

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



University of Nevada, Reno

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### Hiring and/or Admissions Policies

This is what was found by GPHS and others at the University of Nevada, Reno on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

*Note: We acknowledge this information is not always accessible to students and even staff. If you do not have access to this information, please reflect on your own experience and outline what admissions and/or hiring should be like to foster a diverse and inclusive community.*

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement<sup>1</sup> is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available<sup>2</sup>?**
  - The University of Nevada, Reno recognizes that diversity promotes excellence in education and research. We are an inclusive and engaged community and recognize the added value that students, faculty, and staff from different backgrounds bring to the educational experience. The Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) is committed to providing a place of work and learning free of discrimination on the basis of a persons age, disability, whether actual or perceived by others (including service-connected disabilities), gender (including pregnancy related conditions), military status or military obligations, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, national origin, race, or religion.
- **Where are advertisements posted or sent? Are there other strategies for reaching applicants for hiring and/or admissions, e.g. job fairs, showcases?**
  - We asked and everything is posted on an internally-based (Workday) website that can be viewed by the public, but no information was available on where it is distributed beyond workday. Internal postings are likely to lead to unintentional biases.

<sup>1</sup> R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, [blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples](https://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples), (2017).

<sup>2</sup> <https://careers.who.edu/opportunities/diversity-inclusion/>

<sup>3</sup> K. Cobb, #GRExit Resources, <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.13215461.v1>, (2020).

<sup>4</sup> J. Posselt, Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvjghw8s>, (2016).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html>

<sup>6</sup> K. Griffin, J. Bennett, T. York, Leveraging Promising Practices, Washington DC: Aspire Alliance, (2020).



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- What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores<sup>3</sup>/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?
  - **Undergraduate**
  - **4 years of English; 3 years of Math; 3 years of Natural Science; 3 years of Social Studies—GPA of 3.0 or higher in core courses or admission in NSHE Community College with a requirement of 24 transferrable courses (2.5 GPA)**
  - **High School Diploma**
  - **Alternative Admissions available, but must contact**
  - **No Standardized Test requirement**
  - **\$60 non-refundable fee**
  - **Proof of Immunization**
  - **Help available in Spanish**
  - **Graduate Students**
  - NSHE and the University of Nevada, Reno, are committed to providing a place of work and learning free of discrimination on the basis of a person's age (*40 or older*), disability, whether actual or perceived by others (including service-connected disabilities), gender (including pregnancy related conditions), military status or military obligations, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, national origin, race, color, or religion (protected classes).
  - The University of Nevada, Reno does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any education program or activity that it operates. Non-discrimination on the basis of sex is mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.) and the corresponding implementation regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 106). The University's commitment to nondiscrimination in its education programs and activities extends to applicants for admission and employment.
  - Inquiries concerning the application of these provisions may be referred to (or to both):
  - **\*Degree program requirements and deadlines vary**
  - **Hydrology/Hydrogeology: GPA > 3.0**
  - **Letter of Intent**



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- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Department Application
  
- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric<sup>4,5</sup> public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**
  - The applicant must be a fully admitted, incoming domestic or international student who has been offered admission to a degree-granting doctoral program (Ph.D. or doctorate) at the University of Nevada, Reno at the time of nomination.
  - The applicant must meet the minimum requirements for admission to a doctoral degree-granting program at the University of Nevada, Reno Graduate School, either as a domestic or international student.
  - Fellows must maintain satisfactory academic progress for financial aid throughout the period of the fellowship and must enroll in nine or more units per semester.
  - During the period of the Graduate Dean's Fellowship award, the student cannot hold other fellowships or a Graduate Dean's Merit Scholarship.
  - Fellows also cannot hold a position of employment with the University or elsewhere during the fall and spring semesters of the fellowship award. Summer employment during the months of June and July at the end of the fellowship is permitted.
  - Fellowship offers for the March 1 nomination cycle should be announced by March 19, and recipients will have until April 15 to accept admission.
  - Fellowship offers for the April 2 nomination cycle should be announced by April 19, and recipients will have until May 14 to accept admission.
  
- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
  - It is subjective and often difficult to track.
  - Lack of objective measures.
  
- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
  - We are in the process of an external review being conducted by two reviewers from hydrology graduate programs at other schools.



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- **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”<sup>6</sup>?**

# URGEO

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### Admissions

With myriad social forces acting upon faculty as they select and discuss applicants, we need to think systemically when we think about improving admissions. Faculty members' ambivalence about admissions reform has several dimensions, and must, itself, be understood as one among several explanations for continued inequality. Shared aversions to ambiguity, risk, and conflict shape the work of decision making in powerful ways, and prestige often trumps other organizational interests when faculty seek shared values to which they can collectively defer. In addition, the perceived costs of admitting more diverse cohorts, a lack of awareness about compelling alternatives to affirmative action, satisfaction with the way things are, privilege and personal distancing from equity-related issues, and a changing socio-political context each stand as barriers to change.

- **Risk Aversion**
- **Ambiguity Aversion**
- **Conflict Aversion**
  
- **Urge POD identification of places where bias in admissions decisions could be evaluated:**
  - Limited guidance around how to apply
    - This is what should be included, this is how you do it
    - Effectively screening out individuals unfamiliar with grad school
    - Opacity of the admissions process is difficult
  - UNR website needs to host
    - Faculty names and interests in the box
    - CVs and values on their CVS
    - **GOOD EXAMPLE: <https://envisci.ucr.edu/faculty>**
  - How many diverse students apply and how can we improve recruitment to attract student more representative of our society (Nevada, US)?
    - Auditing and tracking applicants
  - In order to admit a student, 2+ professors must sign off the students
    - Checks and balances



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- If a prospective student visits the website, there's no way for them to find out what positions are available. Have to scroll through professors to find.
- All faculty training in implicit biases in admissions
  - Conversation in the next cycle
  - Watch urge videos/read urge videos
  - Anticipate pushback
- Guidelines or mandatory-everything needs to be codified
  - Requirements
- Update GPHS website and professors need to have their own website and specifically talk about this
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- **Recommendations from conversations with administrators:**
  - Money in the form of scholarships for students.
  - Tenure review should include contributions to the university's and program's diversity.
    - **Thus, in political science, linguistics, astrophysics, and philosophy, faculty supported their colleagues' advocacy for a small number of borderline applicants with nontraditional profiles, but they were reticent to take on such students as their own advisees.**
  - Diversity offices are not given substantial resources.
  - Scholarships rather than TAs. TAs are frequently a burden?
  - How can you build a pipeline from undergraduate programs into grad school at the same school?
    - And offer financial support in the form of tuition waiver or scholarship to stay? BS/MS?
  - Teaming up with undergraduate programs at other institutions for cross-institutional pipelines where students might work.
  - Community college pipelines
  - Plan B Thesis
    - What are the benefits of a thesis when many students go to agencies or consulting?
    - We're not making it better—you should be able to submit some kind of professional report



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- More substantive connection with underrepresented student unions

