

January 25, 2012

To: GSEP Students, Staff, Faculty, and Alumni

From: GSEP Diversity Council

Re: Pepperdine University's denial of application for chapter of Reach OUT

Given the recent media attention regarding the University's decision to deny an application for recognition of a student chapter of Reach OUT at Seaver College, the GSEP Diversity Council wishes to communicate to the GSEP community our stance.

GSEP is a professional school that is committed to preparing students for work with diverse populations. The fields of education and psychology emphasize the importance of engaging in practices that affirm one's identity, improving the well-being of those we serve, and increasing understanding of diverse perspectives. Not only are our fields guided by these best practices, but we have both a professional and an ethical responsibility to exercise said practices. Our view is that the University's decision runs counter to the best practices and professional standards that GSEP strives to uphold.

Moreover, the GSEP Diversity Council wishes to reaffirm that GSEP is a school that: *"...values and respects the perspectives and diversity of our students in regard to ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, age, and ability status. Thus, it is critical that discussions include respectful dialogue about any issue that impacts the lives of our students, and the individuals, families, and communities that our students serve."* We want to ensure the GSEP community that we take the above statement seriously and aim to create opportunities for respectful discourse in all areas of diversity.

We want to assure our students, staff, faculty, and alumni that GSEP understands the implications of the decision made by the University, have expressed our concern to the University, and plan to work with the University to create a more inclusive and affirming learning environment for all.