



32 Ideas to Enhance Diversity

In Your Geography Department or Program



AAG

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Dear Colleagues,

We are pleased to offer you **"32 Ideas to Enhance Diversity in Your Geography Department or Program."**

It seems appropriate that during a time when the U.S. is experiencing such profound demographic changes, special attention is paid to how these changes will affect our institutions of higher education. There are projections by the U.S. Census Bureau that by the year 2050, ethnic minorities will make up over half of the U.S. population. While this trend has been constant for several years, the presence of underrepresented students or faculty in higher education is not proportionate to this growth. Other groups such as women, first-generation college students, the economically disadvantaged or disabled, and the LGBT community are also often not well represented in colleges and universities.

According to the large body of literature which addresses the positive benefits that diversity and inclusion have in higher education, there is no doubt that enhancing diversity in geography programs is of utmost importance in our discipline. In order to help support you in your departments as you define and implement goals for broadening participation, enhancing diversity, and improving inclusion, members and staff from the Association of American Geographers have put together a list of ideas to help inspire, inform, and motivate your efforts. The strategies that follow are by no means "one-size-fits-all" solutions to enhancing diversity in higher education, nor should they be understood as a comprehensive set of actions that university departments can take. The pages that follow simply offer descriptions of what other geographers and geography programs have found beneficial in reaching out to traditionally underrepresented students and faculty on their campuses and in their communities. Some of these ideas have also served to support departments in strategic reporting or assessment planning at their home institutions. Although the strategies presented here were put together with geography departments in mind, many are applicable to other disciplines as well.

We wish you the best as you take important steps to enhance diversity in your institution.

Association of American Geographers

www.aag.org/diversity

1 Develop a Diversity Retention & Recruitment Plan

Although the majority of higher education institutions have diversity recruitment plans, this pattern is not necessarily true for individual departments or programs. Developing a diversity recruitment and retention plan at this level is a progressive way which geography programs can take steps forward to **increasing diversity** in their department or program. While following a university-wide diversity plan is a good first step, **program level plans** can help to **refine activities** that more closely **meet the needs** of students and faculty in their home departments.



Get started!

Look for recruitment plans already in place at your institution. Borrowing action lines from these plans could be an easy and strategic way to start your own recruitment plan specific to your geography department. To be able to track progress, it is a good idea to conduct a census of the students in your program. You can share your data and compare it to other higher education statistics using the AAG's Disciplinary Data.



Take a look...

The Office of Diversity at the Swanson School of Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh, has developed their own "Diversity Action Plan" addressing employee diversity (recruitment and retention), graduate and undergraduate student diversity (recruitment and retention), and how to manage education from a more diversity-rich viewpoint. To view a copy of this plan, please visit the Swanson School of Engineering diversity webpage at http://www.engineering.pitt.edu/Diversity/Diversity_Action_Plan/



Info

Visit the AAG's "Final Report: An Action Strategy for Geography Departments as Agents of Change", available at http://communicate.aag.org/eseries/diversity/df_final.pdf



Showcase Inclusion

Showing inclusion in your geography department or program is important when it comes to recruiting students. Making department diversity visible draws the attention of both prospective students and faculty and will help them in making choices about whether or not to join your department. Students and faculty of minority status may feel more welcomed in a department that offers them the possibility to work with individuals like themselves, and students and faculty that are not of minority status may feel drawn to study or work in a department that has higher levels of diversity. Showcasing inclusion could be done through websites, billboards, television ads, etc.



Get started!

Look through the ways in which you are getting through to the public (newsletters, websites, etc.) and determine how you are representing departmental diversity (are you?). You can also survey students and faculty on their perceptions of diversity in your department and publicize it—opinions of current students mean a lot to prospective students and faculty. If the results are not what you are looking for, then think of strategies you can use to get better results next year!



Take a look...

The geography department at Texas State University, San Marcos, does an excellent job at showcasing inclusion in their department. On their website (<http://www.geo.txstate.edu/>) you can find videos of current students in the department explaining why they chose Texas State Geography, why they feel comfortable there, why they would recommend it to their friends, etc.

Info

See De Morsella's "Diversity Recruitment Marketing Best Practices Checklist: A Compilation of the Most Effective Marketing Strategies for Diversity Recruitment" at <http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com/giveaway/diversity-recruitment-marketing/best-practices-checklist.asp>



Hold Special Events on Promoting Inclusion

This strategy stems off of the idea to have **diversity workshops** to teach your geography students and faculty how to deal with a wide range of diversity issues. By expanding this idea out to the whole department, you can be more successful at **recruiting** and **retaining** diverse students. **Workshops, brown bags, and speakers** will give ideas as to what you can do to increase diversity but can also give you answers to unanswered questions that people may be too embarrassed to ask. It will be a **learning experience** for everyone and will also allow you to increase the diversity in your department.



Did you know?

“Compared to white students, non-white students [self-identified in these categories] (a) perceive their department environments as being less tolerant, equitable, and diverse, (b) are less likely overall to perceive the working environment in favorable terms . . .”

Solem, Lee, and Schlemper, 2008



Take a look...

The AAG has led the “Enhancing Departments and Graduate Education in Geography (EDGE)” project since 2005. It examines the environments in geography graduate programs in an attempt to help create a more supportive climate for women and minority students. There have also been EDGE workshops which help share results from AAG research to train individuals on how to improve climate in their departments. For more information on the EDGE project, please visit <http://www.aag.org/cs/education/edge/research>



Info

Refer to “Departmental Climate and Student Experiences in Graduate Geography Programs” by Solem, Lee, and Schlemper available in *Research in Higher Education Journal* Volume 50, number 3 / May 2009, 268-292.



