Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for San Francisco State University

This is what was found by SFSU Pod at San Francisco State University on Hiring and Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

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

- **Faculty hires:**
  - Many departments now require a diversity statement as part of the application process for faculty, but it is not yet campus wide. It should be.
  - EEO language in advertisement: “San Francisco State is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, color, ancestry, age, disability, genetic information, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, medical condition, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, covered veteran status, or any other protected status. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for qualified applicants with disabilities who self-disclose by contacting the Senior Human Resources Manager.”
  - All faculty search material must be approved by Faculty Affairs, who makes recommendations to increase diversity of applicant pool (such as minimizing the number of items listed in “required qualifications”).
  - Faculty Affairs has a [resource page](https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html) on Equity, Inclusion and Diversity to help guide departments in tenure track hiring practices.
  - **Recommendations:** Although we do not think that adding university wide standard language would add much, we do think that it would be valuable for each unit (college or department) to add their own statement of values regarding equity and inclusion

- **Graduate Admissions:**
  - On the [landing page of the SFSU graduate admissions website](https://careers.whoi.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/), there are photos showing students from diverse backgrounds actively doing research and a “Black Lives Matter” icon is present that links (but not obviously) to a [webpage with helpful resources and a statement](https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s) from the graduate division from Summer 2020. While this is a good start, it is dated, and has a limited focus.
  - The graduate division “about” webpage has this statement included “We support the academic and personal success of all students regardless of origin and status.”

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5. https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- **Recommendations:** The Graduate Studies Division should make more visible and apparent how SFSU supports equity and inclusion. This includes providing more obvious links to university resources. Although some of these are included now, they are challenging to find on the website. This is also true for individual graduate program websites. Some programs do have statements that outline equity and inclusion statements/policies/resources, but they are difficult to find. While other programs have no such statements at all. We recommend that these values and resources be made more visible throughout.

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

- **Faculty hires:**
  - Advertisements are sent to different places inside and outside the university depending on discipline. Search committees must submit recruitment plan to Faculty Affairs for approval and address how the search strategy will draw a diverse pool of applicants.
  - In recent faculty searches, job advertisements have been posted specifically at organizations with diversity as a central focus or organizing principle, in addition to the more mainstream places scientists in a particular discipline would look.
  - **Recommendations:** Use of social media can be improved to attract a more diverse candidate pool and communicate about our DEI values.

- **Graduate Recruitment:**
  - The graduate division participates in some virtual graduate program showcases. It also hosts many workshops and advising sessions to assist applicants, with information on these events posted on their website.
  - **Recommendations:** Use of social media can be improved to attract a more diverse candidate pool and communicate about our DEI values.

- **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 hires:**
  - Most searches require: (1) a letter of interest, (2) a current CV, (3) a description of research interests, including how you will engage students in research activities, (4) a statement of teaching philosophy; (5) a statement addressing past and/or potential contributions to equity and inclusion efforts, and (6) names and contact information of three references.
Recommendations: University Faculty Affairs should provide clearer guidance to departments on the evaluation of diversity statements. Faculty affairs could also provide more guidance in designing rubrics and identifying potential sources of bias throughout the application package, e.g., letters of recommendation, vocabulary used, etc.

Graduate admissions:
- Base requirements are set by the CSU and the university. Individual graduate programs have discretion to set additional criteria. Informally, qualifications or characteristics are also set by individual professors for the students they may be willing to mentor.
- University academic senate passed a resolution encouraging programs to not require the GRE and to work toward holistic review of applicants in fall 2020. Geoscience, biology, marine science programs do not require GREs. Other graduate programs may still require them.
- Typically, an applicant needs to identify a faculty mentor who has the capacity, resources, and aligned research interests in addition to meeting program entry requirements. These usually include statements of interest regarding graduate research and prior research experience, bachelor’s degree in a relevant major or pre-requisite coursework, transcripts, minimum GPA, and letters of recommendation.
- Recommendations: In this case Division of Graduate Studies should provide graduate coordinators and department admission committees clearer guidance on developing rubrics and identifying potential sources of bias throughout the application package, e.g., letters of recommendation, vocabulary used, etc.

