

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



---

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

This is what was found by the URGE Chico Geoscience Pod at California State University, Chico on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

- **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>?**

### Undergraduate & Graduate Admissions

Statement on the Undergraduate [Admissions webpage](#):

- Any CSU, Chico student or applicant for admission to CSU, Chico has the right to be free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. If you feel you have been subjected to the aforementioned, consult [Executive Order 1097](#) or contact the Student Judicial Affairs Office, 530-898-6897.
- Links to the [Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) available on the [university's homepage](#)

Graduate Studies [webpage](#) has [a section for International Students](#) with good representation of diversity at Chico State. However, this page is limited to international students and difficult to find.

**Recommendation:** we will advocate to Graduate Studies to include a more visible, forthcoming Diversity Statement on the Graduate Studies website

### Hiring

- Statement shown on each job advertisement:

CSU, Chico is committed to recruiting outstanding candidates who reflect the diverse, intercultural, and intersectional identities of our student body. The University proudly holds the Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation, and enrolls over 17,000 students, over half of whom identify as first generation college students.

The ideal candidate will share Chico State's demonstrated commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, have prior experience working with culturally and socio-economically diverse populations, and will

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



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

contribute to student success through inclusive pedagogy, research and service to the university and surrounding North State communities.

- On 4/1/2021, the university president emailed about the latest step in advancing our strategic priority of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). “All future recruitments will explore a candidate’s experience with EDI, and the Human Resources Service Center and the Office of Academic Personnel have partnered to develop resources to help hiring committees meet this expectation. Working together, the interim Chief Diversity Officer, the Business and Finance Diversity Committee, and the University Diversity Council have developed sample questions that can be used by committees to explore these experiences, and included themes that would be expected in responses. Committees remain free to choose their own questions or methods of exploring EDI themes with candidates, but going forward all recruitments must include some form of exploration.” Sample EDI interview questions are provided on the HR website.

This is an **encouraging step**.

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

### Graduate Admissions

- [Graduate School Fair](#) advertised via Graduate Studies website,
- Other advertisements through our Department website, word of mouth, and professional networks.

### Hiring

- Departments disseminate job advertisements to professional organizations, colleagues, listservs at their discretion
- The Office of Academic Personnel (OAPL) posts to: **Chronicle Vitae, Indeed, CSU Careers, CalJobs (EDD)**, and “a number of **diversity-centered subscription sites**”.
- OAPL also provides the current year recipients of the [Chancellor’s Office Doctoral Incentive Program](#) to search committees. This program provides [financial support](#), [mentorship by CSU faculty](#) and [professional development and grant](#) resources. There is a financial incentive for our campus to pay for campus visits for candidates from this program.

**Recommendation:** It is unclear, in our ongoing faculty search, if OAPL advertised our job opening to this program.



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- 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?

### Graduate Admissions

- Required: application form, official transcripts, TOEFL for international students, two letters of recommendation.
- New in 2021: gender identity and sexual orientation questions appear on the first page of application materials distributed to the department. Including this so prominently may imply a requirement to provide this information.

**Recommendation:** This information could be collected as a post-application survey so admission to the grad program isn't tied to providing such information.

- Department-specific: letter of intent with specific prompt (area of study, faculty interest, career goals, specific preparation, explanation of GPA if below 3.0), current CV.

### Recommendations:

- Prospective students are asked to contact potential research advisors (item 8 on the [Admissions to Graduate Program page](#)), which is potentially problematic for URM students. To alleviate this issue, the Department Graduate Coordinator reaches out to remind applicants and notifies faculty of a potential grad applicant. A possible recommendation to further alleviate potential barriers for students contacting faculty include emailing both the applicant and faculty for an email introduction.
- We recommend that our Department reviews the prompt for the letter of intent each year.
- We also recommend that our Department ensures there is consistency between requirements on our website and the CSU application system. This recommendation is based on general feedback from a student applicant for the entire CSU system.

**Positive note:** The GEOS Department removed the GRE requirement for its graduate programs in Spring 2019.

### Hiring

- University requirements: cover letter (including how you have interacted with, or plan to interact with diverse students in teaching, research, and other mentoring), a CV, and contact information of three professional references
- Diversity, teaching, and research statements are not required in the initial application to remove potential barriers (University requirement). Departments can follow up with a request for these statements after the first round of interviews.

**Result:** in our ongoing faculty search, multiple applicants referred to the CSU, Chico commitment statement, indicating it was useful to them in preparing their application.



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

- **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?**

### Graduate Admissions

- Graduate Studies reviews applications for completion and minimum requirements before releasing them to the department
- Department faculty review applications independently, then discuss during department meeting. A checklist is used to check for completion of department and university requirements.

### Recommendations

- We recommend using a detailed rubric for the review of applications.
- TA position assignments are entirely at the discretion of the Department Chair, we recommend that the Department have a conversation on these assignments.

### Hiring

- Hiring committee members (a subset of department faculty + 1 faculty member outside our department) review applications independently, then discuss during a meeting. A simple rubric is used for initial screening (A, B, F grades with notes). A more detailed rubric including diversity is used for phone interviews and campus visits to remove potential for bias.

**Positive note:** the University President just shared example EDI interview questions.

**Recommendation:** department faculty (+external committee member) create/review the rubrics used to evaluate applications, phone interviews, campus interviews to ensure criteria are aligned with departmental goals.

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

### Graduate Admissions

- All Department faculty are part of the selection committee.
- Faculty members interested in working with an applicant seek approval from colleagues on research project and need to have secured approval from one colleague to be part of the applicant advising committee. The final decision is at the discretion of the major advisor. Important note: our graduate program is small and graduate students are largely self-funded.



## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

### Hiring

- Hiring committee composed of Department Chair, one/two other Department faculty members, and an external member.
- All campus employees and managers who are involved in search committees are required to complete training on the topic of *Avoiding Bias in Hiring*
- New in Spring 2021: creation of the “Action Now Team” of diverse faculty who consult with and/or serve as outside committee members on current tenure-track faculty search committees, and make recommendations for revisions to recruitment and retention policies and practices. These recommendations have included enhancing virtual interview itineraries and reimagining the Faculty Recruitment Manual as a user-friendly web and app-based resource for search committees. Participation of Action Now Team is optional.

**Recommendation:** include a departmental conversation about hiring committee composition (who from our department and who for the external committee member, including discussion of a request for an Action Now Team member to be included in the committee).

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

None that we are aware. The University was recently re-accredited by WASC, but the Department did not receive any feedback.

No internal review of the application/hiring process by the department: grad admissions discussions are anecdotal, no review of the process and hiring process has had no review except internal discussions within the hiring committee (but none at the department level).

- **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>?**

Cohort mentoring for new faculty.

Limited cohort mentoring for grad students, mainly limited to co-enrollment in required graduate courses. Anecdotal and accidental rather than planned.