

Increasing enrollment, quality, and diversity of UT graduate students

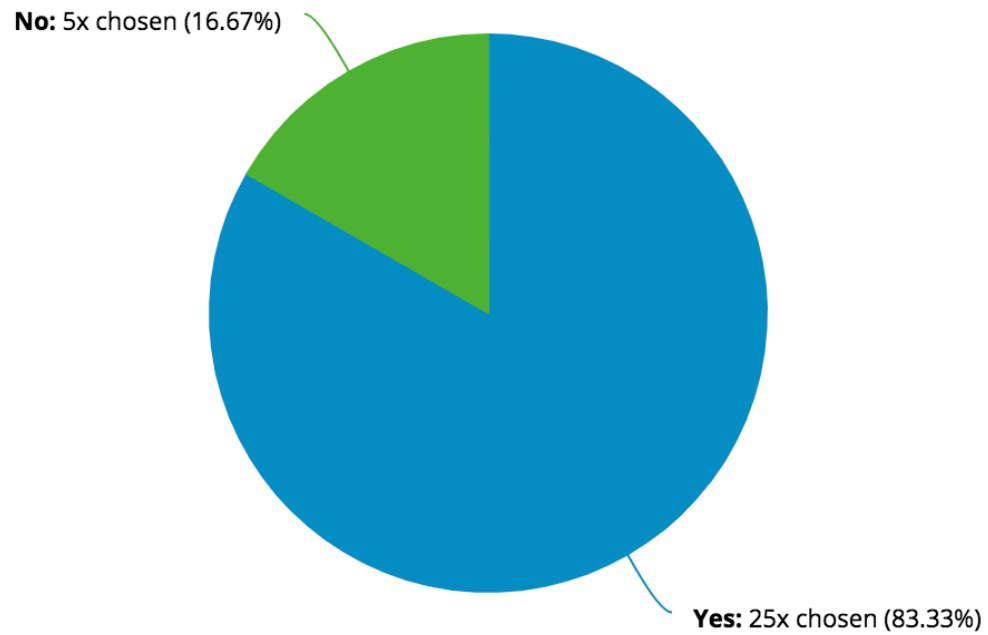
Survey Results

Graduate Council

November 13, 2018

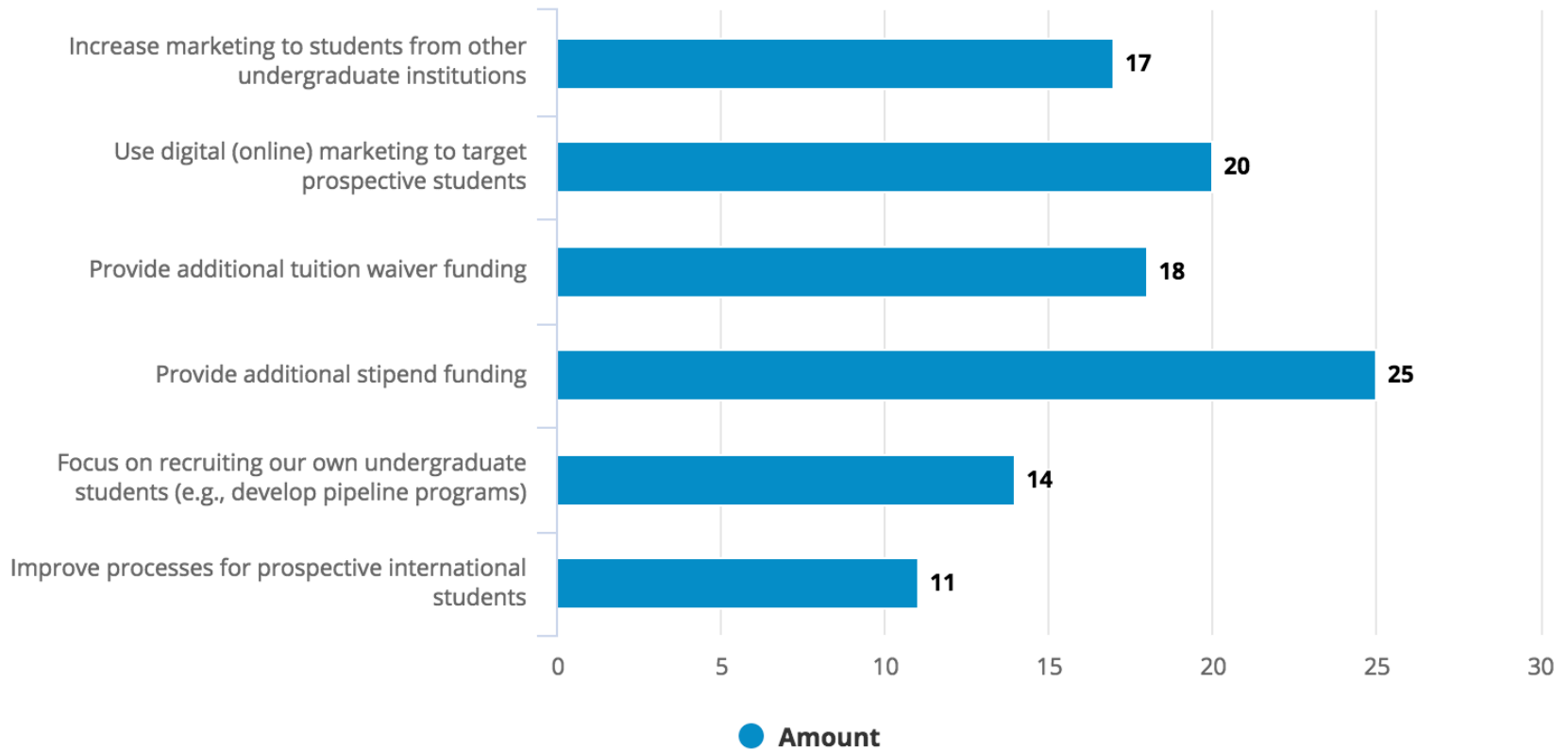
My graduate program needs to recruit more graduate students.

