The mission of the Animal Behavior Diversity Committee is to promote, foster, and enhance the diversity of the Animal Behavior Graduate Group (ABGG). Diversity includes the familiar categories of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, as well as all the different characteristics and attributes of our current and aspiring members. The Committee believes that the inclusion of members with a diversity of background and experiences creates a more productive, innovative, and understanding scientific community. The Committee recognizes that achieving these goals requires not only assisting individual students during recruitment and throughout their graduate studies, but also developing an organizational culture at both the Graduate Group and institutional level that values and supports an inclusive academic environment. As such, we are committed to 1) providing equitable opportunities for all individuals to be able to realize their maximum potential, and 2) identifying and overcoming patterns of oppression, as they arise in our program, the UC System, and the broader scientific community. We aim to achieve this by regularly evaluating and improving our admission and recruitment practices, creating diversity and inclusion training opportunities for all members, and ensuring that all students have equitable access to the resources offered by the University of California.

The Committee aspires to develop membership that resembles the community from which it draws. Currently, 24% of ABGG students identify as people of color and 20% are from racial groups traditionally under-represented at U.S. universities. This is close to the national averages reported by the NSF for science and engineering graduate programs (19% and 28%, respectively), but falls short of the representation rates in the general population of the State of California, where Hispanic and Latino students alone make up 54% of enrollment in California public grade schools. The Committee sees a clear imperative to take action to help bridge this gap.

We also realize that even traditionally underrepresented groups well represented in the program (71% of students identify as women, for example) face challenges rooted in historical institutional injustices and discrimination. We seek to create and reinforce an academic environment that embraces diversity at all institutional levels, eliminate barriers as they arise, and (if elimination proves impossible) provide students with the resources to help overcome them.

The Animal Behavior Graduate Group is renowned for its academic rigor and the success of its students. It is our mission to ensure that the program reaches its greatest potential by promoting and valuing a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment for all.

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1 http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/cb/ceffingertipfacts.asp