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:
- Many departments use a rubric, but there is no standard rubric across campus. There is certainly the possibility that bias is embedded in the departmental rubric (for example: ranking the “fit” or the “quality” of the PhD granting institution. There is no current mechanism for looking at these biases in the rubric, as these are not reviewed by anyone outside the departments doing the faculty search in advance of the search (they are sent to Faculty Affairs after the search). However, in some larger departments like Biology, there is a hiring committee that provides these materials to the full faculty and a great deal of effort goes into identifying potential biases and removing them. To our knowledge, no departments in the College of Science & Engineering remove applicant names.
- Recommendations: Faculty Affairs should create the foundation of a rubric for hiring and then work with individual search committees to develop rubrics before the search even starts.
• **Graduate admissions:**
  o Graduate applications are shared with faculty for review
  o Faculty usually correspond in writing and also meet with prospective graduate students.
  o Current graduate students in faculty labs may also meet with the applicants and provide feedback to the potential faculty mentor
  o Graduate admissions committees meet to review the applicant pool and confirm matching with faculty mentors
  o In some programs, information on demographic composition of the cohort is an additional component of the admissions decision-making process.
  o **Recommendations:** Think critically about how to minimize the role of individual relationships (i.e. not default to admitting students with a personal connection). One strong step would be to develop clear rubrics for graduate admissions. Another step that would help would be to have targeted advising for undergraduate students who are interested in graduate school in person and written on graduate websites.

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

• **Faculty hires:**
  o Departments usually elect a search committee. In many departments this is a committee of the whole department, so that the entire department votes at each step. See above that in larger departments, the search committee is a subset of the faculty -- in Biology there are usually 5 or 6 faculty chosen to represent a range of disciplines as well as to balance gender and race. The department must present their candidates to the dean, who weighs in on the candidate to make an offer to. This candidate selection is brought to the provost, who gives the final approval.
  o During the search process a sub-group of the department interacts with the candidates during the phone interview. But during the on-campus interviews the candidate interacts with almost all the department faculty, the dean of the college, and other administrators (such as the head of research), and possibly faculty outside of the department if appropriate for the discipline and specialty. Candidates also meet with students and staff
  o **Recommendations:** SFSU required bias training for faculty searches two years ago, but it seemed this was not continued for all search committees. We recommend a tiered training structure that would require fewer resources for training, and therefore make it more likely that training continues for each search committee. We also have concerns about the voting structures of committees (particularly when it is a committee of the whole) when there are committee members who are not fully engaged in the search process but then have a vote that is weighted equally. The concern is that when people do not have the ability to take in all the forms of assessment then they fill in those gaps with biased reasoning. We recommend departments consider structures that would avoid or mitigate these biases.
**Graduate admissions:**
- Students interested in graduate programs often meet with Individual faculty mentors, current/recent graduate students, Department/program graduate admissions committee, and graduate coordinators.
- Decisions are often made at the department level to balance out the overlapping interests of students and faculty, department resources (such as fellowships and TA opportunities). So the final decisions are often a combination of individual PI and department needs/interests.
- **Recommendations:** SFSU is a comprehensive 4-year university with primarily masters programs and very few PhD programs (none in STEM). Faculty would be more willing to be more flexible of which students to admit to their lab group if they had more resources. These resources include time to mentor students (so less teaching/service), and financial support for the students in the form of fellowships, TA positions, tuition waivers (currently not offered at SFSU), etc.

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

**Faculty hires:**
- There is no indication that outside consultants have given feedback on current or past hiring practices. Faculty affairs did have a committee of faculty who provided input into how to make the search process more equitable. This included implementing training for search committees about unconscious bias.
- **Recommendations:** We recommend that SFSU take full advantage of the internal expertise to evaluate current policies before investing in potentially expensive evaluations. SFSU has a long standing commitment to equity and social justice, and we are therefore uniquely positioned to access internal expertise in this areas.

**Graduate admissions:**
- As far as I know there has been no external evaluation of the admissions process for the graduate division or for colleges or departments, except perhaps as part of formal program reviews.
- In one graduate program with a NSF Research Traineeship program there is an external program evaluator. They provide some limited evaluation of the recruitment methods and its effectiveness with respect to diversity of the applicant pool and admitted students.
- **Recommendations:** See above recommendation for internal evaluation.
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”?

- **Faculty hires:**
  - There are no official dual career support policies. Similarly, while there have been calls for cohort hiring, those have not been centered around diversity hires.
  - **Recommendations:** While we know that dual career support is currently not an option at SFSU, we do recommend the university should consider cohort hiring. We also recommend that SFSU develop mentoring programs beyond departments.

- **Graduate Admissions:**
  - No formal policies or practices. Some externally funded programs have a cohort model/curriculum.
  - **Recommendations:** We recommend SFSU be more intentional about graduate program and the co-curricular support offered (such as career workshops, science communication workshops, cohort social activities, etc)
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