URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

URGE Week 5 Deliverable - Admissions and Hiring Policies

This is what was found by FSU EOAS Pod at Florida State University on Hiring and/or Admissions policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Deliverable Background:

Hiring and admissions is the entry point to your organization. Policies and procedures at this gate will have major impacts on the people who are part of your university or company, as well as the community who interacts with you. Some of these are legal requirements and some are guidelines that organizations have more control over. Hiring policies include the text of job advertisements, where those advertisements are posted, the requirements for an application, the makeup of your hiring committees and the rubrics/procedures they follow, the interview process, strategic hiring techniques including group or cohort hires, as well as the policies of your organization regarding compensation equity. In addition to the policies for hiring, academic institutions will have admissions policies including the application process (application fees, letters of recommendation, SAT or GRE testing scores), an evaluation process and rubrics for applications, in-person interviews or campus visit days, as well as unwritten norms such as reaching out to an advisor via email ahead of time. Each one of these policies and procedures is an opportunity to improve the inclusivity and lower or remove barriers to your organization.

This deliverable is an audit of the hiring and, if applicable, the admissions process of your organization. As you investigate postings and advertisements, the application and evaluation processes, equal opportunity/inclusion language, and required fees or test scores, please also include proposed improvements that would increase the diversity of not only your applicant pools but also your new hires/admissions and the retention of these individuals.

Audit of FSU and EOAS Hiring/Admission:

Video on Unconscious Bias in Hiring (found from UF) - not included through FSU but may be good for search committees to review before going through application process. https://vimeo.com/469941348

UF Search and Screening Guide 2021 through HR, Diversity and Inclusion: https://hr.ifas.ufl.edu/employees/administrators/search-guide/

FSU/EOAS Employee Hiring -

FSU Hiring Website: https://hr.fsu.edu/working-fsu/prospective-employees/careers-florida-state
On the hiring website, can look at current career opportunities, benefit information, preference in employment of veterans and a link to access the equal opportunity and non-discrimination statement.

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

Advertisements on Florida State University's job list only include a link to where the Equal Opportunity Statement can be viewed (see below). Some advertisements include longer statements than others. Longer equal opportunity statements tend to relate to higher positions within the university (e.g. faculty). For example, a position at the Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory includes the following statement, as well as a link to the Equal Opportunity Statement: Florida State University is an Equal Opportunity/Access/Affirmative Action/Pro Disabled & Veteran Employer. FSU is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive community that is welcoming to all faculty, staff and students. As such, we strongly encourage applications from members of groups historically under-represented in science, as well as those who have a demonstrated commitment to fostering and promoting the values of diversity and inclusion.

Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Statement (last revised 9/20/2019):
https://hr.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2186/files/PDF/Publications/diversity/EEO_Statement.pdf

Equal Employment Opportunity Webpage:
https://hr.fsu.edu/sections/equity-diversity-inclusion/equal-employment-opportunity-eeo
On the opportunity webpage, there are additional inclusion statements and resources made publicly available. Included in this is a list of EEO and Affirmative Action Provisions and the Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, and Non-Retaliation Policy. Resources made available on this webpage include EEO Regulations, which include federal and state laws. The webpage also divides these laws by types, including: age, equal pay, pregnancy, religion, sex, disability, national origin, race, retaliation, sexual harassment. There is also a list of related websites, including links for Florida Statutes and Constitution, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, U.S. Department of Labor, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Florida Commission on Human Relations.

Renisha Gibbs is listed as the EEO Coordinator, which includes being responsible for day to day implementation and monitoring of the University's Affirmative Action Plan. Renisha Gibbs is also listed as the Associate Vice President for Human Resources/Finances and Administration Chief of Staff.

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

Jobs/positions are listed on the Florida State University careers webpage. Positions from different departments may be shared in other ways like listservs or through online job searches (e.g. indeed.com).

Form for training how to post a job opening:
https://hr.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2186/files/PDF/Publications/training/CreatingaJobOpening.pdf
It is recommended that search committee members network through their professional organizations, professional meetings, affinity group, and professional contacts throughout the academy. Also recommended the advertisements are made electronically using job posting services targeted at diverse groups.

List of potential job posting services targeted at diverse groups, could possibly be updated and elongated:
https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/publications-with-diverse-readership.pdf
What are the requirements for an applicant (e.g. letters of rec, fees, test scores, grades)? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?

For faculty applications, applications should include a criminal background check, cover letter, curriculum vita, a two-page narrative describing research interests and plans, a one-page graduate student mentoring statement, and the names of three references. None of those seem like potential barriers for applicants; however, the inclusion of a diversity statement from applicants could be useful for evaluating the applicants for potential to increase diversity in the department.

For an OPS position, application requirements include a criminal background check, basic information about the applicant (not known until you apply), qualifying questions (not known until you apply), work history up to ten years, and education details. There is an option to attach a resume.

