

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Hiring Policies for the Natural Capital Project April 1, 2021

This is what was found by the NatCap URGE pod at the Natural Capital Project on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

General Findings and Notes

NatCap is a broad partnership among several different institutions. For this week's deliverable, we focused on the hiring processes in place at Stanford, where the majority of NatCap staff are employed. We recognize that hiring processes are largely controlled by the institution where the hire occurs, so expect that there are some differences in the hiring process for University of Minnesota and other NatCap member organizations. Students are not admitted directly into NatCap, so we don't discuss admissions in this document.

Generally, we found that there is no centralized NatCap-specific hiring process, beyond what is required by Stanford University. However, there is an internal NatCap DEI Interns and Hiring Team that was started last summer and has made great progress in detailing current practices and working to make both passive and active hiring more equitable. From the team:

"Active hirings are for positions where we know we have a funded opening and want to make sure the entire process from advertisement of decision is promoting diversity and equity. We put together 2 documents (which are available in a NatCap google drive), a best practices document and a spreadsheet of places to advertise opportunities to make sure we're recruiting from as diverse a group as possible.

On the passive hiring front we've tried to make a place where we can collect information for people who reach out for jobs at NatCap through 'back channels'. As we know, a lot of academia revolves around who knows who and who emails who, so we wanted to make a public facing portal where there can be a more level and anonymized playing field where people can submit interest forms for potential future openings. That way if opportunities come up we don't just default to people in our network, but also can try to

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

² <https://careers.whoj.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).

broaden our reach. Our Stanford group meets once a quarter to review all applicants from this form for potential opportunities that we may have."

Specific steps the NatCap DEI Interns and Hiring Team has pursued to make passive hiring more equitable:

- Developed new natcap website application form
- Included specific question on commitment to DEI in the form
- Developed a non-bias evaluation process to review candidates at regular intervals
- Anonymizing CVs
- The form is posted on the NatCap website for rolling applications and is also a resource for our team to re-direct interested candidates that might find themselves connected to NatCap by nature of their positionality and privilege
- If NatCappers are looking for specific candidates, they are invited to include the form in their opportunity advertisement

Review of NatCap Hiring Process

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

- The Stanford EEO statement is included on all jobs advertised for Stanford employees. It reads *"Stanford is an equal employment opportunity and affirmative action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law."*
- Additionally, there has been internal discussion about crafting additional statements encouraging diverse applicants to apply. While this hasn't been codified into an official statement yet, a recent job announcement included the following language: *"Whatever your intersection of identities, you are welcome at the Natural Capital Project. We are committed to inclusivity and promoting an equitable environment that values and respects the uniqueness of all members of our organization. We therefore encourage applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age, and/or status as a First Nation, Metis, Inuit, or Indigenous person."*

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

- All jobs are posted on the official Stanford career site, <https://careerssearch.stanford.edu/> as well as on the Natural Capital Project website. Any sharing of Stanford positions links to the Stanford careerssearch site, and anyone who wishes to apply does so through Stanford. Posting open positions on the NatCap website allows more freedom to describe a role, and links anyone interested in applying to the Stanford posting. Large job aggregators, like Indeed, pick up Stanford jobs.

- The DEI Interns and Hiring group has also put together a list of contacts for inclusive hiring, which aggregates a number of different organizations and groups focused on encouraging underrepresented groups in STEM. This list has been distributed among NatCap, and hiring managers are encouraged to post job advertisements with these organizations.
- Since many of our jobs are explicitly looking for bilingual individuals, job postings are also often translated into the target language (eg Spanish or Chinese, recently), and shared among language-specific lists or posted in that language on hiring manager's LinkedIn pages (one recent instance)
- As mentioned above, the DEI Intern group has developed a [webform](#) available on the Natural Capital Project encouraging anyone interested in pursuing an internship to fill out the form. The goal of this initiative is to move away from the old practice, where interested individuals reached out to personal contacts within the NatCap organization.

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?

- Jobs typically ask for a CV/resume and cover letter
- Additionally, there are in-person or telephone/video interviews
- There may be a request to give a presentation or respond to a hypothetical "problem"

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?

- Evaluation depends on the hiring manager and selection team, as well as the type of position (i.e. intern, post-doc, or staff)
- Some hiring managers have developed a rubric
- The process or rubric for hiring employees or post-docs is not public
- NatCap's Intern and Hiring Team has worked to anonymize application materials, but it hasn't been used in post-doc or staff hiring

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

- The hiring manager, plus relevant team members.

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

- Not that we know of

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?

- Not that we know of.

Recommendations

- We recommend that NatCap continue working to expand its recruitment and job posting practices to include specific sites and organizations focused on Black, Indigenous and People of Color in science and technology. The NatCap DEI Hiring and Interns group has put together a list of some of these organizations, and recent jobs have been advertised more widely. We recommend formalizing this process across the organization.
- We recommend that NatCap leadership, hiring managers, and the Interns and Hiring Team review the key questions from this deliverable, particularly bullets 3-7, and assess where we stand as an organization and evaluate how we can further minimize bias and increase diversity in our candidates and hiring practices beyond the existing practices put forward by the Interns and Hiring Team.
- Inclusive, supportive, and welcoming organizational culture and policies are essential to attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. We recommend that NatCap leadership audit our policies and culture as they relate to employee retention using the framework presented in [Leveraging Promising Practices](#), with a focus on the retention specific recommendations. Some areas for focus include onboarding practices, role definition, professional growth, promotion, and cultural norms. Making these practices more transparent and socialized across teams and geographies would be beneficial.
- After an audit of our current practices and any modifications proposed, we recommend that hiring and retention strategies and practices be widely socialized and made available across the organization in an explicit and purposeful way. All hiring managers and teams should be actively encouraged to use this information and apply recommended practices and therefore feel supported in their efforts to minimize bias and increase diversity and equity at NatCap.