Student Access and Opportunities

The graduate students in the department of Biological Structure are recruited through the interdisciplinary programs. The interdisciplinary programs use a variety of mechanisms to recruit students from different backgrounds and cultures. When selecting individual students to work with faculty in our department, background and life experience is a factor that is considered along with academic criteria. We accept students with a wide variety of academic backgrounds; while most of our students have bioscience degrees, we have accepted students with degrees in psychology, engineering, computer science, zoology, and other fields. This increases the pool from which we may select students, thereby enhancing diversity. We commit financial support and tuition to our students through graduation, so financial issues are not a barrier to graduate study.

Student Development and Retention

We try very hard to match student and advisor so that a good fit is ensured. The faculty member makes the final decision when choosing a student, usually after a rotation quarter where the student’s performance and fit in the lab can be assessed. The student usually has done a minimum of three rotation quarters and so has had a chance to experience the research environment of a variety of labs and to experience first-hand the working styles of the faculty and lab members. The student is exposed to a variety of research projects so that a project of scientific interest to the student can be found. Once a student permanently joins a lab we work hard to provide an atmosphere which is beneficial and conducive to learning and growth, and where individual personalities are encouraged. Besides stipend and tuition support, a variety of other support may be available, such a travel support, access to computer facilities, and common grad areas where students may interact with each other.

Engagement with the External Community
Many of our students have experience with tutoring junior students in the outside community; others have developed interests with external organizations such as government policy debates and forums. Many of our students attend, with departmental assistance, external training programs at places such as Woods Hole, Massachusetts. All of our students are encouraged to attend and present at National Meetings where they can meet others in their respective fields.

Staff and Administrative Diversity
We recruit our staff through Human Resources and have staff from a variety of backgrounds. Employee input is sought out and valued in terms of overall effectiveness. The department values the contributions each staff member makes and every effort is
made to embrace different points of views and styles in our general working environment.

Faculty Diversity

The department of Biological Structure has not hired new faculty in the last 5 years. However, we have opened a new search in Feb 04, and will have 5 potential new faculty searches over the next 5-6 years. Maintaining and continuing to develop gender, ethnic and other background diversity among our faculty is and will be an important goal in all of our searches. Our current faculty includes Dr. Anita Hendrickson, who was the only female Chair in the School of Medicine during her term as Chair. We also have a disabled faculty member who continues to participate in our teaching programs; every effort is made to accommodate his special needs and to create an environment where his participation is maximized.

Curriculum and Research

Graduate students in this department are recruited primarily through the interdisciplinary programs. The curriculum each student follows is that required by the interdisciplinary program of which they are a part. The department makes an effort to be flexible and to do our best to accommodate a student’s individual needs and interests. Individuality of thought and style is strongly encouraged in our students.

Climate

We are committed to providing an educational and research environment that encourages respect, inclusiveness, and individuality. We have a diverse set of research programs in the department, and as such our student, faculty, and staff are exposed to a variety of research topics, approaches, techniques, and styles. We firmly believe that independent thought and style is a benefit to the entire department and encourages maximum creativity.