Seek Advice and Referrals



Take a look...

The AAG Diversity Ambassadors is an informal network composed of volunteers who share ideas about college life, graduate school, job searches, and networking. It is geared towards students; however, faculty looking to implement diversity activities are also welcome. This information venue seeks to provide an open forum to engage in conversations regarding recruiting and retention strategies. For more information, please visit http://www.aag.org/cs/projects_and_programs/enhancing_diversity/people_making_a_difference

Using **informal networks** to gather advice is an easy way to collect information about how to enhance diversity in your department or program. A starting point could be **Interviewing** or **polling** individuals from underrepresented groups and traditional populations alike, about strategies that they think would be useful. Make note of what attracted them to your program and see how you can make this better or expand on it. **Pizza evenings** or **brown bag lunches** are especially fun ways to draw a crowd.

Info

Refer to "The Internet as a resource and support network for diverse geoscientists " by Jefferson, A.J., Hannula, K.A., Campbell, P.B., & Franks, S.E. 2010 in GSA Today, 20(9): 59-61., <http://bit.ly/dneVRv>.

5 Use Specialized Diversity Publicizing Programs

Take a look...

There are several diversity-friendly job boards available online. To visit some of these please go to:

diversityworking.com diversityjobs.com
employdiversity.com diversityclassifieds.com
www.diversityinc.com/careers/

While these are for diversity in general, websites also exist that cater to specific groups, such as www.saludos.com (ranked number one for Hispanic employment).

Making your geography department/program **more visible** to a diverse population may be a challenging task, especially because drawing **publicity** to your department can be so expensive. By using diversity **job boards**, **advertising agencies**, and **social networking sites** (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to **advertise** your program, you will save money and reach a large audience.

Info

See “Virtual Community Building for Effective Engagement of Students of Color in Earth System Science” in The Journal of Geoscience Education. 55(6): 522-530, by Pyrtle, A.J., Powell, J.M., Williamson-Whitney, V.A., 2007



Promote Administered Programs in Diversity

Institutions with offices or programs committed to diversity such as an **Office of Multicultural Affairs** can serve multiple purposes: hosting **multi-cultural events**, **spreading awareness** about **different cultures**, being safe-spaces for minority students and **providing services** for minority students. Using offices such as these as an **outlet** for minority geography students could be beneficial in order to help them **branch out** and **network** with other students. Incorporating geography ideas into these programs or using the offices for geography programs could also be beneficial for the department.



Get started!

Contact your multi-cultural office and ask them about hosting an event sponsored by the geography department. It would be educational (and would draw attention to the department) for example, to have the department sponsor a workshop in which minority groups can use the center to map out where they or their families are from using online mapping technologies and have a group discussion about it.



Take a look...

The AAG did a survey of best practices in university geography departments and programs across the United States. Seventy-five percent of departments who have used this strategy claim that it has been useful in increasing diversity in their geography department or program.

Info

For more information about how an Office of Multicultural Affairs as well as other institutional factors can affect student retention, please see "Institutional Factors Affecting Student Retention" by Linda K. Lau, in *Education*, vol. 124, 2003.



Incorporate Diversity Messages

Some ways to increase diversity in your geography program are easier than others—such as this one. When hiring new faculty or administrators, adding messages that call for individuals who can add to the diversity of the department is a good way to draw the attention of more applicants. Messages can be simple (one sentence) or longer (a paragraph), but they generally state that a particular institution is “committed to diversity” or that “minorities are encouraged to apply”. Other diversity ‘buzz’ words/phrases that are frequently used are “affirmative action employer”, “equality in education”, and “equal opportunity” employer.



Get started!

Make sure to include diversity “buzz” words and phrases throughout program openings. If you are already using them, make sure that they stand out (make them **bold**, **larger**, etc.). These buzz words can really help carry “pro-diversity” sentiments into interviews as well to make a bigger impact!

“Minorities & women are encouraged to apply. The University of Iowa is an EQUAL OPPORTUNITY Employer”.



Take a look...

The geography departments at the University of Iowa and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville are both examples of institutions that utilize diversity messages in position openings. On the University of Knoxville website there is a form that applicants must fill out which asks for their minority status. To view how these diversity messages are incorporated into the overall program opening, please visit <http://www.uiowa.edu/~geog/water-resource/> (University of Iowa) or <http://web.utk.edu/~utkgeog/affact.pdf> (University of Tennessee).



Info

Refer to Freehill's, O'Connell's, and Serrano's “Effective Strategies to Diversify STEM faculty” at <http://diversefaculty.nmsu.edu/>



Organize Recruitment Events

There are several questions in the minds of students when they are considering a geography major which include: "What can I do with my degree?" or "Where can I end up working"? In attempts to not only reassure minority (and other students) into pursuing geography degrees but to also give geography majors the chance to excel after graduation, geography departments can hold **career fairs**. These fairs could occur several times a year and have different **themes**, such as a geography job fair for minority students. Students will feel more encouraged to pursue geography if they know what life after college has to offer them.



Get started!

Chances are that your institution already has at least one job fair a year. Why not find out who is in charge of putting these together and ask for advice and materials to be able to custom-fit these job fairs for your geography program? Student research assistants could work on finding minority-friendly geography institutions which offer internships and jobs and can work with administrators and faculty members, centers for diversity and inclusion, etc., to put the fairs together.