Number of responses: 30



Effective approaches for recruiting more students to our graduate program include

Number of responses: 29



Please provide any other suggestions you have for recruiting graduate students

Number of responses: 13

Text answers:

Stipend. Stipend. Stipend. We regularly lose our top choices because of the low funding. They take other offers with better funding.

Graduate College sponsored recruitment days.

Include health insurance and instructional fees as part of the tuition waiver (and/or costs covered by UT)

Focus on quality students, not just quantity

the stipend amounts need to be balanced with the tuition waiver amounts. Having more tuition waiver does not help since the students want stipend and they will go elsewhere to get them. also the stipend should be the same for all categories of stem students because departments should not be competing with one another for students. Also the stipends need to be competitive compared to other graduate programs in the same area.

We are very attractive to adult workers that need to pursue an MA for career advancement. Focusing on local marketing strategies that reach these populations would be useful.

Provide health insurance!

Waive the application fee (in the past, this fee was charged when students accepted). We can't bring them in if they don't apply. This money is small compared to just about anything else and not collecting these fees will not change how we operate our graduate college. Waiving the fees can affect the quality of our programs, however, by providing us with a larger pool of applicants (this has never been more important!).

For decades, ecology undergraduates who want to go to graduate school are and have been told to find an advisor they want to work with, contact that person specifically, and then apply to that graduate program and university. Therefore faculty need to be conducting high-profile, high-quality research that interested undergrads will see at conferences and in journals. Simply putting out marketing materials to anyone vaguely interested in graduate school in ecology is going to result in mediocre students at best who have no real interest in or commitment to the research they get assigned in whatever lab takes them. College-wide or even department-wide recruitment at the graduate level is counter-productive because it is not how prospective ecology graduate students look for graduate programs. Nor do any other high-profile ecology programs at other universities recruit in this way.

Faculty in my (STEM) program typically recruit into their own labs. They need help spreading the word about research opportunities in their labs, especially to students from underrepresented groups.

