

URGE

Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



Hiring Policies for Susquehanna University

Susquehanna University does not have graduate students, so this report focuses on our current faculty hiring and retention policies and practices and includes recommendations from the pod specific to those areas.

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

The following statement is a required component of all advertisements for faculty positions and can be found in our internal Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Faculty handbook:

As a living, learning and working community, Susquehanna University affirms its commitment to being an engaged, culturally inclusive campus. As we seek to embody the rich diversity of the human community, we commit ourselves to the full participation of persons who represent the breadth of human difference. The university encourages candidates from historically underrepresented groups to apply. Susquehanna University is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Other inclusion statements that are publicly available:

- On our public website under “Campus Life”
 - **Inclusive Excellence** (<https://www.susqu.edu/inclusive-excellence>)

“As a living and learning community, we are committed to being an engaged, culturally inclusive campus that does not exclude or marginalize individuals and groups because of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, social class, marital and parental status, disability, age, religion, geography or national origin.

We seek a campus community that reflects the rich diversity of humanity with the full participation of people who represent the breadth of human differences.

We believe these commitments are necessary to be a viable and competitive institution of higher learning in the 21st century. They are indispensable in achieving our mission of educating “undergraduate students for productive, creative, and reflective lives of achievement, leadership, and service in a diverse and interconnected world.”

- **Bias Response** (<https://www.susqu.edu/about-susquehanna/bias-response>)

Creating an inclusive and diverse campus community:

“Susquehanna University is committed to assuring the campus is a supportive community in which all members feel welcome and supported, and that all students are able to pursue an education free from harassment and discrimination.”

Susquehanna’s Nondiscrimination Statement:

“In administering its affairs, the university shall not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status or any other legally protected status. Our policies comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Reg 34 C.F.R., Part 106) which states, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

- On our public website under “About SU”
 - Title IX (<https://www.susqu.edu/about-susquehanna/title-ix>)

“Susquehanna University is committed to providing our students with an educational journey that is safe and free from sexual misconduct and gender based violence. When harm happens to any individual within our campus community it creates a ripple effect from those directly involved to their social networks, professional colleagues, academic classes, extracurricular groups and, finally, impacting the entire university. We take our role and responsibility seriously under Title IX by maintaining a fair compliance process, mandated training, educational programs and supportive resources. Our goal is to

implement an individual response to misconduct and gender-based violence that is respectful, caring and just.”

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

Ads are typically sent to The Chronicle of Higher Education and to job postings on professional-level websites. Human Resources also automatically posts ads in Inside Higher Ed.com, Higher Ed Jobs.com, HERC, and the SU website.

We recommend that SU should be much more intentional in our job advertising strategies as part of our efforts to recruit more individuals from minoritized groups. We are currently working with our faculty and administrators to identify the resources (publications, list-serves, professional organizations, etc.) that will most effectively ensure that our job postings reach a diverse audience.

- **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?**

The Chair of the Search Committee works with the committee and the Department to determine the requirements for applicants. These requirements are included in the advertisement. According to the Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Faculty handbook, the ad should include:

- The rank of the position and the appointment term
- “Required” and “Preferred” qualifications
- Description of Teaching and Advising responsibilities
- Expectation of Scholarship statement
- Expectation of Service statement (example: participate in departmental activities and in recruitment and retention of students)
- “Review begins by” date (normally, at least 1 month after ad will post)
- Materials requested of each candidate. This should include a request for a Statement on how the applicant will contribute to the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, including applicant’s knowledge of and experience with inclusive pedagogical practices in classroom teaching, advising, and mentoring. This is a required application component.
- Name and Contact information for the Chair of the Search Committee

- The ad must include the EEO statement

While none of these requirements seems problematic on the surface, the readings we did for this session have made us realize that we need to be particularly careful when we identify our 'required' and 'preferred' qualifications, to make sure that they do not perpetuate discrimination against minoritized candidates, particularly as they are actualized through our rubrics (below).

- **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?**

The search committee meets to review the content of the advertisement and to create a rubric for reviewing applicants. This must happen before any member of the committee logs into the online system that we use to collect candidate materials. According to the Guide to Recruiting and Hiring Faculty Handbook the rubric should list the "deal breaker" areas and the "highly desirable" areas. One of the requirements for every candidate will be their ability to demonstrate how they will contribute to the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion. All candidates are then reviewed against the rubric.

Using the rubric, the committee generates a short list (5-15) of candidates in rank order. The Chair of the Search Committee needs to document the reason(s) each candidate has been eliminated from consideration at any point in the process utilizing the guidelines in the "Reasons for Candidate Non-Selection". These are:

- Unable to contact
- Less relevant teaching skills
- Less relevant research
- Less relevant research skills
- Less relevant experience
- Less relevant education
- Poor reference check results
- Salary unsatisfactory to applicant
- Applicant withdrew
- Showed little interest/motivation
- Candidate accepted another position
- Poor quality of application documents.

The short list is sent to the Dean for demographic review via Human Resources. If the short list is representative of the pool (based on candidate input in the online system), approval

is given for Skype (or phone) interviews. If it is not, the committee is given instructions on how to proceed.

After the short list is approved, it is narrowed down to 2 candidates who may come to campus for an interview. This is generally done via a Skype interview. Committees are expected to:

- Develop a list of job-related questions to ask each applicant
- Conduct first-round phone interviews
 - i. Be familiar with the Guide to Non-Discriminatory Interviewing (Appendix II).
 - ii. Ask questions that focus on the applicant's past performance
 - iii. Ask questions that directly relate to your listed requirements
 - iv. Share that you will be contacting references as a next step
 - v. During the phone interview, you may want to provide the applicant with general benefit information. Direct them to our website at <http://www.susqu.edu/offices/23167.asp>
- Proceed with Reference Checks.