Take a look...

The geography department at the University of Maryland (College Park) has a geography career fair that students can attend to obtain more information on potential future careers (http://www.geog.umd.edu/news/jobfair_fall08.html). Northeastern University also has a diversity career fair catered towards minority students (<http://www.northeastern.edu/racerelations/careerfair.html>).

If geography departments merged these two ideas, they would help give current minority geography majors a big step forward in life after graduation.



Info

Refer to Payton, F.C., 2004, "Making STEM careers more accessible", in Black Issues in Higher Education, v. 21, p. 90.



Participate in University Recruitment Events

If program specific **recruitment events**, **fairs**, and **career center activities** (see strategy #8) do not seem attainable just yet, it is always a great idea to utilize **university-wide events**. Although geography won't be the only focus, this could be a good way to recruit students who would have never gone to a geography-specific event in the first place and will encourage geography majors to **meet other students** (especially important for **incoming students**).

Take a look...

Lisa Marshall, the Director of Outreach (as well as an instructor and advisor) in the Department of Nuclear Engineering at North Carolina State University has worked on campus recruitment for years. She has written a very helpful document for geography departments titled, "Remarks for geography department advisors on working with your university recruiting office." Tailoring this to your geography department or program could be useful in developing more successful recruitment techniques.



Get started!

Make your presence at a university-wide fair known! Before the event be sure to make colorful and attractive fliers, brochures, or any other kind of document that can give prospective or current students information. Make sure that someone with a positive attitude is always at your booth ready to answer questions!

Info

See ASHA's, "Minority Student Recruitment, Retention and Career Transition Practices: A Review of the Literature" available at <http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/recruit/litreview.htm>



Recruit Non-Major Under-represented Students

Introductory courses are always important in any department because of the **diverse student body** which usually enroll in them. Individuals in these courses are usually first or second year students that are either considering majoring in geography, are undecided, or are taking the course to fulfill a general education requirement. Teaching your course well could not only **convince** students to major in geography but can also attract other non-major students to make geography a part of their program of study (through a **double major** or **minor**).



Get started!

Another way to recruit more students into geography using intro courses is to allow them to explore what THEY are interested in as long as it fits in with course material when assigning projects or reports. That way, students can begin to imagine in what ways a geography career could fit them. Bringing up upper division courses when speaking about certain topics can also remind them of the opportunities they have to take interesting courses if they stay within the department.



Take a look...

David Padgett, professor in the Department of History, Geography, and Political Science, at Tennessee State University uses multi-disciplinary job ads related to geography and GIS in his introductory level geography classes to recruit students into the major. He claims, "Over the years, it has proven to be very effective. Most of my students come with little real knowledge about what geography is, much less that there are career options, some of them well-paying." (<http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm>)



Info

Padgett's class commercial: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oz1CLpYudq4&list=UUcQVDe-5GUV7sgrsE9wuVig&index=10&feature=plcp> **AND** "Geography Undergraduate Program Essentials: Retention" by Estaville, L., Brown, B., and Caldwell, S.



Establish Departmental Committees

To be truly successful, even the most diverse geography department needs to be able to cater to the needs of their students. Establishing departmental committees, groups, or student clubs is an additional way to make sure that students have access to resources they need. These can serve as outlets so that students can help each other study for example but can also be a way for students to relax and bond. Clubs and organizations like this provide excellent networking options for students and should be included in diversity departments to make them more diversity-friendly.



Get started!

Propose the idea of a geography club to students in your department and see what the reaction is—if there is interest, make sure that students know where to find help for starting and running the club, where to fill out forms, where to get financial support, etc. Having packets with this information readily available to students could help them in creating geography clubs, groups, or committees.



Take a look...

The University of North Carolina at Chapel-Hill founded SWIG (Supporting Women in Geography) in an attempt to increase women participation in geography and to provide support for those who were already in the field. Since it was founded, SWIG has expanded and now there are SWIG groups that have been established at other universities across the U.S and Canada. To learn more about SWIG, please visit their website at <http://swig.igenpage.com/index.htm>



Info

For a list of schools which have a SWIG group, visit <http://swig.igenpage.com/groups.htm>
See Guiffrida's 2003 piece, "African American student organizations as agents of social integration" in *Journal of College Student Development*, 44(3), 304–320.



Encourage Departmental Participation in University Committees on Diversity

For the most part, institutions of higher education have some sort of diversity committee or focus group. If your geography department/program does not have its own committee, or even if it does, it might be beneficial to **work with the school as a whole** to determine what the current **patterns** of diversity are at the institution, if there are any upcoming diversity plans or events, etc. Working with university committees will not only help you understand what **measures** you can take in your department/program, but could also serve as a way to **market** yourself to a **greater audience** (as more students will see that you are involved in these types of discussions).

Take a look...

Not only does the University of Minnesota Geography Department have their own Geography Diversity Committee, they also have a website that students can go to which includes information about services which may be of use to minority students such as fellowships and awards for minorities, student support resources, links to diversity workshops, and job listings. To view their Webpage, please visit <http://www.geog.umn.edu/diversityCommittee.html>



Get started!

While it may seem like a great idea for geography departments/ programs to have their own diversity committees, this may not be quite feasible for many institutions. However, departments can nominate members who will work with university diversity/inclusion committees, and this way, they are still involved!

