

# Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives (ORDI)



## Annual Report

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2013-2014

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## I. Mission

The Office of Recruitment and Diversity Initiatives (ORDI) seeks to promote a diverse and inclusive graduate community by acting as a resource - assisting every graduate program on campus to recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse student body.

## II. Staffing Changes

The ORDI remains staffed with a full time A/P faculty director, part-time administrative assistant, and 20-hour graduate assistant position. This year, the office employed a second full time graduate assistant and a part-time graduate assistant to help with special projects. The ORDI also hosted an intern during the spring 2014 semester that contributed to the operations. The group meets every Monday morning to discuss the week's events and deliverables.

## III. Major Programs

### Open Houses and Visitations

Open Houses are offered by ORDI on select Fridays during the fall and spring semesters. They consists of a welcome by Dean DePauw (if available), a 30 minute presentation about the VT Graduate School, a tour of the GLC and residence space, and an hour-long campus and town tour. Department appointments are arranged as the student's schedule allows.

This year, ORDI offered 5 Open Houses hosted by the Graduate School and assisted with other visitation programs hosted by departments and colleges. The ORDI hosts groups for tours every summer such as the following:

- McNair Scholars from East Tennessee State University
- McNair Scholars from Concord University and Bluefield State
- VT Knowledge Works International Student Group

### Tours

ORDI changed the M-F 8-5 availability of tours to offering a 10am and 2pm tour every day. On average, the ORDI host 2 students a week for the one-hour van tour of campus and Blacksburg. These tours include coordination with departments for faculty appointments to offer the student a full itinerary. The ORDI Graduate Assistant manages these visits.

### Coordinated School Visits Program (CSVP)

The CSVP is recruiting efforts shared by the ORDI and departments, mostly to target Minority Serving Institutions, but also other targeted markets.

The following trips were made through this program in 2013-2014:

1. Oak Ridge Associated Universities
2. Florida AMU
3. West Virginia University
4. Morgan State
5. Florida International
6. University of Miami
7. UMBC McNair Conference
8. Virginia Tech
9. Radford University
10. James Madison University
11. Virginia Commonwealth University
12. Society for the Advancement of Hispanics, Chicanos, and Native Americans in Science
13. Atlanta University Consortium
14. University of Delaware McNair Conference
15. Purdue Big 10
16. Hampton University
17. HBCU Career Development Marketplace
18. Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students
19. Concord University
20. Longwood University
21. Western Alabama State University Research Conference
22. District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority
23. Bridgewater
24. Virginia State University
25. Southern Regional Education Board Compact Conference

#### Summer REU Ice Cream and Pizza

The annual ORDI hosts two events for the summer researchers on campus. The first social is a pizza social where ORDI presents Graduate School 101 and does a Q & A session. The second social is an ice cream social where the dean welcomes the group and encourages them to go on to graduate education.

## IV. Department Support

#### Diversity and Recruitment Summit

ORDI hosts summer meetings to report on the programming and progress of the Office to the department coordinators, heads, and graduate directors. These events allow ORDI to obtain feedback and solicit collaborations. The summit is well attended. This year, the VT Medical School and IGEPs will be in attendance.

#### HOBSONS Connect System

The Graduate School is in year 2 of the 5 year contract with HOBSONS Connect which is a client management system. The system took a team of Graduate School directors to build over the course of a year and just recently imported 20,000 records to include all applicants from July 2012 to date.

This year, the ORDI hosted 10 Hobsons training sessions for faculty and staff through NLI. Several individual consultation sessions also occurred with departments throughout the year. To date, there are 189 users. Departments are also creating communication plans to include videos about their admission process. These videos are produced by the ORDI. To date, the ORDI has produced 18 department videos to be included in the Hobsons system.

#### Gradrec Email

ORDI manages the [gradrecr@vt.edu](mailto:gradrecr@vt.edu) account. This account receives direct emails and forwarded emails (from igss and gradappl) from prospective students. The account averages 100 emails a week.

