Maximizing your Graduate Program Website for Recruitment

* Primary purpose of the GRADUATE link on your department’s website is to recruit new students. Make sure the link for Prospective Graduate Students is easy to find. (The “About our program” pages are often too broad – embed a link there that jumps specifically to a “Prospective Graduate Students” page.)
* Highlight why someone should choose your program instead of your competitors’ programs. This might include touting the job placements and career successes of your alumni.
* Think about attracting applicants via the faculty research profiles. List recent article titles, grant titles, or areas of emphasis with an eye toward showcasing what kind of work students would engage in, if they join your program. Photos are also welcoming.
* Explicit commitment to inclusivity is recommended – statement, photos, and connections to campus-wide resources for under-represented students. Also a welcoming nod to international students.
* Highlight funding options – both within the program and offered by the Graduate School (<http://graduate.ua.edu/students/financial-support/>). Point the applicants also to external funding sources where appropriate.
* Save the regulatory language for your handbook (“students must”, “all students will”, “requirements include”) rather than for the pages prospective students will be reviewing. Prospective students should see opportunity and success, not dictates.
* Showcase what graduate students have the opportunity to do – what do some sample RA-ships involve, recent thesis/dissertation titles, alum success stories.
* A picture is worth a thousand words – students doing things. Showcase facilities where appropriate. Give prospective students a feel for how it is to be here, live here, work here – as compared to our competitors.
* Make sure one page is titled “How to Apply” or something similarly clear. That page should include an invitation to visit, and instructions for setting that up in advance. It should also encourage early applications for full consideration, and should invite correspondence between the candidate and a designated faculty member.
* Connect prospective students to a current graduate student (ambassadors, dept. organization, etc.) if possible.
* Clearly state what kind of personal statement / statement of purpose you are looking for – not all students come from backgrounds that will train them in this “code.”
* Link to video testimonials from students.
* Consider using social media (such as a Facebook page) to drive prospective students to your website and vice versa.