Info

See the Learning Skills Council's 2006 publication, "National Equality and Diversity Strategy: Widening Participation and Promoting Inclusion, 2001-2004 (<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/Pre2005/internaladmin/equalitydiversity/national-equality-and-diversity-strategy.pdf>).



Offer Diversity-Related Courses

Geography is a discipline which **crosses many boundaries**—and courses within a geography department or program should definitely represent this. Offering courses that link geography to **social justice**, **ethnic** and **gender studies** (etc.) is a good way to attract a wide range of students, especially those who can relate to these courses. This is not to say that all students of minority status are going to be attracted to these courses; but again, there are many individuals who would like to take courses about something which they can **relate to**.



Get started!

Take a look at your course catalog. Do you have courses that seem to cross boundaries such as the ones listed here? If you do, take a look at their titles—how do they reflect actual course content? Look through course titles and make sure that what is offered in the classes can be clearly understood from their titles. Course titles can make all the difference in attracting new and more diverse students into a geography class or program.



Take a look...

The Geography Department at Pennsylvania State University requires students to take "Intercultural and International Competence Courses in Geography" (<http://old.geog.psu.edu/undergrad/intercultural.html>).

The Department of Geography at Dartmouth College also offers classes about geography and gender, culture, different world regions (from Latin America to the Czech Republic), religions, etc. A list of these classes can be found at http://www.dartmouth.edu/~geog/dc_geo_AG_CandC.html



Info

Refer to "The impact of an undergraduate diversity course requirement on students' racial views and attitudes" by M.J. Chang, available in the Journal of General Education, 1999, 51, 21-24.



Offer Service Learning Courses & Projects

Offering **service learning** courses or projects can be a good way to **recruit** and **engage** with underrepresented students. Often, underrepresented students are motivated by factors affecting their **communities** and because of this, courses that are designed to help local communities may attract a more diverse student body into your geography program.



Get started!

Your department should strive to offer courses like the ones at the Ohio State University. Not only is it a great way to attract underrepresented students, but it also allows your department to gain publicity while helping communities which really need it. Creating a community service requirement could help recruit more socially-conscious students into your program.



Take a look...

The Department of Geography at the Ohio State University partnered with the African American and African Studies Community Extension Center and offered a class titled "Elements of Cartography: Serving the Community through Cartography". Students learned cartography and GIS elements and then worked on a project for a "severely underserved lower socioeconomic community". This project consisted of a map which helped individuals track services and historic points in their community and was distributed via brochures and posters (<http://www.geography.osu.edu/maps2serve/>).



Info

See Einfeld's and Collins 2008 piece, "The Relationship Between Service-Learning, Social Justice, Multicultural Competence, and Civic Engagement" in the Journal of College Student Development 49(2): 95-109.



Engage with Diverse Alumni Graduates from the Department

Keeping in touch with **alumni** that graduated from your geography department provides a valuable **resource** for current students looking for **internships** or **jobs**. Making sure that underrepresented alumni are included is important so that they may serve as **mentors** and **advise** or **help** network other minority students. This is not to say that alumni which are not of minority status would not be more than willing to help students; however, it may be more meaningful for a minority student to not only see how another minority student is doing in the “real world” but to also know that they can possibly **help** them in the **future**.



Get started!

Create surveys that will be distributed to senior students every year that have contact, future employment, and any internships/job information. If students agree, make a list of this information that can be posted in your department or even distributed to students. You could also have student workers update the lists and call alumni to make sure that lists are up to date.



Take a look...

The University of North Alabama Alumni Association is an excellent example of what other universities could do to promote interaction between alumni and current students. This website, <http://www.unagaa.org/>, includes information such as current officers, useful links, and a member survey to keep in contact with alumni/ keep the website updated. This association even has alumni conferences, and should serve as an example of the many ways in which alumni connections are important.



Info

See Guiffrida's 2003 piece, "African American student organizations as agents of social integration" available in the Journal of College Student Development, 44(3), 304-320.



Engage with Professional Association Networks

Connections, connections, connections! One of the most important things that any institution of higher education can do for its students is create networks and partnerships with professional associations. This also holds true for geography departments. Do everything you can to make connections with both geography specific associations (such as the AAG) or other organizations where geography is key (such as the USGS). Making your department known to these organizations will not only help graduating students find possible jobs and/ or internships, but it can also help in bringing in new geography students.



Get started!

First thing's first—the first step to setting up a partnership like the ones featured on this page is to look up what/where some of these geography associations are. A good place to start is to take a look at the AAG's complete list of specialty groups (http://www.aag.org/cs/about_aag/specialty_groups_2). Contact the groups that you are interested in and talk to them about the possibility of creating some sort of partnership with them—they will probably be more than happy to help.



Take a look...

The AAG offers programs such as Dissertation Research Grants (<http://www.aag.org/cs/grants/dissertation>) and Community College Travel Grants (http://www.aag.org/cs/grants/college_travel) to help recruit underrepresented students into geography programs. For a complete list of grants and awards available from the AAG please visit <http://www.aag.org/cs/grantsawards>

Info

Read Stenken's and Zajicek's piece, "The importance of asking, mentoring, and building networks for academic career success" available at http://grad.uark.edu/dean/Stenken_Zajicek_Mentoring_Article.pdf



Engage in Partnerships with High Schools

Getting **high school students** involved in geography could be an overwhelmingly powerful approach to recruit more geography students (and with the right approach, more minority students). Making your geography department more **visible** to, and **familiarizing** high school students with the **broad range** of possibilities that geography offers can attract them to a discipline which they may have never even considered to study!



