

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Hiring and Student Advising Policies for Amherst College - URGE Deliverable

This is what was found by AC Mammoths at Amherst College on Hiring Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve. Because Amherst College is a small liberal arts school, where faculty have limited influence on the direct admission of students, we also focus here on how we can help our students navigate the complexities of the graduate admissions process and drive more equitable outcomes.

Admissions and Advising:

Even though much of the conversation around bias in graduate admissions is focused on the side of the admitters, rather than the recommenders, we realize we have an important role to play in providing equal access to thorough guidance and fair treatment of students going through the application process. We took note of several action items for the faculty during future admissions seasons, primarily:

- Connect all students with standardized application resources, which describe the process and best practices for graduate application (e.g. <https://geogradapp.com/>)
- Standardize our practices in letter writing for students, with a focus on minimizing bias (e.g., <https://wff.yale.edu/news/resources-avoiding-gender-bias-reference-letters>), and writing honest but positive letters that focus on student strengths.

In addition, we identified a key outstanding challenge -- how can we best support those students who want to get a graduate education, who we know would be successful, but may be held back by their academic record? Finding the right advocacy strategy to reduce the negative impact GPA and standardized test scores can have on some students remains a high priority that we intend to discuss further.

Hiring:

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

Example Solicitation here: <https://apply.interfolio.com/77685>

Amherst College Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Amherst College does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs and activities on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity), age, disability, genetic information, military service, or any other characteristic or class protected under applicable federal, state, or local law. Amherst College complies with all state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act. Inquiries should be addressed to the [Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#), Amherst College, P.O. Box 5000, Amherst, MA 01002-5000.

Inclusive leadership planning:

<https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/diversity/office-of-diversity-equity-inclusion/inclusive-leadership>

Inclusive hiring for staff:

<https://www.amherst.edu/amherst-story/diversity/office-of-diversity-equity-inclusion/inclusive-leadership/inclusive-hiring>

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

Hiring is done through standard channels in interfolio, with advertising done through professional societies and disciplinary listservs. For our most recent round of hiring in Geology, there was an intentional effort focused on cultivating a diverse applicant pool, providing opportunities for prospective, early career BIPOC scholars to visit campus, practice job talks, and learn about the mission of small liberal arts colleges.

What are the requirements for faculty applicants, 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?

Documents requested vary by department -- for Geology, they include the following: a unified statement including your research program, teaching philosophy, and how to foster diversity within the geosciences. In addition, a cover letter, undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and letters of recommendation

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?

Evaluation is done at the department level, and up to this point, has not involved a rubric.

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

Selection is done primarily at the department level, with final hiring authorization made by the provost and president of the college. During the interview process, the applicant meets with the relevant faculty, the dean for research and provost, and the diversity officer for the college.

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?

Amherst College is undergoing a “cluster hiring” process now -- looking for ways to increase diversity among the faculty while also maintaining a hiring cohort, to create a clear support network and pathway for research and teaching collaboration. In addition, Amherst College sits within the “Five Colleges” of the Pioneer Valley, a consortium of schools that have historically facilitated spousal accommodation.