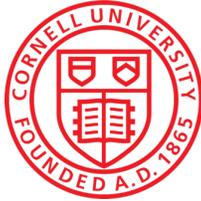


URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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

This is what was found by Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Cornell University on Hiring and/or 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?**
 - EEO statement: <https://hr.cornell.edu/our-culture-diversity/diversity-inclusion/equal-opportunity-and-affirmative-action/equal-education>
 - Equal Employment and Affirmative Action resources and contacts: <https://hr.cornell.edu/our-culture-diversity/diversity-inclusion/equal-opportunity-and-affirmative-action>; includes the Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity that can be contacted for further resources
- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
 - Undergraduates (UG), Graduates (G), Postdocs: email, word of mouth, face to face at conferences/in-person visits, recommendation/connecting via undergrad advisor to potential graduate advisor, yearly advertisement in EOS, AGU job board
 - Faculty: email lists, word of mouth, twitter, AGU job board
 - Staff: Workday, discipline listservs where appropriate (lab staff)
- **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?**
 - Undergraduate applications:
 - Happens at the college level; nobody from within the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (EAS) is directly involved in the admissions process; EAS can talk to admissions officer and give input, but no formal process
 - Application and admissions process is slightly different for each college. EAS is in three colleges:

- CALS:
 - <https://cals.cornell.edu/education/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/first-year-applicants>
- CoE:
 - <https://www.engineering.cornell.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions/first-year-applicants>
- A&S: <https://as.cornell.edu/admissions/admissions-requirements-and-process#undergraduate-admissions>
- Graduate School applications:
 - Letters of recommendation, Statement of purpose/motivation, CV, GPA, transcripts, TOEFL or IELTS English test (for non-native speakers)
 - GRE not necessary anymore as of the 2021 application cycle
 - Application fee is a barrier (\$100), but can be waived; TOEFL test fee (~\$180) and its availability can be another barrier, but can also be waived by having the Director of Graduate Studies write a letter to the Dean
- Postdocs:
 - CV, Letters of recommendation, research statement
- Faculty:
 - CV, Letters of recommendation, teaching statement, research statement, diversity statement (required as of ~2019)
- **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?**
 - Currently, it appears none of these processes are completely transparent or public; names are not removed
 - UG: Certain high school courses, standardized test scores (very little information was acquired on this topic, possibly revisit later this semester)
 - G: New rubric as of 2020/2021 admissions cycle with categories: alignment with program; demonstrated or potential for quantitative reasoning skills; writing and communication skills; research potential, commitment and experience; service, outreach and engagement; self-awareness and self-management skills. Primary goal of rubric is to catch candidates that might get overlooked systematically in traditional evaluation approaches. Solicited feedback on the rubric from faculty and participants of the URGE pod. Rubric is not public, but this year's experience with it will be used to change admissions questions for next year to speak more directly to the rubric categories.
 - Postdocs: HR "proofreads" any postdoc advertisement for legal language requirements; actual hiring decision solely with PI
 - Faculty: Committee of tenured faculty, including 1-2 faculty from another department if it makes sense thematically; process not public, but search committees need to report out to a Strategic Oversight Committee (SOC)

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
 - UG: Application officers decide, university admins interact
 - G: Committee of faculty makes recommendations, but individual faculty have ultimate say in who to admit; admin and Director of Graduate Studies interact primarily, but often faculty are in contact with prospective students via email and Zoom during the process
 - Postdocs: faculty who is hiring
 - Faculty: subset of faculty plus some faculty from outside the department

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
 - Generally not aware of any evaluation by consultants outside university
 - UG: Faculty has no input; not clear whether the process has changed over time; College of Engineering: 50% women in latest application cycle, up from ~20-30% 10 years ago, so whatever they are doing seems to work to encourage more female applicants
 - G: Change in EAS over last decade towards a more equitable process (see above)
 - Postdocs: Still very much dependent on faculty that is hiring
 - Faculty: SOC: recommends to consider diversity at every stage of process; faculty target in the College of Engineering: 50% non-white male (CoE is doing well with women, but not URM); if offers are not made at this rate, SOC steps in and suggests changes to search and selection process; search committees have to have a “search plan”, which gets reviewed by the SOC; the credo is to compromise on area, not excellence; have to have method for recruiting URM; make sure URM candidates are reviewed twice; need documented justification to eliminate URMs once they are on the shortlist; SOC watches out for weird patterns and language that gives away implicit bias; watches out for tokenism

- **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”⁶?**
 - Generally yes. Cohort hiring is being considered more often. Officially, partner hires do not exist, but in practice accommodations can be made for the partner of a hire (from helping to find a job to a de facto spousal hire)
 - More information on the SOC for faculty hires: <https://www.engineering.cornell.edu/research-and-faculty/faculty/resources-faculty/faculty-development/strategic-oversight-committee>
 - Guidelines for faculty searches and hires: <https://cals.cornell.edu/faculty-staff/academic-appointment-procedures/academic-hiring>

- **Additional points:**

- Students wish to see diversity statements of faculty candidates, which has so far not been possible
 - There's a course on Demystifying Graduate School for Undergraduates; lessons learned from it should be incorporated into a more transparent Grad School application process
 - Anecdotal evidence of dismissal of grad student applications based on country of origin and or name
 - Students encourage faculty to keep their websites up-to-date, as it is an important information source about potential Grad School supervisors
 - Possibility to defer starting Grad School should be made more widely known
 - Recognizing the limits of what can be changed about the postdoc hiring process, as it is very individual
 - Very few UG in Atmospheric Science; there might be a cap enforced by the Grad School (unconfirmed); however, admission rate is ultimately similar to other fields at the university (~10%)
 - Visiting universities before deciding can be a financial burden and thus introduce obstacles
- **Outstanding points (if possible revisit before final report):**
 - Our pod lacked information on the Undergrad admission process