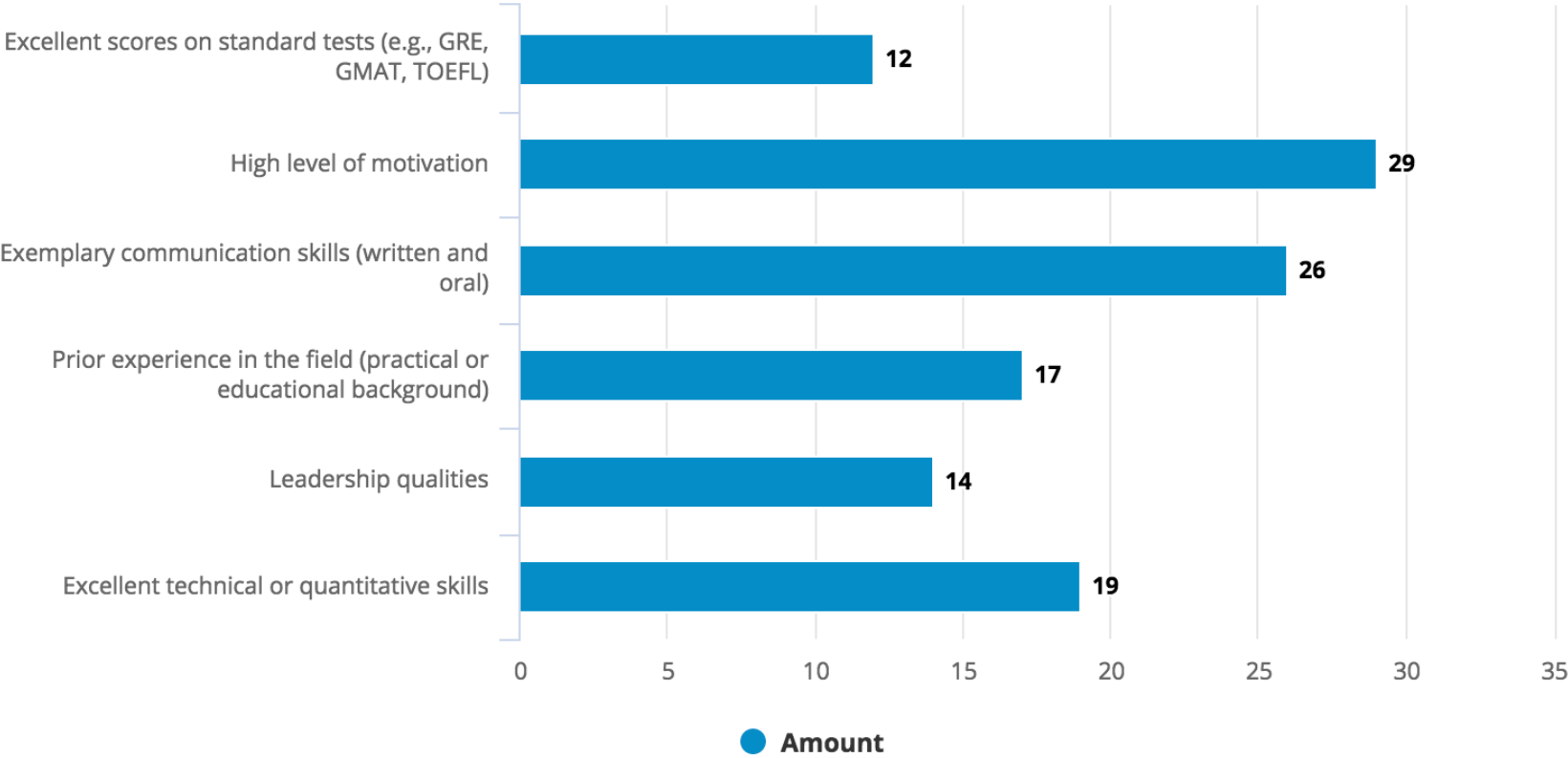
help in developing recruiting materials / we support

Improve our website to better showcase our program, provide a small budget for items we can use when meeting with prospective students, work with our program to better understand the obstacles our applicants face in choosing in our program (i.e., cost in comparison to other similar programs).

Lower the cost of our program. A few years back the tuition for our program was raised differentially. This is making our program more expensive than our competitors, given the fees the students pay to do clinic.

Highly qualified graduate students exhibit the following attributes

Number of responses: 30



Please list any other attributes that highly qualified graduate students might possess

Number of responses: 13

Text answers:

Some experience with research and scholarship in English and other humanities plus excellent interpretative-analytical skills.

High GPA

Well-rounded (compassionate, ethical, empathetic) individuals with volunteer activities and outside interests

high ethical standards

have creative thinking, to be able to work independently, and think of how to proceed on a project

High GPA. Real interest to research. Demonstrated accomplishment in research.

Excellent theoretical grounding for non-quantitative work.

Motivation trumps all. Lack of motivation is a killer.

