Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for Purdue University- EAPS

This is what was found by Purdue EAPS pod at Purdue University on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.

1. What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available?
   a. Need EEO statement on grad admissions page/application page
   b. Hiring
      i. On EAPS Open Positions page for faculty, staff, and postdocs
         1. Purdue University is an affirmative action/equal access/equal opportunity employer. In accordance with Purdue Policies, all persons have equal access to Purdue University's educational programs, services and activities, without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran. See a more complete statement of Purdue's policies of equal access and equal opportunity. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, please contact the Office of the Vice President for Human Relations at vphr@purdue.edu or 765-494-5830.
      ii. On EAPS old Strategic Plan:
          1. “Crosscutting Strategies: We strive to utilize crosscutting strategies to accomplish our objectives in a multi-cultural, diverse environment that enriches the academic experience for our faculty, staff, and students alike.”
          2. “Faculty who are committed to the advancement of students from underrepresented minority groups”
          3. “Increase the diversity of graduate students that apply and are admitted through cultivation of links and the creation of academic pathways with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, (HBCU), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), as well as other Minority Serving Institutions, (MSI). This should particularly be done with those institutions employing our graduates as faculty or with whom we have active research and teaching collaborations.”
      iii. On EAPS dept head ad 2018
1. Purdue University’s Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences is committed to advancing diversity in all areas of faculty effort, including scholarship, instruction, and engagement. Candidates should address at least one of these areas in their cover letter, indicating their past experiences, current interests or activities, and/or future goals to promote a climate that values diversity and inclusion. Purdue University is an EOE/AA employer. All individuals, including minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply.

iv. Graduate Coordinator hiring
   1. Purdue University is an EOE/AA employer. All individuals, including minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply
   2. Required: (Inclusion?)
      a. Ability to collaborate and communicate with individuals at all levels within and external to the university to support department needs
      b. Ability to work with people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures

c. Admissions
   i. No graduate committee rubric
      1. Admissions up to discretion of advisor
      2. Standardizing a rubric for a dept. of our size may not account for the specific needs of a lab group.
   ii. Is there a standardized test score cutoff?
      1. Not explicitly, some faculty have numbers they have in mind.
   iii. Making admissions pages clearer (talking to potential advisors, see notes at bottom.)

d. General Inclusion
   i. Multiple new statements on diversity and inclusion on the website
      1. Includes departmental actions taken- but some haven’t happened yet! (that I’m aware of, mostly in the open doors/monitoring section).
      2. What are active steps being taken to increase diversity and do we have a plan to assess how successful they are?

2. Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?
   a. Hiring
      i. EAPS webpage Open Positions
         1. Individual Graduate Opportunities
      ii. For Graduate Coordinator (but not on EAPS website?)
iii. Faculty already at Purdue reach out to scientists in their inner circle for job openings

b. Admissions
   i. Individual lab pages
   ii. Graduate School Fairs
   iii. Per old strategic plan
      1. “Advertise for research supported graduate positions in science publications such as EOS.”
      2. “Create and use Research Experiences for Undergrads (REUs) as a pathway to recruit top undergraduates from across the nation into the department's graduate program”
   iv. Listservs- ex cryolist, planetary newsletters, spreadsheets, twitter
      1. But undergrads aren’t usually on these types of lists
   v. twitter
   vi. Booth at major conferences (AGU, GSA, etc)
      1. List of interested candidates is collected at the booth, but disappears into the main office
      2. Additional advertisement ideas (more at end of doc):
         a. Reach out specifically to minority serving colleges
         b. Send out advertisements into listservs that reach BIPOC institutions
         c. Active form of advertisement for underrepresented students or communities at conferences like SACNAS

3. 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?
   a. Hiring
      i. EAPS dept head: cover letter, curriculum vitae with the names and e-mail addresses of three references, a statement of research and teaching accomplishments, and a vision statement for the future of EAPS research and education.
      ii. Graduate Coordinator: Can’t see what you have to submit without signing up for a job website, background check, will not sponsor employment verification