#### Information Sessions

ORDI is occasionally asked to provide an information session about *Graduate School 101* for departments or visiting groups. Last year the ORDI hosted 8 of these sessions mostly for Virginia Tech undergraduates (such as Corp of Cadets) and visiting groups.

#### New Coordinators and Directors Need to Know Presentation

The ORDI worked with the Graduate School directors and Associate Deans to produce a WebEx recorded video about Need-to-know features of the Graduate School. The video includes things about policy, resources, and websites that help guide departments when working with the Graduate School.

#### Spring Visitation Grants

The ORDI put out the call to departments to submit budgets for small grants allowing the release of funds to support highly-competitive admitted students to visit campus.

Departments who were granted support include:

- Math
- Human Development
- SOVA
- Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Engineering Science and Mechanics
- FREC
- AAEC
- GEOS
- Chemistry
- Architecture
- Chemistry

- Mechanical Engineering

## V. Collaborations

ORDI works with various offices around campus to provide services to prospective students, current students, and alumni. Collaborations include but are not limited to the following offices:

- Cranwell International Center (CIC)
- Office of Diversity and Inclusion
- Multicultural Academic and Opportunities Program
- VT-PREP and IMSD
- Career Services
- Women's Center
- VT Advance
- Multicultural Programs and Services
- REU programs (various departments)
- Queer Grads and Allies
- Black Graduate Student Organization
- George Washington Carver Program
- Language and Culture Institute
- Fulbright
- University Honors
- Human Resources Office of Equity and Access
- Graduate School Ombudsperson
- Graduate School Admissions and Academic Progress
- Graduate School Student Services
- Student Success Center
- Graduate Fellows and Resident Life
- Office of Services for Students with Disabilities
- Graduate Student Assembly
- University Relations

### Graduate Student Climate Survey

The ORDI and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion worked together to write the report of the findings from the 2013 Graduate Student Climate Survey. It is published on the Graduate School website under Diversity. In the spring, a group of Masters students taking an assessment class with Dr. Martha Glass conducted focus groups and interviews with students who identified as having a disability, being over 30 years old, or having children.

These three groups voiced concerns on the survey and so these interviews were conducted to help address the concerns of the students. I met with the assessment group once a week to talk through the process and collect the data. Their findings are part of the report.

### National Name Exchange

This is the first year that we have officially participated in the National Name Exchange. This is a membership to which we get access to names of underrepresented, high achieving prospective graduate students. I worked with Dr. Karen Sanders and the studentrequest@vt.edu staff to get the names of our students to share in the database exchange. Last year we gained access to 7,400 names and this year there are over 8,400.

## VI. Assistantships and Student Funding

### GEM and New Horizon Graduate Scholars

The College of Engineering (COE) continues to work with the ORDI to maximize efforts in recruiting underrepresented students into their programs through multiyear funding. The COE has named these students as New Horizon Graduate Scholars (NHGS). Many of these students are identified through the GEM Consortium membership. Other students are identified through purchased GRE names or faculty member relationships.

The first cohort of the NHGS enrolled 25 students. The number of graduate students from underrepresented minority groups rose from 82 in 2012 to 107 in 2013. These NHGS were brought together for a breakfast during orientation where the Graduate School and the COE departments were the host. The students were also included on the monthly luncheons for underrepresented students in the COE. The ORDI did wellness checks with the students at the end of the semester to endure their return for the second semester.

The ORDI works closely with the COE to ensure these students are retained by providing mentoring and continued funding.

### Dean Diversity Assistantships

The DDAs are an excellent recruitment tool. This year there were 21 nominations and 8 offers made. The 13 students who were not chosen were either funded through the George W. Carver program, the VT IMSD/PREP program, or the COE NHGS programs. By including the directors of these programs in the selection process, it was easy to collaborate to ensure that all students were offered some funding.