Get started!

It might be worthwhile to contact the admissions office at your institution to talk to the visit coordinator (the person in charge of coordinating overnight/day visits of prospective students). Get ideas from them about how to schedule events, when to schedule meetings, etc for your prospective students.



Take a look...

Texas A&M University offers its "iGeo" program, a three day program which offers under-represented high school juniors and seniors the chance to become more familiar with the geosciences. Apart from meeting other high school students, students have the chance to meet current students and faculty members in the geosciences. They room with current geosciences students and also learn about admissions procedures and scholarships (<http://roadtodiscovery.tamu.edu/packing-your-bags/igeo>).



Info

Refer to "Teaching Geography to High School Students with Academic Deficits: Effects of a Computerized Map Tutorial" by Horton, S., Lovitt, T., and Slocum, T. available in Learning Disability Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 4, Autumn 1988, pp. 371-379.



Engage in Partnerships with Tribal Colleges

Tribal colleges are often overlooked when it comes to geography programs, and partnering up with these colleges can provide mutual gains for both your geography department and theirs (if they have one—if not, it is still a great opportunity). Tribal colleges are special in that they have students from really **unique backgrounds** who can see geography and spatial tools (such as GIS) from completely **different perspectives**—this can **enrich** your geography program.



Did you know?

“Though the number of degrees conferred to American Indian/Alaska Native students has grown significantly over the past thirty years, only 8.6% of American Indian/Alaskan Native adults (25+) have a Bachelor’s degree, 4.5% have a graduate degree.”

DeVoe, Darling-Churchill, & Snyder, 2008



Take a look...

Haskell Indian Nations University is a tribal university which now has a computer and GIS lab thanks to working with the University of Kansas and the US Geological Survey. After USGS employees, teaching a GIS course at Haskell, provided enough equipment for this course, the University of Kansas stepped in, and now Haskell collaborates with them in the Polar Radar for Ice Sheet Measurements (PRISM) grant. To learn more about this program please visit Haskell’s computer lab webpage at <http://www.haskell.edu/gis/>.



Info

For a list of tribal colleges, please refer to the US Department of Education’s 2009 “White House Initiative on Tribal Colleges and Universities—Tribal Colleges and Universities Address List” available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whtc/edlite-tcllist.html>



Engage in Partnerships with Community Colleges

Community colleges can be considered “melting pots” of higher education institutions because they usually have such a **diverse student body**. Because of the **rich diversity** found in Community Colleges, creating partnerships with these institutions could be beneficial in **recruiting** more students into your geography program.



Take a look...

California State University Long Beach has an NSF funded program, the Geosciences Diversity Enhancement Program, which works with high schools and community colleges to engage underrepresented students in the geosciences. The program helps community college students transfer from their institutions to four year institutions where they will study geosciences. To learn more about this program please visit the program webpage at <http://www.csulb.edu/depts/geography/gdep/>



Did you know?

“While Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders made up less than five percent of the national population in 2007, they represented nearly seven percent of all community college students.”

National Commission on Asian American & Pacific Islander Research in Education. 2010



Info

See “Teaching Geography to High School Students with Academic Deficits: Effects of a Computerized Map Tutorial” by Horton, S., Lovitt, T., and Slocum, T. available in Learning Disability Quarterly, Vol. 11, No. 4, Autumn 1988, pp. 371-379.



Form Strategic Partnerships with Community Organizations

Apart from service learning courses, forming other types of partnerships with community organizations (such as **internships**, **volunteer networks**, etc.) is a great way to increase publicity for your geography program. By **reaching out** to the community, more people will become aware and interested in what your geography department has to offer. These kinds of partnerships can also come with several benefits to students such as **job opportunities**.



Take a look...

The Department of Geography at the University of Washington has created partnerships with community organizations such as food banks, private aid and refugee groups, and institutions serving children and the elderly. Students are able to become involved with these groups through classes (service learning classes) offered in the geography department, and it is an effective way in which the geography department has become more widely known in the community.



Get started!

Conduct a search of institutions that are relatively close to campus (five to ten miles away) and find ways in which your geography program can help them. Contact these institutions and arrange department trips to volunteer.



Info

For more ideas about forming strategic partnerships with the community, please see "Building Partnerships with College Campuses: Community Perspectives" by Liederman, Furco, Zapf, and Goss available at http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/engaging_monograph.pdf



Engage in Partnerships with Historically Black Institutions

One of the best ways to increase diversity in your geography department is by working directly with **Historically Black Colleges** or **Universities**. You can look online to find HBCUs that have geography programs to not only persuade students into transferring, but to also give your current students the chance to work with a diverse group of people. Establishing programs with HBCUs that do not have geography programs could also be a great way to not only increase diversity in your department, but to help expand the geography discipline as a whole.



Did you know?

"The national college graduation rate of blacks in 2002 was 39%, compared with 60% for whites".

Amadu Kaba, 2005



Take a look...

