Deliverable - Admissions and Hiring Policies

The Admissions Process

A. Graduate Program Application
https://www.syracuse.edu/admissions/graduate/apply/

Reflections:

1. Application fee is $75. Fee waivers seem to be available for certain types of applicants (e.g., Military, Veterans, and McNair scholars; https://onlinegrad.syracuse.edu/public-administration/admissions/faq/). Could this fee be waived completely for all? How important is this revenue to the SU financial figure?

2. In EES, the evaluation committee is in general the potential advisor(s), especially for students who are admitted as RA/fellowship. For TA students, the rank of applicants will be voted by the departmental faculty based on academic merit, research potential/achievement, contribution to the diversity, and some special considerations. As a department, we need to work towards formalizing these rubrics.

3. No GRE is required anymore in EES programs starting 2021 Fall. However, for fellowship application (e.g., REDF Fellowship), it is still to be decided (?) whether GRE will be removed.

4. The applicants typically contact advisors before the application due date via email or are identified at the time the faculty go through applications, though it is clear that those who do not contact members of the department prior to the application process are at a disadvantage. We can and should spend more time evaluating the applications that are not directly connected to a potential advisor.

5. Most years we have recruiting booths at GSA or AGU and we commonly use this opportunity to meet with students who have contacted us or connect with new students. This model has been fruitful but the pool of potential applicants is limited to those that have the opportunity to attend these meetings and has not enhanced departmental diversity. This is a clear area that needs improvement and it could help us see significant gains in applicant diversity. We need to extend our recruiting efforts to other meetings (e.g. SACNAS) that are outside of our traditional recruitment territories.

B. Undergraduate application
https://www.syracuse.edu/admissions/undergraduate/apply/

Application fee is $85. Fee waivers are available for certain scenarios:
https://www.syracuse.edu/admissions/undergraduate/first-year/faq/#q:how-much-is-the-application-fee
Hiring Process

Research Focus
The department makes a collective decision(s) on what area(s) represents the greatest need with respect to expanding research scope and deepening areas of strength. Pedagogical needs are also considered but are secondary to research. Typically the process is guided by a small group of faculty that are likely to comprise the future hiring committee. A draft ad or ads are prepared and sent as a hiring proposal to the Dean’s office that includes requested level of appointment, lab needs, approximate startup costs and how the position fits into the framework of the department with respect to teaching and research. Further there is justification about the area of research being one that is capable of attracting extramural funding and whether that funding diversifies potential areas of funding. It is not uncommon for us to send two hiring proposals when they are requested and the Dean may approve one or the other, or both, though this is uncommon.

The Hiring Committee
Upon approval of the position, the chair of the position’s home department will assemble a hiring committee typically comprising a senior member of the department as chair, whose research is in the general area of position. The remainder of the committee has 2 to 3 more faculty members, and generally includes a junior faculty member, a tenured professor in the research area that is sought, a faculty member from outside the department, and a senior graduate student. The composition of the committee would ideally include members from an underrepresented group, or at the very least encompassing diversity of rank and gender. The problem here is that in a University where there are few qualified science faculty who are members of an underrepresented group the demands placed upon their time can be high (they are often asked to participate in search committees every year but this is improving). As we increase the diversity of our faculty this will become less of an issue. The point is that there is thought put into the composition of the committee to increase its diversity as much as is possible.

Drafting and posting of Ad
The committee drafts the ad and it is approved by the department before being sent to Human Resources for approval. Accompanying the ad is a plan for how and where the ad will be disseminated. The goals here are to provide the widest exposure of the ad outside of the normal channels such as societies and email listservs. Applicants are asked where they saw the ad, and the reality is that it is uncommon for applicants to have seen the ad outside of conventional channels or forwarded from colleagues. This can and probably does limit the scope of people who view the ad. These policies are not public but they are reviewed internally. Over the last several years there have been significant changes to the faculty hiring process to ensure that we are being inclusive and expansive in the ad placement and in the language in the ad itself (see below).

Exact language from our ads includes:
“We welcome candidates who can contribute to an inclusive environment, bring new perspectives on mentoring students from diverse backgrounds, implement novel approaches to quantitative research, and who value collegiality and collaboration.”

“Syracuse University is interested in candidates who have the communication skills and cross-cultural abilities to maximize their effectiveness with diverse groups of colleagues, students and community members. Women, military veterans, individuals with disabilities, and members of other traditionally underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply. Syracuse University is an equal opportunity employer, as well as a federal contractor required to take affirmative action on behalf of protected veterans.”

We also ask for a one page statement “describing how you would contribute to the University’s commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community”.

**Required Application Materials**
Applicants are required to provide a CV, research statement, names of three references, teaching statement, diversity statement. Depending on the search they may be able to include selected publications as well.

**Selection of candidates**
Selection of candidates follows from a narrowing of the pool that fit the advertised research area of the position, and from that pool we identify a subset for whom we ask for references and short video interviews. This selection process does not have a rubric, but is generally done by consensus amongst the faculty on the hiring committee. A general rubric agreed upon by the faculty would be beneficial to this process. Absent a rubric, the composition of the committee becomes extremely important; the need to honor the vision of the advertisement and work to advance a diverse pool of short-listed candidates that can be assessed by the whole faculty.

**Compensation Equity**
This is an area for which there is little to no clarity. Syracuse University is private and compensation data are not released directly. They recently performed a salary equity study and the results of which were “there is no problem” but the raw data were not released. So there is no way to know whether salary equity is truly achieved.

One other important item that pertains to research universities are the resources provided for startup. These numbers are not revealed and while candidates that have received offers are told to “ask for what they need,” there is a high potential for inequity. If a candidate does not have the experience, training or mentoring to know how to negotiate through this process it is possible that one candidate may be put at a significant disadvantage that will limit their future potential for research success, and will therefore affect their long-term compensation.

**Demographics and Diversity of Applicants**
The specific demographic data are not available outside of Human Resources. We are provided with a demographic summary as a way to assess the efficacy of our efforts to increase diversity.