Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences

This is what was found by URGE at UNM at University of New Mexico 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?\(^2\)
  - From our last job ad: “The Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences is committed to building an excellent, diverse and inclusive faculty, staff, and student body. In addition to the highest standards of scholarship, teaching, and professional activity, successful candidates will have a demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and student success, as well as working with broadly diverse communities.”
  - From our last job ad, our final paragraph on the university: “The University of New Mexico is the largest and most comprehensive of the state’s institutions of higher education and is both a Carnegie Very High Research University and a federally designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. Located in Albuquerque, the largest metropolitan area in the state, UNM features a growing campus that reflects the cultures and diversity of the Southwest and fosters an excellent work and learning environment for its faculty and students. For more about Albuquerque, visit https://advance.unm.edu/why-abq/. The Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences has a faculty of 16 and offers undergraduate degrees in Earth and Planetary Sciences and Environmental Science, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Earth and Planetary Sciences.”
  - From a random job ad pulled off the UNM jobs website (at the very bottom and in VERY small font): “The University of New Mexico is committed to hiring and retaining a diverse workforce. We are an Equal Opportunity Employer, making decisions without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, or any other protected class.”

---


\(^2\) 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?

- We post job ads to the UNM jobs site: https://unm.csod.com/ats/careersite/search.aspx?site=14&c=unm
- We post job ads via:
  - Individual institutions (e.g., NMTech, UT-Austin, UNM Alumni Assoc, UNM Career Services, NMSU)
  - Jobing.com
  - NM workforce connections
  - Diversity.com ($281.25/mo posting)
  - American Assoc of Hispanics in Higher Education ($6.25/mo posting)
  - SEPM
  - GSA
  - AAPG
  - LinkedIn
  - Twitter
  - Veteran’s Job Bank
  - Association for Training and Development
  - HigherEdJobs
  - Diversity in Higher Ed

- Individual faculty post job ads to their social media and extra-university list-servs
  - Twitter
  - Facebook

- As individual faculty we try to target underrepresented people we KNOW to apply as well as looking for potential candidates through professional society networking, poster presentations, etc.

- We could definitely improve dissemination to BIPOC by posted to societies serving historically underrepresented minorities (e.g., SACNAS, GeoLatinas, others specifically for other racial, sexuality groups?) -- twitter!! @BlackinGeosciences, @Geolatinas, @TigersinSTEM

- EPS does not make a general effort to recruit graduate students
  - We could easily improve this by making a list of faculty looking for students each year and posting to EPS website, Twitter, and others of the locations listed above…?

- In Fall of 2020, interested students were directed to join two virtual Q and A webinars. These were very well received and popular. Our international
applicants increased this round. Individual faculty advertised on Twitter, and on listservs
- Individual faculty recruit students via:
  ■ Twitter
  ■ Facebook
  ■ Personal websites
  ■ Personal networks
  ■ Emailing listservs
  ■ Recruiting UNM students

- 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?

**Faculty Hire Applicant Requirements**
- Cover letter
- Research Statement
- Teaching Statement
- Diversity Statement: “commitment to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in a highly diverse campus community”
- CV
- 3 References contact info

**Barriers to success candidacy in faculty hires**
- The current review process is heavily weighted towards the CV - h-index, numbers of papers and pedigree
- We would like to see a revised process that focuses on candidates statements first and updates the evaluation rubric

**Graduate Admission Application Requirements**
- EPS Supplemental Form
- Letter of Intent: including…
  ■ Why you wish to obtain a degree from EPS
  ■ What field(s) of study within the Earth sciences are of greatest interest to you for graduate research
  ■ An indication that you have contacted a specific faculty member(s) who might act as your advisor (we strongly encourage this)
  ■ Email address, and/or daytime phone number
- UG or MS school transcripts
3 letters of reference

From the UNM Graduate School (for domestic student applicants; there are also criteria for undocumented and international applicants):

- Must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in the United States or its equivalent in another country.
- Generally, applicants must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (B) or its equivalent in their last two undergraduate years and in their major field.
- Must indicate all academic institutions they have previously attended on their applications. Failure to disclose any previous college attendance or any other misrepresentation of the record may result in disciplinary action, including revocation of admission to the University.
  - Applicants must also request an official transcripts from each university attended (except UNM) be sent to the University of New Mexico.
- In most departments, the minimum undergraduate prerequisite is 12 semester hours of upper division course work (300-level courses or higher) in the major field to which the student is applying, or in cognate areas.
- Some academic units at the University of New Mexico will admit students with a bachelor's degree directly into a doctoral program, though many admit only students who have earned a master's degree within the same or a different program from an accredited institution.

