Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization - Example URGE Deliverable

This is what was found by Smith College GEO at Smith College 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\(^2\)?

“Diversity and a culture of equity and inclusion among students, staff, faculty, and administration are crucial to the mission and values of Smith College. We are an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer and do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or veteran status in the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, and the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by all applicable laws and regulations. Women, historically underrepresented minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.”

- Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?

During our searches in 2018-19 and 2019-20, we met with our Vice President for Equity and Inclusion to be advised on how to best run a search to attract diverse candidates. We received the advice to contact HBCUs, HSIs and MSIs, so we put together a list of all institutions with earth sciences or geological science programs, and the search chair wrote individual letters to the chairs of these departments asking them to please advertise our position to their students and alums. We also advertised with SACNAS and AWG, among other professional organizations. The search chair reached out to departments that had successfully recruited and hired diverse candidates and asked for advice, and all of this was incorporated into our process. We were told

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\(^2\) https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/


\(^5\) https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html

to make sure we wrote a very broad and general ad and that posting a narrowly defined job ad could disincentivize qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds from applying if they did not feel they were a good match for the job description. We followed this advice. We also used our personal networks to solicit advertisements from a variety of candidates, and advertised on social media as well, including Twitter and Facebook.

For the 2018-19 search, applicants were asked to self-report where they learned of the ad. From that information, we garnered that about half learned from HigherEd jobs, GSA or AGU websites. The rest were split between (1) emails and outreach to listservs, (2) the Smith website, Chronicle of Higher Ed and Geochemical News; and (3) Personal contact/word of mouth.

- 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?

We required applicants to submit a cover letter, CV, teaching and research statements, and three letters of recommendation.

- 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?

We worked as a committee to shape a rubric for assessing applications to help avoid the bias that is introduced when too much emphasis is placed on letters of recommendation and/or the problematic view that some degree-granting institutions are “better” than others. We agreed on all criteria in advance of reviewing any applications. Our rubric asked each faculty reviewer to assess the following characteristics of job applications: (1) interest and ability to engage undergraduate students in research; (2) mentoring/advising experience; (3) postdoctoral/research experience; (4) teaching experience; (5) commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; (6) record of research accomplishments.

- Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?

The selection committee consists of all faculty members of the department. The applicants interact with the departmental faculty, faculty from aligned departments, the Provost/Dean of the
Faculty, and students. The departmental faculty make the final decision with approval from the Provost/Dean of the Faculty and input from students and faculty from aligned departments.

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

At Smith, the search chair for a tenure-track hire meets with the Office of Equity and Inclusion to discuss strategies for advertising and evaluating candidates. The search chair is responsible for sharing information from this meeting with the rest of the hiring committee.

Additionally, all members of a hiring committee must attend an orientation regarding implicit biases and the hiring process that is facilitated by the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The orientation includes a discussion of different practices hiring committees can undertake to minimize implicit bias, and also discusses implicit bias that could be present in recommendation letters.

Because of this training, our department spent considerable time drafting and discussing a scoring rubric in advance of our reading applications. In advance of the departmental meeting that discussed the applications, readers completed the rubric on a spreadsheet while reading applications. Therefore, the rubric scores identified the candidates that objectively scored the highest to the full committee prior to the group discussion.

- **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”?**

Our institution has attempted to facilitate partner hires at neighboring universities or within our own institution, when possible. However available positions often are very limited. There is a large effort underway at Smith College to make sure pre-tenure faculty members receive mentoring both within and outside of their department, through formal and informal mechanisms.