b. Admissions
   i. Previous question of gender options- did we find out?
   ii. Grad Application Requirements (there are two separate pages for this)
      1. GRE "is not required by the EAPS Department, but will be viewed if submitted." but is a financial barrier and is not a predictor of success
1. 1-2 pages
2. Fee remissions
   a. General consensus amongst grad students that we should omit the grad application fee. Waivers are available and generally get approved, but this puts undue burden on the students who this is an actual barrier for.
3. Three letters of recommendation
   a. Statement of what a "good" recommender would look like (i.e., not necessarily someone in academia).
   b. A lot of junior faculty are not explicitly taught how to write recommendation letters, considering they go from needing rec letters to writing them in such a narrow time frame. Workshops/guidelines for this would be useful.
4. TOEFL or ILETS is required for international applicants
   a. Tests aren’t necessarily a good demonstration of English abilities
   b. This is a grad school/typical college requirement
5. One to two page research statement of purpose
   a. How can we split this large statement into more directed, short questions?
   b. Being more explicit about what we want to hear from applicants
6. Optional diversity statement
   a. Used partially to determine admissions fellowships
   b. Other uses?
7. Admissions fellowship in diversity
   a. Requirements
      i. Professor- mentorship plan, but nothing groundbreaking
      ii. Idea is to provide funding (in the form of a TA-ship, in the future hopefully more comparable to RA type salary) for students who are a good match for a professor in the dept., but when the prof doesn’t necessarily have a designated project that aligns with the student's specific interests.

4. 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?
   a. Hiring
i. Diversity only included in the cover letter? (dept head 2018)

ii. What additional anti-bias strategies are there that we can include immediately with little pushback (if any?)
   1. Workshops?
      a. Anti-bias training during retreat for evaluating practices used when evaluating “successful” graduate students

iii. At college level they’ve been requiring that part of the search process starts with a rubric that is designed in correlation with the ad that goes out
   1. For international faculty- have to demonstrate that they’re the best candidate for visa reasons- makes it easier with the rubric to show.
   2. To serve on a faculty search committee, you have to do 4 hours of implicit bias training every 5 years

b. Admissions
   i. What additional anti-bias strategies are there that we can include immediately with little pushback (if any?)
      1. Workshops?
         a. Mentorship practices
         b. Holding a workshop for prospective students?

c. Suggested actions:
   1. Anti-bias training at the faculty training
      a. Different from search committee training, more directly applicable to grad students/undergrad relationships?
      b. Possibly
   2. Workshop for prospective student at Purdue about what we’re looking for/tips/tricks
      a. along with specific tips/application timeline included on website

5. Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?
   a. Hiring
      i. Search committee in charge
         1. Is there a grad student on the committee?
         2. How is the committee picked and what training/instructions are they given?
         3. What happens if there’s a disagreement?
      ii. What happens between the review of the application and the visit?
      iii. Top 3+ (how many?) do a campus visit and interact with undergrads through deans of the college
iv. Who is on the selection committee/makes decisions?
   1. Hiring wise: applications, review of them to get a long list (~10), then phone/skype interviews (10)
      a. 4 invited to campus to do chalk talk/teaching, research talk, and meeting with department grads, faculty, and college level.
      b. Search committee collects data and discusses strengths and weaknesses and a recommendation is given and taken to the head who makes the final decision.
      c. Faculty are willing to argue!
         i. Saw this recently during the highly supported Lucy-for-dept-head campaign

b. Admissions
   i. Who do we invite out to expo stats wise?
      1. Then, who do we accept?
      2. And then, who does accept us?
         a. Do we collect data on why students turn us down after they’ve received an offer?
         b. 0 Students of URM’s for Fall 21 so far.

6. Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?
   a. When is the hiring process evaluated/changed?
      i. Lucy is the one that does this at the college level.
         1. She notes there’s challenges to make sure there’s diverse pools, diverse interviewees, and making sure each search is run with best practices and the most objectively.
         2. Have done some work with Gates and diversity offices.
         3. Always a process and they reflect on questions such as
            a. Are we reflecting the demographics of the student body of Purdue and/or the field? Faculty already use seminar and gaggle talks to start building networks for hiring
      ii. Lucy says most work needs to be done before the ad even goes out, in terms of cultivating the pool and deciding the wording/requirements/rubric for the ad
         1. Very important to send it to different groups and get a wide applicant pool
            a. Have had problems in the past of not trying to hire their buddies

7. 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”?
a. Admissions
   i. Mentoring first semester grad students through GSA
      1. Could establish meeting schedule
      2. Oversight would be helpful
      3. An end of program survey
      4. Making new grad seminar/new student orientation more useful/grad student handbook/ up to date
         a. Filling out forms/receiving W2/taxes
         b. Registering for classes
         c. General deadlines
         d. Mental health resources, external info that relates to purdue health insurance
   ii. Cohort hiring of students of color in grad admissions specifically
      1. Not just 1 URM per year, How do we reach a critical mass of students of color?
         a. Lucy directed us to look at the chemistry department
            i. They are connecting and making a pipeline to HBCU’s.
            ii. They send current students to those universities to make personal connections.
               1. Assuming this is all paid for by the department? How do they fund it?
               2. How do they pay the current grad students for these trips? Essentially a recruiting trip
               3. Who do they decide to send? Do students apply to go or are they selected? Are they normally URM's themselves?
                  a. Who could/would we send to make these connections when there aren’t many URM’s in the dept already, and how can it be an advantage to the current student rather than just another diversity thing they’re expected to do because they’re not white?
            iii. Who do they decide to send? Do students apply to go or are they selected? Are they normally URM’s themselves?
1. Who could/would we send to make these connections when there aren’t many URM’s in the dept already, and how can it be an advantage to the current student rather than just another diversity thing they’re expected to do because they’re not white?