From 4-OP-C-7-B3 Application for Employment - Individuals interested in submitting an application for current vacancy should follow these instructions: review the minimum qualifications and requirements for each position before applying, complete online FSU application for employment and submit application for each position vacancy, online application must be completed in its entirety (incomplete applications will not be processed), encouraged to include a resume, current university employees must complete online application via OMNI Self Service.

Having applications being only made available online may be a barrier to some people who do not have their own computer.

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)?

This will vary between departments, but generally applications are evaluated by a hiring committee/interview panel. The committee/panel will be made of faculty and/or staff members of the department doing the hiring.

Examples of hiring evaluations below, not sure how EOAS evaluated candidates. Maybe this could be included on the website?
https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/screening-matrix.pdf
The first one includes looking at the applicant's degree/equivalent, evidence of research/scholarship, teaching experiences, evidence of service and funding.
https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/evaluation-tool.pdf
This second example for hiring evaluations includes looking at the candidate's leadership, record on diversity, research productivity and scholarly impact, funding, communication, innovation, evidence of interdisciplinary work, teaching/mentoring skills, service/community engagement.
For the records on diversity section of the evaluation - includes whether or not the candidate is a leader in faculty recruitment and retention efforts; an ally or active player in social justice/equity work; evidence of broad involvement with diversity work on campus (with students, faculty/staff, or leadership); national presence in this arena.
Interview Checklist - https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/interview-checklist.pdf
Mentions that if a candidate is from an underrepresented group from the department, the search committee should make an effort to include a broad cross-section of the campus community in the visit. There are currently five affinity groups on campus who are available to provide support during the campus visit. Contact HR, Equal Opportunity and Compliance, to schedule time.

Guide to Lawful Inquiries -
https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/guide-to-lawful-inquires.pdf
This includes a list of unacceptable questions, including questions on citizenship/birthplace, gender identity, disability, national origin, race/color, religion, sex, or sexual orientation

According to 4-OP-C-7-B1 General Employment - The determination of the chosen individual for employment and promotion purposes is to be based on factors as the individual's education, training, physical ability to perform the job, skills, and proven work experience. Descrimination towards applicants and employees as it pertains to race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veterans' or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other protected group status is expressly forbidden.

4-OP-C-7-B4 Interview and Selection - Selection criteria should be established from information contained on the position description, including the duties, knowledge, skills and abilities, and the information listed on the FSU Job Vacancy Listing. Pre-planned interview questions are developed which are tied to specific job requirements. Open-ended questions are recommended. Gives advice on establishing an appropriate interview environment. Specifies that all information gained during the selection process must be documented. The applicant who rates highest in responses to the interview questions, most closely meets the established selection criteria, and receives satisfactory reference checks should be the recommended candidate.

Suggested to include contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion within EOAS hiring decisions. Rubrics from other universities can be useful for including this in the hiring process.
Berkeley -
https://ofew.berkeley.edu/recruitment/contributions-diversity/rubric-assessing-candidate-contributions-diversity-equity-and
Brandeis -
https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/rubric-for-evaluating-diversity-statements.html

There used to be a Search and Screening Guide that trained departments on the hiring process to make sure it is a fair and compliant search. I found information that suggests it was created in 2010 but I am unable to find it. According to the 2017 Faculty Handbook, that guide should be used by all faculty search committees and sets forth uniform search and screening guidelines. This likely was replaced by hiring committee training as mentioned in the recruitment plan pdf below.

HR Training Guide for Reviewing Applicant Data:
https://hr.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2186/files/PDF/Publications/training/ReviewingApplicantData.pdf
Takeaways from the Training Guide - When looking at applications through FSU's application system, the reviewer will have access to the applicant's name, whether or not they are a veteran, whether they are already a FSU employee or external, their application, and their resume. No information is made available to the reviewer regarding sex, religion, race, etc. This does not go over how the department should review the application. It only goes over how to access the applications.

PDF of Recruitment Plan:
https://searchtraining.hr.fsu.edu/storage/toolkits/faculty/sample-recruitment-plan.pdf
Takeaways from this plan - search committees first meet to walk the members through the hiring process and their role in that process. All individuals involved in the search should complete the Faculty Search Committee Training (list of training subjects here, including tips to avoid cognitive biases and building the best applicant pool through active recruiting,
https://hr.fsu.edu/sites/g/files/upcbnu2186/files/PDF/News_Events/FacultyStaffSearchTraining.pdf).
In the development of the advertisement/job posting section, the plan mentions to determine if the department is underrepresented for women, minorities, or both when measured against disciplinary availability estimates included in the University's Affirmative Action Plan. It is suggested that the department consult human resources, office of equal opportunity and compliance for this information. The plan in the advertise and network section also mentions using electronic job posting services targeted at diverse groups such as minority caucuses in specific disciplines.

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

Usually a group of ~5 faculty/staff members are put on selection committees and usually those that are put on these committees are early career. The search committee formulates hiring recommendations and some administrators suggest that least least two or three names be recommended, unranked. The department chair or hiring supervisor makes the decision regarding who is the best applicant for the position and draft up a recommendation for appointment. This recommendation gets sent to the dean or other appropriate administrative officer.

Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process of changing it? Has your university implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture?

