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Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center

This is what was found by TIDE pod at NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center 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) statement¹ is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available²?**

NOAA includes a boiler plate EEO statement near the bottom of every job application:

“The United States Government does not discriminate in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor.”

In addition, TIDE is working on additional language to include in a plain language clarification of hiring process:

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

All NOAA positions are initially posted on the USAjobs website. NOAA enforces a strict policy regarding the advertisement of jobs via other methods: those methods must be accessible by all (e.g. Twitter is not considered accessible by everyone). NOAA Fisheries recently released a page where current open FTE opportunities are listed in one location and TIDE is working on building a [database](#) of places to advertise jobs more broadly.

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores³/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**

This one is not being addressed at a center level. These requirements are mostly set through broader NOAA policies and monitored by NOAA HR, which is not based in the center. Working

¹ R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eeo-statement-samples, (2017).

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

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

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

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

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



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with the larger government entity to adjust some of these policies is one of the main challenges to addressing D&I issues in the NOAA hiring process.

- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric^{4,5} public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**

Applications are evaluated by a centralized HR department. There is a specific set of requirements for each position that is described in detail in the job announcement. Applications are evaluated by an HR representative who is unfamiliar with the field; this person looks for keywords in the application materials that indicate the applicant has the required education and experience for the position.

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

NWFSC hiring guidance document is in development, and similar guidance exists at NMFS level. There is a black box of filtering that occurs before we can do anything with USAJobs applicants.

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

We have not had outside evaluation of the hiring process.

- **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?**

How can we do this at a center level?

Recommendations:

- Have an early intervention/training for hiring committees
 - Educational materials?
- Show them the demographics of recent hires, demographics of the center, before hiring process starts
- Include information on how to apply/diversity statements on NWFSC website
- Include a KSA about diversity/working on diverse teams/etc
 - Remind hiring managers that social identity need not be a qualification of an applicant, but the experience and perspective that a candidate brings because of their social identity can strengthen their application substantially



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- Evaluate hiring process at all steps to 1) identify places where we rely on discretion, which can lead to bias, and 2) develop ways to raise awareness of the biases that can come into play at each of those steps
- Review characteristics of staff who are thriving at NWFSC and use that to guide KSAs and other filters in the hiring process
- Review hiring guidance and recruitment strategies annually, because context is constantly evolving