Ultimately, the committee recommends 2 candidates to bring to campus to the Dean, who works with the Provost to secure permission.

The rubrics developed through this process are not publicly available and are unique to each faculty search. Despite the presence of a trained diversity advocate on all search committees, this process still allows for unconscious or conscious bias to impact our review of candidates in several ways, including:

- Applicant names are not removed prior to evaluation of the materials.
- Deal-breaker and highly-desirable areas may unduly advantage individuals who attended 'top tier' universities for their undergraduate, graduate and/or postdoctoral work, and/or published in 'top tier' journals (which is easier if you attended a 'top tier' institution) and potentially disadvantage excellent work performed/published in other places.
- Unconscious bias may also cause more minoritized candidates to be screened out using 'reasons for candidate non-selection'. In particular, the 'less relevant' categories could be used, as described above, to screen out candidates who did not attend the 'right' universities. Additionally, 'showed little interest/motivation' can be a highly inaccurate and biased reaction to introverted, quiet or reserved candidates, particularly if they come from a background different from that of the reviewers (https://www.chronicle.com/article/why-your-objective-screening-rubric-produced-biased-results?cid=gen_sign_in)

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

Normally, the Department Head serves as the Chair of the Search Committee. The committee should include both senior and junior faculty members from within the department and a faculty member from outside the department. At least one member of the committee should serve as the trained Diversity Advocate. Training is provided by the Office of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion. The suggested total number of committee members is 5.

The interview itinerary is:

- One 60-minute Interview with the Department Head
- One 60-90 minute Interview with the Search Committee and the faculty of the Department Note: It is preferable and more valuable to your outcome to have fewer people spend more time with the candidate than to have more people spend less time with the candidate. Do not schedule multiple short (30 minute) meetings with every member of the department, for example. This is exhausting for the candidate and does not yield reliable information.
- One 60-minute Interview with Students (without faculty present; often scheduled as a lunch meeting)
- Teach a class or conduct a seminar (discipline appropriate)
- Interview with the Dean (30 minutes)
- Interview with the Provost (30 minutes)
- Tour of the campus
- One 60-minute (minimum) Wrap-up meeting with the Chair of the Search Committee (and Department Head if the Chair is not the Head)
- Schedule 10-15 minutes between appointments to allow for travel time and short breaks for the restroom/refreshments.
- While not required, often one or two members of the search committee or the Department Head will meet the candidate for breakfast; the Department Head and remaining search committee members (if available) will have dinner with the candidate. In order to have a meaningful, informal conversation with the candidate, meals off-campus should involve no more than three people (including the candidate); alcohol is limited to one glass of wine/beer per person.
 - The Committee should schedule escorts for the candidates to and from their various meetings and appointments. Students and academic assistants may also help, but it is important to have an escort in place

Recommending a Candidate for Hire. If a top candidate is selected and all references are good, the following process occurs:

- The Dean is contacted to discuss the ranking of candidates.

- Once a candidate has been agreed upon, the Dean will forward the recommendation to the Provost.
 - If the Provost is in agreement, a salary is determined and the recommendation moves forward to the President.
 - If the President approves the hire, the Provost notifies the Dean.
 - The Dean contacts the candidate and makes the offer. The Dean will keep the Department Head and Provost updated.
- **Has your hiring process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**

We are currently seeking feedback from our HR department regarding this question.

- **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?**

SU has some of practices of these practices in place but may benefit from considering others.

- We do have faculty who are currently in dual career tenure-track positions.
- We are encouraged to contact new hires (after they have been hired) to determine if there are family members/partners who may need help to relocate to Selinsgrove. These latter efforts are not formalized.
- Our Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) currently runs our new faculty orientation sessions and facilitates new faculty mentoring in which an incoming faculty member is mentored by both an early career faculty member and a senior faculty member. No separate program is provided for minoritized candidates, in large part to keep them from being even more overburdened by additional required events.
- The University supports affinity groups for faculty of color, LGBTQ+ faculty, and international faculty and there is a CTL Support Circle for pre-tenure and non-TT faculty of color.
- Also, the CTL addresses issues of bias at several points in the structured new faculty mentoring sessions, but those are whole-group sessions. They are going to be taking a look at how these programs should change moving forward though and look forward to what our URGE pod learns and recommends.

Pod recommendations;

Based on our findings above, our pod recommends that SU consider the following:

- We recommend that SU should be much more intentional in our job advertising strategies as part of our efforts to recruit more individuals from minoritized groups. We are currently working with our faculty and administrators to identify the resources (publications, list-serves, professional organizations, etc.) that will most effectively ensure that our job postings reach a diverse audience. This intentionality should also extend to search firms utilized for administrative searches.
- We recommend that SU consider removing names from application materials during the initial screening of candidates (getting to the 'short list').
- We recommend that we host a university-wide opening workshop in August, 2021 to foster more inclusive hiring and retention practices based on the ASPIRE model. *Leveraging Promising Practices* highlights the “importance of conducting a thorough self-assessment, the danger of reaching for promising practices before identifying the root problems, and [provides] a framework for developing a holistic, comprehensive and systemic approach to institutional change for inclusion that addresses the systemic, structural, values and cultural dimensions simultaneously.” Thus, the topics of this workshop should be determined only after we have conducted that thorough self-assessment (a summer project).