

# URGE

## Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

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### Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for MidWest Glaciology (MARS) Pod

This is what was found by Midwest Glaciology pod on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

*Please put your name and institution when reflecting/answering the following questions*

- **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>?**

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - The EEO statement for job advertisements is: “In a continuing effort to enrich its academic environment and provide equal educational and employment opportunities, the university actively encourages applications from members of underrepresented groups in higher education.” HR gives a booklet with 4-5 different options for such statements. There is also a standard statement of “KU prohibits discrimination on the basis of...Retaliation is also prohibited...Contact these people regarding policies...” The chair of the search committee does a mandatory training on “Diversity Foundations for Faculty Search Committees” and receives a 45-page handbook on “Recruiting and hiring for a more socially diverse KU faculty”. This booklet outlines strategies and guidelines, as well as where to post job advertisements.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - Departments and faculty within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences are not required to properly advertise open graduate student positions. However, on the graduate admissions website that links to the application portal the following statement is provided: “University of Virginia’s [Notice of Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)”. The following statement was included in a recent (2020) faculty position advertisement: “The University of Virginia is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Women, minorities, veterans and persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Equity and diversity are essential to academic excellence and a requirement for the provision of beneficial outcomes in the Environmental Data Sciences. An open and diverse community fosters the inclusion of voices that have been underrepresented or discouraged.”

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#) - Required text is “The University of Michigan is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. CLaSP and the College of Engineering are especially interested in exceptionally well qualified candidates who will contribute, through their research, teaching, and service, to the department’s goal of eliminating systemic racism and sexism by embracing our culture of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply. The University is also

<sup>1</sup> R. Kelley, 10 Samples of an Effective EEO Statement, [blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eoo-statement-samples](http://blog.ongig.com/diversity-and-inclusion/eoo-statement-samples), (2017).

<sup>2</sup> <https://careers.whoj.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).

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responsive to the needs of dual-career couples. The University is a non-discriminatory, affirmative action Employer. The Michigan Engineering component of the University's comprehensive, five-year, DEI strategic plan can be found at:

<http://www.engin.umich.edu/college/about/diversity>.”

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - Vanderbilt University has a strong institutional commitment to recruiting and retaining an academically and culturally diverse community of faculty. Our people are committed to and manifest a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive culture that showcases respect, collegiality, and intellectual freedom. We recognize that diversity is a driver for innovative and creative solutions that benefit our society through engineering. Vanderbilt is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer dedicated to excellence through diversity

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

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - We have a requirement that 20% of applicants must be minorities. Otherwise, the Dean can say the search has failed. This gives departments additional motivation to pay for job advertisements to be posted on listservs that reach diverse applicant pools.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - Job positions in our multidisciplinary environmental sciences department are advertised through major national and international science organizations (e.g., AGU, ESA), as well as through organizations and listservs such as LatPro, NABG, SACNAS, SHPE, Earth Science Women's Network, Society of Women Engineers. We also advertise on social media sites like twitter.

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#). We have a spreadsheet that I maintain including listservs and places we have advertised in the past. Happy to share that if anyone is interested. It includes about a dozen different list serves that are affiliated with groups working with or serving underrepresented communities.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - Faculty positions must always be posted in Interfolio as this is a requirement by VU. Generally the faculty search committee determines where the search ad should be posted. For the current search in our department we posted in the following locations: Academic Jobs Online, Academic Keys, Association for Women in Science, Diverse: Issues in Higher Education, IEEE, Interfolio, LinkedIn, Society of Women Engineers, American Geophysical Union, ACM, CEE website, VUSE website, CPS virtual organization, Academic & Research Leadership Network, Informs, sent to the national list of Chairs/Heads of Departments, sent to Engineering Dean's network, and paid ads on Google search.

- **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?**

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[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - For job applications, yes to letters of recommendation, but only at phone-interview stage. Same phone questions are asked to all candidates - and the questions are vetted by HR to ensure they aren't problematic.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - For faculty positions, the initial application requires a cover letter and statements on teaching, research, and diversity.

[Sophie Goliber, University of Texas](#) - For graduate admission the fellowship deadline is December 1st, everything else is January 1. There is a \$65 and \$90 application fee for domestic and international students, respectively. Fee waiver granted by GRE or GMAT; financial aid awards for the previous two semesters showing the source(s) of your funding; or, if you are not currently enrolled, your tax returns for the last two years. GRE/GMAT and TOEFL or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for international students. 2 letters of recommendation and a statement of purpose are required.