Kentucky State University is a historically black university that is part of the Kentucky—West Virginia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation. This program is funded through the National Science Foundation and engages under-represented students in the STEM fields. The ultimate goal of this program is to increase the number of under-represented students in the STEM fields, from undergraduate to graduate degrees. To learn more about the alliance and to view descriptions of the program at Kentucky State University and other institutions, please see the program website at <http://kywvamp.uky.edu/>



Info

For a list of HBCU's please visit the United States Department of Education's "List of HBCUs—White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities" available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/whhbcu/edlite-list.html>



Engage in Partnerships with Hispanic-Serving Institutions

One of the best ways to increase diversity in your geography department is by **working directly with HSIs** through your program. Like with the HBCUs, you can look online to find HSIs that have geography programs which will not only allow you to **recruit students into transferring** but will also give your current students the chance to work with diverse individuals. Establishing programs with HSI's that do not have geography programs could also be a great way to increase diversity in your department and help **expose more students** to geography.



Did you know?

“Latinos are far more likely to be enrolled in two-year colleges than any other group. About 40 percent of Latino 18-24 year-old college students attend two-year institutions compared to about 25 percent of white and black students in that age group.”

Richard Fry, 2002



Take a look...

The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) is a good source for learning more about Hispanic-Serving Institutions. For general information about this organization and what they do, visit http://www.hacu.net/hacu/HACU_101.asp

The AAG Guide to Programs also provides detailed information on Undergraduate and graduate Hispanic serving institutions in the U.S. Please access the AAG Guide for more Information.



Info

For a list of hispanic serving institutions, link to <http://www.hacu.net/assnfe/CompanyDirectory>

For information about what is considered to be a Hispanic-Serving Institution, visit http://www.hacu.net/hacu/HSI_Definition



Adhere to University Level Affirmative Action Policies

It may be beneficial to conduct a **baseline analysis** of where your department stands in terms of diversity. You could then **compare** this to your institution's affirmative action policies and determine how feasible it would be for your department to also follow this strategy. Depending on how much progress you want to make in a specific amount of time, you will have to **adjust** the policy to make it more relevant.



Get started!

To make your geography program's diversity shine through to potential applicants, be sure to let them know that your program values diversity. Instead of writing that your institution offers "equal opportunity" in fine print, showcase this in **BIG, bold**, letters somewhere where potential applicants can see it! If your program is doing well in terms of diversity, let people know how "diversity rich" your program is by using numbers to show it!



Take a look...

The Geography Department at the University of Colorado at Boulder makes it obvious to prospective applicants that diversity is important in their decision making processes. On their graduate admissions page they have a list of seven important factors that admissions officers take into consideration, and one of them is "affirmative action." They also mention that their geography department "leads all other universities in the nation in the percentage of its PhD's who are women". To see how this message was incorporated into their Admissions and Applications website, please refer to http://geography.colorado.edu/grad_program/admissions_and_applications



Info

Refer to Brown's "The Case for Affirmative Action in Higher Education" in About Campus 1, no. 2 (May/June 1996): 10-15.



Participate in Organizing University Wide Social Events

Campus fairs, residence hall activities and other university wide social events are crucial in recruiting underrepresented students in an important way—AWAY from the department. Although it is imperative to make sure that your department is diversity-friendly and is prepared to cater to student needs, it is also important to branch out into the larger university scene to attract students into your department. By promoting activities that encourage social interaction between students, you open up lines of communication with students that may have never considered studying geography.

Take a look...

At Oregon State University, geosciences faculty members have organized and promoted AFAPC (Association of Faculty for the Advancement of People of Color) events. These include a discussion panel session opened to the entire campus on the importance of race, a celebration dinner for AFAPC members and friends featuring guest speakers, and a public forum open to the entire campus. The AFAPC has also worked with the President's Commission on the Status of Women Programs, and Programs for Ethics, Science, and the Environment.

Get started!

THREE WORDS: GEOGRAPHY. AWARENESS. WEEK. Geography Awareness Week is celebrated the third week in November. With some effort and coordination, departments or programs can pull off something as simple as setting up a geography booth available to students during lunch hours, or can host even larger events.

Info

To view an example of how universities can promote geography during Geography Awareness Weeks, see Northwest Missouri State University's webpage at <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/dept/geo/gaw.htm>

Conduct Welcoming Activities

At the beginning of each school year, **organize welcoming activities** to greet the new students that pass through your department. Orientation activities are always a great way to **reach out** to students, and it is easy to **promote diversity** by doing things such as having underrepresented groups take new students on **tours** of the department, etc.



Take a look...

One underrepresented group that we have not mentioned so far is the LGBT community. We would like to draw attention to Princeton University, who was ranked in the top 20 campuses for LGBT students for reasons such as: having full time LGBT coordinators, several LGBT ceremonies and annual events, progressive non-discrimination policies and more. Programs like these are important in encouraging equal participation from all of the students in your program. Please see the following page about Princeton's programs to encourage participation from the LGBT community.



Info

Refer to "Developing attitudes of acceptance toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual peers" by Engberg, Hurtado, and Smith in the Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education, 4, 49-77.



Provide Diversity Training

One of the ways that you can show your commitment to diversity and also make your geography program more inclusive is providing **diversity training** either within your department or on campus. The reason why programs like these are beneficial is because they **address** and **answer questions** and **concerns** which would otherwise not have high probability of being asked or answered. These programs have the potential to create a more diversity-inclusive department, as department members will feel more comfortable speaking about diversity-related issues.



Get started!

To find some ideas on how to conduct a diversity workshop for your geography department, visit the following website which is full of ideas (ice breakers, workshop activities, etc.): <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html>



Info

For an interesting article on what campuses across the U.S. are doing in terms of diversity workshops, please see "Diversity Workshops on Campus: A Survey of Current Practice at U.S. Colleges and Universities" by McCauley, Clark, Wright, and Harris, available in College Student Journal, 34 (1), 100-114.



