories as research assistants and one (5%) is working in the field of AIDS awareness while preparing to retake the MCAT. Of the 19 who entered graduate programs 17 (89%) entered PhD or MD/PhD programs. One entered an MS graduate program in biomedical sciences and one entered an MD program. Of the 19 who are in graduate programs, nine (47%) were offered admission to Yale, with five of the nine (55%) currently matriculating in a Yale BBS PhD program.
- 2. A piloted version of the **Transitions: First-Year Experience Program** was extended to the entire fall incoming cohort (approximately 612 students). As such, 35 Peer Orientation Mentors were hired to help create community and share strategies for navigating the graduate school experience, each covering a small group of 15-20 incoming students.
- 3. Over the last five years, there was a **61% increase in applications from underrepresented students** with a corresponding **30% increase in offers**, and a **45% increase of acceptances**.
- 4. 30+ prospective students who were extended offers of admission for Fall 2020 participated in **the Diversity Recruitment Days** just before campus closings in March 2020 due to COVID-19.
- 5. 70+ prospective students participated in each of the two virtual sessions for the **Diversity Preview Days** on September 24 and October 1, 2020.
- 6. **Additional recruitment initiatives** continue including:
 - Participation in graduate school fairs and conference.
 - The establishment of partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)
 - Collaborations with national consortia
 - Yale campus visits (online for Fall 2020)

- Online department-specific informational Boot Camps
 - Webinar information sessions about the graduate school admissions process
7. Plans are underway to continue the **Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) Program** (virtually, if necessary) for the summer of 2021. The SURF Program provides an 8-week research intensive experience to rising undergraduate juniors and seniors who have an interest in pursuing a Ph.D.
 8. Dean Nearon has been meeting with groups of students, faculty, and staff throughout the year to discuss topics such as campus climate, microaggressions, and talking about race.
 9. Dean Nearon is currently consulting with 23 departments as they develop their diversity strategic plans and will continue to do so with more departments in the future.

Detailed responses to many of your questions about diversity in the graduate school - many of which emanated from the December 2019 Diversity Town Hall – may be [found in this FAQ link on the GSAS website](#). So much has happened in the past year but our dedication to you remains the same.

Sincerely,
Lynn Cooley

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C.N.H. Long Professor of Genetics
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