1. **The Graduate Program**

To offer the best training environment possible, the Department of Microbiology strives to recruit and maintain a diverse population of graduate students. One key to achieving this goal is to start with a diverse pool of applicants. This is clearly an area where there is room for improvement. As a new initiative, we are currently participating in a multi-department effort to showcase biomedical graduate programs across the University of Washington campus. We have contributed to a professionally designed recruiting package that describes the graduate programs in 15 biomedical departments on the campus. Importantly, these materials provide a step-by-step description of how to apply to the various graduate programs. The attractiveness of Seattle as a place to live is also emphasized. Although designed primarily to enhance recruitment of under-represented minority students, these brochures will be incorporated into all of our graduate program recruitment efforts. A new, second flyer targets junior high and high school students in an attempt to increase their awareness of the career opportunities available for individuals with a Ph.D. This initiative promotes graduate training as an alternative to the highly visible professional school choices where career possibilities are more obvious and often promoted by school counselors. This approach, combined with our efforts to host high school students for summer research experience, will likely pay significant dividends in minority applications in future years.

At an early stage in the review of applicants to our graduate program, we identify qualified minority applicants and make every effort to include them in the group invited to the campus for an interview. The decision to accept a student into the graduate program is based on background and breadth of experience as well as the standard academic scores and letters of recommendation. An important consideration is whether our program matches the needs and aspirations of the applicant. Once accepted into the program and prior to time they decide on a graduate program, faculty and current students maintain contact with the applicants to ensure that they are fully informed concerning the advantages of graduate training in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Washington.

In recent years, there has been no significant gender bias in our applicant pool. Similarly our graduate student population has approximately equal numbers of men and women, reflecting the unbiased nature of our recruitment process.

An important component of our training program is mentoring for all students. When constituting their Supervisory Committees, graduate students are encouraged to take advantage of the broad range of interests represented in the Department. Regularly scheduled meetings between students and their advisors and committees ensure timely completion of the program requirements and thesis research. These meetings also help with the early identification of any problems and the development of a plan to resolve the problems.
2. Faculty and Staff

The process of recruitment and hiring in the Department is designed to identify the best possible candidate for each job, bearing in mind the need to identify individuals who will contribute to the research productivity and academic mission of the Department at every level. A search committee is appointed for each position and the members work together in an open and fair manner to identify candidates. To represent the diversity of the Department, committee members are appointed based on a careful consideration of their expertise, professional backgrounds, gender and overall responsibilities. Future potential as well as past accomplishments are important criteria in making hiring decisions. The committee pays careful attention to the identification and evaluation of minority candidates and makes every effort to maintain gender balance within the faculty and staff. Once candidates are identified, final decisions are made only after an open and fair discussion of the merits of each candidate. In the past three years, the Department has hired three new faculty members.

There is a continual need to monitor the well being of individual members of the faculty and staff and to nurture their professional development wherever possible. Towards this end, performance is reviewed regularly and feedback provided to encourage individuals to realize their potential. When deemed necessary and especially for new hires, mentoring programs are established to help individuals advance to the next stage of their career. On rare occasions special mediation procedures are established in-house to help with conflict resolution. In all of these procedures, special consideration is given to the need for individual privacy and respect.

3. Climate

Our guiding philosophy is that different points of view both scientifically and personally enrich the educational enterprise. Thus our goal is to create an environment that encourages free expression, mutual respect, and an appreciation for the viewpoint of others. In addition, we believe that to maintain good morale within the department, it is necessary to inculcate a strong sense of team spirit where everyone feels that their contribution and input is valued. The creation of an open and interactive environment is essential for the realization of these ideals.