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#). For job applications, we seek letters at some point that varies depending on who is leading the search, but before a final choice is made. For graduate admissions, we have a fee that can be waived, but it is bureaucratically challenging to waive the fee, even though that is an option. Even after we have approved it, students have hoops to jump through. GRE is optional and I am advocating that we refuse to accept it. We have multiple essays that students have to write and nobody knows what should go in those, but several people have strong feelings about what shouldn't go in.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - We dropped the GRE this year for grad students in CE. We require 3 letters of recommendation; we have an application fee \$95. There is no official minimum GPA to be admitted. Faculty position we asked for letters, a research statement, a teaching statement, and a diversity statement. We do not ask for any problematic questions on any application. It may not be possible to reduce the information we request for faculty candidates.

- **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?**

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - The search committee develops a rubric before reviewing candidates, which is vetted by HR. Deciding who gets invited to campus for an interview relies heavily on rubric, and is not always a great metric. HR needs the completed rubric for some legal reasons.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - For faculty positions, public rubrics are used to document evaluations of the written application materials. Request of letters occurs if a candidate is given a phone/zoom interview. The reasons for candidates advancing and not advancing in the applicant pool must be documented. At each stage, approval from the college that our applicant pool is meeting diversity expectations is required. There are diversity reports generated after the initial advertisement period is completed and application submission is extended if goals are not met.

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[Sophie Goliber, University of Texas](#) - The evaluations for graduate student admissions is not made public and unclear if a rubric exists. Students only know about hiring processes if they are on the hiring committee, but they can't share why or why not someone was chosen. The committee removes gender & race information from the initial evaluation of candidates.

[Jeremy Basis, University of Michigan](#) - We have rubrics for everything. Rubrics are generally not public because they constantly evolve and, frankly, the rubrics are generally not great. Typically, we use rubrics developed through the Advance program. Rubrics can be helpful, but it takes time and effort to devise appropriate rubrics and it is important to constantly update the rubrics. We try to devise rubrics before processes begin.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - All search committee members take implicit bias training prior to starting the search; there is a diversity equity inclusion representative on the committee. We reached out to our DEI campus representative prior to issuing the ad for feedback. The rubric/process is not public. For the graduate student applicants [PhD], we request admission nominations from the faculty, then the search committee reviews the nominations prior to admission. For MS applications the committee makes recommendations for admission considering the whole application [letters, personal statement, test scores, GPA, etc.] We do not do bias training for the search committee but I believe this would be a good addition.

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

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - Dept chair forms selection committee; whole faculty vote on who gets campus invitation; whole faculty vote on final decision. In my dept, faculty members who will work most closely with the candidate (once they're hired) end up heavily influencing the vote. All faculty are expected to interact with all candidates, individually or in a group. Not all do.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - A committee is composed of the most relevant faculty members to the research focus of the advertised position. Committee members must undergo bias training. Final decisions are made by a complicated faculty vote for ranking the interviewed candidates and then finally a majority faculty vote determines who is hired. Prior to the interview stage only the search committee interacts with the candidates. During the interviews, faculty, graduate students, and postdocs have the opportunity to interact with candidates.

[Sophie Goliber, University of Texas](#) - Faculty vote.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - Dept chair forms selection committee, the committee decides who gets campus invitation (this different from KU), whole faculty vote on final decision. For faculty hiring, we follow a rigorous process that includes reading the applicant's publications. The hiring decision always happens by unanimous vote (given that we are a small department with 13 tenure track faculty).

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#) - Dept chair forms selection committee, the committee evaluates applications. Typically, the applications are posted so that all faculty can provide feedback, but nobody wants to read through 100 applications unless they have to so effectively it is the committee. The entire faculty votes on the final decision using ranked choice voting. The composition of the committee is absolutely crucial in deciding who comes to campus and in

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presenting feedback on candidates. Some people use the process to bring out their friends and to try to ram through their preferred candidates. Other people use the process to present different views of what the department could look like.

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

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - Not that I know of. I think it's largely dictated by our College policies.

[Lauren Simkins, University of Virginia](#) - I am not aware of this occurring for hires in my department.

[Sophie Goliber, University of Texas](#) - Not yet, but I think there is a plan to have an audit at some point.

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#). Yes and no. The process, from start to finish hasn't been evaluated, but different stages have.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - No consultants outside of Vanderbilt were hired. However, we discuss our hiring practices with outside groups including other universities and our External Advisory Council to ensure we are implementing best practices.