Barriers to success candidacy in graduate admissions

- Application cost - $50
- Cost of sending transcripts
- Requirement to contact faculty
- We stopped GREs so that removes that cost barrier - yay us! :)
- Individual faculty have “private” values associated with applicants that may or may not produce barriers….e.g.,
  - Expecting undergraduate research experiences
  - Expecting conference presentations
  - Expecting authorship or co-authorship of peer-reviewed publications
- Lack of rubric for evaluating candidates
- More or less ad hoc system of evaluation
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- Dept culture of discouraging UNM undergraduates to remain at UNM for graduate school

- **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?

**Faculty Hires**

- We have a rubric for faculty searches, in each scored category committee members rank candidates from 1 - 3; scores are averaged or summed across the entire search committee and a “long-list” (10-15 candidates) presented to the full faculty (including TT of all stages, lecturers, and a grad student representative). Full faculty discussion reduces the long-list to a “short-list” of 4-6 candidates who will be offered an in-person interview in the dept. The trip is arranged by EPS administrative staff and fully funded by the dept (with help from the College?). Upon completion of in-person interviews, the full faculty (same as above) discusses candidates and produces a ranked list for job offers.

- For the 2018 Sed Search rubric of “preferred qualifications:
  - 25% demonstrated publication record in peer-reviewed journals
  - 20% demonstrated commitment to developing a vigorous research program with externally-funded research
  - 20% demonstrated commitment to excellent in UG and G teaching
  - 10% research expertise that complements existing dept strengths
  - 15% demonstrated interest in establishing a field-based research and teaching program, and/or lab methods, and/or quantitative methods
  - 10% demonstrated commitment to DEI and student success, as well as working with broadly diverse communities

**Barriers to success in faculty hires**

- Weighting number of publications and/or indices such as the H-index or impact factors of pubs
- Weighting amount of grant $$$ already acquired
- Weighting prestige of UG, G, and postdoc institutions
- Weighting prestige of academic advisors

**Strategies to remove barriers in faculty hires**

- Remove names and academic institutions from application materials
- Increase the weight of the DEI statement to be equal with research and teaching
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- Design a specific rubric for evaluating each statement that is more specific to the values of the dept (especially for the DEI statement since those expectations are more nebulous)
- Evaluate Teaching, Research, and DEI statements and “anonymously” score candidates prior to collecting the quantitative/biased metrics of # pubs, grant ##, institutional prestige
- Add teaching demonstration to the interview process
- Re-define “success” in evaluating applicants (requires substantial cultural shift in our dept)
- Making diversity concerns a common topic in faculty discussions so that it is not surprising/new when applied to hiring
- Preparing counter-scripts to institutionally racist taking points in candidate evaluation meetings
- Consideration of a postdoc program to bring in a BIPOC that could be considered for a future hire - e.g., UNM diversity postdoc program or alum $$ into a departmental postdoc?
- Diversify colloquium speakers and stay in tune with successful BIPOC early career researchers → “institutional readiness” to jump on opportunities for hiring if/as they arise
- Work towards an endowed postdoc to support BIPOC candidates for the postdoc-to-TT type hire

Graduate Admissions

- The graduate committee reads through all graduate applications to the dept (regardless of sub-field) and provides an overall score from 1 - 3 for the quality of each applicant. Scores are averaged across all members of the committee with high/low scores removed. Average scores are used to create an ranked list of all EPS grad applicants.
- We need to find a way for the Admissions Committee to integrate individual faculty interest/interactions into the ranked list of grad applicants.
- The full faculty (TT faculty of all ranks) meet to discuss admissions, based on the following rules:
  - The number of TA/scholarship admissions spots are calculated and doubled, assuming we have a 50% acceptance rate; this represents the # of offers made. When this number is met, selection proceeds for
an "alternate" list of < 10 candidates (in the case that more than 50% of applicants decline their admission).