iii. Do we need to double down on recruiting? Making new connections?
   1. How are the existing connections we have (native/indigenous communities) doing?
      a. What can we do to strengthen those connections/not let those fall by the wayside while we start another initiative?

iv. How to make measurable change:
   1. Departmental pay raise is a discussion faculty are having at their next meeting
      a. Will bring up relocation expenses with this, as it is a big issue
         i. Affects grad students and postdocs
         ii. Even multiple new faculty had to borrow money for relocation to their faculty job
      b. Fronting the money is the hard part
         i. Have to get into the system
         ii. complicated, but we easily reimburse seminar speakers
         iii. Emergency loans are available
            1. but not if you have to show up before the beginning of the semester
      iv. Even harder for international students
         1. they don’t necessarily have credit in the country
         2. don’t have credit cards accepted in US
      v. Nat says pay delay is because of how Purdue’s accounting is delayed pay structure

Suggested Actionable Items (shared w/ faculty on DEI committee and departmental leadership):

- Outreach + Recruitment
  1. Reach out specifically to minority serving colleges
  2. Send out advertisements into listservs that reach BIPOC institutions, HBCU’s, etc.
3. Active form of advertisement for underrepresented students or communities
   - opposed to passive advertisement (i.e., booths at conferences, going to conferences like SACNAS that engage with a more diverse community)
   - Long term goal: starting an REU program at Purdue (short term, serving the undergrads currently here and offering them research opportunities)
     1. Cohort hiring: planning amongst the faculty beforehand, bringing in BIPOC students in cohorts rather than singular students to help foster a sense of community. Additional suggestion by Lucy: engaging admitted/current BIPOC students with BIPOC undergrads in the department (or even outside the department), either in mentorship type roles or just community building.

- Equal Opportunity Employers
  1. Nothing about this on the graduate admissions page

- Offering a workshop that would prep students for graduate school
  1. At course level for undergrads in the dept
  2. Creating a virtual workshop for prospective graduate students of Purdue, helping them fill out the form, offering additional assistance to things that are not totally clear.
  3. Even reaching out to high school students, professional development, CV/resume mentorship and prep (similar to what is being done with AP Fridays, but reaching out to students who maybe don’t attend predominantly white schools that typically engage with AP Fridays).

- Having a more explicit admissions process
  1. Exactly what are you looking for in the essay prompt? Spelling this out, maybe even breaking it up into individual prompts with specific questions.
  2. Including what the diversity statement is used for, and how it is evaluated.
  3. Having a suggested deadline for reaching out/contacting potential advisors and those advisors graduate students within EAPS, making this clear on the EAPS webpage.
  4. Making it more accessible (application, currently spread across 2 pages)
  5. Example of a Professor’s page for PhD’s and Postdocs that is super helpful: https://sites.wustl.edu/wustl-geomorphology/opportunities/opportunities/

- Getting rid of an even optional GRE
  1. Students see optional, they’re going to want to do it to set their application apart
  2. For faculty who want it optional, do they tell their prospective students to submit it? Having it optional introduces a lot of ambiguity as to why/how the scores are being used, which is pretty stressful to navigate as a prospective student.

- Faculty retreat
  1. Having an anti-bias training in regards to how we engage with and accept prospective graduate students. Who are you developing relationships with? Which emails from prospective students get unread, which make the cut, this is where biases can potentially stem from. Who do you define as a “successful” student, is it someone who looks like you?

- Financial
1. Drop application fee
   1. Having the option of a fee waiver puts undue burden on the students who need financial assistance
2. Re-location stipend, increasing student wages
   1. Will make our program more accessible and competitive

● Retention related items

1. Offering support to new graduate students by way of curriculum related things
   1. Making new grad seminar/new student orientation more useful/, keeping the graduate student handbook up to date. Topics to be covered:
      ■ As a new grad student, how do you fill out relevant forms (i.e., form 100, form 125)
      ■ How do you access your W2? General filing taxes related aid as well (advertising workshops that are offered by college)
      ■ How do you register for classes, what are the deadlines, unit minimums (for your specific appointment), how much is research/an actual class, etc.
      ■ General deadlines (quals, prelims, defense, any other PhD milestones).
      ■ Mental health resources, external info that relates to what is offered by purdue health insurance

2 https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/
5 https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html