- **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>?**

[Leigh Stearns, University of Kansas](#) - Not that I know of.

[Sophie Goliber, University of Texas](#) - The grad students developed a peer-mentoring program and UTIG is starting a faculty/researcher mentoring program. Peer mentoring program requires inclusive leadership training.

[Michael Shahin, University of Kansas](#) - Grad students created a grad-undergrad mentoring program through the local Association of Women Geoscientists chapter. No official department program exists.

[Jeremy Bassis, University of Michigan](#). Yes, except re-visioning your work culture. I don't know what that is. We have a really strong dual career system. I can comment at length on things to consider with all of those things, but on the whole they are beneficial, but need to be carefully implemented. For example, dual career hires can face stigma. Hiring clusters of people together can create competition between people instead of promoting collaboration.

[Ravindra Duddu, Vanderbilt University](#) - Yes, many of our hires require dual career support that we have provided. The Office of Faculty Affairs has a detailed webpage (that is restricted to those with a vnet id) on faculty search committee resources. On this page, there is a section on hiring and retention that links to several useful resources:

- [Interrupting Bias in the Faculty Search Process](#) (University of Washington ADVANCE)
- [Advice for Hiring Faculty with Disabilities](#) (Inside Higher Ed)
- [The Façade of Fit in Faculty Search Processes](#) (The Journal of Higher Education)
- [Faculty Cluster Hiring Report](#) (Urban University for Health)



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- [6 Steps to Hire Diverse Faculty and Staff](#) (EAB)
- [3 Reasons your Faculty Searches Aren't Yielding Diverse Candidates](#) (EAB)
- [Top 100 Graduate/Professional Degree Producers for Underrepresented Students](#) (Diverse: Issues in Higher Education)
- [Tools for Change](#) (WorkLife Law)
- [University of Michigan Faculty Recruitment Handbook](#)
- [Best Practices in Faculty Hiring](#) (University of Oregon)
- [Unrecognized Biases and Assumptions](#) (Virginia Tech)
- [Handbook of Best Practices for Faculty Searches](#) (University of Washington)
- [Good Practices Involving Faculty Hiring, Mentoring, and Evaluation Processes, and Climate](#) (University of Michigan)

The following are reflections based on the readings and discussion from March 26<sup>th</sup>.

### Hiring

- **Train reviewers** - Having fewer but well trained reviewers may make the process efficient and less biased
- **Transparency** - Graduate students and non-faculty are usually not aware of how or why certain hiring choices are made. Feedback on hiring should be solicited from all stakeholders at an institution and taken seriously.
- **Remove the need for 'pandering'** - candidates often feel they need to be more extroverted or connect directly with the research of every other faculty member (difficult at large institutions). Puts the emphasis on the candidate to 'fit in' rather than evaluating if the hire will benefit the department and the candidate. Senior faculty should seek collaboration with new hires/junior faculty, not the other way around.
- **Explain choices for hiring** - Faculty hires are long term and you will interact with them, but we need to evaluate basing this on preferences like 'collegiality' that may be highly individual to the reviewer. Our own experiences color what we perceive as good co-workers so we need to be aware of our personal biases.

### Graduate admissions

- **Transparency and clarity in application** - When applying, students should be aware of how they are being evaluated. Essay prompts should be clear so students can address important questions admissions committees need to know.
- **Remove GRE requirement** - Presents a barrier to students and does not accurately portray graduate student success.
- **Remove application fees** - Application fees can be very expensive when applying to multiple schools and fee waivers are different at each institution. Students may not know an institution has a waiver if they do not ask, which is unfair and uncomfortable to the student.



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- **Prepare undergraduates for the application process** - Each field has unwritten rules on how to enter graduate school, including email prospective advisors before applying, ideal timelines, and these are often learned by word of mouth. URGE Pod member Malisse Lummus developed a website with a guide on how to apply to geoscience graduate programs (<https://geogradapp.com/>). This should be clear and accessible information for all undergraduate students.
- **When available, share funding opportunities publically** - Students often do not know if they will have funding for a graduate program until after they have applied. Sharing funding opportunities will help students make the decision on where to apply, reducing the financial burden of application and sending test scores.
- **Clear expectations from potential advisors** - Graduate student success is often linked to their relationship with their advisor. Advisors should have clear guidelines and expectations with the prospective graduate student and encourage them to speak to current/past students to see if their advising style is a good fit.
- **Expand undergraduate research opportunities** - Research experience is important for many graduate admissions, but it is often difficult to get experiences as an undergrad.