- We aim to share departmental TA resources among faculty as best we can
- Pre-tenure faculty automatically get a full TA resource to use for admission
- Top candidates are considered for departmental fellowships and are automatically admitted
  - Scholarship candidates are interviewed in person (all travel organized and paid for by the EPS dept) and upon completion of all interviews 1 - 2 candidates are chosen to receive scholarship funds (this is dependent on which funding allocations).
  - Scholarship candidates who DO NOT receive a scholarship are offered a lump sum signing bonus if they accept UNM admission
  - Preceding down the ranked list, faculty may request admission of 1 student from the TA pool:
  - Untenured faculty get 1st pick, starting with the most recent hire
  - Then, tenured faculty are allowed student admissions based on ranking, each faculty gets one TA allocation as we go through the student rankings until all the TA offers are made. Some years faculty with top ranked students may get two TA offers, some years not all faculty get a TA offer
- Faculty with RA funds may use funds to supplement the TA funds and support additional offers. For example in a split “TA/RA mix”, two students can be admitted with one TA offer and the RA funds pay for the rest of the students’ admissions package
- Admissions acceptance letters are sent to all admitted applicants; applicants not on the waitlist are mailed rejection letters. Faculty approve/update all letters to reflect specific circumstances of RA funding, TA/RA mixes, MRT fellowship, dept scholarships, etc.

**Barriers to success in graduate admission**

- We have no rubric, so there is no way that we know how members of the grad admissions committee are weighting certain factors
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- Weighting quantitative measure of success (grades, numerical eval section in letters of recommendation, courses taken)
- Weighting number of publications authored, co-authored and/or number of professional society research presentations given
- Other weighting of UG research experiences that may not be available to all applicants
- Weighting prestige of prior institutions attended or faculty worked with

Strategies to remove barriers in graduate admission

- Remove GREs - done in 2020
- Remove names and academic institutions from application materials
- Increase specificity in prompt for the Letter of Intent so that it more explicitly highlights what traits or experiences faculty are looking for in a successful candidate or potential a list of short answer questions
- Create rubric for candidate evaluation and publish this on our website
- Provide examples and/or “formula” for writing personal statements and introductory letters to faculty
- Expand 3:2 programming or 1 yr MS for continuing UNM UG’s
  - Writing in specifically in grant proposals $$ for UG’s moving into 1yr MS
  - Need to see about the official hoops for pursuing this

- Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?
  - Selection committees for both hiring and graduate admission are populated by members of the faculty (including all TT stages and lecturers).
  - The final decision on candidate hire/acceptance comes from the full faculty (as above) with input, in the case of faculty hires, from the graduate student representative.
  - We strive for faculty and grad admissions candidates to interact with as much of the EPS Dept as feasibly possible. This means….
    - During faculty interviews:
      - UG and G students have opportunities to directly interact with candidates; UG and G perspectives are shared with the full faculty via the graduate student representative
      - Faculty (sometimes postdocs) take candidate to breakfast/dinner; graduate students to lunches
      - Candidates meet with the Dean of the Arts & Sciences College
      - Candidates are given departmental building and laboratory tours
Occasionally(?) candidates are provided driving tours of ABQ!

- During graduate scholarship interviews:
  - Candidates have 30 min interviews with faculty members over a 2-day period
  - Lodging is provided by hotel and meals distributed between the potential faculty advisor and graduate students

- During regular graduate student admissions recruitment:
  - Regular admission graduate student recruitment is funded by individual faculty members
  - Faculty members can request that faculty meet with these students over a two-ish day period
  - The faculty member is also in charge of setting up any interactions with graduate students, meals, and lodging

- Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?
  - No---we would be interested to hear of resources to do so

- 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”?
  - Cohort Hiring
    - UNM has done this--but these programs don’t seem consistent and are often formed around research topics, not diversity
    - I would think this is controlled by available funding for hires
    - Department could consider cohort grad admissions
  - Mentoring
    - Each new faculty identifies and requests 2 senior faculty as mentors--this is very loose and should be formalized
    - Mentors provide informal guidance scheduled as requested by the assistant faculty member
    - Asst Prof faculty also need to schedule teaching evaluations each semester by their mentors
  - Dual Career Support/Partner Hires
    - We have done reasonably well here during my time, at least when the spouse is in another A&S Dept, less support when it is cross-university.
    - I don’t think UNM has a specific policy about this
Re-visioning Work Culture

- We do a good job at not negatively viewing faculty who take family leave or utilizing some aspects of work-life balance
- I think this is a great idea! -- my thinking would be along the lines of moving away from the “prestige” model of academic success and towards a more holistic model that values excellence in teaching, excellence in service and outreach, excellence in UG and G mentorship, excellence in building major collaborative projects...etc.
- Making “hard” conversations more normalized/commonplace.
- Make conversations about expectations of how family/covid leave is taken explicit