Provide Leadership Training for Underrepresented Faculty

It is always a good idea to provide **mentoring** or **leadership training** for your faculty, and you must be careful to provide the right kind of mentoring depending on the faculty member. Often, individuals of **different backgrounds** have **different needs**, and providing mentoring or leadership training **catered** to these needs is another factor which could determine how successful you are in increasing diversity in your geography program. If individuals know that they have this **personalized training** available, it will attract them to your department because they know that you are **sensitive to their needs**.



Take a look...

The University of Maryland—Baltimore County engages women in their Leadership Education, Advancement and Development Support Program (LEADS) for Women Associate and Full Professors in STEM. This is an NSF-funded program, that was created to encourage open discussion about the policies and practices undertaken which affect women faculty in STEM at UMBS. Eligible applicants to the program are able to attend leadership workshops, conferences, trainings, and more. For more information about this program please visit http://www.umbc.edu/advance/initiatives_leadershipdevelopment.html



Get started!

Upon hiring new faculty members, provide them with a booklet of information regarding the kind of support that they can expect from your department. Include information such as important websites, contact information, and points of contact for information related to training sources.

Tip: Look up the AAG Departmental Leadership Workshop!!



Info

For information on how to better mentor geography faculty, please read Foote's and Solem's 2009 piece, "Toward better mentoring for early career faculty: Results of a study of U.S. geographers" available in the International Journal for Academic Development, 14(1):47-58.



Provide Leadership Training for Underrepresented Students

This strategy is a continuation of the strategy above (strategy #27: Provide Leadership Training for Underrepresented Faculty). Just like underrepresented faculty, underrepresented students have **unique needs** because they come from **different backgrounds**. It is especially important that you **publicize the training** that your department offers so that it is obvious to students.



Did you know?

"70% of women, almost twice the number of men, identify lack of mentoring as a barrier to advancement".

Catalyst Newsletter, 2001



Take a look...

The School of Engineering at Santa Clara University offers its MUSE, or Mentoring Underrepresented Students program. MUSE was designed to provide engineering students with mentoring and career counseling and allows them to interact with local engineers, giving them a better idea about life after graduation. Although the program was designed specifically with engineering students in mind, it is open to all students. Minority students in the engineering field are also encouraged to get involved with this program (<http://www.scu.edu/engineering/about/muse.cfm>).



Info

To find more information about leadership in a campus climate of inclusion, see Antonio's 2001 publication, "The Role of Inter-racial Interaction in the Development of Leadership Skills and Cultural Knowledge and Understanding", available in Research in Higher Education, 42, 593-617.



Offer Research Support for Underrepresented Faculty & Students

Some geography departments have special **fellowships** or **awards** that are meant to provide **research support** for underrepresented faculty. Offering this type of support is often important in encouraging stronger participation from underrepresented faculty in your program.



Get started!

Go through the fellowships and other types of research support that you currently offer in your department. Do you have any especially geared for underrepresented faculty or women? If so, make sure that faculty know what is available to them. If not, create opportunities for these individuals by speaking with geography programs that already do.



Take a look...

New York University has an NSF ADVANCE Diversity Science Research Grant, which provides seed funds to women scientists so that they can develop projects which address why more women are not engaged in STEM fields. This university also has other NSF-funded programs which help women or underrepresented faculty such as their ADVANCE Women-in-Science Travel Grants, ADVANCE Research Challenge Grants, and Faculty Mentoring Program (<http://advance.as.nyu.edu/page/programinitiatives#5>).



Info

Visit the National Research Council's 2006 study, "To Recruit and Advance Women Students and Faculty in the Science and Engineering". Available at http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=11624#toc



Offer Progressive Child Care Policy

A factor keeping many individuals from not being able to pursue a more thorough education is **having children and families to support**. There are many potential students who would love the opportunity to go to school but do not find adequate places to **leave their children** or cannot afford to. It may be too much for your geography department or program to offer its own childcare program, but for institutions that already have child programs or discount services for childcare, publicizing this to prospective geography students can make a significant difference.



Take a look...

The University of New Mexico offers its "Children's Campus" which offers "subsidized care for student families" and claims to "celebrate diversity and employ anti-bias curriculum practices". The campus offers care for infants to school-age children and offers much more information on its website. For more information about this program, please visit the Children's Campus website at <http://childcare.unm.edu/facts-about-the-childrens-campus.html>



Get started!

Make it very clear to prospective students that their family needs are important to your department. If your university has a childcare program, make sure to advertise this on your website somewhere. If not, locate the closest childcare facilities and have this information readily available to prospective students.



Info

For additional information about factors affecting adult enrollment in higher education, please visit: <http://www.inpathways.net/SettingtheStage.pdf>



Arrange Services for Faculty & Students with Disabilities

Almost all institutions of higher education have services for students and faculty with disabilities. One of the possible problems with these services is that unless individuals go and personally look for information, they may either not know that they exist or may have limited knowledge about them. To make your geography program more diversity-friendly, it is important to make it obvious that first of all, you are aware that your institution offers these programs, but second of all, it is important to have information about disability services readily available in your department as well as a supportive attitude for individuals who need to use these services. Having brochures or fliers as well as someone who knows what these services are can help with arranging services for disabled students or faculty.



Did you know?

Reg Golledge, a dearly missed member of the AAG spent years of his life advancing the disability-geography field. For information on his inspiring story and research please visit <http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/events/departments-news/577/a-giant-of-geography-is-gone-but-his-legacy-lives-on/>



Take a look...