Independent, self-motivated, organized, and prior practical experience in MY FIELD SPECIFICALLY (not just "Biology" generically)

A positive attitude

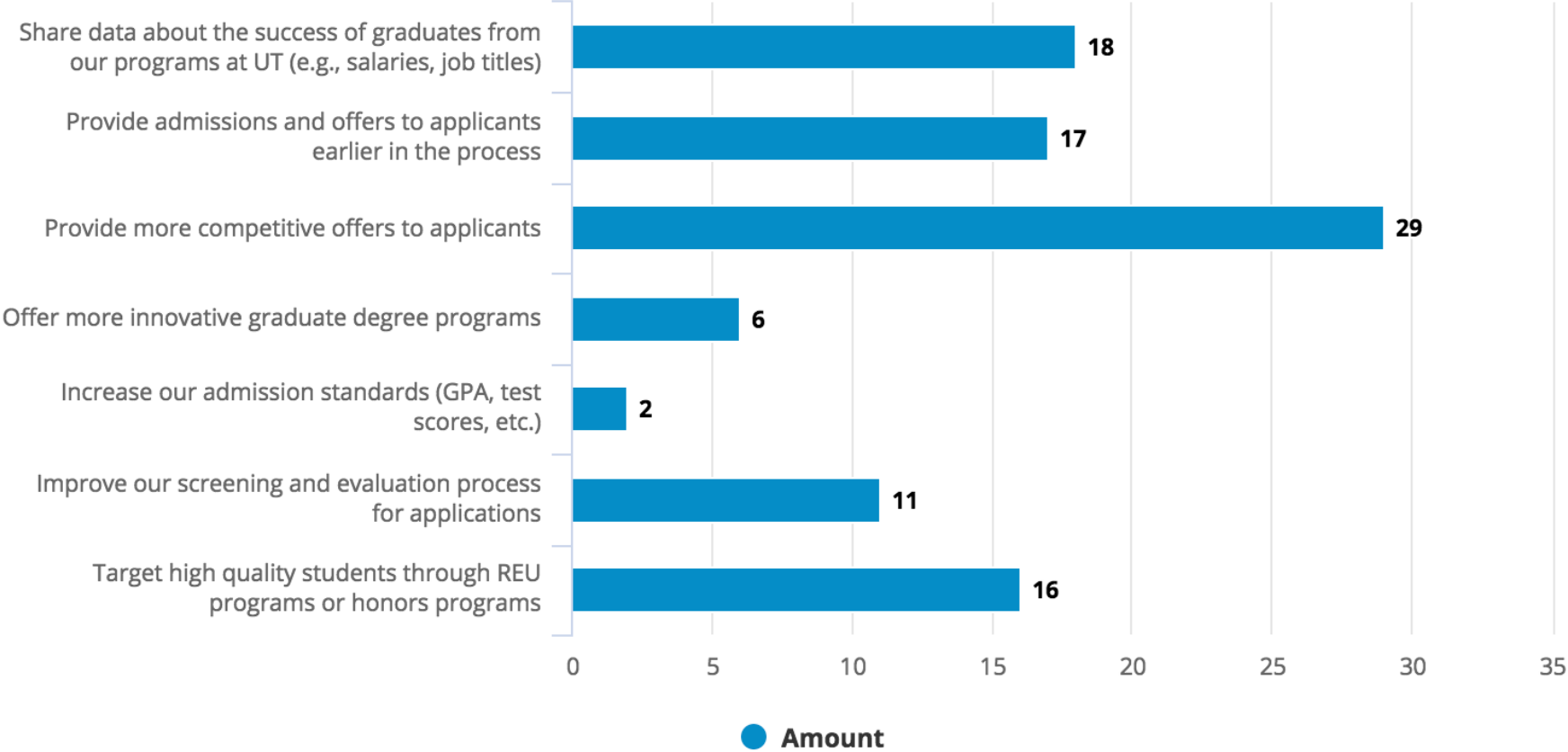
Applicants do NOT need all of these, but a nice mix. Strong GPA in the major. Flexible thinking and positive attitude. Work history outside the field that shows customer service, ability to problem solve, reliability, etc. Knowledge/experience in multicultural environment.

Ability to write a scholarly document e.g. abstract, manuscript for publication &/or proposal

Computing skills

In order to maintain/improve the quality of our new graduate students, we should

Number of responses: 30



Please provide any other ideas that you have for improving the quality of our applicants

Number of responses: 10

Text answers:

improve the quality and reputations of our current programs.

Offer early admission incentives

health insurance, competitive stipends, decrease parking fees

we already have a large number of graduate programs, we need to market these better and show the candidates that they will be able to find good jobs once they graduate

Increase the reputation of UT by investing in research

Eliminate barriers for admissions and registration (note; this does not mean lower admission standards but seriously look at what obstacles that create problems for admitting students and getting them registered.

