1. **Student Access & Opportunities:**

The Department of Genome Sciences makes every effort to recruit highly qualified applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds. To this end, our admissions committee carefully considers each of the over two hundred applications received in a typical year. We consider qualitative as well as quantitative factors; an otherwise outstanding applicant will not be removed from consideration on the basis of one marginal standardized test score. Our admissions committee is composed of four faculty members chosen to ensure gender balance and expertise in diverse areas. In this way, we can be sure every applicant receives fair consideration.

The Department uses a variety of means to reach out to potential students, not only to encourage students to consider our department for graduate training, but to consider a career in the sciences in general:

- We support the Genome Sciences Education Outreach group, described in greater detail in section three below.

- Genome Sciences contributes substantial funding to the UW GenOM Project (Genomics Outreach for Minorities), which provides programs, research opportunities, and scholarships geared toward minority high school, undergraduate, and graduate students.

- Our faculty participate in undergraduate research programs geared toward minority students such as those sponsored by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the UW’s BRIDGES program, which provide hands-on lab research experience.

- Genome Sciences, in collaboration with other Biomedical Research programs at the University of Washington, recently produced a brochure targeted toward minority students. This brochure not only describes our programs, but also talks about graduate school in general and outlines what students can do to prepare themselves and produce a strong application. This brochure has been sent to area high schools and colleges around the country. It will also be distributed by participating departments at graduate school fairs.

- Other methods include participating in graduate fairs, such as those sponsored by the UW’s Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program; including links to UW and Seattle-area resources of interest to minority students on our website; and participating in name-exchange consortia, such as the Western Name Exchange.
Genome Sciences provides full financial support to every student in our program. Our students come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, but none of them need to worry about finances while pursuing their studies. Funding is provided via two NIH training grants (the Genetics and Genome Training Grants), departmental funds, faculty research grants, and fellowships targeted toward minority or international students, such as the GenOM, Stroum, and Hawthorne Fellowships.

2. Student Development

The Department is committed to helping our students succeed in this program and beyond. The relatively moderate size of our program (approximately 50 students and over 40 training faculty) ensures that students receive personalized attention throughout the course of their studies, and activities such as the annual Department Retreat and weekly social functions contribute to a welcoming atmosphere.

Students rotate through a minimum of three laboratories, and more, if needed, in order to be sure they find a suitable lab and mentor for their research interests and learning styles. Our core course series is modified with feedback from our students to assure relevance. The Department pays for students to take any elective courses needed to pursue their research goals. Grant writing and public speaking skills are facilitated via the General Exam, Journal Club, and Research Reports functions.

Except for two quarters in which they develop their teaching skills by serving as Teaching Assistants, our students are not required to work on anything except their thesis research. This allows them to focus on their studies with minimal distractions.

The Department guarantees a minimum of $1500 over the course of their studies to each student to use toward the cost of travel to scientific conferences.

Regular meetings with their Supervisory Committee, a group of 4-5 faculty members who help guide their research, ensure that our students stay on track and receive needed feedback on their work.

3. Engagement With the External Community

The Genome Sciences Education Outreach group offers the following programs aimed at developing interest in science among grade school & high school students:

- **High School Human Genome Project:**
  The High School Human Genome Program provides professional development in the fields of DNA sequencing, genomics, and bioethics for high school teachers. Participating teachers in the Seattle area are provided with the necessary training, equipment, and supplies to conduct DNA sequencing in their classrooms. During our one-week summer institute, we also include teachers and scientists from other regions who are interested in developing DNA sequencing programs in their communities. A
6-8 week summer teacher research experience in a University of Washington lab is also available.

- **The Genetics Project:**
The GENETICS Project fosters excellence in the teaching of genetics in the state of Washington from Kindergarten through 12th grade. We provide professional development for elementary, middle, and high school teachers and work to identify and develop outstanding genetics instructional materials. We offer a 5-day genetics workshop for high school teachers in the summer, a 3-day workshop for middle school teachers, and workshops for other grade levels throughout the year.

- **Genetics Education Partnership:**
The Genetics Education Partnership is a web resource that contains genetics curriculum and resource reviews, classroom genetics activities and cool tools, outreach program listings, and more.

Some of our labs have established partnerships with labs in other countries, including locations in the Middle East and Africa, thus creating opportunities for students to conduct research in international settings.

Other ways in which the Department reaches out to the external community include our support of the UW GenOM project & faculty participation in HHMI undergraduate research programs (as outlined above), participation in events such as the Health Sciences Open House, and our Seminar Series, which brings well-known scientists from around the country and the world to Seattle. These seminars are open not only to UW students and faculty, but also to faculty and students from area colleges, and any member of the general public with scientific interests.

4. **Staff and Administrative Diversity**

The Department believes strongly that the variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and viewpoints among our administrative staff create a positive effect. These differing perspectives help ensure that the Department is managed in an efficient, inclusive manner.

5. **Faculty Diversity**

Genome Sciences continues to add new faculty members and in doing so is making a strong effort to increase the number of women and minorities among our faculty. Currently, 6 of our 23 core faculty members are women (26%). Including our adjunct and affiliate training faculty members, the totals are 12 out of 44 (27%).

6. **Curriculum and Research**

As mentioned above in the Student Development section, the Department recognizes that our students have a wide range of interests and come from a variety of backgrounds. Our
program’s curriculum is deliberately structured for maximum flexibility, so that students can choose the appropriate course of study for their interests.

The diversity of interests in our department is reflected in the wide variety of research areas among our students and faculty, reflecting genetic, genomic, and computational approaches to medical and biological issues.

7. Climate

The Department of Genome Sciences strives to provide a climate of inclusiveness, collaboration, openness, and respect for individual differences amongst its faculty, students, and staff.