One of the ways that the AAG offers extra support to disabled individuals is through the AAG's Disability Specialty Group. Their mission is to foster communication among members and to encourage research, education, and service that address disability issues (http://www.aag.org/cs/about_aag/specialty_groups_2/disability). Through the Todd Reynolds Fund, the AAG helps disabled individuals attend the Annual Meeting every year (<http://www.aag.org/cs/grants/disabilities>).



Info

For other ideas on how to provide services for the disabled, please see Kalivoda's and Higbee's 1999 piece, "Serving College Students with Disabilities: Application of the theory of planned behavior" in *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 3(2), 6-16.



Monitor Departmental Progress Towards Diversity

Keeping track of program diversity quantitatively is important, and there are many tools available that can help you. Some of these tools include surveys, metrics and evaluations which will allow you to keep track of your progress in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty members and students, as well as figuring out what recruitment methods are more relevant in your program. Remember, there is no strategy that is one-size-fits-all, which is why evaluating the steps that you take is important in helping you decide what strategies to use.



Take a look...

The AAG conducts periodic surveys about demographic composition in geography departments and programs across the country. In 2004-2005 and in 2010-2011 a baseline survey was distributed across the United States. Taking part in these surveys helps the AAG monitor progress that departments have made towards increasing diversity, as well as how the discipline is progressing as a whole. To view the AAG's data, visit http://www.aag.org/cs/projects_and_programs/disciplinary_data and look at the sidebar on the left.



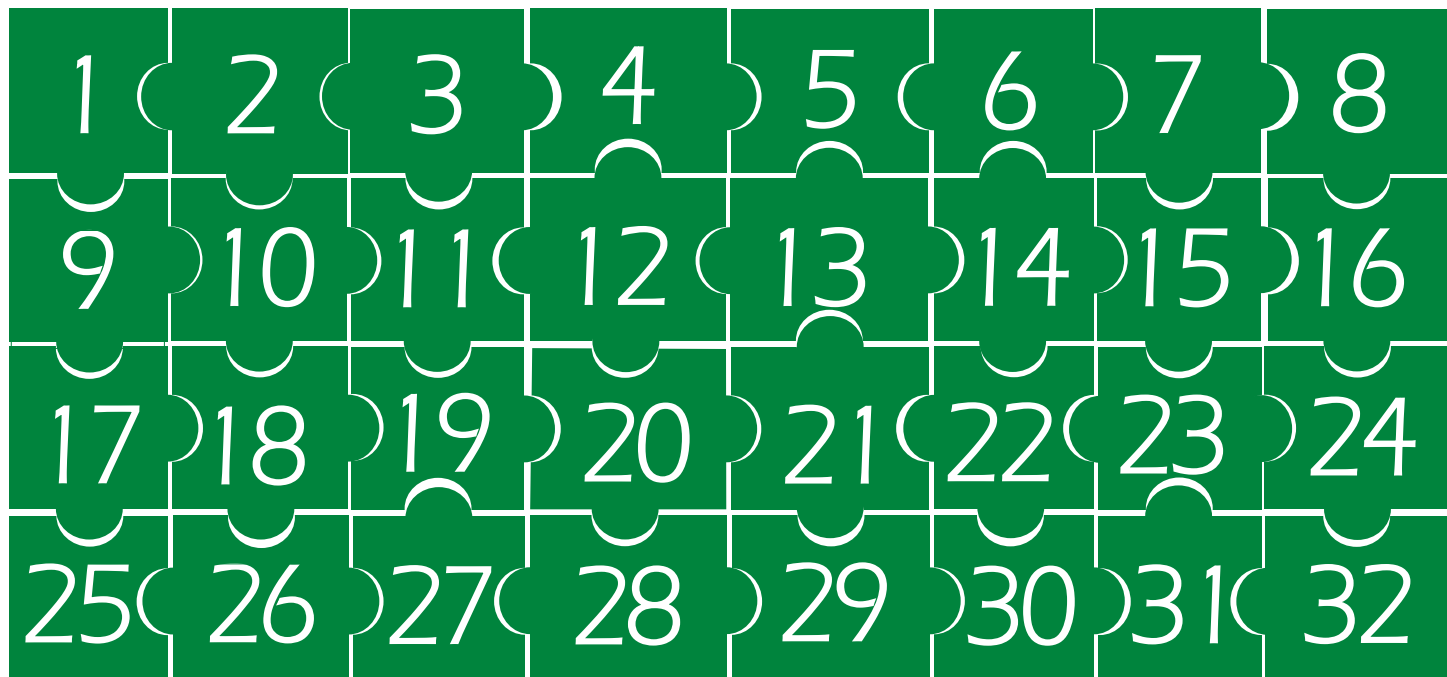
Get started!

The AAG manages several initiatives related to diversity within the discipline. These include but are not limited to the ALIGNED project (Addressing Locally-Tailored Information Infrastructure & Geoscience Needs for Enhancing Diversity), the Enhancing Diversity Committee, the Enhancing Diversity Award, the Committee on the Status of Women in Geography, the VGSP (Visiting Geographical Scientist program), and the Geographies of Broadening Participation project. For more information about these programs, please visit <http://www.aag.org/diversity>



Info

To see the beta version of the ALIGNED Department Toolkit please click <http://www.aag.org/cs/alignedtoolkit>



Ideas to Enhance Diversity in Your Geography Department or Program