### Powell Fellowship

After two years of not offering the Powell Fellowship, it is being offered again. There were 6 nominations and 1 student was chosen. This award has few nominations because a student must be a VA resident and have high need. I may have to change the process to identify these students for the departments.

### McNair Assistantship

There were 4 nominations and 1 award for this assistantship. It is still a struggle to identify students who qualify for this award since it requires that the student be a past McNair Scholar. Many times departments do not have

this information about the student unless the student self-discloses that they are a McNair Scholar.

## VII. Diversity Initiatives

### Diversity Scholars

This third year of the Diversity Scholars program was a success. ORDI received 27 nominations and chose 13 Scholars to participate. There were 2 additional scholars this year who joined, one of who deferred from a previous year and the other who joined an existing Scholar. The Scholars represented 7 colleges and the Medical School. The group accomplished the goal of increasing the awareness of diversity issues around campus and had their work acknowledged through the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Advancing VT Conference, and VT News. Their projects can be viewed on the Graduate School website under Diversity.

### Connect Luncheons

The ORDI hosted four connect luncheons this year. The first being the second annual minority student luncheon at orientation. This event was attended by over 150 students, faculty, and staff.

The second luncheon was the Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month luncheon with over 50 students and 3 faculty/staff/administrators. This is the largest connect lunch the ORDI has ever hosted.

The third luncheon was the annual HBCU luncheon which had 23 students in attendance and 3 faculty/administrators.

For Black History month, the ORDI hosted the third annual Speed Networking luncheon co-hosted with the Black Graduate Student Organization with over 30 participants.

Finally, the ORDI hosted a connect luncheon for the Jewish Awareness Month. Four students attended who identified as Jewish and 3 students attended wanting to learn more about the Jewish culture.

## VIII. Miscellaneous

### Little Hokies Clothes Swap

The ORDI joined the Graduate Student Assembly and the Women's Center to host the second annual *Little Hokies Donate and Clothes Swap*. This venture brought together faculty, staff, student, and community to trade children's clothing and supplies. The event was a success with over 100 donations and over 100 participants. Graduate student were especially thankful for the event as it was free, accessible, and beneficial for students with families.

#### Search Committees

The ORDI director served on the committee for the Communications Manager, Graduate School

#### Hispanic/Latino Faculty/Staff Caucus

The ORDI director served the VT Hispanic/Latino Faculty/Staff Caucus.

#### Diversity Chairs

The ORDI director served on the ODI Diversity Chairs Committee representing the Graduate School.

#### Provost Inclusive Excellence Taskforce

The ORDI director served on the Provost Inclusive Excellence Taskforce. This group met five times. The taskforce members read reports, saw presentations, and made recommendations.

#### National Association of Graduate Admissions Professional

The director of ORDI presented at the national NAGAP conference for professional development and to present the university efforts with the New Horizon Graduate Scholars. The presentation was so well received that Virginia Tech has been invited to give the presentation at Johns Hopkins University to their Colleges of Liberal Arts and Engineering.

#### Intergroup Dialogue Training

The Division of Student Affairs invited the director of the ORDI to participate in Intergroup Dialogue Training to serve groups on campus in working in a more inclusive fashion. This was a two-day training and will be used for future focus group sessions.

#### VT Action and VA Organizing Training

As part of one of the Diversity Scholars projects, a group came to campus to train community members on how to successfully organize action groups. This was a two day training and will be used for future advocacy on campus and in the community. The director of the ORDI co-hosted this event.

### **IX. Future**

The ORDI hopes to implement a first annual community outreach event to identify prospective students and share with them opportunities in the New River Valley area for graduate education. Radford University, Hollins University, and others local graduate schools will participate.

The ORDI plans to host M/E/S/S/ Hall Mondays in the GLC. Mental, Emotional, Social Stability Hall is a casual space designed to bring graduate students together to talk through current issues of being a graduate student.



The ORDI staff will continue and grow existing efforts and form more collaborations across campus to help maximize recruitment efforts for departments who want to see growth in their enrollments through use of the Hobsons Connect system.