Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for the University of Kansas

This is what was found by the KansasGeo URGE Pod at the Kansas Geological Survey and KU Department of Geology on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

- What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement\(^1\) is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available\(^2\)?
  - On the KGS website, there is a Non-Discrimination/EEO statement on the positions listing page. On the specific job description announcements, there is either a direct link to the KU EEO policy or a short statement describing it.
    - [http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/staffIndex.html](http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/staffIndex.html)
  - Both KGS and KU Geology use BrassRing to post jobs. Their statement is:
    - “The University of Kansas prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability status as a veteran, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, gender identity, gender expression, and genetic information in the university’s programs and activities. Retaliation is also prohibited by university policy. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies and are the Title IX coordinators for their respective campuses”:
      - Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Opportunity & Access, [IOA@ku.edu](mailto:IOA@ku.edu),
        - 1246 West Campus Road, Room 153A, Lawrence, KS 66045, 785-864-6414, 711 TTY 9 for the Lawrence, Edwards, Parsons, Yoder, and Topeka campuses);
      - Director, Equal Opportunity Office,
    - [http://policy.ku.edu/IOA/nondiscrimination](http://policy.ku.edu/IOA/nondiscrimination)

---

\(^2\) https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/
\(^5\) https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html
Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?

- KU and KGS Job advertisements
  - University of Kansas Job listing:
    - [https://employment.ku.edu/](https://employment.ku.edu/)
  - KGS direct link to jobs available:
    - [http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/jobs.html](http://www.kgs.ku.edu/General/jobs.html)

- Reaching out to Applicants:
  - Social Media
    - Both departments also use social media to advertise. They also ask that we submit lists of where jobs have been posted so HR can keep track of that.
  - **Direct solicitation** “Critical”
    - The most prominent method for recruitment
    - Personal connection has played a big role for some individuals
      - Solicitation by university event booths, conferences, events/networking, academic connections, job interactions
    - Networking in person or virtually
    - Student Connections:
      - Undergraduate and Graduate reach out to us asking for experience or work positions (Both KU/KGS)
    - KGS: For student hires, KGS reaches out to the STEM departments to disseminate the announcement
    - KU: Alumni networking from previous graduate students or recruitment from undergraduate students

- There is a requirement that the nominee pool must meet a 20% threshold for diversity before interviewing can begin. If you don’t meet that threshold, you must petition for approval from above to begin the interview process.

- Actions needed to be completed:
  - We need a centralized page that shows who is recruiting students, who has funding and project information
  - Add criteria and list of additional sources to help students applying to KGS and KU graduate programs
  - Add the list of connections to organizations/programs to identify connections faculty and/or staff
Everyone’s various disciplinary message boards/communities:

- CUAHSI (https://www.cuahsi.org/)
- ESWN (https://eswnonline.org/)
- Hydrosci (https://hydrosci.com/)
- CZEN (https://www.czen.org/)
- AboutHydrology (http://abouthydrology.blogspot.com/)
- International Soil Modeling Consortium (https://soil-modeling.org/)
- CGU (https://cgu-ugc.ca/)
- AGU (https://www.agu.org/)
- GSA (https://www.geosociety.org/)
- SACNAS (https://www.sacnas.org/)
- SocioHydrology (https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol25/iss4/art22/)
- AWG (www.awg.org)

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

**KU Faculty:**
- Letters of recommendation (*biases are rampant in these*)
- Research Statement (*biases based on who is reading these*)
- Teaching Statement (*biases based on who is reading these*)
- Diversity Statement (*little to no instruction on what we should be looking for when reviewing these*)
- CV
- At least one member of the selection committee must do the KU Implicit Bias when hiring training, **but not all.**
- No clear protocol for how to report biases when they are happening within the committee.

**KU Staff**
- CV or resume
- Cover letter

**Undergraduate Students**
- Resume
- References
- Cover letter recommended but not required
KGS Scientist
- Cover letter including research interests and addressing job requirements/qualifications.
- CV
- List of references
- Someone came in and talked about implicit bias in the evaluation process, but not terribly in-depth.
- Search committee can see all the names, demographics. This information is withheld from the rest of the department though.