Offering fellowships on top of stipends is an effective recruitment tool for attracting more talented students. We should do more of this.

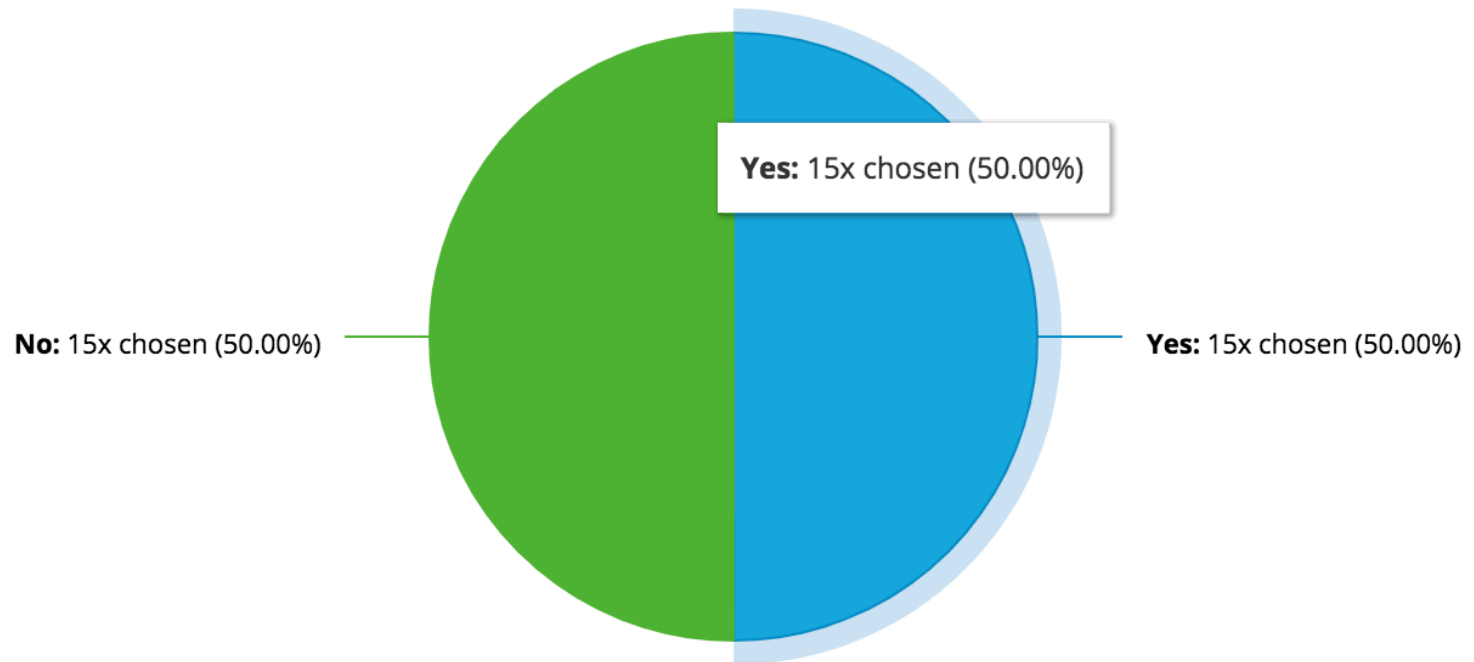
Individual faculty need to take responsibility for attracting high-quality graduate students to work with them specifically. If faculty are not conducting high-profile research that attracts high-quality graduate students, we will continue to get only mediocre applicants.

It all boils down to casting a wider net to spread the word, and then making sure our support offers are competitive.

We already have a substantial number of highly qualified applicants, and filling our positions is easy initially, until they find out the cost.

