URGE Policy for Hiring and Admissions for USD's EOSC Department

This is what was found by USD Environmental and Ocean Sciences URGE Pod at the University of San Diego on Hiring and Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?

- Resources are provided through USD’s Human Resources at the following link: https://www.sandiego.edu/hr/employment-.eeo/eeo/

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 faculty positions in as many listservs that we can think of, especially those associated with professional organizations (e.g., AGU, ASLO).
- For faculty positions, we could advertise on Twitter to reach a large audience in addition to normal listservs. Also, we should advertise with the Compact for Faculty Diversity, which has a 4-day conference (called the Institute on Teaching and Mentoring; schools have booths for advertising faculty positions--USD should have a booth) every fall (usually end of October, but with pandemic, the 2020 conference was rescheduled virtually for April 2021): https://www.sreb.org/institute-teaching-and-mentoring
- For our graduate program, we should be advertising more widely, focusing on, e.g., SACNAS, HBCUs, and HSIs.

What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores⁴/grades?

- For our graduate program (M.S. in Environmental and Ocean Sciences) the requirements are three letters of recommendation, transcripts, an essay, and an application fee.

Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed?

- Yes! Application fees are an issue, and represent such a small amount (from a university perspective) that we see no need to include them, so it would be good to drop these. If we regularly have a booth at SACNAS (which has been proposed), it is typical to give away fee waivers, so this would remove some of the barrier.
Are there any problematic questions asked?

- Yes - there are a series of questions that are problematic, including asking about academic probation, student conduct, conviction of a felony, which we fear could affect some candidates negatively. Our graduate director is going to find out if these are somehow a legal requirement or just a legacy.

How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric\textsuperscript{4,5} public?

- Our graduate program is weird, because we require a one-to-one match between advisor and student, so the evaluation is mostly done by prospective advisors, with some nudging from the grad director.
- For prospective graduate students, it would be good to revise prompt for the personal statement, since that is the one place where they can tell us about themselves. However, as they are now (short and kind of vague), it is hard to get anything useful out of them. This will also help us be more explicit about our criteria and what we are looking for in our graduate admissions process (i.e. connecting with a potential advisor).
- For our faculty searches, we REALLY should be trying to create more of a rubric, where we can EXPLICITLY put diversity in as a consideration. It is far too easy for a candidate with a lot of experience and publications to be ranked above one who brings so many things to the table that are equally important.
- For faculty searches, we need to make having a diversity statement (with a good prompt) for every search.

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

- Something good that we do in our department is that we are all involved in the faculty hiring process. It is important to make sure we all are on the same page before we start a hire so we are evaluating candidates with a common goal in mind - a rubric is a good way to do this.

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”\textsuperscript{6}?

- Our university has had previous success with cluster/cohort hires (our URGE pod leader was hired through one), and our university is looking into further cluster hires going forward.
Policy/Action Items for Faculty Hiring Practices in EOSC:
- Rubrics (but carefully crafted to align with our values/criteria)
- Requiring diversity statement (with specific prompt)
- Being clear in job ads about what we are looking for (without narrowing the field)
- Sharing AART procedures during the interview process

Policy/Action Items for Graduate Admissions Practices in EOSC:
- Look into revising graduate admissions personal statement prompt
- Potentially get rid of application fee; if not hand out fee waivers at SACNAS
- Develop criteria for determining scholarship amounts for admitted students
- Determine if we can control/change external questions on the application

Because we are a primarily undergraduate institution, and a lot of our students may be interested in applying for graduate school, we thought it would be useful to formalize advice for our undergraduates on that process. Towards that end, we propose the following action items:
- Giving our students guidance on how to ask for letters of recommendation (could be in a certain class or at our capstone meeting?)
- Event (once a semester or year) about pursuing graduate school; we could partner with other undergraduate programs to reach a broader audience.