Graduate Students
- Official transcript and proof of graduation
- 3 letters of recommendation
- Resume/CV
- Personal Statement “…in particular, we are interested in learning about
  1. your specific interests within geology and why they are important and interesting to you
  2. what you envision as your educational and career objectives and how a degree from KU Geology helps to meet those objective
  3. which of our faculty members you think would be an appropriate graduate advisor and mentor.
- GREs score submissions are optional

Current barriers faced by students:
- Paying for application https://gradapply.ku.edu/apply
- The fees are as follows:
  - Domestic degree-seeking: $65 vs International degree-seeking: $85
  - Certificate-seeking: $30 vs Non-degree-seeking: $30
- Note: undergrads at KU don’t have to pay the transcript fee.
o **What needs improvement:**
  o Clarification on communications with which faculty are taking on what students
  o Who is completing what research?
    ▪ Make sure all active research topics are clearly stated along with availability.
    ▪ Note past research or no longer active studies or focuses
    ▪ Note KGS and KU research connections and active work together
  o State clearly on Geology website they need to contact faculty **FIRST** before applying to a specific faculty member or program
  o Make rubric available for individuals applying (ID Excel)
  o Direct links or contact to faculty designated to assist undergraduate and graduate on applications on websites below:
    ▪ Undergraduate: [https://geo.ku.edu/undergraduate-admissions](https://geo.ku.edu/undergraduate-admissions)
    ▪ Graduate: [https://geo.ku.edu/graduate-admissions](https://geo.ku.edu/graduate-admissions)
    ▪ Include on Financial support opportunities to reduce or eliminate application fees: [https://geo.ku.edu/financial-support](https://geo.ku.edu/financial-support)
  o Website links to help first time students who need to learn how to send an email and links on hints/tips for applying to schools and to specific faculty members
    ▪ Graduate students: Make a generic example email directed to faculty they want to work for

- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**
  o KU Geology has recently instituted a new rubric for evaluation of graduate students (see attachment)
  o Rubric must be revised on previous feedback
  o Rubric needs to be review every couple (~2-3) of years to make sure it is checked for biases
  o Be aware of the time frame during COVID-19 where academic or career research is absences or otherwise impacted
Undergraduate students

- Once the deadline closes, applicants are reviewed by the selection committee. Interviews are set up and then the selection committee provides the names/rankings to HR.
- If there aren’t enough applications by deadline, the deadline for applicants should be extended.
- It should become a standard practice for undergraduate applicants to have a specific rubric available to them when Departments are evaluating applicants.
- This should be a standard practice when any student (undergraduate or graduate) applicant applies for a working position at KU &/or KGS.

- Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?
  - Person hiring seeks out members for the search committee for other positions.
  - Department chair or director assigns a chair and then they seek out members.
  - Selection committee hierarchy – *outside members don’t get a final vote*
  - ADR committee – early career (ish) person from each of the sections (Sam, Jon, Franek, Julian), external from KU Geology, and an external from KBS, Annette as the HR rep, Dianne as the KUCR helper.
    - Established a short list for phone interviews and invited 3 for campus interviews (same for Faculty positions above).
    - Phone interviews has a standard list of questions that you pick from HR, or if you had some new question it had to be approved.
    - On campus, they give a talk to everyone, one meeting with the search committee, then scheduled series of meetings and meals across multiple sections.
    - Anonymous surveys were used to collect feedback from everyone after the on-campus visits.
  - Faculty – the department votes on the phone interview list during a faculty meeting, and then there was a department vote on the final rankings.
  - KGS – more of a consensus, but it was only through the search committee. But they incorporated the anonymous feedback. Rolfe had to approve that or he could have gone rogue.
Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?
  - KUCR involved in KGS ADR search
    - https://research.ku.edu/kansas_center_for_research

Has your university or company implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture, or other considerations outlined in “Leveraging Promising Practices”?  
  - Chris Brown is Vice-Provost of Faculty Development, they have mentoring and other programs for new faculty (New Faculty Foundations)
    - KGS scientists are invited to these events
    - https://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/newfacultyfoundations
    - University on new hires:
      - https://facultydevelopment.ku.edu/sites/facultydevelopment.ku.edu/files/docs/NFF_Spring2021/New%20Faculty%20Foundations_%20Service.pdf
  - Undergraduate/ Graduate students
    - Create a fee waivers option for applications (make this apparent if they need to contact the department for coverage or not)
      - Or eliminate fee entirely
    - Create a website for available KU/KGS groups on https://career.ku.edu/
  - Graduate students do a semester long orientation
    - Geol 791: Graduate Student Prof Skill & Ethics taught by Dr. Olcott

For faculty hiring:
  - KU regularly makes partner hires, and six current KU Geology faculty were hired as three partner hires.
  - KU has made cohort hires in the past (most recently in the Geology Dept in 2014).