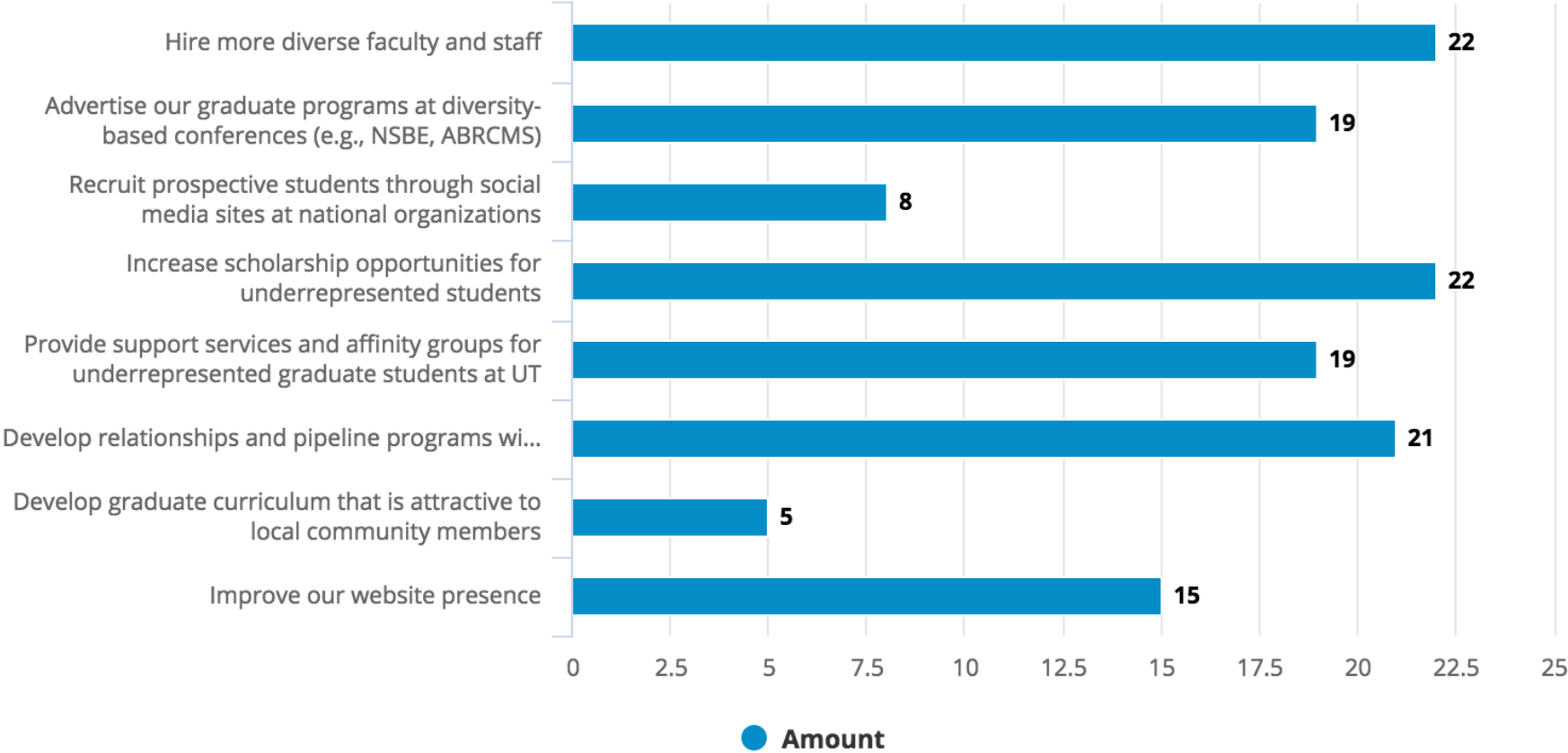
We have a diverse graduate program

Number of responses: 30



The following tactics could be used to increase diversity in our graduate program

Number of responses: 29



Please list any other suggestions for recruiting more diverse graduate students

Number of responses: 6

Text answers:

professional development for faculty and staff on implicit bias

make an office of diversity that established ties with URM institutions and offer our range of graduate programs to them

Unfortunately, one of our biggest underrepresented groups is Americans. We need to offer more incentive for them to come to UT.

Again, lots of highly qualified diverse potential graduate students are out there. Our faculty need to be highly qualified and diverse in order to attract those applicants.

There are a lot of different areas where we need to improve here. Developing relationships and pipeline programs with undergraduate institutions with high proportions of underrepresented students, such as HBCUs, is probably the most important thing we can do besides diversifying our own faculty and staff.

Perhaps any of these would help, but the underrepresentation is a national issue in our field and has been for decades. There has been a concerted effort through our national organization, but only a little progress has occurred.

Additional Input

- Any questions/suggestions overlooked?
- Any other topics GC wants to explore related to these conversations?
- Ongoing action items
 - Benchmarking stipends
 - Marketing – digital, messaging
 - Recruiting – events, materials, relationships
 - Health Insurance
 - D&I strategic plan – VP McKether