

# AMIGA Project

## Holistic Review Best Practices

- 1. Review graduate program or graduate group data for applications, enrollments and completion**
  - a. What trends are observed from the data?
  - b. Do these trends coincide with desirable graduate program/group goals?
  - c. How do these graduate program/group, UC Davis and California demographic data intersect?
  
- 2. Meet prior to break to discuss data, graduate evaluation process and next steps**
  - a. Review or identify key graduate program success attributes on which to base evaluations
  - b. Discuss tools for equitable and inclusive graduate admissions
    - i. Unconscious bias – e.g. preference for particular institutions, high GRE scores, high overall GPA without context
  - c. Identify and define the graduate admission process for your grad program/group
  
- 3. Every complete application should receive at least two reviews**
  - a. Each applicant has invested a considerable amount of time, energy and resources to submit their graduate application. It is incumbent upon the University to provide an equitable and in-depth review.
  
- 4. Select a few holistic review practices to introduce this year and reflect on the practices that are missing as you advance through the admissions process, for addition next year.**
  - a. Value of diversity**
    - i. Consider President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program criteria
    - ii. Discuss and decide how contribution/s to diversity will be evaluated
  
  - b. Socioeconomic level** – first generation, number of siblings, socialization, living conditions, "distance traveled", parents' education levels, overcoming barriers to higher education
  
  - c. Fair and consistent review**
    - i. Identifying review criteria
    - ii. Incorporate a review template or rubric
    - iii. Establish scoring or evaluative process
  
  - d. IF GRE scores must be used in evaluation consider the following**
    - i. Set a low threshold for scores particularly in first round
    - ii. Deemphasize GRE scores for second or final round of admission decisions

**e. GPA**

- i. Consider applicant's GPA in context
  1. Overall GPA
  2. Last two years GPA
  3. Upper division GPA
  4. Major GPA
- ii. What factors may have influenced GPA?
  1. Multiple change of majors
  2. Personal or family circumstances
  3. Small number of low performance grades in or outside of major

**f. Recommendation letters**

- i. Written by familiar faculty
- ii. Written by unfamiliar faculty
- iii. Not from research institution or top tier liberal arts college
- iv. Does recommender address skills that foster success

**g. Research experience**

- i. Did applicant work extensively as an undergraduate or Master's student
- ii. Might students who must work extensively influence their ability to participate in extensive or sustained internships?
- iii. Was applicant introduced to graduate school options early or late?
- iv. Did applicant participate in a grad school preparation program, e.g McNair Scholars, UC LEADS, UC-HBCU, etc. In SLATE you can identify an applicant's participation in graduate school preparation program.

**h. Discipline specific skills**

- i. Determine skills that contribute to graduate success, e.g. math, writing, language, musical composition and analytic skills and how they will be evaluated

**i. Interviews**

- i. How are interview applicants evaluated?
- ii. Establish guidelines or evaluative processes.
- iii. Provide all interviewees with guidelines and expectations that include items that one might assume are already known. This issue is particularly salient for first generation college students.

**j. Consider how to value persistence and resilience, two valuable attributes that influence long-term goals.**

- k. Identify first generation college students** and the unique qualities they bring to their work.
  - i. First generation and historically underrepresented students are highly likely to work on projects that benefit their communities. Consider how their perspectives contribute to a team or disciplinary culture.