URGEO
Unlearning Racism in Geoscience

GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE · University of Alaska Fairbanks

UAF · UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Hiring and/or Admissions Policies for University/Organization

This is what was found by the UAF Pod at the University of Alaska Fairbanks on Hiring and/or Admissions Policies, as well as what the pod would propose to change and improve.

Relevant Resources:
https://uaf.edu/equity/files/2019-UA-Affirmative-Action-Repor-Summary.pdf

- **What EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement[1] is included in a standard job or admissions advertisement? Are there other inclusion statements and resources publicly available[2]?**
  - Standard statement on all positions listed on careers.alaska.edu - *UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination*
  - Statements on the Department of Equity and Compliance page on the UAF website:
    - *The University of Alaska Fairbanks strives to be a place where all people are treated with common courtesy, compassion, dignity and respect.*
    - *The UAF Department of Equity and Compliance promotes a working and learning environment free of discrimination, including harassment and violence, and leads a focused effort to build inclusive systems at UAF by ensuring compliance with civil rights laws; providing advice and direction to administration, faculty, staff, supervisors and students; and institutionalizing processes to eradicate discrimination and build equity.*
    - *The department works with many other groups and programs to reach these goals.*

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

- ○ Staff: positions are posted to careers.alaska.edu at the very least. It is up to the department or organization to post elsewhere (AGU, LinkedIn and/or other social media, job boards, etc.) and via national listservs.
    - Moving forward, HR could pay or sponsor posts for advertisements on job boards for BIPOC.
- ○ Faculty: In addition to broad posting on job boards and listservs, lots of personal outreach to encourage candidates to apply, based on their work and expertise.
- ○ Post-docs: sought out similarly to faculty, based on their expertise.
- ○ Admissions: Booths at AGU, GSA etc. (GI, UAF, sometimes department), for graduate opportunities on funded proposals usually outreach through listservs / collaborator networks.

- **What are the requirements for an applicant, e.g. letters of recommendations, fees/test scores[3]/grades? Is providing any of these a potential barrier that could be further lowered or removed? Are there any problematic questions asked?**
    - ○ All applications are electronic only (this is generally a good thing, but can create barriers).

    - ○ **Graduate school applicants need: (https://catalog.uaf.edu/getting-started/admission-graduate/ https://catalog.uaf.edu/getting-started/admission-international-students/)**
        - 3 letters of recommendation, personal statement, official transcripts, resume / CV,
        - International students additionally require: TOEFL / IELTS (can be waived on individual basis), official transcript translations, passport ID page copy, financial statement form
        - Application fee $75, $100 if after deadline
        - Department of Geosciences eliminated GRE requirement in 2020; still a university requirement though.

- **Undergraduates** require Field School to graduate (this can be at UAF or a 6 credit course elsewhere if not offered at UAF)
- International applicants having to agree to a disclaimer (truescreen.com) for review of lifestyle and other personal questions (unclear whether this is a federal requirement for background checks), see figure below. Phrasing seems unnecessarily intrusive: personal characteristics, mode of living, etc.

- **How are applicants/applications evaluated? Is that process and/or rubric[4,5] public? What kind of biases are introduced in this process and what strategies are used to address these, e.g. removing applicant names?**
  - Staff: depends on the position, but every hire is processed through preliminary and intermediate screenings prior to interviews (screening questions are never the same and dependent on the position/department). Everything is guided

through HR, however the process is not public and applicant names are not removed.
- ○ Faculty: parts of the process are rather public (interview seminars etc.) so people can review papers/research. HR is guiding the hiring process, but up to the search committee to draw diverse applicants.
- ○ Graduate students: public amongst the faculty prior to taking on students
- ○ All implicit biases are present in the current hiring processes, and hiring committees/faculty are aware of the current demographics.
  - ■ Strategies: seek/advertise in a more diverse applicant pool, maybe remove applicant names (dependent on the position).
- ○ Is networking a bias? Where is the line drawn between "who you know" and bias?

- **Who is on selection committees and who makes the final decisions? Who interacts with the applicants?**
  - ○ Staff/faculty hires: usually the hiring committee lead picks committee members, makes the final selection after deliberation, and proceeds with HR to finalize the hire. HR interacts with the applicants the most.
  - ○ Meet and Greet with graduate students

- **Has your hiring and/or admissions process been evaluated by outside consultants? What is the process for changing it?**
  - ○ UA HR not been evaluated by outside consultants but is evaluated internally and is very receptive to feedback.
  - ○ UA HR: From Charla Bodle:
    - ■ To my knowledge, we have not hired external consultants to review our hiring processes. UA HR, and specifically the Talent Acquisition team, continue to regularly evaluate and implement process improvements, often having project work teams that consult with identified stakeholders and leadership members across the various campuses.

- We are certainly always open to feedback and suggestions. Does the team currently have recommended changes to a particular recruitment process?
  - UA Admissions: From Anna Gange-Hawes, acting director of admissions
    - Admissions requirements are decided by the Faculty Senate so any major decisions to waive ACT/SAT, GRE, adjust our core GPA requirements - all that would need to be a motion approved by the Faculty Senate for us to make the appropriate changes in admissions.
    - For undergraduate students our admissions criteria are [here](), [here]() and [here]().
    - For graduate students the departments have almost total autonomy on what they require for their programs and can choose to individually waive the GRE etc. The only requirement that they do not have flexibility on is requiring final, official transcripts from their universities that they have previously attended. Any large scale changes to graduate admissions would also need to go through the Faculty Senate.
    - To the best of my knowledge I do not believe that UAF has contracted with an outside company to look at our admissions criteria. I've worked in admissions for about six and a half years and I know that that hasn't happened in my time here, but it could have happened previous to that and I might just be not aware of it.

- **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]?**
  - Unknown, other than multiple funding sources or cross-departmental hires for students/staff/faculty.

- **Primary points within hiring/admissions process that our URGE pod suggests should be adjusted or changed (to suggest to HR - re: Charla Bodle's note)**

  - Geoscience Department:
    - Provide accessible alternative to field school to fulfill capstone requirement
    - Participate in AGU BRIDGE program
    - Establish recruitment weekend for prospective graduate students

  - Faculty Senate:
    - Eliminate GRE as graduate admissions requirement university-wide
    - Review and eliminate intrusive questions during application process

  - Admissions:
    - Reduce application fees
    - Provide potential contact at institutions for students with Internet connectivity issues to assist with online applications.

  - HR:
    - Provide implicit bias training systematically to everyone, particularly if involved in hiring / admissions processes, decoupled from new UAF HR hiring committee webinar (or potentially expand that section).
    - Provide potential contact at institutions for students with Internet connectivity issues to assist with online applications.