Recruiting

**Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) at Illinois** at Illinois brings highly competitive undergraduate students from across the U.S. and its territories to our campus, for a paid, eight-week introduction to graduate study. SROP students explore careers in research by taking part on a research team and in a research writing course, and engage in many other activities to interact socially with faculty, administrators, and other undergraduates.

**ASPIRE** unites underrepresented students from across the nation by bringing them to the Urbana-Champaign campus for a three-day visit early in the application process. Departments at Illinois showcase the quality and strength of their graduate programs, to ultimately recruit these students. It is important that students become familiar early on with the dynamic community of underrepresented scholars on the University of Illinois campus, as well as opportunities to engage in research and explore their fields of interest.

Transitioning

**Community of Scholars (COS)** unites newly admitted students with their admitting graduate programs, with peers among perspective students in other units, and with current Illinois graduate students during a three-day orientation to graduate study at the University of Illinois. COS connects a diverse community of underrepresented scholars to enhance a collective spirit of enthusiasm for our campus in the spring, prior to matriculation. Visiting students attend research presentations in an area of study and also ask current Illinois scholars about graduate student life. Through networking and gaining a better sense of the Illinois campus, students are able to better understand how graduate study at the University of Illinois can support their short and long-term goals.

**Summer Pre-Doctoral Institute (SPI)** offers incoming graduates an advanced opportunity to become quickly prepared for the rigors and culture of their graduate program during the summer prior to the start of their graduate studies at Illinois. This paid, eight-week orientation and research experience provides an opportunity to work with a summer research advisor or faculty mentor in their department. A series of seminars additionally provide a foundation from which to begin dissertation research and further acquaint scholars with expectations of their graduate programs. COS and SPI address academic, social and cultural factors that are important to graduate student success.

Supporting

**Fellowship Support** increase the enrollment of outstanding students from populations historically underrepresented in graduate study. The awards provide 1-year ($12,000) of support for incoming master’s students and 1-3 years of support ($20,000-$25,000 per year) for incoming doctoral students.

**Competing for External Funding** assists Illinois graduate students in competing for external grants and fellowships, helping to lessen any financial barriers that graduate study may present.

**Grad Mentoring @ Illinois** offers a mentoring network that facilitates relationships to promote inclusion and retention of traditionally underrepresented students. By matching students and faculty, the mentoring network offers students knowledge and experience that support the broader negotiations of graduate student status while on campus.

Fostering Alliances beyond Illinois

**Illinois Partners for Diversity (IPD)** an annual summit connecting administrators and faculty of Minority Serving Institutions throughout the U.S., including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Fostering inter-institutional collaboration, IPD aims to develop innovative strategies to bridge cohorts of underrepresented racial minority students into graduate programs.

**Broadening Participation in Graduate Education** - The Graduate College has made a priority of addressing the limited pool of students from populations historically underrepresented in graduate study by offering opportunities for visiting, newly admitted, and current graduate students at the University of Illinois. Exposure to graduate school practices, as well as opportunities to network with other students and faculty will better equip underrepresented students for graduate achievement. A diverse community of graduate scholars strengthens creativity throughout the learning process and prepares future leaders to work within increasingly diverse and global settings.
Reach Out to Potential Applicants

**Develop relationships** with faculty at minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and with students from populations underrepresented in graduate education.

- Initiate conversations at professional conferences (e.g., visit poster sessions).
- Present at conferences targeting underrepresented students, such as McNair conferences or the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in the Sciences.
- Visit minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and talk with faculty and students about your research and opportunities at U of I. (You may apply for Broadening Participation in Graduate Education funds from the Graduate College).
- Participate in the Illinois Partners for Diversity Summit.

**Call prospective students** and personally encourage them to apply to your program. Convey confidence in their ability to thrive in the program, explain why the program is a good fit (e.g., specify projects, faculty, and courses of interest), and outline funding opportunities. Alert Ph.D. and MFA students about application fee waivers ([www.grad.illinois.edu/freeapp](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/freeapp)).

**Serve as a summer mentor** to students in the SROP, REU, or McNair programs.

Respond to Competitive Applications Aggressively

**Call students** and notify them of acceptance as soon as possible.

- Convey confidence in students’ abilities to thrive in your program.
- Discuss why the program is a good fit and provide all available funding information.
- Invite students for a campus visit (see Community of Scholars information).
- Help students find additional information (e.g., housing, childcare - [www.grad.illinois.edu/new-students](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/new-students)).
- Ask a U of I graduate student with similar interests and life circumstances to contact the student.

**Follow up** with a personalized letter outlining details and next steps. Again, emphasize program fit.

**Pursue funding** possibilities on behalf of students (e.g., Graduate College Fellowships).

**Stay in touch** with students to answer questions and encourage enrollment.

**Promote Summer Pre-doctoral Institute participation** among students who enroll in your program.

What Departments Can Do

**Admit** underrepresented minority applicants as early as possible.

**Invite applicants** to visit your department in conjunction with the Community of Scholars Campus Visit Program. Showcase your vibrant community (e.g., hold a reception and/or research symposium).

**Consider U of I’s best practices** for recruitment/retention ([www.grad.illinois.edu/bmp/g/recruitretainurm](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/bmp/g/recruitretainurm)).

**Utilize National Name Exchange data** to identify talented students.

**Recognize and reward faculty efforts** to broaden participation in graduate education.

For the most up-to-date information on these programs, visit [www.grad.illinois.edu/prospective/underrepresented](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/prospective/underrepresented) and [www.grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/toolkits/recruit](http://www.grad.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/toolkits/recruit).

For details, contact the Graduate College at grad@illinois.edu.