

Section Three

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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GRADUATE STUDENT AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

For well over thirty years equal opportunity and affirmative action in the recruitment of faculty, staff, and students have been integral components of the University's agenda for diversity. In a statement issued in February 2001, President John Hennessy reaffirmed that commitment, observing that "our educational purposes will be served best if the country's demographic diversity finds a presence on campus, and we thereby reflect the full range and the full capacity of this society."

At the graduate level, Stanford believes that a student body that is both highly qualified and diverse in terms of culture, class, race, gender, ethnicity, work and life experiences is essential to the education process. The University is therefore committed to a substantial representation of students who would bring such diversity to the graduate student body - including African Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and others whose backgrounds can provide additional dimensions to University programs. The University likewise strongly encourages departments in which there are few women graduate students to make a serious effort to increase their presence and participation.

Of special importance to institutions such as our own, a lack of diversity in Ph.D. programs nationwide means that the professoriate of the future will continue to be unrepresentative of the population it teaches and thus lacking in role models who can teach and encourage by the example of their own success. To achieve such success means that the individuals chosen for admission to our doctoral programs must continue to be, as they have been in the past, superbly qualified and capable of attaining the highest level of academic excellence.

Important though Stanford's institutional commitment to diversity is, it does not suffice. "Effective action" - to cite President Hennessy again - "requires the personal involvement of all members of the Stanford community." It depends especially on the enthusiasm and everyday efforts of individual faculty, staff members, and students. We must not only work diligently to encourage applications from and to recruit those who would bring such diversity to the graduate student body, but we also need to create a hospitable and supportive environment for all - and especially for newcomers whose social and educational backgrounds may differ from those of the majority of our students. Difference, which at once challenges stereotypes and enriches our educational process and community, is what diversity is about.

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