FSU recently started in the NSF-funded Alliance program, along with 15 other public universities. Working with 15 other universities allows FSU to learn from other institutions and to work with them to develop and test ideas to improve recruitment, hiring, support, and retainment of a diverse faculty. Alliance is an inaugural 3-year institutional effort to improve recruitment, hiring, and retention practices. Focus is on 2 missions: Finding successful formulas to diversify the makeup of faculty, and recruiting, retaining, and graduating women, students from minority racial and ethnic groups - and persons with disabilities in STEM majors. Reported in 2019 that over the past year (assuming 2018-2019), FSU hired 93 new faculty members in STEM. Of those, 14% are under-represented minorities, 30.1% are faculty of color, and 45.2% are female.

FSU/EOAS Student Admissions -

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

No statement is included in advertisements, on the website, or in brochures. EOAS, however, doesn't really advertise graduate student positions. Advertising falls upon the faculty member looking for a graduate student.

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

Again, EOAS does not advertise positions but some faculty do list advertisements on listservs that cater to their specialty. Few job fairs have previously been attended, but there is progress being made currently to be present at future job fairs, transfer student fairs, and undergraduate fairs.

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

For admission into the graduate school of FSU, an official transcript from a previously attended university or college is required, as well as a standardized test report, and a $30 application fee. For admission into the EOAS department there are four sub departments that have similar guidelines. The AES (Aquatic Environmental Science) program states specifically that the average GRE score of the accepted students is above the 60th percentile. This program also stipulates a 3.0 GPA in their undergraduate studies. The Law/Aquatic Science program includes the additional requirement of reporting an LSAT score. All four areas of study have recently waived the GRE requirements for the 2021 academic admissions, but it has been a previous requirement. As well, a TOEFL score is required for students whose first language is not English. A statement of interest, CV/Resume, as well as three letters of recommendations are required. The three letters of recommendation should be from professors, mentors, and employers with knowledge of your research and research interests. In the Oceanography, Meteorology, and Geology sections it is encouraged to contact faculty members before applying, however there is no guidance for students that do not know how to get in touch with faculty or what to say.

The GRE may be fallible to the downfalls of standardized testing, with a better ability to predict socioeconomic placement (due to things like paying for the GRE cost of $250 and having access to resources) than ability to complete a graduate program. While ETS provides guidance to utilize the GRE scores with multiple other admission material, it is not known whether this is the standard for the department. This is an obvious barrier to the advancement of students from diverse backgrounds. There is current discussion on waiving the GRE at FSU but this has not been confirmed. The GRE could be replaced by adding emphasis onto the statement of interest, increasing interview opportunities, examining leadership activities, as well as statements of adversity and diversity.

A $30 application fee will create barriers to applications as well. The TOEFL is designed as a barrier to academia. As well, requiring letters of recommendation from previous work experience disadvantages those who have not been able to take the common low income internships and work studies of the field. It also does not acknowledge that work experience outside of the field can be just as important, and can even be a barrier to those changing fields later in life.

There is also no guidance for the Statement of Interest. This is problematic as it can highlight the different levels of application writing knowledge that is not a requirement of the graduate school and is not taught to all students. Adding guidelines and guidance for the statement of interest as well as the Resume/ CV writing would help students who didn't have access to a job application course/ knowledge.

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

This process is not accessible to the public. The selection committee is not made public, though typically involves many members of the department including senior members with potential biases. The applicants interact with the faculty member they contact initially and questions go to the graduate advisor for the sub department. Given that we do not know how many applicants apply or how many are accepted, if more apply than the number of positions available, then having a more transparent evaluation becomes crucial.

Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process of changing it? Has your university implemented or considered strategies like cohort hiring, mentoring, dual career support and partner hires, re-visioning your work culture?

This has not been addressed by the EOAS department but may be part of the Alliances program for FSU. For EOAS, cohorts (made up of the accepted graduate students) meet each other once after being admitted but do not interact beyond this initial interaction. This potentially limits the feeling of inclusivity in the department.

Discussion Questions:

1) *What was your experience like going through hiring and/or admissions, start to finish?*
   - **Postdoc Experience:**
     - I talked to an assistant professor at a conference, they offered me a postdoc. I followed up with them over email, and we had a Skype "interview" but there was no posted position or other applicants. This process limits accessibility to anyone who doesn't know the culture.
   - **Student Experience:**
     - I talked to my current advisor and then members of the lab group over zoom. The hiring process was quick from start to finish and quite informal. The position I applied for was not advertised (as far as i know), I'm not sure how you would have known about it if you were not already involved in the field as an undergraduate.

2) *Who is on your hiring and/or admissions committees? Who interfaces with applicants?*
   - **Postdoc Experience:**
     - Only the future advisor.
   - **Student Experience:**
     - Only future advisor, no formal hiring process.

3) *Does your organization make their hiring/admissions policies public? Are they reviewed?*
   - **Postdoc Experience:**
     - I don't think this process is public or reviewed.
   - **Student Experience:**
     - I don't think so and there is no review process.